



OPINION
Madhu K Marasini



INTERVIEW
Annette Schlicht



FORUM
Dr. Prabin Manandhar

New SPOTLIGHT

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May 03 - May 16, 2019

FORTNIGHTLY

IMPACTS OF DAM

Fish Under Threat

INSIDE



PRESIDENT'S CHINA VISIT
Belt & Road



UPPER TAMAKOSI
Meeting Deadline



KING BIRENDRA-AS I KNEW HIM
Honest Revelation

शुभ २०७६

मनाउनुहोस् उत्सव
नयाँ-नयाँ शुरुवातको,
खुशी र उज्जवल भोलिको ।


Ncell
आज, भोलि, सधैं सँगै ।



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Notes From The Editor



President Bidya Devi Bhandari has completed her first state visit to Nepal's northern neighbor, People's Republic of China, signing a few agreements and addressing the second Belt and Road Forum on International Cooperation. As the constitutional head of state, President Bhandari's commitments have limitations. However, her participation in the second BRF Summit is a matter of significance given the South Asian and Global politics. After unification of ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP), they have achieved a major success completing the unification process from district levels. Although it took almost a year, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and Prachanda were able to give the message that the unification is real. However, a question remains: how long will the unification of two parties made on the basis of their respective strengths of the past last. Given Nepal's political trend where even a major party like Nepali Congress, with six decades of history, is unable to remain intact, it is no more than a wishful thinking to believe the unification of the leftists is real. Although the political process is going through contradictions, we have decided to cover the issue of fish and aquatic life in Nepali Rivers. With the target of generating 10,000 MW power by ten years and irrigating a huge portion of land, Nepal government is building more than one hundred dams in different rivers ignoring the life of endangered fishes and aquatic life. Given Nepal's growing population and to achieve higher economic growth, there is the need to exploit the water resources and priority needs to be given to utilizing water. However, there is also the need to keep in mind how to protect the endangered fish species in the river. With the proper environmental protection, we can build the dam as well as protect the fishes and aquatic life. Based on a recent report published by Asian Development Bank Impacts of Dams on the Fishes of the Rivers of Nepal, we have decided to make it a cover story.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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Bolts From The Blue

The sudden 'Havahuri' plus the subsequent rains on Sunday, the 31st of March created havoc in two districts of Bara and Parsa in Southern Nepal. For the first time in the documented history a deadly tornado struck parts of the country and twenty seven people died in its wake. This was a bolt from the blue, though it has been part of our tradition that 'Shivratri Showers' or 'Makai lai Pani' tended to occur at this time of year. Four rural municipalities were hit and Pheta suffered massively. The industrial loss of this misfortune is expected to be immense. This occurrence has made many Nepalis aware that such disasters can occur anywhere in Nepal without any notice whatsoever. Though offers of aid have been prompt and residents told that houses will be reconstructed within four months, one is left wondering if it will become a reality. A point to appreciate however is the quick response of the army and police personnel stationed nearby. The attention of not only the people in Nepal but also of the world has been focussed on the fact that the frequency of such disasters seem to be increasing by leaps and bounds almost everywhere. Is this all the result of global warming occurring worldwide these days? One immediately calls to mind the wild fires that ravaged the area of Paradise in California. What irony that a site named Paradise became a major disaster area!

During the last two years one has read, heard and seen in the media of the many disasters that seem to be showering on the world these days. Are these occurrences from China, Japan or Philippines in Asia, to Iran in the Middle East, to Mozambique in Africa, to Mexico, USA, Cuba and Canada in the Western Hemisphere portents of the future? Europe has had its shares of excessive rain, snow, sleet and floods.

The Saptakoshi River which flows from Nepal to Bihar has been notorious for causing floods and is known colloquially in the area as the 'River of Sorrow'. Though attempts have been made to mitigate its effects by the construction of the Koshi Barrage in early 1960, the effort has not been entirely successful. The river took a heavy toll in Sunsari and Saptari in the floods of 2008. A recurrence of this took place in August / September 2018 when a large number of houses were inundated in Hanumannagar.

Many can still recall vividly the earthquake of 25th of April 2015. This quake with a magnitude of 7.8 on the Richter scale took a massive toll of the Nepalis, about 8,200 amongst which there were many foreigners trekking in this land of ours. The quake with its epicentre at Barpak was a major disaster for Nepal. Just 85% of the houses have been reconstructed four years later. Reminder that it can



BY HEMANG DIXIT

occur again and again were the tremors felt in Dhading only last month.

Not content to facing the disasters brought about by the vagaries of Nature one is confronted with major disasters as a result of modern living. The earth is not getting bigger but with the population increase there is requirement of corresponding facilities for work places, the production of food for the increasing population, places to sleep and for disposal of the waste products of living. These are the problems of the future.

Surprisingly the leader of the richest country in the world does not believe in the fact that it is global warming that is causing all this. What is heartening that many in the world are turning towards solar power and other forms of energy than the traditional sources?

Manmade disasters are also making headlines all over the world. Use of inflammable building materials were and are the causes of dance hall fires of Seoul and the 2017 Grenfell Tower residential building in London when 72 residents died. The fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris in mid April is the latest of such bolts from the blue. The fire in a factory in Bangladesh some months back, showing pictures of people jumping out of the building, because of the heat and dying in the process brought sad memories of the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers of New York in 2001.

The military, being put in charge of Disaster Management in Nepal may be taken as good strategy in that our army does not have to be used to stop the Chinese and the Indians coming to Nepal. After all we are on very good terms with both our neighbours and do not need to stop visitors from both the countries at the borders. Disaster management is what our army and to a certain extent the police force should be used for. This in fact will really be a good use of the expertise that our army and police have built up over the years after going in UN Peace Keeping Forces all over the world. One word of caution would be not to emulate the Thai and Chinese PLA by opening banks and conducting various other businesses.

It is said that the army has been given charge of building the estimated 2,500 single storey dwellings that were blown away or collapsed in the disaster in Madhesh with the proviso that these should be completed within the next four months prior to the onset of the monsoons. Considering the magnitude of the disaster, one hopes that this will be done soon. One wonders whether this denotes a lack of trust in civilian concerns not being able to do designated works on time!

The author writes fiction under the name of Mani Dixit. Website: www.hdixit.org.np. Twitter: @manidixithd

NEWSNOTES

Georgian Ambassador Calls On COAS



Non-Residential Ambassador of Georgia to Nepal Archil Dzuliashvili has paid a courtesy call on Chief Of Army Staff (COAS) General Purna Chandra Thapa at Nepal Army Headquarter.

According to a press release issued by Nepal Army, during the meeting, CoAS General Thapa and ambassador Dzuliashvili discussed matters of mutual interest.

Peace Corps Volunteers Sworn In

Forty-nine Peace Corps Volunteers were sworn in by Ambassador Randy Berry and the Peace Corps/Nepal Country Director Sherry Russell. They will begin their two-year service in Nepal.

The new Volunteers join over 3,800 Volunteers who served before them in Nepal since 1962, and over 7,200 Peace Corps Volunteers currently serving in 65 other countries around the world. Chakra Pani Khanal, Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development, was the Chief Guest.

“As Peace Corps Volunteers, working in remote areas and with traditionally marginalized populations, you will have an outsized impact on the good that the United States can do and on the understanding that Nepalis have of Americans and our culture and values,” said Ambassador Berry.

The forty-nine Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in February 2019 and underwent 11 weeks of intensive language, cross-cultural and technical training in Kavre District in preparation for their service. The Volunteers have been assigned to ten districts in Provinces 3 to 7 to

teach English in government schools and to work on food security, youth development, and health projects in coordination with the Ministries of Education, Health and Agriculture, and in support of the Government of Nepal’s priorities. In response to a request

from the Ministry of Education, this group of Volunteers includes the first group of English teaching volunteers in Nepal since 2004.

Since its establishment in 1961, the Peace Corps has been guided by a mission of world peace and friendship.



The agency advances development and builds cross-cultural understanding around the world. The Peace Corps advances its mission through the work of the Volunteers, both during and after their term of service. Rather than providing monetary assistance to countries, the agency sends Volunteers to share their skills and experience while living and working alongside local individuals and communities.

KOICA Provides Scholarship To 12 CIAA Officials To Use ICT

Twelve Nepalese Government officials (Joint Secretaries, Under Secretaries, Police Inspectors and Investigation Officers from CIAA) are leaving for the Republic of Korea to participate in “Use of ICT in Evidence based Investigation” which is one of KOICA’s multiyear Country Specific program started from 2018 – 2020. This year’s program is scheduled from April 18 - May 01, 2019. Through this program 36 official from CIAA will be trained on use of ICT by 2020.

The prime objective of this fellowship program is to understand importance of ICT capacity building in evidence based investigation and to contribute in establishing the development plan of CIAA reflecting Korean experience and know how in above sector. The program includes a series of lectures, group discussions and field visits.



KOICA and KOICA Alumni Association of Nepal (KAAN) organized a Departure Orientation and Action Plan sharing workshop for the participants on April 16, 2019, which was attended by KOICA Deputy Director Ms. Kim JinHwa, 12 fresh officials from CIAA, 7 former participants of same program and Executive Member of KAN. The main purpose of this program is to promote and share the action plan which has been prepared by 2018 participants of CIAA for same program. The said program also provided needed information regarding the KOICA program and trip.

During the program Kim stressed on focusing more on refining the already prepared action plan so that the recommendation made and planned activities could be materialize instead of recommending new plan and also encouraged each participant to increase the ownership towards the prepared plan.

KAAN President Binod Bidari also shared that the planned activities should not always be limited in the papers but they should at least be shared among the related stakeholders and each participants should work towards making a conducive environment for it to be implemented.

Japan Supports Health Center In Udayapur



Ambassador of Japan to Nepal Masamichi Saigo laid the cornerstone of a health center in Chaudandigadhi Municipality, Udayapur District. Along with Ambassador Saigo, Dr. Narayan Khadka, Member of the House of Representatives, attended the ceremony.

The Project for the Construction of a Health Center in Chaudandigadhi Municipality,

Udayapur District, is funded under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Government of Japan. The total grant assistance is USD 67,944 (approximately NPR 8.0 million).

The new health centre will offer medical services to improve maternal and child health in the area, through the provision of vaccinations, regular check-ups, etc.

The project is being implemented by FACT Nepal, which has been contributing to support better access to health care services in the region since its establishment in 2004. FACT provides trainings and awareness campaigns on public health, early childhood development education, and income generation for local women in Udayapur District.

“The Embassy of Japan expects this project will improve the health care services for the people in remote areas; providing better access to basic medical treatment locally. The Embassy also hopes the assistance will contribute to enhancing the bilateral relationship between Japan and Nepal,” said a press release.

Intra-regional Integration Backbone Of SAARC: Secretary-General Sial

“Intra-regional economic integration is the backbone of the SAARC process. As envisaged by our Leaders at the Eighteenth SAARC Summit, our ultimate goal is to achieve South Asian Economic Union in a phased and planned manner through a Free Trade Area, a Customs Union, a Common Market, and a Common Economic and Monetary Union,” said Amjad Hussain B. Sial, Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Sial made these remarks, while addressing the

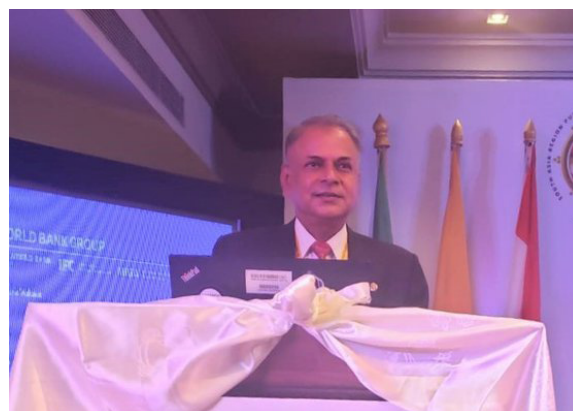
Inaugural Session of the Sixth South Asia Region Public Procurement Conference on Professionalization of Public Procurement for Better Performance in Thimphu.

“Public procurement is yet to become a part of formally agreed areas of regional cooperation under the auspices of SAARC. This sector, however, does have great importance for the economies of all the South Asian countries. We, therefore, highly value the convening of this Conference on Public Procurement,” said the Secretary General.

In his statement, the Secretary General said that globally, public procurement accounted for a significant amount of the total expenditure of Governments and is reportedly around 15 percent of the world’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

“It is estimated that the South Asian countries spend around US \$ 550 billion on public procurement of goods and services. Reportedly, India alone spends around 20 percent of its GDP on public procurement, which might be the highest in the world,” he stated. “Given the high volume of spending on account of public procurement in the region, it merits consideration to have a regional forum to deal with Public Procurement matters,” he said.

Affirming that a clear roadmap on grievance redres-



sal mechanism, including dispute settlement process, can help improve efficiency in public procurement, he said, “At the regional level, we have established the SAARC Arbitration Council (SARCO) to provide a legal framework within the region for fair and efficient settlement of commercial, industrial, trade, banking, investment, and such other disputes.”

The Secretary General also briefed the participants of the Conference about the South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO). SARSO was established in 2014 as a specialized body of SAARC with the aim to develop harmonized standards for the region to facilitate intra-regional trade as well as to have access in the global market.

The Conference, organized by the Kingdom of Bhutan in collaboration with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, ended on April 25.

BUSINESS BRIEF

NEA Promotes Shrestha, Koirala And Rathi As DMD



Bigyan Prasad Shrestha, Madhav Prasad Koirala and Om Prakash Rathi are promoted to Deputy Managing Directors of Nepal Electricity Authority. Board of

Nepal Electricity Authority has promoted three directors to the post of deputy executive directors on the basis of their seniority.

Shrestha and Koirala are currently working as chief executive officers of Upper Tamakosi Hydropower Limited, and Chilime Hydropower Company Ltd. Rathi is heading Company Management and Inspection Directorate.

According to news published in Urja Khabar.com, an online portal specializing in energy sector, the board of director also posted all three in same offices as they have been working. Having worked in Upper Tamakosi for almost seven years, Shrestha, who has been taking the position of CEO for the last two years, is working to complete 456 MW hydropower project. His plan is to operate first unit by December 2019 and 98.7 percent of the work has already been completed.

Having a long experience of working in Chilime, newly promoted Koirala has big challenges and responsibility to complete four hydropower projects which are under construction. Similarly, Rathi is also a very capable engineer of NEA who has successfully completed his tenures in various positions under NEA.

NIBL Ace Capital Launches Free DEMAT Account

NIBL Ace Capital has launched Free DEMAT account, supporting the 'One Nepali, One DEMAT account' Campaign by Government of Nepal. The offer has started from Baisakh 1, 2076 as a limited time offer. The free DEMAT Account is offered from NIBL Ace Capital, Lazimpat, Kathmandu and its branches and from the branches of NIBL Bank.

NIBL Ace Capital Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Nepal Investment Bank Limited, has been functioning as a Depository Participant under CDS and Clearing Limited since 2014. NIBL Ace Capital is also a licensed merchant banker and fund manager from the Securities Board of Nepal (SEBON).

Apart from facilitation as a Depository Participant, NIBL Ace Capital also renders a comprehensive and wide range of services in the field of registrar companies and currently serves around 14,00,000 shareholders of 40 registrar companies from



NIBL ACE CAPITAL
Managing shares. Managing investments.

various sectors such as Commercial banks, Development bank, Finance, Life Insurance, Non-life insurance, Micro-finance, Hydropower, Manufacturing and processing and others. In addition, NIBL Ace Capital renders services in the field of fund management that include the NIBL Samriddhi Fund and the NIBL Pragati Fund, Portfolio Management Services, and Issue & Sales management services.

In addition to this, it is the first company amongst its peers in the industry to cross the highest number of DEMAT accounts with more than 170,000.

Issuing the statement, NIBL Ace Capital has also introduced call centers and promised to provide many more services that would ease their valued customers.

World Bank To Support Scaling Up Renewable Energy Options

The Government of Nepal (GoN) and the World Bank signed an agreement to scale up renewable energy options in selected regions of Nepal in partnership with the private sector.



The agreement was signed by Shreekrishna Nepal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of the Government of Nepal and Bigyan Pradhan, Acting Country Manager on behalf of the World Bank.

Total of USD 17.21 million will be spent during four-year period of the Private Sector-Led Mini-Grid Energy Access Project, of which the World Bank will finance total of USD 7.61 million (Approx. NRs 84 Crore 52 Lakhs) through its Strategic Climate Fund (SCF) comprising of SCF Grant of USD 5.61 million and SCF soft loan of USD 2 million. Similarly, Government of Nepal will contribute subsidy of USD 6 million and the remaining USD 3.60 million will be contributed by the private sector. The project will provide renewable energy to 126,000 rural people and support more than 80 businesses through micro/mini-hydro and solar subprojects in Nepal's rural areas. The project will be implemented by the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPCC), the government's nodal agency for renewable energy promotion in Nepal.

"We are thankful for the support of the World Bank in launching this milestone project to encourage commercial financing of renewable and off-grid energy systems in Nepal," said Joint Secretary Shreekrishna Nepal. "This project will demonstrate that the private sector led model is feasible in mini-grid development and GoN is committed to engage private sector in development."

According to a press release issued by the World

Bank, under the Project, private entities and cooperatives will be mobilized to provide electricity services to rural areas as “energy service companies” (ESCOs). These specialized ESCOs will crowd-in financing capacity to develop, build, own and operate renewable mini-grid projects. Commercial banks are a key partner who will assume credit risk of the subproject loans to ESCOs once they are eligible and selected to participate in the Project by AEPC. The credit facility component of the Project is in turn supported by a technical assistance component for stronger project development support to the mini-grid sector, ESCOs and partner banks to ensure sustainable implementation beyond the life of the project.

Nepal Needs To Clear Its Agenda To Present In BRI

Former vice chairman of National Planning Commission and former ambassador to U.S. Dr Shankar Prasad Sharma said that since the BRI is an evolving process, onus is on Nepal to negotiate terms that are beneficial to us.

“Whether the financial support will be in the form of loan or grant, if it is loan then what would be the interest rate and what would be the terms and period?” queried Dr. Sharma.

At a function organized by SAWTEE-Centre for Sustainable Development on China’s Belt and Road Initiative, experts pointed out various options during a roundtable discussion.

The event was organized to add to the discourse on how to align Nepal’s development plans with the China’s multi-regional connectivity initiative—the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The BRI basically is an infrastructure investment program creating a web of transportation system including roads, railways, telecommunications, energy pipelines, and ports across regions.



Dr. Sharma called attention to the ambiguities present in the project financing modality for the projects to be included in the BRI.

Gyan Chandra Acharya, former

Under-Secretary General, United Nations and head of SAWTEE-CSD, pointed out that it is evident that Nepal till date does not have clear vision on how best to proceed with the BRI, hence, discussions like these could be instrumental in shaping the future courses.

Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, Chairman, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), pointed out that much of the BRI discourse is only dominated by infrastructure issues, but there should also be focus on being integrated to Chinese value chain through investment.

Hyatt Regency Kathmandu Launches Aperitivo

Hyatt Regency Kathmandu has Launched Aperitivo. This is a simple idea of meeting up with friends over a drink and enjoying canapés.

According to a press release, it says, “Enjoy a relaxed, early evening atmosphere with an aperitif and Italian antipasti at the Poolside. Chef Santosh Kumar has created a special menu which includes varieties of bruschetta , vegetarian & non-vegetarian slider , arancini, fried calamari, stuffed mushroom, polenta onion ring with a sweet ending with zucotto.

Time : 4.00 PM - 7.00

PM Venue : The Terrace ,

Hyatt Regency Kathmandu

Day Every Friday Rate : NPR 1,111 per person plus taxes for a glass of complimentary beer and canapés.



Fourth ATR72-500 Aircraft Joins Yeti Airlines’ Fleet

Yeti Airlines announce that the addition of a fourth ATR72-500 aircraft with MSN 754 to it’s fleet. The aircraft with Nepalese Registration no. 9N-ANC arrived at TIA Kathmandu on April 26, 2019 after it’s ferry flight from Bangkok, Thailand. It’s sister ship MSN 740 will be joining Yeti Airlines in May 2019 pushing the number of ATR72-500 aircraft in our fleet to five.

“We hope this will help Nepal achieve the target of 2 million tourist arrivals for the ‘Visit Nepal 2020’ year,” said Yeti Airlines in its press release.

The ATR72-500 is a twin-engine turboprop aircraft manufactured by the French-Italian consortium ATR. With it’s superior build and performance the ATR72 has become one of the most successful regional carriers in the world, steadily expanding and entering into new global markets.

The ATR72-500 is powered by two Pratt & Whitney PW127 engines and are equipped with Hamilton Sundstrand composite blade propellers. These high-tech engines and propellers ensure exceptional performance, fuel efficiency, remarkably low noise and low greenhouse gas emissions.

Well known global operators of the ATR72-500 aircraft are Air New Zealand, Aer Lingus, SAS, HOP!, Azul, Bangkok Airways, Indigo, Malindo Air etc.

Yeti Airlines commenced it’s flight operations from 1998. Besides the ATR72-500sit also operates a fleet of five BAE Systems Jetstream 41 aircraft. Along with Tara Air, it’s sister airline which operates two Dornier Do228 and four DHC6 Twin Otter aircraft, Yeti Airlines operates the widest network of flight routes in Nepal.



Belt & Road

President Bidya Devi Bhandari expresses Nepal's unflinching support to Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

BY A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when a group of people are questioning Nepal's decision joining Belt and Road Initiative arguing that BRI as a debt trap, President Bidya Devi Bhandari has expressed Nepal's unflinching support to BRI.

During her first state visit to China, seven agreements were signed between Nepal and China in presence of President Bhandari and President Xi.

Following the bilateral talks, President Bhandari and President Xi witnessed the signing of a total of 7 bilateral agreements between the two countries. The list of the agreements is as follow: Protocol to the Agreement on Transit Transport, Handover Certificate of Grant-Aid for the Repair and Reinforcement Project of the Existing China-aided Projects, Agreement on

Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters, Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation on Standardization, Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation, Minutes of Meeting on Strengthening Assistance Cooperation in the Field of Livelihood in the Northern Region of Nepal and Agreement on Preventing Theft, Clandestine Excavation and Illicit Export Import of Cultural Property.

At a time when Nepal is unable to easily access ports in southern neighbor, it is yet to see how Nepal manages the most difficult one.

"The Belt and Road Initiative is emerging as a key driver for poverty alleviation, employment generation, infrastructure building and industrial transformation, and expressing the

confidence that BRI will support the process of economic transformation in Nepal by expanding connectivity networks and supporting the country's economic integration into the global market," said president Bhandari.

The Second Belt and Road Forum concluded in Beijing with the release of a Joint Communiqué titled Belt and Road Co-operation: Shaping a Brighter Shared Future. In the Joint Communiqué, the leaders from participating countries expressed their support to build on the progress already made in developing economic corridors and economic and trade co-operation zones in various countries, including the Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network and Nepal-China cross-border railway.

In the Joint Communiqué, the leaders vowed to support, among others, policies and activities that help land-locked countries transform into land-linked ones, including by strengthening connectivity and co-operation on transit arrangements and infrastructure. They also highlighted the importance of special and differential treatment in international trade for developing countries, and reaffirmed their commitment to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

She addressed the Leaders' Roundtable of the Second Belt and Road



Chinese President Xi (Left) & President Bhandari (Right)



Forum for International Cooperation, expressing the view that the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is possible only through enhanced co-operation among nations, the President stated that the objectives of development and prosperity as emphasized by the Belt and Road Initiative closely correspond to the Sustainable Development Goals for achieving transformative, inclusive and equitable development outcomes.

“The Belt and Road Initiative is emerging as a key driver for poverty alleviation, employment generation, infrastructure building and industrial transformation, and expressed the confidence that BRI will support the process of economic transformation in Nepal by expanding connectivity networks and supporting the country’s economic integration into the global market,” said president Bhandari.

“Nepal is a country of the high Himalayas. These high peaks serve as the heat sink during the summer and heat source in winter. Forming an integral part of the organically linked ecosystem, they are a common heritage of humanity. Also, there is tremendous potential in developing clean energy in Nepal through hydropower. It can greatly contribute to the green development of Nepal as well as its neighbors,” said president Bhandari.

“It is a matter of happiness that Nepal, which was connected to the southern route of the ancient Silk Road, is now linked with Belt and

Road Initiative. We believe that this Initiative will support the process of economic transformation of landlocked Nepal by expanding its connectivity networks and integrating its economy into the global market. We expect that Belt and Road Initiative will greatly contribute to eradicating poverty, deepening and expanding trade, revolutionizing industries, creating jobs and improving the living conditions of the people by increasing economic opportunities.”

There is a Chinese maxim: building roads is the first step towards prosperity. We are now creating the necessary foundations to realize the long-term goal of development and prosperity. In this context, we have laid primary emphasis on the development of Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network under Belt and Road Initiative.

On Nepal China

She said that Nepal and China are neighbors and close friends, sharing a long history of friendship and cooperation. Geography, culture and traditions bind our two countries and peoples. “We are trustworthy friends. We have been faithfully conducting our relations on the basis of the ‘Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence’.

Our relations are trouble-free,” said president Bhandari.

“Our commitment to One China policy is strong and unshakable. We have taken concrete measures to ensure that our territory is not used for

any activities directed against China.”

Economic transformation is our priority agenda. We have to move fast to realize people’s ever exorbitant expectations. We do not have luxury to waste time and energy. Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali is our national resolve. Our development efforts keep our people at the centre.

“China is our most trusted and reliable development partner. Government and the people of Nepal always appreciate the Government and the people of China for their continued support and assistance to the socio-economic development endeavors of Nepal.”

She said that BRI has opened the additional windows of opportunities for investment. I would like to urge the Chinese entrepreneurs and businessmen to tap the opportunities.

“We welcome substantial Chinese investment in every sector. Protection of investment is our responsibility. We have accorded top priority to facilitate Chinese investment in Nepal.

“Government of Nepal has announced the year 2020 as Visit Nepal Year. We expect qualitative rise in the number of tourists from our next door neighbor,” China.

“If a large number of Chinese tourists can make their holidays in faraway lands, why cannot Nepal be made the most favored destination? Chinese friends will not miss their homes while in Nepal. We need your cooperation for greater publicity of Nepal as a tourist destination. We welcome investment in tourism infrastructure.”

Despite a growing anti-BRI opinion in some section, President Bhandari has called Chinese investment for better and prosperous Nepal. It is yet to see how more Chinese investment is lured and how Nepal’s other immediate neighbor and other western countries view this.

Trade Talk

The Marrakesh Agreement on establishing the World Trade Organization, WTO, states in its Preamble that the parties (member states) relations in trade and economy should be conducted with the purpose of raising standard of living, ensuring full employment, increasing real income, and ensuring effective demand creation and expansion of the production of and trade in goods and services. And, such relations should allow for the optimal utilization of available resources to attain sustainable development.



BY MADHU K MARASINI

It has further emphasized the need for a positive effort in all the developing countries and specially in the least developed countries, to secure a fair share in growth and international trade that meets with their needs of economic development. Against this backdrop, this short article initiates a discussion if the spirits of the Marrakesh Agreement have been translated into action and accomplished the objectives /outcome in Nepal's international trade since her accession into WTO.

Nepal became a member of WTO in 2004. She was the first least developed countries to take WTO membership by accession. Prior to this, Nepal had also taken initiative for accession into the General Agreement on Trade and Tariff, GATT in 1989 by submitting her desire, and had received an observer status since then.

Fifteen years on since joining the WTO in 2004, it is timely to look in retrospect if Nepal is close to achieve the spirits and objectives as mentioned earlier. While doing so, this article also acknowledges that Nepal's international trade or the post 2004 development impacts in Nepal, are contingent upon many factors, of which becoming a member of WTO is a part of the whole gamut.

Nepal joined the WTO with a natural expectation that this platform would be helpful for Nepal to attain the long overdue broad-based economic growth by reaping the benefits of liberal trade policies and regulations based on WTO framework. Necessary reforms in legal and regulatory framework were carried out meeting the WTO commitments. It was also expected that Nepal's bilateral transit trade relations with India and other neighbouring countries will be more supported by the international agreements and conventions. Along with carrying out reforms in laws and procedures, Nepal started cutting tariffs to fulfill the commitments made while entering into WTO.

These reforms were important departure in Nepal's economic and trade policies, which reinforced the policy prescriptions of Washington Consensus and Structural Adjustment Programs implemented at the behest of IMF and

the World Bank in the 1990s. The policies of import substitution were gradually replaced by liberal import policies. Protections and quotas were in general abolished. The termination of WTO Agreements on Textiles and Clothing in 2005, and phasing out of Multi Fiber Agreement by the US, hit hardest Nepal's thriving garment industry before it was able to stand on its own foot and be competitive. Gradually,

Nepal started losing her trade competitiveness. Trade deficit widened year after year, with a direct bearing on declining manufacturing and job opportunities, among others.

The post 2004 trade implications can be overserved in a table below. As presented in the table, the overall volume of trade has been increasing over the years; the trade to GDP ratio has increased from 33.7 percent in FY 2005/06 to 44.1 percent in FY 2017/18. However, this increase is dominated by surging import and deteriorating export. The import that was Rs. 160.68 billion in 2005/06, jumped to Rs. 1326.52 billion in 2017/18. However, the export stagnated and increased merely from that of Rs. 59.78 billion in 2005/06 to Rs. 81.33 billion in 2017/18.

The export import ratio, which was 1:2.7 in FY 2005/06 leaped to 1:15.3 in FY 2017/18. The share of export to GDP went down from 9.1 percent in 2005/06 to 2.7 percent in 2017/18.

Generally, a sharp increase in import is not considered a problem when a country is at developing stage. It can be an indication of the economic expansion. Specially, if

the import is of industrial raw materials and of the capital creating goods, then it will add on economic transformation; industries grow and production will rise; more jobs will be created and people's income will increase. The import will also give the customers more choice with comparatively at a lower price. However, such a rising import should yield to increased domestic production and export. In Nepal's circumstance, the post 2004 trade data clearly shows that the surging import has instead eroded the export. The worn export sector resulted in a shrinking domestic production. The manufacturing sector which was around 9 percent of GDP during the early 2000 has dropped to around 5.5 percent currently. According to the Economic Survey, 2017/18, the growth in manufacturing sector was averaged merely at around 3 percent in the last decade. The unemployed population continues flocking to Middle East or other potential job markets abroad.

The alarming trade deficit has placed major chal-



lenge to attain the improved living standard through trade and economic endeavors, to ensure for employment, and increase in real income through effective demand and expansion of production, as aspired while joining the WTO. Though there has been some noticeable improvement in social and human development sector, yet due to a low per capita income, which is at little over US\$ 1000.00 in 2018, Nepal still remains as one of the least developed countries. The low per capita income has been the major obstacle for Nepal to graduate from LDCs status.

The Trade Policy, 2015, also admits that Nepal's trade deficit is widening even after joining the WTO. Though the membership of the WTO had extended opportunities for easy market access for Nepali products with some special and differential provisions of Duty Free Quota Free to the developed markets. However, various non-tariff measures particularly SPS and TBT related provisions imposed in destination market hindered expected market access for Nepali products.. WTO membership also provided a platform to negotiate and secure better market access. Nepal could not stand strong in this field either due to capacity and other constraints. The mobilization of technical and other assistances, as well as trade preferences available under the WTO framework for least developed countries, could not be adequately utilized for various obstacles so as to narrow down the gap.

Thus, it is a subject of a critical examination where Nepal lagged to take benefit from the available technical assistances and preferences by WTO such as DFQF market access and other regional and bilateral mechanism such as SAFTA, and whether such available supports were sufficient to withstand Nepal's competitiveness in international trade. Additionally with the reductions or elimination of tariffs by many countries and introduction of new system of DFQF preferences margins to LDCs like Nepal have been eroded making products of such countries further less competitive in importing markets.

The lessons learnt so far strongly suggest that for certain years positive differences and trade preferences are

necessary along with full priority to domestic production enhancement through value chain development efforts. Reciprocity or one size fits for all approach cannot help to an economy that is not yet competitive enough. This has to be also considered by our major bilateral trading partners: India and China, which have emerged as global giants with scale productions and heavy subsidies in many of primary products. As the custodian of rule based international trade, the WTO itself should retrospect its support to Nepal, identify the constraints, and find a way out in collaboration with the Government of Nepal. The causes thus have to be scrutinized. Though not in isolation, but in a holistic manner.

We could notice that the Government has been pursuing various institutional and legal reforms to improve the overall trade and investment climate. Major trade and investment related laws have been enacted or in the last leg of enactment. One Stop Service Centre has been established to provide hassles free and predictable services to the potential investors and businesses. The investment summit targeted for foreign direct investment to meet the funding gap in the economy has been concluded successfully. Approach paper for the 15th periodic plan, that lays the foundations not only for growth and development for the next five years but also for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, has recently been approved by the national development council. This is a high time that the WTO and the international development partners such as the IMF, World Bank, ADB, including the major bilateral trading partners such as India, China, and USA, extend their preferential supports to revert Nepal's ever widening trade gap and bring it into a sustainable path. Thus, only the pragmatic and country specific supports by international institutions and major bilateral trading partners will help translate the spirits of the Marrakesh Agreement into action and results.

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal. Views expressed are personal.

On the auspicious occasion of 64th anniversary, we firmly commit to assist in maintaining equitable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth of the nation by developing efficient financial system with formulation and implementation of effective monetary policy.



Nepal Rastra Bank

Meeting Deadline

Upper Tamakosi Hydropower Project Needs To Complete By December 31

By A CORRESPONDENT

Missing its deadline twice due to several reasons, Upper Tamakosi Hydropower Company, along with Nepal Electricity Authority, is now in no mood to extend another deadline. The more the time the project will take, the cost will escalate further. With a strategically higher value in hydropower, the completion of the project will be a game changer in energy sector in Nepal.

This the reason all the concerned officials, including the minister of energy, water resources and irrigation, are making all-out efforts to complete the project in 2019 at any cost.

In the presence of Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority and chairman of Upper Tamakosi Hydropower Ltd Kul Man Ghising, contractors agreed to start the installation of Upper and Lower Vertical Shaft within this month.

With instructions from the Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Barsha Man Pun, who set a new time table to generate electricity by the end of December 31, MD Ghising paid an inspection visit at the sites of the project and held several rounds of meetings and evaluated the progress to fulfill the deadline.

During the inspection visit on April 21 and 22, the contractors said that they will start the installation of lower vertical shaft by May 5 and upper by second week of May.

Installation of pipes of Upper Vertical Shaft will start from the second week of May. Installation of the 372-meter long lower shaft is regarded

as the most difficult and challenging task. In the lower vertical shaft, there is the need to install various pieces of penstock pipes with a length of five meter and 27 tons. However, bent penstock pipes of tail sections have already been installed.

The process of placing the crane to erect the pipes in the lower vertical shaft is at a final stage. After looking at the slow work by Indian contractor Texmaco Rail & Engineering Limited,

ants.

Minister Pun directed last month to complete the project in the new timetable and directed NEA MD to pay the site visit monthly to inspect the progress. During the meeting the senior officials of all concerned parties were present.

“Since this project is constructed with the investment of Nepali people, every Nepali is keenly watching the project and expressing the concern

as to when it will complete,” directed MD Ghising. “The construction of power house has already completed and the turbines are waiting for water to charge. As a national priority project, Upper Tamakosi will bring positive changes in the country’s economy.”

CEO of Texmaco Rail & Engineering Limited GC Agrawal said that all the contrac-

tors are working in the project with a better coordination and complete the work in time.

During the meeting, they reviewed the progress in the installation of upper shaft and lower shaft penstock, dam, intake and settling basin. They also held discussions to test the dam, intake and sand settling basin, by filling water by the first week of June. MD Ghising called for the need to start the trial by the first week of June. He directed the contractor to complete concrete lining in the main tunnel as soon as possible.

Due to the earthquake, after-shocks, floods and landslides, Madhesh Agitation, design change and slow work of Lot 2 contractors delayed the project. According to initial plans,



which is responsible for supplying and fitting penstock pipes, Tamakosi Hydropower Ltd has handed over the work to ANDRITZ Hydro of Austria, a contractor of Lot 3, without additional burden to the project on January 7, 2019.

However, Texmaco Rail & Engineering has been doing all fitting works of upper vertical shaft on its own. Minister Pun visited the site on 23 March and directed concerned officials to regularly monitor the project works and sort out the problems in the field, if there is any.

The inspection visit and meeting of MD Ghising was part of that direction. MD Ghising held a meeting with project management, representatives of contractor companies and consult-

the project should have completed by 2016/17. Later it was amended with 2017/2018.

According to the current revised deadline, the project should start the generation from first unit 76 MW by December 31, 2019. The construction work is moving ahead following the revised deadline.

The project initially estimated the cost was Rs. 35.29 billion, excluding interest, during the construction period. With interest and bank commission estimated of construction period at Rs. 13.22 billion, the total initial estimated cost was Rs. 48.86 billion.

According to the current revised estimation, the cost reached Rs. 49.29 excluding the interest of the construction period. With Rs. 19.84 billion interest during construction, the total cost of the project is now estimated to be Rs. 69.59 billion.

In the project, Employees Provident Fund invested Rs.10 billion, Nepal Telecom Rs.6 billion, Citizen Investment Fund and National Insurance Company Rs. 2 billion each and the government agreed to invest remaining Rs.11.08 billion.

In the company, NEA has 41 and Nepal Telecom 6, Citizen Investment Trust and National Insurance Company 2 percent shares each. Similarly, 15 percent goes for public, 10 percent for Dolkha residents and employees of NEA. Other companies and depositors of Employment Provident Fund receive the rest of 24 percent.

NEA

Mission Possible

After the beginning of the trial of two chronic projects, Kulekhani III and Trishuli 3, NEA MD Ghising has showed that nothing is impossible

By A CORRESPONDENT

After the release of water in its tunnel and start of the trial of other units, 14 MW Kulekhani III, a chronic project of Nepal Electricity authority, is in the final phase of generation of electricity.

The case of Kulekhani III, a cascade project of Kulekhani I and II, was unique. Started eight years ago with an estimated cost of Rs. 2 billion, Kulekhani's cost nearly doubled in the last eight years. The project got delayed due to mismanagement and loose contract agreements.

For years, three chronic projects like Chameliya, Trishuli A and Kulekhani III were a major headache of Nepal Electricity Authority as these projects consumed almost decades to complete.

Just after assuming the post as MD of NEA, Kul Man Ghising launched his mission to complete a chronic project along with eliminating load shedding.

NEA Makes Rs.2.84 Billion Profit

At a time when some people are disseminating the news saying that Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has made over a billion rupees in loss, Auditor General, constitutional apex audit body, Annual Report of 2017/018 said that NEA's net profit has reached Rs Rs.2.84 billion. In its report, Auditor General said that NEA's financial condition is healthy.

Released recently, the report said that Reserve Fund and Collection Fund is now Rs.23.59 billion in credit compared to Rs.26.33 billion last year. The report says that ratio of profit margin has increased. Similarly, in ratio with liability and total spending, the losses in employees spending and distribution ratio have declined.

Auditor General's Final Auditing has shown that NEA is in a net profit of Rs. 2.84 billion 8.1 million. When Kul Man Ghising was appointed NEA's MD in August 2017, NEA was operating at a net loss of Rs 8.89 billion. Along with ending the decade-long chronic load shedding, Ghising is able to run NEA in profit due to his management capacity.



Under the leadership of Ghising, NEA has been making several efforts to control electricity loss and administrative and financial reforms.

MD Ghising released NEA's annual report in August 2018 predicting that the total profit will be over Rs.1.10 billion. The actual profit for the last fiscal year reached nearly Rs. 3 billion in the final audit. Progress made in controlling electricity loss, import from India, declining of ratio of electricity purchase from private sector, control in maintenance and administration cost, ending load shedding and effective implementation of financial restructuring are the reasons to run NEA in profit.

In the last fiscal year, NEA was able to reduce the electricity loss to 20.45 percent. The loss in generation, transmission and distribution has declined last year to 2.45 percent compared to previous year. Last year, the loss was 22.90 percent.

Furthermore, NEA has already reduced the electricity leakage by 15.45 percent in the last five months of the current fiscal year. NEA has set a target to bring the leakages by 18.5 percent in the current fiscal year. In the last fiscal year, transmission loss was 5 percent two previous years. It reaches 5.63 this year with increase of 0.63 percent. However, the distribution leakages reduced from 2 percent from 16.82 to 14.82. NEA has been launching leakage controlling, electricity theft, incurring remaining due and improvement of distribution transformer, distribution line and strengthening substation as a national campaign.

Moving Ahead

After the opening of the rebidding notice for the first package, Tanahu Hydropower Ltd has shown that it will complete the project in time

By A CORRESPONDENT

With the opening of the rebidding notice for the first package, three months of speculations and uncertainty over whether the project will complete on its schedule have come to an end.



Pradeep Kumar Thike

With a generation capacity of 140 MW, Tanahu Hydro Ltd has canceled the agreement with Italian Company CMC after the company did not start the work as per the agreement.

Thanks to mishandling of Melamchi Project and Ministry of Water Supply, CMC pulled out from all the projects in Nepal questioning security of foreign staffs and governance issue.

Tanahu Hydropower Ltd (THL) announced retender notice for construction of first package infrastructures. The construction works under first package includes dam sites.

According to the tender notice, the last date for submission of tender is June 9, 2019. Under this rebidding, the contractor has to build 140 meter height concrete dam, two tunnels to turn the rivers and temporary dams. For this construction, the concessional loan of Asian Development Bank and European Investment Bank (EIB) will be mobilized. According to managing director of THL Pradeep Kumar Thike, those bidders willing to take part in bidding has to submit Technical and Financial proposal simultaneously as the ADB's Single Stage to envelop

bidding procedure.

"After evaluation of technical proposal, the price bid of the only technically responsive and qualified bidders shall be opened after technical bid evaluation whereas the price bid of those bidders whose technical bid are not responsive and qualified shall be returned on open after the award of the contract," MD Thike.

The target of THL is to sign agreement with contractors on second week of October and mobilize successful bidders in the project site by second week of December. The project will be completed by second week of June 2024.

THL cancelled the agreement with Italian company CMC after it did

constructing office building, labor quarters, access road of the projects and other structural designing work.

Under the third package, 220 KV double circuit Transmission line will be constructed. THL has already signed the agreement with Indian Company KEC as part of the bid and the company has already mobilized its workers and is now conducting check survey. Rural electrification and work for environmental safeguard are part of it.

The total cost of the project is US\$ 505 million. Out of this ADB will lend \$150 million, JICA \$184 million, EIB \$ 80.5 Million concessional loan. Similarly, NEA and Nepal government will invest \$ 80.7 million.



not start work as per its bid agreement.

Chinese company Sino Hydro Corporation, which won the second package including electro mechanic and hydromechanics component supply, has already started work in the project sites. The company is currently

The contract agreement has already been signed for financial arrangements with different stake holders. After Kulekhani, Tanahu Hydropower project is the largest storage project to contribute power during the peak supply.

Rape Culture

The term 'culture of rape' was popularized by feminist writers and activists in the United States during the 1970s. It first appeared in print in the book 'Rape: the first reference book for women', published in 1974, which was one of the first books to talk about rape from the point of view of women's experiences. The purpose of this term is to show the tendency of people to blame victims for sexual violence and to consider male sexual violence as natural. Everything that is reasonable normalizes the acts of sexual violence and can be considered as part of a culture of rape. The culture of rape is an environment in which rape prevails and in which sexual violence against women is normalized and justified, both in the media and in popular culture. The culture of rape is perpetuated through the use of misogynistic language, the reification of the woman's body and making sexual violence glamorous, giving rise to a society unconcerned with the rights and safety of women.

A film with the title 'Culture of rape' which premiered in 1975 drew attention to how the media and popular culture spread major and erroneous beliefs about rape. The culture of rape describes a social and cultural problem where rape is accepted and normalized due to thoughts, beliefs, behaviors and social attitudes about gender, sex, and sexuality. It includes social messages that focus on how older men and women assume predefined gender roles in relation to sexual behavior. Nonetheless, we live in a world where sexual violence is a common experience, especially for women, a society in which girls grow up afraid to walk alone on the street. Men are not the only ones who rape and neither are women the only victims - there are men who rape other men and women who rape men - but what makes men the most responsible is that 99% of the violations reported are committed by men and less than 1% are women.

Clearly, this type of sexual violence is often suffered by women and practiced by men. Every 6 hours, a woman is raped in Nepal and only 1% of the aggressions end in a sentence. The number of reported rapes has increased by 256 percent in the past decade.

Many rape cases never come to court and this is due to the traditional patriarchal culture. Let's look at a few examples. The first example is that it is natural to give liquor to female friends in the hope of being able to engage in sex and when the female friend is unconscious, the act becomes part of the culture of rape. When mothers blame girls for posting sexy selfies and leading their sons into sin, when society believes that girls 'allow' themselves to be raped and when journalists substitute the word "sex" for "rape" – as if they are one and the same thing and we can call this, the culture of rape.

The most consistent behaviors and practices that create a culture of rape are acts of sexual assault, but there are others that also play an important role in creating this context. These include: sexual bullying in the form of bullying, harassment,



BY DEEPAK RAJ JOSHI

intimidation and threats to women and girls. Denying that rape is a widespread problem, blaming the victim, accusing the victim of lying, sexual objectification of women and girls etc. also play a major role in promoting the 'culture of rape'.

Rape culture also has some beliefs, assumptions and myths in our society. The objectification of women and these beliefs are crucial in our society. Cultural expectations that men have to force women to have sex and that women and girls want to be forced, the belief that men and

boys have a right to the bodies of women and girls and the socialization of girls who have a duty to serve the demands of male sexuality are all myths in our society which have are unreal and inaccurate.

We believe that rape is a daily occurrence that cannot be changed. We believe women and girls provoke sexual assault with their dress and behavior. Rape is a social problem and we have to find the social solution.

Media should learn the proper difference between terms such as 'known violation', 'date violation' and 'actual violation' to make false distinctions about the crime of rape.

We have to stop using rape as a point of the plot and for economic gain in film and television. We need to avoid video games with rape scenarios and songs and music videos that glamorize sexual coercion as the culture of rape is mainly composed of behaviors and practices, the way we think about sex and rape, the way we talk about sex and rape and cultural representations of sex and sexual assault.

If the resolution of the government, which lightly intervenes in a rape case, is taken into account, the government becomes part of the culture of rape. In other words, we are surrounded by a social and cultural environment in which sexual violence is justified in various ways. Blaming the victim, treating people as things, and minimizing or denying the damage caused by rape are symptoms of a society that strengthens the idea that it is normal and natural for men to have aggressive behavior in sexual relationships. Such a situation would not exist if it were not a system. Police are one of the most corrupt government institutions in Nepal. Often police officers not only participate in concealment and neglect of crime, but are also involved in the crimes themselves. In the Nepalese patriarchal society, where women are subjected to tremendous pressure to comply with male rules, they remain silent. Those whose permission does not slack off are often punished brutally.

At times like this, women also need to create collective strategies, find ways out of fear. Women are taught not to trust another woman because of the patriarchal culture, and this ends up generating isolation. The women of our society need to build networks of strengthening and care, collectively in the form of women movement.

(Full Article www.spotlightnepal.com)

“There Is Every Reason To Celebrate The 1st Of May 2019 Proudly And Full Of Hope”

As Nepal is celebrating May Day organising various programs ANNETTE SCHLICHT, Resident Representative of Friedrich Ebert Foundation Nepal spoke to New Spotlight on various labor related issues. Excerpts:

As FES Nepal has been supporting to build and strengthen various trade union Organisation, Nepal is celebrating May Day calling to defend the lawful rights of workers. How do you see the changes in Nepal?

Since the restoration of democracy in 2006 and even before, the Nepalese labour movement has not only been a key driver of political change but also succeeded in enshrining social and economic rights in the 2015 constitution. In 2017, the constitutional requirements were specified by the adoption of a new labour law and a law on social security, which were developed through extensive consultations with workers' representatives. Therefore, I reckon there is every reason to celebrate the 1st of May 2019 proudly and full of hope. Still looking ahead, organisational and political challenges for the Nepalese trade union movement will not become less. On the contrary, their future strength will depend on whether they succeed in positioning themselves at all levels of the decentralised state as representatives of the interests of the working population and in achieving real improvements in social security, job creation and the implementation of core labour standards. Furthermore, external factors can have profound effects on the strength and existence of trade unions in Nepal. These include foreign direct investments in Nepal, such as those planned by China within the framework of BRI as well as the establishment of special economic zones.

Despite the legal and constitutional guarantee, the issue of social security and safety remains unresolved in Nepal. How do you suggest to improve the situation?

It is clear that Nepal still has a long way to go when it comes to ensuring social safety and security for all. Nevertheless, one should not disparage the existing legal and constitutional provisions, especially considering that only 27 per cent of world's population has adequate social protection coverage and more than half lack any coverage at all. Successfully introducing social security schemes entails dealing with a lot of implementation challenges such as low quality of services and accessibility as well as

coverage gaps. Additionally, lack of coherence between macroeconomic/fiscal policies and social protection schemes may contradict good intentions. In view of this difficulties, one has to congratulate the Nepalese government for the steps it took to introduce a social security scheme last year. Stemming from the German tradition of social partnership, we will definitely support our partners from the trade unions to facilitate future developments keeping an eye on safeguarding workers interest.

With the promulgation of new constitution and formation of a new government, the government has announced some key measures for social security and social welfare, how FES-Nepal can support in the process of implementation given its own experiences?

As an organisation based on the values of social democracy, issues of social justice such as social security and social safety are, of course, key areas of FES in Nepal as well as of FES on the global level. As a political foundation with strong links to the German labour movement, we are convinced that trade unions have an important role to play in shaping the social, economic and environmental conditions in a given country. In that sense, we see our role in strengthening democratic and independent trade unions as legitimate representatives of the interests of working people. This includes democratic organisation and financial autonomy by broadening the membership base. In Nepal, a special concern is to help trade unions to organise informal sector labourers and migrant workers and advocate for their concerns. Additionally, Nepalese trade unions benefit from the vast regional and global network and joint events which FES organises together with regional and international umbrella organisations such as the International Trade Union Confederation or the Global Unions Federations.

How do you see the gender perspective in Nepal's labor issue at present?

Applying a gender perspective on an analysis of the labour force concerning qualification, payment, affiliation



to economic sectors as well as breaches of human and labour rights provides important insights for all actors in the field of labour issues including trade unions. For Nepal, one can state that the majority of women, although their labour force participation does not differ substantially from that of men, are working in less productive sectors such as agriculture and services. This means that they have a lesser chance of qualification and decent payment. Furthermore, they are disproportionally often victim of human and labour rights violations, be it forced labour, child labour, or human trafficking. Against this backdrop and seen from a trade union perspective, gender issues should be high on the agenda. Still, only around 15 % of trade union members in Nepal are female. This certainly is an important future task as well as a potential for the labour movement in order to increase its organisational power.

How your observation on women's leadership in labor moment in Nepal?

During its 4th Congress in Copenhagen 2018, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) endorsed equality as one of its four pillars of action for the coming four years. All trade unions which are members of ITUC committed themselves to reach 40 per cent in women leadership until 2022. As ANTUF, GEFONT and NTUC, the biggest trade union federations in Nepal are all members of ITUC, I guess that they will intensify their efforts

to increase the number of female leaders within their organisations. As is the case in many trade unions around the globe, trade union leadership in Nepal at the moment is predominantly male.

In the context of growing foreign direct investment, how do you see Nepal's labor law?

Even if foreign direct investment is growing, it is still on a quite low level with proposed FDI not more than 15 per cent of GDP. Furthermore, it is concentrated in few sectors such as hydropower and mainly coming from two countries, i.e. China and India. In view of this situation and taking into consideration that a so-called positive investment climate depends on a number of parameters such as the condition of the infrastructure, policy stability, legal structure, capacity of the banking and financial sector, human resource profile, responsiveness of bureaucracy and internal security, I estimate the role of the new labour law in this context as negligible. The more interesting question is, how soliciting foreign direct investment can equally lead to a qualification initiative resulting in a skilled productive labour force which attracts investors and ensures a decent life for the workers.

Building Resilience

JICA completes reconstruction of a number of schools and infrastructure

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Japan International Cooperation Agency JICA Nepal is celebrating its fifty years in Nepal, its contribution to Nepal's all round development is being widely appreciated. From building infrastructure like road, drinking water and hydropower to agriculture, education and disaster, JICA has been there in all areas.

Its contribution in post-earthquake reconstruction is visible all over the earthquake affected areas in livelihood, school buildings, heritage reconstruction, roads and bridges.

As the reconstruction of building and infrastructure continues, Japan International Cooperation Agency JICA Nepal has published a photo book capturing some of the major accomplishments in the last four years.

A total of 236 schools are being reconstructed in 6 districts (Gorkha, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dadhing, Makwanpur, and Lalitpur) with JICA support.

"We feel happy that we are going to school and pursuing our education, thanks to JICA. Our school buildings are stronger, making us feel safe and secure. In addition, learning is fun now, as our school is well equipped with not just classrooms, but also good facilities like separate toilets for boys & girls and we now have a library too," said a middle school student from Dharmodaya Secondary School in Mirkot, Gorkha.

JICA has assigned two heritage restoration experts at the Department of Archeology to support rehabilitation of three temples in the Kathmandu and Patan Durbar Squares. Japanese technical knowledge is transferred to the government counterparts on a day-to-day basis through collaborative work.

JICA's Community Mobilization Program successfully promotes collective reconstruction by rural house owners. As of March 2019, 46,004 (over 80%) houses have been rebuilt in JICA's target areas.

About 1,500 people in the earthquake hit communities in Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk have received livelihood recovery support through a JICA project. About 80% of the beneficiaries were

women, taking part in such activities as vegetable and maize production, goat raising, and quality seed production.

In Ampipal Hospital, Palungtar, Gorkha, a seismic resilient Outpatient Department (OPD), completed in December 2018. It provides medical services to the people of Ampipal and the surrounding areas. More than 200,000 people are expected to benefit from this new building. This is one of the 22 priority public facilities in Gorkha reconstructed through JICA's Quick Impact Projects (QIPs).

Bridges in Gorkha JICA has built five new bridges along the road connecting the central Gorkha and the epicenter region around Barpak, to help expedite reconstruction and recovery in the surrounding communities which were not accessible during monsoon. The local

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Japanese Cooperation in Nepal (1969-2019). This occasion thus assures stronger ties between Japan and Nepal with better partnership and cooperation in various development efforts.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is a governmental agency that coordinates official development assistance (ODA) for the government of Japan. JICA is one of the world's largest bilateral aid agencies with a network of 100 overseas offices and projects operational in more than 150 countries. It is chartered with assisting economic and social growth in developing countries and for the promotion of international cooperation. In accordance with its vision "Leading the world with Trust," JICA is



people prefer calling the new bridges as "Japanese bridges."

Since immediately after the devastating earthquake struck Nepal in April 2015, JICA has been supporting the Government of Nepal and its people in the post-earthquake recovery and reconstruction, by pursuing the principle of Build Back Better (BBB). Although reconstruction efforts are still ongoing, this photo book aims to capture some of the major accomplishments in the last four years.

advancing its activities around the pillars of a field-oriented approach, human security and enhanced effectiveness, efficiency, and speed.

JICA supports the resolution of issues in developing countries through flexible combination of various types of assistance.

A total of 236 schools are being reconstructed in 6 districts (Gorkha, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dadhing, Makwanpur, and Lalitpur) with JICA support.

KING BIRENDRA-AS I KNEW HIM

Honest Revelation

Late Narendra Raj Pandey's book King Birendra-As I Knew Him is an honest and credible observation about late King Birendra

By KESHAB POUDEL

Many persons served in Royal Palace during the reign of late King Birendra but only a few have published a book based on their personal conversation with him. Late Narendra Raj Pandey's recently published book *King Birendra-As I Knew Him* is a book which narrates the conversations with King late Birendra honestly.

Having served in the Royal Palace Secretariat in different capabilities and positions before retiring as Principal Secretary, late Pandey's integrity and honesty are unmatched. Although his junior brother Dr. Devendra Raj Pandey, who stood against monarchy for long, no one questions Pandey's faith and integrity towards monarchy.

Like his elder brother Dr. Mri-gendra Raj Pandey and junior brother Dr. Devendra Raj Pandey, former ambassador to People's Republic of China Narendra Raj Pandey has maintained the family's decorum to speak honestly whether somebody likes or dislikes it.

This is what one can find in the off-the-record conversations with late King Birendra in the recently published book on King Birendra. Although Nepal has been declared as having moved from monarchy to a republican system, the views of King

late Birendra compiled in the book will be very useful to understand Nepal and Nepal's issues.

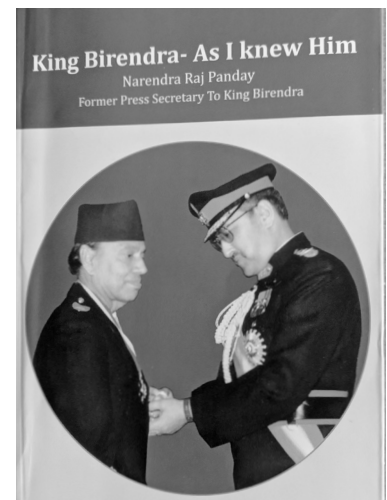
"Late Narendra Raj Pandey's book: *King Birendra - As I Knew Him* is in an unusual style proving interesting insights. A section on Birendra's Off-the-Cuff Observations is fascinating and relevant even today forcing me to be surprised to find my 20-year old comments! In his second tweet, Gyawali said late Narendra Raj Pandey's book *King Birendra - As I Knew Him* has a chapter on "Birendra's Off-the-Cuff Observations" like Dibya Upadesh 2. Read it."

After late Birendra's Guru of Harvard University, professor Francis G. Hutchins, who described late Birendra as Dhruva, Pole star. Professor Hutchins, in his book *Democratizing Monarch*, a memoir of Nepal's King's Birendra, writes, "Like Dhruva, Birendra seems certain to remain a fixed point of reference." As the pole star, Dhruva is also called Graha-dhara, pivot of the planets, to which the pole star is thought to be linked by invisible strands of nurturing influence."

Late Narendra Raj Pandey's book proves it, for example, Dipak Gyawali's tweets back Professor Hutchins and late Pandey that King late Birendra was genuine. Even after

fifteen years of his death, there are so many relevancies on his opinion. As King late Birendra, late Pandey's honesty, integrity and punctuality will be remembered through the book. We have decided to reproduce some important components of the book.

As Nepal is celebrating seventeen years of death of King Birendra, this book reveals many personal opinions.



Name of the book: *King Birendra-As I Knew Him*
By Narendra Raj Pandey
Published By Nalini Pandey, Asim Pandey and Anjan Pandey
Price Rs: 300.00

From the book

Independently and objectively recorded by author late Narendra Raj Pandey, former Press Secretary to King Birendra, there are so many interesting and relevant statements of King Late Brenda's in the book. We have decided to bring some interesting and relevant thoughts.

Brenda's Off the Cuff Observation

Foreign Affairs

Nepal expects her friends abroad to show understanding for her desire to preserve her independence, sovereignty and independent identity.

Nepal has learnt to live with its neighbors. It is a historical fact.

Our institutions are vulnerable with two big neighbors. If our friends understand this, it will help.

Nepal with her two big neighbors on the north and the south, is influenced by the Tibetan and Gangetic Plain's cultures.

We are aware of the possibility of Nepalese soil being used against one or the other neighbor of Nepal and we realize that it is detrimental to our interest. The Government is acting on it, but yet to see how effective it can be because the Mafia is involved in such activities.

There should be two-track diplomacy always. One is through the normal or formal channel, the other is outside the formal channel, a channel through which one can get many things

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done. Differently expressed- one over the table and the other under the table. One is not complete without the other.

Relations have to be conducted at two levels-one government agencies or bureaucracy and the other is at the people's level so that the people feel inclined to come out in support whenever the need to be played properly. Else, it may backfire, so due thought has to be given to this aspect.

As a landlocked and least developed country, Nepal has many constraints, but she has learned to live with them. We should not mix personal relations with state-to-state relations.

Countries like South Korea could be a channel to beam message to the west.

State visits provide opportunities to generate goodwill and to renew contracts and establish new ones which should be able to capitalize on.

Nepal with her two neighbors has to struggle constantly to maintain her identity. If Nepal's friends understand this, then they will understand a lot of things about Nepal.

The world today has not experience to go by as to what happens after a Cold War.

Nepal India Relations



Nepal has to face difficulties when she took things for granted in Nepal-India relations. We don't want to repeat it. While some issues of Nepal-India relations may be publicized or even politicized, there are issues

at times that warrant observance of strict confidentiality from both sides.

Windows of opportunity have to be constantly watched and not missed.

We have to work much harder when the tension is low.

It was our own behavior to give India undue importance or lift that has made them expect of us such things. Since we have been accepting them on that role we are to blame ourselves. So better we tame ourselves.

Unlike political parties or government of the day, Monarchy views Nepal-India relations from a long-term perspective and wishes to see it develop on an enduring basis lasting for generations, learning from experience.

If India had accepted the Zone of Peace Proposal, Nepal would have been obliged to comply with India's request to check the alleged ISI operation from Nepal.

India's cooperation should be solicited in curbing anti-monarchist activities of organizations of domiciled Nepalese in India, which reportedly have links with anti-monarchist leftists organization in Nepal.

Both Nepal and India have to be watchful of elements who, as a part of their political game, cannot see good relations between the two countries.

India has to take measures that will help her win the confidence

of the Nepalese people.

There is a tendency in Nepal to compare Nepal's relations with one neighbor as against with the other.

Paper writes anything. We should not conduct diplomacy through papers.

Being neighbors, things get exaggerated. Even small things are at times blown out of proportion.

Nepal China Relations

The Institution of Monarchy wants to see Nepal-China relations develop on a long term basis where political parties and leaders have a short term approach.

As a small country, what Nepal should be careful about in its dealing with other countries is that our loose talk or comments on sensitive issues do not create unnecessary uneasiness in our relationship. It is perhaps more true in our relations with China. Nepal should always be alert as how the growing importance of China in the world affects her perception on Nepal.

Nepal has always appreciated China's understanding of her relations, her independence and sovereignty.

Western countries are using Tibet and the Dalai Lama to create confusion in Nepal-China relations.

Nepal Japan Relations

Japan should help Nepal neutralizing the pressures from her neighbors, if she is to help her develop economically.

What are the prerequisites Nepal should fulfill to attract Japanese assistance in her economic development efforts.

It is interesting that what Nepal is going through currently (1990s) is similar to what Japan had to undergo at one time. If it was US in Japan's case, it is India in Nepal's.

Nepal Thailand Relations

Thailand is one of the countries that helped Nepal, a landlocked country, to open up.

Nepal-France Relations

Nepal has always appreciated France's support for her identity and sovereignty.

Nepal Britain Relations

Nepal Britain Relations were established in battlefield and developed.

Nepal Israel Relations

In Nepal, there is a great deal of admiration for the way Israel has struggled for her identity and sovereignty. Nepal's decision to have relations with Israel was guided by a principled stand.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

Ten years is long enough a period for SAARC to evolve into a delivering mechanism from talking shop.

How serious are India and Pakistan in SAARC's neighborhood all having gone nuclear, how would this affect SAARC in short, medium and long term?

People have started questioning the output of SAARC.

More serious thought needs to be given to what the objectives of SAARC are to be, and secondly, what are the prerequisites in terms of structure, human and other resources to achieve those objectives. This has to be clear.

At SAARC Summits, Nepal always discouraged group meetings or meal engagements and insisted on either exclusively bilateral or with all seven attending for fear of being accused of groupism.

If all seven of SAARC have a common voice, it naturally car-

ries more weight in the international arena.

The concept of SAARC was first broached by Nepal with Sri Lanka in 1980 during the state visit. Later, it was shared with Bangladesh. President Ziaur Rahman agreed and wanted to Nepal take the lead which was politely declined. Instead Bangladesh was asked to initiate the matter with other South Asian leaders. India (Indira Gandhi) did not say 'no', while Zia ul Haq of Pakistan said if it was Nepal's idea, he would go for it. Nepal declined Bangladesh's offer to take the lead because she was interested in the end result and rather than on credit-taking. So, she preferred to act behind the scene.

When SARRC Was Established the objective was to afford the head of state or Government an opportunity for some form of interaction on a regular basis so that there was more rapport between them because historically we have had problems for lack of proper communication. This was the understanding. Like all regional ventures, all the countries in SAARC must get rid of the historical legacies we have inherited.

SAARC is the outcome of the concern shown by all countries of the region for the betterment of the lives of their peoples.

Nonalignment

Questioning the validity of the Non-aligned Movement will continue.

At the beginning when there were two superpowers and decolonization was an issue, the Non-alignment Movement was a school of opinion, a pressure group or a lobby, which could consider specific issues, although not really able to achieve specific objectives.

Royal Nepal Army

Do you have an independent army commanded by your people? This was one of the questions the United Nations had asked Nepal to prove her sovereignty when she had applied for membership of the world body.

Whether one likes it or not, a martial nation like Nepal with the kind of geopolitics and open border cannot go the Costa Rican way.

The role that has been assigned to the Army is in the areas of environment, roads, relief and rescue works as well as politically supporting the system by giving into action when called.

Monarchy

On matters relating to the Institution of Monarchy or on issues of core national interest, it becomes the duty as well as the responsibility of the King to invoke the constitutional rule of being consulted especially when the matter is brought to attention.

Given the prevailing international situation and the internal bickering within among the parties why would the institution of monarchy be interested in going through the headache of interfering with the government's day to day work or trying to assert exercise power.

Monarchy does not play like a politicians.

Monarchy should avoid involving itself in matters related to political leaders and parties.

Nepal should be alert that there are constant attempts by foreigners as well as by some Nepalese to undermine Nepal's national institutions that can hold the nation together. Such institution include among others, the Monarchy, the Constitutional organs and the Royal Nepalese Army.



Presenting credentials as the Ambassador to People's Republic of China



Monarchy -is-a threat syndrome still prevails at some level. This is the reason monarchy is holding back. it cannot come down this level politicians. it prefers to take its own time and let them get rid of this syndrome.

In multiparty dispensation, a monarchy cannot be anything but a constitutional monarchy. Else, it will be seen as taking sides among different schools of thought.

The Monarchy has to work with whoever is the prime minister. He represents the government. Monarchy has to back him.

Monarchy's interest is to see the multi-party democracy consolidated in its true sense. It is willing to play its role in a constructive manner in the process.

Monarchy's only interest is to safeguard nationality, sovereignty and to see the people happy with an improvements in the quality of their life.

Democracy

Nepal never had any problem with democracy. The way it is practiced may differ. Sometimes, it fits, but other times one many have to make adjustments. For instances, if you have copied the British system, it is a system where coalition government is almost unthinkable.

How to make everyone work within the norms of democracy is the difficult that Nepal is facing today.

In a multi-party democracy, you want to see an effective opposition in place. When you talk national government with no opposition, there will be no safety valve which may create many other problems.

What kind of democracy is it where so much emphasis is given

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to rights and nothing is mentioned about responsibilities?

It is said that democracy in Nepal is in infancy, but the truth is that it is the leaders who are behaving as infants.

Democracy, human rights and liberalization, which the West have emphasized are like body, mind and spirit (spiritual). A balance of the three is essential for smooth functioning. In Nepal's context, how is this balance maintained?

Politics

In politics, you say a lot of things but cannot deliver all. That is the problem with many developing countries. When the government gets embroiled in power struggle, staying in power becomes priority number one. In this situation, laws don't get enforced, nor are necessary laws enacted. Thus, a vacuum is created which may not remain vacuum for long because the extremists can come to fill in it.

Institutions are the pillar. If they are weakened, there may be serious consequences.

The constitutional organs are meant to provide a mechanism to check the Executive. But, the existing system of selecting the members of such organs and the rules and regulations governing them hindrance in enabling them to discharge their

role freely and fearlessly.

In Nepal, even the Supreme Court is bogged down in a political issue.

Maoist

Using army to solve the Maoist problem is the last options. It means acceptance of defeat. If at all, Army is involved, it could go for logistic support which is essential to make the operation effective and that of only for a certain period of time. If one is to recognize that the Maoist problem is a security or political problem, then the Army is the wrong tool.

Both the Maoists and government or the political parties will try to involve the Institution of Monarchy in the Maoist problem. If the Maoist can drag the Monarchy in the front, they will think their objective achieved successfully. How to avoid or be spared of such a situation is a challenge.

To the Institution of Monarchy, a Maoist is first and foremost a Nepali, then only he is a Maoist. Same the case with other "ists".

If ISI can be accused of having links with the Maoists, there are indications that suggests the same about RAW.

सङ्घीयताको महत्वपूर्ण सारः मानव बेचबिखन अन्त्यका लागि जिम्मेवार र सहकार्य सहित गरौं खबरदार ।



नेपाल सरकार
सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मन्त्रालय
सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग

IMPACTS OF DAM

Fish Under Threat

As Nepal government plans to generate 10,000 MW of hydropower in the next ten years for domestic consumption and export, more than a hundred dams in the river are required to divert water and realize the plan. On the flip side, Nepal's fishes and aquaculture are sure to come under threat. Published by the Asian Development Bank, a study on the Impact of Dams on Fish in the Rivers of Nepal proposes various ways to preserve fishes while constructing the dams

By KESHAB POUDEL

Mai Khola of Ilam and Modi Khola of Parbat, Marsyangdi and Daraudi of Lamjung are examples of how the construction of casket hydropower dams are destroying aquatic life and fisheries.

With virtually no fish ladders and other such safeguards, fishes are disappearing from many rivers. As Nepal's demand for energy is growing, the exploitation of water resources for energy generation is natural but, on its flip side, aquatic life is coming under threat.

However, there is also the need to give equal weight to the conservation of ecosystem of the river, which is the lifeline of aquatic culture and lifeline of human livelihood. During the process of Environmental Impact Assessment, promoters have agreed to give due attention to these aspects.

The reality is different in the rivers. With the construction of dams, hydropower uses all the water in generating power, not discharging even a drop.

These are not the only examples. Except for a dam like Babai Irrigation Project of Bardia district, starting from Kosi to Gandak, all the dams

constructed during the last six decades are unfriendly to aquatic life and fishes.

As the numbers of dam have continued to increase in the recent years, they are virtually wiping out the fishes of the rivers. Despite the mandatory provision to include fish ladders and fish friendly system, promoters including Nepal government pay a little attention on it.

As Nepal has been moving with a grand target to generate 10,000 MW of hydropower by 10 years for domestic and export purposes and planning to build more dams to irrigate land, Nepal's river eco-system and fisheries are great threat for their existence.

Dilemma In Priority

If hydropower generation is the priority, the government has to choose the rivers with intense study about the fisheries and eco-system. Based on the nature and kind of fishes, the government has to allow promoters to dam the rivers.

The government should come with the priority, keeping in mind the needs to preserve eco-system as well. Nepal needs energy and water for irriga-

tion as well as to protect the endangered fish species as well.

The dam of Babai shows how to manage the fishes and water for irrigation purposes. With functional fish ladders, Babai is conserving fishes and providing water for irrigation.

Kali Gandaki Hydropower has a well developed fish hatchery. However, it is not properly functional due to lack of budget. In promoting the fisheries, Kulekhani has been one project helping protect fisheries.

Nepal needs to exploit the water resources to meet the demand of energy and water for irrigation but there is also the need to give a proper attention to aquatic life and eco-system of the rivers.

Although Nepal's Environmental Impact Assessment has given clear guidelines to make the necessary arrangements to protect the fishes in the phase of construction of dam for hydropower projects.

Nobody follows the guidelines. During the EIA process, promoters have agreed to build fish ladders, release minimum level of waters and construct hatchery. However, nobody abides by



the commitments.

Recent Study

According to a recent study, hydropower projects build the dam with a fish ladder just to show that they have it. Those who are obliged to build fish hatchery have been the least concerned about the fishes.

Given the present state, ADB's study report prepared by Deepak Bahadur Singh, Senior Environment Officer, Nepal Resident Mission, ADB, and Dr. Deep Bahadur Swar, Consultant Fisheries Expert, is highly relevant.

ADB's Country Director for Nepal Mukhtor Khamudkhanov expressed the hope that a study report on the impact of dams and fish in the rivers of Nepal will open the door for more discussion and extensive research on this important topic.

Addressing a dissemination seminar on the study of Impact of Dams on Fish in the Rivers of Nepal ADB's Country Director Mukhtor Khamudkhanov said that the study will contribute to save endangered species of the Himalayan rivers.

"A broader understanding of the importance of a healthy fish habitat to maintaining balance in the ecosystem and food chain and generating economic and social benefits from fisheries will go a long way in promoting environmentally sustainable development," said Mukhtor Khamudkhanov, ADB's Country Director for Nepal.

"Special measures are needed in

hydro and irrigation projects in Nepal to arrest rapidly declining fish stocks in the country's rivers, according to a new study from the Asian Development Bank (ADB)."

The new study from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) assessed the impact of projects including the construction of dams on aquatic biodiversity and came up with several recommendations to save fish population in the rivers of Nepal.

"Early findings of this study suggest that the fish population in Nepal's river basins with dams are in sharp decline," said Deepak Bahadur Singh, ADB's Senior Environment Officer and co-author of the study.

"Some technical considerations while building dams or other such projects can go a long way in saving the fish population. Providing a fish ladder, building a fish passage, and a fish bypass channel, are some examples."

In addition, breeding fish in hatcheries and annually releasing them upstream and downstream of the dam to maintain their populations could also be effective, says the study. The study also recommends a "fish screening framework" for identifying the scale of impact on fish by a development project and adopting typical mitigation measures.

The study assessed the operation of selected hydropower and irrigation systems with dams to divert water. The systems included the Kali Gandaki, Marsyangdi, Middle Marsyangdi, Kule-

khani, Khimti, and Trishuli hydropower projects, and the Babai irrigation project. The study also reviewed international good practices, particularly in South Asia, on mitigating the impacts on fish while constructing projects with dams on rivers.

The study suggests that effective regional cooperation between Bangladesh, India, and Nepal could help conserve the valuable and threatened aquatic fauna by ensuring the animals' trans-boundary movements for feeding and reproduction. A few tributaries in each major river basin could also be declared aquatic life protection areas, or even a fisheries national park.

The study concludes that a strong legal provision and a dedicated government agency to enforce the rules and regulations are crucial in protecting fish habitat in the country.

Fish Diversity

As the rivers of Nepal are a significant habitat of many resident and short to long-distance migratory fish species, dams create barriers that restrict movement and many cases threaten species survival.

Along with biodiversity, Nepal is also known for its diversity in fishes. Acting Executive Director of Nepal Agriculture Research Center Dr. Tek Bahadur Gurung said the report prepared by ADB's team is highly important and worthy to raise the awareness about the importance of aquatic animals for preserving the river environment.

He thanked author duo Deepak Bahadur Singh and Deep Bahadur Swar for bringing a very detailed report on the fisheries in Nepal and the damage caused by the construction of hydropower and irrigation dams.

According to the study, IUCN Red List for fish and fauna in Nepal includes 21 rare and endangered fish species. At a time when Nepal has been in the process of building more hydropower projects by involving public and private sectors, these endangered species will be extinct if serious and proper safeguards and measurements are not considered for fish during the construction of dams.

As ADB is a leading multilateral development partner of energy sector, the commitment shown by the bank will

help balance development between fish species and hydropower projects.

“By virtue of being the second richest country in the world in water resources, export-oriented hydropower generation and food security through irrigated agriculture are two important catalysts that can steer Nepal toward prosperity. The country has initiated planning and construction of hydropower projects that aim to generate 5,000 megawatts of electricity within the next 5 years,” said Mukhtor Khamukhanov, ADB’s Country Director for Nepal.

“Major irrigation systems with inter-basin water transfer are being implemented to improve commercial agriculture. The majority of these projects need dams or barrages across rivers for water diversion. Dams are important to harness water’s potential to support economic growth but also pose environmental concerns, such as damage to aquatic habitats and blockage to the movement of endemic and migratory fish in river basins.”

“The water bodies of Nepal represent unique ecosystems that are highly rich in fish fauna. All rivers of Nepal drain to the Ganges in India, hence they are interconnected. Many short- and long-distance migratory fish species travel along these river basins during their life cycle,” said the report. “Some of them are believed to spawn in the Bay of Bengal and travel all the way back to the Ganges and reach the rivers of Nepal to complete their reproductive cycle. However, their movement is becoming seriously affected by the increasing number of dams along their migratory routes.”

Dams block fish movement and create reservoirs in a free-flowing river, which deteriorates water quality, alter the existing ecosystem, and damage spawning grounds of native fish species. Early findings of this study suggest that the fish populations in Nepalese river basins with dams are in sharp decline. The impact on aquatic biodiversity generally goes unnoticed when sufficient legal provisions and a dedicated government agency to enforce them are lacking. Gaps in research on fish in river basins of the

country and limitations to mapping their routes have made it difficult for decision-makers to locate dams at suitable places to avoid blockage of fish movement in interconnected river basins

Multiple dams have been constructed in the rivers of Nepal for diverting water for power generation and irrigation. The rate of damming rivers is expected to increase rapidly in the future to generate more hydropower and construct major irrigation systems. The rivers flowing through the varied ecological realms of the country host many indigenous rare and endangered fish species and other aquatic organisms, creating unique river ecosystems.

However, the aquatic fauna’s migratory behavior, routes, and range of movement for feeding and reproduction are neither properly studied nor understood. In the absence of this information, it is difficult to identify locations for dams on the rivers without significantly obstructing the animals’ migratory route. The past and ongoing damming of rivers have had huge

adopted in past projects and the recommended measures that proved to be successful. A fish biodiversity screening checklist was prepared to screen future development projects for impacts on fish biodiversity and to design appropriate mitigation measures, depending on the significance of the impact. The study also aimed to prepare a basis for future research on fish biodiversity in the rivers of Nepal to better understand the impacts and formulate appropriate mitigation measures.

Fisheries in Nepal are significant sources of food, nutrition, and recreation; this is a traditional way of sustaining life and livelihood. Recreational angling is rapidly picking up, with the presence of highly sought-after game fish species like the *Tor putitora* (Golden Mahseer) and *Bagarius yarrelli* (Goonch). A healthy fish habitat is vital to maintaining balance in the ecosystem and food chain and generating economic and social benefits from fisheries.

This requires a comprehensive approach for fisheries management,



environmental costs with serious and irreversible impacts, including the rapid decline in the population of many fish species. The Asian Development Bank conducted a rapid study and assessed the potential impacts of damming of rivers in Nepal on fish biodiversity.

The study reviewed the result of mitigation and compensatory measures for the protection of fish that were

including conservation of existing fish habitats, restoration, and sustainable commercial use. Fish habitats can be damaged in obvious and subtle ways and by big or small changes. For example, a fish habitat can be damaged by a large hydropower project or a poorly installed culvert that blocks the migratory route of endangered and vulnerable fish species.

COVER STORY

“Among the most common threats to fish habitats are those associated with damming of rivers for water diversion, which usually produce dry river stretches downstream from the dam, destroying the riverine ecosystem. Population depletion of fish species is not solely caused by dams, and many a biotic and biotic factors play a role,” said report.

“Increase of silt and contaminants in the water, formation of a reservoir on a free-flowing river, removal of sand or gravel from river beds, and industrial and municipal waste discharge are some of the other causes of destruction of fish habitats.”

The study recorded 223 dams at

several short-distance species such as *Schizothorax richardsonii*, *Puntius chelynoides*, *Tor tor*, and *Neolissochilus hexagonolepis* were also recorded in most of the rivers. *Schizothorax richardsonii* is “vulnerable” per the IUCN Red List and *Neolissochilus hexagonolepis* is “near threatened.”

It recommends reconsidering the government’s waiver of environmental impact assessment requirements for hydropower projects with up to 50 megawatt capacity. Strategic environmental assessments should also be carried out for important national policies, plans, and programs, including hydropower and irrigation policies and master plans, in order to look at rivers

High Mountains and alpine meadows above the tree line.

The wetlands have high cultural and economic significance. Nepal also has a high degree of agro ecological diversity. More than 6,000 rivers drain the country. The three major river basins of Nepal—Koshi, Gandaki, and Karnali—host about 230 species of freshwater fish and scores of zooplankton and phytoplankton, forming a rich and unique aquatic ecosystem.

“The river source (snow melt, spring, or rain-fed), topography (mountains, hills, and Terai plains), and associated change in climate (alpine tundra in mountains to warm and



different phases of development at different locations in the rivers of Nepal. A comparative study of environmental impacts and effectiveness of mitigation measures in 13 dam projects was carried out.

The results showed that all the dammed rivers are inhabited by *Tor putitora*, *Bagarius* sp., *Clupisoma garua*, and *Anguilla bengalensis*, as well as other fish that are important long-distance migratory species. Of these four species, *Tor putitora* and *Bagarius* sp. are listed under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List as “endangered” and “near threatened,” respectively. Similarly,

in an integrated basin wide context with interlinked fish movement paths. This information will help select the appropriate location of dams with the least impact on biodiversity.

There are 118 identified ecosystems in Nepal, including 112 forest ecosystems, 4 cultivation ecosystems, 1 water body ecosystem, and 1 glacier or rock ecosystem. These ecosystems range from the tall grasslands, marshlands, and tropical and subtropical broadleaf forests along the Terai and Siwalik Hills to the subtropical and tropical broadleaf and conifer forests in the Middle Mountains. Furthermore, there are mixed conifer forests in the

tropical climate in Terai) create great variation in river characteristics such as velocity, morphology, and temperature, which provide habitats for a variety of fish species unique to those particular ecosystems. The barrier effect of dams restricts seasonal fish migration to the upper reaches for spawning and feeding and returning back downstream,” said report.

However, due to the lack of baseline information on aquatic biodiversity in different river basins, there is a serious constraint in the ability to adequately evaluate the impact of such dams on aquatic resources and develop mitigation and compensation measures.

VISIT NEPAL YEAR 2020

Promoting Brands

Inviting social icons and celebrities, Nepal Tourism Board has started a unique approach to promote brands

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although seven months remain for Visit Nepal Year 2020 to kick off, Nepal Tourism Board has already taken several initiatives at national and international levels to champion the brands of different tourism spots of Nepal using celebrities and diplomats.

In the month of April, popular Bollywood actress Manisha Koirala completed her Everest Base Camp Trekking. With a large number of fans in Nepal and abroad, particularly India, her trekking was a major milestone to brand Nepal's tourism destinations in India.

After completing her trekking, she shared her trekking experiences with journalists recently. Posting her pictures of Everest base camp through social media like Twitter and Instagram, Koirala disseminated the information about trekking on the trails of Everest.

Supported by Nepal Tourism Board to promote Visit Nepal Year 2020, she left Base Camp on April 7, along with two of her Indian friends, and returned after a week.

Along with Koirala, Canadian Ambassador to Nepal Nadir Patel also made his Everest trekking, terming his experiences to Everest Base Camp adventurous and memorable. Having visited other parts of the world as well for trekking, ambassador Patel's experiences were also shared globally through social media.

As over 30,000 thousand tourists from Canada visit Nepal annually and there are possibilities to increase the numbers, the base camp training has its own importance in the context.

Of late, CEO of Nepal Tourism Board Deepak Raj Joshi has been taking several efforts, including us-

ing high profile persons, in tourism promotion. Koirala sent a tweet that said the aim of her trekking was to promote Visit Nepal Year 2020 and thanked Nepal Tourism Board for grand preparation. She used social media widely to express how it helped refresh her.



A cancer survivor, Koirala's recent adventure trekking was another milestone. Along with this trekking, NTB is also supporting an Everest Expedition by mountaineers from Nepal, India and China.

With a target to bring in two million tourists by 2020, the government had announced the campaign last year. However, there is still the need to do a lot of work, which includes promotional activities like the current one.

After the announcement, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) and the private sector have been preparing for the campaign.

The government has allocated Rs. 100 million in fiscal year 2018-19 for the campaign.

Chairman of the campaign committee industrialist Suraj Vaidya said that the committee has prepared a few programs in association with

the private sector that have to be implemented before the current fiscal year ends.

The campaign will mostly focus on promoting new tourist destinations and digital marketing of the project. Besides, the campaign will also focus on selling old destinations with new experiences.

Along with the committee, NTB's initiative to popularize the brands and destinations will help the mission of 2020 to bring two million tourists in Nepal.

Seven Decades

As Nepal and France are celebrating the seventy years of establishment of diplomatic relations, they are showing common things that link the two countries

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although Nepal and France are far away in terms of geography, there are many things to link these two countries not only at the official levels but also at the people to people level.

Even before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries, Nepalese officials had made efforts to connect with France. Bhimsen Thapa had sent a delegation to meet French in 1812 in India.

Nepal's most powerful man of the 18th century Jung Bahadur Rana not only paid his visit to France on the way to England but also influenced by the legal system. After his return from his visit, he introduced civil code in Nepal, which is influenced by French legal system.

At the people to people level, renowned French scholar Levy was the first continental European to write a book on Nepal. During the time, the level of relations between Nepal and France grows even at the people-to-people level.

To show the existence of people to people relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Embassy to Nepal hosted a cultural event provided by the group Singhini Consort.

The group, which celebrated jointly organized by the French Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations between Nepal and France, large numbers of people including high government official, Kathmandu based head of foreign diplomatic missions, former ambassadors, business communities, French nationals living in Nepal

and people from different walks of life attended the program.

The Goodwill Ambassador for the 70th anniversary Shrinkhala Khatiwada, Ms. Nepal, also shared her thought on the importance of the relations and her recent visit to France and interest of French people towards Nepal.

The musical path of Franck Bernède, cellist and ethnomusicologist, is crossed and influenced by various currents/trends. Born into a family of musicians, he began his education under the direction of his father, the violinist and conductor Jean-Claude Bernède. He then studied with Alain Meunier and Reine Flachot at the National Conservatory of Music of Lyon as well as with Arto Noras at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki (Finland) where he was awarded his higher diploma. He completed his studies in the baroque music classes of Christophe Coin and William Christie at the National Conservatory of Music of Paris, where he obtained in 1985 a first prize in baroque cello. Since then, Franck Bernède has appeared in many European countries as well as in the United States, Japan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Taiwan. He has participated in many concerts and recordings in ensembles specializing in

Baroque selection such as The Concert of Nations (Jordi Savall).

Frank is actively involved in the field of ethnomusicology which he has been researching in India and Nepal for thirty years focusing on the bardic traditions of the Central Himalayas as well as on the music of the Newars of Kathmandu. Franck is the founder and director of the Singhini Research Center, an organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Himalayan music and dance.

Santosh Bhakta Shrestha and Bidur Rajkarnikar joined in a performance with Franck with Tabla and musical instrument Esraj. Santosh Bhakta Shrestha, born in 1975, began studying the musical instrument esraj at the age of 11 under the guidance of teachers Mohan Prasad Joshi and Krishna Narayan Shrestha.

Bidur Rajkarnikar began his musical studies under the direction of his father with whom he learnt the art of tablas and Newari percussion. He has been a member of the Singhini group since 2001.

Frank in a solo performance as well as in a musical collaboration with Santosh and Bidur have played various music showing how strong the people to people relations through music.



France And Nepal Share A Lot Of Values

This is a memorable day. 70 years ago, on April 20th 1949, France and Nepal established diplomatic relations. France was the 4th country to establish diplomatic relations with Nepal.

Four days later, on 24th, the French ambassador to India, Daniel Levi, came to Kathmandu to give his credentials. For today's ceremony, I am very grateful that the Hon. Foreign minister Gyawali is with us representing the government of Nepal.

I am also very grateful that Miss Nepal World 2018, Shrinkhala Khatiwada, accepted to be our goodwill ambassador for this year of commemoration, to express the voice of the civil society, of the young generation, the one who will be in charge after most of us.

To characterize relation between France and Nepal, I would like to employ an African proverb : "only mountains cannot meet". It means that human life is made of communication and is full of opportunities. But today I would like to say : "Nepal is the country where mountains can also meet". And, to illustrate that, I can give you some examples.

Allow me to remind you of the first famous French travellers who wandered on foot across these mountains : Sylvain Levi, Alexandra David-Néel, Isabelle Massieu.

Let's also remember the many researchers who have come here since the 60s :

- Corneille Jest, who surveyed wide areas of the western part of this country, and left maps, movies, hundreds of booknotes, which he shared with generations of students. Unfortunately, he passed away in January this year, and I would like to pay a special tribute to him.

- Gérard Toffin, a renowned expert amongst the French scientific community, on rural and urban Newar communities and Newari culture and architecture,

These are just two examples which highlight dedicated and impressive research of the region.

In that regard, I would like to mention two Nepali cities that are symbols of our common history :

- Panauti : not far from Kathmandu, where France and Nepal have had a long lasting shared history in the preservation of culture and heritage, and where we have a lot of friends,

- Salme in Nuwakot district : which hosted more than 40 French researchers during between 1979 and 1985,

- Next year we will celebrate the momentous ascent of Annapurna in 1950, led by Maurice Herzog and his French and Nepali climbing partners; Pierre Mazeaud, the French alpinist and politician was the first French national to climb Everest in 1978.

Let's remember how Eric Valli, the French movie maker, whose images of the Nepalese breathtaking landscapes received an Academy Award nomination.

Let's mention our very significant cooperation in the field of seismology: Nepalese mountains are interconnected through a network of 22 stations, to monitor earthquakes.

As you can see, the bedrock of our relation is people to people exchange. 500 French associations are actively engaged in relation with Nepal. I have met many of these people. Most of them come to Nepal initially for tourism and mountaineering, and then get engaged in various development projects. They are impressed by Nepali people who, despite difficult lives,



BY FRANÇOIS - XAVIER LEGER

continue to exude kindness, a sense of hospitality and their smile. They want to reciprocate this Nepali welcome. They are truly convinced that Nepali people have a lot of energy and a great potential, and that they deserve their support. In fact, let's say, they fall in love with Nepal.

The "French team", which comprises of the Embassy, the Alliance Française in Kathmandu and its board members, the French School, the Nepal France Chamber of Commerce, is fully dedicated in the mission in taking our bilateral relation to a high level.

The French community in Nepal is strong and supportive. Some have been living here for decades. All are true friends of Nepal. They were very helpful and compassionate after 2015 earthquake. I would like to convey my warm appreciation for that.

The Nepali friends of France are also very active. Those who live in France are very involved in bilateral relation and association activities. I have found their relationship with France personally very inspiring. I would like to commend their engagements, and to give a special mention to the Collectif France Nepal and the Nepal France Friendship Society who are our partners in advancing this People 2 People relation further.

My colleagues and I were deeply moved by the dozens of messages of sympathy we received after Notre Dame cathedral blaze on Monday. It reminded us of the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake, the resilience and the impressive willingness to rebuild collapsed monuments, that we could witness here : our love for cultural and spiritual heritage is one of the many elements Nepal and France have in common.

France and Nepal enjoy democracy and both countries guarantee freedom of opinion and freedom of speech; not to mention a vibrant media community. Both countries truly believe in independence, peaceful resolution of conflicts and multilateralism : our soldiers stand shoulder to shoulder in peace keeping operations.

On this solid bedrock, we can look forward with confidence to the next 70 years of shared community and friendship and to continue building together our relation.

- We can develop our political dialogue on world affairs : we have instigated political dialogue at the foreign secretary level and anticipate some high level political visits this coming year.

- We can facilitate more business opportunities, as we already have in the field of communication satellite, security printing, or urban transportation. We also held a very productive B to B seminar with the FNCCI just a few weeks ago. There are many such possibilities in the future.

- We can continue to promote culture and are working on facilitating an exhibition of remarkable Nepali art in Paris, an event which would no doubt raise the profile of Nepal as a cultural destination

So, at the end, you see, everything gets linked: mountain and people, friendship and solidarity, and common values. That is why I say : "Nepal is the country where mountains can also meet".

François-Xavier LEGER is the ambassador of France to Nepal. This is an excerpt of the remarks by Ambassador delivered on April 20th, 2019 during the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Nepal France bilateral relation.

Nepali Branding

FBPWN announces a fashion show on May 18

By A CORRESPONDENT

For the young Nepalese women entrepreneurs, renowned tourism entrepreneur, heritage lover and social worker Ambika Shrestha is a source of inspiration. Shrestha always backs young women entrepreneurs to make a difference in society, branding Nepalese product globally.

Whether through her tourism enterprise or through social work, heritage conservation, Shrestha has never spared time not to encourage youth to champion Nepali goods and products.

Chairperson of Federation of Business Professional Women - Nepal (FBPWN), Ambika Shrestha said that the forthcoming fashion show will promote Nepal made dress to the national and international markets.

“Our Hotel, Dwarika’s Hotel, has been using Nepali dress as official dress for a long time. I request all to promote Nepalese dress in respective organizations,” said Shrestha.

Addressing a press meet to highlight that a fashion show, Fashion From Home, is going to take place at Hotel Yak & Yeti on 18th May 2019, chairperson Shrestha expressed the hope that the event will be a grand one.

Under the leadership of Shrestha, FBPW has been organizing various programs in Nepal targeting

the women as per the mission of BPW. The International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International) was founded by Dr. Lena Madesin Phillips in 1930.

Opened in 1971, FBPWN was officially registered in 1975 in Nepal. It has been organizing various pro-

grams in Nepal.

may Pun also spoke at the press meet. BPW International is one of the most influential international networks of business and professional women with affiliates in over 100 countries in five continents. Its members include influential women leaders, entrepreneurs, business owners, executives,

professionals and young business and professional women.

BPW develops the professional, business and leadership potential of women through skill building, networking, advocacy, and mentoring around the world.

BPW International aims to unite business and professional women in all parts of the world to work for women’s economic independence, equal opportunity and representation in economic, civil and political life.

It also encourages and supports women and girls to develop their professional and leadership potential, undertake lifelong education and training and use their abilities for the benefit of others, locally, nationally and internationally.

The organization advocates for the elimination of all discrimination against women and for human rights and the use of gender-sensitive perspectives.



grams in Nepal.

“I want to see Nepal made products to take their own brand to the global level,” said Shrestha. Along with fashion, there will be a display of various Nepali products at Yak & Yeti Hotel.

FBPW – Nepal, with its Sustainable Development Goal, is organizing an event “Fashion From Home,” a fashion show, to empower Nepalese women and promote Nepalese products. Fashion From Home is going to take place at Hotel Yak & Yeti on 18th May, 2019.

General secretary Mangala Karanjit also said that this is a great opportunity to promote Nepalese dress in enterprises. Event coordinator Prati-

HAITI

Mission Compete

Nepal police officers return completing their role under MINUSTAH in Haiti

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Nepali Army and Nepal Police have retained their prestige working under UN Peace Keeping Mission, they maintained their prestige in the Haiti Mission as well. Facing ups and downs

MINUSTAH. The current contingent arrived in 4 April 2018 in the contingent location at Quarter Morin, Cap Haitian, Haiti.

Nepal as a police contributor to the UN: As of 28 February 2019,

in demonstrations.

Under this mandate Nepal Police carried out the activities during the last year by the contingent include joint operations, joint patrols, static security, escort of humanitarian aid to hurricane-affected area and escort for UN Conveys.

In a media interactions, MINUJUSTH spokesperson Sophie Boutaud de la Combe said that Haiti's Police force are capable themselves to handle the law and order situation now. With the support from MINUJUSTH, capability of Haiti's police have already developed and they are able to operate all police activities. She thanked Nepali Police for providing training for Haitian police under UN Mission.

She said that Nepali Police have trained Haiti's national police to handle humanitarian mission, control violent move and VIP's security, patrolling and other security related issues.

UN Police Commissioner Serge Therriault said that mission is successful to institutionalize the police in Haiti. Nepali Police Officer commander Sushil Kumar Yadav, operation officer Naresh Raj Subedi, language assistant Chakra Bahadur Shah and Female nurse Bijaya Deuja have played differing role during their stay.

Female nurse Bijaya Deuja said that she has taught the issue on how to handle gender based violence and sexual harassment issues.

In a Skype interview recently, commander Yadav said that Haiti has now a well trained police institution and police force to handle the law and order situation.



and controversies, Nepal Army 's UN Peace Keeping Mission successfully returned completing Mission.

After serving for almost two decades in Caribbean country Haiti, restoring order and launching the rescue and relief operation under United Nations Peacekeeping Mission, the last Nepalese police contingents of 140 members returning to Nepal on May 1.

Currently 140 police-officers are serving in Haiti to maintain law order and provide support to Haiti Police. Nepal's 1st contingent arrived in Haiti in September 2004 with

Nepal is the fifth largest Troop and Police Contributor Country (PCC) with 5,757 uniformed personnel deployed in different UN missions.

According to UN Mandate, area of intervention of MINUJUSTH Police accompany and advise the National Police PNH at the strategic, operational and technical level, with a particular focus on the areas of command, control, operational planning and administrative management of the units and to provide support through joint checkpoints with the PNH, patrols and crowd control in the event of

Inspiration To Youth

Industrialist Binod Chaudhary has made it clear that Nepali students can achieve global success

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when Nepalese students have been harboring an inferiority complex with waning confidence in global order, chairperson of Chauhdary Group Binod Chaudhary, who went to TU to complete his academic course, has made it clear that nothing is impossible.

“The students from Tribhuwan University can make a difference globally,” said Chaudhary.

Industrialist and chairperson of Chaudhary Group Binod Chaudhary suggested the students of Tribhuwan University to march ahead to meet the target leaving their inferiority complex aside.

Addressing 700 master’s level students of Tribhuwan University Central Department of Management, Chaudhary said that success in life depends on how one pursues determination.

He suggested students should decide their future destiny. “Today’s world is most important for the youth below 30 years as this group of youths has contributed to all achievements in the information technology sector,” said Chaudhary. “There are a lot of opportunities for the youth who are now in the room.”

He said that three S’s, Skill, Scale and Speed, are the most important indicators for success. “Your

university education should be for the achievement of these,” said Chaudhary. “If you are able to broadly implement the skill achieved in the university, then only you will be successful.”

He said that today the world is moving fast but the world cannot

from TU can make world class innovation. For this students need to aspire for it and follow it.

He gave many names of youths who have made achievements in the world and become member of billionaire club even before 30.

He said that the world is changing fast and its implication will also affect Nepal. Instead of people, there is a growing use of robots and technology and they will snatch the job of the youth. As the world is now under influence of artificial intelligence, it is likely that jobs will be cut down globally. He said that pilotless fighter plane, driverless cars and robots for workplace have already been innovated suggesting students to think one step ahead.

Industrialist Chaudhary said that there is the need of P2 or Pro-public politics in Nepali Politics and G2 or Good Governance. He said that the University has already produced prime minister, minister and civil servant, expressing the hope that the university will produce politicians to implement P2 and G2.

He also shared with students on world class successful brands like Waiwai and CG Hospitality.

Sharing experiences with the students, Chaudhary showed that his mission is now to inspire Nepalese youth to become globally competitive.



move in your own speed. Industrialist Chaudhary said that one needs to move at the speed of others. For this one needs to give up confusion and inferiority complex.

“It is not true that only those studying in high class universities attain success. I myself pursued my education in a TU-affiliated campus. If that was the case, I would not be a billionaire,” said Chaudhary. He cited an example of how a youth from Ukraine Jan Koum has made a great success, making WhatsApp. Even the students

Nepali On Top

Three Nepali Students Top Cambridge International Exam

By A CORRESPONDENT

As in the past, students from Rato Bangala School maintained their best performance in the GCE A Level. After a long tap, students from Malpi International School also found their place on top in the exam.

British School, St. Xavier and Xavier International have also achieved major success in the GCE A level. However, Chelsi International School has failed to repeat the success with no student listed on the top

Three students from Nepal won Top in the World award and fifty-three students in Nepal won Outstanding Cambridge Learner Awards for their exceptional performance in the June 2018 and November 2018 Cambridge exam series.

There has been a growth of over 40 per cent in the number of winners from Nepal over last year. The award winners from schools across Nepal were recognized for their impressive academic achievements at the Cambridge Outstanding Learner Awards ceremony, supported by the British Council, on 12 April 2019, at Hotel Himalaya, Nepal.

The ceremony was attended by Ruchira Ghosh, Regional Director (South Asia), Cambridge International, Satyajit Sarkar, Manager, Nepal and Bangladesh, Cambridge International and Jim O' Neill, Country Exams Manager from British Council Nepal, along with other representatives of the British Council.

Ruchira Ghosh, Regional Director, South Asia, Cambridge International, said, "We are thrilled by the performance of the students from Nepal and wish them the very best



as they move onto bigger things and adventures in life. We at Cambridge take great pride in our curriculum as it prepares the students for a great future and higher studies by giving them a deeper understanding of the subjects and enabling them to think independently."

Jim O' Neill, Country Exams Manager at British Council Nepal, said: "The year 2019 is a special year as we witness a history in the making with the highest number of award winners from Nepal ever and it also marks six decades of British Council in Nepal. The success demonstrated by the students is not just a validation of our efforts but also a motivation to everyone involved in education, especially the teachers and academic leaders. I thank all the students for their superb efforts and wish them well on the next step they take in Higher Education and in their careers. I also thank the Ministry of Education for recent clarification that the A levels

are equivalent to completing secondary education."

Three Nepali students Sakrit Karmacharya of Malpi International, Ritik Yadav of Xavier International College International and Prajita Budhathoki 'GEMS' Institute of Higher Education International topped the Cambridge World Series AS Level examinations of November 2018.

Under the World Series Karmacharya secured the award in Computer Science June 2018, Yadav AS Level Computer Science November 2018 and Budhathoki AS Level General Paper November 2018.

Others are: Best across Three Cambridge International a Levels Sakrit Karmacharya Malpi Institute First place June 2018, Best across Four Cambridge International AS Levels Aasish Rijal St. Xavier's College First place June 2018, Best across Four Cambridge International AS Levels Om Koirala Trinity International College First place November 2018.

VIKTOR PETROVICH SAVINYKH

Man Of Space

Watching Mount Everest from the First Flight To Space, Russian cosmonaut Viktor Petrovich Savinykh sees his visit to Nepal as the most significant

By A CORRESPONDENT

As the 85th Birth Anniversary of cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first living being to journey into outer space, is celebrated, Nepal's first satellite has started to send signals to Nepal.

What a coincidence, Russian Federation, a pioneer of space technology, presented a bust of Yuri Gagarin to Kathmandu Metropolitan city recently. At a function, the bust was installed at Sankhedhar Park. This bust is a courtesy to strengthening the bilateral relations between Nepal and Russia, which has been defined by mutual respect and cooperation.

Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City Bidya Sundar Shakya and Special Guest Cosmonaut Viktor Petrovich Savinykh, who has been twice awarded as Hero of the Soviet Union, installed the bust jointly.

The program was attended by M.S. Nekrasov, President, Russian Nepal Cooperation & Friendship Society, Yuri Yuzhaninov, Charge De' Affaires, Embassy of Russian Federation in Nepal and other high ranking delegations of Russian Federation.

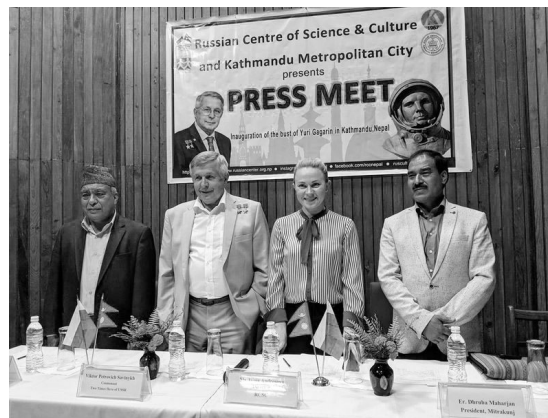
Russian cosmonaut Viktor Petrovich Savinykh said that he felt really great to be in a country of Mount Everest which he saw from space during his flights. Expressing happiness over the news that Nepal too has sent a satellite in orbit, cosmonaut Viktor Petrovich Savinykh said that it is a great achievement for Nepal.

He said that Russia is ready to provide necessary support to Nepal in space technology. "It will be a matter of pride for us to share our scientific knowledge with Nepal on cosmic technology," said cosmonaut Viktor Petro-

vich Savinykh.

Visiting Nepal as a guest to attend inauguration of bust of Yuri Gagarin, first human to reach space, cosmonaut Viktor Petrovich Savinykh shared his thought at Russian Center for Science and Culture.

With a collaboration of RCSC and Kathmandu Metropolitan City, the bust of Yuri Gagarin was unveiled near Rani Pokhari.



Selected as a cosmonaut on December 1, 1978, he was retired on February 9, 1989. During 10 years, he flew as Flight Engineer on Soyuz T-4, Soyuz T-13 and Soyuz TM-5. He has spent 252 days 17 hours 38 minutes in space.

Clearing the medical tests and getting selected for training to become a cosmonaut is the most difficult part, said Viktor Petrovich Savinykh, a Russian cosmonaut.

When Russia invited applications in 1960s to train and select cosmonauts, more than 500 persons turned up for the selection. Many were dropped during the fitness test and only 20 selected to undergo training.

Health and flying skills are the two important criteria to become a cosmonaut, he said.

In 1978 a six-member team was

selected to undergo training. Savinykh was one of them. His first mission to space was in 1981. The second one was in 1985 and the final one, 1988. Among the three, the second was the toughest trip to the cosmos, he said.

Sharing the details about the second trip, Savinykh said he and his team were sent to locate a space shuttle, which was lost in the orbit. There was no communication and signal with the shuttle, which was in orbit. The team with Savinykh traced the shuttle and, after a struggle for over two weeks, the problems in the space shuttle were identified and rectified.

During the first mission, Savinykh spent 75 days in space and in the second mission; his stay got extended due to the problems in the space shuttle. It took nearly 170 days during the second visit, he said.

Before the journey of human beings to space, Russia sent two canines and they successfully returned. Only after their successful return to the earth, Russia sent Yuri Gagarin and his team to the space.

Savinykh is visiting the country at the invitation of RCSC. A photography exhibition was also held on the occasion.

During the press meet, Director of RCSC Yuliya Androsova, Director of RCSC, said that cosmonaut Viktor Petrovich Savinykh visit to Nepal is taking place in very important occasion. She said that unveiling bust of Yuri Gagarin will be very important occasion in symbolizing good relations between the two countries.

Dhruba Maharjan, president of mitrakunj and Nahendra Pradhan, immediate past president of Mitrakunj also spoke on the importance of the day.

BHUTANESE REFUGEES

UD Ambassador's Visit

US Ambassador Randy Berry Visits Bhutanese Refugee Settlements

By A CORRESPONDENT

As the largest recipient of Bhutanese refugees, United States has been very important in resettling the Bhutanese refugees of Nepal. The recent visit of the US Ambassador to Nepal, Randy Berry, to refugee settlements in Jhapa and Morang Districts to gain first-hand impressions about the situation of Bhutanese refugees is a matter of importance.

The Ambassador was accompanied by Leah Zilversmit Pao, Deputy Regional Refugee Coordinator from the US Embassy in Kathmandu.

During the trip, Berry met with local officials, held discussions with representatives from UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration, and spoke with refugees to learn more about the issues affecting them. He also observed various livelihoods programs, including a mushroom farming initiative, designed to increase their self-reliance.

"I am very pleased to see the many ways in which this group of refugees is increasing its ability to pursue livelihoods, boosting its resiliency and contributing to the local community. This would not have happened without assistance from UNHCR, the Government of Nepal, other donors and the local community. Over the past decade, over 96,000 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled across the United States as our contribution to support their livelihoods. I am hopeful that dialogue between the Nepali and Bhutanese governments can lead to a conclusive solution of this protracted refugee situation," said Randy Berry, US Ambassador to Nepal.

The United States (US) is one of the major donors to, and an important partner of, the UNHCR in addition to being the world's top resettlement country for refugees.

Under the third country resettlement program, more than 113,000 Bhutanese refugees from Nepal have been resettled in eight countries, out of which over 96,000 were resettled in the U.S.

The other countries offering resettlement for Bhutanese refugees are Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The current Bhutanese refugee population in the two settlements of Beldangi and Sanischare is 6,626; UNHCR is working with the government, partners, and donors to pursue sustainable solutions for their future.

"Without the support of the Government of Nepal and the international community, the resettlement program for Bhutanese refugees would not have become successful," said Bushra Halepota, UNHCR Representative in Nepal, who accompanied the ambassador during the visit. "A special thank-you goes to the United States for their continued support."

Taking advantage of the space created by the success of resettlement program, UNHCR, together with government authorities and partner agencies, is working towards increasing access to local social protection services and inclusion of refugees in development planning in the spirit of "Leave No



One Behind" principle of Sustainable Development Goals.

Thanks to the support of the Government of Nepal and the local authorities, many Bhutanese refugees are now going to the same hospitals and access the same treatments as locals. Similarly, some refugee children are studying in the same public schools as children of the host communities.

The ongoing activities for the refugees and the host communities in the eastern Nepal complements the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December 2018, which calls for sustained commitment and engagement from all stakeholders for the well-being of refugees and host communities.

"Our focus now is on building synergies between the refugees and the host communities and providing timely support so that they can lead productive lives with access to health, education and job opportunities," said Halepota, adding "At the same time, UNHCR stands ready to support and facilitate dialogue between the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan for voluntary repatriation of Bhutanese refugees, who are willing to voluntarily return to Bhutan."

Constituency Development Fund: Learning From Past Experience



BY DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR

As the Ministry of Finance starts preparations for formulating budget for the new fiscal year BS 2076-77, lawmakers from different political parties have been lobbying for continuation of the controversial Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

CDF has been practiced in some of the South Asian and African developing countries, but the experience of such parallel funding arrangement has not been positive. In many instances including Nepal, there are negative impact on accountability and service delivery.

However, the lawmakers could not resist the temptation of managing and spending budget, which is not their job. They should rather focus on their primary task of law-making and policy formulation. Further, they should carry out the oversight functions to provide critical feedback and hold the executive accountable for the implementation of the budget.

Some of the lessons from national and international contexts:

CDF violates the key democratic principle of separation of power by giving the executive function of budget execution on the legislature. There is potential conflict of interest in continuing CDF, and possible conflict between local government and central government.

CDF violates the ideal of devolution and vertical separation of power. The local government units will not be adequately resourced and empowered, thus weakens federalism.

CDF has regressive effect on development as it divides the scarce resources equally between constituencies, not taking into consideration of the need

and potentiality. A number of studies have confirmed that the project selection under CDF is often driven by political interest rather than benefiting the most poor and disadvantaged communities.

CDF support ad-hoc projects and does undermine coherent local government strategy and programs to address underlying causes of poverty and inequality.

Lack of monitoring mechanism and internal audit of government function will further promote financial irregularities in such a loosely managed fund, which is not a part of structured fund-flow mechanism.

Overall, CDF does not strengthen the lawmakers, rather it will distract them from their core responsibility and instead make them accountable to the executive. CDF risks compromising the integrity of both the legislature and the executive.

We do not need CDF. Let us make the local governments stronger in the spirit of devolved authority, downward accountability, and inclusive development. Let us strengthen oversight role of legislature in results-based monitoring and financial compliances. Let us strengthen public financial management systems including internal controls and procurement at all levels.

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

CDF violates the ideal of devolution and vertical separation of power. The local government units will not be adequately resourced and empowered, thus weakens federalism.

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