



**OPINION**  
Dipak Gyawali



**INTERVIEW**  
Sarvendra Nath Shukla



**FORUM**  
Dr. Prabin Manandhar

# New SPOTLIGHT

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March 15 - 28, 2019

FORTNIGHTLY



DALIT WOMEN OF DOLKHA

## Devastation To Revival

INSIDE



**ADB PORTFOLIO REVIEW**  
Slow Progress



**BARDIA NATIONAL PARK**  
Best Destination



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## Whole Body Basic

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- **Heart Function Test:** ECG
- **Lungs Function Test:** Spirometry (PFT) on Plethysmograph
- **General Test:** Body Composition Analysis
- **Kidney Function Test:** Urea, Creatinine
- **Diabetic Test:** Blood Sugar Random
- **Liver Function Panel:** SGOT, SGPT
- **LIPID (Fats) Profile:** Cholesterol, HDL Cholesterol, LDL Cholesterol, Triglycerides
- **Complete Blood Count (CBC):** Hemoglobin, Packed Cell Volume, R.B.C Count, MCHC/MCV/MCH, Platelet Count, Total W.B.C/Differential Count, Platelet Count
- **Other Test:** Urine Routine Examination
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- **Diabetic Test:** HBA1C, Blood Sugar Random
- **Liver Function Panel:** SGOT, SGPT
- **LIPID (Fats) Profile:** Cholesterol, HDL Cholesterol, LDL Cholesterol, Triglycerides
- **Complete Blood Count (CBC):** Hemoglobin, Packed Cell Volume, R.B.C Count, MCHC/MCV/MCH, Platelet Count, Total W.B.C/Differential Count, Platelet Count
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- Precision Radiological Examinations:**
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- **Doctor Consultation**

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 For further information: 9864477526

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**Editor and Publisher**  
Keshab Poudel

**Associate Editor**  
Abijit Sharma

**Reporter**  
Dipesh Adhikari

**Photographer**  
Sandesh Manandhar

**Contributor**  
Sabine Pretsch

**Cover Design/Layout**  
Sahil Mokthan, 9863022025

**Marketing Manager**  
Madan Raj Poudel  
Tel: 9841320517

Nabin Kumar Maharjan  
Tel: 9841291404

**Editorial Office**  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: 977-1-4430250

**E-mail**  
spotlightnepal@gmail.com  
P.O.Box: 7256

**Website**  
www.spotlightnepal.com

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## Notes From The Editor



Three major political events of the last one week will have a significant impact on the future course of Nepali politics. The verdict of Kailali District Court handing down a life sentence to 11 people including Resham Lal Chaudhary, a lawmaker from the Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal, banning on activities of Nepal Communist Party led by Netra Bikram Chand and signing 11 points agreement with CK Raut are all have thier own implications. Rising as a champion of a populist nationalist slogan, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, who defied the suggestions given by internal groups and well wishers from neighboring countries, such as Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, to make the new constitution inclusive and without flaws, has been exposed to the people. Signing an 11-point agreement with Coordinator of the Alliance for Independent Madhes CK Raut, endorsing its demands for a separate state, Prime Minister Oli has exposed his own follies. Prime Minister Oli has claimed that the agreement signed with the coordinator of the Alliance for Independent Madhes Chandra Kant Raut, who led a separatist movement for years, is a big achievement. However, the interpretation of a sentence in clause 2 has created much controversy. Social media users, who treated PM Oli as favorable for his harsh comments, are now turning against him and calling Oli anti-national. Given Nepal's nature of politics, it is too early to predict any direction to the politics by the current outcry. As politics is very unpredictable in Nepal, what we have decided to look into is the life of Dalit women of remote Dolakha district who are in the process of recovery from the great earthquake. Launched by Lutheran World Federation Nepal, in collaboration with ELCA, the projects have made many changes in the life of Dalit women who face double discrimination, including their gender. As Nepal celebrated the International Women's Day, we have tried to bring up the transformation and change in the Dalit women of Dolakha district as our cover story of this issue.

**Keshab Poudel**  
Editor



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# A Peace Maker

*Defying All Odds, A Nepali Female Peacekeeper Is Serving In South Sudan*

BY A CORRESPONDENT

Lance Corporal Mina Thapa not only defied the odds by joining the army – a male-dominated field – but went a notch higher by accepting to be a part of the Nepali military peacekeeping force, she is now serving in South Sudan, far away from home.

For Mina, joining the army was an opportunity to live a childhood dream.

“As a child, I didn’t know whether women were recruited into the army, but my dream was to be a soldier and serve the nation,” she said with a gleam on her face.

Listening to her combat story, it becomes fairly easy to tell what the source of inspiration to join the army was for her.

“My father was also a military officer, so I got a lot of inspiration from him. The works of the military in our society also inspired me a lot,” she says.

Two hundred women applied to join the Nepali army on the same day as Mina.

Having the desire to join the military is one thing, but surviving through the drills and tough training, is another. Mina says it is not only the physical strength that many focus on. It takes a lot of mental and emotional perseverance.

“People think that women can’t work in the army. The training was very tough in the initial days of my career. But after some time, I and my peers got acclimatized with whatever we were being taught,” she says before adding, “This is what many in the army call dying a little.”

Soon, her combat work was to take her to serve on a foreign, UN peacekeeping mission.

“I was very happy when my organization selected me to serve on a UN Mission. I knew this would come with new challenges, but I would be able to fulfill my childhood dream of serving humanity,” she says.

Indeed, the challenges were to be enormous. Travelling the long journey from Asia to Africa, change in weather and diet, staying away from family, and being on the alert at all times are just a few on her long list of challenges.

“Before coming to South Sudan we had a Mission Specific Training and Peacekeeping (MSTP) at the military

mastered drill.

“Peacekeeping is a challenging job, but we perform our duties with utmost discipline as per the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan,” she emphasized as she unpacked her message to other women saying: “As women, we must believe in ourselves. We can perform all other duties in the UN cutting across peacekeeping and administration duties.”

How does she manage to juggle between her combat duties and family



school,” she explained.

Daily, Mina joins long and short distance patrols, keeps guard at the watch towers, town patrols, base patrols and other assignments as they come from her commanders.

Straight away to handling a gun, the speed and accuracy with which she unpacks and re-assembles a gun is a clear indication of a perfectly

responsibilities, one may wonder.

“My view is different. A military job is sacrifice,” she says, concluding, “To achieve your military goals, you must do a lot of self-sacrifice. All human beings are my family. Serving humanity gives me the courage to accomplish my duties and responsibilities.”

Courtesy: UN Information Center (UNIC)

## NEWSNOTES

### Chinese Ambassador Hou Yanqi Holds Women's Day Reception



Ambassador Hou Yanqi held the International Women's Day Reception in Kathmandu, Nepal. Tham Maya Thapa, Minister of Women, Children and Senior

Citizen of Nepal attended the reception as Chief Guest.

Radhika Shakya, spouse of Prime Minister Oli and spouses of other political leaders, female government officials, parliament members and representatives from Nepal, female diplomats to Nepal were present.

Ambassador Hou conveyed her best wishes to the guests, briefed women's achievements in China and the exchanges and cooperation between the two countries. She highlighted that China will work together with Nepal for the development of women's cause and contribute to the bilateral relations.

According to a press release posted in Chinese Embassy's website, Minister Thapa also expressed her best wishes and said that the Nepali government paid high attention to the protection of women's rights and would like to cooperate with the Chinese side to promote the development of women's cause.

### Indian Women's Association Organizes Music Concert

World's renowned violin Maestro Dr. L. Subramaniam and famous bollywood singer Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam performed their program in a Charity Music Concert in Nepal on 8th March, 2019.



On the occasion of International Women's Day, Indian Women's Association in Kathmandu organized a Charity Music Concert in Embassy of India, Kathmandu.

The Program was attended by over 1500 persons, covering different walks of life-politicians, artists, musicians, literary persons, students and media. Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

At the Programme, Dr. L. Subramaniam and Ms. Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam were accompanied by Atul Raninga and Frijio Francis (Keyboard), Vasant Kulkarni (Drums and Percussion), Alwyn Fernandes (Guitar), Keith Peters (Bass Guitar), Tanmoy Bose (Tabla) PNS Phalgun (Mridangist) and Vinay Vincent (Sound Engineer).

Dr. L. Subramaniam is an acclaimed violinist and is a world renowned personality in the field of instrumental

music. Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam is a famous bollywood singer who has recorded more than 18,000 songs in around 16 languages. Their group made this performance an entirely unforgettable experience. They enthralled the audience with their energetic, contemporary and classical portrayal of violin playing and singing which would be remembered by the audience for a long time.

### Second Annual Moot Court Competition Commences

Thirty law students from five law schools of Nepal and one from the United States are arguing on complex legal issues before distinguished judges at the Second Annual Moot Court Competition from March 8-9 in Kathmandu.



Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Competition on March 7, U.S. Ambassador to Nepal, Randy Berry said, "It's exciting to be among an energetic group of aspiring young attorneys who are ready to dive into this challenging competition where the results are not judged by flashy style and drama, but by the ability to effectively articulate sophisticated legal concepts both in writing and orally before panels of tough judges."

Supreme Court Justices Anil Sinha and Sapana Malla, and former Supreme Court Justice and Executive Director of the National Judicial Academy Top Bahadur Magar, also delivered key remarks at the event.

### EU Provides Equipment To Nepal Bureau of Standards

EU Ambassador to Nepal Veronica Cody has handed over the ownership of equipment worth over €1.2 Million (Equivalent to Nr.16 Million) to the Nepal Bureau of Standards & Metrology (NBSM) and the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC).

The equipment was provided under the EU Funded 'Trade and Private Sector Development (TPSD) Project', which started in September 2014 and runs until June of this year. It includes a range of state of the art laboratory testing and inspection equipment for, inter alia, food products, monitoring of taxi meters and ensuring the safety of gas cylinders used throughout the country for cooking.

"The equipment and technical assistance provided will help the Nepali government and private sector to ensure standards for food safety and security as well as standardizing measurements and calibration of other key products and services. This will raise domestic demand for products, as consumers are assured of quality and safety, and also allow Nepal to meet the standards required for export to the international market, thus contributing to increasing its trade and boosting the economy. The European Union





would like to see Nepal draw greater benefit from the EU's Everything But Arms trade regime. This regime, the most favorable of its kind in the EU, allows Nepal to export everything except arms to the EU on a tariff free and quota free basis," Ambassador Cody said during the handing over ceremony.

### Germany To Partner With Nepal On Governance And Economic Development

A parliamentary delegation from Bundestag, the German House of Representatives, paid a five-day official visit to Nepal from 1st to 5th March 2019.

According to a press release issued by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Kathmandu, this visit further strengthened parliamentary relations between Nepal and Germany, contributing to the long-standing bilateral friendship and cooperation that has lasted already for 60 years till date.

"We discussed with the international affairs committee of the Nepali Government to work towards further cooperation and to organize regular exchanges. We would



like to extend to them an invitation to visit Germany," said Tobias Pflüger, Head of the Delegation.

The members of the Delegation met President of Nepal

Bidya Devi Bhandari Prime Minister of Nepal K.P. Sharma Oli, Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali and Finance Minister Dr. Yuba Raj Khatriwada.

They discussed a wide range of topics, including the current federal and economic transformation of Nepal, Nepal's peace process and human rights, women empowerment and the necessity to increase access to high quality education for all as well as German-Nepali development cooperation and the upcoming investment summit.

During a two-day visit to Province 5 (Bhairahawa, Butwal, Lumbini) the delegation visited Lumbini Peace Park in Kapilvastu, the Raj Brewery producing Warsteiner Beer since 2017 and the future Gautam Buddha International Airport. With Shankar Pokharel, Chief Minister of Province 5 and representatives from the private sector as well as German development cooperation, they discussed the enormous potential for regional economic development.

Lumbini's potential as a tourism hot spot for South-Asia and beyond was touched upon. A visit to the Voca-

tional Training Academy of the Rabindra-Puri-Foundation in Panauti and the rich cultural heritage of Bhaktapur focused on heritage conservation and earthquake reconstruction. The delegation discussed possible support to the Prime Minister's efforts to promote Technical and Vocational Training.

### Japan Grant For School In Dadeldhura

Ambassador of Japan to Nepal Masamichi Saigo signed a grant contract for the construction of classrooms in Shree Mahendra Secondary School, Khalanga, located in Dadeldhura District. The grant contract was signed between the Embassy of Japan and Surendra Singh Ayer, Head Teacher of the school.



The Project for the Construction of Classrooms for Shree Mahendra Secondary School, Khalanga, Dadeldhura District, is funded under the Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Japanese Government. The total grant assistance is USD 81,465 (approximately NPR 9.2 million).

### Nepal's Federalism In Right Direction: Australian Ambassador

Ambassador of Australia to Nepal Peter Budd has said that Nepal's federalism is being implemented in the right direction. Ambassador Budd said that he is very optimistic about Nepal's experience. He said that implementation of federalism requires long experiences arguing that even Australia with 114 years of experience is still in learning stage.

Addressing a book launching program The Politics of Change: Reflections on Contemporary Nepal, the ambassador said that Australia is ready to provide support to Nepal to implement federalism.

Supported by The Asia Foundation-Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Partnership on Subnational Governance, the Politics of Change serves as a companion volume to 'A Survey of the Nepali People in 2017'

Meghan Nalbo, Country Director, The Asia Foundation, said that the book will help to understand the current trends of Nepal and said TAF will continue to work in this area.



## BUSINESS BRIEF

### NIBL Opens New Counter In KMC



Chief Executive Officer of Nepal Investment Bank Ltd (NIBL) Jyoti Prakash Pandey and Chief Executive Officer of Kathmandu Medical College Sinamangal Dr. Damodar Prasad Jointly opened the 11th extension counter of bank 111 ATM.

Now on KMC Teaching Hospital will open bank account in the name of child born in hospital and the bank will provide cake on the birthday of child after the account has minimum balance.

The counter will help to deposit money and payment. KMC received almost 30,000 patients in a month and there are almost 1000 doctors and employees. According to bank, opening extension counter in KMC, NIBL wants to strengthen its existing relations.

### Five Women Receive Hyatt™ WOW Achievers Awards 2019



Anuradha Koirala, founder and director of Maiti Nepal and Governor of province 3, has provided Hyatt™ WOW Women Achievers Awards 2019 to five out-

standing women of Nepal amidst a function.

Women from five categories were honored at the event, which saw the participation of a distinguished panel that helped select the honorees. The honors were presented in the following categories: - Entrepreneurship - Arts - Social Activism/Service - Leadership - Inspiring Woman of the Year Awards.

Those women included Pradhan (Entrepreneurship), Akanchha Karki (Arts), Sita Adhikari (Leadership), Padma Khayargoli (Social Service/Activism) and Uma Devi Badi (Inspiring Woman of the Year).

The event was supported by Nabil Bank Limited, Ncell Pvt. Ltd, Dabur Real Fruit Power, Sanima Bank, Siddhartha Insurance Limited and Turkish Airlines.

In honor of Women Achievers and in line with International Women's Day, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu partnered with Media 9 Pvt Ltd to organize the third of the Hyatt™ WOW Women Achievers Awards 2019.

### Nepal, Bangladesh Ink Agreement To Avoid Double Taxation

Government of Nepal and the Government of Bangladesh have signed an Agreement on the Avoidance of Dou-

ble Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income.

The agreement concluded aims at providing settlement

between the tax claims of the Government of Nepal and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. It would also eliminate double taxation and promote bilateral trade, persons, services and capital investment.

Lal Shanker Ghimire, Secretary (Revenue) of the Ministry of Finance and Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, Senior Secretary, Internal Resources Division, Ministry of Finance and Chairman of the National Board of Revenue on behalf of the Government of Nepal and Bangladesh signed the agreement on behalf of their respective Governments.

Secretary Ghimire expressed the belief that the agreement would pave ways for the expansion of trade relation and investment between the two countries.

According to a press release issued by Ministry of Finance, the agreement signed between the two countries, also the members of SAARC as well as other regional organisations, would make a long-term effect.

Finance Minister Dr. Yub Raj Khatiwada, and Ms. Mashfee Binte Shams, Ambassador of People's Republic of Bangladesh to Nepal, were also present during the signing ceremony.



### International Women And Rivers Congress Held

A first-of-its-kind International Women and Rivers Congress kicked off at Club Himalaya in Nagarkot, Nepal on 7th March, representing almost all the major rivers of the world. It has been organized by the Berkeley-based International Rivers and its South Asia office in India with the local host Nepal Water Conservation Foundation.

Attended by one hundred participants from 32 countries representing all the five continents, the Congress is supported by Australia's DfAT, Sweden's SIDA, American Jewish World Service (AJWS), Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA), Oxfam and many of their partner organizations.

The three-day congress will share stories of struggles and achievements related to water. It will also examine the role of women leaders and the political challenges they face, and also seek to deepen our understanding of development issues from the perspectives of feminist discourse and philosophy.





## Japan Supports Excavator For Tukche Village In Mustang

Ambassador of Japan to Nepal Masamichi Saigo and Ratna Prasad Juwarchan, Chairman of Ward No. 1, Thasang Rural Municipality, signed a grant agreement for the project Installation of an Excavator for Tukche Village, Mustang District.

Under the agreement the Embassy of Japan will provide grant assistance of USD 82,553 (about NPR 9.3 million) under the Japanese Government's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP).



Tukche is a village in Mustang District that is a famous stop-over for trekkers heading to Jomson, Muktinath, and beyond to Lo Manthang in Upper Mustang, and around the Annapurna trekking routes.

Tukche is located along the banks of the Kali Gandaki River, thus large volumes of snowmelt water

regularly hit the river banks during the rainy season. Erosion also happens in Tukche, and in the past people lost their fields and had relocated their houses. The excavator provided by this project will be used to prevent erosion as an emergency and temporary countermeasure.

## Zonta Club of Kathmandu Celebrates Yellow Rose Day Honoring Inspirational Women

Zonta Club honored women from various field of work and awarded for their exceptional and impactful work which helped in bringing about a change and creating an impact in the lives of many other women.

Women awarded on this occasion were Padmasana Shakya. with the Princess Helen Shah Inspirational Women of the Year Award 2019 along with NRs.1 lakh, Basanti Pradhan with Amar Rana Women in Floriculture Award 2019 along with NRs. 1 lakh. Jyoti Scholarship Award 2019 goes to Jane M. Klausman, Women in Business Scholarship, Nepal was presented to Shreya Pokharel along with NRs. 25,000/, Jyoti Scholarship Award 2019 for Young Women in Public Affairs Award was presented to Pratikchya Gurung along with NRs. 25,000/.



This year Zonta Club of Kathmandu honored four such women who have been contributing in the field which had been unexplored by women especially in Nepal. Their dedica-

tion to their work and achievement had been able to create an impact and inspire many other women. These awards were supported by Nabil Bank with and award money of NRs. 25,000/- each.

Women who were awarded were Muna Ghimire Shrestha for her continuous work for almost twenty years as a heavy equipment operator, Nirmala Maharjan for her dedication to establish herself as Nepal's first female bodybuilder, Ram Maya Tamang for her relentless effort to make a mark as a female mason and Dikshya Shrestha for her passion to establish herself as female motorcycle racer and stunt rider

On the occasion of Zonta International's Rose Day and International Women's Day, a special program was organized by Zonta Club of Kathmandu to recognize and honor the contribution and achievement of inspirational and courageous women in different field of work in Nepal.

## Nabil Bank Announces 12 Percent Bonus Share



34th AGM of Nabil Bank Limited concluded with announcement of 12% bonus share. Nabil Bank Limited's 34th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at Nepal Academy Hall, Kamaladi, Kathmandu.

Chaired by chairman Shambhu Prasad Paudyal, Chief Executive Officer Anil Keshary Shah presented the programs. The AGM also approved the consolidated financial statement. Similarly, it also approved the proposal to convert the 10% promoter shares (sold by NIDC Development Bank Limited) to public shares.

The fractional stock dividend will be rounded to the nearest whole number. After the distribution of bonus share, issued and paid up capital will rise to Rs. 9 arba.

Other agendas of the meeting include endorsement of audited financial report for the FY 2074/75, appointment of statutory auditor for the FY 2075/76. "Nabil Bank concluded 34th Annual General Meeting deliberating on the Bank's performance in the past fiscal year and celebrating 34 years of operation! #NabilTeam #SurgeTogetherAhead #NabilBank," writes CEO Shah in his face book wall.

# Gendered Developments

This year's spring allowed me to reflect over and challenge my own ignorance about the feminist movement. As with many for whom March 8 is just one of those days that comes with some noise and then fades away, so it was with me. This year, however, my old organization Nepal Water Conservation Foundation (now run by a younger crop of water activists and experts) co-hosted with International Rivers the first ever Women and Rivers Congress in Nagarkot that saw participation by a hundred women from 32 countries of all continents and all major river basins.

The California-based organization is no stranger to Nepal: in 1993 it had helped the first generation of Nepal's water activists internationalize their case against the World Bank's Arun-3. Its founding chair Phil Williams had been invited to the Himalaya-Ganga conference organized by NWCF in 1993 when the campaign against Arun-3 had just begun. It was not easy convincing him to support our cause for ontological reasons. His first question was: how many people did it displace? Answer: none, it is in a very remote area and no one lives in its vicinity. How much land was submerged? Really not much, as it is a run-of-river project and not a big storage one. What are the main environmental impacts? As a relatively small r-o-r project, not really much, and whatever damage to fish migration dam building does has probably already all been done by the Indian Kosi Barrage downstream.

Phil's blunt question was: then why should we support you? And our equally blunt answer was: because it is an affront to the very notion of development itself and why activist organizations exist at all. The 201MW Arun-3 was being attempted for development by a bevy of donors led by the World Bank at \$5400/kW when the going market rate was five times less, and Ethiopia is even today build-



BY DIPAK GYAWALI

ing its Grand Renaissance Dam at \$800/kW. Eventually IRN (as it was then called) found out that Arun-3 was the perfect brick with which to hit the World Bank on the head for its very bad economics during the 50 Years Is Enough Campaign.

The Nagarkot Women and Rivers Congress brought together mostly women activists who have earned their spurs battling river-related issues, many from opposing bad dams and mining projects that hurt local communities. As the Nagarkot Statement issued at the end of the Congress puts

it, they see themselves as custodians of rivers and freshwater systems which are global commons under threat from extractive profit-driven development. In a world that privileges economic values over ecological, spiritual and customary values, they were gathered to celebrate their shared commitment to safeguard their water and territories from man-made existential threats including climate change.

As they shared their rich experiences, what was interesting to me was the broad range of perspectives they

had on what constitutes the alternative pathways ahead and the politics of knowledge they could pursue. Indeed, the value of these movements by women lies in the opening of space for an alternative imagining of our common future. While each came with the ethos of their very diverse histories and geographies, what was common was the need to challenge imposed and debilitating stereotypes. For instance, many Asian and African

women refused to see themselves as gender experts or even feminists. Africans could not stand that word which did not give due acknowledgement to the history of racial injustice and so preferred the term 'African sisterhood', something that has existed since time immemorial and was severely damaged by colonial practices.

And South Asians saw themselves as professionals and mainstream experts on their own right and not as woman





this or woman that to be marginalized with gender tokenism. Indeed, the four men in the entire conference might have been the only feminists around! The Chinese saw the fight for equal women's rights as not very relevant as the Chinese laws gave all its citizens including women equal rights, and it was up to the individual to see if they could live up to it. The problem in China was the relaxing of its One Child policy, allowing families to have two or more children because of the impending demographic squeeze. It is not working too well because professional women find that having more children damages their professional growth prospects. Hence the battle there is now for career growth facilities that would allow women to have more children but not face professional regression as a consequence.

This re-visiting of local feminist movements and their histories is important because it allows us to see where the real steam lies and what can and needs to be achieved. On the occasion of this year's March 8 celebrations, in the sea of verbiage,

one Nepali article stood out. It was by Ghamber Nepali and Buddhi Nepali, two researchers in the School of Research and Development writing in *Naya Patrika*. They start with the problem that arises when translating patriarchy into Nepali (used as the basis of much of the discourse) as '*pitrisatta*' instead of '*purushsatta*'.

The word '*pitri*' actually means 'departed ancestors' and thus not quite 'male' domination. They then go on to identify five different types of feminist movements in Nepal.

The first and original Nepali feminist movement was by the ascetic Yogmaya who returned to Nepal from Assam towards the end of the First World War, founded the first women's organization and successfully campaigned for the abolition of *sati*, or live cremation of widows. She with 68 of her disciples committed mass suicide by jumping into the raging Arun river to protest traditional Hindu discriminatory practices. It remains the mother of all movements. The second is liberal feminism by middle- and upper-class women asking for equal rights and equal representation with men. Satisfied with tokenism, it has compromised with male dominance and diverted the movement away from its political economic challenges.

The third is the Marxist strand that sees liberal feminism as being unable to address the needs of the downtrod-

den and marginalized women and poses itself as opposed to it. It reached its apogee during the Maoist movement but is taking a backseat as its main votaries seem to be joining the liberal strand. The fourth is led by post-modernists bent on deconstructing the second and the third and finds support among the educated youth. Fifth is extreme feminism which opts for anti-male position and championing the unconventional, including in reproductive matters. The authors think this strand does not enjoy much traction in Nepal, a sentiment expressed by UML politician Usha Kala Rai who thinks anti-male position is counter productive and, with most rights ensured in the 2015 constitution, only the issue of citizenship through the mother is the fight that remains. Another politician, deputy speaker of the Far West Nirmala Badal Joshi makes a similar argument but confesses that even in the new dispensation, patriarchy rules: municipal chiefs just ignore their deputies who are women and take unilateral decisions!



All this points to a rich discourse in the days ahead about what constitutes the feminist movement in Nepal. It is not that any one of the five strands identified above is wholly right but that indeed each one may be partially right, leading to interesting permutations of knowledge, actions and compromises that will be made in the future within

these movements. And leading this will have to be what was briefly touched upon at a newly instituted Tribhuvan University course on the Philosophy of Science for PhD students: feminist philosophy. With the rise of the feminist movement in the West as a reaction to the juggernaut of industrialism at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, feminists began to question the handed-down wisdom from a fresh perspective. Using tools inherited from Western philosophy, they began questioning the foundations of aesthetics, ethics, epistemology and even phenomenology through a gender lens and discovered interesting shortcomings and new interpretive possibilities.

Such a task re-examining these old questions within Eastern (Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Confucian and Daoist) and Islamic philosophies is a task still waiting to be done. And what that means for understanding water is a challenge the Nagarkot International Women and Rivers Congress has left for the days ahead.

# Chinese Reactions

## *Chinese Ambassador Hou Yanqi Refutes Remarks of U.S. Official On Nepal-China Belt And Road Initiative (BRI)*

By A CORRESPONDENT

As there is growing move against China-Nepal Belt and Road Initiative cooperation from internal and external elements in Nepal, Chinese ambassador to Nepal Hou Yanqi has publicly termed anti-BRI comments as irresponsible. She refuted comments on China-Nepal Belt and Road Initiative cooperation by a U.S. official recently visiting Nepal as irresponsible.

During the Belt and Road Initiative: Nepal Connecting the World International Conference, Ambassador Hou Yanqi said this in reference to an interview by Nepali media and refuted some irresponsible comments on China-Nepal Belt and Road Initiative cooperation.

Ambassador Hou said we noticed the media reports about some irresponsible comments on China-Nepal Belt and Road Initiative cooperation by the recent visiting U.S. official in Nepal, which makes us surprised and confused. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) follows the rule of shared benefits through consultation and contribution. While advancing the Belt and Road Initiative, China upholds the principle of equality, openness and transparency and sticks to enterprise-oriented market operations as well as market laws and well-accepted international rules. Each and every project is the outcome of equal-footed consultation.

"As we all know, insufficient industrial capacity, lack of self-reliant development capability, backward infrastructure and financing difficulties constitute bottlenecks for the development of many underdeveloped countries. Having faced the same problems over quite a long time, China shares the feelings of these developing countries. So we know their pressing needs and have conducted mutually beneficial cooperation with these countries under the principle of upholding justice while pursuing shared interests and provided assistance much needed to developing countries with no political strings attached based on our own experience," said the ambassador.

"All this cooperation has forcefully promoted the socio-economic de-

velopment and improved the livelihood in relevant countries. The support and assistance China has offered have no political strings attached at all and does not interfere in their domestic affairs. They welcome and appreciate what China has done, and commend China as the most trustworthy partner of all the participating countries including Nepal. This is a fact as well as a common consensus of all the participating countries."

"If a country cannot provide help for developing countries, it should at least refrain from obstructing others from assisting these developing countries, even less hurting the benefits of these people to serve its own political needs and sowing discords. Though faced with a large amount of facts and statistics, the relevant country has played up the so called issue of non-transparency of China's investment and increasing the debt burden from the BRI and made irresponsible remarks out of its political needs. It attempts to interfere in the friendly cooperation between China and Nepal which is very ridiculous."

"In fact, these remarks are unpopular and have no market. Since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation under the BRI in 2017, the two countries have continued to promote pragmatic cooperation in various fields under the framework of the BRI. The leaders of two countries have reached consensus on jointly building the trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. As part of the cooperation under the BRI, projects such as ports, highways, railways, aviation, and hydropower are progressing steadily and fruitfully and have brought tangible benefits for the development of Nepal and the life of Nepali people.

The Belt and Road Initiative: Ne-



**Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Hou Yanqi**

pal Connecting the World International Conference was held in Kathmandu.

In their speeches, experts and scholars from over 10 countries praised the promotion role of the BRI on the regional connectivity in the South Asia, which fully reflects the popularity of the BRI in the region, according to Chinese Embassy website with long statement of ambassador.

"We noticed that statement by Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, in an interview recently. He believes that BRI is a big economic concept and debt trap is an imported psychology. And the debt trap rumor in Nepal is aimed at instilling psychological fear. We appreciate the position of Nepali side. Suffice to say that justice is in the voice of the people. I hope that the relevant country can do more practical things for the developing countries themselves, instead of making indiscreet remarks or criticisms. It is my belief that the cooperation under the BRI between China and Nepal will continue to produce new and greater achievements, benefiting the two countries and the two peoples," said the Ambassador in her statement.

Although Chinese officials rarely make any comment on such issues, this time the Chinese government has come up with strong words defending the initiative. The message is loud and clear for all, including Nepalese officials.



# Education At Large

It was on Maghe Sangranti day that the Minister for Education, Science and Technology submitted a report prepared by a high level national education committee, headed by the member secretary of the University Grants commission to the PM. The report has set restrictions on the new colleges until the provincial and federal structures and regulations presumably are fixed. The idea is for a whole reorganisation of the educational sector. Currently it is neither 'Hanseko chal na Kukhurako chal' as far as educational institutions in this country are concerned. One pertinent issue that needs to be addressed and sorted out is whether institutions should be on regional, read provincial basis or on faculty basis depending on what they teach / instruct on. There is an ongoing debate on a central medical university and on how many colleges a university should affiliate. Now is the time to make the medical 'Deemed Universities' into full fledged ones and be allowed to function within their spheres of influence.

Our PM in his wisdom has rightly said that students should not be forced to study matters which they are not interested in and pronounced as failures but be encouraged develop their areas of interest. This calls for a total review of our educational system and perhaps for some form of apprenticeship in the process of choosing ones career for the future. There is current dissatisfaction with the educational system not only in Nepal but also in countries such as India and USA. Ironically, subjects no longer relevant are still being taught. The question is whether we want people with skills who can perform or persons with degrees who can't function?

In earlier times individual initiatives had started some colleges in different parts of Nepal. Academic activities accelerated when a number of Nepali scholars sent to the University of Oregon in USA to be trained as teachers returned back. The institution at Chet Bhawan was then started.

Then on a cold and rainy day the two queens of King Tribhuvan laid the foundation stone of Tribhuvan University (TU). A number of elderly Nepalis still remember marching all the way to Kirtipur on the occasion. Following this, a number of institutions were affiliated and integrated in this set up irrespective whether the private parties wanted it or not.

Later King Mahendra started the Sanskrit University bearing his name. It is now just Sanskrit but would be better to call it Sanskriti University and include for further studies other areas of Art and Fine Arts under its jurisdiction. Further studies in the various ethnic languages and culture could be part of it.

At this juncture the National Education System Plan (NESP) of 1972 which tried to modernise the system by introducing semesters and making it compulsory for students pursuing graduate study to go and spend a year in different parts of the country. With 'Diploma courses' in the forefront the whole concept was challenged, student's unions of the Right, Left and Centre were formed and students took to the streets on various issues. Things took a political turn and the whole system was discredited.

It was perhaps to tackle this that Private Campuses were allowed in TU. There was in those early days the thought that



BY HEMANG DIXIT

there should be a Technical University, and a Purbanchal and Paschimanchal University with Mahendra Morang and Prithvi Narayan Campuses being the base. The irony is that these universities have been set up ignoring this initial concept and TU continues to be huge, wieldy and unmanageable. A recent announcement that a Man Mohan Technical University is contemplated in Province One is welcome news. Hopefully they will be laying stress on and providing vocational training as a large number of Nepalis are presently going to many parts of the world as unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Hopefully this institution will reverse this trend.

The current number of Universities stands at 10 of which the six accredited are TU, KU, Sanskrit U, Purbanchal, Pokhara and Mid Western. Others are the Lumbini Buddhist, Agriculture & Forestry and the Open University. Rajarshi Janak at Janakpur Dham is in process of becoming one. There are four medical deemed universities at Dharan, Karnali, Patan, Pokhara and NAMS at Kathmandu. The government has stated that it will have a Central Medical University and an Academy of Health Sciences at each of the seven Provinces.

The last two decades has seen a plethora of colleges, mostly IT ones which have sprung up like mushrooms all over the country, which in this modern age is the call of the times. The present government has also come forward with a scheme of education for Nepal. All this is in the context of a 'Private and Public Mix' which has been the call up of both the Health and Education Sectors.

Dr. Govinda KC campaign has been about medical colleges. He has however also insisted that CTEVT should not now be running programmes of health sector below twelve years of education and producing health sector manpower of dubious standards.

The reality still is that quality education is not being given by many state funded institutions affiliated to Universities. As a previous VC of TU remarked, "Many teachers are more sincere to these institutions than to TU which pays the major part of what they earn every month." A very devastating fact is that Thesis of Masters and PhD levels are being manufactured and sold by photocopy shops just outside many centres of learning.

The pertinent question now is what sort of a system of education should be established in this country? Should education up to 12 years be totally free? Should it be like the Finnish system where there is no specific curriculum with students choosing what they want to learn and teachers oblige? Should we have an 'Apprentice Type' of system as in many parts of Europe where the students learn the trade of their choice? Should graduate studies be expensive as in the Community Colleges or the Universities of USA or should these be relatively costless as in many parts of Europe. With memories of the 10<sup>th</sup> February Shree /Basanta Panchami fresh in our minds these pertinent questions need to be seriously considered before we in Nepal choose the way forward.

The author writes fiction under the name of Mani Dixit. Website: [www.hdixit.org.np](http://www.hdixit.org.np). Twitter: @manidixithd

## ADB COUNTRY PORTFOLIO REVIEW

## Slow Progress

*Nepal needs to drastically improve its performance in implementing the infrastructure projects to achieve higher growth*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**T**he current episode over Melamchi Water Supply Project has shown how a technically inefficient and incapable institution can push a mega project, which is in final stage, into uncertainty.

With immature and haphazard decision taken by then secretary Gajendra Thakur against Italian contractor CMC and its staff, Melamchi Project, a national priority project of Nepal and flagship project of Asian Development Bank, has landed in uncertainty.

At a time when there is so much uncertainty, new secretary of Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation Deependranath Sharma has come up with some positive note, expressing hope that Melamchi Water Supply Project will be completed in time with all concerned stakeholders working together.

“I am not an astrologer to predict when it will complete. What I can say is that the government is working to bring water from Melamchi within the time frame. Due to certain reasons, there are confusions. However, the government is developing a contingency plan to complete the project in time and provide water to over 6 million population of Kathmandu.

Addressing Nepal Portfolio Performance Review Meeting of Asian Development Bank, secretary Sharma said that Melamchi is a national priority project and the prime minister and minister are also concerned about the project. Although there is certain progress in the recent

years in the infrastructure projects supported by Asian Development Bank, this is not enough for any over enthusiasm.

For example, with a haphazard decision, expansion of Runway and Parallel Taxi Way, which aimed to ease the current traffic, is now nowhere. As the traffic grows, there is more congestion and even a flight used by Prime Minister KP Oli was on holding for 10 minutes last week in the air.

With its ambitious target to achieve over 8 per cent annual growth to graduate from Least Developed Countries, finance minister Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada has been calling for more investment for infrastructure development.

However, the recent discussion on Country Portfolio Review shows a very bleak scenario. Although a certain progress in many areas is there to compare with the previous years in disbursement and contract agreement, that is not enough.

The Asian Development Bank’s

(ADB) annual lending to Nepal hit a record high in 2018, but disbursement has been lagging. ADB’s total lending in 2018 reached \$592 million and technical assistance at \$8.01 million (including \$5.31 million in cofinancing) for projects in transport, urban development and water supply, energy, rural roads, agriculture, and natural resources.

“This is a substantial increase from the \$253 million a year on average lending during 2014–2016 that demonstrates ADB’s strong commitment to Nepal’s economic development and improving the lives of its people,” said ADB’s Deputy Director General for South Asia Diwesh Sharan, speaking at a country portfolio review meeting jointly organized by ADB and the Ministry of Finance.

Sharan also said ADB’s portfolio performance in Nepal has shown good progress in recent years, but contract awards and disbursement could be better. In 2018, disbursements, as a meas-





ure of actual project implementation progress on the ground, totaled \$246.7 million, excluding cofinancing, and met 80% of the original target. Of the net available funding amount of \$2.8 billion spread over 36 investment projects, 61% is still to be disbursed.

“Nepal has entered into a federal structure, which can considerably improve service delivery to the people,” said Sharan. “But there is a gap in capacity both at the central and the sub-national government levels that needs to be addressed for timely and successful project implementation. This in turn will improve services that people receive on the ground.”

Sharan’s advice has valid reasons given the current state of project implementation. Presenting Nepal Portfolio Performance, Narendra Chand, officer-in-charge- Portfolio Management Unit Nepal Resident Mission, said active portfolio totals \$ 2.8 billion, with 36 projects (31 loans 18 grants).

According to ADB, as of 31 December 2018, five projects were in inception phase, 23 in full implementation and eight projects are winding down to close. Energy sector was one of the most affected by implementation challenges and mainly in terms of low readiness and startup delays.

“Implementation challenges are further highlighted by the average Nepal’s portfolio age increase to 5.7 years in 2018 from 5.5 years in 2017. This is high compared to an ADB wide portfolio age of 3.8 years. The increase is due to bigger number of loan and grant extensions about 56 percent of the active projects have been extended,” writes ADB’s report.

Melamchi Water Supply Project- the oldest ongoing loan in ADB through 18 years has contributed to higher average age of the Nepal’s portfolio.

Finance secretary Dr. Rajan Khanal also stressed the need to improve the performance of the projects currently undergoing with ADB’s grants and loan. Secretary Khanal directed all concerned officials to improve contract management, disbursement and implementation stage.

Since 1966, ADB has approved assistance totaling \$5.8 billion for Nepal. ADB’s portfolio consists of 36 projects amounting to \$2.8 billion and 18 technical assistance projects worth \$26.4 million.

Chaired by Shree Krishna Nepal, joined secretary and chief, IECCD of Ministry of Finance, the one and half days meeting was lively with officials presenting their shortcomings. With frequent interventions, joint secretary Nepal persuaded project officials, saying that a high progress is necessary to make Nepal prosperous.

“I would say that the overall performance of ADB-assisted projects last year was reasonable. However, jointly, we need to do much more project implementation in terms of both quality and timing and substantially increase disbursement as a proxy for the project implementation progress especially in the new federal environment for the people to feel a difference at the ground level,” said ADB Country Director for Nepal Mukhtor Khamudkhanov. “Our course, I would

like to thank the project teams for their efforts in addressing a range of issues spanning from project readiness to procurement and contract management and safeguards. But, I would also like to encourage all of you to do even better in the interest of the economic development of the country and the people who want to see greater improvements in their lives, whether relating to better infrastructure or improved services.”

At a time when most of the mega projects in energy, transport and air transport sectors are going slow, one can see certain progress in the projects like Gautam Buddha International Airport.

“Clearly, challenges remain but there are positive signs as well. The new government is putting high emphasis on utilization of capital budget. This requires notable improvement in project implementation in general. ADB’s pro-

ject portfolio should contribute to and benefit from these efforts,” said ADB’s Deputy Director General for South Asia Diwesh Sharan.

Given the current state of ADB’s project implementation, procurement and disbursement, there is a long way to go to materialize Prime Minister Oli’s slogan of Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali.

The recent meeting on ADB’s portfolio review will help accelerate the infrastructure projects identifying their weaknesses and shortcomings.

#### Award For Best Performer

At a special ceremony held in conjunction with the meeting, Finance Secretary Rajan Khanal presented awards to ADB-supported projects that showed excellent results. The projects that won outstanding project management teams awards are the Rural Connectivity Improvement Project, the Skills Develop-



ment Project, and the Regional Urban Development Project.

The Disaster Resilience of Schools Project was awarded in the category of best team for procurement management. The Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Improvement Project-Additional Financing received the best team awards in the categories of environmental and social safeguard monitoring and gender equality and social inclusion.

“These awards recognize the project teams’ efforts in achievement of targets and ensuring that the environment, social safeguards, and gender equality and social inclusion aspects were also considered during project implementation,” said ADB Country Director for Nepal Mukhtor Khamudkhanov. “All these are critical for results on the ground that promote socially inclusive development.”

# "Four Million Nepalis Are Denied Citizenship"

*SARVENDRA NATH SHUKLA, former minister and leader of Rashtriya Janta Party-Nepal, is a well established veteran politician from Madhesh. Having secured victory several times in the national parliament from Rupandehi district, Shukla, who is now a key figure of Madhesh based RJP-Nepal, spoke to **KESHAB POUDEL** on various contemporary political issues. Excerpts:*

## **How long will your party support this government?**

The activities of the last one year have shown that the government is not serious to meet our demands of amending the constitution and solving the problems. Our party has already handed over a memorandum saying that we can withdraw our support at any time. As the government is ignoring their own words not bringing any bill, there is no option for us other than to pull out the support.

## **With two thirds of strength in its hand, including the support from Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum, don't you think your support cannot change the status of the government?**

Of course, our strength is not enough to pull down the government. However, it has a political and a moral part. They can ignore us showing the numerical strength but the government will lose the remaining credibility and support in public.

## **How inclusive is this constitution as claimed by two major parties?**

Just writing the word inclusive in the constitution does not guarantee an inclusive society. The process of inclusiveness depends upon how state acts in reality. I don't agree that this is an inclusive constitution. There is the lack of two major elements. First of all, they had not taken adequate efforts during the writing of constitution. They wrote a few words to show that the constitution is inclusive. Secondly, they ignored even the issues of citizenship. Even as the process of implementation of limited inclusiveness is concerned, the government is moving very slowly to pass bills. The persons and parties involved in constitution making intentionally avoided making the constitution inclusive. As long as there remain large numbers of people excluded from the country, it is impossible to have prosperous and developed Nepal.

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## **Why is inclusiveness important?**

Only through the effective inclusive policies, you can avoid conflict in future and this is also a pre-requisite for prosperity. There is the need to bring people to mainstream who are excluded in the past. There is the need to assure the people, who suffer from the exclusion policy of the state, that they get proper opportunities. The present so called inclusiveness is incomplete and ineffective. What I say is that the state has already derailed from its commitment to be an inclusive society. If this continues, it will generate another phase of new conflict. You cannot visualize the conflict in surface but it is still beneath.

## **Do you mean the demands which your parties raised during the promulgation of constitution still persist?**

The issues raised by us are not addressed. Even the written agreement signed by two major parties before the formation of the government is yet to be implemented. For instance, the government is yet to table a constitution amendment bill. They ignore our demands for full proportional representation, representatives on the basis of population and provincial boundary. We have been insisting the amendment of constitution to make the constitution inclusive to accommodate all the excluded population. Only through this, you can prevent possible conflicts in hill and Madhesh. We have been pushing the government. However, the government and main opposition party Nepali Congress have not shown any serious concern on the issue.

## **Given the large number of population in Madhesh and Hill are yet to receive the citizenship, how do you see the recent controversy raised by members of ruling party in the House of Representative on some the provisions of citizenship bill by the members and leaders of ruling party?**

We have been saying for long that there are over





four million stateless people in Nepal who are denied citizenship certificate by the state. The children of citizen of naturalized citizens, children of the citizens who have certificates of descent and a child who does not have a birth certificate are ineligible for citizenship. Similarly, the children of single mother are denied the citizenship and children of those whose father is unknown. It seems that a section of racist people from hill are making efforts to put the conditions that will prevent genuine Nepali to secure citizenship. This section of people has been arguing that foreigners will grab our citizenship if they do not put strict conditions. They are now in the parliament as a member of ruling NCP.

#### **How do you see their argument?**

They are irrational and racist. At a time when Nepal's southern neighbor is making high economic progress, no Indian citizen can consider to take Nepali citizenship as worthy. Similar is with the citizens of northern neighbor China. A group of elite are acting like Nazis denying the right of citizenship arguing with wrong presumptions. In recent parliamentary debate so called ultra-nationalist of ruling parties are making every effort

to deny the genuine rights of the citizens who were born, grow and live in Nepal. This also indicates mockery of inclusiveness. How can you claim that your new constitution is most inclusive when such a large numbers of citizens of the country are denied all the state services including education, health, commercial transaction.

#### **What do you want to say on citizenship?**

As the government has made citizenship mandatory for day to day life, the government must provide citizenship certificates to those who were born in Nepal and live in Nepal. Without the citizenship certificate, a child cannot go to school, hospital and employment. This means whole lifeline of such individuals is blocked. Those who are poor particularly, Mushar, Dusadh, Chamar, Dom, Dhobi and other dalits in hill, ethnic communities like Santhal, Rajbanshi, Meche, and Koche of Madhesh have been suffering the most. There are some populations in Himal and Pahad as well. The history of world shows that the stateless persons always remain a threat to stability. Stateless population needs to be given citizenship certificate. The leaders of ruling parties are linking citizenship certificate with nationalism. This is foolish. In India and China, there

## INTERVIEW

are more opportunities available than Nepal. Even over 8 million Nepalese are currently working in India. They are making more money selling momo in India than here. The rulers want to continue the issue of citizenship. There is the need to solve the problem forever.

**The government claims that the state is inclusive since it holds the elections for all the three tiers, giving equal opportunities to all. How do you look at it?**

It is natural for ruling elites to claim. As I mentioned, just holding elections does not guarantee inclusiveness. There is the need to take action and implementation. Nepal has been holding the elections since Panchayat and all later stages. However, the power always lies in the center. Currently, even chief ministers of ruling parties have been blaming central government for not devolving power. During the constitution making, they ignored provinces giving more power to local level and center. There were only Madhesh based parties demanding more power to province in constitution making but now all chief ministers and ministers representing are demanding power.

**How do you see the external relations of Nepal following the promulgation of new constitution and formation of this government?**

The mindset of ruling elite and dominant political leaders of this country has not changed much. They see a close neighbor with same civilization as a threat. For instance, Madhesh based Parties and Madheshi people called the blockade on our own strength. The current Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and his party did not spare any time to blame India fanning anti-India feeling among its cadres. Although Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggested to make a new constitution inclusive and functional, these very leaders projected his sincere friendly advice as interference. Given the recent acts, the current government has failed to maintain good relations with none of the countries including China, and European and U.S.

**During the first tenure of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, Nepal's relations with India were badly deteriorated. How do you see Oli's second innings?**

First of all, all of us need to acknowledge the fact,

Nepal and India are politically two nations with one civilization. We share everything and we have many commonalities. The open border between Nepal and India symbolizes our closeness. People of Nepal know this reality very well and the relations at the people to people level remain cordial and brotherly. However, the problems lie at the political leaders and few elites of hills. For the sake of their individual interests and benefits, they have been exploiting the traditional and close relationship with India. In 2015, when Indian leaders and government suggested Nepali political leaders to promulgate the new inclusive constitution, they used every possible means to condemn our brotherly neighbor and their leaders. Given our own experience dealing with Nepali leadership including PM Oli, what I can say is that they sign and commit everything to be in power but rarely show concern to implement them. PM Oli and his team have shown that they are untrustworthy and unreliable not tabling constitution amendment bill as promised with us in writing.

**Do you mean there is no trust?**

At a time when I cannot trust the words of our ruling elites and politicians, I don't think any foreign leaders can trust them. Given their past behavior, what I can say for sure is that once PM Oli or Prachanda faced any political disaster, they don't mind to blame India or international forces. They will use their well trained cadres to condemn them. Nepal's political elites

link power with relations and they hail neighbor till they remain in power.

**But, Prime Minister Oli and his foreign minister have been repeatedly saying that the state to state relations are back to normal?**

I have already told you that Nepal and India have a unique relation existing over centuries at people to people level and no one can create any crack on it. However, the present lot of people in power does not believe on it as they have grown in anti-India schooling. They will again use same anti-India statement and try to play China card once out of power. People in power need to have firm understanding about the foundation of our relations and develop their convictions not on words.





## BARDIA NATIONAL PARK

# Best Destination

*Honored as the best sustainable destination in Asia and Pacific, Bardia National Park has proven its conservation as unique in the world*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Individually, it is a matter of pride for anybody to see his or her birthplace to be recognized globally as the best destination for its conservation. For the chief executive officer of Nepal Tourism Board Deepak Raj Joshi, it is historic and one of the most prestigious matters to receive the recognition of Bardia National Park as the best sustainable destination in Asia and Pacific Region in International Tourism Mart in Germany.

“Bardiya won #1 place as a sustainable destination in Asia-Pacific Region. Bardiya is recognized as top 100 sustainable destinations for 2019. And, now, we are in the Sustainable Global Leaders Network too. It is so proud to receive this prestigious recognition for my birthplace #Bardiya. #visitNepal #lifeTime Experiences,” writes Deepak Raj Joshi, CEO of NTB on his Facebook wall from Berlin, in jubilation.

Recognition with such an award is also a matter for pride for all Nepalis. At a time when Nepal is planning to bring two million tourists, declaring Bardia National Park as the Best Sustainable Destination In Asia Pacific is highly significant.

Nepal received the award because of the efforts of all conservationists and promoters. The role played by Executive Director of Nepal Tourism Board Deepak Raj Joshi was very important.

He made every possible effort to promote the destination. Nepal is now in the sustainable global leaders network.

The credit also goes to the National Park staff, NTNC, WWF, ZSL, ETDF, CBUAP, Nature Guides, all local people, other NGO/INGO.

The award ceremony was held

on March 6th within the framework of the ITB Berlin 2019 fair in Germany. The CEO of Nepal Tourism Board Deepak Raj Joshi received the award of best of Asia Pacific on behalf of Destination Management Authority.

Bardia National Park is awarded as the best sustainable destination in Asia-Pacific region at the Green Destinations Gala, an initiative that recognizes innovation and good practices in tourism management of destinations.

Experts from 12 international organizations analyzed the proper planning of tourism, monitoring elements related to sustainability, tourist experience towards nature, always encouraging their protection, among other aspects. Bardia National Park met these criteria and was ranked first in the “Best of the Asia-Pacific” category of the most environmentally friendly destinations.

According to a press release issued by Barefoot Adventures, the Top 100 of the best sustainable destinations

Destinations, TravelMole, Travelife and ten other organizations that reward efforts to develop eco-tourism.

Destinations Winners are showing international leadership and innovation in responsible and sustainable tourism in different parts of the world. Those include ITB Earth Awar, Republic of Palau, Best of Africa Chumbe Island (Tanzania), Best of Asia-Pacific, Bardia National Park (Nepal), Best of the Americas Galapagos National Park (Ecuador), Best of Europe Portugal.

Over the years Bardia has become well known for its wildlife conservation efforts including zero poaching year and popular for the habitat of key species of wildlife including Royal Bengal tiger.

The destination was nominated by the Barefoot Adventures, in coordination with Nepal Tourism Board and is selected by an international Jury on the basis of their overall sustainability.

With CEO Joshi at the helm



in the world highlight success stories about the quality of destinations, attractiveness and sustainability in tourism. The current edition of the awards was organized by ITB Berlin, Green

and efforts of all stakeholders, Nepali tourism destination was able to secure the prestigious award which will ultimately help to promote Bardia National Park for tourism.

## 11-POINT PACT

# PM Oli In Trouble

*After signing the 11-point agreement with separatist CK Raut, many have questioned PM KP Sharma Oli's ultranationalist credentials*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although the verdict of Kailali District Court handing down a life sentence to 11 people including Resham Lal Chaudhary, a lawmaker from the Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal, in connection with the 2015 Tikapur incident, banning on activities of another Nepal Communist Party led by Netra Bikram Chand and 11 points agreement with separatist leader led by CK Raut come in separately, what all three have common is they aim to push Nepal into another phase of uncertainty and chaos.

The cabinet has decided to ban Chand led party stating that it is a criminal outfit involved in violation of people's right to security and that it has infrastructural damages, extortion, among other illegal activities to its credit- the government is set to declare an all-out ban on the party, at once.

Suddenly but in a planned manner Prime Minister Oli, in the presence of NCP leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, signed an agreement with Raut, separatist leader from Madhesh, to join mainstream politics giving up his seven years long demand for independent

ent Madhesh.

After signing the agreement, Coordinator of Alliance for Independent Madhes CK Raut withdrew his demand for a separate state.

The 'free Madhes' campaigner signed the pact with Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa acknowledging Nepal as a free and sovereign nation which cannot be divided and promised to completely halt dissemination of secessionist information. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli was also present on the occasion. Former prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai in his tweet described the agreement against national integrity.

Even before any statement from main opposition party Nepali Congress, NCP leader Bhim Rawal issued a statement questioning the nationalist credential of his leader and Prime Minister Oli on the 11-point agreement.

Raising the question on Clause 2, which says they will follow a democratic means to address the dissatisfaction of people, including those of Tarai-Madhes, NCP leader condemned

the agreement saying that the clause gave legitimacy to secessionist movement or separate homeland in Nepal.

Four years ago, PM Oli was made a hero and guarantor of Nepal's sovereignty for his sentimental decision to defy suggestions of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make the constitution inclusive.

Nepali nationalist people ignored Indian PM Modi's strong statement against ethnic based slogans raised in all parts of Nepal to support PM Oli. After the new eleven point agreement, the table has turned against PM Oli.

Prime Minister Oli's four years long posture as a true defender of Nepal's ultra nationalism has come to the heel following his agreement with separatist leader C.K Raut.

Social media, including Facebook and Twitter, were full of words condemning Oli for his stand on backing secessionist CK Raut and surrendering before him. The sentiment against PM Oli went widespread after Raut delivered statements in Janakpurdham and his cadres' slogans taking the agreement as a document of endorsement of secessionist movement.

The statements and activities of CK Raut and his worker even irked the province 2 government and chief minister Mohammad Lalbabu Raut, who issued a statement opposing the secessionist move of CK Raut. The Chief Minister demanded a clear statement from PM Oli on the issue of Nepal's integrity and independence.

PM Oli, who championed the anti-Madhesh slogan in 2015 terming the protestors anti-national, is now in a court to prove his nationalistic credential to very people who termed them anti-national.





As the criticism on his role in signing the agreement with CK Raut intensifies, the Prime Minister and his coterie are trying to sell the agreement as that of the 12-point agreement.



**Netra Bikram Chand**

“This is an historic agreement after the 12-points agreement. We are able to bring separatist leader CK Raut forcing him to join peaceful politics within the constitution,” said General Secretary of NCP Bishnu Poudel. “The agreement did not recognize any separatist movement. The agreement has disagreed on separatist movement.”

Even Dr. Baburam Bhattarai expressed the dissatisfaction over the use of words in the agreement. “PM Oli termed me joining hand with separatist simply for my meeting with CK Raut,” said Dr. Bhattarai.

As anti-Oli wave is growing, nobody wants to listen to what the agreement actually says. Even the good spirit and suggestion of Sukh Deo Muni, a renowned scholar and Nepal expert of India, is interpreted differently.

“Dr CK Raut and Nepal government led by Oli must be complimented for the agreement to mainstream ‘Free Madhes’ movement. There is enough democratic space to fight for the interests of Madhes in Nepal,” tweets Sukh Deo Muni.

After reading angry reactions, Professor Muni retweeted, “What should one do with such Nepali friends who understand my tweet in their own way. I welcomed Raut’s withdrawal of separatist Madhes demand and Oli

Govt. giving freedom to him to play his politics within Nepal’s democratic order. What is wrong with that?”

Following the sentimental words and statements after promulgation of Constitution of Nepal, which has been creating so many complexities and crises due to ambiguity and flaws in words, Oli was made a hero even for his wrong position and stand.

In a matter of just four years, people have dumped the same hero and icon of Nepali nationalism K.P. Sharma Oli as a villain. In social media, there are waves of statement against PM Oli’s stand terming it anti-national.

As there is a growing anger against PM Oli, Nepal Students Union, a student wing of Nepali Congress, burnt the effigy of PM Oli terming him a separatist leader. “PM Oli agreed to fabricate our country agreeing to the demand of Separatist leader,” said a Nepal Students Union leader.

Long before the promulgation of present constitution, Nepal’s well wishers had visualized the possibility of the recent political crisis and chaos. However, Nepali Congress leadership, CPN-UML leader and Maoist leader defied and ignored good suggestions of internal and external friends, includ-

ing Nepal’s southern neighbor, covering their mistakes and wrongdoings with the nationalist slogans. PM Oli even was able to mobilise Nepali diaspora for his sentimental slogan.

Despite opposing the agreement,

Nepali Congress leadership is still with Prime Minister Oli in implementing the constitution, which seems to be responsible for the present chaos.

Although people in social media and street are gradually realizing that those who control the state power, chanting nationalist slogan and blaming particular country, fooled them, they don’t have the power to reverse the present state. The time has come to

say right and wrong on the basis of fact not on the basis of sentiment.

Oli led government signed agreement with separatist leader and ban activities of a party which does not have separatist agenda and court gave life imprisonment to a leader from indigenous Tharu community who does have faith on the integration of the country.

Three events of the last one week will have a significant impact in the future of Nepali political course. Although all three events have different connections, what all three have common is their outcome.

### Eleven Points Agreement

1. CK Raut and his party, Alliance for Independent Madhes, will respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country
2. They will follow democratic means to address dissatisfactions of people, including those of Tarai-Madhes
3. They have agreed to settle all differences through democratic means
4. They expressed their commitment to ensure autonomy and equality
5. The government agreed to withdraw all cases slapped against AIM cadres and all AIM cadres and leaders will be released from jail/custody without any condition
6. AIM leaders will not be prosecuted for publicity materials produced in the past, but it was agreed the party wouldn’t publish any such material in future
7. AIM cadres and leaders can enjoy all rights guaranteed by the constitution, including the right to open political parties
8. The family of Ram Manohar Yadav, AIM cadre who died in jail, will be provided with adequate compensation and one member of the family will be provided with a government job
9. Government will provide treatment to all AIM cadres who were injured during the movement
10. The government agreed to treat AIM as a democratic political force
11. The agreement came into force on Friday



**Resham Chaudhary**

## MAKING NEPAL SOUTH ASIAN POWER

# Decisive Role Of Bhakti Thapa

The outstanding bravery and sacrifice of Bhakti Thapa during the Anglo-Nepal War has completely overshadowed the equally most crucial role he played in making Nepal a South Asian formidable power.

According to foreign historians Bhakti Thapa had created a legend of the bravest of the braves during the Anglo-Nepal War. A wave site in the USA has even identified him as one of the world's 600 topmost outstanding figures in the entire history of human civilization. Other names in that list are Marshal Zukov, Douglas MacArthur, Edmond Hillary, Charlemagne, King Solomon, Sir Francis Drake, Queen Laxmi Bai of Jhansi etc.

The LALMOHARS published some years back clearly prove that during the regency of Bahadur Shah, the leadership role of Bhakti Thapa was invincible for successful accomplishment of the unification of the vast territory extending from Kali-Gandaki in the east to Yamuna river in Garwal of India.

### LALMOHARS and Bhakti Thapa

Bhakti Thapa's crucial role in transforming Nepal's status from an insignificant state to that of a formidable power in the South Asian Sub-continent became known very lately in 1960s only after Historian Narahari Nath published the official LALMOHAR documents addressed to Bhakti Thapa bearing the royal seal in the magazine HIMABATKHANDA. Foreign historians were quick to rewrite the Nepalese history of that period based on those published LALMOHARS. **Assumption of Unification Leadership**

Historian C.P. Khanduri has written "Leadership and character were the hallmarks of the Gorkhas that got them victorious. Bhakti Thapa had impressed the Gorkha commanders during the War of Consolidation and joined those who were to be the eventual rulers of Nepal. Kaji Amar Singh Thapa had treaded in the footsteps of Bhakti Thapa."

Bhakti Thapa had assumed in 1789 the leadership role of the campaign to unify western Nepal at the end of the critical period of two years long confrontation when the forces of Jumla had proven itself impenetrable barrier on the path of further expansion of then Nepal to the west.

### Kali-Gandaki: Nepal's Western Boundary

According to historian Hamilton the Nepalese force was no match to the strength of the large Jumla force of that time so an outright attack against the Jumla force would have ended up sadly. It appears that Nepal's western boundary would have never extended beyond the present day Gandaki zone or the Kali-Gandaki river if Bhakti Thapa would not have assumed the leadership role right from the Jumla operation.

Historian Stiller has written "Jumla was the key to the west. Jumla had collected an army to face the Gorkhalis, a force far superior to anything the Gorkhalis could put in the field at that time. It is not surprising that Jumla with such an



BY LAXMI THAPA

army was able to resist Gorkhali army for more than two years". Thus further extension of Nepal to the west would have been totally unthinkable without subduing the resistance of Jumla. **Bhakti Thapa's Ingenuity**

Bhakti Thapa had demonstrated his exceptionally brilliant skill and ingenuity in defeating Jumla kingdom. He totally changed the strategy of his predecessors and led the attack on Jumla from the difficult northern side. The result was a swift victory and life of many people was saved.

It is clearly stated in the LALMOHARS sent to Bhakti Thapa after the accomplishment of the Jumla operation that he had been assigned for the job believing in his performance capability.

### Doti and Beyond

According to the LALMOHAR Bhakti Thapa was strongly cautioned that his resources are quite limited and thus he should not advance beyond Jumla. Highly encouraged after the great success in Jumla operation Bhakti Thapa is seen to have completely ignored the instruction of the Capital. Poet Shakti Ballab in a poem in Sanskrit has written about Bhakti Thapa's campaign to unite Doti soon after Jumla operation. After the Doti operation Kumaun and Garwal were also incorporated into Nepal. Within a short period of about two years the Yamuna river became Nepal's western border.

### Unlimited Authority

During almost the entire period of Bahadur Shah's regency Bhakti Thapa had played a decisive role, which becomes apparent from the virtually unlimited authorities vested in him according to the LALMOHARS as described hereinafter.

Even at a time when the Nepal's western border was already Yamuna river and his headquarter was far away at Almora, Bhakti Thapa still continued to hold unlimited authority over a vast region extending from Yamuna river right up to Chepe-Marshyangdi on matters related to mass mobilization, control of all military garrisons, deployment of local *rajas*, constructions of forts and fortification, building bridges and roads etc. He was authorized to receive foreign head of states or their representatives and hold negotiations with them and sign the agreements unless it is deemed necessary in his opinion to refer them to the capital.

### Financial Disbursement

It is most astonishing that Bhakti Thapa was even vested in authority to disburse fund to support the Capital. In one of the LALMOHARS the king has written not to cut the emolument of his brothers and nephews without his prior concurrence.

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## DALIT WOMEN OF DOLKHA

# Devastation To Revival

*Dalit women from the Dolkha district have shown that the implementations of livelihood programs backed by reconstruction and advocacy help them take political power and become economically independent. As women alover the world including Nepal celbrated International Women's Day, the projects and program launched by LWF-Nepal with collaboration from Evangelical Lutheran Churches In America (ELCA) have helped to revive the life of dalit women, who suffered from earthquake*

By **KESHAB POUDEL**

**S**un Maya BK, 50, a ward member of Gauri Shankar Rural Municipality had never imagined that a day would come when she would get elected as a member of the Rural Municipality. After attending a six-month long Transformative Education Program (TEP), her entire vision changed and she took part in the election to establish the rights of the Dalits.

Representing Marbu, a remote village of the Rural Municipality, BK has been attending the board meeting and pushing the agenda of the Dalits and Dalit women since she was elected 22 months ago. "I am grateful to TEP for the change."

Thirty-two-year-old Ganga BK became a legendary farmer of Chankhu Village of Garui Shankar

Rural Municipality Ward 6 for her Akbare Khusarni (Habanero Chili). She is producing Akbare Khursani, also known as King of Chili, to sustain livelihood.

Four years after the earthquakes, the Dalit community, particularly Dalit women, have found new life in three wards, 5,6 and 7 of Suri, Chankhu and Marbu village of Gauri Shankar Rural Municipality of Dolkha district.

Implemented by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF-Nepal) with the funding support of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches In America (ELCA) in collaboration with the Dalit NGO Consortium, the Dalit women empowerment project has transformed backward, excluded Dalit households of Dolkha. As the

project, which was implemented after the 2015 earthquake, is at the wrapping up phase, it has helped make Dalit women resilient, confident and self-reliant.

The Dolkha District is far from the capital, almost 150 kilometers northeast of Kathmandu, where Dalits from these three villages have suffered exclusion, poverty and suppression for centuries. As most of the men leave the village for employment, the women have been bearing the entire burden of tending to the children, elderly and managing household chores. Dependent upon the subsistence-based agriculture, their livelihood options did not bring any economic transformation.

As the earthquake badly affected Dalit women with the destruction



Mira Nepali

of their homes, livelihood options and limited infrastructure including drinking water taps, their state of living was miserable. Things have changed now following the implementation of aid relief, recovery, reconstructions, and livelihood and advocacy programs through the Dalit women empowerment project.

The experiences of three small villages have shown that focused and unified projects can bring transformation which could help formulate better strategies for future disaster recovery programs in Nepal.

The programs demonstrated that the marginalized and excluded groups need different recovery strategies than others after major disasters. Although the government provided a blanket grant of Rs.300,000.00 for housing reconstruction for victims, had LWF Nepal and ELCA not funded an additional Rs. 75,000.000 for reconstruction, many houses of the Dalit community would not have been completed even now. Constructed

following the Building Back Better (BBB) scheme, the new houses and infrastructure like drinking water taps and public buildings will likely to resist disasters in future. Moreover, without livelihood support of both these organizations, many Dalit women would have continued to face exclusion and economic hardships.

The programs implemented under the Dalit women empowerment project supported poultry rearing, goat rearing and vegetable farming. These programs have been generating employment for women and putting cash in their hand. However, this is not going to be enough. There needs to be long term social recovery and capacity building programs

and projects to bring Dalits out of the current cycle of poverty and discrimination.

In the last three years, the project offered start-up capital, ranging from Rs.17,500.00 to Rs.25,000.00, for small rural businesses like livestock and farming, coupled with necessary skills and guidance training in the first phase.

The project also ensured the creation of equal opportunities across the Dalit society. As well as that, the project has targeted the most vulnerable groups, such as families headed





by single women, the disabled and elderly.

As the project is at the stage of conclusion, Dalit women have built secure, safer and more sustainable communities but they are still vulnerable to exclusion and domestic violence.

“Along with implementing the earthquake reconstruction, we have also launched the governance, inclusion, advocacy and livelihood programs. Thanks to the programs like TEP, many Dalit women are elected as ward members. We provided them training to build capacity to raise the issue of Dalit women and put pressure to increase the budget for the Dalits,” said Dr. Prabin Manandhar, Country Director of LWF-Nepal.

### Different Approaches

Unlike other earthquake recovery and reconstruction projects implemented in various other districts, LWF-Nepal, ELCA and the Dalit NGO Consortium have implemented different approaches in the three villages. LWF-Nepal mobilized the

Dalit NGO Consortium to make the program more effective and the members of the Dalit NGO Consortium got involved in their specialized areas with united missions directed for the economic progress of Dalits.

LWF-Nepal's project modality in Dolkha was different than other districts. Instead of building homes, they encouraged victims to access the government's grant and provide additional support to complete the housing construction.

The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) provides a blanket grant of Rs.300,000 to all earthquake victims. As Dalits are in worse economic conditions than other people, they were unable to complete the rebuilding of their homes with just the government grant, so LWF-Nepal and ELCA came to aid them with an additional Rs.75,000.00 to completely finish off their housing.

Side by side, with housing reconstruction, LWF Nepal and ELCA have also supported the WASH, TEP and livelihood programs.

### Women Focused

As the focus of the project was to reduce the burden of women, the activities were also directed towards them. Under the program, a number of water taps were installed in different localities to reduce the time of women having to carry water. Likewise, livelihood support was given to women in areas like vegetable farming, construction of tunnels, livestock, poultry and tailoring.

“We have provided support to livelihood and infrastructure including water supply and irrigation. Other programs are related to governance, advocacy and inclusion. It focuses on local governance, especially women,” said Moti Nepali, Chairperson of the Dalit Welfare Association (DWA).

“We have constructed several water taps in three villages. After the completion of the taps, the time to fetch water has been reduced from 2 hours to 10 minutes. What we want is to provide water for all households. We are working in close coordination with the local level.”



Jaya Prithivi Bahadur BK and Prhthvi Maya BK

Although the project's contributions are just Rs.450,000.000 for drinking water in three villages, water users' associations and local levels are contributing to the remaining budgets. This has helped establish a sense of ownership. Whilst LWF-Nepal and ELCA funded the project, the role and responsibility was given to the community. "Our technical advisors frequently visited the sites. The project encouraged the community. In WASH, the community and local level were involved with transparency and accountability in the entire process," said Ashiwini Poudel, LWF-Nepal Project Officer in Singati.

The support of the community was different in the three areas. In Suri, each household contributed Rs.4000.00. In Chankhu and Marbu each household made a contribution in labor by carrying stones and sand. However, there was still a strong sense of ownership in the three villages.

In Marbu, the project also supported source protection and maintenance and constructed 8 new water taps. As the remotest village out of the three, transport cost is very high in Marbu. People contributed by transporting all the materials on their own.

"In the first phase, there were

nominal contributions of communities. Now communities have been showing interest to take ownership and also provide their own contribution, this is what the fundamental change is. The participation of the people is high and they are taking leadership. I found the community must be empowered. The quality and support is high that is one of the biggest things I have seen. There is realization that this is our project and it is for us," explains Nepali.

TEP For Change

Under TEP, all three villages received two classes each for six months, focusing in the theme of environment protection, justice, empowerment, domestic violence, exclusion, disasters, social welfare, business plans and literacy.

In the last four years, Dalit women have become economically independent and more aware about their rights. One of the significant achievements of the project is that all the elected representatives in the wards were the product of TEP.

By implementing TEP, the pro-



**Kopila BK**

ject empowered Dalit women giving them information about how the law and constitution protects them. The first phase program was entirely related to earthquake response. However, the second phase include governance, exclusion, livelihood and WASH.

"During the training period, we taught them how to raise the issue of Dalits and how to accommodate Dalit welfare and education schemes at the local level. We focus our program on governance and inclusion. The experiences have shown that education is an important sector to improve the livelihood of Dalits," said Gaura Nepali, Chairperson for the Center for Dalit Women.

"In the first phase, we supported women who were unable to secure the second installment of funding for the



**Bhagbati BK**



earthquake reconstruction. We also supported single women and dalits with no land registration certificate and citizenships to secure the grant.”

In the second phase, efforts are taken to raise the issue of caste-based discrimination and exclusion to try and bring the Dalits into the mainstream. The constitution and laws state to treat all individuals with equality but what has not changed is the mindset of the people. Although there are more elected Dalit women, they are not being invited to partake in meetings in the local body. They are elected but they are yet to secure their own rights. As Nepali put it, “Despite efforts to empower Dalits, Dalits are yet to be in a top administrative position. There is yet to have a Dalit Secretary, IGP and Army Chief.”

#### Beneficiaries

With women being the main beneficiaries of the programs, the income and decision-making rights of Dalit women has increased a lot. Women are empowered through the livelihood program.

In three wards, there are 900 population of Dalits and half of them are women whose financial conditions are still bleak. Through the CDN, out of 74 elected Dalit women representatives, 57 elected representatives were trained. The project also provided training to Dalit related organizations, as well as 18 human rights defenders from the district.

Under the entrepreneurship training program, the project trained 25 young women. Though this program they were taught how to maintain logbooks. Under the agriculture and market program, the project helped Dalit women to establish links with cooperatives, financial institutions and insurance offices. Connections were also established with Singate Market mobilization. As the project is in the final stage, the

villages of Suri, Chankhu and Marbu have seen drastic changes in the overall state for Dalit women.

After the implementation of the program, one can see qualitative changes in the lives of the Dalits. One of the major successes of the program



**Kalpana BK**

was its ability to integrate development and advocacy together.

“Dalits, who have been living in society full of so much of exclusion, have realized that there are certain organizations which speaks for them and to provide them with some resources,” said Moti Nepali. When the program launched the awareness level was very low. The situation is different now; there is realization that they have to do something for themselves.

“When we launched the project, the local Dalits expressed the feeling that there was someone who could speak for them. When I went to conduct the training, the women expressed their own difficulties openly. They trusted me so much,” said Gaura Nepali. “As a woman from the same community, I understood their difficulties. In all of the Rural Municipality of Dolkha, we have trained two human rights defenders. We constituted a network of human right

defenders, local Dalit activists and human right activist.”

“Although they suffered greatly, many victims do not have land-ownership certificates or a citizenship certificate. We supported them to take both. Since the males of most of the households are working in foreign countries, women are denied facilities. We took the issue at DDC and CDO office. We have created a conducive environment. They were living in their own difficult circumstances. From a hopeless community, the situation has changed and victims are now living with hope,” describes Moti Nepali.

pali.

CDWN’s main focus is building the capacity of elected Dalit representatives through the following activities: raising awareness of new government policies and provisions, human rights training and cross-learning and exposure visits. In the first phase Rs.25000.00 will be provided.

#### What Next?

The marginalization and exclusion of Dalits cannot be solved just by launching short-term programs. There needs to be more awareness generated of plight of the Dalits and



**Sun Maya BK**

## COVER STORY

there needs to be more frequent classes conducted for all.

Although infrastructure was rebuilt and livelihood programs implemented, the social status of the Dalit community is yet to improve. “Building drinking water, toilets and other infrastructure alone are not enough to completely transform the Dalit community. What they require is the means to exercise their constitutional and legal rights and share the positions of power. There needs to be programs against oppression and discrimination launched. This issue must be addressed at local level, provincial level and national level. This should be go to international level in order to raise the issue,” states Dr. Prabin Manandhar, Country Director of LWF-Nepal. “We worked with the Dalit NGOs to use

the Dalit Network to support Dalits.”

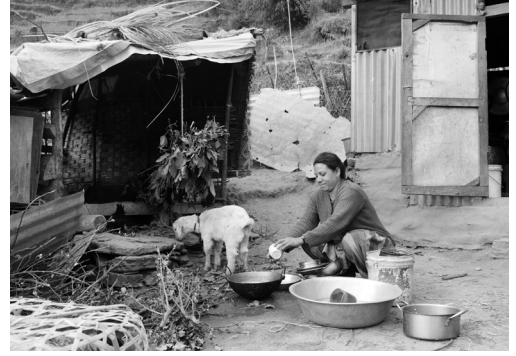
“Just giving one or two training courses is not enough. We need to address the challenges to move ahead. Today’s ward member is going to be the ward chair of tomorrow and maybe she will be Member of Parliament at the Center and province. We need to enhance her capability,” said Gaura Nepali.

“What are the achievements and what are ways forward, this is very important,” said Gopal Dahal of LWF-Nepal.

Instead of giving a small amount of money, there need to be more resources with long-term commitment. Although the communities concerned and impacted population have developed considerable self-resilience, the support is still inadequate to ensure

full recovery and reduce the poverty, social disruption and vulnerability to future potential hazards.

Finally, other members of society also need to be integrated into the Dalit’s program, only then can the problem of discrimination be effectively addressed.



Kanchi Maya BK

दुई पाङ्ग्रे सवारी साधनको अगाडी / पछाडी  
स-साना बालबालिका राखी सवारी साधन  
चलाउँदा अनिवार्यरूपमा बालबालिकालाई  
सुरक्षित बेल्टले बाँधी आवश्यकताअनुसार  
हेल्मेटसमेत लगाईदिने गरौं ।



नेपाल सरकार  
सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मन्त्रालय  
सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग

# International Day Of Happiness

March 20 is the International Day of Happiness and this year's theme is **Happier Together**, focusing on what we have in common, rather than what divides us.

Starting in 2013, the philosophy behind Happiness Day is that fulfilment of basic human right that happiness is a fundamental human goal. There is no poverty, there is equality, and there is protection of the environment. These goals are pursued through "sustainable development" efforts globally, and is relevant to Nepal with the motto of Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali.

Nepal is endowed largely with human, social and natural assets for prosperity. Building on these assets, we need to develop physical and financial assets for happiness. There is a vision, but lacks mission and values.

I don't want to sound technocratic here by discussing rosy plans and programs, but wish you highlight less visible aspects of human conditions, human relations and human networks.

People are developing fatalistic "**ke garne**" attitude, which is against prosperity and happiness. Ke garne (what to do?) attitude has developed fatalistic mindset of the people contributing to hierarchical power structures and exclusions. Lack of trust in formal structures have given rise of syndicates as informal institutions benefiting only a handful of people.

Syndicate is thriving in every sector in Nepal – health, education, transportation, construction and procurement. Syndicate is breeding institutional corruption. We need to destroy syndicate in order to bring prosperity and happiness in the country and give its way for attaining inclusive double-digit economic growth by the next couple of years.

My first point here is to change fatalistic at-



BY DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR

Nepal is endowed largely with human, social and natural assets for prosperity. Building on these assets, we need to develop physical and financial assets for happiness. There is a vision, but lacks mission and values.

titude, be change agents and hold the government accountable to destroy syndicate culture.

Politicians are developing centralized "**je garda ni hunchha**" attitude, which is also against prosperity and happiness. Je garda ni hunchha (impunity) attitude has developed centralized mindset of the politicians that anything

can be done without accountability.

Centralized federalism is constraining development. Kathmandu political culture and bureaucracy are trying to keep power and resources within it wherever possible. We need to break centralization and ensure political will for devolution of authority and resources. The political leadership must be clear about the distinction between the national issues and needs, and provincial and local issues and needs.

My second point here is to break centralized federalism, and be supportive of governance system of self-rule at the local level and shared-rule at the national level by removing parallel authorities in the districts and provinces.

In summary, what is needed is action for prosperity and happiness. We need hard work, loyalty, high sense of responsibility and integrity in political culture and bureaucracy to develop physical and economic assets. We need responsible citizen. We need high level of confidence in the formal structure, and increased civil society space in

rights based advocacy for voice and participation of people in governance processes.

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



# Quality Power Supply

*Nepal Electricity Authority is planning to upgrade 55 substations by the end of the fiscal year*

By A CORRESPONDENT

As load-shedding has come to an end and a number of new hydropower projects are on way to completion, Nepal Electricity Authority, under its dynamic Managing Director Kul Man Ghising, is expanding and upgrading transmission lines and substations all over Nepal.

In the current fiscal year alone, NEA has set a target to upgrade and build 55 substations. With so many controversies, including land acquisition and use of forest land, NEA's expansion program has been facing hiccups from time to time. However, MD Ghising continues to make efforts to successfully complete the transmission lines.

When MD Ghising took the charge of MD of NEA two years ago, all the major transmission line constructions were facing troubles related to various issues. Be it the 220 double circuits Trishuli-Chilime Transmission line or Kabeli or Hetauda Bharatpur, Marsyangdi Corridor, Trishuli Matatirtha and others, nothing was moving forward.

With focus on managing the load shedding and regular supply of power, construction of transmission line and substations received a lesser priority. MD Ghising changed this. As the electricity leakage is almost 25 percent due to the lack of quality transmission line and substation, MD Ghising's priority to complete the transmission line is

understandable.

Giving high priority to transmission line construction and substation, MD Ghising is able to achieve major success. Dhalkebar Mujafarpur 220 kV transmission line, Khimti-Dhalkebar and Trishuli-Matatirtha were a few cases of such success.

In his own mission to make a quality, regular, supply of electricity, MD Ghising is also focusing his attention to complete the projects under NEA. After facing difficulties for

country.

NEA is currently implementing the projects for upgradation and construction of 30 grids and 20 distribution substations. Under this scheme, 600 circuit kilometer transmission lines and 8,000 circuit kilometer distribution lines will be constructed. In the last one year, NEA has already completed construction of 19 grids and 20 distribution substations.

The Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation recently

inaugurated a 33-11 kV substation in Hasulia of Kailali district and 132-33-11 kV substation in Pahalmanpur. Similarly, 132-33 kV substation in Bhurigaun of Bardia and Hapure of Dang were also completed.

“With an aim to use the electricity generated in the

country in the country, NEA has been launching the construction of transmission line and substation as a campaign,” said Minister Pun.

Ending load shedding has made us happy but we need to focus now for the quality supply of the electricity to establish industries in the country. The time has now come for us to do something different for quality power generation



almost a decade, 36 MW Chameliya is now operationalised and Kulekhani III is finally on the trial.

After ending the load shedding, Nepal Electricity Authority is now working to make electricity supply regular, dependable and of quality. Under this program, NEA is now implementing the project to revive and upgrade 55 substations and transmission line of various capacities throughout the

## TANAHU HYDROPOWER

## CMC Fired

*As Tanahu Hydropower Project Terminates The Agreement With CMC, New Tender Process Will Begin*

By A CORRESPONDENT

The controversial decision taken by Melamchi Water Supply Project is not only delaying or raising cost for it, this has also affected Tanahu Hydropower Project.

With the action taken by Melamchi in December stopping its employ-

Development Bank (ADB) and European Investment Bank (EIB), which are financing the hydropower project, before the contract termination letter is sent to the Italian company.

After issuing the termination letter, the project is now working to

estimated at \$506 million, of which the Manila-based Asian Development Bank will provide \$150 million, Japan International Cooperation Agency will contribute \$184 million, European Investment Bank will give \$85 million and NEA will chip in \$87 million.



ees in Kathmandu Airport Immigration, CMC did not respond to Tanahu Project regarding whether to continue the work or not.

Following this, Tanahu Hydropower Project has officially announced the termination of the contract with Co-operative Muratori e Cementisti (CMC) di Ravenna after the Italian firm abandoned the 140-megawatt Tanahu Hydropower Project.

The project also asked Nepal Investment Bank to confiscate the money deposited by the CMC. After completing the 28-day deadline to the Italian company to return to work and, Tanahu Hydropower Project issued a letter terminating the contract with CMC.

Before taking the decision, the project consulted with the Asian

publish the new tender within the month of March.

Once the contract is terminated with the Italian company, the project will restart the procurement process. The project had hired CMC to divert the flow of the river, build dam and complete head works. CMC was selected as the preferred bidder as it had made the lowest bid of Rs 20.64 billion.

The project has hired Chinese firm, Sinohydro, to build the tunnel and power house of the storage-type project. The Chinese company will also import hydro-mechanical and electromechanical equipment and assemble them. The Chinese firm has agreed to complete all the work at Rs 3.83 billion.

The total cost of the project is

Although the CMC is still fighting its bankruptcy case in Italy and the hearing is slated in April, the officials in Nepal have hurried to give the verdict on the pending court issue.

Known for its reputation to complete the mega projects in Asia, CMC has also shown its proven capacity completing 28 long tunnels for Melamchi. With the mishandling of the issue by Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation, even Tanahu Hydropower, which is in final stage of kicking off, has suffered.

Although the officials at the project have said that they will select the new contractor soon, the cancellation of contract agreement with CMC will likely to push the project for few more months.

## EARTHQUAKE RECONSTRUCTION

# India Moves

*After years of stagnation, India comes with a technical team to complete the reconstruction of 72 school buildings*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although the process of reconstruction of school buildings was already delayed for months, finally, India has taken the initiative to complete the work by deploying Central Building Research Institute (CBRI) to Provide Technical Support For Post-Earthquake Reconstruction of 72 Education Facilities In Nepal.

At a time when the reconstruction of school buildings is in the final stage, India's recent decision to deploy Indian technical team to accelerate the process of reconstruction gives joy to the local communities.

Given Nepal's state of reconstruction, India is very much concerned about the use of quality materials and quality construction, particularly in the school building. Giving high priority to the quality construction, Indian government has deployed CBRI for technical support to make reconstruction earthquake resilient and strong.

The Embassy of India, Kathmandu signed an Agreement with the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), Roorkee, India for post-earthquake reconstruction of 72 educational facilities in Nepal.

The Agreement was signed by Dr. Ajay Kumar, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Kathmandu, on behalf of the Government of India, and by Dr. Purnima Parida, Group Leader, Planning & Business Development Group, CBRI, Roorkee.

Sushil Gyewali, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) of Nepal and Manjeev Singh Puri, Ambassador of India to Nepal graced the occasion.

The CBRI will provide Design and Project Management Consul-

tancy services for reconstruction of 70 higher secondary schools in seven districts (Gorkha, Nuwakot, Dhadhing, Dolakha, Kavrepalanchowk, Ramechhap and Sindhupalchowk) as well as the Central Library of Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu and the National Library in Patan, Lalitpur. The CBRI will work with the Central Level Project Implementation Unit (CLPIU) of the Ministry of Education of Nepal to reconstruct/ retrofit educational facilities as per the Government of Nepal's guidelines on disaster-resilient reconstruction.

Separately, Shuchita Kishore, Head of Reconstruction Wing of the Embassy of India and Ima Narayan Shrestha, Project Director, CLPIU (Education) signed separate project specific MoUs, laying out the implementation modalities for reconstruction of eight schools in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts.

The CBRI, Roorkee, a premier National Laboratory under the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research

(CSIR), is a pioneer in India for research in the field of shelter planning, building materials, structures, foundations and disaster mitigation.

At a time when there are growing worries over the delay in the reconstruction of schools and heritage sites under the Indian support, the agreement signed by Indian Embassy and India's premier technical institution has helped to end the uncertainty.

As the process of reconstruction of some of the heritage sites under Indian support was delayed due to procurement of quality materials, local people and local government took the responsibility for the reconstruction of temple on their own.

By deploying highly efficient and premier Indian technical teams for the reconstruction of temples, Indian government has shown its commitment to complete the reconstruction of school buildings adhering to the quality of materials and construction.





# Small Is Beautiful

*As it celebrates 18th Anniversary, Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittyasanstha Ltd (SKBBL) shows how 'small' can make a big difference*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**C**elebrating its 18th Anniversary and felicitating its pioneer former Chief Executive Officer Jalan Kumar Sharma, who served all his career to promote small farmers, Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittyasanstha Ltd (Small Farmer Development Micro-Finance Financial Institution Ltd) has shown that commercialization of agriculture with strong financial institution can bring change in the country.

Although there were several other programs, one of the main highlight of the programs was felicitation of Sharma for his contribution to expand and strengthen the project. Felicitating Sharma, CEO Shivaram Prasad Koirala and his team in the bank have shown their commitment towards the cause of farmers. Sharma has spent entire his career to establish the cause of the downtrodden farmers.

Despite making a progress in alleviation of poverty through cooperatives and micro-finance, large numbers of Nepali people are still living below the poverty line. With lack of strong grassroots based financial institutions, large numbers of farmers are yet to improve their agriculture production.

As it celebrated the 18th anniversary in the presence of Finance Minister Dr. Yubraj Khatiwada, SKBBL, which has already invested Rs.75 billion, is now the largest micro-financial institution, serving 800,000 households in 69 districts.

"As the institution has already had the highest capital, it needs to increase its current D level financial

status to B. There are many other similar micro-finance institutions required for upgradation. I want to express my commitment to upgrade this institution to B Level financial institution," said Dr. Khatiwada, who is one of the key architects of the SKBBL.

Making a net profit of Rs. 23,91,10,000 ( 230.91 million) in this fiscal year, its total assets is Rs. 19,48,84,46,000. The bank provided loan up to Rs.75.3 billion and secured Rs.57.65 billion. The rate of return of bank is 99 percent.

With 691 No. of SFACLs/MFIs members and 229 similar types of others, SKBBL reaches throughout the country among the poor farmers. Thanks to the support of Government of Israel

SKKBL is the extended form of Small Farmers Development Program Initiated by Agricultural Development Bank Limited (ADBL) to uplift the social and economic condition and lives of rural poor people in early 1980s. In its 18 years of establishment, SKKBL has continued to work for the people characterized by geographical diversity, traditional modes of farming, under employment, low income and poor living standard.

The SFDP was the first credit plus targeted program to provide microcredit for income generating activities alongside a saving program at the doorsteps of poor communities. The program has provided skill development trainings and socio-economic development programs to improve the living conditions of the rural poor. This community based integrated SFDP targeted for economic and social development was extended to remote and far flung villages.

"With the extensions of programs nationwide and institutions, we are able to reach the poorest and poor sections of people. One of our achievements is that the rate of

loan recovery is 99 percent," said Shiva Ram Prasad Koirala, Chief Executive Officer. On the one hand increasing cost of agriculture production with lower quality, declining productivity, high risk and growing international competition is making it difficult for farmers resulting in the country's inability to produce the product for their own consultation," said Koirala.

Welcoming the guests, chairman of SKKBL Khem Bahadur Pathak said that there was the need to further expand SKKBL to reach the poor and vulnerable communities.



and Embassy of Israel in Kathmandu, SKBBL has also sent almost 500 students of small farmers in Israel for 10 months in an 'earn and learn' program.

Living for centuries in subsistence farming, the exposure given in Israel has already helped transform Nepal's traditional based agriculture system.

"Despite opening of numbers of micro-credit related institutions, SKKBL is emerging as a financial institution supportive to farmers with minimum charges," said finance minister Dr. Khatiwada.

## GOÛT DE FRANCE

# French Food

### *Eight Nepali Restaurants To Take Part In Goût de France Global Gastronomical Event*

By A CORRESPONDENT

For the last four years, Nepali restaurants have been taking part in Goût de France Global Gastronomical event showing their competency and efficiency to produce quality French food.

As in the past, this year too, eight Nepali restaurants are taking part in the event offering the best quality French food in Nepal. Known for their taste and varieties, French cuisines have global recognition.

As Nepal is seeking to host more tourists in the coming days, offering quality French foods will be added advantages for Nepal. In this regard, this years' festival has its own importance.

French Ambassador to Nepal François – Xavier Leger said gastronomical values are common in both Nepal and France. “As a Frenchman, it gives me immense pleasure to see the importance being given to developing a food culture and being innovative. I have found that Nepal and France share common values when it comes to gastronomy: Like in France, Nepal also believes in shared meals, in the friendly atmosphere, and use of local organic products,” said ambassador Leger addressing a press conference at the Residence

of France to introduce the fifth edition of “Goût de France Good France”.

Ambassador Leger also talked about how the gastronomical partners participating in this Good France event spreads the message of a new Nepal: a young, dynamic, vibrant country that is open to the outside.

The French Embassy in Nepal organized a press conference.

event will see about 5000 chefs making a “French dinner” with a local twist on the same evening (March 21st) with one common objective: celebrate responsible French gastronomy with greater concern for the environment with the help of local talent and products.

Ambassador Leger also talked about how the gastronomi-



Goût de France / Good France is a unique global gastronomical event held on 5 continents in over 150 countries which has entered its fifth consecutive year. This global

cal partners participating in this Good France event spreads the message of a new Nepal: a young, dynamic, vibrant country that is open to the outside.



# Nepal Is On A Global Map For Celebrating The Excellence In French Cuisine

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the French Residence and present to you the 5th edition of operation Good France which will be celebrated in Nepal.

As you all know, the French gastronomy has been listed as the UNESCO's intangible heritage and here in Nepal, the excellence of French gastronomy is being celebrated by Nepali restaurants since 2016 which is a testament of high quality local talent, management and products.

This event was initiated in 2015 by the then French minister for foreign affairs, Laurent Fabius, whose objective was to create an event that would celebrate one of the greatest French heritage (the French gastronomy) and each year, it has seen a significant increase in the number of participating countries and restaurants. As you may notice, the French diplomatic network is fully mobilized to make this event a huge success. This grand event on March 21st will see over 5000 chefs participating in 150 countries in 5 continents!

One of the main reasons, France is at the origin of this event is because gastronomy helps us project our culture and our values throughout the world. It is also one of the key factors for the millions of visitors that come to France. It is said that no less than one - third of them come to France just to taste our French food and wine. France has the ambition to welcome 100 million tourists in 2020 and the development of tourism by valorizing the French cuisine is expected to play a major role in our attractiveness.

So now without any further ado, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the following restaurants taking part this year:

- 1- The Philosophy Restaurant at Silver Mountain School Of Hotel Management
- 2- Pauline's Garden restaurant
- 3- Olive Garden restaurant at Radisson Hotel Kathmandu
- 4- La Terrace restaurant at Global Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Education
- 5- Garden Terrace restaurant at Crowne Plaza Kath-



BY FRANÇOIS – XAVIER LEGER

mandu-Soaltee

6- The Chimney Restaurant at Hotel Yak and Yeti

7- The Old House restaurant in Durbar Marg

8- VINO Bistro in Lazimpat

Thanks to our gastronomical partners, Nepal is on a global map for celebrating the excellence in French cuisine. You can see the complete list of participating restaurants throughout the world on [goodfrance.com](http://goodfrance.com).

When I visit many eateries in town, I am pleasantly surprised by the quality and the creativeness around the food. And as a Frenchman, it gives me immense pleasure to see the importance being given to developing a food culture and being innovative. I have found that Nepal and France share common values when it comes to gastronomy: Like in France, Nepal also believes in shared meals, in the friendly atmosphere, and use of local organic products. My wife and I, we regularly enjoy going to farmers' market and buy local products directly from the farmers.

On my part, I will be organizing a small dinner at the Residence for a few friends with the help of my wife, Gael, and my Chef Uttam Aryal who was trained at my Ministry in Paris last year. Each French Ambassador is expected to host his own dinner.

Before I pass mike to the representatives of the restaurants, I would like to inform you that in 2019, we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. In order to mark and celebrate this, Nepal and France have jointly appointed Miss Nepal, Shrinkhala Khatiwada, as our Goodwill Ambassador. By the way, she is currently on a goodwill visit to France meeting senior French officials and eminent personalities and spreading the message of a new Nepal: a young, dynamic, vibrant country that is open to the outside. Participation of our gastronomical partners in this Good France event also sends a similar message.

(Excerpts of the statement delivered at press conference.)

# Restoring Ecosystem

*Launching EbA2, Ministry of Forest and Environment aims to increase adaptive capacity to climate change and restore national capital*

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Nepal is ranked one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to natural disasters, there is the need to prepare the people to adapt with the hostile scenario. With frequent extreme events and human interventions, large numbers of people have been suffering from floods, landslides, GLOF, droughts, thunderstorms and cold-waves.

In this context, the implementation of Catalyzing Econ-system Restoration for Resilience Natural Capital and Rural Livelihoods in degraded forests and Rangelands of Nepal (EbA2) is a major event.

At a time when there is rampant destruction of natural resources including forest areas, there is the need to increase awareness at the community and locally elected level. With a priority of promoting community based adaptation through integrated management of agriculture, water, forest and biodiversity sector, forest and eco-system management for supporting climate led adaptation innovations and eco-system management for climate adaptation, EbA2 has its own character.

Thanks to the efforts of secretary of Ministry of Forest and Environment Dr. Bishwa Nath Oli, the project, which was at the stage of collapse, has finally revived.

This is what Moon Shrestha, Task Manager Climate Change Adaptation Unit of UNEP, has revealed in the inception workshop. She also thanked secretary Dr. Oli for playing an important role to materialize the project. She said that the project will be implemented and monitored by user groups.

Minister of Forests and Environment (MoFE) Shakti Bahadur Basnet said that sustainable development is impossible without preservation and protection of the environment.

Inaugurating Project Inception Workshop of Catalyzing Econ-system

Restoration for Resilience Natural Capital and Rural Livelihoods in degraded forests and Rangelands of Nepal (EbA2), minister Basnet said that this project will help generate awareness at local level about the importance of ecosystem based development.

A joint undertaking of Ministry of Forest and Environment, UNEP and Ministry of Administration and Local Development as collaborating partners, the project is funded by Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF).

Implemented with a goal to reduce the climate vulnerability of local communities in Nepal, the project is

going to increase the capacity of the government and local communities in Nepal to adapt to climate change by implementing EbA in degraded

forests and rangelands in mid-hill and high mountain areas.

Minister Basnet said that Nepal has been passing through new phase of three-tier government, from center, province and local levels. "There certainly is the need to readjust local governments during the time of implementation," said Minister Basnet.

"At a time when there is a growing debate over development and environment protection, this project will help disseminate the perception of how sustained development is possible with preservation of forests," said Minister Basnet. "Whether one likes it or not, EIA and IEE are now mandatory conditions for development and both issues are not anti-development. EIA and IEE will facilitate sustainable development."

Minister Basnet said that forest and environment are the property of all human beings and we need to preserve them for future generations. Whether the issue of Nijgadh Airport, construction of transmission line or road, all need to think about starting the project with minimum damage of forest and ecosystem.

Addressing the program, Secretary of Ministry of Forest and Environment Dr. Bishwanath Oli said that the project design had started in 2012 in one context and it is now implemented in a different political and governance context with the election of center, province



and local levels. He assured concerned stakeholders that the EbA project will address all the concerns of local levels in the implementation stage. He also thanked UNEP for its contribution and support to materialize the project.

"With modification in implementation stage, the project will be closely working with local level and community," said Dr. Oli. He said that the environment is not only an issue of national concern, this is also an issue of international concern.

"Development is the need of people. However, development can be disastrous if it fails to preserve the environment. Preservation of environment is important part for sustainable development. As the government is in the process of drafting new Environment Protection Act, it will help to



manage development and environment.”

Delivering the opening statement and highlighting the objective of the workshop, Dr. Maheshwar Dhakal, chief of Climate Change Management Division and National Project director of EbA2, said that the objective of the inception workshop is to present the project in detail, including implementation and execution arrangements. He said that this also aims to assist relevant project stakeholders understand their role/ responsibilities and take ownership of the project interventions from the very start and to develop a common understanding.

He said that EbA will be implemented and monitored by user groups to restore forests and rangelands in the mid-hills of Achham and Salyan and high mountains of Dolakha to decrease the sensitivity of local communities to climate change.

With the total cost of \$5.2 million, a total of 12072 households with a population of 59172 are expected to benefit from the EbA targeted interventions. According to Dr. Dhakal, at least 1000 ha of degraded forest will be restored using EbA and 450 ha of rangeland restored. During the three years implementation period, 100 operational management plants will be restored, 36 filtering dams will be constructed and 120 ha of improved terraces will be developed. Similarly, 36 filtering dams constructed, 36 water conservation pond and 24 community rain water harvesting devices will be constructed.

Delivering the statement at the inception workshop, Moon Shrestha, Task Manager, Climate Change Adaptation Unit of UNEP, said that there is a certain delay in the implantation of the project expressing hope that this is going to help to reduce the risk of climate change to vulnerable communities and also increase the capacity of the government. She said that this is the third EbA project in Nepal and will be implemented and monitored by user groups.

Attended by various stakeholders from districts, local level, government officials and media persons, Ram Hari Panth, National Project Coordinator, presented details of EbA 2 projects. He said that the project will increase the capacity of government officials, local user groups to implement EbA 2 through enhanced institutional arrangements, intersectoral collaboration and research. He said that demonstration intervention will increase adaptive capacity to climate change and restore natural capital.

## CHAUDHARY GROUP

# Paying High

During the fiscal year 2018/019, Chaudhary Group related organizations have contributed Rs. 9.67 billion to national coffers in revenue. The contribution of the group in national treasury is 1.64 percent.

According to a press release issued by the Group, its contribution was 22.72 percent higher than previous year. During the period, the group contributed Rs. 7.88 billion.

“We are proud to contribute such a high amount in government revenue. Due to increase in investment and expansion of industries, we have generated new employment

completed and some are in the stage of implementation. Among them, establishment of country’s biggest Cement Factory in Palpa, Taj Vivanta Hotel in Kathmandu, Shopping Mall in Chitwan, CG Industrial Park in Sunsari, 18 MW middle Modi and 44 MW Super Modi. Others are expansion and modernization of industries inside CG Industrial Park Nawalpur. CG Brewery, Packaging, Snacks food and soft drinks are yet others. Similarly, CG Lifecell, country’s largest digital telecom, is in the process of implementation. CG is investing Rs. 25



and increase our contribution to revenue,” said Nirvan Chaudhary, MD of Chaudhary Group. “We believe in high professional dignity and transparency. We firmly believe that this will contribute to national development.”

Chaudhary Group is investing Rs. 20 billion in current fiscal year. Out of this, some projects have already

billion in this project.

With over 10,000 employers, thousands of others are contributing in service industries of Chaudhary Group. Established by Chaudhary Group, CG Industrial Park is one of the best parks in Asia. The group is also planning to establish industrial park in province 1 and 5. Chaudhary Group is a corporate house.

# Women Empowerment

Women empowerment over the past few years has grown to be an important issue that has garnered adequate attention, and quite rightly so. National plans and policies have sought to be inclusive and gender friendly. Development sector has banked on the narrative so well that there is not a single non-empowered woman in Nepal but only women who have not yet been spotted by an NGO. As we continue our drive to empower women without considering their emancipation, we have to stop questioning what it is about skimpily clad women that reflects empowerment.

The female body has survived brutal times over the course of history from being misunderstood to being controlled. Even today, our bodies are used against us. All major violence and threat against women are carried out in the form of bodily harm- female genital mutilation, rape, molestation, acid attack, or murder- even pandering to toddlers and young girls who have not even learnt about their bodies. Used as an instrument of oppression throughout time, we have been conditioned to believe that they serve the purposes of child bearing and husband pleasing, apparatuses of male entitlement.

In the advertisement sector, female bodies sell everything from washing powder to cars. Not only do advertisements and commercials sexualise women in erotic ways but also stereotype into society approved gender roles. Why this is a problem is because once a sold narrative will continue to be consumed, it will pervade the society instilling those same values to the audience. Once these values are internalised, it will take us back to the point of origin: skewed representation.

One rung further beyond this chaos stand the women that have been subject of appeasement to the male gaze, the semi-clothed models. Some claim this to be empowerment which is fair enough, as women can decide what they want to wear and how and where they choose to present their bodies breaking the shackles of conventional attire and limitations of shame and honour.

It does give away a whiff of liberation – albeit different from empowerment – this discourse assumes full agency of the female while accepting to dress and pose provocatively to appease to the male gaze. We are refusing to acknowledge all the money that is being made off a human being for looking and dressing in a titillating way. The person also makes money from it, but in this grander scheme of things can be skirted away as a compensation for renting their



BY ADITI ARYAL

existence to be reduced to a pamphlet. To no one's bemusement, corporations founded and headed mostly always by male personnel benefit the most.

Alternatively, if shedding clothes was equivalent to empowerment, adult film actors would have been the strongest. In reality, they go through horrible working conditions with no ownership of their own bodies and face

harassment at the hands of production houses, coupled with double standards from the audience: first being celebrated and later shamed for being in such a profession. Basically, there does not even exist a hint of bodily agency and female bodies are just like puppets being controlled by the ultimate puppeteer, misogyny. Because how else could we justify rage, body shaming, and abuse when women strip to protest for things that actually matter?

Some also argue that high ranked 'celebrities' have the power to influence to bring changes in society. What they may actually have is a little bit of power to say no to doing these adverts, but they will always be replaced by somebody else who will not refuse. Market demands more of these and so will they be delivered because these have always been sold and will continue to be until we demand agency over our bodies.

My contention is not an archaic one curtailing women the rights to dress and make a living as they choose. The major argument here is that it does not benefit women, the least of which the human being who agrees to do it. There is no empowerment in stripping, the very methodology to

bring positive change laced with hidden misogyny cannot be the means to achieving an end. Before considering it empowerment, there is one fundamental question that needs to be asked,

"who do you want to strip for"? For men that continue to sexualise our bodies? For corporations that will make untracked profit? Or for other women who will then have to fit the size of the calendar girl?

All the world's a stage and it is driven by misogyny. I rest my case.





# LIVING THE MOMENT



#HAMRORUSLAN

f/RuslanVodka

ENJOY WITH RUSLAN RESPONSIBLY





पहिलो पटक  
**निःशुल्क जीवन तथा दुर्घटना मृत्यु बीमा**  
सुविधाका साथ प्रस्तुत



**जीवनमा बचत गरौं... जीवन नै बचत गरौं**

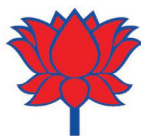
नेपाल इन्भेष्टमेन्ट बैंक लि. मा सुरक्षा बचत खाता खोली तपाईंले

निःशुल्क रु. १ लाखको जीवन बीमा तथा रु. २ लाखको दुर्घटना मृत्यु बीमा सुविधा पाउन सक्नुहुनेछ ।

हाल लाई १८ - ६० वर्षका ग्राहकहरूमा मात्र लागू हुने | न्यूनतम मौज्दात - रु. ५,०००

घर, हायर पर्चेज, शिक्षा तथा सुन-चाँदी कर्जामा विशेष छुट | निःशुल्क इन्टरनेट बैंकिङ सुविधा | निःशुल्क मोबाइल बैंकिङ सुविधा

थप जानकारीका लागि नजिकको शाखामा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला ।



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