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Notes From The Editor



After banning the Netra Bikram led Nepal Maoist Communist Party, the government has been launching massive drives to contain violent and illegal activities of Chand led parties. Although the government has had a major success in arresting top leaders of Chand Led Maoists, the extortion threat in the rural municipalities is yet to recede. As Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and Chand led Maoist parties both are taking a hard stand, there are no chances of political negotiations happening any time soon. Despite Chand led Maoists' claim of not having any plans to attack the police force now, but elected representatives living in rural parts of Nepal have started leaving their homes after feeling threatened. Instead of a political issue, we have decided to issue a Citizenship Certificate cover story this week. The House of Representatives is now discussing the provisions of the new citizenship bill because of the large number of people living without citizenship certificates, deprived from facilities provided by the state. With two third of its majority in the parliament, the communist led government is pushing harsh provisions in the act to obtain the citizenship certificate. Instead of discussing irrelevant issues and making the citizenship a political issue and an issue of nationalism, The Parliament needs to pass the act with respect to the word and spirit of constitution. Verdicts of courts and Nepal's own international commitments should aim to provide citizenship certificates to people who were born in Nepal and are eligible to claim it.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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TRISHULI 3 A

At Final Stage

Following a delay for almost six years, Trishuli 3 A is finally going to Generate 30 MW Electricity From April 30 and 60 MW from June

BY A CORRESPONDENT

With frequent supply disruptions for short periods at peak hour, the population of Kathmandu Valley has been facing problems. However, the power supply of Kathmandu valley will drastically improve following the supply of electricity by Trishuli 3 A from next month.

Situated close to load center Kathmandu, 60 MW of power generated by Trishuli 3 A will be a game changer to maintain quality of power supply in Kathmandu Valley. The project construction period was delayed

from April 30, 2019. According to a press release issued by Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), the decision was taken at a meeting on project management, contractor companies took the decision in the presence of Managing Director of NEA Kul Man Ghising.

Out of the two units of 30 MW, the second unit will start generation in June 30. After being delayed for years due to several problems, the project has finally been completed with the constant efforts of the Ministry of Energy and NEA.

trial of the main tunnel and other infrastructures will be completed and the project will start generation from April 30,” said project chief Phanindraraj Joshi. “We are working with a time frame to meet the deadline.”

“Now the installment and trial of hydro-mechanical equipment and electromechanical equipment are under way,” said Joshi. “We have directed the contractor of 220 kV transmission line to complete the work by April 15.”

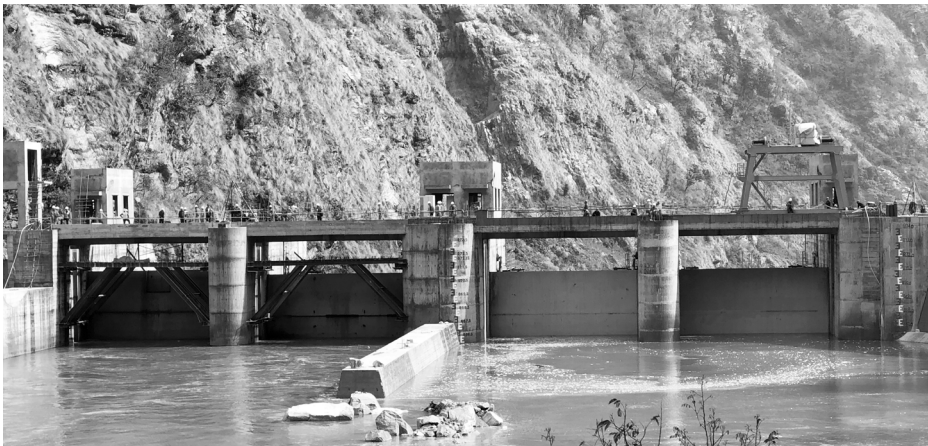
China’ International Water and Electric Corporation is now constructing a 220 kV Trishuli-Matatirtha Transmission line which has a 1300 meter underground portion. The cost of the project is US\$ 26 million.

Constructed with a total cost of US\$125.8 million with the support of Chinese Exim Bank, Nepal Government and NEA, the project signed an agreement with China Gejuwa Group of Companies (GCC) in Engineering and Construction (EPC) model in May 2010 to complete the project in May 31, 2014 with US\$ 89 million

After disputes in several matters including upgrading of capacity, the period was delayed. The earthquake of 2015 heavily damaged the project and pushed the completion period to 30 April, 2019.

As the earthquake damaged left and right sides of the dam and completely destroyed access roads in many places, NEA rescheduled the deadline handing over the reconstruction of the road to the Nepal Army.

Completion of Trishuli 3A project has shown that Nepal’s hydro-power sector is moving towards the right direction and will hopefully be able to achieve its target to generate 10,000 MW in the coming ten years.



for years because it suffered from various technical problems, augmentation issue and the earthquake of 2015.

However, things have changed in the last year. Thanks to Minister of Energy Barsha Man Pun and NEA MD Kul Man Ghising’s constant efforts, the project is now in its final stage of completion.

Along with generation electricity, Trishuli 3 A project has a 220 kV double circuit Transmission line which will help to evacuate many power projects under construction in the Trishuli basin.

Trishuli 3 A project has announced that the first unit of Trishuli 3 A will start generation of electricity

As the project is close to the Kathmandu Valley, it will play an important role in the management of the supply demands of the load center. Similarly, the project will also develop infrastructures which will ultimately help to evacuate electricity from the projects which are under construction in the Trishuli basin.

With the capacity of 60 MW, there are two units with 30 MW capacities. Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Barsha Man Pun visited the project sites recently and directed project officials, NEA and contractor to complete the project in time.

“By April 15, the dry and wet

NEWSNOTES

EU Looks Forward To Enhanced Dialogue And Partnership With Nepal

Deputy Managing Director for Asia and Pacific of the European External Action Service (EEAS) Paola Pampaloni said that the EU and Nepal have been partners in development cooperation ever since their bilateral relations began in 1973.

"Last year, in 2018, we marked 45 years of our friendship. The role of the EU Delegation to Nepal has been vital in advancing these relations over the years. The purchase of the new Delegation premises is a testimony to the European Union's commitment to remain engaged in and with Nepal, and indeed over the long term to strengthen this partnership," said Pampaloni addressing the inaugural program of office premises of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal.

The inauguration of the new office premises of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal took place on 18 March in the presence of the Vice President of Nepal, Nanda Bahadur Pun, the Deputy Managing Director for Asia and Pacific of the European External Action Service (EEAS) Paola Pampaloni, EU Ambassador of Nepal, Veronica

Cody. It was also attended by Nepali Government representatives and EU Member State Ambassadors.

Deputy Managing

Director for Asia and Pacific Pampaloni met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister of Finance Yuba Raj Khatriwada, the Foreign Secretary Shanker Das Bairagi, and the Advisor to the Prime Minister Rajan Bhattarai during her visit. The EU, with its Member States, is the largest development donor in Nepal. In the period 2014-2020 the EU tripled its assistance to Nepal from € 120 million to € 360 million. This financial assistance has been focused on rural development, education, governance and reconstruction.

The European Union stands ready to support the Government of Nepal on its journey toward graduation from LDC status by 2022, and beyond. Further opportunities for cooperation in the areas of common interest are being explored, particularly in the context of preparing for the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework for development covering the period 2021-2027.

The world is facing many challenges to maintain global order in the 21st Century. From the European Union's perspective these challenges can be tackled only through a rule-based and multilateral approach, and acting together with other like-minded countries.

U.S.-Nepal Partnership Highlighted At The American National Day Celebration

The United States Embassy held its 243rd National Day Celebration on March 22, 2019 at Phora Durbar in Kathmandu. Nepal's Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun and U.S. Ambassador to Nepal Randy Berry raised a toast together for the continuation of a strong, deep, and close partnership between the United States of America and Nepal.

Ambassador Berry highlighted the 72-year-long U.S.-Nepal relationship as "joint triumphs" which resulted through shared goals and a deep, meaningful partnership. "That is why our partnership does not come with strings, loans, or indebtedness," he said. "The 150 billion rupees worth of support that we expect to grant to Nepal over the coming five years will not be 'money' or 'donor aid.' It will, instead, deliver global best practices, training in skills, and models for Nepalis to adopt and make their own to help Nepal become both prosperous and happy," Ambassador Berry added.

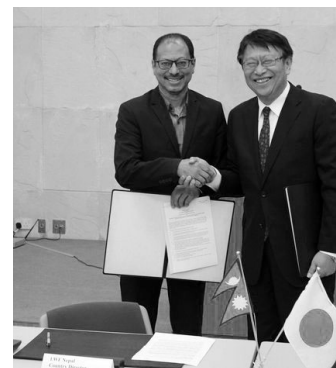
Japan Provides Support To LWF-Nepal

Ambassador of Japan Masamichi Saigo and Dr. Prabin Manandhar, Country Director of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Nepal, signed a contract today to provide agricultural facilities in Beldangi Bhutanese Camp and Sanischare Bhutanese Camp, as well as their respective neighboring communities.

The Project for the Installation for Agricultural Facilities in Bhutanese Camps and Neighboring Communities is funded under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Government of Japan. The grant assistance amounts to USD 70,245 (approximately NPR 8.1 million). This GGP project provides opportunities for income generation for Bhutanese refugees and their neighboring communities.

Addressing the program, Japanese ambassador Saigo said that the construction of facilities in the refugee camps will enhance the capability of refugees and their neighbours.

LWF Nepal was established in 1984 to meet humanitarian and development needs of the poor, oppressed and vulnerable people living in poverty. LWF Nepal has been working for the Bhutanese refugees since 1991 through



the funding support of international organizations like the UNHCR.

Country director of LWF-Nepal Dr. Manandhar expressed his commitments to implement the project successfully strictly following the compliance of the project. He said that LWF-Nepal has been supporting Bhutanese refugees by implementing programs in partnership with UN World Food Program and UNHCR.

Dr. Manandhar also said that refugees are not a burden and that they can support economic activities of the communities outside the camp area. He said the construction of the center will benefit both sides. Dr. Manandhar thanked the Japanese government, people and Embassy of Japan in Nepal for the support saying that LWF-Nepal will implement the projects in coordination with local level province governments of Nepal.

UNHCR Representative Bushra Halepota said that LWF-Nepal remains a reliable partner and has been helping Bhutanese refugees for a long time. She thanked the Japanese Embassy for providing support to the refugees and Nepalese communities living outside the camp.

According to a press release issued by Embassy of Japan in Nepal, the Embassy of Japan hopes that this project will contribute towards enhancing the self-reliance of the Bhutanese camps and neighboring communities and strengthen the bilateral relationship between Japan and Nepal.

Bangladesh Embassy In Kathmandu Hosts A Reception

Ambassador of People's Republic of Bangladesh to Nepal Mashfee Binte Shams has hosted a reception on the occasion of the 48th Anniversary of the Independence and National Day of Bangladesh.

Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun was the chief guest of the reception. Attended by large numbers of people including foreign minister Pradeep Gyawali, Minister of Energy Barshaman Pun, Chief of the Army Staff General Purna Chandra Thapa, senior government officials, Kathmandu based head of the diplomatic missions, political leader and Bangladesh citizens living in Nepal. Addressing

the program ambassador Shams highlighted the role played by The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to liberate Bangladesh and make it independent nation. She also

thanked Nepali political leaders for taking part in Bangladesh Liberation War.



Russian Film Week Kicks Off

Russian Centre of Science and Culture organized opening ceremony of "Russian Film Week" in Kathmandu on 25th March 2019. Ambassador of Israel to Nepal Benny Omer inaugurated the event by lighting the traditional Nepali lamp.

Yuliya Androsova, Director of Russian Centre of Science and Culture, welcomed everyone to the event. The program was followed by screening of the Movie "The Champions" with English subtitles.



Ambassadors of various countries, diplomats and movie lovers were seen in the program. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the movie. The program was a success in its own rights.

Movies have become a top industry and the no. 1 source of entertainment in the world today. During this week, we will have for you, 5 stories of success. The failure that preceded the success, the fight and determination to achieve their ambitions and much more drama that leads to success. 5 inspiring movies will be screened till 29th March 2019 at 5:00 pm at Russian Centre of Science and Culture. We cordially invite all the movie lovers to this "Russian Film Week 2019".

Embassy Of Pakistan Kathmandu Celebrates 79th National Day Of Pakistan

Embassy of Pakistan Kathmandu hosted a Reception to celebrate 79th Day of Pakistan. Nanda Bahadur Pun, Vice President of Nepal was the Chief Guest.

The reception was attended by diplomats, Nepalese dignitaries, senior Government officials, prominent political leaders, Pakistani community members, academician, members of think tanks, businessmen, bankers, senior media representatives and members of civil society. On the eve of 79th National Day of Pakistan, flag hoisting ceremony was held at Embassy of Pakistan, Kathmandu on 23rd March 2019. Ambassador of Pakistan Dr Mazhar Javed hoisted the national flag. On the occasion, special messages of President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan were also read out.



BUSINESS BRIEF

Nepal And Japan Sign MoC For Labor Cooperation

Masamichi Saigo, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, and



Ram Prasad Ghimire, Officiating Secretary of the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security signed the Memorandum of Cooperation on a Basic Framework for Information Partnership for Proper Operation of the System pertaining to Foreign Human Resources with the Status of Residence of “Specified Skilled Worker.”

human Resources with the Status of Residence of “Specified Skilled Worker.”

According to a press release issued by Embassy of Japan, the purpose of this Memorandum of Cooperation is to establish a basic framework for information partnership in order to ensure smooth and proper sending and accepting specified skilled workers, in particular the elimination of malicious intermediary organizations, and to resolve the problems of sending, accepting and residing in Japan of specified skilled worker.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan enhances the mutual benefits of both countries through cooperation for proper operation of the system, cooperating with the relevant ministries and agencies of Japan.

WVIN Hands Over Earthquake-resistant School Building In Sindhupalchowk

An earthquake-resistant and disabled-friendly school building of Shree Kalika Devi Secondary School in



Sindhupalchowk district, constructed with support of World Vision Korea and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) was inaugurated on 7 March. The construction of the school with eight classrooms which

began in August 2017 was completed in Jan 2019 and officially handed over to the community last month.

The inauguration event took place in the presence of representatives from the local government, community, school, World Vision, UNOPS, media and other stakeholders.

Janes Ginting, National Director at World Vision International Nepal said, “We thank the community people for supporting us in the journey of helping build back better so that the most vulnerable children access safe, inclusive and quality education. When children can read, they can better advocate for their rights and help provide for their families.”

In response to the April and May 2015 earthquakes, World Vision reached out to over 600,000 people with interventions in the areas of education, child protection, health, livelihoods, water, sanitation and hygiene, cash,

shelter and infrastructure in ten of the most affected districts including Sindhupalchowk. World Vision’s partner NGOs successfully completed and phased out its earthquake response programmes in all districts early on in April 2018, three years on from the earthquake.

World Vision is a global Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. World Vision started its long-term development work in Nepal in 2001 working for the well-being of children partnering with communities.

At present, WVIN has long-term development programmes in 12 districts and seven provinces of Nepal. After the devastating earthquake struck Nepal in April and May 2015, WVIN responded with immediate relief followed by recovery and rehabilitation efforts in the worst-hit districts of Bhaktapur, Dhading, Dolakha, Gorkha, Kathmandu, Lamjung, Lalitpur, Nuwakot, Sindhuli and Sindhupalchowk working alongside humanitarian stakeholders, government and community partners to benefit more than 600,000 people.

JGI brings Ruslan Gold Reserve Vodka

Jawalakhel Group of Industries (JGI) has introduced Nepal’s first premium vodka with edible gold flakes — Ruslan Gold Reserve Vodka.

Positioned as ‘Taste Gold Feel Gold,’ it is 100 per cent vodka infused with 23 carat gold flakes to create a sensorial experience unlike any in the market currently, the company said in a statement.

The edible gold flakes in the vodka are certified for food grade in Germany. Every batch of Ruslan Gold Reserve Vodka is tested for quality at an ISO/IEC certified lab.

Ruslan Gold Reserve Vodka will be available from this month in select liquor stores, restaurants and bars in the valley initially and other major cities of Nepal later.

The product comes in stunning 750ml, 375ml and 180ml bottles and is priced at Rs 2,200, Rs 1,100 and Rs 550 per bottle, respectively.



Global IME Bank And Nepal Life Insurance Company Inks An Agreement

Global IME Bank Ltd has entered into an agreement with Nepal Life Insurance Company Limited as its agent to sell later’s life Insurance policies. The Agreement was signed by Deputy MD of the Bank, Surendra Raj Regmi and Deputy CEO of the insurance company, Santosh Prasai.

Following the Agreement, Customers can now avail in-



insurance policies and hassle-free Banc assurance services through Global Bank's 134 branches spread across the country in a convenient manner, as per the media statement.

The bank currently provides its services from 134 branches, 142 ATM outlets, 9 extension counters, 15 revenue collection counters, 121 branchless banking units and 3 foreign relations offices.

Himalayan Bank To Issue Rs 3 Billion Worth Bond

Himalayan Bank Ltd. has appointed Laxmi Capital Market Ltd. as an issue manager for issuing its 30 lakh units "Himalayan Bank Limited Bond 2083" that amounts to Rs 3 arba. The MoU regarding the same was signed between

CEO of HBL Ashok SJB Rana and CEO of the Laxmi Capital Market Ltd. Rajiv Sapkota amid a program.

The bank which plans to issue 40% of debenture i.e. Rs 1.20 arba to general investors

and remaining Rs 1.80 arba worth debentures to the big and institutional investors will float its debenture for the investors after receiving permission from SEBON.

The bank plans to provide 10% interest to the investment semi-annually for the 7 years after which the debenture shall mature.

NIBL expands service

Nepal Investment Bank Ltd (NIBL) has opened its 12th extension counter in Kharikhola, Ward No 1 at Pasang Lhamu rural municipality of Solukhumbu district.

The extension counter was inaugurated by Lakpa Chhiri Sherpa, spokesperson of the rural municipality.

Issuing a press statement, NIBL said that it has been delivering banking services in three wards of the Khumbu Pasang Lhamu rural municipality and it plans to open an extension counter in Ward No 5 of the same municipality soon.

Japan Hands Over Embankment Along The Kali Gandaki River Bank In Marpha

Ambassador of Japan Masamichi Saigo handed over embankment along the Kali Gandaki River Bank to the Ward No. 2, Gharapjhong Village Municipality.

Under the agreement the Embassy of Japan provided grant assistance of USD 90,296 (about NPR 9.2 million) under the Japanese Government's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP).

The project supported the construction of a 420 meter long embankment along the bank of the Kali Gandaki to prevent erosion of adjacent land. The embankment protects land near the school



grounds and nearby agricultural plots. The embankment is expected to contribute towards the safety of students and villagers and also protect fields from further erosion.

Weekend Brunch AT Hyatt Regency In Kathmandu

Hyatt Regency Kathmandu Announces a rejuvenating time with friends and family over an indulgent brunch while splashing in the swimming pool or just relaxing in the outdoor whirlpool every weekend.

"Make your selection from the wide variety on offer in the vegetarian and no vegetarian buffet spreads .A buffet featuring barbecue, kebab stations, antipasti , live station and mouthwatering desserts is only part of what makes our Weekend Brunch the finest option," said a press release.

According to hotel, the brunch will be offered on every Saturday & Sunday at the rate of NPR 2,699 per person plus taxes inclusive of a buffet brunch, swimming, complimentary drink and kid's activities.



Bangladesh Food Festival 2019

Ambassador of Bangladesh to Nepal Mashfee Binte Shams said that the Bangladesh Food Festival and Musical concert is a special part of this year's Independent Day Celebration of Bangladesh in Nepal.

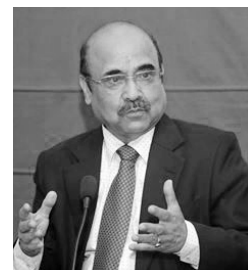
Addressing a press conference, ambassador Shams said that food and music are two important things which people enjoy. Organized by Hotel Yak& Yeti in close collaboration with Bangladesh Embassy, the Bangladesh Food Festival 2019 will be the first international food festival of its kind.



Professor Dr. Madan Kumar Dahal Is No More

Renowned Nepalese Economist and Professor Dr. Madan Kumar Dahal died today at the age of 71. Known for his friendly behavior, late Professor Dahal has many admirers.

Dahal started his carrier in teaching economics at Tribhuvan University Central Department. Dr. Madan had written a numbers of books and articles in journal in contemporary economic issues of Nepal. He is well known in the economic and development sector for his professionalism.



Globally Difficult Situation

Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cautioned nations to be prepared to face the consequences of an unexpected slow growth of the world economy. IMF has also adjusted downward global growth forecast (3.7 to 3.5 percent) for 2019. IMF and its Chief look very reasonable in not painting a bright picture of the global economy because things in and between powerful/resourceful nations are getting complicated day by day. No exception are the less resourceful countries. One cannot also brush aside apprehensions of some observers that multilateralism is being gradually replaced by bilateralism and liberalism by protectionism. A period of unhealthy competition between major global powers is seen, which could lead to an unpredictable and more hostile future. It looks like the post-cold war period of optimism is slowly fading. People are also confused about the new order (likely to emerge) and are not certain whether the transition period will be peaceful. Leaders from other relatively less powerful countries including the European Union (EU) are expected to do some meaningful work to preserve a liberal international order but it does not look like they are well prepared to deal with the heightened competition. Let us see how effective a role can Angela Merkel of Germany, serving her last term in office, play in defending multilateralism.

Notwithstanding some positive developments that took place between the two presidents of China and the US on the sidelines of the G-20 meeting in Buenos Aires, trade row between these two largest economies is far from over. Both economies have taken the hit. Chinese economy is reported to have grown by 6.6 percent in 2018, the lowest in three decades. Chinese exports in February have dropped sharply and it is believed that the huge current account surplus it has been enjoying since 1993 could soon disappear. Trade row has not benefitted the US economy either. Pork and soybean farmers have suffered a lot there. One encouraging fact, however, is that imposition of additional tariff has stopped, albeit temporarily, and officials of both countries are meeting regularly to resolve outstanding issues. Hope the row, which is bound to negatively impact the global economy, is resolved soon.

Britain's exit from EU (Brexit) has also created lots of confusion and is likely to hurt countries on either side of the Channel. Prime Minister May has already failed twice to get the Brexit deal passed by the House of Commons. About a million people protested on March 23 in London



BY DR. TILAK RAWAL

demanding a second referendum on Brexit. The confusion has begun to take a toll on the British economy. It is reported that banks and financial institutions have moved their assets approximating 10 trillion dollar outside of Britain. Bank of England has warned of serious consequences, which could be more dangerous than the ones created by the financial crisis of 2008. It is rightly observed that Brexit proceedings will continue to inflict injury on the economies of EU nations and Britain for years to come. A reliable estimate shows that around 700,000 jobs

in travel and tourism could be lost across Europe in the event of Britain dashing out without a deal with EU on future relations. IMF states that British economy will be 7.7 percent smaller over the next decade in a no deal scenario. Theresa May needs lots of good luck to delay and get the deal passed by the British Parliament.

Venezuelan crisis is also not likely to recede soon. Many inhabitants of this oil rich country have left it to take refuge elsewhere and those staying back are without water, electricity and other essential supplies. We can simply pray that the innocent people do not have to suffer much for long like the unfortunate Syrians.

Things are not very pleasant in our neighborhood either. India, making necessary preparations for the general elections, and Pakistan, with a new government after the freshly concluded elections, were on the verge of a full-fledged war after a deadly suicide bombing in India's section of Kashmir killed more than 40 Indian soldiers in February. The two nuclear-armed nations got engaged in a brief air confrontation in which both sides claimed that they had shot down each other's war planes. Thanks god the concerned leaders sensibly handled the delicate situation and fears of an all-out conflict are almost over at least for now. Emerging economic power India has dedicated leaders to do everything possible to help their economy remain not far away from the two economies (US and China), leapfrogging many economies in coming years and Pakistan's Imran Khan does not seem to be in a war mood because he has the uphill task of putting on track somewhat derailed economy of Pakistan. Sensible leaders all over the world are seen giving top priority to the wellbeing of their countrymen, which is effected through faster economic development. Let us see what is happening in Nepal.

Overall position of the economy is not satisfactory but there are a few areas to derive some solace from. One

of the sectors which has been giving some good results in recent times is the tourism sector which has registered a commendable increase (more than 100,000 in February) in the number of tourist arrival. If this trend continues, it will not be difficult to get 2 million tourists here in 2020 as desired by the government. Remittance is also increasing very encouragingly both in terms of American dollars and Nepalese currency. It may be mentioned that remittance increased by Rs. 77 billion in the seventh month of this fiscal year to reach Rs. 515.55 billion in seven months, registering an increase of 28.5 percent over the corresponding period of last fiscal year. This sharp increase in remittance could not, however, arrest the deterioration in our current account which has reached Rs. 166 billion in the seventh month of this fiscal year as against Rs. 142 billion in the corresponding period of last fiscal year. Balance of payment (BOP) is still negative by Rs. 49 billion in the seven months as against a negative Rs. 18 billion in the corresponding period of last fiscal year. Foreign direct investment (Rs. 5.15 billion) is seen to have taken a hit during this period as it stood at Rs. 14.34 billion in the seven months of the last fiscal year. Capital transfer is also said to have gone down. Further, foreign exchange reserve at the end of last fiscal year was 10.08 billion dollar and it is 9.49 billion dollar in the seven months of this fiscal year. While it is not unusual for government to have some money (more than Rs. 150 billion currently) lying idle at the central bank, the worrisome fact is that only 25 percent of the money apportioned under capital expenditure head was spent till the end of the seventh month and it has reached just 30 percent in more than eight months of this fiscal year. Financial institutions have been charging high interest rates on loans, citing liquidity crunch in the market, and finance minister's strong directive to the institutions to lower the lending rates and Prime Minister Oli's threatening that he would intervene if rates are not lowered have passed unheeded. In hindsight, many of us now realize how mistaken we were to hope that Oli would intervene soon to facilitate injection of billions of rupees into the market. Poor production base and the resultant ballooning trade deficit are the root cause of many evils that have been inflicting somewhat incurable injury on the economy. The deterioration is difficult to be arrested as is evident by a comparison of data of six/seven months of this fiscal year with the corresponding period of last fiscal year. It may not be easy for the concerned to tell commoners at the yearend that their period was better than the last one because situation, both internally and externally, does not look that easy.

Things on the other side of the fence (noneconomic) also look complicated and confusing. A blast in the Valley in the last week of February, claiming one life and injuring two others, and arson attacks targeting at least a dozen telephone towers of a mobile company (Ncell) in several districts came as something reminiscent of the violent incidents of the Maoist war-era period. Netra Bikram Chand-led Maoist party owned up to the attacks and apologized for the

loss of life but has shown no sign of renouncing violence. The government's decision to outlaw the party has become very controversial and people are skeptical whether Chand would come to the negotiating table, surrendering arms, as desired by the current dispensation. It may be interesting to note that several calls by different governments to surrender arms before negotiation had failed to produce positive outcome during the decade-long period of insurgency led by Prachanda. Equally controversial became the eleven-point deal signed between government and C. K. Raut, a known separatist wanting a separate/independent Madhesh. Let us hope that Raut, now heading a political party, must have realized that the southern plain of Nepal seceding from the mainland is just impossible. Little bit disturbing was also the decision of Rashtriya Janata Party (RJP) withdrawing its support to the government, despite the fact that this decision will have no impact on the continuity of this still strong government. Things, however, will be different if RJP leaders succeed in pulling the Upendra Yadav-led party (Forum) out of government to expedite their merger talks.

May be disturbed a bit by the unconducive environment, both internal and external, finance minister Khatiwada has recently adjusted downward some budgetary targets made public by him just six months ago. Total budgetary outlay has been reduced by about 9 percent and its other constituents have also been readjusted. According to the new arrangement, recurrent expenditure is fixed at Rs.

In addition to the law and order situation, our repeated disappointing performance in meeting the capital expenditure target may stand as an impediment to mobilizing huge resources externally. Adequate homework is needed to get the firm commitment otherwise investors will hesitate to pledge and whatever little is promised will not be timely disbursed. A wide gap is found between pledging and its actualization, which has been abundantly shown by our experiences related to the devastating earthquake of April 2015 and the Nepal Investment Summit in 2017 that succeeded in getting pledges worth 14 billion dollars.

798 billion, capital expenditure at Rs. 265 billion and financial management stands at Rs. 135 billion. Revenue collection target of Rs. 945 billion has been slashed by Rs. 26 billion. It may be recalled that revenue collection target could not be met last fiscal year, for the first time in a decade and the concerned may have difficulty collecting even the downsized figure in the current fiscal year. Budgetary adjustments are made and there is nothing to panic about it but government should be extra careful to make sure that the revised targets do not remain unachieved. The government has to be sensitive also because of the fact that Nepal Investment Summit is taking place (March 29 and 30) at a time when the situation is not very favorable to attract investors who love to meticulously delve into different aspects related to the country

and its economy before committing funds. In addition to the law and order situation, our repeated disappointing performance in meeting the capital expenditure target may stand as an impediment to mobilizing huge resources externally. Adequate homework is needed to get the firm commitment otherwise investors will hesitate to pledge and whatever little is promised will not be timely disbursed. A wide gap is found between pledging and its actualization, which has been abundantly shown by our experiences related to the devastating earthquake of April 2015 and the Nepal Investment Summit in 2017 that succeeded in getting pledges worth 14 billion dollars. Good Luck!

(Dr. Rawal is a former governor of Nepal Rashtra Bank)

Connected To Nepal

Japan's Emperor Akihito will relinquish the throne to his eldest son, Crown Prince Naruhito, in less than a month, Nepalese will always remember his love to Nepal

By KESHAB POUDEL

Although Japan is far away from Nepal, Nepalese people have a great attachment to Japan, the Japanese people and Japanese monarchy. The current Emperor Akihito, who is

Francis G. Hutchins, former teacher of late King Birendra, in his book *Democratizing Monarch*, dedicated to late Birendra, described Tokyo University's influence upon him. Particularly, oriental

Emperor Akihito and Queen Michiko saw an isolated and remote Nepal during their first visit. In second visit in 1975 during the coronation of late King Birendra however, their highnesses saw a better and open Nepal.

The current Crown Prince Naruhito paid an official visit to Nepal in 1987. Crown Prince Naruhito is also very sympathetic to Nepal, Nepalese people rich culture and natural heritage.

From scholars to former Nepalese ambassadors to Japan and former Japanese ambassadors to Nepal, every one explains Emperor Akihito has love for Nepal and its people.

For Japan, the abdication will mark the end of the Heisei era, which remained for more than 30 years. For the Nepalese, it will be the day an emperor who personally loves Nepal and its people, abdicating the throne.

Crown Prince Naruhito, 59, who will become Japan's 126th Emperor on May 1, has fair knowledge about Nepal. He welcomed former crown princes of Nepal late Dipendra and Paras in Tokyo.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in September 1956, Nepal continues to benefit from the



Emperor Akihito waves to visitors at the Imperial Palace. Beside him is Crown Prince Naruhito. - KYODO

going to abdicate his throne in April 30, 2019, is well known in Nepal.

He visited Nepal twice with Queen Michiko as a Crown Prince. The emperor has well memories of Nepal, the Nepalese people and Nepalese Royalty. Even after declaration of republic Nepal, Japan has maintained its ties with former royal families and invites them as a guests in Japan's national day and birthdays of the emperor of Japan as reminders of personal bonding ties between Japanese monarchy and former Royal family of Nepal.

Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko first visited Nepal in 1960 as crown prince and crown princesses as state guests and their second visit was in late King Birendra's coronation in 1975 representing Japan's emperor. Their first visit laid a strong foundation for Nepal-Japan relations.

After their first visit to Nepal, late King Mahendra sent Crown Prince late King Birendra to Tokyo University for higher education where late King Birendra learned oriental culture and values.

Professor of Harvard University

values and working style of the Japanese monarchs.

As he travelled through a long way via Patna in their first visit, Emperor Akihito and Queen Michiko know Nepal's old society, which was isolated from the rest of the world because of inaccessibility.

The first Nepalese ambassador to Japan Lt. General late Daman Sumsher Jung Bahadur Rana in his book, described very interesting events between Nepal and Japan in 1960s and visit of Crown Prince and Princesses. "In December 1960, when their Royal Highnesses the Crown Prince and Princesses of Japan came to Kathmandu. I flew to Patna to receive them and escort them home. "Their Royal Highnesses early in the morning, flew high over mountain to have a view of the most magnificent panorama in the world. A few days later, their Royal Highnesses left Kathmandu and I reached them up to Patna."

Late Rana was the first Nepalese ambassador to Japan to present credential to Japanese monarch Hirohito in 1956.



Crown Prince Akihito and Crown Princess Michiko are seen off by King Mahendra and Queen Ratna in 1960 at Kathmandu



King Birendra (1st L) and Queen Aishwarya (2nd L) of Nepal greet Crown Prince Akihito (2nd R) and Crown Princess Michiko (1st R) prior to the welcome ceremony at the Akasaka State Guest House on May 15, 1978 in Tokyo, Japan. (Photo by The Asahi Shimbun via Getty Images)

support provided by Japan in education, agriculture, roads, hydropower, health, aviation, drinking water, sports and all other sectors.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), a leading agency, is celebrating 50 years of its presence in Nepal with Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers.

Japan has already provided Technical Cooperation JPY 76 Billion, ODA Loan JPY 121 Billion and ODA Grant JPY 153 Billion. During the period, Japan has dispatched 3556 experts, 1,414 volunteers and 5,979 trainees to Nepal.

“JICA will continue to provide technical and grant support to Nepal for its overall development. We are satisfy with our work performance,” said Yumiko Asakuma, chief representative JICA in Nepal in her recent interactions with media.

Whatever the state of internal and global state, Japan continue to provide support to modernize Nepal and uplift the livelihood of Nepali people. Annually, large number of Japanese tourists visit Nepal.

“From my first visit to presenting my credential to Emperor Palace till my last call, he always showed his good words to Nepal and Nepalese people and monarch whenever I secured audiences with Emperor Akihito,” said former Nepalese Ambassador to Japan Kedar Bhatka Mathema.

Received audience with Emperor Akihito working as a interpreter to King Mahendra and Birendra in their visit, Harendra Barua, who was a former student of Monbusho University of Japan and has contributed various articles on Japan and published in daily newspapers, said that Emperor Akihito loves Nepal very much because of its nature and culture. He said that Crown Prince Naruhito knows Nepal very well.

Former Japanese ambassador to

2008, Japan and Nepal further deepened their relationship,” said ambassador see interview (Aug. 31, 2016).

Japan and Nepal share common ideas of free society, democracy and peaceful resolution to international conflicts. Japan and Nepal now enjoy a friendly and collaborative relationship, which is the best ever, based upon the multi-faceted mutual interactions that took place in the past in such areas as business/economy, culture, and education.

Ever since the first visit of Ekai Kawaguchi’s religious and adventurous visit to Tibet via Nepal in 1900 and the Rana regime’s dispatch of eight Nepalese students to Japan in 1902, Nepal established their formal diplomatic relationship in September 1st 1956, Nepal and Japan has always maintained friendly and warm relations. As Japanese Nepalese cooperation started in 1969, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is celebrating 50 years of cooperation with Nepal.

Emperor Akihito stepped down on April 30, 2019 with Crown Prince Naruhito ascending the throne the next day.

“When I consider that my fitness gradually declining, I am worried that it may become difficult for me to carry out my duties as the symbol of the State with my whole being as I have done until now,” he informed the nation in a prerecorded video address that aired on August 7, 2016.

The law allowing Emperor Akihito’s abdication defines his retirement title as joko and Empress Michiko’s as

Nepal, Masashi Ogawa in his interview with New Spotlight highlighted the close relations between Nepalese Royal family and Japanese royal family. “The Japanese and Nepalese royal families had a long-standing amity. Even after the phasing out of the monarchy in Nepal on

jokogo. Although the former emperor will retain his Imperial status and still be referred to as heika, or “His Majesty,” he will cease performing official duties.

What ceremonies are scheduled

On the day the emperor stepped aside, the first ceremony marking an emperor’s abdication since Japan adopted a constitutional government will be held at the Imperial Palace’s Seiden-Matsuno-Ma, a room reserved for events of supreme importance.

During his own ceremony, Emperor Akihito, clad in traditional clothes, declared his ascension to the throne in front of about 2,200 Japanese and overseas dignitaries. He then rode in a convertible along a 4.7km procession from the Imperial Palace to his former residence at Akasaka Estate, where he hosted a banquet featuring a number of dignitaries.

In November 2019, the new emperor will perform a religious rite, praying for peace and wealth for the state and citizenry. It will be billed as an Imperial family event in accordance with Japan’s separation of religion and state.

“For the Japanese people themselves, this will be a tough goodbye to a highly popular emperor. But at least he will be handing over duties to his son, who is likely to be very enthusiastically received,” said Nancy Snow, professor of public diplomacy at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies.



Royal Family Members of Japan

Crown Prince Naruhito, 59, who will become Japan’s 126th Emperor on May 1, is expected to carry on the tradition of the world’s longest continuous monarchy -- all while standing as head of state for a modern, democratic Japan.

“Nepal and Japan have a century old cultural contacts and over sixty years of close political relations and expanding economic cooperation. There is a wide scope to expand this relation,” said Jan sharma in his book Nepal -Japan Relations, Time for Strategic Partnership.

From The 'Unsatisfactory' To The 'Unknown'

'Happiness' is, after all, only but a temporary period of 'pause of sadness'. Such was a famous French poet lyricist Léo Ferré's view in life. The current feeling amongst the larger citizenry in Nepal also appears to be tilting toward this view. Have we all become poets to start interpreting achievements of life in a poetic fashion, despite our daily woes, essentially due to a deliberately fragilized political system and weakened bureaucracy, along with the inherent misalignment, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation of truth by activists, careerists and expert spinners?

Recall the repeated promises for a better and immediate future we were made, the dreams of eternal happiness we were shared, and the minimum due process we were spared one decade and a half earlier. Indeed, opportunistically 'nothing' was planned to be converted into 'something'. Political alchemists with halo around them, so confident of their wisdom, then ignoring the importance of lab-tests



BY DR. K. UPRETY

were suffering remains the same. The trajectory has, thus, been turbulent, thematically changing and theatrically crowded, but tragically with a zero-sum outcome.

Many human rights focused scholars have recommended to never accept 'suffering' to be a usual and unchangeable phenomenon. Excessive sufferings morph into feeling of oppression, and ultimately lead to revolution. Hence transformation, although periodically warranted, should not be to add more suffering. However, for transformation to be positive, sensible groups should speak up and demonstrate why, how and what is wrong. Instead of tergiversating like the spinners on the other side, they have to become 'natural opposition' in the peoples' parliament.

Luckily for the nation, there are still a few neutral minds, who, however, are given limited space in the mainstream media, if at all. Whenever such minds have spoken, so far, they have unbiasedly shared elements of truth. But

perceptual risk, therein, still hangs in that their neutral views can always be considered as biased by those for whom leaning one side is an existential necessity.

Nation building takes more than rhetorical opportunistic statements, tokenism of inclusiveness, misinterpretation of the notion of rule of law, unhealthy alliance with selected societal groups for purposes of breaking the unity of some, however strategic that may be, and multiple development plans and white papers on the shelves only.

What the nation needs are constitutionalism, both in thinking and behavior, adequate law-making, both to deter immorality and maintain order, inclusiveness, both in substance and form, representation, both socially and ideologically, and equality, both in opportunity and participation. These should be, to borrow respectively

from Alexis de Tocqueville and Gunnar Myrdal, aimed at improving 'both living standards and social conditions', and ensuring an 'upliftment of the society in its entirety'.

Or else, the nation would have bounced in all directions but reached nowhere. An 'unsatisfactory' system would have been merely converted into an 'unknown' and an 'unwarranted' one, despite the sacrifice of many patriots and devoted souls!

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and soil verification, coercively tabled an agenda for change of exogenous design. They had their pride to protect; their masters to abide by.

In the past decade and a half, the country, indeed, witnessed a sea-change. Views about the outcomes have been mixed and depend on which side of the seat on the rostrum the speaker is holding. But the mixture is still dominated by the conclusion that the average is less than bright and lower than what was promised, and that the plight of those who

BAGH DURBAR

Court Saves Demolition

The order of Supreme Court to KMC Not To Demolish Bag Durbar, a historic palace of Kathmandu, is milestone in preservation of such buildings

By A CORRESPONDENT

Neglected and Ignored for years without any major maintenance, most Rana palaces of Kathmandu suffered heavy damage after the earthquake of 2015 and decisions were made to demolish Rana

organisation in Pro-Public where another renowned public litigation lawyer senior advocate Prakash Mani Sharma gave consent for court battle. Then, the battle of demolition went from street to court.

The court's recent landmark verdict will not only save Baghdubar but it also directed the government to take necessary steps to protect all the Rana Palaces which were damaged by earthquake.

Led by two senior justices Anil Kumar Sinha and Sapana Pradhan Malla, a division bench of the Supreme Court issued order to Kathmandu Metropolitan City not to demolish historic Bag Durbar.

The court in its ruling said that Kathmandu Metropolitan City was not authorized to demolish the historic Bag Durbar. The court said that the historic Palace was not under its ownership.

Pleaded by renowned public litigation lawyer senior advocate Prakash Mani Sharma and other lawyer including Sanjaya Adhikari, Pro-public and heritage conservationists had filed a writ petition on October 2 after the KMC started demolishing the building.

"The verdict is a historic one. With this verdict, the government agencies can not demolish many other neo-classic Rana Palaces, which were damaged by earthquake," said senior advocate Sharma. "Court has accepted the argument that that historic and cultural heritage need to be preserved at any cost."

The building, which is believed to have been built between 1803 and 1804, houses the office of KMC. After the 2015 earthquake, KMC had proposed to demolish the building and build modern structures.

The SC has also asked the government to form a high-level technical committee to study if the building could be protected through retrofitting. The SC on October 3 last year had issued an interim order against the government to immediately halt demolition of the building. The SC had also asked the KMC to take effective measures to protect the building from further deterioration, but no initiative has been taken to protect it.

Sanjay Adhikari, one of the writ petitioners, expressed hope that Bag Durbar will be protected and the verdict also prevent the demolition of other neo-classic Rana Palaces. For Chanda Rana, the verdict gives new enthusiasm to push her agenda further.

Since Kathmandu Municipality decided to demolish the historic Bag Durbar and build modern building on it, conservation activists have launched several protest programs.

Heritage and environment conservationist Chanda Rana led the protest program before moving to court



palaces. Nobody took note of the demolition until conservationist and environmental activist Chanda Rana noticed.

When she saw the demolition of Rana Palaces including Lalita Nivas of Baluwatar, Singh Mahal of Thapahali and Laxmi Niwas in Maharajgunj, Rana started to collection of photographs and observation of those ruined neo-classic palaces.

As the demolition of major Rana Palaces was nearly completed, Nepal Fine Art Academy and Kathmandu Municipal City (KMC) also announced their plan to demolish palaces.

Hearing the news, Chanda Rana started a lonely battle to save Neo Classic Rana Palaces including Laxmi Niwas, Sitabhawan and Laxmi Niwas which were designed by her grandfather, Chief engineer late Dilly Jung Thapa.

The announcement of decision to demolish Bag Durbar and Sita Niwas shocked her. She fought and took the issue of demolition of Bag Durbar to the streets and questioned the decision. Her cause was later joined by heritage lovers led by lawyer Sanjaya Adhikari.

Adhikari took this issue to his



Chanda Rana (Middle) Fighting for cause

by Pro-Public. Rana along with her groups fought tooth to nail to prevent the demolition with the authorities of Kathmandu Municipality.

After the matter started from Chanda Rana and reached up to the hand of senior advocate Prakash Mani Sharma and lawyer Sanjaya Adhikari, the court's recent verdict finally saved the neo-classic building.

"We Need To Assure Investors That Nepal Is Investment Friendly"

*As Nepal has been passing through a political crisis and facing severe economic challenges, former finance minister and leader of Nepali Congress **DR. RAM SHARAN MAHAT** spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on various contemporary issues. Excerpts:*

As Nepali Congress has suffered badly in the last few years failing to perform well in parliament and elections, don't you think time has come to change the leadership?

Nepali Congress has been facing several problems. Of course, the leaders are also responsible for all the debacles. However, several other factors are also responsible for it. NC has trailed in parliamentary elections due to unity of two major communist parties failing to manage internal squabbles and highlight the contribution made by our party to bring peace, managerial weakness and organizational weakness.

Despite the efforts of leaders like you, NC is yet to end factionalism and internal rivalry between Sher Bahadur Deuba, Ramchandra Poudel and others. Having started your political career almost at the same time with people at the top of party, don't you think your time has come to claim leadership?

Of course, Deuba and I started politics almost at the same period and I also went to prison. However, I have not decided about contesting the elections yet. I am not a self centered man. I am ready to assume the leadership in an appropriate time.

Don't you think this is right time to claim leadership?

My friends and well wishers have been advising me to claim leadership. I believe in work. Thus, I have not claimed leadership. I have to accept the fact that Deuba and Poudel had spent more time in prison than I did and I have accepted them as leaders. Also, I have avoided any unhealthy competition in the party and took steps to avoid intensifying the factionalism. If my leadership is necessary this time, I am ready to enter the contest. Looking at the current times, my opinion is that consensus is more necessary in the party.

As Nepali Congress has been facing several problems, particularly, intensifying of factional war, do you think revival of Nepali Congress is possible?

Revival of Nepali Congress is possible. Given the present state of the communist party government, Nepali Congress can come back in power. However, there is a need for the party to bury differences and factionalism. As you know, we have been suffering from factionalism. We need management.

What efforts have you been taking on your own?

I have been urging Party President Deuba to avoid promoting factionalism and internal rivalry. My only mission is to end factionalism and to unify the party.

Prime Minister KP. Oli led communist government has been claiming that they have drastically changed the economy, introduced social welfare schemes and new infrastructure projects like rail, shipping and new airports. How do you look at it?

Prime Minister Oli has been saying whatever he wants to. Rail, ship, airports, pension and so on. However, I can say that all his claims are all show with no substance. People are frustrated just by listening to his paragon. When Oli was elected prime minister, there was high hope among the common people. Hope has already faded from the mind of the people during his year in power. NC has a big opportunity to emerge as a replacement.

Along with Prime Minister Oli, Finance Minister Dr. Yubaraj Khatriwada is claiming that they will lure huge foreign investment. Enough for double digit growth from coming years. How do you look at it?

They have been preaching about all sorts of things but they have not really showed action. They are championing the same Foreign Direct Investment which they opposed while in opposition. Prime Minister Oli has been urging foreign investors to come to invest in Nepal. However, I have not seen genuine foreign investors willing to invest in Nepal.

Why is it so?

One need is to improve the quality of governance, change behavior and gain trust. So far, the government has done nothing to assure investors in changing laws and improving governance. Few years ago, Nepal held a similar summit and received commitments of billions of rupees for investment. However, no one showed up to for the actual investment. If you see the recent trend of FDI, the number of investors has further gone down. As the government is centralizing the power, investors are waiting and observing the situation.

The government has recently introduced number of bills like the FDI Act, Technology Transfer Act, Nepal Investment Board Act in the parliament to make Nepal friendly for FDI. How do you look at it?

The recent amendment on these acts will further complicate the situation for investors. The provisions of the new act are more confusing and complex for the investors. For instance, the government has given excessive power to Nepal Investment Board to decide on the FDI without improving its governance and capacity of the employers working in the board. We can lure foreign investors only through good governance, enhanced capacity of institutions and zero corruption.



Prime Minister Oli has been saying that he will link Nepal with north and south by rail, access to sea through ship and bigger infrastructures projects like road and airport. How do you look at it?

The Prime minister is selling his dream and making nonsense agendas like rail, ship, big airports and high ways. However, the government has not shown any serious interest to improve the existing infrastructures. The Prime Minister has never said anything on improving basic infrastructures and quality of governance. Instead of talking big, the prime minister should have focused on improvement of basic infrastructures, construction of roads. Nepal needs more quality roads, extension of existing airports not railway or river navigation. Instead of improving state of Tribhuwan International Airport, the prime minister wanted multi-billion dollar Nijgadh and other infrastructures. Having done no detailed feasibility study, PM Oli is only selling dreams and populist slogans.

Despite so many things, the government is able to achieve over 6 percent GDP in the last two years and prime minister KP. Sharma Oli is harping for double digit in coming years? How do you look at it?

The current state of growth has nothing to do with the programs of the government. There are several factors behind it. Acceleration of reconstruction activities, improvement of power supply, formation of provincial and local governance, good monsoon and progress in service sector due to remittances. Given all these indicators, Nepal can achieve 6-7 percent growth. However, our country still needs to take lot of initiatives and policy changes. Double digit growth can't be achieved just on the basis of one individual's wish. Prime Minister Oli is merely dreaming about the double digit growth instead of taking any initiative to materialize his target.

Do you mean there are no indication for high growth?

Yes. People are fed up with PM Oli's toll and populist promises who has been talking about rail and river navigation. They are merely nonsense. At a time when the government has done nothing to upgrade and improve basic infrastructures, the Prime Minister is just selling dreams.

If railway and navigation are cheapest means of transport, what is wrong to expand them?

I am not denying your facts. For Nepal, improvement and upgrade of surface transport should be a major priority. Similarly, there is an equal need to upgrade Tribhuwan International Airport. My suggestion is that the government should focus on improving existing infrastructures before launching new projects. The prime minister should first make Gautam Buddha International operational then, move on to Nijgadh. Instead of taking any technical feasibility study, the government is just selling dreams.

How do you see the economy?

Not going for macro level analysis, the export import ratio indicates bleak economic condition. During 1990s, the export ratio was just over 50 percent. Now, the ratio is much higher and the trade deficit is 600 to 700 percent. Export is drastically declining and import is swelling. The contribution of manufacturing sector in the national economy has declined. In 1990s, the contribution of manufacturing sector was 9 percent and now it is below 6 percent.

The government is fully backing investment summit, expecting to lure a huge private sector? How do you see the future?

Communists are experts in target setting and they never give any concentration to materializing them. So far as making commitments are concerned, investors will publicly announce their commitments. Given the current state of government when prime minister is centralizing power and cutting the role of private sector, I don't think any investors will put their money in such risky conditions. Two years ago, Nepal also organized a similar kind of summit and there were over 20 billion dollar commitments. However, none of them came to Nepal to materialize their commitments.

What does Nepal need to do to lure investors?

First of all, we need to assure investors that Nepal is investment friendly. For this, the government needs work to

INTERVIEW

enhance institutional capacity, promulgate investment friendly laws and regulations, make competent bureaucratic set up. However, the current situation is different.

How do you see the scenario?

There is excessive centralization and bureaucracy is politicized. New constitution has adopted a decentralized and federal system but the government is working for excessive centralization. For instance, Prime Minister's Office is controlling all the investment through Investment Board. It is reported that even investments of Rs.5 billion needs to go through the Investment Board. Ministry of Defense has tabled a National Security Council Bill giving power of mobilization of the army to the prime minister. All authorities have been centralized to the Prime Minister. This will create very dangerous situations.

Since the Prime Minister is the head of executive of House of Representatives, what is wrong with giving power to elected leader of the parliament?

The prime minister is an elected leader of House of Representatives and accountable to the people, does not mean that he should be given excessive power. The Prime Minister's role is to give directives and monitor progress. I don't think giving excessive centralization of power to Prime Minister will promote democracy and good governance. Excessive power centralization will only produce a democratically elected authoritarian ruler.

How do you see the financial activities?

The government is spending more on consumption and distribution. The constitution of the new building to the president and a guest house under prime minister are excessive use of financial resources. At a time, when the private sectors are operating many renowned hotel chains and hospitality centers professionally, there is no sense in the government running hotels. Constructions like these will drain money.

If the constitution has itself said that the aim of the country is to turn socialist, what is wrong to have centralization of power?

Socialism propounded by our constitution has nothing to do with classical socialism. The state cannot nationalize property and it cannot control rights. A socialism oriented state means launching programs to reduce poverty, uplift the poor, lower disparities and provide welfare schemes to elderly. Experiences of communist countries including China have shown that centralization of power cannot contribute for economic upliftment. By "turning socialist," our constitution intends to spend more money for poor and backward. Fiscal redistribution is necessary to uplift the poor.

How do you see the current level of revenue?

Our policies of past have changed the state of revenue collections. When we were in the government for the first time in 1994, our revenue was just 12 billion. Now, the government generates a revenue of over 500 billion. There are significant progress in health and education sectors. The World Economic Forum hailed Nepal's progress in human development and social sector. We have made these achievements in the period of political insatiability and violence.

What should be Nepal's priority now?

Nepal's first priority should be economic progress. Strengthening democracy, enhancing capacity of bureaucracy, strengthening institutions, laws and good governance. With the government of two thirds, the government has to launch



programs to make Nepal prosperous. However, the government has been going in the opposite direction instead.

How do you see the present state of the country?

For the first time, through new constitution, Nepal is exercising three tiers of government under the federal structures. All three tiers of government center, province and local level have been given full executive and legislative power. The Federal system is economically a very expensive for of government. Federalism is not a panacea because we have seen the splitting of Yugoslavia due to poor management.

How do you see the present constitution?

The current democratic constitution is a good constitution with federal structures. However, writing democratic constitution enough to establish democracy alone. Along with the constitution, strong institution and capable bureaucracy is also required. I always remember BP Koirala's statement regarding constitution. He used to say that the Soviet Union then, had a constitution with the highest volume with everything about the rights of people elections and democracy. However, the constitution gave birth to an authoritarian communist state. So far as United Kingdom is concerned, it does not have a written constitution. However, Britain has best democratic government in the world guaranteeing all democratic rights of citizens. This can also apply to us. We have written an inspirational constitution but it is very difficult to materialize.

During the finalization and promulgation of new constitution, Nepal's friends and well wishers from far and near suggested to make the constitution inclusive and functional.

Why are your party leaders in a hurry to promulgate the constitution?

I had also suggested our leaders to first, discuss all the clauses, words and context in the Constituent Assembly and take the advice of our friends to make the constitution inclusive. Honestly speaking, our leaders did not listen to me or anybody else. The Constitution of Nepal was passed hurriedly without any clause wise discussion in the Constituent Assembly. CA relied heavily on the subject committees' recommendations. All the CA members voted for the document without expressing their views. I haven't read all the clauses as well and we did everything in a hurry. This is the reason there are so many ambiguities surfacing in the process of implementation.

Maoism Revisited: A Brief Sketch Of Communist Party Of Nepal Led By Netra Bikram Chand

In response to a series of bomb blasts and kidnapping of a member of legislative assembly in Bajhang district recently, the Nepal government on March 12, 2019, proscribed the Netra Bikram Chand-led Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) by branding the same as a criminal group. The ban was imposed just 16 days before the second investment summit, scheduled for March 29-30 by sending a message to the domestic and external investors

that Nepal is safe for investment. The government took the decision based on security agencies reports which found that the CPN has stepped up its activities and moved beyond its "donation drive". In November 2018, the CPN top leaders had rejected dialogue offer of the High-Level Political Talks team formed under lawmaker Som Prasad Pandey. Earlier, to send a positive message to global investors, on March 8, the government signed an 11-point agreement with Coordinator of Alliance for Independent Madhes (AIM) and Free Madhes campaigner CK (Chandra Kant) Raut.

The Communist Party of Nepal also known as Chand alias Biplav faction was formed on November 24, 2014, after splitting from the Communist Party of Nepal (Revolutionary Maoist). Headed by the veteran Maoist leader Mohan Baidya, the party split over serious differences between Netra Bikram Chand and Baidya on "new political line" of the outfit. During the split, Chand was second in command in the Communist Party of Nepal (Revolutionary Maoist). Earlier, both Baidya and Chand had formed the Communist Party of Nepal (Revolutionary Maoist) after splitting away from the then Prachanda-led Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in June 2012. The Chand-led Communist Party is, therefore, an offshoot of the erstwhile CPN (Maoist Centre) that waged a decade-long insurgency.

The outfit's political line/strategy is 'new people's revolt (NPR)' and its objective is to replace the parliamentary supremacy with "people's government". The Party opposes the new constitution of Nepal. In this regard, the party's tactics will be unleashing the NPR to take the revolution further using the "people's war" as a foundation". The outfit's political document emphasizes going for another armed rebellion with the help of rural peasants and the urban working class.

However, there are occasions when the CPN-Chand leaders talk about complete or "total revolution", which is yet to be clarified by the party.

The party claims running a 'parallel government' in some undisclosed areas of Nepal. In a video message, Chand said the CPN has been in the process of forming a strong "People's Liberation Army". The party has also



BY NIHAR R NAYAK

warned to demolish the state and establish a new state structure.

It may be recalled that Chand rejected negotiation with the government panel, which was formed to negotiate with the rebel groups of Nepal in December 2018. The panel reportedly submitted its report to the government by noting that the government should deal with the CPN separately.

Organizational Structure

Nepal police sources observed that Netra Bikram Chand is General Secretary/chief of the outfit. The outfit has five polit-bureau members- Netra Bikram Chand, Khadga Prasad Biswakarma alias 'Prakand' (party spokesperson), Hemant Prakash Oli, Dharmendra Bastola and Santosha Budamagar.

Other prominent party leaders like Mohan Bahadur Karki, Dev Kumar Limbu, Uma Bhujel, Jitendra Narendra (son of Khadga Bahadur Biswakarma), and Basanta Gharti (a rebel leader) among others.

The CPN has formed three military divisions/commands and 17 bureaus both for political and military campaigning. The party claims that it has 11,000 combatants including around 7,000 ex-Maoist combatants, who were disqualified by the UN during the peace process between (2006-2013). Following are the commands:

Central Command- in charge-Hemant Prakash Oli alias Sudarsan
Eastern Command – in charge- Anil Sharma alias Birahi
Western Command- in charge- Dharmendra Bastola alias Kanchan. Deputy command in charge- Om Prakash Pun alias Nirman.

There are 17 bureaus under these three commands. The NCP has divided 75 Nepal districts into 17 bureaus. These bureaus are in charge of some districts. Following are the bureaus and their operational jurisdictions:

Kosi Bureau (jurisdiction- Sunsari, Bhojpur, Morang-Dhankuta)- in charge- Pushkar Shrestha
Mechi Bureau (jurisdiction- Jhapa, Ilam, Panchthar, Sankhuasabha, Taplejung, Terhathum)- in charge- Suman Limbu
Sagar-matha Bureau- (Jurisdiction – Khotang, Okhaldunga, Solukhumbu-Udaypur) –in charge- Dipesh Rai
Janakpur Bureau (jurisdiction- Dhanusha, Mahotari, Siraha, Saptari, Sarlahi, Sindhuli)- in charge- Sandhesh Patel
East Tamsaling Bureau (jurisdiction- Dolakha, Ramechhap, Sindhupalchowk, Kavre)- in charge- Nanda Bahadur Buda Magar
alias VijayNarayani Bureau (jurisdiction- Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Makwanpur, Chitwan)- in charge- Chet bahadur Pun
alias Chiran
West Tamsaling Bureau (jurisdiction- Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading)- in charge- Mohlal Chand alias Ad-

OPINION

harKathmandu Valley Bureau (jurisdiction- Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur)-in charge- Prajwal ShreshtaGandak Bureau (jurisdiction-Gorkha, Lamjung, Tanahun, Kaski, Manang, Mustang, Syangja)-in charge- Savitri Dura alias AsthaLumbini Bureau (jurisdiction- Nawalpur, Nawalparasi, Rupandehi, Kapilabastu, Palpa, Arghakhanchi, Gulmi)-in charge- Chandra Bahadur Chand alias BirjungDhaulagiri Bureau (jurisdiction- Myagdi, Baglung, Parbat, Salyan)- in charge- Dhurba GhimireRapti Bureau (Jurisdiction- Dang, Pyuthan, Rolpa, Rukum, East Rukum, Surkhet)- in charge- Kosh Bahadur BudaSeti Bureau (Jurisdiction- Achham, Doti, Bajura, Kailali, Bajhang)- in charge- Shankar Bahadur Khadka alias SikandarKarnali Bureau (jurisdiction- Dolpa, Humla, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu)- in charge- Khamba Buda alias Atm BisiBheri Bureau (jurisdiction-Banke, Bardiya, Dailekh, Jajorkot, Surkhet)- in charge- Bal Bahadur OliMahakali Bureau (jurisdiction-Darchula, Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Kanchanpur)- in charge- Ram Prasad TimilsinhaInternational Bureau- in charge- Dharmendra Bastola alias Kanchan.

The outfit has students, peasants, workers and women front organizations. Its student organization is called All Nepal National Independent Students' Union (Revolutionary). Chiranjibi Dhakal is chairman of the union. The outfit has a youth organization called National Volunteer Organisation and Youth Organisation of Nepal. The outfit reportedly holds People's Court in its stronghold areas.

Support base and geographical reach

School and college students, unemployed youths, ex-Maoist combatants, ethnic and marginalized groups, who are basically dissatisfied with the new constitution, form the major support base of this party.

The outfit has a pan-Nepal presence. However, out of 75 districts of Nepal, it has strong presence and support base in Dang, Pyuthan, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, Nawalparasi, Saptari, Kathmandu, Achham, Kanchanpur, Nuwakot, Gorkha, Kaski, Myagdi, Chitwan, Rolpa-Thabang region, Dhankuta, Bajura, Rautahat, Bajhang, Kavre and Morang-north region, which is considered as its eastern strategic base area.

Funding and arms sources

More than 90 per cent of the total funds are generated locally and through extortion. It is believed that some NGOs operating in the mid-western and upper Himalayan region pay security money to the outfit to ensure their smooth operations.

The outfit reportedly has around 700 old M-16 rifles, light machine guns, mining explosives and improvised explosives devices (IEDs). Some of its cadres are trained in producing pressure cooker, cylinder bomb and socket

bombs. Nepal Police sources say that the NCP used weapons, which were looted from the Rolpa barracks of the Nepali Army during the conflict in 2001.

External linkage

It is suspected that the CPN has fraternal and ideological linages with the Communist Party of India (Maoist).

Major incidents:

March 12, 2019: Nepal government outlawed the CPN.

March 8, 2019: The CPN claimed responsibility of bomb explosion in Basundhara, Kathmandu. No casualties were reported. However, one vehicle and building was damaged in the blast. In a separate incident, NCP cadres kidnapped a provincial assembly lawmaker Debaki Malla for seven hours in Bajhang district in Province 7.

March 7, 2019: The general strike called by the CPN affected daily lives in five districts.

February 22, 2019: One person died and two others injured during a series of arson attacks on Ncell infrastructure in various districts across the nation, including blasts near the gate of Ncell head office in Nakkhu, Lalitpur.

February 8, 2019: The CPN exploded three improvised explosive devices near the powerhouse of under construction Arun III Hydropower project. In a separate incident, millions of students—from pre-primary to university level—were affected as most of the academic institutions remained closed due to a strike called by the student wing of the CPN. This was the sixth strike in the current

academic session by the union.

April 30, 2018- The CPN detonated an IED at the office of Arun-III Hydropower Project in Sankhuwasabha district. A few months earlier, the outfit had twice detonated IEDs at the project's powerhouse at Diding village in Chinchila Rural Municipality.

April 17, 2018: The CPN detonated a pressure cooker bomb near the temporary Indian Embassy field office in Biratnagar district.

February 24, 2018: The party detonated pressure-cooker bombs targeting Ncell towers in Chitwan, Rolpa, Nuwakot and Dhankuta districts.

October 23, 2017: The CPN strongly opposed the then parliamentary and provincial elections scheduled on November 26 and December 7.

[Compiled from Open Source English and Nepalese Language Media]

The author is a DR. NIHAR R. NAYAK, Research Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

Courtesy: Society For The Study of Peace and Conflict (SSPC)



CITIZENSHIP ROW

Tale Of Two Citizens

Nepal is in the process of bringing another citizenship act which aims to distribute citizenship certificates to all Nepali citizens. However, the debates in parliament have been directed to making the process harder. As Nationalism and citizenship certificates have nothing to do with each other, members of the communist party added many restrictions and hurdles to providing people citizenships in the name of protecting nationalism.

By KESHAB POUDEL

For centuries, families of Krishna Bisku, 73, a person of the Santhal Community, have been living in the southern parts of Jhapa. Bisku, now a resident of Sadakbari, Jhapa Rural Municipality, Ward No 2 Jhapa is an old member of the Santhal community. The Santhals are indigenous people living in the eastern parts of Nepal and India as hunters and gatherers.

“The lands here had dense forests with varied wildlife including tigers and elephants. We shifted places along the Kankai river till the 1970s. After the people from the hill migrated here and cleared the forest lands, our communities including the Dhimal and Rajbanshi were forced to move closer to bank of Kankai,” recalled Bisku. “Since we roamed the forest lands, landownership certificates and

citizenship was out of question. My father died without documents and I don’t have documents as well because I didn’t inherit any from my father.”

Although Bisku was one of the sons of the soil, the Nepali state does not recognize him and his attachment with Nepali land because he does not have papers to prove to them that he is Nepali as prescribed by the law. By virtue of his birth, he is a Nepali Citizen but he does not have an official citizenship certificate.

However clever settlers who came to the land less than five decades ago are now landlords enjoying all the privileges of the state because they had some knowledge about laws. However, thousands of people like Bisku, who were born and raised here, have been living like outsiders. “The new

settlers registered banks of the Mai and other rivers as theirs. We don’t have any place to live anymore,” said Bisku, who does not know about the debate in Kathmandu’s Parliament.

Bisku is not alone, there are many other Dhimals, Santhals and Rajbanshis who do not have citizenships and land owner certificates. Since they do not have certificates, they are deprived from basic services provided by the state for citizenship owners.

Even though Bisku and tens of thousands of other Nepalis have been facing difficulties regarding their identities the Nepalese parliament does not show any concerns and doesn’t bother writing clauses that could make the process easier for people like Bisku.

In the name of nationalism, a group of people lobbying in the par-



liament are making the act more rigid than prescribed in the constitution. This group of parliamentarians' view is; weakening the law will pave way for more people from the southern border enter Nepal.

"Nepal being overwhelmed by foreigners if the government adopts a liberal citizenship regime is an unnecessary thought. Why would people come to Nepal? People migrate either for opportunities or because of war. If Nepal had opportunities, four million Nepalis would not have gone to foreign countries as laborers. Many Nepalis work in India as well. So I don't see India's bhanjas and bhanjis (newphes and nieces) swamping Nepal," said Anup Raj Sharma, Chairman of Nepal Human Rights Commission to The Himalayan Times.

Nepal has two classes of citizens; one class is the people who have citizenship certificates which gives the access to all privileges provided by the state and the other class is deprived of all the rights and privileges of the

country due to the lack of an authentic citizenship.

Although the Dalit and indigenous communities of the southern plains are marginalized, they have been living in Nepalese territory for generations. Despite this, they are denied of citizenship certificates, which is mandatory for citizens to get basic services provided by the state. Due to the lack of a citizenship, these people have been living in miserable conditions.

"Ten years ago, a team had come to us but they did not issue our certificates because we did not have landownership certificates," said Bishku, a Santhal. Although Bishku's name is in the voter's list, he can't claim his citizenship and landownership.

Hem Ram Sahali, 55, has also a similar story to tell. Living in the same area, Sahali has no citizenship and landownership certificates either. "In my own land, I am living as a foreigner without access to the government's services. "This is our ancestor's land. Migrants from the hills, including Brahmin, Rai, Limbu and migrants from India snatched our land and we are landless."

Sadhana Rishidev of Maidhar Jhapa has a citizenship certificate issued on the basis of birth. Under this category of citizenship however, her offspring cannot be

given a Nepali citizenship as per constitutional and legal provisions.

"We have been living in Maidhar for long but we don't have a Nepali citizenship certificate. A few years ago, a high level team visited and distributed citizenship certificates to us and many others. We were happy after being given a citizenship certificate. Now, the officials say that the current act restricts our offspring from having a citizenship. My granddaughter passed the 12th standard and she wanted to apply for a government job but she does not have the

citizenship certificate," said Rishidev. "If my granddaughter, who was born here and grew up in this country cannot get a citizenship, what is the use of my citizenship certificate?"

Majority of residents of a Mushar settlement of Lalbandi Municipality, Ward No 5, of Sarlahi District, do not have a citizenship certificate as well. Even though they have been living here in Nepal for generations the residents aren't allowed to have a citizenship.

Although twenty-two year old Hema Majhi, a mother of two, is a testimony to the transformation in Lalbandi, her family life remains the same. Along with Majhi, other neighbors have been living in a public land near the river and annually they have to shift from places to escape flood.

Jakshi Jhangar, 45, a resident of Naharatole of Rangeli Municipality, Ward No 2, does not own a citizenship certificate and land despite living there for decades.

"I have visited the local ward several times but they always say that my evidences are not enough for me to claim a citizenship certificate. I don't know what the officials want as we were born and raised here," asked Jhangar.

Nepal's civil service and the people working under it are biased and they can't see the poor situation



of these voiceless marginalized communities. “As the state is biased against particular regions and groups, there are over 4 million people living without a citizenship certificate,” said Sarbendranath Shukla leader of Rashtriya Janta Party Nepal. Representatives of the parliament are conspiring against stateless people again.”

Lawyers argue that one cannot be declared stateless just by the fact that he or she has not secured a citizenship certificate. Everyone born in Nepal with the commencement of Constitution of Nepal 2019 can claim a domicile citizenship certificate.

“The problem with citizenship certificates in Nepal is that the officials link citizenship certificate with land-ownership. A landless person can be a citizen of Nepal if he was born at the time of commencement of constitution of Nepal 1961,” said former Attorney General Badri Bahadur Karki. “It is a misunderstanding and can be regarded as a misinterpretation of the law and



“The central government has to take the decision. There is no other way.”

According to a survey report, there are 52,000 Santhal and 234,358 Mushar families living in 22 districts of Terai. For instance, the Mushar population is concentrated in eight districts of eastern Nepal and Santhal and Rajbanshi are in Jhapa and Morang.

Provisions Related To Citizenship

The Constitution of Nepal and Citizenship Act 2063 and Nepal Citizenship Regulations 2063 have made provisions and processes for obtaining the citizenship of Nepal.

According to the Constitution, the people who have obtained citizenship of Nepal at the time of commencement of this Constitution and who are qualified to obtain

citizenship in accordance with this part shall be the citizens of Nepal.

The following person, who has his or her permanent domicile in Nepal at the time of commencement of this Constitution shall be the citizen of Nepal by descent, a person who has obtained the citizenship of Nepal by descent prior to the commencement of this Constitution, a person whose father or mother was a citizen of Nepal

at his or her birth.

A child of a citizen having obtained the citizenship of Nepal by birth prior to the commencement of Nepal shall and upon attaining maturity, can acquire the citizenship of Nepal by descent if the child’s father and mother both are citizens of Nepal.

Every minor who is found within Nepal and the whereabouts of whose father and mother are not known shall, until the father or the mother of the child is traced, be a citizen of Nepal by descent.

A person who is born in Nepal from a woman who is a citizen of Nepal and has resided in Nepal and whose father is not traced shall be provided with the citizenship of Nepal by descent.

Any person born before 2046 Chaitra 31, Bikram Sambat (i.e. 13, April, 1990 A.D.) within the territory of Nepal and having domiciled permanently in Nepal shall be deemed a citizen of Nepal by birth.

The new Constitution of Nepal, though considered more progressive than the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 in terms of women’s rights, is still discriminatory on citizenship provisions that contradict each other and restricts mother’s right to confer citizenship to their children independently.

Since the first citizenship Act was enacted on May 8, 1952, laying down formal criteria for the qualifications of becoming a Nepali citizen, four constitutions and several acts have changed. However, large numbers of



constitution. This issue is also politicized too much.”

“We know Santhals are the sons of the soil and they have been living here for centuries. Since there is an administrative risk involved, nobody is willing to recommend the idea to Mushars and Santhals even though they don’t need legal documents anymore,” said Raj Kumar Yadav, ward chair of Jhapa Rural Municipality-1.

people are yet to acquire their citizenship certificates.

The Nepal Citizenship Act, 1952 remained effective even after the promulgation of the Constitution of 1959. With the dissolution of the multi-party system and the introduction of the Panchayat regime in 1963, another constitution was promulgated in the same year. Under the constitution, the law on citizenship came in the form of the Nepal Citizenship Ordinance in December 15, 1963 repealing the previous Act of 1952.

The same Ordinance was adopted in February 28, 1964 as the Nepal Citizenship Act, 1964. This Act made some drastic changes in the citizenship law of Nepal. Citizenship by descent could only be acquired by people whose fathers were Nepali citizens at the time of the child's birth.

Despite the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1990, citizenship Act of 1964 was retained by Constitution of 1990. However, the Interim Constitution 2007 dropped the provisions of the Act.

With almost five million people without citizenship certificates, Citizenship Certificates remain a thorny issue. The Supreme Court of Nepal has made number of landmark decisions on citizenship directing to the Government of Nepal especially the Ministry of Home Affairs and District Administration Offices to comply with

sions of the Supreme Court and international conventions like International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

Article 10(1) of the Constitution of Nepal 2015 recognized acquisition of citizenship as a right of all Nepali citizens and Article 10(2) states that there will be a single federal citizenship with provincial identity. However, the meaning of "citizens" and "people having citizenships" is unclear.

Children Without Father

Along with indigenous and marginalized population, large number of children with single mothers have not obtained their citizenship certificates. Although the constitution states that the children of unidentified fathers may obtain citizenship through their mothers, there are thousands of children living without citizenships.

"We have a very clear concept that there should not be any discrimination between

men and women. In the citizenship law however, there discrimination against women. If a person can im-



Waiting For Citizenship Certificate

mediately acquire citizenship through their father, why can't they get citizenships through their mother? Why is the declaration of a child's father compulsory? The constitution does not say so, but the act creates hurdles. So mindset of the people should change, but mindsets will only change if the government interprets the constitution correctly and does not bring acts that contradict constitution," said NHRC chair Sharma to The Himalayan Times.

Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD) has been fighting for decades to establish citizenship rights. "Although the constitution said that if a father is a foreign citizen, the child becomes eligible for naturalization. In practice, many single women face difficulties registering their children as citizens by descent," said a report of FWLD.

The Supreme Court ruled that government authorities must not deny registration of birth and citizenship of children whose mothers and fathers cannot be traced.

An estimated 5.4 million individuals (24 per cent of the population aged 16 years and above lack citizenship documentation in Nepal, said the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 released by the US Department.

As the bill on citizenship is in debate in the parliament, the time to provide genuine Nepali citizenship certificates without any discrimination and without making it an issue of nationalism has come.



the provisions on citizenship.

Citizenship laws are yet to be revised to comply with the deci-

MeToo And All That

The effect of the MeToo movement, which started in USA almost two years ago with the Hollywood Mogul Harvey Weinstein in October 2017, is now worldwide. One result of hashtags on social media is that it has recently become almost universal. It started in various parts of India and re-reached Hollywood in October 2018 and then on to Nepal. The harassment of women is not new but what brought it to the forefront was a news report that a Maths teacher at a Lalitpur Secondary School had been sexually abusing young girls for decades. Reports from other schools followed. The trafficking of women to the red light areas of Indian cities has been existent for long. Because of new regulations the process is changing to new routes as through Myanmar. It has been known for ages that families resorted to such measures because of poverty. Sadly this is not restricted to Nepal but also in many countries because of poor economy. Thankfully Maiti Nepal is active against this.

Another happening in Nepal is that young girls and even mothers undergoing menstruation are made to spend four days in chaupaddi huts, where some have even died is inhuman. It is not surprising therefore to imagine that many uneducated persons in rural areas of the country rape minor girls and even kill them. What needs to be done to do away with such practices in Nepal?

The saga of women's rights has a long history. New Zealand was the first country to grant women the right to vote as early as 1893. British Suffragette Emily Pankhurst started her movement in 1903 but the right to vote was first given to women over 30 years, only in 1918 following the end of World War I. A century having passed, there is now 32% representation in a parliament of 650. Surprisingly women in Switzerland only got the right to vote in Federal elections as late as 1971!

Plight of women exists in many Muslim countries worldwide. Women are made to wear burkas so that males may not ogle at them. Fine, but why is it that the colour of women's burkas is black or brown which absorbs the sun's heat whilst the dress of the man is white which reflects the sun's heat and does not cause discomfort. Is this not discriminatory?

A recent book "Good and Mad" by Rebecca Traister is creating ripples in the USA. The author feels that there has been some sort of uprising of women against the bossing by males every fifty years. She has referred to Rosa Parks's action of 1955 when she refused to vacate her seat in a bus. Also to Betty Friedan, whose book 'The Female Mystique' had started a wave of feminism in the USA. Now it is almost a "Hear me Roar" outcry by the women. Social structure is currently unfavourable to women in the USA.

Many feel that all this has occurred in USA because of the general trend for women there to fight for their rights. There are now a record number of 171 women in the US



BY HEMANG DIXIT

Congress. The entire newly elected members to Congress were dressed in white and created a white front in the visuals of the President Trump's State of the Union Address. The hope is that there will be still more women members following the next elections in 2020.

In Nepal this journey may be stated to have started with the Bhojpur born Yogmaya Neupane, who was frustrated with the then existing Nepali society. Her fight was against child marriage, and various other wills in connection with which she made a plea to PM Joodha Shumsher in 1936. Getting no

response she together with 66 followers committed mass suicide in the Arun river.

Mangala Devi Singh of Nepal Mahila Sangh was a lady who strove for women's rights in the Panchayat era. Nanimaiya Dahal became a seven day wonder against the then existing Nepali governance. Subsequent women leaders of Nepal such as Sailaja Acharya and Sahana Pradhan were also prominent but have not left behind much heritage. Though President Bidya Devi Bhandari, House Speaker Onsari Gharti Magar and Chief Justice Sushila Karki have all reached apex positions the public reaction to their feats varies in the population. The search for Nepal loving women leaders is still on.

In retrospect however one must note the fact that women have had a special place in our religious thinking. A large number of girls in various towns of Nepal have been Kumaris and worshipped, albeit for a number of years as deities. In former days, following menstruation they became almost outcasts – without education and no chance of marriage as it was believed to bring bad luck. Is this the reason that the chhaupadi practice still prevails in Nepal? Our annual festivals of Dasain and Basanta Panchami are homage to female Goddesses. A point to note is that the temples to the different female deities are scattered all over the country.

Womens's Day celebrations have become a part of Nepali life but one has to remember that Teej, aka a festival for the women in certain sections of Nepali society has existed over the centuries. This year's Nari Divas has come and gone, but what has been achieved.

The rapes and murders of teenage girls is still reaching greater heights day by day. One wonders at the number of incest cases and rapes by relatives that go unreported. Is this moral turpitude, a by-product of modern times? In terms of women's rights there have been demonstrations in cities of Nepal. Young girls are asking – "Womb is mine. Whose child is it" in connection with the fact that the law on citizenship, on the basis of one's mother is still to be passed. Women parliamentarians have still to fight for other issues as abortion, maternity leave, child benefits and equal pay.

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ENERGY

UPPER TAMAKOSI

Right Track

With the announcement of the new scheme to lure public investment in hydropower, the recent news that Upper Tamakosi will complete by November gives good a message

By A CORRESPONDENT

After achieving major breakthrough dispatching all penstock pipes in the project sites, Ministry of Energy and Nepal Electricity Authority's officials have announced a new working schedule to complete the 456 MW Upper Tamakosi Project before November 2018.

With the recent visit of Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Barsha Man Pun, NEA'S Managing Director Kul Man Ghising at Gonger, Ministry directed to hold a high-level meeting every month in the project site to review the progress.

MD of NEA and chairman of Upper Tamakosi Hydropower Ltd Kul Man Ghising will hold a monthly review meeting with management of the project, contractor companies and consultants. The meeting will review the progress of the project and solve problems that have surfaced in the process of construction.

Minister of Energy, Water Resource and Irrigation Barshaman Pun directed authorities to complete the construction of 456 MW Upper Tamakosi by November.

Instructing the concerned officials at the project site in Dolkha, Minister Pun stressed the need to complete this national priority project in time. Minister Pun also inspected dam site, lower and upper Penstock installation sites. He spent more than three hours meeting technicians and officials.

He talked with project's chief executive officer Bigyan Shrestha. Minister Pun has made it clear that the government and Nepal Electricity Authority will facilitate to complete the project in time.

Managing Director Kul Man Ghising also visited the sites along with minister Pun to take stock of the project. Minister Pun has made it clear that they are not allowed to make any excuse and no more time extension will be provided. "We all need to go together to complete

the project working day and night," said Minister Pun.

During the site visit, he also held different rounds of meeting with project officials and contractors. During the meeting, contractors have expressed their commitment to complete the project as per the schedule.

"After completion of Tamakosi, Nepal's economy will see drastic change. Thus, the project officials need to work in time," said Minister Pun. "There are concerns all over the country over the completion of national priority project."

Chief Executive Officer Bigyan Prasad Shrestha said that the earthquake, damage by landslides, disruption of supply of petroleum products, construction materials, due to Madhesh Agitation, change of design, weakness of hydro mechanical contractor of lot 2 have delayed the project.

Although the project was supposed to be completed in 2073/074, and has already revised once with the deadline of 2075-076, it was delayed due to contractor of lot 2. Now, the project is undergoing its work to generate electricity by December 31, 2019 operation of one 76 MW Unit.

After the completion of the transportation of penstock pipe, one of the most difficult tasks of the project has been completed. Under the lot 2 of the project, five meter long 74 pieces of pipe, which will be used in lower penstock, has already reached the project site in Gonger.

Following months of delay, Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited (UTHL) requested the Indian contractor

to reassign the crucial task of installing the penstock pipes to Austrian firm Andritz Hydro.

With the request of UTHL, Texamo and Andritz signed a tripartite agreement in January, 2019 under which the Indian firm subcontracted the penstock installation part of the job to the Austrian company.

Immediately after signing the pact, Andritz mobilized workers at the project site and construction work resumed.



"Andritz Hydro has transported all the pipes and equipment to the project site and started installation work," said Bigyan Prasad Shrestha, project chief of Upper Tamakoshi. "We are on track to meet the completion deadline of November set by the government."

The penstock pipe conveys water from the reservoir to the turbines to generate electricity, and fitting the pipes is considered to be one of the most challenging tasks of the hydro-mechanical component.

At a time when delays in the execution of the hydro-mechanical component threatened to push back the completion date of the project, the reaching of all penstock pipes gives hope that the project will start generation in time.

Work had halted for months at the construction site of the 456 MW scheme because the Indian contractor for the hydro-mechanical component, Texamo Railway Engineering, lacked expertise to implement the complex task.

The project has faced cost overruns due to delays. It was initially planned to be built at a cost of Rs. 35 billion, but the final bill is now expected to reach Rs. 70 billion, if interest is added. Installing 372 penstock pipes in lower the shaft is regarded as a very difficult task.

Spokesperson of the project Dr. Ganesh Prasad Neupane told Gorkhapatra daily that the pipes were stored in Sunkoshi Power House in Sindhupalchok for long periods.

Out of 732 meter, Texamo has been going itself. Installation of turbine, generator has already been completed in underground power generation house. Similarly, the progress of concrete at dam site and concrete lining at main tunnel is 99.6 and 53.5 percent respectively.

Transmission line construction is also almost complete with 85 percent progress.

Interestingly, the project secured 31 billion loaned and paying 20 billion interest. The estimated cost of the projects was set 35.29 billion excluding interest rate during the construction period.

It is estimated that the project interest during construction period was Rs.13.22 billion and the total cost estimated was 48.86 billion. During the project inspection time, one dollar was equivalent to Rs. 97.6 .

Now the revised estimated cost of the construction of project is Rs.49.29 billion (Except of Interest). The interest of construction period will be 19.84 billion and the total cost of the project will be Rs.69.59 billion.

The project has already dispersed Rs.44.07 billion. The project has loss Rs.7 and 5 billion due to fluctuation in



dollar. The cost escalated because of the earthquake, destruction of tunnel roads and redesign of tunnel and dam. The project has constructed 360 meter tunnel roads to reach dam sites from Gonger.

For the project, the Employee Provident Fund contributed Rs.10 billion, Nepal Telecom contributed 10 Billion, Citizenship Investment Fund, Nepal Telecom and Insurance Company invested 2 billion each. Nepal government invested the remaining 11.08 billion.

Although the project has delayed due to unavoidable natural disasters and supply disruptions escalating the costs, this is going to be a first major project of this size constructed mobilising Nepal's internal resources.

पसिनाको मूल्य महिलाको अधिकार, पहिचानसहितको पहुँच दीर्घकालीन आधार ।



नेपाल सरकार
सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मन्त्रालय
सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग

Gandak River Navigation In Retrospect: Gandak Navigation Canal

Complete disruption to navigation on the Gandak River is anticipated in the wake of the operation at full capacity of the Gandak Irrigation Project, which has been implemented according to the Gandak River Treaty, 1959 signed between Nepal and India allocating almost the entire non monsoon season flow for irrigation.

The Gandak River was navigable by country crafts from the time immemorial. The river had provided principle means of communication in the area traversed by it. The Joint Steamer Company providing navigation services on the Ganges had even conducted survey during the last years of the British rule with the view to extend their services on the Gandak River.

At one point even the provincial government of Bihar had considered making one of the two Gandak main irrigation canals navigable as an alternative to the river course navigation. Obviously, this is now the only recourse to save the Gandak navigation unless both countries agree to take drastic measure to do away with the Gandak Treaty.

Physical Features

The River Gandak after passing through the Deoghat flows in a succession of rapids and pools until it reaches Tribeni. Passing Tribeni, the river traverses a distance of about 310 kms before it empties into the Ganges at Hajipur, opposite Patna.

The Gandak River becomes much wider after debouching into the plains at Tribeni, where it acquires the characteristics of a deltaic river. Except for four rapids at Damran, Narasahi, Thari and Patlahwa between Tribeni and Bagaha where there are boulders and shingles the bed of the river in most of its course down Tribeni is sandy.

Pre-Gandak Project Status
The Gandak River had always been navigable throughout the years by country boats from the confluence with the Ganges up to the Tribeni in Nepal. It was a very important channel of trade of this area even in the early days of the British rule and the transport on this river can be traced back to 1700 AD.

From the view point of navigation the Gandak waterway can be divided into the following four sections. Deoghat-Tribeni Section (78 km), Tribeni-Bagaha Section (50 km), Bagaha-Mallahi Section, Mallahi-Confluence.

A study conducted by the NCAER (National Council of Applied Economic Research) in 1963 indicates that the total annual traffic at that time at Tribeni and upstream from Tribeni was about 20,000 tons. This reach is navigable for about eight months in a year. Boats of only two tons capacity ply in this area.

The volume of the traffic on Tribeni-Bagaha sector, excluding the appreciable quantities of boulders and shingles picked up from the river bed, according to NCAER study aggregates to about 20,000 tons. Boats up to 15 tons capacity play in this section.

Country crafts up to 20 tons capacity used to ply on



BY DR. AB THAPA

Bagaha-Mallahi section.

The volume of traffic on Mallahi-Confluence Section according to NCAER study was about 40,000 tons. Country crafts with capacity of 20 tons or more used to ply. All the boats up and down the river had to stop for some time near the railway bridge at Hajipur for lowering and raising their masts and sails.

Joint Steamer Companies' Surveys

Until the advent of the railways and road transport, the Gandak supplied the principal means of communication in the area traversed by it. In spite of the introduction of alternative mode of surface transportation, a sizeable traffic continued to exist on the Gandak River. So the Government of India had shown in past considerable interest in developing Gandak waterway for navigation.

The Joint Steamer Companies operating on the Ganges were providing services for very long time before the complete closure of such services in 1950s. They were operating feeder services on the lower reaches of the Karnali River (known as Gogra in India) also. However, there was no feeder service on the Gandak to link with the Joint Steamer Navigation Services on the Ganges. They had carried out surveys on the Gandak River during 1935, 1941 and 1946 with a view to extend their services on the Gandak upto Sohansi Ghat and their conclusions were:

In 1935 Survey: *So far as the Gandak River is concerned a service can be inaugurated with probable modification in running periods depending on seasonal conditions for bridge headways at Hajipur according to type of vessels used.*

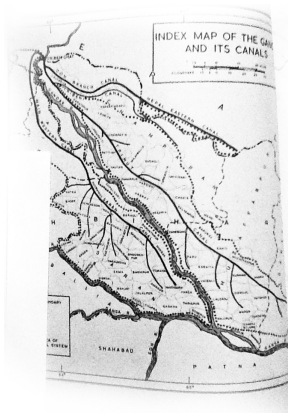
In 1941 Survey: *Seen during the half flood period, the Gandak appeared navigable though the key shoals at Anche, Sattar Ghat would require careful watching and bandalling.*

In 1946 Survey: *Gandak is as easy to navigate during the dry season as the Ganga and the Gogra above Patna, where the depths of three feet are frequently registered in various shoals which are kept navigable by bandalling.*

The Govt. of India's Survey

The Government of India also had carried out the hydrographic surveys of the Gandak River to investigate the possibilities of developing inland water transport. The Central Water and Power Commission had done the survey works. The study covered the stretch of the Gandak River between Bagaha and its confluence at the Ganges.





In April 1950 Survey: *This low water survey recorded 40 shoals below 3 feet.*

In December 1957 Survey: *During this mid-water survey the condition of the river was found to be comparatively better. In this survey only 3 shoals under 3 feet, 3 shoals between 3-4 feet and 13 shoals between 4-5 feet were recorded. During this*

survey a shoal of 2 feet was recorded at the mouth of the river at the Ganges. This shoal is created by shallow depth due to sand deposit.

However, nothing came out of those surveys. The service on the Gandak had always been by country crafts, provided by a large number of boat-owners and boatmen from Patna without any coordination with the Joint Steamer Company's services.

The UNDP Supported Nepalese Study (1967)

The main objective of the study was to find out the possibility of developing water transport from the nearest port to terminal points inside Nepal. All three major rivers the Karnali, the Gandak and the Kosi were investigated. The study team recommended to give priority to the Gandak River for early development because at that time the Gandak River had sufficient water for developing water transportation and the location of this river was favourable for effectively serving the whole country.

Impediments to Navigation

There are several engineering works on the Gandak River at present. Some of them were there since a long time. They are old and new railway bridges with low clearance above the high water level at Hajipur. They are serious impediment to navigation development on the Gandak River. But of all such impediments, the Gandak Project at Bhaisalotten is the most serious and it can preclude the possibility of developing in future navigation on the Gandak.

An agreement between HMG Nepal and the Govt. of India on Gandak Project was signed on December 4, 1959. This agreement has been amended and the revised agreement was signed on April 30, 1964. The Gandak Project comprises of a barrage and the canals for irrigation and power generation.

Gandak Barrage and Canals

A 835 m long barrage has been built across the Gandak River at Bhaisaloten. About half the length of the barrage is in Nepal and the other half in Indian territory. The barrage blocks the waterway. The navigation was going to be blocked. But according to the Gandak Agreement the Government of India would have to provide locking arrangements for facilitating the riverine traffic across the barrage free from payment of any tolls. It was proposed by India to provide lock with a width of only 6.1 metres. The UNDP supported Nepal's study had pointed out that the lock width should at least be 15.25 metres.

There are two main canals. They are main western canal and main eastern canal with head discharge of 15,000 cusecs and 14,140 cusecs respectively primarily for irrigation purposes. A very large volume of water is needed to irrigate lands within the total command area of the Gandak Project. During the rainy season the water demand for irrigation will not be too heavy.

The demand increases when the rains stop. Ultimately in dry season months the river would even become completely dry. In this context the question of continuity of navigation becomes a crucial issue. If this problem is not properly resolved then the navigation would not only become difficult but would be precluded for ever.

Treaty Allocated Flow for Irrigation

The monthly flows of the Gandak river allocated for irrigation by the Treaty and the actual river flow for the year 1963 is given below:

Month	Treaty Allocated flow in Cumecs	Actual flow in Cumecs for 1973
January	325	259
February	283	201
March	272	195
April	286	259
May	458	408
June	711	570
July	821	1920
August	818	3070
Sept.	818	2440
October	767	1480
November	688	743
December	558	463

Bihar Government and Canal Navigation

The Gandak had always been a waterway of great importance for Bihar as well as Nepal. It was apprehended that this important waterway was going to be adversely affected by a barrage cum road to be built across this river near Bhaisaloten with canals on either side for irrigation. So immediately after the sanctioning of this project by the Govt. of India for the construction, the Bihar Government requested the National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi to conduct a study on Gandak to determine the extent of river conservancy work that would be required for preserving the navigation potential of this river. Originally the proposed study included the economics of inland navigation on the Gandak vis-a-vis the Gandak canals. However, at a later date the National Council was informed to drop the inland navigation vis-a-vis the Gandak canals study.

Gandak Canal Navigation

The conversion of one of the two main Gandak canals into a irrigation cum navigation canal (including power generation component if feasible) is the only recourse to save the Gandak navigation. The proposed modification could open a relatively deep waterway route for vessels on a par with the Patna-Faracca sector Ganges waterway, which would be conducive to great reduction in transportation cost. Thus this waterway would have helped to herald completely a new era of development by facilitating trade and industrialization in North-West Bihar, Eastern UP and Western Nepal.

Ref:

- (1) *Inland Waterways for Nepal: Dr. AB Thapa Govt. of Nepal, 1967*
- (2) *Traffic Survey of the Gandak River: National Council of Applied Economic Research New Delhi, January, 1964*

Sixty Years In Nepal

British Council Celebrates Sixty Years In Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when Nepal was in isolation from the world with very few access to books and global information, British Council came as an institution of light to hundreds of people in Kathmandu.

Dr. D. Snellgrove, Tibetan lecturer at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London (SOAS), wrote a report on Nepal in May 1959 to L. Kitchingha, FCO Director Far East Department, recommending that a British Council Representative should be established in Nepal.

He wrote that the Nepalese ‘need to understand the implications and advantages of all foreign assistance now being offered to them, so that they may begin to take a responsible and guiding interest in

various projects’....[and that British advisers need to]....’have an active interest in all things Nepalese and should be prepared to stay long enough to know the country well.’ British Council Nepal Established starting with a library at New Road and later moved to Kantipath.

Until its closure in 2000, the British Council libraries served as important social meeting and cultural convening spaces. According to British Council, first British Council Representative, who is Cultural Attaché at the British Embassy, W. Lynndon Clough. In-Service Teacher Training in English language provided in partnership with the Ministry of Education at Trichandra College.

Although many things changed in Service Teacher Training (English

Language, pedagogy, methodology, leadership etc.) for state teachers, the partnership with Ministry of Education has continued every year for all 60 years.

Similarly, Ambica Shrestha partnered with the British Council to train young women as secretaries in Nepal which led to the start of an industry that did not exist before. British Council supported Ambica and others to establish the Britain Nepal Society. She went on later to become the owner of heritage hotel Dwarika’s and led light of heritage conservation in Nepal.

“Over these 60 years, the British Council has come a long way from library to teachers’ training to building cultural relations and edu-



cational opportunities in Nepal,” said British Ambassador Richard Morris.

Addressing a program to celebrate sixty years of establishment of British Council in Nepal ambassador Morris said, “it has made a rich and wide range of impact by supporting Nepalese women to tell their stories, become true inspirations and help people understand each other better. Thank you to the British Council for their positive contributions in Nepal.”

Sixty years ago, the British Council was established in Nepal with the first British library, to build friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of Nepal and the UK. Sixty years later, it has touched millions of lives through working with people and institutions from the education, language, skills, arts and youth sectors in Nepal –working to build trust between the people of Nepal and the people of the UK.

Nepal and the UK have a rich and complex relationship that dates back over 200 years, when Nepal chose the UK as the first country to establish diplomatic relations with. This relationship is built upon the active and positive contributions of Nepalis in both the UK and in Nepal.

Nepalis have been travelling to the UK for a variety of reasons for centuries. The first Nepali widely considered to set foot in the UK was Nepal’s Prime Minister Jang Bahadur Rana, who visited Britain and France in 1850, and met Queen Victoria. There is also the visit of the Nepali soldier Motilal Singh, who wrote the July 1850 edition of the New Monthly Magazine the article, ‘Some Accounts of Nepalese in London’.

Travelers and people at the interface of borders have and continued to be active members of both British and the Nepali society, and as



Ambica Shrestha

they navigate diverse cultural influences and expectations, they enrich British and Nepali society alike. Nepal has one of the most extraordinary histories, full of wondrous culture, and only in recent history has it experienced a civil war, a royal massacre, an earthquake of major magnitude, a border blockade and the promulgation of its Constitution.

It is the latter and the transition to federalism that we look forward to, supporting the Government of Nepal and its peoples with technical assistance and cultural relations programs as it navigates this historic process. On a more modest level, our celebration of 60 years in Nepal and our excitement of another 60 years to come is only really possible through the journeys, achievements and contributions of these Nepalis at the interface.

All Nepali citizens who have been touched by the UK through the British Council in turn have made significant contributions to Nepali society – some through civil society and services to the Government of Nepal, some in business and public institutions, especially universities, and some in the arts. Many of them are pioneers, all of them are cultural

leaders in their own right.

As the UK and Nepal continue their journey together, the British Council is proud to be a major part of this journey. We look forward to developing even closer cultural ties and friendly knowledge between Nepal and the UK in years to come.

Saurav Dhakal, one of the climate champions from 2010 said, “I got involved with the British Council as the International Climate Champion and had the opportunity to be a part of the Great Himalayan Trail Smart Celebrity Trek in 2012. I traveled from eastern to western Nepal and learned so much about the local communities. It inspired me to know more about the local people so, with my team, we started to train local people to use mobile phones and capture their stories. We trained the youth of the communities to become digital storytellers and started a project like ‘Dream City’, where people designed their cities using maps. I am very glad I became a part of the British Council as a climate champion. The participation has been quite beneficial for me.”

Building On Learning

The Government has followed a theme-based approach in formulating Climate Change Policy, 2075 (BS). The preliminary draft policy which circulated in mid-March 2019, includes policy, and non-separated strategies and working policies in 8 thematic areas, namely: (i) agriculture and food security; (ii) forest, biodiversity and watershed; (iii) water resources and energy; (iv) rural and urban settlements; (v) industry, transport and physical infrastructure; (vi) tourism and natural & cultural heritage; (vii) health, drinking water and sanitation; and (viii) disaster risk reduction and management. The draft policy also lists policies, strategies and working policies on: (ix) gender, social inclusion, livelihood and governance; (x) public awareness, education and capacity development; (xi) study, research and dissemination; and (xii) climate finance management. It considers the need for a new climate change policy to address national priorities and local needs in the changing global context. The draft policy focuses on 'offspring' – the Paris Agreement of the 'mother' Climate Change Convention.

The strength of the draft policy, 2019 is the inclusion of guiding principles which are related to common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities, need for internalization of climate change aspects in relevant policies, plans and programmes, sustainable development, equity, public participation, coordination and cooperation, science-based decision-making, and balance between national priorities and international relations (with priority on climate change adaptation).

The draft policy commits to implement it at federal, provincial and local levels by formulating necessary laws, strategies, working policies, guidelines, procedures, manuals and plans. It also commits, *inter alia*, to: (i) prepare a roadmap to the Paris Agreement, Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plan and transparency framework; and (ii) establish a council on climate change for policy coordination at the national level, climate change coordination committee for policy and functional coordination at the provincial level, and climate change section or unit at relevant ministries at federal & provincial and local levels. Furthermore, the draft policy has made local levels responsible for formulating and implementing climate change-related local plans.

The draft policy does not recognize the role of existing: (i) Climate Change Policy, established in 2009 under the chair of the Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister; (ii) Climate Change Coordination Committee, established in 2011 under the chair of the Minister for Environment (then); and (iii) Multi-Stakeholder Climate Change Initiatives Coordination Committee, established in 2010 under the chair of the Secretary of the then Ministry of Environment. It gives the impression that this draft policy attempts to 'erase' the experiences and learning from 1994 to 2018 in addressing climate change impacts in Nepal, including through 2011 Climate Change Policy and other initiatives. This draft policy opens avenues to understand the 'strategies and working policies' and 'climate and climate change' as one likes.

The draft policy neither reviews the state of implementation of the Climate Change Policy 2011 nor considers the most relevant policies of the then government led by UML. The 2011



By BATU UPRETY

Policy focused on climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, low carbon emission and climate resilience in any development sector that was and/or will be affected by climate change. Similarly, the 2011 Policy emphasized on capacity enhancement, public participation and empowerment, technology development, transfer and utilization recognized the role of the Climate Change Council, committed to establish Climate Change Centre as a semi-autonomous technical body and Climate Change Fund, and channeled at

least 80 percent of the total climate change budget to field level activities. This fund channelling policy was appreciated globally, including by over 400 participants from more than 60 countries attending the 8th *International Conference on Community-based Adaptation to climate change* in Kathmandu in April 2014. Previous commitment to channelling budget has been changed to 'maximum share' of climate finance to local level and has challenged the '2011 political guidance'.

The draft policy has recognized the thematic and cross-cutting areas, as identified in mid-2016, for the formulation of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP). It has considered capacity building, study and research, and access to financial resources as focused in the 2011 Policy. The 2019 draft policy has not set targets like in the 2011 Policy.

Adoption of theme-based approach has opened avenues for repetition of policies on adaptation, technology use, documentation of good practices, capacity enhancement, awareness raising, GHGs emissions, and use of clean energy or energy efficient or low emission technologies in relevant thematic areas. Working policies such as implementation of Chure management programme, crop diversification, conservation of agriculture biodiversity and organic farming, reduction of forest fire etc. are also addressed in other sectoral policies. The draft policy provides unclear reflections on reduction of GHGs emissions or climate change impacts.

The draft policy has nicely defined the role of the federal, province and local levels in implementing policies. Although the 2011 Policy has not been recognised, many of the working policies of this draft can be regarded as the 'old wine in the new bottle'. It would have been appropriate to consider 'low GHGs emission economic development' as one of the guiding principles and objectives. It overlooks community-based adaptation. It recognises the waste segregation at source but limits to produce only clean energy. It should open avenues to promote 'waste-to-resource' approach. Previous studies on climate change in academic curricula might have been overlooked. The draft policy overlooks the nationally and globally acknowledged 'LAPA framework' to help climate change vulnerable communities to adapt to and build resilience to climate change impacts. Although it attempts to list key 2015 initiatives (SDGs, DRR framework, and Paris Agreement), it should equally focus on the outcome of the Habitat III (2016) to align international initiatives and national priorities. In a nutshell, wider consultation and consideration of 8 years of experience, knowledge and learning in implementing the 2011 Policy would make it 'realistic', minimise the 'erasing the footprint' approach, and increase 'ownership'.

Holistic Living

I spent almost 18 years of my life, consumed by western lifestyle. There are pros and cons of living under western influence. The Madness of Materialism is unpremeditated. With the advent of technology, we can learn and adapt a lot from western culture. Our side of the world has 'ashrams' or retreats for spiritual goals and practices. This is where Silicon Valley's finest go to discover themselves. Everyone, from Steve Jobs to Mark Zuckerberg, has sought enlightenment at the sanctuary in the hills of northern India.

The term Holistic comes from the Greek word 'holos' meaning whole. A holistic approach is a way of looking at something done with the concept of recognition of the whole as a more important entity than the parts that make up the whole. Its emphasis is on the importance of the whole and the link between each of the parts that make up the whole. The word holistic has been widely used in various fields like medicine, health care, emotion, and personality.

Today's modern world has three main enemies: lack of time, lack of money and lack of harmony between personal life and work. Life is an expression of God. It is the abundance of the joy of the Spirit. Life is a conscious current that vibrates in every atom. There is life in everything around us. Our health is the result of what we eat, think, and do in our everyday lives. Many times, we create weaknesses for our own bodies. The accumulation of stress, toxins, and waste in our body cause imbalance of life and the only way we can prevent and treat these diseases are by creating an equilibrium in our day to day activities. The sooner we initiate, the better we will be.

Every positive or negative situation that occurs in the life of an individual is formed by the interaction of the circles, past and inner mental dynamics that we live in. A variety of factors, from work to social life, from private life to spiritual life, influences our attitudes and thoughts. Problems or goals that occur in business life may be the source of events that occur in our private life. This situation, which can be ignored in classical coaching and the problems that can be chronic on the person, may arise due to the studies aimed only at the targets. Every step we take, every breath we take, every word that comes out of our mouth, every feeling towards ourselves and others, every action and human behavior, reflects and determines what we are in a single instant.

I am a Holistic man/woman and I believe that all the answers are in the inner silence. Although nobody gave us a manual for how to live, today, there is a philosophy of life that helps us to give meaning to our existence in integral terms.

We have to focus on the holistic approach to health. Optimal health requires not only a good diet, exercise and plenty of sleep but also good relations, healthy working style, a healthy spiritual life. The mind is more important than medicine. The body can heal itself. This philosophy promotes a new approach to disease and treatment. We need to recognize and respect the strength of our body and focus on positive, interpersonal relationships. Health starts with dietary and lifestyle factors. We must understand that money cannot buy health for the individual who needs to change for optimal health. Holistic treatments of health and beauty of women are very important because physi-



BY DEEPAK RAJ JOSHI

cal, physiological and mental health depends on hormonal changes. Awareness of your health and your body will make life more meaningful. If you can recognize yourself, then you will have a way of developing the right self-potential. Your potential will be fully activated. This is where Ayurveda plays an important role in the natural rhythm of a circular operation and the effect on human body-soul.

Holistic education is an educational philosophy that comes from the idea that every individual can find his identity, purpose in life and the meaning of his life through the relationship woven with the community, the spiritual values it has and the natural environment that surrounds it. Holistic living can awaken the Positive Consciousness within you. Your character and attitude are the most important investments to achieve ultimate Success, and holistic living is the key to achieve that ultimate Success.

The 3 main concepts of a holistic life are Awareness, Honesty, and Responsibility. A holistic lifestyle is living in harmony with our natural world, eating foods that are pure and fresh from nature, and to saying 'No' to foods that are untreated, refined, filled with chemicals and containing synthetic ingredients or genetically modified food. A holistic lifestyle is about moderation in consumption and eating in healthy proportions.

Exercise is an important aspect of a holistic lifestyle, as it promotes good health. Natural medicine is a part of the holistic way of life. When you live your daily life taking into account the natural environment, you are thinking about everything you do from the lens of how your life can be ecologically sustainable. Using biodegradable products around the house, recycling, walking, cycling, taking public transportation or car-pooling not only reduces energy consumption but also reduces pollution. A holistic aspect of life also means taking a position of the Earth politically and socially by living a green model for other people in your life so that others can be influenced to do the same.

Live each day as if it is the last. Make the most of every hour, every day and every season of life. So you can look to the future with confidence and the past without sadness. Be the best of yourself. Have the courage to be different and follow your own dream. Do not be afraid to be happy. Our mind, body, and soul are united, if your soul hurts, your body will ache and vice versa. The union of soul, body, and mind is necessary to become the being that you want to be, and it is only possible through holistic living.

This road was not that difficult for me, but so many people told this wasn't what I should do. I listened to people around me all the time and never listen to myself. Finally, I was able to take a small step essential for creating a sustainable life. The goal of sustainability requires fundamental changes in your thought process. I have been there and I have done that but ultimate happiness in life is to be able to do the things you want to do which make you happy. I was looking for heaven somewhere else, but it was in my backyard. Thank God! I came to know the difference between feeling happy and being happy. And one thing is for sure; I did not lose the moon, so now I am happily counting the stars.

The Author Deepak Raj Joshi (The author is a lecturer and IT consultant. He also writes fiction under the name of Kapeed Joshi. He can be reached by email at info@dipakjoshi.com.np.)

PRATIMA PANDE

Honor For Cause

With her contribution to promote Nepal-France relations, Pratima Pandé conferred with a French honour, Knight of National Order of Merit

By A CORRESPONDENT

French Ambassador to Nepal François-Xavier LEGER conferred upon Pratima Pandé the French honour, Knight of National Order of Merit (Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite), on March 19th, at the Residence of France.

Pandé has a long relationship with France especially through the Alliance Française, the French culture center. She was a member of the board between 2001 and 2007, then the Vice President between 2007 and 2011, and the President between 2011 and 2017.

During her years with the Alliance Française, she was one of most active members who regularly lobbied for the interests of the Alliance Française and advanced the vision of the Alliance Française.

This honour is in recognition to her years of selfless service to the Government of France.

During the award ceremony, Ambassador LEGER recollected the role played by Mrs Pandé during the tough period for the Alliance Française and how “she never missed a single meeting and always attended cultural activities”.

The French government's honour Ordre National du Mérite (National Order of Merits) was instituted in 1963 by General Charles de Gaulle. It is awarded for distinguished services rendered in public, civil, military posts, or a private profession.

Nepal-France At 70

At a time when Nepal and France is celebrating 70 years of establishment of diplomatic relations, the time of conferring Pande the medal is very significant. Attended by people from different walks of life including diplomats, Ambassador Leger also hosted a reception at the Residence de France.

Ambassador Leger highlighted the role played by Pande to strengthen France Nepal Relations through Alliance

Francaise for long periods of time. Ambassador Leger said that Pande has been actively serving Nepal's various sectors including Honorary Council General of Italy, President of Nepal Britain Society and Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust. He said that Pande's support and contribution to Alliance Française is commendable.

“To flag up some elements, I will say, for those who may not know, that Pratima Pande has a long history of relationships and friendship with the Alliance Française in Kathmandu. She was member of the board between 2001 and 2007, then vice president between 2007 and 2011, and, last but not least, president between 2011 and 2017,” said French ambassador to Nepal.

“And, I would like to highlight the fact that, according to our friend Prabin Rana, she never missed a single meeting and she always attended cultural activities. She has been always very supportive to the Alliance Française team, and especially to the incoming new young director that we appoint here.”

“I really would like to commend that because, as all of us know, she has so many other duties, as president of the Nepal Britain Society, as member of the Kathmandu Valley Heritage trust, as honorary consul of Italy, and as a philanthropist.”

French Connection

Historically, Pande's family has a long tie with France as her great great Grandfather Maharaja Deb Sumsher Rana welcomed the first oriental French Scholar Monsieur Sylvain Levi in Nepal and helped him to study Nepal. Thanks to acting support of Maharaja Deb Sumsher, Levy

compiled a three volumes historical and scientific survey of the Kingdom, published in Paris in 1905 under the title Le Nepal.

In his book, Note Book of Sojourn, Levy described Maharaja Deb's knowledge in length including speaking French language. Levy writes, “I was very impressed to note that that during interview Maharaja Deb quoted words in Sanskrit and spoke to the professor, in French about Sakuntala (well known dramatic story in Sanskrit), and conversed as an intelligent and well-informed person.

Interestingly, Pande received the medal in presence of his father ninety one year old Himalaya Sumsher Rana, great great grandson of Maharaja Deb. Himalaya Sumsher Rana also confirmed Maharaja Deb's understanding of French. He was told by his father that Maharaja Deb was a student for some years in Dowson College, Calcutta where he spent many afternoons with poets and intelligentsia.

Her husband has also maintained his own relations with France, After



taking first French joint venture bank of Nepal Indo-Suez Bank which is now known as Nepal Investment Bank, Pande's husband Prithvi Bahadur Pande has successfully made it one of the credible and largest commercial bank of Nepal maintaining its predecessors' credibility.

"I would like also, on behalf of all my predecessors, to express my sin-

cere apologies to her husband Prithvi. Partially due to our fault, he certainly spent many lonely evenings," said French Ambassador. "But, it seems that he does not hold it against us, because Nepal Investment Bank has always been along the year a very reliable and trusted partner of the Alliance Française. This support has been really instrumental in

maintaining and developing its cultural activities further, and getting through difficulties."

From her great great grand father up to her, Pande has a long family attachment. The medal given to her during the year of Nepal France 70 Years of Establishment of Diplomatic Relations has its own importance.

Alliance Francaise Roles In Strengthening Nepal France Relations

"I am very happy and honored to stand in front of you as this evening as the French Government is awarding the Knight of the National Order of Merit" Let me first brief to you, the history and background of the Alliance Francaise.

Alliance Francaise or AF is an international organization that aims to promote the French Language and culture around the world. Created in Paris on 21st July 1883, its primary concern is teaching French as a second language in former colonies and abroad and is headquartered in Paris.

In 2005, along with the British Council, Goethe Institute and the Italian and Spanish Language Institutes, the Alliance Francaise was awarded the Prince of Asturias Award for outstanding achievements in communications and the humanities.

Today, the Alliance has 1016 centers in 137 countries. The Alliance Francaise is 136 years old. It was created by a group including Louis Pasteur, The diplomat Ferninand de Lesseps, writers Jules Verne and Ernest Renan and the Publisher Armand Colin. I would like to share some statistics about the AF in neighboring countries with 15 centers in China and 24 centers in India both being, large countries.

The AF was opened in Nepal in 1994 and it is twenty-five years old. Besides teaching French language and culture, it organizes cultural events promoting intercultural dialogue and diversity. The AF welcomes 1500 students per year and creates a link between French and Nepali culture. Students who graduate from the AF have great job opportunities because of their fluency in the French language and work in hospitality industries, tourism, business and many other international INGOs like the United Nations and abroad.

Since 2002, I have been working with AF for 16 years as a Board member and was also president for eight years. During this time, I have worked alongside many former French Ambassadors and directors to help guide people and took part in board meetings. I also attended many cultural events such as Francophone, International Music Day, Gout de France events, musical, art and photo exhibitions, screening of movies, book launching and verities of other activities. Organized efficiently by AF, students, Nepali public and French speaking people took part in these monthly activities. This takes a lot of effort and planning and the staff work very diligently to make all of this happen like magic. AF is a pioneer institution for starting



BY PRATIMA PANDE

film festival in Nepal.

I myself was a student in early 1990s. I went to the AF, which was located in Bag Bazaar, for one hour everyday so that I could improve my speaking abilities. I had done A level French in the United Kingdom. When it came to speaking, there were inhibitions and not much practice. However, the teaching method in Kathmandu was such that I quickly shed my shyness and started to participate in the conversations because we had to speak in the classroom with all other students who were much

younger than me whereas I was married with two children. I used the library facilities to watch French movies, listen to French music CDs in order to improve my language skills, getting recommendations from dear Mira didi who still works in the library today. Over the years, the AF had to change its location many times and now we have a very nice center in Jawalakhel very close to St.Mary's School.



AF when they were working in Nepal. They have to get used to a new country, culture work ethics and still they excel at their work here in Nepal. Also all the former French ambassadors worked side by side with the AF and always gave their encouragement and support to the directors and the board members at all times. It was an experience and a pleasure to be associated with the AF and I certainly learnt to work as a team with the board members and the AF staff. I would like to thank the French Government for awarding me the prestigious medal.

This year we are celebrating 70 years (1949-2019) of Nepal France friendship. May this relation continue to prosper for many years and live the friendly ties between the two countries.

Gods, Gallis And Gyaneshwar

Introduction

Gyaneshwar, named after ancient Mahadev, is one of central neighborhoods in North East Kathmandu you pass through while on your journey to the UNESCO recognized heritage Pashupatinath temple or to the Tribhuvan International Airport from Durbar Marg via Kamalpokhari. Sano Gaucharan, Mahendra Bhavan School, Charkhal Adda, Police Headquarter, Vijaya Memorial School, Nepal Fine Arts Academy, Balmandir, Nagpokhari, Padmakanya Girls School, City Center Mall, Krishna Pauroti and German Embassy are among the major establishments located there. While the well known International Primary School in Gyaneshwar, where multiple generations of Nepalese learned English medium based early education for over 4 decades closed in 2011, young entrepreneurs have started Karkhana Asia there with the purpose of imparting innovative education with focus on “Make, Break and Innovate” and 4 Cs- critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. Gyaneshwar, Ananda Bhairav, Maitidevi, Naxal Bhagabat and Kalikasthan are among the well known gods and Goddesses protecting the locality for centuries. Mahakabi Laxmi Prasad Devkota and Natya Samrat Bal Krishna Sama lived and worked in the neighborhood. Interesting to note here is also how the famous temples, poets and people living were linked through Gallis or narrow lanes, many of which are now widened and named Margs.

Gods and Gallis

Gyaneshwar temple complex, only few hundred meters north of the Gyaneshwar Chouk, houses the famous Shivalinga, Gyaneshwar Mahadev, also known as Parasnath and the Ananda Bhairav, a fearsome manifestation of Shiva ever ready to help the innocents and scare the tainted. Ganesh, lord of siddhi or success, sits on the right-hand side and Saraswati, the goddess of learning, flanks the Bhairav from the left. While lord Gyaneshwar, the source of enlightenment, helps its devotees with both knowledge and power, Ananda Bhairav is believed to cure children of diseases and make them calm and studious. Streams of sick and restless children are brought to the idol regularly. The ancient stone tap, Gyan Dhara on the Eastern side, is a perennial source of water and is also used to bathe the sick children before taking them to Bhairav for blessings. The Bhairav considered as a god of fertility also draws many wishing for children. In ancient time, 1 kilo of gold used to spring out daily at the temple and all metals that touched the idol used to turn into gold, according to a legend. Consequently, many men and women still visit the idol wishing for better luck in business, career and livelihood.

From Gyaneshwar temple, you step down to Gyan Dhara Galli/ Marg to Saraswati Marg and turn right to Shahid Marg at the Martyr's Memorial School. Then cross the main Gaushala-Kamalpokhari road- now Pashupati Sadak and turn on to Janata Galli/Marga that will get you to the famous Maitidevi Temple less than 1 Km away. Lots of people live on both sides of the Gallis or Margas; including Kishan and Ghumti Gallis, which you may enjoy looking at on the way to Maitidevi- considered the parental home of all goddesses; Maiti meaning “parental home” and Devi being “goddess”. While the current pagoda style temple was built during Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher's period the first edifice was erected by Lichhavi King Amshu Verma in 628 CE. The two impressive stone lions guarding the main entrance and the old Peepal tree arching over the temple are believed to be from Amshu Verma period. The cremation ground or Shamshan Ghat on SE side is integral part of the temple as the original tantric rituals required priests to burn human skulls during prayer. However, a human face made on a lump of ghee is burned in recent time as skull burning is neither liked nor feasible. Maitidevi is also revered as Mahalaxmi and has to be reinstituted inside the sanctum sanctorum annually during Laxmi



BY SOM P PUDASAINI

Puja by the Munikars of Maligaon.

You then hop on Maitidevi-Peepalbot Galli (now Mahakabi Marga-Peepalbot Marga) to Dillibazar Galli (now Radhe Marg) on the Eastern side of Charkhal Adda and cross the main road in Dillibazar to Kalika Marg on the way to Singhadurbar to reach Kalikasthan-Bhagabati Kalika's abode. It is an open roofed structure, where the temple priests dwell on the ground floor and the Goddess in the temple upstairs arched over by a big Peepal tree

Return from Kalika Marga to Radhe Marga, then cross Kamalpokhari-Gaushala Sadak (now Pashupati Sadak-3) to Sanogaucar Galli (now Devi Marga) that will lead you to Sanogauchar to the right and Naxal Bhagabati to the left both few hundred meters away. The Naxal Bhagwati temple dates back to 1050 of the Kaligat Sambat, when Bikram Kesari was the king and Navasagar his queen. A grand Bhagabati idol presented to the queen by an artist that she liked so much that she installed it as Goddess naming after herself as “Navasagar Bhagwati”. In 665 BS (607 CE), King Shankerdev built the current pagoda style temple for the Bhagabati and initiated a 3 day long chariot procession or jatra on the Preta Chaturdashi known as the “Khat Jatra” now. The current statue of Naxal Bhagwati is believed to have been crafted by the same artisan, who built Palanchowk Bhagwati, Shobha Bhagwati and Nala Bhagwati idols later. Shiva, Ganesh, Hanuman and Sani Statues also occupy important places in Naxal Bhagwati also called Satya Swaroopini- the ‘embodiment of truth’.

Poets, Landmarks and Gallis

Take a right from the Maitidevi temple then hop left into Siddhi Marg then to Prabhat Galli you reach Mahakabi Devkota's House at the corner of Prabhat and Kabi Galli. Mahakabi Laxmi Prasad Devkota, a giant of Nepali literature, was born in Thatunati (now Dhubidhara) and lived in Maitidevi. His popular works include, Muna Madan, Sulochana and Sakuntala. Inspired by Newari “Ji Waya La Lachhi Maduni” and departing from the Sanskrit tradition that dominated the Nepali literary writing then, he wrote Muna Madan in “jhyau bhaka”. It is the most sold book in the history of Nepalese literature. Born on 12 November 1909, Devkota died at Pashupati-Bagmati Ghat on September 14, 1959 after a protracted fight against cancer. His work reflects rebellion against the autocratic Rana rule (1846-1950) and the influence of Wordsworth and Coleridge. He served briefly as Minister of Education under the premiership of K I Singh in 1957.

If you move about 200 meters west of Gyaneshwar chouk on Pashupati Sadak-3 you will locate Gyan Marg on the right where Bala Krishna Sama (8 February 1903 - 20 June 1981) lived and worked all his life. Sama, a dramatist known as “Natya Siromani” and the “Shakespeare” of Nepal, wrote dramas, painted and acted in plays. His rich stack of work includes “Aago Ra Paani”, “Chiso Chulho”, “Mukunda Indira”, “Mutuko Byatha” and “Prahlaad”. “Kaikai” is his most well-known short story collection.

The well known Charkhal Adda or four-walled government building in Dillibazar is now dilapidated by age and earthquakes, the jail here though continues to house notorious criminals, including Charles Sobraj- globally known as Bikini Killer. The first bakery in Nepal, Krishna Pauroti Bhandar in Kamalpokhari founded in 1948 is part of the landmark too. Shwet Binayak Ganesh, Jain Mandir, Gyaneshwar church, Saibaba temple and Siddhi Binayak Bhude Ganesh accessible by Galli or Marga make Gyaneshwar neighbourhood additionally interesting to visit or live-in.

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Nepal Research Bhavan Opens In Patan

Three German research units bundled under one roof Nepal and its various ethnic groups as well as cultural richness have been a treasure for international researchers, explorers, geographers, and anthropologists for many decades.

The German research scheme in Nepal with a long history has already undergone various transformations. The first research project was launched in 1959 with government support and with assistance of the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.

Six years later, the Thyssen House opened its doors and was predecessor of the Nepal Research Centre, which was established in 1967 by contractual agreements between Nepal and Germany.

The support of the German Oriental Society (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft), which has existed since 1974 and was agreed in cooperation with Tribhuvan University, ended in 2014 with the closure of the Nepal Research Centre. As part of the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP), archival documents of the Nepalese National Archives were microfilmed by the German Oriental Society. Since 1987 the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University (SAI) has a branch office in Nepal. The location in Patan bundles now three research units under one roof and accommodates also the research units "Documents on the History of Religion and Law of pre-modern Nepal" of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the „Center for the Study of Manuscript Cultures" of Hamburg University. The affiliated „Nepal Heritage Documentation Project“, a cooperation of Heidelberg University and SARAF Foundation has a separate office at Mangalbazaar.

Nepal Research Bhavan is home to an extensive and open accessible library containing numerous books, magazines, manuscripts and other documents. In the beginning of March 2019, the Nepal Research Bhavan was opened together with a two-day conference on "Masters & Servants: Slavery, Bondage and Unfree Labour in Nepal's History" and the exhibition "Opposite Dreams" by ArTree Nepal. The professors of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Thomas Holstein and Bernd Schneidmueller, as well as the directive professors and local representatives of the respective research projects, visited the opening ceremony and the conference. Representatives of the National Archives of Nepal, Tribhuvan University, Department of Archeology and SARAF Foundation were also present during the opening ceremony. The project "Documents on History of Religion and Law of pre-modern Nepal" under the direction of Axel Michaels, a professor of Classical Indology and Religious



BY SABINE PRETSCH

Studies at Heidelberg University is involved in the studies of various historical, administrative and legal documents, the systematic investigation of this unique textual corpus and the development of an open access digital database. Christiane Brosius, a professor of Visual and Media Anthropology at the Heidelberg Center for Transcultural Studies is director of the Nepal Heritage Documentation Project, which focuses on recording of endan-

gered monuments and intangible cultural heritage of Nepal. With her background in Art History and Art Education she has got involved with local art projects and published the book "Breaking views – Engaging Art in Post- Earthquake Nepal" in cooperation with the visual artist and art educator Sanjeev Maharjan.

The preservation of the palm leaf manuscripts in Nepalese archives and libraries is the main project aim of the Center for the Study of Manuscript Cultures of Hamburg University, represented by the project coordinator Dr. Bidur Bhattarai. On the initiative of Dr. Nadine Plachta, Resident Representative of SAI branch office, the Nepal Research Bhavan hosted the exhibition "Opposite Dreams" by ArTree.



ArTree Nepal is a team of contemporary artists who want to foster meaningful dialogue. The artists focus on critical subject matters that have social significance. With their mixed media art, they urge the audience to reflect on discrimination, injustice, exclusion and instability.

A good example of this approach is the exhibited art work "Labour's Helmet" of the series "I Have to Feed Myself, My Family and My Country..." by Hitman Gurung. Ten golden helmets, which hang on the wall, shall draw attention to Nepali migrant labours that have to leave their families in order to earn a living in foreign countries.

Nepal Investment Summit 2019: Learning From Past Experience

The government is organizing a second investment summit on March 29-30, 2019 in a bid to promote Nepal as an attractive destination for foreign investment by welcoming over 600 investors from 40 countries. Under the motto, “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”, the summit will attract foreign investment (FDI) for physical infrastructure and industries based on energy, information and communications technology, tourism, agriculture and forestry. The summit will also be an opportunity to share information and exchange national and international experiences on investment.

The government has been implementing a number of policy reforms to facilitate business, and promote a competitive investment climate and create a range of investment opportunities in all seven provinces of Nepal.

The government had hosted the first investment summit in March 2017. The summit had secured investment pledges worth US\$ 13.74 billion. However, most of the pledges were not materialized. Foreign investors are still skeptical.

What lessons have we learned from past experience? What we need to insure beyond policy reforms in the changed context? How do we address governance issues beyond technical fixing of FDI?

Some of my views are:

We need to solidify coherent national policy, strategy and programs to address underlying causes of poverty and inequality, and employment and economy for all. FDI should be part of such national economic drive.

Centralized federalism is constraining development, and will do so for FDI. We need to break centralization and ensure political will for devolution of authority and resources. The political leadership must be clear about the distinction between the national issues and needs, and provincial and local issues and needs.

We need to bring improvement in inter-departmental coordination at the federal level and facilitate business by easing procedural details (business registration and licens-



BY DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR

ing, user-friendly business manual, working visa, fund transfer etc).

We need to ensure consistent enforceability of the law at federal, provincial and local governments. Trade unions must be managed by political parties in a way that supports rights of the labor as well as it facilitates enabling business environment for FDI.

We should have functional complaints handling and dispute resolution mechanism to help settle disputes between investor and the host government, between the investor and employees, as well as between the two governments.

We should strictly ban frequent strikes that threaten business, markets and normal life of people. We should ensure safety and security of investment with a provision for compensation to investors if their investments suffer losses owing to war, armed conflict and state of emergency.

We should ensure that FDI promotes self-reliance on long-term basis with the optimum mobilization of youths, transfer of technology, and combining of foreign and local investments.

People have suffered a lot in the name of politics in Nepal. Now, people want less politics and more economic development. The current political disputes amongst political parties is not a good sign of quality politics to contribute to political stability and economic development in Nepal. Let us not politicize extremism in the name of religion, caste or ethnicity.

The political parties should rise above win-lose attitudes and work together on national agendas for development, international relations and foreign investment. They should exercise a culture of tolerance and cooperation on major issues, and

more important, political parties must exercise financial transparency within them.

The author: Dr. Prabin Manandhar is an expert of international development. Currently, he is working as Country Director of The Lutheran World Federation. He is the Former Chair of the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN). He is also a visiting faculty at the Kathmandu University. He can be reached at prabin.manandhar11@gmail.com

