



VIEWPOINT
Hou Yanqi



ENVIRONMENT
Batu Uprety



DOCUMENT
Masamichi Saigo

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NEW BUDGET

Realty Vs Populism

INSIDE



NEPAL INDIA RELATIONS
Under Modi II



INTERVIEW
Park Young-sik



MAHARAJKUMARI RAMA MALLA
Admirable Reception



एक रुपैयाँमा आफ्नै बचत खाता

नेपालको उत्कृष्ट बैंक NIBL मा एक रुपैयाँमा खाता खोल्नुहोस्

आफ्नो भविष्यको लागि अलिअलि गर्दै मेहनतको कमाइ जम्मा गर्न NIBL मा गएर
एक रुपैयाँमा आफ्नै बचत खाता खोलौं ।



or



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With a swelling balance of payment, trade imbalance, unfavorable weather, declining remittance, Nepal's economy is not in a good shape. Given limited options with high political target, Finance Minister Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada has presented his budget for fiscal year 2019/2020. Unlike last year, finance minister Dr. Khatiwada, who maintained a tight financial control, has opened the purse for everyone. Allocating huge money for non-productive sectors, including increasing salary, Constituencies Development Fund, social security allowance (SSA) and other such populist measures, finance minister Dr. Khatiwada has virtually allocated meager budgets for development projects aimed at accelerating the economic growth. Dr. Khatiwada has allocated little budget to infrastructure and new projects. At a time when Nepal's current level of revenue is just sufficient to meet concurrent expenditure, finance minister Dr. Khatiwada is expecting to go for international and domestic borrowing for capital expenditure. Published without wider consultation with Nepal's development partners, there are wide disenchantments on recently released Nepal's Foreign Aid Policy which has placed so much of conditionality for development partners. As the budget has announced the target to grow 8 percent in coming fiscal year, there is the need of huge investment in infrastructure. Given the current situation, there is a little room for it. We have covered the budget of fiscal year 2019/20 as our cover story this week. We have also analyzed Nepal-India relations during Narendra Modi's second tenure as a prime minister. We have also interviewed ambassador of Republic of Korea Park Young-sik looking at different aspects of Nepal-Korea relations.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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Prachanda Speaks

NCP chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda reveals that KP Oli and he had a written understanding on rotational Prime Ministership

BY A CORRESPONDENT

As Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli is running the country as a single-handed government, taking major decisions on his own, Nepal Communist Party (NCP) co-chair, in his recent interview, has reminded Prime Minister Oli of his real position.

At a time when PM Oli's government has been focusing more in the state affairs ignoring the party affairs, former PM Prachanda, in his own style, put the pressure on Oli.

The timing chosen by Prachanda is very significant as one and half years have already passed since the formation of the government and there remain another year to cross the half.

"Oli Jee and I have a written understanding to run the government alternatively," said Prachanda, in his calculative and very shrewd manner expressing displeasure.

Chairman of ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) Pushpakamal Dahal Prachanda has revealed that prime minister K.P Sharma Oli and he has an understanding to run the government in rotation between them. In his interview with journalist Rishi Dhamala, he said that this understanding was made during the party unification process.

He also said that there were clear understandings between them on taking responsibility of party chair and prime minister in rotation.

"The understanding reached between two (Me and Oli) during the party unification process is not a hidden agenda as it is written. There is a mention in the agreement to run party and government in alternation," said Prachanda.

"Now we have two presidents and he (Oli jee) is leading the government. Although we have an understanding, I don't have any temptation to be a prime minister. If the

government works as per the wishes of people for development and prosperity, Oli Jee can run the government for a full term of five years. However, my role must be clarified," said Prachanda.

He also frankly said that there is the need to divide clear role and responsibility between them. "If Oli jee works in a better manner, I will support him. Whatever is written in the understanding, I will not go and ask for prime minister's chair. My role needs to be clear. The discussion is going on even at the party level."

He also said that all need to be honest towards the understanding. "Oli also needs to prepare to hand over power as per the understanding. He might be ready for that," said Prachanda.

He said that he is not a power monger but he is seeking a clearly defined role in power or party. "I should be given obvious role in party or government. This will work in the interest of party and government," said Prachanda.

He said that he does not have any hesitation to speak

the truth in front of the people. He also said that there are some people who see my clear and concise views as being a power monger or aspiring to become prime minister. "But, I don't have any objection, if the government and party run in good way. I want



benefits for the country not for me. If the country can benefit and prosper, it does not have any difference to me to see Oli jee is in power. However, there is the need to have a clear role for me in the party."

Although it is too early to say about the future of the government and possibility of instability, the statement given by Prachanda will likely shake the government, which is said to have two thirds majority in the parliament.

NEWSNOTES

Japan Hands Over Public Toilet And Improved Facilities To ANFA



Ambassador of Japan to Nepal Masamichi Saigo handed over a public toilet and other facilities constructed at the premises of the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) Complex, Satdobato, Lalitpur. Karma Tsering Sherpa, the President of ANFA was present at the ceremony.

The Government of Japan provided financial assistance of USD 71,581.00, equivalent to approximately 7.4 million Nepali Rupees to the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) for the Project for Construction and Improving the Attached Facilities of Satdobato Football Stadium of ANFA, under the Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Project (GCGP) of FY 2017.

KOICA Volunteer Supports Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital

KOICA volunteer supports in installation of autoclave machine and Shredder to improve the infection control program in Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital

KOICA volunteer with the support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) completed the project "Purchasing Autoclave Machine and Shredder".



Through this project KOICA Nurse (volunteer) Minkyung Yu supported biomedical Waste Management Horizontal Cylindrical Autoclave (400mm x 1100mm, 150L) and biomedical waste shredding machine to Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital to improve the infection control program

in Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital under KOV's project support activity. For this project KOICA has supported around \$29,515 and hospital has supported around \$17,013.

KOICA has been partnering with Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital since 2018 and the project inauguration ceremony was held at hospital premise on May 31, 2019 in the presence of Mr. Diwakar Raj Karnikar, Former chairperson of Nepal Cancer Relief Society/special advisor of Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital, Dr. Dipesh Dhital, Acting Medical Director, KOICA representatives as well as other staffs of the hospital.

China Hands Over Dubar High School

Chinese ambassador to Nepal Hou Yanqi said that Kathmandu Durbar High School is the first modern education school in Nepal. She said that it has trained a large number of talents for the development of Nepal, and embodies the youthful memory of generations upon generations of school alumni.

Addressing the public Open Day of China Aid Kathmandu Durbar High School Reconstruction Project, ambassador Hou Yanqi said, "it is my great pleasure to attend the Public Open Day of China Aid Kathmandu Durbar High School Reconstruction Project. In August last year and on this same place, we held a commencement ceremony."

"At that time here it was clear ground, and the earthquake-damaged old buildings were removed to allow space for reconstruction. After nine months of construction and with the joint efforts of both China and Nepal, we are now very pleased to see the new teaching building rise straight above the ground in front of us."

Nepal's Bhumika Shrestha Included In 100 Most Influential People

Bhumika Shrestha, a transgender activist, model, and actress of Blue Diamond Society of Nepal, is included in the Gender Equality Top 100, The Most Influential People In Global Policy 2019.

Bhumika Shrestha is a transgender activist, model, and actress, who has become a prominent voice of the transgender movement in Nepal. Due to her own experiences as a transgender woman, she has been outspoken on changing laws that prevent discrimination against the LGBT community.

She played a prominent role campaigning alongside the Blue Diamond Society, a Nepali LGBT rights organisation, to include a third gender option on Nepalese passports. She was the first Nepali citizen to travel with documents marked with the country's legally recognised "third gender".



United States Breaks Ground On Public Facilities

Deputy Mission Director for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Nepal, Adriana Hayes, participated in the groundbreaking for six schools and two health facilities in Makawanpur District that were damaged during the 2015 earthquakes.

At the event, Ms. Hayes said, "We are proud to partner with the Nepali government and the people of Makawanpur to build back safer and stronger. USAID's post-earthquake



assistance prioritizes rebuilding public facilities--especially schools and health facilities--because we firmly believe that an educated and healthy population will contribute to the economic prosperity of Nepal."

According to a press release issued by the U.S. Embassy in Nepal, the new schools (Shree Janata Secondary School, Shree Mahendra Kiran Secondary School, Shree Bhrikuti

Secondary School, Shree Bandevi Basic School, Shree Gyanjyoti Basic School, and Shree Yug Chetana Basic School) and health facilities (Sukaura Health Post and Kankada Health Post) will be reconstructed with the generous support of the American people through USAID's Nepal Reconstruction Engineering Support Activity in partnership with the National Reconstruction Authority; the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology; the Ministry of Health and Population; and relevant local government authorities.

Accession To The Throne Of The Emperor Of Japan Marked

Masamichi Saigo, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, hosted a reception to celebrate the Accession to the Throne of His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito at his official residence, in Tahachal, on Tuesday 28th May, 2019.



Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, as Chief Guest, Ambassadors, and Heads of International Organizations in Nepal, members of the Federal Parliament, and high ranking government

officials attended the reception.

Ambassador Saigo mentioned the relationship between His Majesty the Emperor and Nepal. His Majesty the Emperor visited Nepal in 1987 when he was the Crown Prince, and spent time here visiting city areas and mountains. It is said that His Majesty developed further thoughts about the water problems of the world through this visit, and since then continues to talk on themes related to water and society at various international platforms.

Thai Embassy Marks Visakha Bucha Day

On 18 May 2019, the Royal Thai Embassy organized activities on Visakha Bucha Day at Sirikit Vihar, Kirtipur.

Bhakavat Tanskul, Ambassador of Thailand to Nepal, together with Embassy's officials, representatives of Thai Airways International and Thai community in Kathmandu, approximately 20 people in total, participated in religious activities including chanting, and circumambulation.

USAID Hands Schools In Sindhupalchowk

Mission Director for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Nepal, Amy Tohill-Stull, and National Reconstruction Authority's Chief Executive Officer, Sushil Gyawali, handed over four new primary schools to the people of Sindhupalchowk District. Mayor of Chautara Sangachowkgadi Municipality, Aman Singh



Tamang, also participated in the handover event.

These four schools are part of 29 seismically safe, well-equipped, and child-and disabled-friendly primary and secondary schools that USAID is constructing in seven districts that were heavily impacted by the earthquake. USAID has handed over 13 of these 29 schools so far. Overall, the 29 schools will benefit more than 8,800 students.

India Builds Educational Institution In Udayapur

Member of Parliament Dr. Narayan Khadka inaugurated Shree Narad Adarsha Education Campus at Chaudandigadhi Municipality in Udayapur District. Dr. Ajay Kumar, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India attended the inauguration ceremony as a Special Guest.



The new infrastructure constructed with the Government of India's grant assistance of NRs. 30.20 million, is a two storied building comprising 12 classrooms, library, meeting hall, separate toilets for boys and girls and supply of furniture.

The newly built infrastructure will not only boost learning environment of students but also enhance access to education to rural students of Udayapur and adjoining districts, including Bhojpur, Khotang, Sunsari and Saptari.

K-pop World Festival 2019 Organized In Nepal

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal Park Young Sik inaugurated 2019 K-pop World Festival in Nepal aimed a function in Tribhuvan Army Officer's Club Auditorium. Addressing the program ambassador Park Young Sik said that Nepal is one of the countries in South West Asia with highest number of follower of Korean Pop music. He said that Korean culture is expanding in Nepal thanks to Korean food and music liked by overwhelming number of Nepalese youths.



The Ambassador said that K-Pop is providing opportunity for diverse cultures from around the world to unite showing music and dance of K-pop star. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea, Ministry of Culture and Sports, Sangwan City and KBS Television have been jointly organizing the festival annually. Selected in a qualifying round, organized in Bagmati Boarding School, fifteen teams presented their performance with full house auditorium of Army Officer's Club.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Tatopani Border Resumes

Minister for Industries, Commerce and Supplies Matrika Yadav and Chinese envoy to Nepal Hou Yanqi jointly inaugurated the Tatopani Transit point and announced its operation at a recent program.

The transit point officially resumed after four containers ferrying wool entered the Nepali side from China amidst the program attended by high level officials from both countries.

After the devastating earthquake of 2015, Tatopani transit

point at the Nepal-China had shut down.

Despite the resumption of transit point, people will not be permitted to pass via the border. Vehicles ferrying goods from China will be off-loaded at a dry port in Larcha on the Nepali side and loaded from there.



National News Agency RSS reports that repair and construction of the main office, customs yard, and a quarter destroyed by the earthquakes have been completed at the dry port. Likewise, after the construction of customs office, quarantine, check post, bank and residence is over, goods will be off-loaded and loaded at the dry port.

The Nepal-China border point resumed after Miteri bridge and other physical structures damaged by the earthquakes were constructed. The border-point is the shortest from the capital Kathmandu.

NIBL Ace Capital Limited To Issue NIBL Sahabhagita Fund

NIBL Ace Capital Limited, one of Nepal's leading merchant banking companies and a subsidiary of Nepal Investment Bank Limited, has announced the launch of "NIBL Sahabhagita Fund" as the first open ended fund of the country.

It has been designed under the NIBL mutual fund as the first ever open

ended mutual fund scheme after the implementation of the mutual fund regulation, 2067 and mutual fund guidelines, 2069 issued by SEBON.

According to the information, the fund has an approved size of NPR. 500 millions. Initially, Rs 125 million will be issued as new fund offer (NFO) to general public, and 75 million will be provided to fund sponsor Nepal Investment Bank and NIBL Ace Capital Limited.

The investors must apply a minimum of 100 units and maximum of 2.5 lakh units at par value of Rs.10 per unit. They can apply through ASBA approved banks from all 77 districts

across the country and from MERO share as well.

The NFO will be opened for subscription from June 2, 2019.

The Scheme will invest its fund in the Securities that are listed in the NEPSE. The fund is managed by the NIBL Ace Capital Limited and will be open for Subscription and redemption of units after three months from allotment, initially from the premises of NIBL Ace Capital Limited, Uttardhoka, Lazimpat, selected branches of NIBL and prescribed distribution agents.

More Nepalis In Enlarged Partnership: Ambassador Schäfer

Ambassador of Germany to Nepal Roland Schäfer said that more than 1500 Nepali currently study in Germany. "This is only a small part of what our relationship is about: learning and developing together. Nepal has come a long way since our relationship started in 1958, and so has Germany. Today, linking up to Germany means linking up to the whole of the European Union, and to all its member states. We want more Nepalis to live this enlarged partnership in their studies and their work. This is my dream for the success story of the coming sixty years," said ambassador Schäfer.

Addressing a talk program on 'Retrospect and Prospect of Nepal Germany Relations, The Role of Alumni in Nepal's Development, German Ambassador to Nepal Schäfer said that there are a lot of opportunities for Nepalese scholars and students to learn from Germany.

At the talk organized by Nepal German Academic Association (NEGAAS), former Nepalese ambassador to Germany Dr. Madan Bhattarai said that there are strong possibilities of further promoting cooperation between Nepal and the Federal Republic of Germany

in the changed context of political stability and change of emphasis towards socio-economic transformation under the concept of a Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali.

"While we can continue cooperation in areas that have been agreed between the two sides, there is a real possibility of extending mutual cooperation in the field of communication and information technology, biotechnology, academic and scientific cooperation, herbal medicine, etc. for a win-win cooperation between the two countries," said Dr. Bhattarai.

The objective of the talk program, organized by Nepal German Academic Association (NEGAAS), was to discuss about the role of academia / NEGAAS / Alumni in shaping Nepal - German relations and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Prof. Dr. Ramesh K. Maskey, President of NEGAAS and Dr. Roshana Shrestha, founder of NEGAAS also addressed the program.



NEGAAS is a non-profit organization established in August 1986 by a group of Nepalese scholars having obtained their academic degree, undergone training and conducted researches in various universities and institutes of Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). NEGAAS aims at strengthening the relation between Nepal and FRG by developing mutual understanding and cooperation among the academicians of both the countries in social, scientific and technical fields. The talk program

was organized inside the premises of Information and Communication Technology Centre (ICTC), Pulchowk Campus, Lalitpur on 24 May 2019.

UNDP To Support NTB To Develop TSA

Chief Executive Officer of Nepal Tourism Board Deepak

Raj Joshi and Ayshanie Labe, Resident Representative of UNDP, signed an agreement to develop Tourism Satellite Account TSA. According to the board, UNDP also agreed to provide support to NTB for promotion of sustainable tourism.

TSA is one of the universal data bases. As Nepal does not have world class tourism data base, Nepal is not in a position to identify benefits from tourism sector.

CEO of NTB Joshi said that the agreement will help analyze the exact benefits of tourism sector in Nepalese economy. Nepal tourism is now developing TSA. After this agreement, UNDP will provide technical support to NTB to make TSA. In the process, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Central Bureau of Statistic and Nepal Rastra Bank will also join,

After almost seven months of visiting United Nation World Tourism Organization in Madrid, this is materializing. Senior Director of Nepal Tourism Board Kashi Raj Bhandari has made a major contribution for this.

NIBL Opens New Extension Counter In Budhanilkantha

Chief Executive Officer of Nepal Investment Bank Ltd Jyoti

Prakash Pandey and headmaster of Budhanilkantha School Homnath Acharya have jointly inaugurated an extension counter just outside the Budhanilkatha School.

The counter will provide easy financial service to

local people of Budhanilkantha Municipality ward 5, students and teachers of Budhanilkantha School. Attended by bank's employees, ward members and local people, this is 14th

extension counter in Budhanilkantha Municipality.

The Bank has been expanding services in rural parts of Nepal to enhance financial literacy. This counter is part of it. Similarly, Nepal Investment Bank Ltd also moved its Sankhuwasabha branch office from Lekhandbari to Pragati Tole of same area.

The bank has 24 branches in Kathmandu valley and 56 branches outside the valley covering all seven provinces. Beside, NIBL has 112 ATM kiosks, 14 extension counters, 10 Revenue Counters and 51 branchless offices.

KOICA Volunteer Supports Installation Of Laparoscopic System

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) volunteer has supported the installation of Laparoscopic system for emergency operation, Electronic Medical Recording as well as Picture Achieving and Communication System (PACS) in Nepal Korea Friendship Hospital.

KOICA volunteer, with the support from the Korea International Cooperation

Agency (KOICA), completed the project "Prevention of disease and improvement of working environment in Nepal Korea Friendship Hospital". Through this project KOICA Doctor (volunteer) Byungcheol Kim supported various equipments in the hospital. The total budget of the project is USD 50,000.

KOICA has been partnering with the Nepal Korea Friendship Hospital for a period of over 19 years and the project inauguration ceremony was held at Nepal Korea Friendship Hospital on April 30, 2019 in the presence of Madan Sundar Shrestha, Mayor of Madhyapur Thimi Municipality.

The main objective of supporting laparoscopic system is to examine the organs inside the abdomen in low risk as well as the objective of supporting electronic medical system is to improve and upgrade the existing working system. The EMR system will help the hospital to provide the history of each and every patients, doctors prescriptions, x-ray reports, lab reports etc.

KOICA's volunteer program is one of the main programs to contribute to socio-economic development of the partner countries at the grass root level. KOICA dispatches Korean national volunteers to partner government organizations as per the need of expertise, knowledge, and experience.

According to a press release issued by KOICA, each volunteer serves in Nepal for 2 years in various fields such as education, health, agriculture, ICT etc. Currently, 3 advisors & 23 KOICA volunteers are actively working in various government sectors in accordance with an agreement between the governments of Korea and Nepal.



Our Two Countries Shall Further Strengthen Policy Coordination And Infrastructure Connectivity

From April 25 to 27, 2019, the Second BRF was successfully held in Beijing. The Forum includes the opening ceremony, the Leaders' Roundtable, the high-level meeting, 12 thematic forums, and a CEO conference. 40 leaders attended the round-table, including heads of state and government from 38 countries including China and Nepal, United Nations (UN) Secretary General and Managing Director the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Over 6,000 foreign guests from 150 countries and 92 international organizations participated in the forum. The participating parties had an in-depth exchange of

views on the Belt and Road cooperation and widely saw the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a great opportunity. They reached broad consensus on high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, delivering substantial results. The consensus and outcomes are reflected in the Joint Communiqué adopted unanimously at the Leaders' Roundtable and in the List of Deliverables compiled and released by the Chinese side as the host country. The list includes 283 concrete results in six categories, namely, initiatives proposed or launched by the Chinese side, bilateral and multilateral documents signed during or immediately before the second BRF, multilateral cooperation mechanisms under the BRF framework, investment projects and project lists, financing projects, and projects by local authorities and enterprises.

On the BRI, I would like to explain other two points. The first one is so called "debt trap". Some countries raise the questions whether the BRI adds to the debt of some countries and creates a "debt trap", our answer is no. Businesses, as the main players in BRI cooperation, will naturally act according to the law of the market so that they don't end up losing money. For most developing countries, they need funds and investments in order to achieve development. China, as other international financial institutions do, offer help in the form of funds based on equal consultation and without any additional political condition. All parties involved are equal participants, they have all contributed to the BRI and benefited from it. The BRI is open, inclusive and transparent. It does not harbor any hidden geopolitical agenda, nor is it designed to form an exclusive circle or impose discriminatory trade terms on others. The debt problem of developing countries has a much longer history, so it would be unfair to blame the BRI or China for their debt problem. As a matter of fact, no country has got trapped in a debt crisis since its participation in the BRI. Quite on the contrary, it is through participating in BRI cooperation that many countries have got out of the trap of "no development".

The second one is that some countries regard the BRI as non-reimbursable assistance. As per this, since a country joins the BRI, China should help them to develop projects in the form of non-reimbursable assistance. This isn't the truth of BRI. The BRI follows the sound principle of consultation and coopera-



BY HOU YANQI

tion for mutual benefits and has become the largest platform for international cooperation, which means that the participants involved consult together, work together, and enjoy the benefits together. As for specific cooperation, the BRI adheres to a government-led, enterprise-operated, and market-based pattern. All projects have been examined by a feasibility study and market-based argumentation to ensure due economic and social benefits. China is not only the initiator, but also an equal collaborator in the projects. China always provides assistance for related cooperation within its capacity, and encourages

common support from other sides. The Belt and Road cooperation has depicted the picture of the times featuring win-win cooperation between China and Nepal, and the world. We are willing to, together with cooperative partners, sow the seeds and reap the fruits. We wish people of all countries a happier life and wish the world a better place, and hope that various parties will jointly build a community with a shared future for mankind.

The Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations was held from May 15 to 22 in Beijing. At the CDAC opening ceremony, Chinese President Xi Jinping rejected the theory that different civilizations are bound to clash. "Various civilizations are not destined to clash," he said. "It is foolish to believe that one's race and civilization are superior to others' and it is disastrous to willfully reshape or even replace other civilizations."

Xi made a four-point proposal to consolidate the culture foundation of jointly building a community with a shared future for Asia and humanity: treating each other with respect and as equals; appreciating the beauty of all civilizations; adhering to openness, inclusiveness and mutual learning; and keeping pace with the times.

I wish Nepali media friends, as the main promulgators of information, can focus on them and do the objective reports in order to make more contribution to the further development of China-Nepal relations.

At the invitation of Xi Jinping, President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari attended the Second BRF, and delivered a keynote speech, which fully shows that Nepal supports the BRI and attaches importance to China-Nepal relations. President Bhandari's attendance makes great contribution to the success of the BRF and the China-Nepal Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network, including China-Nepal cross-border railway has been written in the Joint Communiqué of the Leaders' Round-table at the Second BRF.

Besides attending the BRF, President Bhandari also paid a state visit to China. This is the first state visit to China by Nepali President. During the visit, H.E. President Xi Jinping held a welcome ceremony for President Bhandari and held talks. During the talks, President Bhandari reaffirmed that Nepal sticks to the one-China Policy and will not allow any forces to use its territory to conduct any anti-China activities. President Bhandari also invited President Xi Jinping to visit Nepal. President Xi Jinping expressed that he was willing to visit Nepal at the convenient and suitable time for both sides. President Bhandari also visited

Xi'an, Shanxi Province and Tibet Autonomous Region, and has extensive talks with the leaders of local government of China.

President Bhandari's state visit is successful and fruitful, which is the milestone of China and Nepal relations and has far-reaching significance. Many bilateral cooperation documents such as the Protocol on Implementing Agreement on Transit and Transport between China and Nepal, the Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation, Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters, Agreement on Preventing Theft, Clandestine Excavation and Illicit Export Import of Cultural Property and Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation on Standardization, were signed by the two sides. In the Protocol on Implementing Agreement on Transit and Transport between China and Nepal, China allows Nepal to use open sea ports and dry ports for handling its traffic-in-transit. Under the Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation, the Government of China will provide the Government of Nepal a grant assistance of RMB 1 billion (about one hundred and forty million US dollars) for the implementation of mutually agreed projects in the fields of livelihood improvement, post-disaster reconstruction and infrastructure.

China and Nepal, linked by mountains and rivers, have enjoyed ever-lasting friendship. The two peoples have close bonds and have gone through thick and thin together. The Chinese side highly values the development of bilateral relations, and supports the Nepali side's efforts in safeguarding national independence, sovereign and territorial integrity, and in exploring a development path suited to Nepal's own conditions.

Since China and Nepal signed the MOU on the BRI, the traditional friendly cooperation between China and Nepal has faced new historic opportunities and we stand at the historical starting point. The leaders of the two countries have reached important consensus on jointly building the trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. In the days coming, the two sides will work together to implement the consensus and outcomes of visit. According to Nepal's statistics, in the 2017/2018 fiscal year of Nepal, the trade volume between the two countries was 1.767 billion U.S. dollars, up 39.6% on a yearly basis. China has become Nepal's biggest FDI country, the second largest trading partner.

Currently, the projects of the two countries such as Nine-storeyed Basantapur Tower Restoration at Durbar Square of Kathmandu, Kathmandu Durbar High School, International Sports Center Reconstruction, Rehabilitation of Runway and Taxiways of Tribhuvan International Airport, Pokhara Regional International Airport are under the smooth progress. Upper Trishuli 3A Hydropower Project has injected 30 MW into the Nepali national grid. Bheri Babai Diversion Multipurpose project's TBM Tunnel has got its breakthrough and Zhangmu-Tatopani border port, temporarily closed due to the earthquake in 2015, will be re-opened

soon. In my view, our two countries shall further strengthen policy coordination and infrastructure connectivity, steadily push forward the construction and research of infrastructure development such as roads, ports, railways, and airports, and strengthen the cooperation in tourism, finance, culture and people's livelihood. As you know, the people-to people and cultural exchanges between the two countries keep a strong momentum. China is Nepal's biggest source of foreign tourists. In 2018, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Nepal exceeded 150 thousand, and in the four months of this year, the number reaches more 60 thousand. We are willing to encourage more Chinese tourists to visit Nepal in order to cooperate with the plan of Visit Nepal 2020.

At present, China has entered a new era by following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and Nepal also has opened a new chapter of stable development. China and Nepal should further intensify exchanges of all the levels and strengthen win-win cooperation in all the fields under the framework of BRI. The Chinese side is willing to continue to support Nepal's economic and social development. The two sides work together to combine the "Chinese Dream" of realizing national rejuvenation with the development goal of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali" and advance China-Nepal friendly cooperative relations

to a new level and join hands to embark on a new journey to benefit two peoples of the two countries and build a community with shared future for China and Nepal.

I wish Nepali media friends, as the main promulgators of information, can focus on them and do the objective reports in order to make more contribution

to the further development of China-Nepal relations.

During our preparation of the briefing, some friends show their interests on the trade friction between China and US recently. I would like to take this opportunity to cast some lights on the issue.

Based on the China-US trade deficit, the US side has repeatedly imposed tariffs on Chinese goods since March 2018. From then on, the two sides have held 11 rounds of trade talks to find the solution, during which the Chinese side has shown sufficient sincerity and constructive attitude. The spokespersons of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China have explained and showed Chinese stance on this, welcome Nepali media friends to browse the website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China.

China will firmly stick to its own pace and steadily advance reform and opening up. In addition, we will work with the majority of countries to stay committed to the multilateral trading system, promoting economic globalization and trade and investment facilitation to jointly build a community of shared future for mankind. China will further enhance mutually beneficial economic cooperation with our neighboring friends including Nepal in order to promote the economic and social development in the region.

Excerpts of the speech delivered at the press conference.





NEPAL INDIA RELATIONS

Under Modi II

At a time when the law and order situation is deteriorating, state institutions are weak and activities of inimical forces are growing in the absence of strong institutions in Nepal, Narendra Modi has started his second tenure as the prime minister of India with a message to follow a peaceful neighborhood policy. However, even before starting the second tenure by Modi, political leaders, intellectuals and intelligentsia, who were the part of ongoing changes of Federal, Secular, Democratic Republic of Nepal, are issuing nervous, panicky and contradictory statements based on their imagination on India's possible new policy towards Nepal.

BY KESHAB POUDEL

When Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, a staunch secular and communist ideologist, met Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi in New Delhi on May 30, he presented PM Modi a gift of Rudraxa seed, which is known as *Elaeocarpus ganitrus roxb.* (Rudra's Tear Drops for Hindus).

Communist and secular Prime Minister Oli, who received Ph.D degree from a Christian Missionary University of South Korea a week ago in Kathmandu, chose a spiritually sacred Rudrax seed as a gift to PM Modi, a devoted Hindu. Rudrax seeds are traditionally used as prayer beads

in Hinduism.

Showing two characters in a matter of a week, Prime Minister Oli has exposed his dubious belief. Although PM Oli can justify both, securing a recognition from a Christian Missionary University and gifting Rudraxa to Prime Minister Modi, a

devout Hindu, as his secular character, his act is likely to erode his credibility.

Prime Minister Oli is not alone to show such a character. One can see such double standards in Nepalese leaders, intellectuals and intelligentsia following the results of Indian elections.

It is said in international relations that a big country's internal issues directly affect the small country's foreign and internal agenda. This way, Nepal is not an exception. India's internal issues directly affect Nepal's foreign and internal policies.

Since India is Nepal's close neighbor with so many proximities and sharing similar civilizations, it is understandable to see keen interests of Nepalese from all sides in the Indian elections outcome. However, their perceptions on the outcome of Indian elections and comments regarding particular individual look eccentric.

Almost every day since BJP swept the elections in India, Nepalese political elites, intelligentsia and ruling class, who have hailed promulgation of the new Federal, Republic and Secular Constitution as a victory against interventionists India, are issuing nervous and panicky statements.

Although they are not harsh against current constitution, which is a by-product of a 12-point agreement signed under the mediation during the tenure of India's foreign secretary Shyam Sharan, they are issuing statements and comments portraying newly appointed Minister of External Affairs of India S. Jaishanker as an interventionist given his mission during the promulgation of new constitution followed by subsequent events up to border disruptions or blockade.

"If Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishanker who visited as emissary of Prime Minister Modi and honestly advised as per the direction in words and deeds as a villain, how could a foreign secretary, Sharan who defied the direction of then PM, imposing his own will in Nepal and intervened in internal affairs be a hero?" asked Yubaraj Ghimire in his interview in

API Television. "There is a double standard in analyzing the events of two different periods."

Nervousness and panic further intensified after the appointment of former foreign secretary S. Jayashanker as the minister for External Affairs, who visited Nepal as a special envoy of Prime Minister Modi advising Nepalese leaders to make the constitution inclusive and a consensus document.

Although nothing has drastically changed during the first tenure of Indian Prime Minister Modi, common people see no reason for political leaders, intellectuals and intelligentsia as associated with the current system to issue panic statement on the basis of personal imagination regarding Government of India's future policy. Those who are part of the 12-point agreement are afraid of their own experiences of past.

"Jai Shankar's induction is a bold acknowledgement of his diplomatic acumen and intellectual sharpness. He will have to measure up in balancing Malabars with Wuhans as

secretaries as interventionists and villains. "In the case of foreign minister Jaishanker, he did strictly what Prime Minister advised him to do. Whereas Sharan went beyond the mandate of his political master," writes Ghimire in his column in Deshsanchar.

Whether prime minister Oli or intellectuals, there is double standard at work. If double standard is a Nepalese intellectual character, it will create more distrust and mistrust in the state to state relations in coming days. For long, trust deficit remained a major problem between Nepal and India which obstructed cordial and warm relations.

Former ambassador to India and renowned expert on Nepal-India relations Professor Lok Raj Baral expresses the view in his interview that there is nothing to worry saying that India's policy towards Nepal continues.

Contradictions

At a time when India has a prime minister who firmly believes in India's traditions, religion, values



S. Jayashanker

also crafting a credible Neighborhood First 2.0. Testing times ahead for him and India," tweets renowned Indian scholar Sukh Deo Muni in his tweet.

If the group of Nepal's accept interventions of previous foreign secretary as a blessing, there is no reason to blame other former foreign

and culture to bring harmony in India, Nepal is under a rule of communist party, which does not believe in traditions, values and religions from heart and mind.

With the rise of communist party in power with two thirds majority, PM Oli-led government is, knowingly and

unknowingly, shaking and weakening Nepal's traditional religious foundations.

Prime Minister of India Modi in his first address following elections victory has challenged the ongoing secular interpretation of India and defended tradition and civilization of India as source of harmony in unity.

Although Nepal and India are two independent nations, they share one civilization. In this context, PM Modi's statement too have a message to Nepal as well. Given the recent wipeout of communist party in India, the wind blowing in southern neighbor will likely to make differences in Nepal as well.

Along with international conventions and norms, Nepal and India relations are also determined by the shared values, culture, religion and geography. However, the current ruling dispensations do little care on tradition of Nepal. The Guthi bill, which is now registered in National Assembly, exposed their faith towards Nepal's traditions. If the bill passes without amendment, it will completely hand over rights of property and lands of Nepal's Hindu temples and shrines to individual tenants.

"This bill will completely collapse our current system. Forget about others, even Pashupatinath Temple will be landless and the temple lands worth of billions of rupees will be transferred to individuals," said NC member of parliament at National Assembly Radheshyam Adhikari.

At a time when PM Oli is handing over Rudrax to PM Modi showing religious importance, members of parliament representing his party are defending the new Guthi bill. This is where Nepal is now.

Changing Equation

Since the promulgation of new constitution, billions of cusec of water

have already flown in Bagmati river with changes in political alliances, equations and ideologies. However, a group of politicians, intellectuals and intelligentsia, who defied and humiliated India's foreign secretary in 2015 ignoring his advice to make functional and inclusive constitution, are more panicky.

Former prime minister and Maoist People's Government head Baburam Bhattarai, who is known for his wider contact with Indian political leaders and intellectuals of Jawaharlal Nehru University, also wrote an article expressing some alarm how Nepal and India Relations will take course in coming days under the new foreign minister.

Dr. Bhattarai was chairman of one of the committees of Constitutional Assembly when Jaishanker returned with humiliations. "Let's move ahead learning the lessons," tweeted Dr. Bhattarai, who has joined Upendra Yadav-led Federal Socialist Party, which took the responsibility of blocking the border and called a

his cabinet.

Sanghiya Samajbadi Party's leader Upendra Yadav, who led the border blockade in Nepal India border is deputy prime minister in Oli's cabinet. Yadav, who opposed the present constitution as incomplete document, has already given red carpet to former Maoist leader Bhattarai as the cochairman of his party.

More than 60 Madheshis were killed and hundreds wounded following five months of agitation against the constitution. Dr. Bhattarai, who played a crucial role to promulgate the constitution, joined the party which launched the agitation.

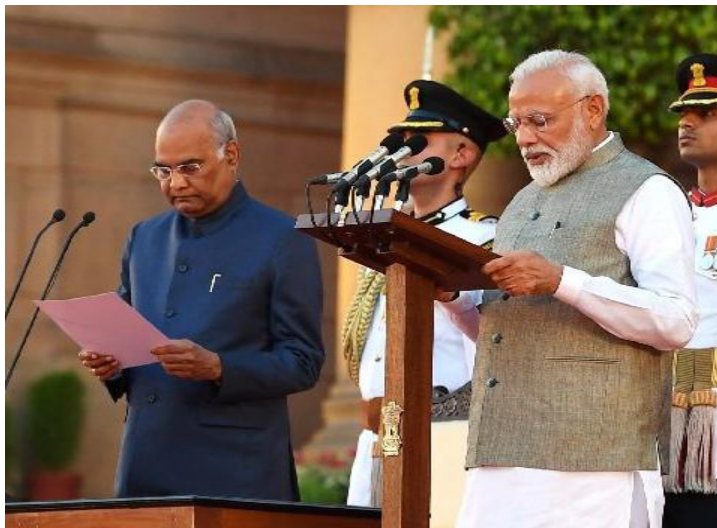
Internally, there is a grand equation among supporters and antagonistic forces of constitution sharing powers and position forgetting each other's role. However, the fierce comments against Prime Minister Modi and his new foreign minister S Jayashanker are yet to recede.

Nepal's Speculation Over BJP

Although BJP's government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee had reportedly backed Nepal's current political change, there is no reason for Nepali to so much panic with the surge of BJP's strength in India. However, with PM Modi at the center, Nepalese politicians, intellectuals and experts have been writing opinions, commentaries and articles with speculations and suspicions on coming days.

After the wipeout of communist parties in India in recent elections, there are more worries in the communist camps. As in the past, communists thrived in anti-Indian slogans. It may not surprise many to see communists can jump to cash on-going tempo against PM Modi and his external affairs minister Jayshanker to strengthen their position.

What Nepal and India Need to do



violent agitation in Terai.

In the last four years since the promulgation of New Constitution, political equation in Nepal has drastically changed. PM Oli, who publicly accused two Madhesh based Parties, Sanghiya Samajbadi and Rashtriya Janata Party Nepal, for playing India's game blocking the border, has included one of its leaders as DPM in

“The dynamics of the relationship between India and Nepal has been changing rapidly over the past few decades. The historic, social-cultural and socio-economic ties between the two ancient civilizations have been repeatedly placed in front of strong challenges over the past few decades – much to the surprise of New Delhi and Kathmandu alike,” said SK Basu, an Indian strategic writer based in Canada.

“The relationship between these two adjacent countries has been losing its warmth over the years and that’s why New Delhi needs to be extremely cautious and careful not to push Nepal further into the hands of an aggressive, hostile and increasingly confident China.”

“India-Nepal socio-economic and socio-cultural ties need to improve significantly over the next 10-20 years to start working together in develop-



ing a solid strategic geopolitical and diplomatic relationship,” writes Basu.

Despite going through some misunderstanding in the first tenure, Indian Prime Minister Modi, in his recent meetings with PM Oli, expressed his desire to take India Nepal relations to a new height.

However, growing instability, rising incidences of violence, crumbling economy, weakening state authority and deteriorating law and order, Nepal’s current course is heading towards anarchy. The emerging scenario will need to address building trust with each other.

**बालबालका माथि हुने हिंसा,दुर्व्यवहार,
शोषण भएको, जोखिमपूर्ण अवस्थामा
रहेको वा बाल अधिकारको उलङ्घन भएको
छ भने बाल हेल्पलाइनको पैसा नलाग्ने
फोन नं. १०५८ मा खबर गरौ ।**



नेपाल सरकार
सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मान्त्रालय
सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग

Recent Political And Security Decisions And Its Impact

Nepal is constitutionally obliged and bound to the new order with nationalism, secularism, republicanism and federalism. It can be perceived that the Nepal Communist Party's (NCP) government is beyond doubt yearning to challenges and arguments along the avenue. The NCP leadership unquestionably desires strong-minded, resolute and modest administering and supervising of national issues that bears long term political and security consequences.

Nepal is exposed to political, security, economic, diplomatic and cultural setback leading to downturns and risks. Political and Security situation is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguity. Within weeks, three notions occurred; the government banned Biplav's NCP party that owned bombing at 11 sites, which caused one death and two wounded in the capital plus their activities, pledging for the deployment of the Nepali Army (NA) on Prime Minister orders as well as signed an 11 point agreement with CK Raut on 8th March. CK although trivial in strength was advancing with a "free Madhesh" movement, which bears national, regional and international corollary. These three foremost heated debates on security, political and diplomatic issues was all over social, visual and print reports and beyond doubt has national, regional and international corollary.

Banned Biplav's NCP

The Prachanda led NCP Maoists deceased armed struggle through signing of the peace agreement in 2006 and have been on democratic arrangement. There are evidences that the weapons the Maoists cadres possessed in spite of everything is with the split up group, Biplav's NCP who confessed the bombings. The government is taking stern action against the cadres and senior leaders of the Biplav NCP as per the existing legal provisions. Together with banning the party a resolution to deploy the national force, the Nepali Army on the Head of the Government's (HOG) orders had significance. It can be speculated that the HOG's gesture to deploy the army on orders signifies physiological motion, priority and considerable concern even if the short cut process was constitutionally debatable.

Together with political dialogue, strict implementation of law of the land could have been an option.

The option of a political dialogue as well as strict imple-



BY BINOJ BASNYAT

mentation of law of the land could have been carried out by the government. The deployment of the army would have long term political implication when the Executive does not have the majority in the Legislature. National issue should have national response, so taking in confidence all the political parties small or big especially the opposition and other stakeholders would create a conducive environment for the military to operate with alacrity, validation, rule of engagement and within predetermined time frame

to normalize the unstable situation as well as understanding the key geo-political forces at work in Nepal.

The NA has the tradition and history to follow directives and instruction of democratically elected existing government if orders and directives are constitutionally correct and according to the rules and regulation of the land. The deployment of the national force should move through the National Security Council approved by the cabinet and endorsed by the President. The decision needs parliament approval after one month. The five members NSC are also members of the cabinet except the CoAS.

The Biplav led NCP is not in the stage to confront the military with enthusiasm and capacity but the illegal undesired activities is an irritant for the law and order environment, which will have direct bearing on politics, economics and diplomacy. The decision by the government prohibiting

the Biplav led NCP has appealed for confrontation on the day of the cabinet approval. The rise in unemployment, miss governance, corruption, lack of political motivation, spoilers will be an attraction to join the outlawed outfit. The trend of unstable environment of the country has been out from different sources from time to time may have encouraged the military to modernize

with new weapon system and improve its capability with the existing strength.

Security sector priority with optimum efforts in intelligence, professional law and order forces should have been the beginning for adhering to democracy and stability.

Madhesh Politics and Consequences



The Government and CK endorsed accord illustrated the way to long time secessionist campaigner CK to guide his believers and faction who were willing for armed struggle to choose a peaceful democratic path. The leadership may have given up "Free Madhesh" but nonetheless seems to be carrying the political goal and impetus by way of varied democratic mechanism. The long-awaited political concern to bring CK to peaceful politics is encouraging, yet a test for his supporters' behavior till the next election is imperative when political possibility in the Madhesh is shifting. You cannot deny the probability of the party to go on separate ways. This is a positive appreciated political gesture but has many sides to it, which requires political, diplomatic and security scope.

Many nations across the world have been opting for national referendums as politicians and governments lack confidence to push through major change and are putting more and more big decisions to popular vote. Of many referendums 2016 saw four that opted against the expected result, democracy and values of the 21st century. The Colombians rejected the peace deal, Britain split from the EU, Thai endorsed the Constitution brought by the Military backed government, and Hungarians backed the government's plan to restrict refugees.

Of the five states of the UK a referendum on Scottish independence was held in 2014, when 55% voted against the proposal.

On 1st of Oct 2017 a semi-autonomous Catalan parliament in the north-east of Spain answered yes to "Do you want Catalonia to become an independent state in the form of a Republic?" The push for independence let go Spain into its major political crisis for 40 years. Yes won 92% for independence and 8% voted against on a 43% turnout and declared independence on 27th Oct. The Madrid imposed direct rule by invoking Article 155 of the Spanish constitution. The Catalan leaders were sacked, parliament dissolved and the nationalist winner of the Dec snap election caused former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont and four others to flee, while two are in prison. Even prior to the voting the constitution court of Spain suspended the move and affirmed illegal and violated the Spanish constitution on 7th Sept 2017. Though Catalonia does not have the strength for unilateral independence, but it has colossal aptitude to threaten the whole of Spain.

Though the outcomes were dealt with national referendum a valid democratic practice all these events accomplished one thing: referendums are messy and dangerous.

PM Oli has been stressing and obstinate that there can be no referendum on matters of national integrity and sovereignty hinting on CK's demand and behavior. Politics does and have immediate remedy but political decisions have long term impact so the years ahead are vital for federalism.

Conclusion

The geo-political, geo-economic situation with China, India, both immediate neighbors and the US's the only global

power strategic activities are continuing. Globalization and multilateral treaties and conventions are less significant. The two rising immediate neighbors are at the cross roads when it comes to their own growth. Nepal's national security situation is in a dilemma and striving to find a response when political diversification with nationalism is under deliberation and extra regional and regional influences on national politics and traditional beliefs are enduring. The speculation and view that major transformation to Federalism, Nationalism, Republicanism and Secularism would move on the correct line was judged with ideological emotion and not realism. The national forces are focusing on their own internal dynamics, all the security agencies are more concerned and attempting to address their internal governance, when the domestic security configuration, regional political, economic and security interests is altering and altering rapidly.

The government's political decision is undeniably an optimistic gesture in regards to the two indisputable national threats of probable armed conflict in the hills and a secessionist movement in the Madhesh. National challenges needs national motion and the 11 point agreement and prohibiting Biplav's NCP should have added earnestness and requisite to be a national consensus with political unity and involvement of other instruments of power even the security sector.

The geo-political shift, sensitivities, transformation and the strategic importance requires collective deliberation in the national security sector and political approach to shape the environment for peaceful economic activities and opportunities with political and policy stability. Lack of a strategic body under the executive is the need for holistic approach to national security and political governance. If security sector is not prioritizes, grim cost will be imminent so Nepal requires an efficient, innovative and an agile security system.

National Security requires rearranging, revitalizing and reshaping the Defense and all of the law enforcement forces with affordable expenses and immediate attention to the intelligence forces for national well being when India; after independence and China aspiring to be a global player are both shaping their defense sector with changes in strategic structures, force organizations, restructure the army and capabilities to increase combat potential.

Political unity must visualize how Nepal will outline politically, diplomatically, culturally and economically in the next five to ten years so that correct policies are situated in order. Miss governance, corruption and not being answerable from irresponsible political, undemocratic decision are the prime anxiety for sure. Responding to the trends in global politics and in South Asia with political unity and political endorsement is considered necessary to safeguard Nepal's unity in diversity and sovereignty.

Are geo-political events, dealings and happenings in Nepal orchestrated to de-evaluate values and the identity of Nepal and the Nepalese? Will the political decision and participation bear national security challenges? These are questions floating that need answers. Hope the responsible leaders realize!!!

Basnyat is a retired Nepali Army Major General, is a political and security analyst.

Though the outcomes were dealt with national referendum a valid democratic practice all these events accomplished one thing: referendums are messy and dangerous.

“Korean Government Has Put Nepal In The Priority List”

*At a time when Nepal is working to woo the investors from the Republic of Korea, Ambassador of Republic of Korea to Nepal **PARK YOUNG-SIK** spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on various issues regarding the present state of Nepal and Korea Relations. Excerpts:*

How do you see the present state of bilateral relation between Nepal and Korea? What are the basic characteristics of the relation?

Since the establishment of diplomatic relation between Korea and Nepal in May 1974, the two countries have been enjoying very cordial and progressive relation with tremendous growths in various fields including political, economic and social fronts. There are around 35 thousand Nepali workers currently working in Korea under the Employment Permit System (EPS). Likewise, the opening up of Nepali Embassy in Seoul in 2009 is another milestone in our relation that highlights the importance attached by both the countries to each other's relation. The number people visiting each other's country is increasing rapidly especially after the Korean Air began its direct flights linking Seoul and Kathmandu in November 2006. Korean companies are very much willing to invest in Nepal whereas some Korean companies are already engaged in hydropower projects. Korea and Nepal also share mutual understanding and support to each other in various UN and international platforms. From these perspectives, I can say that the present state of relation between our two countries is very much satisfactory. However, there is still much room for deepening our relations further.

Moon Jae-in, President of Korea, has visited Nepal twice before his election to the post and thousands of Korean citizens including mountaineers, Buddhists and social workers visit Nepal each year. How do you evaluate their contribution in strengthening bilateral relation between Nepal and Korea?

The current Korean President visited Nepal twice on a personal note, and once in June 2016, he was even involved in a reconstruction works of a school in Nuwakot district that was damaged by the devastating earthquake of 2015. His empathy towards the earthquake victims and his attachment to Nepal is a solid proof of our shared values toward humanity and the importance of cooperation. There are always multiple facets of relation between any two countries and it is not only the government of each country but the people who play vital roles in enhancing the bilateral relations through various means such as tourism, trade, sports and social works etc. Many renowned Korean mountaineers have come to Nepal and ascended highest peaks of Nepal including Mt. Everest. Similarly, every year thousands of Buddhists visit Lumbini for a pilgrimage. Such an exchange of people between two countries is the basic foundation for strengthening bilateral relations.

What is the current status of Korean tourists visiting Nepal

and what possibilities do you see in increasing the number of Korean tourists including trekkers?

I have mentioned earlier that since the Korean Air began its service with direct flight in 2006, the number of Korean tourists visiting Nepal has increased by many folds. Every year thousands of trekkers and mountaineers visit Nepal. According to the data of Nepal Tourism Board, around 37,200 Koreans visited Nepal last year. Majority of them came to Nepal for trekking purposes. There are some challenges particularly with regard to trekking and mountaineering as the local weather in mountain areas is highly unpredictable and volatile. Even a small change in the weather could cause heavy snowfall and avalanche putting the life of trekkers in danger. The trekking routes of Nepal are world famous but more facilities including weather alert system and adequate shelters with prompt rescue mechanism along with better hotels could attract more tourists including Koreans to visit Nepal.

Will you shed some light on Korean government's support to Nepal and the current activities of KOICA, which is extending support to Nepal by mobilizing Korean volunteers?

I am glad to mention that Korean government has put Nepal in the priority list among other ODA recipient countries. Although Korean government's ODA support to Nepal is modest in comparison to other major donor countries, Korea has a unique knowhow of sharing its development experience with Nepal, since Korea had been supported by many Western countries during the early period of economic growth (1960~1970s). The areas for development cooperation in Nepal are ICT, health, job training and agriculture, which we can say is essential for Nepal's economic development. The Korean government has been carrying out several development projects through KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency). Currently, there are various ongoing projects of around USD 56.3 million across the country in many areas including ICT health, child care, rural development, empowerment of women and young girls, disaster recovery and technical and vocational education etc. The Korean government offers university courses as well as short term trainings to Nepali government officers in various universities of Korea. Last year alone 45 Nepali government officials were offered Global Fellowship courses and Master's program in different fields in Korean universities. During the last four years more than 350 government officers from Nepal have received development trainings courses and university degrees in Korea in multiple fields. There are altogether 25 Korean



volunteers dispatched across the country who are providing expertise in different fields including health, tourism, IT, education and social welfare sectors.

Although it was delayed for some time, the completion of Chameliya Hydropower project and transmission line under the support of Korean government has greatly contributed to develop hydropower projects in far-west region. How does Korean government look at Chameliya Project?

Darchula, is the least developed and inaccessible Far-Western District of Nepal. Accordingly, developing a project in such a remote area was a great risk. But in terms of economic benefits to the Far-Western Region of Nepal, I think this Chameliya Project has been immensely helpful. To build this project, the developers had to build a road to get to the project site. So it helped in connectivity. A 131 km long transmission line from Balanch, Darchula-Attariya also has been built to transmit the electricity from the project site at Darchula to the national transmission line at Attariya. Now through this road and transmission line, both villagers and other power developers will benefit. It is true that cost of the project was higher than expected due to delays. But like the Managing Director of NEA have stated in newspapers, this is a narrow way of looking at the high costs. The project site is located at a fragile site, where there were cases of tunnels crumbling due to loose soil structure. So we need to look at the technical difficulties of the project, which increased the cost. Another fact is that Korean company finished its mechanical work within the required time, while civil works conducted by the company of other country was delayed on several times.

How can Nepal attract Korean investors to Nepal?

Firms come to any market to seek a profit. So issues like repatriation, ease of doing business, and policy stabilities are important. For Nepal to attract foreign investment, it needs

to make sure that ease of doing business is good. According to World Bank's Report of 'Doing Business 2019', Nepal is ranked 110th out of 190 Countries (1 being the best and 190th being the worst). This ranking could be better. In Nepal, it takes too long for foreign firms to register due to bureaucratic red-tapes and hassle because investors have to visit different government agencies and file paperwork. Accountability and transparency have to be improved in Nepal. According to 'Corruption Perception Index 2018', Nepal was ranked 124th out of 180 countries (180th being the most corrupt and 1 being the cleanest). Another problem that I see is that government agencies do not coordinate with one another. For example, Department of Industry may give approval for FDI, but Central Bank of Nepal may ask investors for more paperwork for bringing money into the country. I hope these kinds of problems will be solved by the recently established one-stop service.

How do you see the current state of FDI in Nepal?

Nepal has an ambitious goal to become a middle-income country by 2030. According to NPC (National Planning Commission), it would require a total investment of NPR 1.7trillion (\$17.7billion) per year for the next 11 years to fulfill SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). Government is relying on the private sector to especially invest in infrastructure development like hydro sector, road, transportation etc. 60% of the total investment in infrastructure will have to come from private sector. But there are not enough domestic resources. Nepal's earnings from tourism and foreign grants/loans are still too low. This is the main reason for Nepal to have to attract foreign investment. FDI can help to reduce the trade deficit in the country. According to the Central Bank of Nepal, Trade deficit was \$11.17billion last fiscal year. But remittance was \$7.26billion in last fiscal (26.24% of GDP), which cannot cover for the huge trade deficit. This trend is unsustainable in the long run. With bigger investment

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in factories and other companies, FDI may help to increase domestic production which could increase exports and reduce imports in Nepal. Despite the immense need of FDI, according to Central Bank of Nepal, total FDI was only \$168million in last fiscal year which was less than 1% of the country's GDP. This needs to change.

Do you think the recent changes in FDI laws would make investment environment more favorable?

I am glad to say that there have been big improvements in the recently endorsed FITTA (Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act) Bill and PPP (Public-Private Partnership) Bill. FITTA Bill states that the Industry department will be a one-stop service for any investments up to NPR 6billion, while Investment Board Nepal will be the one-stop for big projects which are above NPR 6billion. Enacting or revising foreign investment-related law for the purpose of improving business environment is necessary. However, implementing the new laws is even more important. Foreign Investors will be waiting to see if Nepal's foreign investment laws will be fully implemented. For example, one-stop-serve means that a foreign investor files application and other paperwork just once in one location. If a foreign investor files the same paperwork to different agencies at different times in one location, it cannot be called a one-stop-service in the true sense.

What is the status of the 216 MW Upper Trishuli -1 project?

South East Power Company signed a PPA (Power Purchase Agreement) with NEA (Nepal Electricity Authority) on January 29, 2018. This is a consortium of many companies. Korean South East Power Company Limited has 52% ownership, Daelim Construction Company has 16%, Kerung Construction Company has 10%, IFC 12% and 10% belongs to a Nepali Partner. The only issue that was holding up the project was hedge-fund. But I am glad to say that during the Investment Summit of March 29-30 of this year, the consortium signed an agreement to bring \$650million for the project by coming to the agreement on hedge-fund issue. Both the MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency) and IFC (International Finance Corporation) of the World Bank Group will provide guarantee, finance and arrangement of debt for the 216 MW Upper Trishuli-1 hydro projects. Hopefully, financial closing will be done within the next 2-3 months.

There are a couple of pending issues regarding this project. The first one concerns tax reduction. Government of Nepal has stated in the fiscal budget of 2014/15 that any hydropower developers that start commercial generation by 2022/23 will be given full tax exemption for the first 10 years and 50% exemption for additional 5 years. I believe the tax break concession period should be extended in the upcoming fiscal budget of 2019/20. The second one is also taxation-related issue. To foreign investors, it does not make sense to pay taxes

for the time when they suffered so much financial losses due to the April 25th earthquake and its aftershocks.

Nepal has been sending people abroad for work. Nepalese who returned after completing their assignments under EPS are now involved in entrepreneurship. How do you see the role of migrant returnees in Nepal's development?

I would say Nepali migrant returnees would play a great role in Nepal's economic development. Just last year, Korean Embassy and ANKUR (Nepali Migrant Returnees Organization from Korea) organized a seminar in order to share the experience and know-how on how migrant returnees can start a business in Nepal successfully. Migrant returnees do not seek any jobs in Nepal because expected salary is too low for them. Therefore, migrant returnees become entrepreneurs so they can create opportunities for themselves. EPS returnees are certainly in an advantageous position to become job creators because they have gained the experience and the capital during their stay in Korea.

Korea has experience of sending worker overseas and made best use of their remittance for the purpose of Korea's economic development. From 1966-1979, Korean nurses and minors went to Germany for employment. In the 1970s and 80s, about 2 million of Korean workers were dispatched to oil fields in the Middle East. Their money was not only used for the individual's entrepreneurship and their children's education but also for Korea's national economic development. I hope that Nepal's workers will think of their possible life-plans before going abroad.



Nepal and Korea have bilateral chambers. How do you see the roles of bilateral chambers to promote investment in Nepal?

I think bilateral chambers do have a big role in expanding domestic/foreign markets. Korean/Nepali Business Chambers have had numerous interactions lately. In Oct of last year in Kathmandu, FNCCI (Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and SMBC (Small and Medium Business Corporation of South Korea) signed a MoU on partnership for promotion and development of SMEs (Small medium enterprises) in the two countries through NKCCI (Nepal-Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry), which is a bilateral business organization that works to promote trade/tourism between Korea and Nepal exclusively. In Oct 2017, Kiran Saakha, President of NKCCI, and HAN (Hotel Association of Nepal) led a Nepali business and tourism delegation to Korea. In May of this year, FNCCI/NKCCI led a delegation to Korea to attend Seoul International Handmade Fair, and similar programs will also be held next year. In early June of this year, a team headed by the President of 'International Contractors Association of Korea' will be coming to Kathmandu. I sincerely hope that these kinds of meetings/interactions will lead to more frequent business opportunities between the two countries.

FDI THRESHOLD

Not For Genuine Investors

The recent decision of government setting Rs.50 million threshold for foreign investment will likely bar genuine investors

BY A CORRESPONDENT

At a time the government is calling for a boost in foreign investment in Nepal, the recent decision of the government to increase the threshold for Rs.50 million will be likely to discourage genuine small investors in Nepal.

Although the government increased the low threshold to stop many small investors competing with Nepali small micro entrepreneurs, it is going to backfire. Along with bringing investment, small investors are also bringing technology to the country.

With the setting up of the new threshold, small investors from Japan, Southeast Asian countries and western countries have already expressed their concerns. Even the diplomats from those countries have recently expressed their concern with the ministers.

The government has set a minimum foreign investment threshold of Rs 50 million in the country. The Cabinet meeting decided to hike the minimum foreign investment threshold to Rs 50 million from the existing Rs five million without understanding its implications.

“This will badly hurt foreign investment in Nepal in the coming days. At a time when the countries around the region are reducing the threshold to attract more small investors, Nepal government’s decision will discourage genuine investors,” said an investor on condition of anonymity.

However, Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry backed the decision of the government saying that it will protect Nepal’s SMEs. “We welcome the government decision,” said Bhavani

Rana, president of FNCCI.

The recently enacted Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Bill has a provision which states that the government will set a minimum threshold for foreign investment and publish it in the Nepal Gazette. The government has raised the minimum foreign investment threshold based on the same provision.

The Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Bill was authenticated by the president in the second week of March.

DoI had recommended to the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies to set a minimum threshold of Rs 70 million for foreign investment. However, the ministry had tabled the proposal to set the minimum threshold of Rs 50 million for foreign investment.

At a time when Nepal’s law and order situation is deteriorating and the investors are facing so many bureaucratic difficulties to remit their investment in foreign currency, this new decision will ultimately bar inves-

tors to come to Nepal.

With the decision, many investors, now in Nepal, are already facing difficulties. For them raising such a huge investment without any preparation is a difficult task.

As the latest Economic Survey points out, following the decline of foreign direct investment by half, there will be further decline in the FDI in coming days. Although the new policy is directed at Chinese investors, it will broadly affect other investors from different countries.

“I don’t think anybody is a fool to invest such a big money where there is no guarantee of repatriation of currency and there is so much of hanky-panky. Only third grade individuals will come to Nepal to invest. For the long term, the decision of government will harm the country.”

At a time when Nepal cannot escape from globalization, putting Nepal into isolation like North Korea will harm its aim to achieve higher growth.



Narayani-Gandak Agreement: Benefit Or Burden?

Nawalpur and Parasi are two of the luckiest districts of Nepal for having Narayani-Gandak Barrage built after the agreement signed between Government of Nepal and Government of India in 1959 and revised in 1964. The major tributaries of Narayani in Nepal are the Trishuli, Budhi Gandaki, Marsyangdi, Seti and Kaligandaki rivers. The average runoff (discharge) of Narayani at Narayangadh is around 1,600 cubic meters per second (m³/sec). The entry point of the Narayani/Gandak River at the Indo-Nepal border is also the confluence called Triveni with rivers Pachnad and Sonha descending from Nepal. Triveni in Nepal and Valmikinagar in India are the bordering cities to make the Gandak River a transboundary river.



BY: DR. CHANDRA LAL PANDEY

The Gandak Agreement is based on the principles of enhancing the 'common interests' or 'common benefits' of Nepal and India from the Gandak river through the construction of barrage, irrigation canals and hydropower development. The Agreement particularly focuses on irrigation system and hydropower generation to meet the common interests of Government of Nepal and Government of India. For achieving the major goals of the Agreement, construction of barrage, a system of irrigation canals and Surajpur hydropower house were built.

Capturing the essence of the Agreement three main canals were built, which include Nepal Gandak Western Canal (NGWC); Western Gandak Canal (WGC) and Main Eastern Canal (MEC). The NGWC was built to irrigate an area of 8700 ha. land with a discharge of 8.5m³/s, however, the canal, and water control and distribution systems have deteriorated heavily as these infrastructures do not get regular maintenance. Even the intake of water in NGWC depends on the water level—at least 365 m for water to flow over the sill level of the canal—upstream of the barrage and at the mercy of the barrage operators, controlled by the Government of India. In theory, NWGC should not encounter any limitation in water supply in any time round the year but in reality supply is unreliable and uncertain and the canal does not even look like a canal compared to WGC and MEC. However, the article 9 of the agreement ensures that the government of Nepal "will continue to have the right to withdraw for irrigation or any other purpose from the river or its tributaries in Nepal".

The WGC and MEC were built to irrigate large areas of land in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar respectively. The total area of land to be irrigated in India is 1.784 million ha. The MEC also feeds into the Nepal Eastern Canal (NEC) to provide 24.1 m³/s water to irrigate 37,000 ha of land in Bara, Parsa and Rautahat districts but this also does not seem to be happening when you visit the point from where water enters into Nepal side.

Although the spirit of 'mutual benefits' is highlighted in the Preamble of the Agreement, it does not appear to be so in praxis. Equitable sharing of water for irrigational purpose and generation of 15MW of electricity were the highlights of the Agreement but upstream user rights are compromised. The powerhouse of Surajpur is to be producing 15 MW of electricity but it has never produced this amount and its current production capacity is between - 3MW to 4 MW only. The WGC and MEC canals irrigate lands located far beyond the Gandak basin areas however the impacts of the construction of WGC occur in the command areas of Nepal as this canal travels 19 KM in Nepali territory before it enter Uttar Pradesh (UP), India. Some of the fundamental impacts of the construction of Gandak Barrage and WGC include, regular flooding, water logging, prolonged inundation, riverbank erosion and change in river course, and disasters induced too much of water and no water for irrigation.

According to the people living in command area communities, there are three main reasons for floods, water logging and inundation. The first reason is that the NWGC and the WGC intercept the north-south flow of local streams and impede the natural draining system. The cross drainage works in the NWGC and WGC canals are deficient with poor maintenance resulting into about 4 months inundation in the monsoon and early winter period, rendering almost one-third of the command area in the south adjacent to the WGC out of crop cultivation. The faulty design of WGC, which extends 19 KM within the Nepalese territory, blocks the flow of spring water.

The second reason is the regular flooding in the Narayani River itself in rainy seasons affecting the communities and downstream areas of the barrage. The people who own riparian land downstream from the barrage have lost vast areas of lands due to regular flooding and erosion (Katan) yet they continue to pay land revenue tax with the hopes of receiving compensation from the concerned authorities in the future. The third reason is the seepage of water from WGC because of poor maintenance and faulty designs keeping the adjacent areas of the canal waterlogged, resulting into snakebites and many other water induced disasters.

In sum, the Agreement which was done to achieve mutual benefits for both countries sounded good in spirit but in praxis, it has brought more challenges compared to benefits in the riparian communities. For example, the NGWC looks completely dry throughout the year except in the rainy seasons as it was designed such a way to fulfill the motives of Indian irrigation interests and it has never been able to irrigate the lands of Nepal, which were expected to be irrigated. Second, the WGC intercepts natural flows of small waters and forces the north and southern areas of canal flooded and waterlogged causing huge losses of crops, contamination of drinking water system, increased snake bites and many other water induced disasters affecting lives and livelihoods of the people. Third, the private land areas of farmers adjoining to Narayani-Gandak river is continuously getting eroded, forcing people to quit homes and livelihood practices resulting into loss and damage of property and psychological sufferings.

The communities in the command areas of Nawalpur and Parasi in Nepal organized 34-day long sit-in strike in WGC against the disasters occurred by building the canal, resulting into signing of the 21-point agreement between Gandak River Control Struggle Committee and government of India. The members of struggle committee shared that a few points of the agreement were fulfilled, which included the blacktopping of the canal road in the command areas, construction 40 spurs and 1.5 meter height and width embankment wall in Triveni area (dam side), renovation of siphons, cleaning of the NGWC, renovation and coloring of the bridge railing, and construction of four bridges. However, the main problems related to disasters due to waterlogging and inundations and impacts on health and livelihoods are yet to be solved and the losses of yearly damages have not been compensated as agreed. The need for immediate revision of the Agreement to share equitable benefits of the international river and preparedness against 'too much and too little of water' resulting into water induced disasters remain as distant items on the agenda for now but they need immediate attention.

Dr. Pandey is the Program Coordinator and member of faculty at the Community Development Program, School of Arts, Kathmandu University.

NEW BUDGET

Realty Vs Populism

Contradictory to the expectation of many economists, Finance Minister Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada has presented a budget undermining the economic reality of the country. Bowing down to the pressure of his party leaders, finance minister Dr. Khatiwada gave up his own stand and economic reality and reforms. At a time of depleting financial resources, Nepal needs to go for borrowing to pay the increased salary of government employees and social welfare allowances. Given declining productivity, increasing import and unpredictable weather and meager budget for development, achieving high growth of 8 percent will be unlikely.

BY A CORRESPONDENT

Although the government's revenue collection is declining and Balance of Payment is not in favor, allowing the huge trade deficit, the budget presented by Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada believes that the economy will turn up over 8 percent growth.

As all previous finance ministers, Dr. Khatiwada has also limitation. With growing pressure from his own party, finance minister Dr. Khatiwada is not in a position to resist or set achievable target. Surrendering with

the majority of members, he allocated Rs. 60 million to each member of parliament under the constituency development fund.

As there is the need to take drastic steps to contain the trade deficit, the government is yet to announce tangible programs. To bring down the trade gap, the budget has given priority to domestic industries, especially export-oriented industries, generation of employment opportunities, promotion of agriculture and tourism sector and enhancement of public service

delivery.

Former vice chair of National Planning Commission Dr. Swarnim Wagle said that the budget has no program to address the economic problems faced by the country and this is just a budget based on populism.

However, former finance minister and leader of ruling Nepal Communist Party Surendra Pandey defended the budget saying the document is as progressive with inclusions of all kinds of social welfare and infrastructure development programs.



Finance Minister Dr. Khatiwada

Although finance minister Dr. Khatiwada said that the budget focuses on infrastructure development aiming to tighten the inflation within 6 per cent and proposing to catch economic growth at 8.5pc in next fiscal year, there is no such thing in the budget. The private sector which is waiting to see some concessions will face more trouble in coming days as they have to work in tight conditions.

The Finance Minister has proposed Rs. 1.53 trillion federal budget, giving emphasis to mega projects like development of roadways, railways, waterways, hydropower and airports, but the budget has allocated very little resources on them.

Out of Rs. 1.53 trillion budget for 2019/20, the budget has allocated Rs. 957.1 billion under recurrent, 408.59 billion under capital expenditure, and 167.5 billion under financing.

In the infrastructure sector, the finance minister has also expressed his commitments to complete major projects, including Melamchi Water Supply Project, Bhairahawa International Airport and Motihari-Amlekhgunj Oil Pipeline Project within 2019-20. It has prioritised completion of pending projects during the year.

At a time when the central government was unable to meet the target

of Rs. 800 billion revenue collection last year, the budget has set ambitious federal government's revenue collection target of Rs 981.12 billion for the next fiscal.

Although the government plans to seek foreign grants and loans worth Rs 298.8 billion and Rs 58 billion, respectively, the recently announced Foreign Aid Policy places so many conditionalities.

As financial sector continue to suffer from cash crunch, it is yet to see how government will collect internal borrowing worth Rs 195 billion.

The budget has transferred Rs 55.3 billion to seven provinces and Rs 89.95 billion to local bodies in equalisation grants and Rs 44.55 billion to provinces and Rs 123.87 billion to local bodies as conditional grants. Under the revenue-sharing scheme, the provinces and local bodies are expected to receive Rs 130.89 billion in the next fiscal.

Social Security

Without making arrangements of adequate safeguards, the government has increased social security allowance of the senior citizens. Minister Dr. Khatiwada announced that the social security allowance of the senior citizens was increased by Rs 1,000.

With this, the social security al-

lowance of the senior citizen of above 70 years has reached Rs 3,000 per month but it will also increase the financial burden.

Similarly, Dalits, senior citizens of Karnali state, people fully disabled and partly disabled of above 60 years have been incorporated in this programme. It has been expected that around 1.3 million senior citizens would directly benefit from this.

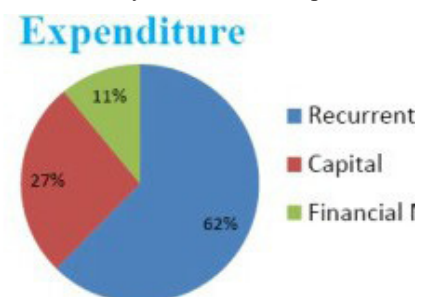
Another major burden for the country is the increasing

the salary of government employees by 18-20 per cent. This will increase huge burden to the government's revenues. In case the government is unable to collect enough money from development partners and internal borrowing, the government will require spending all its revenues to meet social security, sidelining development activities.

Economist Bishwo Poudel holds the view that the budget had followed the previous trend of being distributive in nature and had failed to adopt austerity measures necessary to ensure economic growth.

Budget For All

Finance Minister Dr. Khatiwada in the budget of fiscal year 2019/20 has allocated Rs. 141 billion for the reconstruction sector to complete the construction of the private housings in the areas hit by the 2015 earthquake.





Dr. Minendra Rijal

It has also announced restructuring of the Prime Minister Agriculture Modernisation Project and effectively implementing it in the upcoming fiscal year, thereby creating more employment opportunities.

The government has announced it will develop nine cities, including Kathmandu, Birgunj and Biratnagar, as megacities and connect every rural municipality with at least one strategic road. There are budgets for incomplete projects like roads, highways, airports, hydropower projects and railways. However, the finance minister has not proposed any new projects.

At a time when the budget under recurrent budget and the size of revenue collection is almost the same, there is every possibility to see the budget for capital expenditure. As in the past, the government has to go for foreign donors to seek money for infrastructures.

Given its recent policies to tighten their activities, development partners will be unlikely to come to put the money as demanded by the government. This means Nepal's aim to achieve higher economic growth

and graduate to middle economy by 2030 will suffer.

As predicted by Meterology, this year's monsoon rain will be almost 20 percent less than the last year, it will affect the agriculture production, which is key to achieving a higher growth. The increase in the salary will further raise the cost of production and

Nepal will lose its competitive advantage. As the demand of Nepalese workers in foreign market is shrinking, Nepal's remittance will also likely go down.

Given such a situation, it will be very difficult to achieve economic growth target of seven per cent. As Nepal has been losing its comparative advantage in the agriculture production, there is no tangible program to reduce the import of agriculture and other products to reduce the trade deficit.

Distributive Budget

With the limited resources in hand, most of the budget allocated to education, health, science and technology, agriculture, drinking water and hygiene, social security, employment tourism, industry, commerce and supplies, energy, transportation and urban development sectors will be spent to feed the employees' salary.

However, Minister of Finance Yubaraj Khatiwada said the budget for fiscal 2019-20 was not 'distributive' and met the aspirations

of the people, economy and the entire development process.

"The budget had given priority to enhancing education, health and drinking water sectors and creating job opportunities in the country to ensure people's fundamental rights," said Minister Dr. Khatiwada. "The top priority had been given to infrastructure development, which was crucial to materialise the country's development aspirations and economic growth."

The budget has been criticised, especially for allocating a large chunk for recurrent expenditure and low allocation for development expenditure. Giving priority to populist programmes, such as raising the budget for constituency development programme and substantially raising

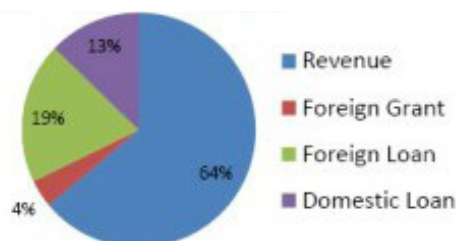


salaries of civil servants, experts have been criticising this distributive nature of the budget.

The minister said the government would be successful in meeting its revenue collection (Rs 981 billion) and economic growth target (8.5 per cent) in the next fiscal. "The government, through the budget, has tried to promote domestic production-oriented revenue collection over import-oriented revenue collection," said Dr. Khatiwada.

With so many constraints, there is unlikely to achieve the ambitious growth of 8.5 percent in the next fiscal year. As optimism is said to be the mother of all hopes, people have no alternative other than to believe in the words of Finance Minister Dr. Khatiwada.

Sources of Budget



Monarchy Or Republic?

Nepal could soon become the first country in the world to abandon the republic as a form of the state within democratic normalcy and restore the monarchy. Isn't this a very unusual hypothesis—a dilemma that has its origins since ancient times? During their long history, both the monarchy and the republic had different meanings. The Republic is a form of government that has appeared in history both in autocratic and in democratic regimes, while the monarchy has for centuries been largely part of the autocratic regime, changing its various forms, ranging from a slave, absolutist state to modern, hybrids and constitutional parliamentary monarchy.

The way things are moving, Parliamentary monarchy is a better political solution than a republic for Nepal. The restoration of the Monarchy is getting closer in Nepal. We need to wake up from the general lethargy that had been around for the last 22 years with a different political experiment which gave nothing to my very nation.

Our irritated society with an agitated system can hardly produce anything anymore. Successful nation-building should incorporate basic principles like good partners, process, Problem-solving, Purpose, People. The nation building is about people. Power, Greed, and the Love of Money do not move history. People move history. We are practicing social Darwinism, not democracy in Nepal. I can go on and on as I need someone as a guarantor of national unity.

I was raised as a democratic person. I am a Democrat, and I confess that I am absolutely ready to return to the constitutional monarchy. Can we have a referendum on the monarchy? We can't always make the right decision, but we can make every decision right. We have to do it now before it gets too late. I don't think there is anything wrong with the modern constitutional monarchy which is part of a constitutional system based on a parliamentary form of government in which the monarch has only a ceremonial role. So the monarchy cannot clean up the political class, because the parliamentary system will inherently keep all the elements of democracy. The most important aspect of freedom and democracy are identity and dignity. The day we abolished the king, we lost our identity and dignity, and since then, we have not been able to practice true democracy with freedom. Do I really need such a system? A system that consists in mandating a party cadet who will have to obey the orders of international institu-



BY DEEPAK RAJ JOSHI

tions that do not obey any democracy? Who will try to pass his reforms to an assembly of corrupt representatives?

Every citizen has the duty. We must all be aware of our history and the behavior of our policies, the quality of our vote, the system and therefore, our quality of life. Let's not choose anything blindly. What we have is not a democracy. It's a lottery. We are not treated as citizens. The problem of the republic is that an aristocratic fate of real parasites, parvenus, took

control. Republican Nepal, which is not really a republic but plutocracy held by an oligarchy without nobility, is an occupied country.

The King has no ambition to interfere in political life beyond his mandate or to increase these powers. The King does not have the mercy to lead a party or any civil movement that looks like a party. Arguments never cease to stop in our country. The Nepalese still need to realize that a republic would cost the taxpayer more than a royal family. The republic is not politically and morally defensible for us. In reality, a Republic would be cheaper than a Mon-

archy, but this is not happening to our country. Based on the data from the last 10 years, the government has spent 10 Arab but in 250 years, only 9 Crore. Thus, we can say that Monarchy cost us less than the president! This issue has made Money saving one of the main arguments against the restoration of

MONARCHY



REPUBLIC



the monarchy. The fact is that the elected president is spending as much as the king or more than him. However, the issue is not only that. What many don't know is that after every four years, the president gets a lifelong retirement so we practically will have several presidents at the same time, while in the case of the monarchy there is just one ruler, just one king.

Let us talk about the cost of the election. Every four years, the president is elected. It is simple mathematics that if a direct election takes place, the institution of the king would cost taxpayers less than the institution of the president. Hence, I believe now that a king would give a better image of my nation than a president. The monarchy seems to me as an antidote to Nepal. The Monarchy represents the plurality of identity and the constant renewal within continuity. Monarchy might not be a perfect system, but it is the best for a country like Nepal. The way things are moving, it has been proven that the monarchy in Nepal was more democratic than a republic!

Cleaning Everest

Nepal Army collected 10,000 kg of waste during its Mount Everest Clean Up Campaign

BY A CORRESPONDENT

Just after taking the command of Nepal Army, Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) Purna Chandra Thapa issued a Command and Directives of CoAS. One of the key elements of his command and directives had stated that the NA will work for cleaning the mountain.

With piles of pollution lying here and there, Nepal Army, in collaboration with other organizations, including different government organizations, local NGOs, local level and provincial offices, collected 10,000 kg of garbage from Everest region under Sagarmatha Clean Up Campaign 2076.

Having worked to protect the nation and nature, Nepal Army has been constantly siding for the cause of Nepal. CoAS General Thapa's Command and Directives has also shown how to make the highest peak of the world clean.

Under the institutional directives of CoAS General Thapa, Nepal Army mobilized its existing equipment and manpower to collect the debris left by mountaineers and trekkers.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Ishwor Pokharel inspected the concluding program of Mount Everest Clean Campaign 2076. Out of the total, 4000 kg has already been brought to Kathmandu and Nepal Army is planning to bring remaining 6000 kg of wastes from Everest.

Addressing the program, DPM Pokharel said that Nepal Army has been working to serve nation and people thanking NA team for taking up the noble work of cleaning the debris of Mount Everest.

The joint campaign was run by the Nepali Army, different government ministries, Nepal Mountaineering Association, Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality and Sagarmatha Buffer Zone, among others, he added.

Addressing the program, Chief Minister of Province 1 Sherdhan Rai announced 5 million rupees to Khumbu Pasang Rural Municipality, making it a model tourism village of the province. He said that Mount Everest should be made part of Nepal's prosperity.

Chief of Army Staff General Purna Chandra Thapa said that there was the need to work together to improve environment and nature of Khumbu Region and urged all to make necessary arrangements to manage waste.

According to the NA spokesperson Bigyan Dev Pandey, the NA followed the command and directives of CoAS Thapa, which stated that the NA will work for cleaning the mountain. This is the first time that the NA took initiatives to clean the tallest mountain of the world, according to Pandey.



"Twelve Sherpas helped to collect the garbage above the base camp," said Pandey, adding that the Sherpas collected garbage from different camps of Mt. Everest.

The Nepali Army first carried the garbage collected from Mt Everest to Gorakhshep, located inside the Sagarmatha National Park, by a helicopter.

Also a helicopter was used to airlift the garbage from Gorakhshep to Okhal-

ghunga. It employed vehicles as well as a helicopter to carry the garbage from Okhaldhunga to Kathmandu, according to Pandey.

Starting on April 14, Nepal Army provided helicopter and manpower for cleanup campaign and collected 4000 kg of waste. Out of them, 1000 kg has already been brought to Kathmandu and provided to Blue Waste Blue. Nepal Army is planning to bring another 6000 kg of waste to Kathmandu by June 3.

The stakeholders today claimed that a month-long cleaning campaign on the world's highest mountain has concluded successfully collecting over 10,000 kilograms of rubbish from the Mt Everest region.

According to Ang Dorje Sherpa, Chairman at the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee, the mega Everest clean-up drive was conducted in coordination with the government and non-government agencies for the first time in the history of Everest climbing.

"At least four dead bodies and the rubbish left behind by the world climbers in the high camps of Mt Everest have also been collected during the campaign," Sherpa said.

According to Sherpa, different teams spent over a month at the Everest Base Camp, Camp II and Camp IV to collect the garbage. "More than 6,000 kg of waste was collected from the base camp and the high camps," he said, adding that the local community groups also joined hands to keep the Khumbu region clean.

Pasang Nuru Sherpa, one of the members of the cleaning team, said that it was really a tough task as the team struggled hard to collect trash in the high camps.

Major Dipendra Neupane of Nepal Army said that over Rs 23 million was spent to run the campaign. "The campaign will continue in the coming years."

Admirable Reception

Maharajkumari Malla hosts a reception to congratulate Shreejana Rana for her election as the first woman president of Hotel Association Nepal

BY KESHAB POUDEL

Felicitations functions, receptions and parties are organized to fulfill official commitments, business responsibilities and formalities. However, some receptions go beyond to share love and affection and to praise achievements with due and strict professional advice.

Following the election as the first woman president of Hotel Association Nepal (HAN), Shreejana Rana attended a number of felicitation programs. However, a reception hosted by Maharajkumari Rama Malla to congratulate Rana on May 19th 2019 was more gracious, with personal attachments as well as professional advice.

The welcome reception organized by Maharajkumari Malla, the first woman to join Nepali hospitality industry, dominated by male then, was professionally meaningful, as it attached love and pride in the success of a niece.

"I am very happy and proud to see my dear niece Shreejana Rana, who I affectionately call Susie, as the first women president of Hotel Association Nepal (HAN)," said Maharajkumari from her heart. "However, Susie being a hard working person, a trait which I appreciate always and think it is something one has to have and do if one wants to succeed- Success does not come easy- and she being far more political correct and affable than me," narrates Maharajkumari.

Establishing herself one of the most successful entrepreneurs in hospitality industry, Maharajkumari Malla is known for her bold stand and frank statement. Daughter of reformist Rana Prime Minister Late Padma Sumsher, Maharajkumari inherited the liberal attitude from his father.

Known for her habit to speak truth bluntly, Maharajkumari Malla stands for the cause and truth. This is her great strength for herself. This was the reason she even rejected the offer to be president of HAN long time back.

"Prabhakar and Shadev Ranas, after their tenure, had also asked me to take the same post but not being a politically correct person and having a habit of speaking truth bluntly I refused," said Maharajkumari Malla, whose father and grandfather served as prime ministers of Nepal in the greatest time of history.

Along with personal love and attachment, she also reminded newly elected president about the nature of job. Her observations are based on her own experiences.

"President of HAN, in my opinion, is a thankless job. She will have to fight constantly with the government. As sadly, the government, in my country, has never been good support even though we our industry is the highest foreign exchange earner

to the treasury. Also, we in Nepal are very quick and free to criticize but very slow and scared with praise," said Maharajkumari Malla.

Noting the harsh reality of Nepalese society, Maharajkumari bestowed total support and backing to newly elected president Rana. "I am sure she will succeed I wish her all my very best wishes for her to go from strength to



Maharajkumari Rama Malla (left) & Shreejana Rana (right)



strength,” said Maharajkumari Malla.

Although many organizations have organized felicitation for newly elected President of Hotel Association Nepal, the reception hosted by Maharajkumari Malla had special meaning and importance.

Maharajkumari Malla, only daughter of liberal Rana Prime Minister Padma Sumsher and grand daughter of Bhim Sumsher Rana, has backed and encouraged Shreejana Rana to fight for success.

Expressing words with high respect in adorable tones to Maharajkumari, her aunt in family relations as well as a successful woman entrepreneur of Nepal, Rana, who had lost her father in early age, remembered her support expressing affable words and expressed determination to fulfill the wishes expressed by Maharajkumari Malla.

“Thulo Mua, I don’t think I have the words to express how deeply touched I am by your kindness in hosting this evening for me and for your kind words right now. But I will try,” said Rana in her sober words.

In her touchy words full of love, admiration and obedience to Maharajkumari Malla, Shreejana Rana said, “Thulo Mua, through good times and bad, you have always been there for me, especially after Neeraj and I lost our parents.”

Rana expressed words and sentences with her great sense of respect and guardianship offered by Maharajkumari’s guidance at the great tragic times of losing two parents. “You are my rock and source of unflagging support, I have known you to tell me in no uncertain terms when you thought I wasn’t on the right track.”

Expressing her adoration to uncle Saradindu Malla, husband of Maharajkumari Malla, Rana, showed how fatherly he is to her in the time of pain and happiness. “Thulo Bua, you for being there for me always for your love and encouragement,” said Rana.

Expressing determination to bring change as a president of HAN in hotel industry, Shreejana Rana said that her work will tell her vision. “To be the president of HAN is an honor and privilege. I plan to make a difference during my term for the good organization and the hospitality and tourism industry. But I know that I can’t do this on my own. So, thank you from my heart to each of you here for good wishes and support,” said newly elected president Rana.

Maharajkumari Malla is a close relative of newly elected Rana but Maharajkumari Rana is also a well established, self made, hotelier who had defied all the odds of a conservative aristocratic family.

Defying traditions, family rules and cultures, Maharajkumari Malla, had to pay a price, too be a successful entrepreneur in the the hotel industry.

When she was addressing a reception attended by his very close relatives and persons, Maharajkumari Malla’s voice and words and firmness suggested work for conscience in the country.

Maharajkumari’s self confidence resembled arrogance or egoism for some. A successful tourism entrepreneur, Maharajkumari Malla, who has been traveling around the world and attending high level ceremonies representing the Maharajkumari of Nepal, including in Buckingham Palace, in her style, spoke frankly and boldly advising Malla.

Inheriting characters of her liberal father prime minister Padma Sumsher Rana, Maharajkumari Malla does not fear anybody in exercising her own rights. Whether under the rule of monarch or under the republican setup, the direction of Maharajkumari Malla is unchanged.

Grand Daughter of Babu Sahib Khadga Bahadur Malla, the largest Zamindar in Bardia, and daughter of late Kiranendu Malla and late Kendra R L Malla, Shreejana Rana, the executive director at Hotel Annapurna, becomes the first woman to get elected as president of Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) by the 46th annual general meeting.

Hosting a reception, her known way, Maharajkumari Malla has shown her personal love and pride to see her niece elected as the president of HAN. In her speech, Maharajkumari Malla did not spare any time showing the reality of working as the president.



Can Socialism And Communism Sustain Sans Austerity?

“A communist having lust for wealth cannot run politics or communist Party” -**Xi Jinping**.

The last stage of socialism is communism, is what a political thinker has said. As stated by Karl Marx, “Communist society is one where each individual works according to his/her’s capacity and in return takes from the society all that he or she requires”. The major difference between socialist and communist system is that under the socialist system, the individual gets from the society all the material benefits in proportion to his or her capacity. Whereas under the communist system, because of abundance of goods and services, capabilities lose their significance enabling each member of the society to get all the benefits that an individual requires.

Nepal now has been declared - a democratic federal republic-, and the present government is led by Nepal Communist party(NCP).For any new government coming to power in Nepal, it has become customary to issue directives for the maintenance of austerity measures to check public expenditures. But unfortunately, the directives remain in paper only, taking them as a ritual by the concerned agencies and all government functionaries. As a result, no one feels responsible and accountable for monitoring and implementing the directives

The country is, currently, undergoing difficult political situations and is weighted down by myriad socio-economic problems. People, in general, have started commenting on the expensive foreign tours of VVIPs and bureaucrats calling the austerity slogans of the government as a “Pennywise and pound foolish” speeches only to fooling people.

We have now a government led by a communist party, which came into fore after the two communist parties, one of which was a revolutionary one, came together which believe in communism – a communism imply national ownership of the means of production and distribution .The idea of distribution of goods and services and also of austerity and equality are inherent in this concept. But a highly tragic aspect of our political leader’s versions of communism are that those who loudly profess them themselves making a mockery of it by living in grand ostentatious style and regarding themselves as a privileged class even while countless millions of Nepal’s do not get a square meal and go semi-naked.

Despite the periodic exhortations by exponents of socialism and communism by the present breed of political leaders running the country, asking people to economies all round, in view of the unprecedented economic crisis, foreign cars, are still being bought from foreign companies for the use of VIPs, VVIPs and bureaucrats .The cost of all these comforts to the public exchequer is, indeed, very heavy and regrettable. Their salaries represent a fraction of what the nation has to spend on them and on all the pomp and show that are deemed essential for them whenever VIPS and VVIPs go on foreign tours or visit districts to inaugurate functions. Their prerequisites are so many and so out-of tune with the times that many foreign visitors wonder at the government’s extravagance while the country is still associated with the begging bowl at



BY SHYAM ADHIKARI

international forums and in affluent countries.

The conduct of Head of State and ministers in capitalist or non-socialist countries provide a sharp contrast. The Prime Minister of Turkey has refused to live in the spacious official residence or to use an official car, instead, he preferred to live in modest rented apartment. While many of our VIPs, VIPs and bureaucrats insist on using luxurious cars and furnishing their official residences at heavy cost to the exchequer. The President of Switzerland travels by bus .The Governors and Governor-Generals in Australia and Canada walk

in the streets like common people and never get road cleared for them. A recent example, is that the President of South Korea Mr. Miungbak was seen ridding an ordinary bicycle on way to his office. Another example that we have seen is the former Prime Minister of the UK, Tony Blair travelling in train and finding no seat vacant stood in a corner reading newspaper. The Prime Minister of Holland was also seen recently riding on his bicycle to and from his office. None of these VVIPs needed body guards nor any security measure to protect them.

In Nepal, we have big contrast with those aforesaid countries and VVIPs .When our VIPs and VVIPs are to pass along a road ,other people have to make way for them and sometimes traffic both road and air are held- up hours together at the cost of people’s woes. People have started making joke that one day, Nepali air, surface and water route would be closed for hours in the name of security of the VVIPs causing tremendous hardship to the common people.

If only our VIPs AND VVIPs live in simple style like commoners, they would be better able to realize what problems are faced by the general people. If they abandon their expensive luxuries at the cost of poor tax payers sweat, they would prove to be true socialist or communist and not fake ones, as they are behaving these days. The yawning gap between their positions and practice do not extend to their mode of living. In their living styles they imitate affluent aristocracy, and in their lust for wealth they imitate the present neo-riches and in their speeches they preach democracy, socialism, communism and austerity. All the sacrifices are on the people’s side, comforts and luxuries on theirs. Isn’t it against what Xi Jinping in his quote above has expressed?

Austerity and simplicity are postulates of democracy, socialism and communism. But it is ridiculous to see our leaders and politicians who swear by socialism and communism every day and endlessly call for more sacrifices by the poor masses. It appears that our leaders have conveniently escaped the evolutionary process of socialism and communism and are trying to get all the benefits of a socialist and communist society disregarding the fact that our social and economic systems are still in pre-industrial stage. It is most unfortunate that our political leaders proponent of socialism and pursuing communist ideology, preach their”Isms” to people and themselves practice and behave like capitalists. Thus what a socialism, communism and the theory and practices of austerity in Nepal?



Future Of Work

ILO Assistant Director General's recent visit to Nepal is highly significant

BY A CORRESPONDENT

As Nepal is heading towards becoming prosperous, there is the need to enhance the quality of work as well as work place. In the context, the recent visit of ILO Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Tomoko Nishimoto, was highly significant.

During her four-day visit to Nepal, she called on all constituents to “work beyond the normal” to help realize social justice and decent work for all.

The visit was part of her commitment to reinforce relations with ILO constituents, comprising the Government, and organizations of employers and workers, and to generate general public discourse on the ILO Centenary Initiative on the Future of Work.

Meeting from prime minister K.P Sharma Oli to Finance Minister Dr. Yubaraj Khatriwada, she also talked with Minister of Labor, Employment and Social Security Gokarna Bista, secretary and other officials for labor unions.

Nishimoto paid a courtesy visit to Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli where she briefed the Prime Minister on the ILO's Centenary Initiatives on the Future of Work. Prime Minister Oli highlighted the reforms being made by Nepal, including increment on minimum wages, launching of contribution based social security scheme and labor legislations. He also appreciated the role of the ILO in promoting fundamental rights at work, equality and social justice.

In her meeting with Finance Minister Dr Yuba Raj Khatriwada, the

two discussed the challenges and opportunities of Nepalese labor market and translating provisions outlined in the contributory social security law for workers. She shared the ILO initiative on the Future of Work, and made references to the experiences of ASEAN countries in this regard. Minister Khatriwada highlighted some of the key initiative taken by the Ministry in support of application of minimum wage, contribution-based social security, labor rights, and strengthening of labor administration including inspection.

The ILO Assistant Director-General also called on Minister for Labor, Employment and Social Security,

Prasad Dahal briefed Nishimoto about the initiatives of the Ministry, the need to enhance capacity of labor administration towards protecting and promoting the rights of Nepali workers. He also said that the Government is mulling to ratify some ILO conventions relevant to Nepal this year.

Similarly, Nishimoto held separate meetings with Bhawani Rana, President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and prominent trade union leaders on contemporary issues related to labor, social and economic changes unfolding in the world of work and how growth could go alongside unionism.

On 20 May, Nishimoto attended a National Tripartite Discussion Program on the Global Commission report on the Future of work co-hosted by the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security and the International Labor Organization (ILO).

According to a press release of ILO, during the discussion program, the speakers shed light on, among

others, the concept of life-long learning, universal labor guarantee, need to increase investment in people's capabilities, institutions of work and decent and sustainable work.

During her stay in Nepal, she also had separate discussions with representatives of a number of development partners in Nepal, including Valerie Julliand, UN Resident Coordinator.

The visit of high-level ILO officials and her meeting with top government will contribute to build Nepal's capability.



Gokarna Bista and took stock of the developments in the labor administration of Nepal. The Minister spoke on the key priorities of the Government including application of labor legislations, contribution-based social security scheme and creation of employment in the country. He emphasized on the need of more ILO technical support as Nepal is passing through a very crucial stage of political transformation.

Secretary at the Ministry Mahesh

Environment Protection Bill 2019: Heavy Punishment For Non-Compliance

The new Bill on Environment Protection 2019 has proposed to punish with a fine up to NRs. 5 lacs, 10 lacs and 50 lacs for the implementation of any proposal without approval of the 'brief environmental study', Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports or any act contrary to these approved reports. The concerned agency shall issue directives to comply with the approved reports and the agency shall punish 3 times of the above provisions for any act contrary to the directive issued. This punishment is 50 times more than the existing provision of the Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1996. This indicates that environmental condition may be improved by penalising the proponent in a country where implementation of environmental protection measures (adverse impacts mitigation and benefits augmentation measures) as included in the legally approved IEE or EIA reports are grossly unknown.

Environmental assessment (EA) – understood worldwide as a planning and management tool – is used to identify, predict and evaluate significance of environmental impacts and recommend preventive, mitigative and compensatory measures for adverse impacts, and augmentation measures for beneficial impacts to make the development environment-friendly and sustainable. Alternative analysis and environmental management plan (EMP) or implementation of adverse impacts mitigation and benefits augmentation measures are the integral part of any type of EA worldwide. The IEE, EIA, Social Impact Assessment (SIA), Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) or Health EIA, Cumulative Impact Assessment etc are normally understood project-level assessments while Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is carried out for any environmentally sensitive policies, plans and programmes (3Ps). EAs and SEA are carried out in almost all countries for the 'prescribed' proposals (projects and 3Ps) through legislation, Decree, policy or administrative decisions. Fundamental differences on different types of EAs, in practice, require clear understanding and implications on development efforts while proposing for such assessments.

Nepal started the use of project-level assessments – IEE or EIA – through periodical policies, National EIA Guidelines (1993), separate EIA Guidelines for Forestry and Industry sectors (1995), EPA (1996) and Environment Protection Rules (EPR, 1997). From 26 June 1997, Nepal is carrying out IEE and/or EIA for all 'prescribed' projects and it has 22-years of experience in legally providing 'environmental clearance' for the implementation of the development projects by approving IEE or EIA reports. As EPA (1996) has considered any plan, project or programme as a proposal, it has opened avenues for SEA study (for plan and programme). But there is no legal procedure to carry out and approve the SEA report like that of IEE and EIA reports.

Many countries consider EA study an opportunity to know both beneficial and adverse impacts, including cost sufficiently in advance. In Nepal, many investors consider this tool expensive and complex, just an add-on process, and a development 'barrier'. It is very difficult to find project stopped from EA study. In case, mitigation measures are costly to address significant adverse environmental impacts, proponent may sometime withdraw project construction and implementation. Anyway, project developers have complied with the legal provisions on EAs in Nepal, some consider that once EIA report is approved, 'environment is automatically managed'. Experience indicates that approval of under quality IEE/EIA report has derailed environmental improvement initiatives.

The new Bill has included additional layer for preparing and approving 'environmental study' report for the prescribed proposal in



By BATU UPRETY

addition to IEE and EIA. Based on proposed definition, 'environmental study' includes: (i) brief environment study; (ii) IEE; and (iii) EIA reports. A section has been added for 'detailed alternative analysis' of any proposal that requires environmental study report. Based on Schedules 3 and 4 of the EPR (1997), alternative analysis must be included in any IEE or EIA report. The EPR (1997) before its amendment required scoping for IEE study as well. In principle, scoping is carried out to know the 'scope of work' for IEE or EIA or any other EA studies. The first amendment (15 April 1999) of the EPR deleted the scoping requirements

for IEE study and Terms of Reference does not include scope of work for the IEE study.

The proponent should prepare in the 'prescribed format' to maintain the standards and quality of the environmental study report. If, environmental study report is prepared by non-complying the standards and is in contrary to the quality prescribed, the consultant will not be 'eligible' to prepare such report up to 5 years. It gives a message that proponent is not responsible for the under quality report. The existing EPA and EPR do not recognise the 'consultant' and all IEE and EIA reports 'must be owned' by the proponent. However, proponent may hire the consultant to prepare the report on its behalf. It seems, 'ownership over the report' is shifted.

The new Bill also provisions for carrying out Strategic Environmental Analysis (SEAn) for the prescribed policy, programme or project. It does not include Plan but includes project which may require either IEE or EIA. As IEE or EIA is carried out for projects, SEA is widely used to assess environmental impacts of a policy, plan or programme. Nepal carried out SEA of Nepal water plan in 2004/05. The EIA report (1995) of the Bara Operational Forest Management Plan was of SEA level. As the Bill has proposed for SEAn, a clear understanding and demarcation would be essential for 'SEAn and SEA'. The new Bill opens avenues to advance SEAn and EMP but clarity is required to translate legal provisions into action. The Bill has recognized the need for Supplementary EIA but procedural aspects may be included in the Rules.

Rule 14 of the EPR (1997) empowers the Environmental Ministry to conduct environmental auditing 2 years after the commencement of the service provided from the proposal requiring EIA report while the new Bill obliges the proponent to conduct auditing within 6 months after 2 years of the service provided. As environmental auditing is a systematic study and requires documented evidences (as the financial auditing) to access the actual environmental impacts, this binding provision (within 6 months) is in consistent with the principle. This 'within 2 years' provision in EPR 1997 was replaced by 'after 2 years of service' in its first amendment (1999). Scoping and ToR, EIA report and its implementation, and auditing are carried out by the proponent and Bill is 'silent' on environmental monitoring. Interestingly, the new Bill empowers the Government of Nepal or the Province to carry out environmental study of any mapped area or location.

The operational experience in developing and institutionalizing EA system in the Government of Nepal for about two and half decades and building capacity of the EA practitioners in Nepal and few African countries encouraged me to 'flag' these issues. Some of the provisions of the new Bill require 'conceptual clarity'. It is encouraged to understand the implications of each provision contained in the Bill as IEE/EIA is repeatedly 'blamed in Nepal a barrier' for project construction/economic development without considering accelerated 'cut & paste syndrome'. The new Bill may complicate the process for making the social and economic development projects environment-friendly and sustainable.

BRITISH AMBASSADOR MORRIS

Running Cause

Along with other runners from around the world, British Ambassador Richard Morris took part in Everest Marathon to Help People With A Visible Difference

BY A CORRESPONDENT

For some it is for fun, some for adventures and record. However, British Ambassador to Nepal Richard Morris ran for for raising money and awareness for two causes, changing faces with Visible Difference in UK and Burns Violence Survivors in Nepal.

British Ambassador Morris and 222 other participated in Everest Marathon held in marking Everest Day 2019. A total of 223 trail runners participated in the event, out of which there were 158 foreigners, including the British Envoy Richard Morris and 65 Nepalis, according to the Coordinator of the Marathon, Shikhar Pandey.

"I'm running the Everest Marathon (the world's highest), to help people with a visible difference," writes Richard Morris in his article in Changing the Faces website. There aren't many runs where you have to walk for 10 days to reach the starting line. Or where oxygen depletion is a concern at the start line altitude. Or where -26 degrees temperatures seem a possibility.

For Nepal's Burns Violence Survivors in Nepal, only medical facility to provide victims of domestic violence particularly burn patient, has been facing huge gap of fund. Ambassador Morris's decision to run shows his dedication for the cause of such victims.

"I'm wondering one more time whether participating in the Everest Marathon is the very best idea I've had. I'm looking forward to it with a mixture of excitement and (definitely) trepidation. I've always been a runner – more enthusiastic weekend trail runner than podium finisher. I've always tried to run wherever I've lived in the world, and since being 40, have run various marathons on different continents. When I was asked to present the prizes at the finish line of the Everest Marathon in 2016, I began thinking how I could get

myself in shape to complete it while still in Nepal. When the organizers said they'd be happy to have me in the 2019 race, and let me raise money for charity, I couldn't resist. So, for the last 12 months, I've been practicing. I run about four times a week, mainly in the gym. At the weekend, I get out of Kathmandu, where I'm based as British Ambassador, and participate in a trail run or run with Nepali friends. I've discovered there is a whole running sub-culture here, with lots of UK connections. Distance runner extraordinaire, former 24 hour road running and 100km world record holder Lizzie Hawker is often here. It has been great to meet her and find inspiration in her book. I've been inspired by meeting Nepali distance runner, multi-race winner and National Geographic Adventurer of the Year 2017, Mira Rai, too. Both are completely down-to-earth and friendly, even to this obviously amateur runner. And there are plenty of other enthusiastic Nepali, Brit and international runners here too. Some are simply happy to get out at the weekend. Some are always looking for new distance goals – the four day run around the Kathmandu Valley sounded amazing (leopards on the path anyone?). Definitely further than I was aiming, but amazing to see people you know pushing such boundaries," wrote ambassador Morris before leaving.

At the event, organized every year on May 29 as part of the Everest Day Celebration, Suman Kulung ranked first in the marathon completing the race in three hours 47 minutes and 16 seconds. The second and third positions went to Kapilder Buda and Ram Kumar Raj Bhandari who completed the race in 3:36:10 and 3:58 respectively.

Tenzing Hillary Everest Marathon is an international high altitude adven-



ture sports event held from Mt Everest Base Camp, crisscrossing the high Sherpa trails of Khumbu valley, according to the Marathon's official website. The Marathon celebrates the historical ascent of Mt Everest by Late Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Sir Edmund Hillary on May 29, 1953.

The 2019 Marathon is the 17th edition of this event. Runners from all over the world can participate in their desired categories — 60 km Extreme Ultra, 42 km Full Marathon, and 21 Km Half Marathon.

Although it was a very difficult and tough task to run at high altitude, ambassador Morris is able to generate awareness throughout the world about the cause of victims.

Artificial Intelligence

The Fear of Job Losses – Real or Imaginary?

Human beings, by nature, want in life power, pleasure, comfort, and happiness. In these pursuits, humans have invented, refined, and further advanced machines and their applications. In their unfinished search for more and more comfort and happiness, human beings, in the first industrial revolution, innovated the steam engine which helped switch production method from manual to mechanized factory system. Human beings further upgraded the technological innovations by introducing mass production, assembly lines, and electrical grid system etc during the second industrial revolution. The third industrial revolution has given us internet and social media helping us to remain globally connected with people and events (though not necessarily always in promoting harmony).

Now the artificial intelligence (AI), in the fourth industrial revolution (IR4), is enabling machines to perform nearly everything better, cheaper, safer and faster than human beings. Machine is learning to learn by itself without human help making self-corrections along the path of self-improvement - showing flashes of its cognitive power sharper than those of humans. Experts are warning in unison voice that within a short period of a mere few decades or sooner, labour of all collars (blue collar and white) will be reduced to unemployable “useless class”. Potentially no jobs will be safe from AI including high-skill jobs like those of the lawyers, doctors, journalists, and even artists, musicians and painters, not to talk of the muscle labour in the factories. Indeed, future job vacancies may even come with a tag like ‘humans may not need to apply’. There would be a surge in “disemployment”, a state when labour would be considered expensive at any costs, and the need for their services and their jobs would be displaced from the economy never to return in any meaningful way again. This is a much worse situation than unemployment, as unemployed labour faces only a temporary out of job situation. He/she remains employable and is bound to find a job sooner or later. An unemployable labour will not just be out of job, he/she also stands the risk of losing his economic power, self-esteem, confidence, and pride as being a contributing member to the society. The psychological damage will be severe.

Even in the political arena, robot-political-candidate (named Matsuda) has already started robotic debut in the Mayoral elections in Japan (in April 2018) getting 4,000 votes and securing third position in the election vote count. Some recent surveys indicate that about 33% of the German voters would rather prefer efficient and ethically untarnished clean robots as their political candidates over the traditional politicians. (It would be interesting to see the results if similar surveys are carried out in Nepal and other developing countries).

These technological disruptions will have severe global implications in the labour market (due to massive job losses of all skills), in income distribution system because of the winner-take-all method (by big corporations like FANG in the US (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, Google) and BAT in China (Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent) swiping all the technological profits to themselves), education system (due to decreasing relevance of what is being taught in the classes), and healthcare system (due to commercial availability of bio-products and genetically-edited products to serve the whims of just a small minority super-rich classes towards youth-prolonging devices, and other similar unusual services).

When one talks about AI, it is really about two factors - data, and the computing capacity of semiconductor chips. Whichever will



BY OMKAR SHRESTHA

have commanding lead in these two factors will enjoy commanding domination in AI race. Oil will thus be replaced by data as the most valuable resources in the race for AI leadership. Given the importance of massive data need for AI, FANG and others like them will be making all efforts to collect massive data about human behaviour (with or without) human knowledge to the extent that TVs are likely to be watching the humans and their likes and dislikes of the types of the TV programs than humans watching TVs.

Kindle will be reading the readers' likes and dislikes (in terms of the types of books and articles) than readers reading the Kindle. Same with the Facebook, you tube etc. Humans seem to be willingly and voluntarily submitting all kinds of data about themselves with FANG, BAT in exchange of free email services, and you tube entertainments. It is a transaction heavily skewed in favour of the FANG/BAT (the Big Seven).

Are these perceived global fears being mere myth or are they going to be real? If mere myth, it will be a nice entertaining suspenseful story. If real, how is the world (not just Nepal) going to cope with them? Who will be the gainers and who the losers? Given the importance of data, who will be owning them and who will be regulating and supervising them? What will happen to the society's foundation, the dwindling middle-income-class, as the issue of income inequality gets ugly? How should the future education system be reformed and updated? How will this impact our current style of work-life balance? Will these disruptions overwhelm our life-style that we are used-to and familiar with? Moreover, will the marginalized massive masses meekly accept the unbridgeable pathological income inequality gap, or will they demand nothing less than the fundamental changes in the very concept of Capitalism? Should there be a serious review of the current intellectual property rights (IPR) system that handover all the technological gains to the Big Seven? Should Capitalism continue its traditional focus only on creation and addition of productive gains? Should not it start giving importance to the distribution of gains as well? Should profit be the be-all and end-all motive behind technological innovations, or should ethical dimension also be given due recognition in the fair share of the gains, and who is going to take this initiative – the individuals, the big corporations, or the Government? The questions are many and serious; the proposed solutions (like the Universal Basic Income (UBI) or the Universal Basic Services (UBS) are few, tentative, and controversial.

At the end of the day, what has to be kept in mind is that future really belongs to them who create their own future and make ethical and “good use” of it. Time has come that technological advancements can no longer be considered as mere scientific discoveries. Their societal, political, ethical and moral dimensions also demand serious consideration before it is too late.

Ph.D. in Economics, East West Center Scholar;

Over 27 years of services with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in various capacities in multiple countries;

For the past ten years, research undertaking at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, and currently academic teaching at the National University of Singapore (NUS);

Invited keynote speaker in national and international conferences;

Several publications, Honours, and Recognitions

A New Era, “Reiwa”, Commenced In Japan

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to celebrate the ascension of the new Emperor of Japan. Since his ascension in May this year, a new era, “Reiwa”, commenced in Japan. Reiwa means beautiful harmony, with the hope that culture will flourish through the hearts and minds of people coming together in a beautiful manner. As Prime Minister Abe mentioned, “Reiwa” is taken from the Manyoshu, the oldest poetry anthology of Japan compiled more than 1,200 years ago.

As we leave the “Heisei” era of Japan behind, we can recall that sometimes there were difficulties such as natural disasters and slow economic progress, however, with the respectability, their majesties the Emperor Emeritus and Empress Emerita, the Heisei era lasted for more than 30 years.



We are grateful to learn that their Majesties, the Emperor Emeritus and Empress Emerita, and His Majesty the Emperor have bonds with Nepal. His Majesty the Emperor visited Nepal in 1987. There are some photographs at the embassy, which we share with you for this special occasion today. I learn that His Majesty visited Nepal when he was Crown Prince, and he spent time here visiting city areas as well as mountains.

It is said that His Majesty developed further thoughts about the water problems of the world through this visit. He mentioned his experience later at lectures. Particularly, he saw women and children fetching water when he visited Pokhara, and thought about their difficulties, such as that it might take a long time for them to carry water back to their homes.

His Majesty studied the history of water transportation in Japan and in the UK and his interest has been broadened in relation to water in society and people's lives. His interest ranges from water supplies, and protection from floods, to relations with the environment, public Health and even education.

In 2003, His Majesty delivered a key note speech at the third World Water Forum in Kyoto. Since then he continues to talk on various themes related to water in society. For example, as Honorary President, he has made contributions to the United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation from



BY MASAMICHI SAIGO

2007, delivering thoughtful keynote speeches about global water problems with historical perspective.

Today, the bilateral relations between Japan and Nepal continue to be strengthened as both of our Foreign Ministers visited each other's country recently. These visits were followed by Memorandum of Cooperation regarding “Specified Skilled Worker,” which was signed in the March. Japan would like to keep supporting the vision of Nepal- “Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali”

through various fields such as economic and technical cooperation, promoting investment, and preservation of cultural heritage. As a true good friend of Nepal, we will continue to deepen and widening our bilateral relationship further in comprehensive and dynamic manner.

Japan hosts the Rugby World Cup 2019 from this September to November. Just a week ago there was the Kathmandu Rugby Festival, in which two Japanese professional players Kikutani and Ms Inui, kindly joined. As I am a keen rugby fan, and played it when I was young, I hope this sport becomes more familiar among the younger generations of the country. The Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan will be followed by the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympics Games in 2020. We welcome many Nepalis who love sports to both occasions!

Masamichi Saigo is the Japanese Ambassador to Nepal. Excerpts of the statement delivered on 28 May.

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GUTHI LAND

Up For Grab

Experts argue that a new Guthi Bill presented at the Parliament will give state to destroy Nepal's tradition

BY A CORRESPONDENT

Just over 3000 Bighas of land of Swargadwari, Nepal's prominent temple of Pyuthan District, is under encroachment. Due to illegal encroachment, the temple has not been receiving any revenue from land necessary to maintain religious practice and tradition.

Late Swargadwari Baba, who established the temple, handing it over vast property to maintain religious practices, has clearly written in the will saying those who misused and grabbed the land will be subject to religious punishment.

Remembering this decree, land tenants used to pay their share to the temple authorities. Following the 1990 changes, people have started to defy the edict. With the upsurge of Maoist movement following 1996, Maoists launched a hate campaign under the guidance of Maoist leaders. After the declaration of Nepal as a Federal, Republican and Secular state, the temple's annual revenues started to decline.

Now the temple with such a huge property is facing financial difficulties. This is not the only case. Thrived on populist slogans, fringe communist parties, including the current Nepal Communist Party, have promised to bring the act to end Guthi.

Swargadwari is not alone in the list, Pashupatinath Temple, Janaki Temple, Gorakhnath Temple and hundreds of temples in Kathmandu are facing financial crunch due to transfer of Guthi land to tenants. With its aim to grab the lucrative Guthi land, the government led by Nepal Communist Party has presented a new Guthi Bill and is pressing to pass the bill at any cost.

Alarmed by the clauses and provisions of the Bill, experts, trustees and stakeholders have launched a campaign demanding withdrawal of the Guthi Bill. At a function organized by Guthi Puch, experts also have

decided to take this issue at broader levels.

This bill shows how politicians are eyeing the revenue and land of the Guthi. The aim of the bill is to remove local trustees and give them opportunities to misuse the land.

"Once the government removes local trustees, it might give them opportunities to misuse the assets of temples," said Deepak Gyawali, academican of NAST and Former Minister of Water Resources. He is also a member of Guthi Pucha.

During the interaction, the groups called for withdrawal of the Guthi Bill registered in the National Assembly. They argued that the new bill will turn Guthis into a playground of political leaders, bureaucrats and influential people to recruit the people they desire.

Raj Guthi, public guthi, are responsible to organize almost all festivals and cultural programs in Kathmandu. Managed

on cultural preservation.

According to a study, there are 2,335 public guthis in Nepal under Guthi Sansthan, the umbrella body which currently oversees all the guthis. The trustees of these guthis are locals who have been managing the trusts for centuries.

Currently Guthi Sansthan has been providing financial support to these trustees to operate temples, Satals, Pati, Pauwas (rest houses) and stone spouts; make daily offerings at temples; organise religious jatras and perform pujas.

"The Guthi Sansthan currently owns 1.45 million ropanis of land (737.673 million square metres) across the country. It generates revenue by leasing vacant land to individuals and businesspersons. Guthi Sanstha has also built business complexes on its own. It generates revenue of around Rs 500 to Rs 520 million per year from its

properties," reports The Himalayan Times.

According to experts, the bill has also proposed to bring all private guthis under the proposed Guthi Authority. There are an estimated 2,600 private guthis in the country. Once the bill is passed, the private guthis

cannot use their trusts as per their own regulations, but will have to work as per the rules of the authority.

According to report, under the proposed law, ownership of land under Guthi Sansthan can be transferred to individuals by filing applications. Land ownership certificates will then be provided by the Land Revenue Office, the bill states.

Member of National Assembly Radhe Shayam Adhikari had already opposed the bill in National Assembly. Under his initiative, Nepali Congress members have already registered an amendment proposal in the parliament.



by local communities, they have been organizing festivals and overseeing religious works in their localities.

But if the proposed Guthi Bill, registered in the Parliament two weeks ago, is signed into law, the proposed Guthi Authority will remove all the locals appointed as trustees.

"This will enable bureaucrats and influential people to recruit people, who have very little knowledge of local culture and traditions, to operate the guthis. This will uproot our culture and tradition," said Kedar Bhakta Mathema, chairperson of Guthi Pucha, a non-profit guthi that works

PPA: Take It Or Not

The decision of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to stop take or pay Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA) for hydropower projects has sparked a row

As Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Barshaman Pun is luring the national and international investors to invest in the energy sector by showing the government's readiness to purchase power because of its huge market in Nepal, the Nepal Electricity Authority has stopped the take or pay PPA.

NEA claims that the limit set for the take or pay PPA for Run of the River (RoR) projects is over. However, investors are saying that without take or pay PPA, financial closure is impossible for all the hydropower projects as banks don't finance that type of projects.

According to the NEA, the government has fixed the target to produce 15000 MW within 10 years and the RoR ratio is only 35 percent of the total or only 5250 MW. The limitation for PPA has already reached.

NEA signed the last PPA with Kalika Construction Company for developing Upper Daraudi project of 8.3 MW capacity but limitation of RoR, only 5.442 MW is in take or pay and 2.858 MW is in take and pay .

Prabal Adhikari, spokesperson of NEA, said that after finishing of RoR projects in take or pay PPA limitation decided by NEA board committee, NEA is going to PPA in take and pay.

"The government has taken the aim of producing 15,000 MW in 10 years and kept the RoR limit of 35 percent of projects and according to the decision taken by the Authority, it will now be take and pay PPA," he said.

According to NEA, despite crossing the limitation of RoR, peaking RoR has enough place for take or pay PPA. Some 30 percent of total or 45 hundred MW has limitation but only 910 MW has done PPA and 7 projects with 1090 MW are in PPA pipeline.

Here some 2500 MW space is there for take or pay PPA. Similarly, 35 percent of total of 5250 MW for storage project but only 140 MW has been PPA. In the storage projects, there is a possibility of take or pay PPA at large capacity but most projects are RoR.

According to the NEA, 133 RoR projects with 4167 MW are in PPA pipeline. Private developers have been telling that the banks don't invest in take and pay PPA and projects cannot manage money without financial closure. For project construction, there are no limitations in PPA and government withdraws these types of restriction. "Energy minister, secretary and managing director of NEA have been always telling about take and pay, they assured us but in reality, they are telling one thing and doing another thing," said Shailendra Guragain, chairman of the Independent Power Producers Nepal (IPPAN)- "10% of energy is not purchased with condition of NEA now



BY BHIM GAUTAM

and take and pay PPA brings other conditions of NEA, it shows that the authority does not want to purchase electricity. This is the major obstacle for hydropower development."

He argued that without take or pay PPA, there will be no hydropower projects and without hydropower projects, the government's dream of economic prosperity, including the promotion of less developed country to developing status is impossible and it will fail. "Instead, the government has to create other mechanisms for purchasing of

all produced power and to sell to national and international markets, and without doing so, economic prosperity through hydropower will become meaningless."

According to the Department of Electricity (DoED), most license holders of hydropower projects are RoR. So if the government doesn't open the take or pay PPA, it creates huge problems in hydropower sectors. The Energy Ministry has said that the government is searching for an alternative way for purchasing all power and discussion has been already started. "The Ministry has begun to end restriction of electricity procurement and reason of fulfilling of limitation take or pay PPA, blocking of electricity purchasing is impossible," said spokesperson and joint secretary of Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Pravin Raj Aryal. "There have been many opportunities including electricity trade in neighbouring countries, it should increase the limit, now we are at the discussion phase and we will solve these problems soon."

Three years ago, the government announced the national energy action plan for developing hydropower with the target of 10 thousand MW within 10 years. The action plan declared the ratio of RoR, PProR and storage projects. Limitation of RoR was 30%, but the limitation has crossed. After that the private sector demanded an end to the limitation. Again one year ago, energy minister Pun announced the energy production plan of 15,000 MW in the next 10 years. There was also the limitation of PPA of RoR projects.

The latest five-year plan of the National Planning Commission has declared that 40 thousand MW power will be produced within 25 years as hydropower is the key driver for economic growth of Nepal. Nepal had already signed power trade agreement (PTA) with India and Bangladesh has proposed to Nepal for purchasing 9 thousand MW within 20 years. The energy minister is also telling the national and international investors and others for investing in the hydropower projects in most of his meetings with them but in reality, there have been restrictions in take or pay PPA.

PRABHAKAR SUMSER RANA

Death Of A Legend

The death of renowned industrialist Prabhakar Sumsher Rana ends a history of over eighty-four years

BY KESHAB POUDEL

Having contributed enormously to establish hotels and tourism industry in Nepal, late Prabhakar Sumsher Rana, son of Nara Sumsher and grand son of Rana Prime Minister Juddha Sumsher, was a man of simplicity.

An eye-witness of Nepal's all political, economic and social upheavals, Rana was a person who was with events and had the knowledge of Nepalese history, which was unwritten.

Although his dream to publish his own autobiography could not materialize, he has written a book, *The Ranas of Nepal*, the coffee table tome published by Timeless Books, unravelling the mysteries associated with the 104 years (1850-1954), as a co-author with Pashupati Sumsher Rana and Gautam Sumsher Rana.

Growing up in a closed society under the rule of Prime Minister and his own grandfather Juddha Sumsher Rana, late Prabhakar was part of all the political upheavals and transformations.

Apart from promoting hotel and tourism industry in Nepal, late Rana was also a great admirer of Nepalese heritage, culture and nature. Founding president of Nepal Heritage Foundation, he also served King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation.

In the business sector, late Rana promoted many ventures. After the cancellation of Arun III, Nepal was facing a severe crisis in the energy sector. With the initiative of late Rana, an American Company Panda Energy invested 37 MW Bhotekosi Hydropower project as a joint venture with Soaltee Group. It was a great achievement of Nepal's private sector. As a founder of Himal International Power Corporation Ltd, he continued to support private sector's involvement in hydropower.

As his father late Nara Sumsher Rana, who was pioneer to introduce and establish sports in Nepal including football, Prabhakar Rana had also interest in Golf. Whether in the time of political hype or normal period, late

Rana avoided to work in front. Along with his son Siddhartha Rana, late Prabhakar has donated a lot of money for humanitarian and social institutions, including orphanages and for heritage conservation and preservation works. However, late Rana rarely has made any effort to publicize them.

Just a month before leaving for his treatment in New York, late Rana mentioned that he was on the final stage to complete an auto-biography. Sober and perfect gentlemen, Rana, a staunch patriot, always worked in low profile. He was never exposed in public and never hurt anyone in his dealings with others.

One of the propensities of people in the Nepalese society is to vulgarize and finish individuals in terms of their personality traits. Rana always walked in the tight rope. He rarely interacted with the media.



Pioneer of hotel and tourism industry in Nepal, Prabhakar Sumsher Rana died at the age of 84 at Rehabilitation Center in New York. Founding chairman of Soaltee Hotel, the first international hotel in Nepal and Chairman Emeritus, Rana had been admitted to hospital since last one year for medical treatment.

A pioneer industrialist and entrepreneur in the tourism, hydropower and automobiles sector, he is also the Chairman, Surya Enterprises Private Limited. Rana was educated in India, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts (First Class with Honours) from the esteemed Patna University.

He is a Trustee of American Himalayan Foundation and a Global Member of International Council of the Asia Society, New York. In recognition of his exceptional leadership and vision, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) honoured Rana with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013.

He died in presence of his son Siddhartha Rana, daughter-in-law Nilima and daughter Maya.

Rana was affiliated with various international organizations. Along with receiving many national medals, he was also decorated by a British medal. He was life member of PATA and Emeritus President of Hotel Association Nepal.

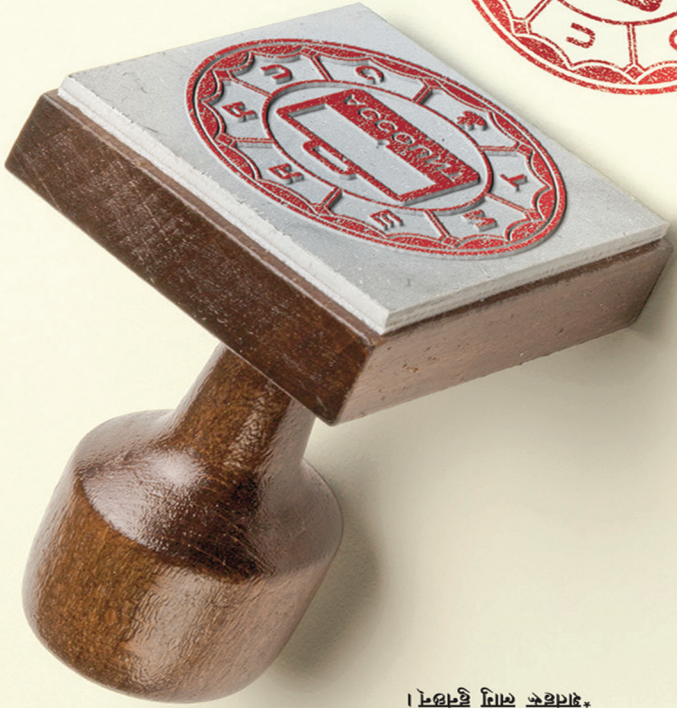
He was also a founding member of many successful ventures like Surya Enterprises, Himalaya Godrik, Surya Tobacco, Himal International Power Corporation Ltd and Siprodi Trading Company. He was also founding president of Heritage Society of Nepal. His last cremation was to be performed in New York and remaining rites in Nepal.

At a time when countries around the world including South Asia have been making economic progress with stable political order, Rana always expressed his concern on growing political anarchy, disorder and indiscipline in Nepal. As himself an industrialists facing different challenges of disorder, he always believed there need to have rule of law, orderly and disciplined society for economic prosperity of Nepalese people.

Having connection with high connection people, diplomats and adequate information, Rana was always concerned about the future of economy and identity of Nepal.

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*Experience Trekking,
Experience Nepal....*

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Trekking in Everest Region