



VIEWPOINT
Dr. Tilak Rawal



ENVIRONMENT
Batu Uprety



ARTICLE
Parmita Shrestha

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PRACHANDA'S VISIT TO INDIA

'Incredible Success'

INSIDE



NEPAL FOREIGN SERVICE DAY
REMEMBERING CONTRIBUTIONS



BUDGET 2080 / 81
A DOCUMENT OF RITUAL



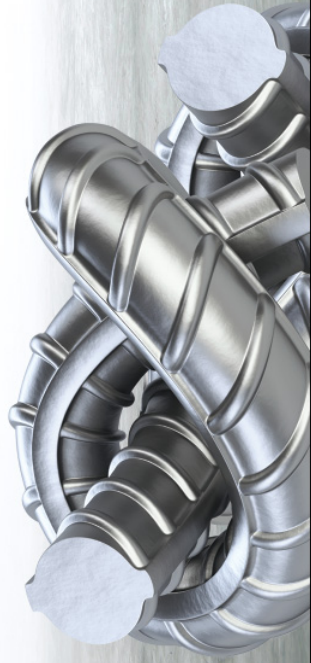
INTERVIEW
PASHUPATI SUMSHER RANA



हिमाल स्टील
DUCTYL500D

**मिचिषो जति,
बलिषो त्यति**

**बढी
हिमालले सुरक्षित घर बनाउँछ।**



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The relationship between India and Nepal has entered a new stage. Nepal-India ties have entered a time of increased confidence and trust as a result of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's private meeting. The relationship between Nepal and India is changing after the completion visit to India and the signing of seven agreements. The Power Trade Agreement Transmit Treaty signing is one of the two most crucial aspects of the visit. With India, Nepal has long sought to establish a bilateral power accord. But the delegation led by Prachanda succeeds in obtaining the goal it has been working toward for the past three decades. Another significant event of this visit is the signing of the new transit pact. The newly modified pact allows access to further ports without relying on the traditional Kolkata ports. Nepal and India have demonstrated that they must advance together to attain economic success and higher growth in a variety of areas, including commerce and power. PM Prachanda and Modi have demonstrated that resolving the trust gap is essential to advancing bilateral ties rather than seeing one another with distrust. The visit of PM Prachanda to India will serve as this week's cover story. In addition to the budget story, this issue includes an interview with Pashupati Sumsher Rana, a seasoned politician from Nepal.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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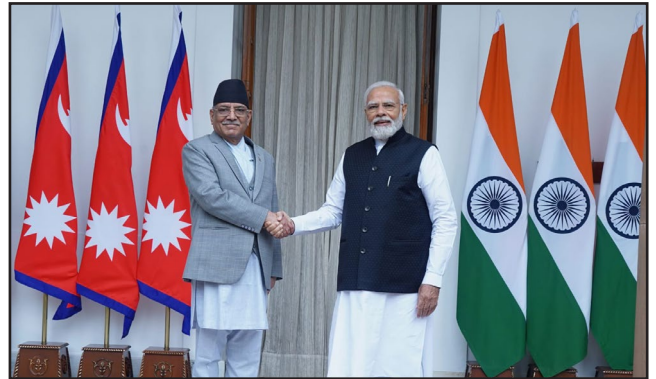
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Be-Woke



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

This term with origins with the Coffee Party US started a campaign that was supposed to encourage people to awaken their souls. I quote: ‘WOKE means awakened to the need of others. To be well informed, thoughtful, compassionate, humble and kind.

Eager to make the world a better place for all people.’ It was started in 2010, a year after one called Tea Party, a totally Republican affair. The Coffee party advocated that ‘the government is not the enemy of the people’ and wants more participation by the people of the in the political process.

Just below this post in FB was shown a picture of scantily clad, very thin and under-nourished Nepali males claimed to be queuing for ‘one mana of rice’ in 2055 BS. Some viewers doubted the authenticity of this photograph and said it was a fake. Another (me), posted that it reminded one of Nepali farmers queuing for high priced fertilisers at the time of the yearly planting of crops – a regular annual happening! This also reminded me of my childhood years when we Nepali children played what was known as Damdi biyo, literally a game when a small piece of wood, tipped at both ends was thrown in the air by one’s opponent and then one struck it by a larger stick with a hefty swing. This game is said to have been played for over 2500 years in many lands of Asia and even Europe. In ancient days this game when played in England was known as ‘Tip-cat’ or ‘Tip-pussy’ and is said to be the origin of cricket in that land and baseball in the USA! The word for this game, played also in rural Bengal in former days was known a Gilli danda and as Vitti Dandu or Kitti Pulu in other parts of India.

As many of us in Nepal are avid FB followers, I too saw a post during third week Jan. titled ‘Men un-woke’, courtesy Fox News that went on to say. “We are being governed by some of the most smug, sanctimonious and proudly ignorant people on the planet. In turn, they are governed by what they lap up from the fountain of sewage.” This sums up the current situation here, but what to do?

This brought back to my mind some visions of three decades ago when we saw painted on many walls and buildings of Kathmandu the word ‘Thaha’ said to have been the handiwork of one Rupchandra Bista, a member of Rastriya Panchayat. This was taken by many of the capital’s denizens to be their right to know what was going around after all. In course of time this campaign disappeared like a ‘seven days wonder’! Its follow up seems to be the ‘Khoj’ campaign but this too has not unearthed the shady doings of our politicians! Poor us, who are all suffering now without a whimper from our lips.

My thoughts then drifted to the 1989 Dalit andolan in India at the time of Indian PM VP. Singh when the OBCs were fighting for their rights and a student immolated himself in the street. Recently Prem P Acharya repeated such an inci-

dent in front of our current parliament to try to draw the attention of the public to injustices prevalent in Nepal towards which authorities are turning a blind eye!

Returning back to the title of this item, we in Nepal ought to ‘Be Woke’ too like the Democrats of the US to the needs of the people i.e. informed, thoughtful, compassionate, humble and kind in our own ways too. Unlike the Tea & Coffee Parties we ought to have a Makai and a Bhatmas one instead! Traditional agricultural wisdom in Nepal was to plant both makai and bhatmas in the same plot and subsequently to roast both and eat them together! By doing this the bad side effects on just existing on maize did not occur. It may be recalled that the Niacin deficiency disease Pellagra was endemic in Southern US for almost four decades of early 20th Century as the poor existed on maize alone!

The time has come for our new or rejuvenated parties in our House of Representatives to cater for the common Nepalis and look after their interests. During our last election campaign there was a lot of support and enthusiasm for the new parties with slogans such as ‘No Not Again’ or No Never Again’ being bandied about in the social media. The success of the new parties reminded of a ditty I heard a long time ago that went:

“With rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,
She shall have music where-ever she goes.”

A number of new faces of both genders have been elected but the atmosphere seems to very stagnant. Is the enthusiasm for the new comers already evaporating? Some gentler sexes seem disconcerted and angry at being referred to as ‘Cheli’! Some their compatriots do not think that ‘Cheli Beti’ is derogatory. Is the enthusiasm for the newcomers dissipating as they realise that they do not have the numbers to make real changes and that all that they saw whilst in the wilderness was just a mirage! Have the bell ringers been silenced after just three fortnights in power? Is it all Back to Mangalman and a state of reality come into force? Have are neo-rulers of Nepal already realised that they are not in a position to do much for the common Nepali? As they look around, do they feel that as the author Erich Fromm has said, “The successful revolutionary is a statesman; the unsuccessful one is a criminal.” Has this all come to pass in Nepal to make us an experienced nation? After all as Oscar Wilde has said, “Experience is the hardest kind of teacher. It gives you the test first and the lesson afterwards.”

Like the gilli or the biyo in the Nepali context the Nepali population is being thrashed with the ever huge rising costs of daily living. Can I say to my country nationals, ‘Awaken Your Souls – BE WOKE’?

The author is a retired medical doctor and writes fiction under the pen name of Mani Dixit also. Website: www.hdixit.org.np. Twitter: @manidixithd

NEWSNOTES

Italian Embassy Hosted A Reception To Celebrate Italian National Day In Kathmandu

Ambassador of Italy to Nepal Vincenzo de Luca



hosted a reception in Kathmandu on the occasion of Italy's National Day, Festa della Repubblica. Vice-President Ram Sahaya Prasad Yadav was the chief guest.

Attended by large number of people from different walks of life including Members of parliament, senior political leaders, high level government officials, ambassadors based in Kathmandu, businessmen, Honorary Consul Generals and Consuls, members of the Italian community living in Nepal. The reception brought together distinguished personalities from various sectors.

In her opening statement, Pratima Pande, the honorary consul of Italy in Nepal, expressed said that Nepal and Italy have a relationship which dates back over sixty-four years. Italian Ambassador Vincenzo De Luca and Charge de' Affairs of the European Union, Dr Joëlle Hivonnet, also address the program.

Romeo Orlandi, the special envoy of Expo Roma 2030, spoke about the upcoming Expo Roma 2030 and its potential to foster cultural exchange and economic growth. The reception concluded with a cultural program, showcasing the spirit of both Italy and Nepal.

Japan Extends Technical Cooperation Programs To Train Nepali Government Specialists For The Future Of Nepal

The Embassy of Japan in Nepal and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal has agreed to extend the Technical Cooperation Programs for Fiscal Year 2023.



The Technical Cooperation Programs, which have been extended to Nepal annually since 2003, support Nepali government officials to obtain Japan's knowledge,

technology and experience by providing them with training opportunities in Japan and by sending Japanese advisors to the Nepali government for Nepal's socio-economic development.

The Technical Cooperation Programs for FY 2023 will be implemented by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in various fields: namely, more than 50 training courses for medical/health care, governance, private sector development, water supply management, road maintenance, agriculture, education, disaster prevention, climate change, urban transportation and airport development. In addition, six experts will be sent to serve as advisors to Nepali government organizations.

The Programs will be beneficial for the further development of the Nepali society and the prosperity of the Nepali people. The Programs include projects to promote irrigated agriculture, to strengthen resilience to natural disasters, to conduct forest management that is adapted to the climate change, and so on.

In addition, two other programs will be launched; "The Project for the Improvement of Basic School Education" and "The Project for Capacity Building for Countermeasures against Disaster and Landslide on Major Highways". We believe that the Technical Cooperation Programs implemented by the Government of Japan will assist the human resource development of the Government of Nepal for a brighter future and the socio-economic development. We hope that they will further contribute to building stronger bilateral relations between Nepal and Japan.

International Sagamatha (Mt. Everest Day) Celebrated

A rally has been organized in Kathmandu on the occasion of the 16th International Sagarmatha (Mt Everest) Day.



Organized by various governmental and non-governmental organizations relating to tourism, the march went through various areas of Kathmandu including Thamel before concluding at the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) at Bhrikutimandap.

The rally was attended by people from various walks of life including Minister of State for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Sushila Sirpali Thakuri, the ministry secretary Suresh Adhikari, the NTB chief executive officer Dr Dhananjaya Regmi, and chairs and representatives of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, the Trekking Agen-

cies' Association of Nepal, the Hotel Association of Nepal, the Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents and the Thamel Tourism Development Council.

The Day is observed every year to celebrate the first successful ascent of the tallest peak of the world by Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Sir Edmund Hillary on 29 May, 1953.

Fonepay and LankaPay Sign MoU for cross border payment system

The collaboration will allow users of either network's applications to make payments across merchants of these two networks in either country.



Fonepay, Nepal's largest payment network, has announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sri Lanka's National Payment Network: LankaPay, to collaborate on the strategic

partnership to revolutionize the digital payment landscape by developing an interoperable digital payment system that enables users to transact seamlessly across the two countries.

The collaboration will allow users of either network's applications to make payments across merchants of these two networks in either country in an affordable and convenient manner, reads the press release issued by the company.

Swisscontact Supports To Strengthen The Capacity Of Start-up And SMEs: CEO Dr. Philippe Schneuwly

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Swiss Contact Dr. Philippe Schneuwly said that Swisscontact promote start-up and facilitate process to support and strengthen the capacity of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

In a panel discussion program on "SMEs and Sustainable Economic Growth organized by Swisscontact, a Swiss INGO, he gave an overview of how development sectors work and particularly how Swisscontact contributes.

He has stated, "we work with the private sector to resolve development challenges in a sustainable manner. We promote start-ups and facilitate processes to support and strengthen the capacity of ecosystem actors to enable them to provide better services."

The objective of the panel discussion was to share insights into the state of Small and Medium Enterprises

(SMEs) in Nepal and their contribution to the economy and foster dialogue and synergies in achieving sustainable economic development by catalyzing SME growth in Nepal.

The panel included Surakchya Adhikari, COO of Thulo Inc Pvt. Ltd.; Manoj Paudel, Founder of Adhyanta; Rewati Gurung, Founder of Kokroma, Princi Koirala, Technology Entrepreneur, and Dr. Philippe Schneuwly, CEO of Swisscontact. The panel was moderated by Chewan Rai, Chair Che&Co Pvt. Ltd.

Sharing her experiences, on the power of technology and the requirement of skilled human resources to enable SME growth, Adhikari stated, "A comprehensive approach to digitization is crucial to enhance the efficiency of business processes, thereby fostering the long-term viability of SMEs." She further emphasized, "The need to consider the informal economy, as it significantly contributes to Nepal's Gross Domestic Product, in pursuit of the objective to uplift the SME sector."

To this, Koirala added, "there is also the need to invest in research and development with documentation of homegrown business case studies – a must to bridge the gap between education and experience."

SMEs are a vital component of Nepal's economy. There are opportunities for the SME sector to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Highlighting more on the role of SMEs in inclusive development and the utility of knowledge exchange for growing SMEs, Gurung shared that "Adaptability and collaboration with other stakeholders are key when running a business. The pursuit



of any lifestyle by a woman, fueled by her hard-earned money, becomes a powerful act of empowerment, regardless of its nature."

Access to capital is one of the key enablers for SME growth. Paudel opined, "The significance of fostering an enabling ecosystem for angel investors, venture capitalists, and impact investors to support SMEs' development cannot be overstated. While the growing interest from domestic and international investors is promising, further ef-

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forts are needed to streamline investment procedures and offer guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs.”

The panelists spoke in unison when they shared their success stories and acknowledged the support from the development partners being instrumental in creating a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem.

After the discussion, moderator Chewan Rai opened the floor for the audience to engage with the panel members. Rai summated the discussion by emphasizing the need to host such events because it presents pragmatic optimism for entrepreneurs and gives inspiration and power to SMEs to navigate their growth. T

The challenges presented by the panel members, among other things, necessitate policy reforms and strengthening of the entrepreneurial ecosystem for the creation of a more conducive business environment for anyone who wants to start a business in Nepal.

Despite the growing number of SMEs, their capabilities and business conditions haven't improved in line. Constraints like inadequate infrastructure, capital access, and skilled resources hinder growth. Many SMEs can't scale and may close, particularly during shocks like Covid-19 or economic downturns.

Swisscontact is a leading partner organization for the implementation of international development projects. The organization promotes inclusive economic, social, and ecological development to make an effective contribution toward sustainable and widespread prosperity in developing and emerging economies. The independent, non-profit, and private foundation was established in 1959 in Switzerland.

Swisscontact registered as an International Non-Governmental Organization in Nepal, has been operating in Nepal since 1991. Currently, Swisscontact Nepal has six development programs across all seven provinces, with a well-functioning country office that employs over 120 staff members.

US Visa Application Fees Hiked

Application fees for the US visas have increased with effect from June 17.



According to the US Embassy in Nepal, the application fee for visit visas and other non-immigrant visas, which is based on non-petition, will be increased from \$160

to \$185. Petition-based visa fees will increase from \$190 to \$205.

According to the Embassy, e-visa application fees will increase from \$205 to \$315. Officials at the Embassy also said that the visa fees are determined based on the results of the annual study on the cost of services.

Mountain Clean-up Campaign 2023 Collects Over 34,166 Kgs of Waste in Just 45 Days

The Mountain Clean-up Campaign 2023, led and coordinated by the Nepali Army has successfully concluded the halfway mark of waste collection from four mountains including Mt. Everest, Mt. Lhotse, Mt. Annapurna, and



Mt. Baruntse. The noble cause has seen the collaboration of several organizations, with The Coca-Cola Foundation as the major donor partner for the campaign. This is one of the largest mountain cleanup programs in the world, the campaign commenced on 28th March and will close on 5th June.

Every year, hundreds of climbers, Sherpas, and high-altitude porters make their way to Everest, leaving behind tons of both biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste along the way to the highest peaks, leading to a challenging waste management problem in the mountains.

The campaign team comprises a total of 97 dedicated members which includes Nepali Army personnel and Sherpa supporters. The team had to endure extremely harsh weather conditions which slowed the clean-up efforts and so far, has collected 34,166Kgs of waste from the four mountains.

The waste retrieved from the mountains comprises empty oxygen canisters, abandoned tents, food containers, plastics, glass, aluminum, and electronic gadget waste among others. The campaign team continues to complete the campaign with the aim of collecting 35,000 Kgs of waste from the mountains this year.

Speaking on the ongoing Clean-up campaign, the Campaign Director, Brigadier General Sundar Kumar

Pandey of the Mountain Clean-up Campaign 2023 shared, “The Mountain Clean-up Campaign with a noble cause to preserve the sanctity of the Himalayas. Compared to past years this year we experienced harsher weather conditions during the campaign which led to a number of team members falling behind due to health issues. This also resulted in more evacuations for the safety of the team members. Despite the challenging weather and high-risk situations, the sheer dedication of the team has kept us moving forward towards our goal. The experts and Nepali Army teamed up with the Sherpas, medical officers, rescue operators, high altitude porters as well as local communities who enabled us to collect and bring back the waste not just from the usual route and camps but from all the areas that accumulated waste.”

The Mountain Clean-up Campaign is an initiative led by the Nepali Army and various stakeholders, aimed at protecting the environment of the Himalayas and minimizing the effects of climate change. The campaign is currently in its fourth series, and The Coca-Cola Foundation has been a major donor partner for four consecutive years.

This year, the campaign’s theme is “An endeavor to save the Himalayas,” reflecting the collective responsibility of all stakeholders to protect the mountains’ delicate ecosystem. The teams are working in close coordination with local government bodies, stakeholders, and partners to ensure the effective and efficient collection of waste from the targeted four mountains.

Speaking on the ongoing Clean-up Campaign, Anand Mishra, founder and President of Creasion and one of the key partners of Cleaning Campaign shared, “Mountain waste poses a significant challenge in Nepal, greatly diminishing the splendor and significance of our majestic peaks.

Nepalese Peacekeepers Honoured Posthumously At UN Headquarters Ceremony

Two Nepali peacekeepers were awarded the Dag Hammarskjöld medal posthumously for their service to the United Nations (UN) missions. Private Anil Gurung and Sergeant Pashupati Karki were bestowed with the award during a ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of UN Peacekeeping on Thursday.

UN Headquarters observed the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers and marked the 75th anniversary of UN Peacekeeping on Thursday, 25 May.

In 1948, the historic decision was made to deploy military observers to the Middle East to supervise the implementation of Israel-Arab Armistice Agreements, in what became the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization.

Since that time, more than two million peacekeepers from 125 countries have since served in 71 operations around the world. Today, 87,000 women and men are serv-

ing in 12 conflict zones across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Nepal is currently the 2nd largest contributor to UN peace operations with more than 6,200 military and police personnel serving in Abyei, the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Lebanon, Mali, the Middle East, Sudan, South Sudan, the Western Sahara, and Yemen.

During formal ceremonies at United Nations Headquarters, Secretary-General, António Guterres, laid a wreath to honour more than 4,200 UN peacekeepers who have lost their lives since 1948. He also presided over a ceremony in the General Assembly Hall at which Dag Hammarskjöld Medals will be awarded posthumously to 103 military, police, and civilian peacekeepers, who lost their lives serving under the UN flag last year.

Among the peacekeepers who were honoured posthumously with the Dag Hammarskjöld medal two were from Nepal: Private Anil GURUNG who served with the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); and SGT Pashupati KARKI who served with the UN Mission in South Sudan



(UNMISS).

The Secretary-General also presented the 2022 Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award to Captain Cecilia Erzuah, a military officer from Ghana who served with the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

Created in 2016, the Award “recognizes the dedication and effort of an individual peacekeeper in promoting the principles of UN Security Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security”.

Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, said: “Peacekeeping is a powerful example of how strong partnerships and collective political will can result in meaningful change.

The International Day of UN Peacekeepers was established by the UN General Assembly in 2002, to pay tribute to all men and women serving in peacekeeping, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

BUSINESS BRIEF

World Bank Provides \$120 Million Concessional Loan To Nepal

Government of Nepal and the World Bank Sign \$120 Million Concessional Loan Financing Agreement and \$19.7 Million Grant Agreement to Strengthen Nepal's School Sector

The Government of Nepal and the World Bank today



signed a financing agreement for \$120 million concessional loan from the International Development Association and a grant agreement for \$19.7 million from the

Global Partnership for Education for the School Sector Transformation Program (SSTP) Operation, which support the implementation of the government's flagship School Education Sector Plan.

The agreement was signed by Arjun Prasad Pokharel, Finance Secretary, and Faris Hadad-Zervos, the World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

The operation focuses on improving foundational skills by implementing the national integrated curriculum in early grades. The operation supports the government's program through the development and implementation of the Recovery and Accelerated Learning Plan to address learning losses as a result of school closures due to COVID-19 and other disasters, strengthening teaching and learning in the classrooms, construction of green and resilient classrooms, ensuring minimum enabling conditions such as qualified teacher, child-friendly taps and seating, and toilets in the early childhood education development centers, and strengthening digital teaching and learning materials, among others. The operation also envisions improving the equity of the school sector by supporting girls, disabled students, and those of lower socio-economic status, through targeted scholarships programs.

"I am hopeful that the reform agenda envisioned in the School Sector Transformation Program will be instrumental in increasing equitable access and improving the quality of education, which are critical for human capital development," said Arjun Prasad Pokharel, Finance Secretary.

"The School Sector Transformation Program operation supports the Government of Nepal's Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) agenda by investing in quality and equitable access to education, which is key to developing human capital and fostering inclusive and resilient growth," said Faris Hadad-Zervos, World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

Consumption Of Per Person Electricity Will Be Increased To 450 kilowatt Hours

Minister of Finance Dr. Finance Minister said that the amount of imported fuel will be significantly reduced and electricity consumption per person will be increased to 450 kilowatt hours.

According to him, within a year 900 megawatts of electricity will be added to the national transmission. He the government will make necessary arrangement to reach 100% of the population within the next two years.

He said that after the completion of 111 MW Rasuwagadhi, 102 MW Central Bhotekoshi, 42.5 MW Sengen and hydroelectric and solar projects promoted by the Nepal Electricity Authority, about 900 MW electricity will be added to the national transmission system in the next financial year.

By the end of the next fiscal year, the total electricity production will reach 3,600 megawatts. According to him, the construction work of West Seti Hydropower Project, Seti River 6, Lower Arun and other hydropower projects, which are of strategic importance, will be progressed after signing the project development agreement.

He said that in order to meet the electricity demand of dry yam and to export hydroelectricity, the construction work of 1,200 megawatt capacity Budhigandaki and 635 megawatt capacity Dudhkoshi reservoir hydropower project will be decided and the construction work will be carried out.

Union, state and local level co-investment of Upper Arun with a capacity of 1061 MW, Chainpur Seti with a capacity of 210 MW, Jagdulla with a capacity of 106 MW, Tamakoshi Fifth with a capacity of 99.9 MW, Simbua River with a capacity of 70.3 MW and Ghunsa River with a capacity of 77.5 MW He said that the construction will be started.

Last year, the government allocated 75 billion 100 million rupees for the development of the energy sector.

This year, 87 billion 45 million rupees have been allocated.

This year, the budget has been increased by 12.35 billion rupees for the development of the energy sector. As the budget was given only

to the projects that were completed, the budget of the energy sector also decreased

The government has allocated a budget of 87 billion 45 million rupees to the Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and Energy for the development of the energy sector. The budget is 21 billion rupees less than the current year.

Finance Minister Dr. Mahat informed that the budget of the Ministry of Development such as physical infrastructure and energy has been cut after managing the budget only for the



strategic projects that will be completed.

For the current year, a budget of 75 billion 10 million rupees was allocated for energy. Similarly, 33 billion 500 million rupees were allocated towards water resources and irrigation.

41 Year Old Transmission Line Faced Obstacle In Up gradation From Local People

Although the transmission line was built about 41 years ago, locals have obstructed the upgradation of the transmission line by demanding that the route of the transmission line should be shifted.



Residents of Sukouli area located in Makwanpur’s Hetaunda sub-metropolitan city-15 have obstructed the upgrading (wire replacement) of 132 KV double circuit transmission line.

When the transmission line was constructed about 41 years ago, the affected land was not compensated and now the locals have obstructed the work of changing the conductor of the line by demanding that the route of the transmission line be shifted. The work has been stopped since the first week of last Baisakh due to the obstruction of the locals.

In order to increase the capacity of the East-West 132 kV double circuit transmission line, the Nepal Electricity Authority is going to replace the low capacity old wire with new high capacity wire in the 136 km section from Hetaunda to Dhalkebar substation in Dhanusha. Currently, about 200 megawatts of electricity is flowing through the transmission line, after changing the conductor, the capacity will increase to about 400 megawatts.

According to the authority, this will improve the electricity supply in that region, the electricity produced in the western region can be flowed to the east and the excess electricity consumed in the country can be exported to India through the Dhalkebar substation.

Out of the 9.57 km transmission line from the substation at Chowkitol in Hetaunda sub-metropolis to Kamane, 7.5 km wire of one circuit has been replaced. During the replacement of wires in the Hetaunda-Kamane section, the old wire connected to the tower has been cut and temporarily tied. The authority said that the rest of the work was stopped due to the obstruction of the locals.

The authority claims that the demand for electricity has increased in the Terai region, but because one circuit was closed to replace the conductor, now there are problems such as tripping due to the line capacity not being met, and the management of electricity demand is difficult.

A high-level team including Executive Director of the Authority Kulman Ghising and Deputy Executive Direc-

tor of Project Management Directorate Tara Prasad Pradhan visited the construction site and discussed with the locals and requested them not to obstruct the work of the line which is the backbone for the east-west electricity flow.

In the discussion, Sunil Moktan, Ward President of Ward No. 15, said that when the line was built about 41 years ago, he did not get compensation and compensation, and that the house could not be built because of the line, the demand was from the locals.

Mentioning that the legitimate demands raised by the locals will be addressed gradually, Executive Director Ghising said that it is impossible to move the line built about 41 years ago now. “There is a problem in the construction of transmission lines all over the country, if the route of the under-construction line cannot be moved, it is not possible to move the completed line,” said Ghising.

He said that if this line could not be upgraded, the Marsyangdi River Corridor projects would not be able to supply electricity and it would cause the state to lose crores of rupees daily.

He assured that there are discussions at the top level to deal with issues such as the right of way of the transmission line and the right to mortgage in the bank, and the local social demands will be addressed.

The contract agreement for conductor upgrade of 132 KV transmission line was implemented on July 4, 2019. The goal is to complete the work by December 2021.

Lumbini Cable Car From Butwal To Vasantpur Launched

The Lumbini cable car, built with the investment of IME Group, has been operational since Monday. The cable car with 25 gondolas (passenger carriages) of monocable detachable system has the capacity to transport 6000 passengers daily.

The lower station is 230 meters above sea level and the upper station is 940 meters above sea level. From the lower station one can reach the upper station within a 10 minute journey. It is believed that the attraction of domestic and foreign tourists will increase after the operation of the cable car.

President Chandra Dhakal said that the operation of the cable car is expected to help Butwal, which was disappointed due to the relocation of the capital. Dhakal said that the cable car was installed targeting followers of Buddhism in India and third countries.

He said that preparations have been made for tourists to use facilities such as a hotel with 150 beds, a casino, and a meeting hall that can accommodate more than 700 people. He said that a significant number of Indian tourists are expected to be present during the summer season.



Budgets Of Nepal



BY: DR. TILAK RAWAL

Beginning of the budgeting system in Nepal can be traced back to the year 2008(1951), after the overthrow of the Rana rule in February 1951, when Suvarna Sumsher, finance minister in then coalition government, made public the first ever estimate of government's annual revenue and expenditure. The budget with an outlay of Rs.50.25 million covered the period from March 1951 to February 1952. This was a humble beginning and was based more on the knowledge and related experience of the formulators rather than authentic facts and figures. On account of instable political situation thereafter, budgets were prepared, presented and approved, following different methods on an ad hoc basis. A more comprehensive and systematic presentation of budget was done by B P Koirala-led government when deputy prime minister and minister in charge of finance Suvarna Sumsher made public the budget, reading it before the lawmakers in the first ever elected Parliament of Nepal on 13 August 1959. The budget with an outlay of Rs.249 million (Rs.24, 8958000) had set aside Rs.126 million under general expenditure head and Rs.148 million under development head. It also showed a surplus of Rs.1.84 million, after meeting general expenditure. Unlike previous budgets, which contained estimates both in Nepali and Indian rupees, this budget for fiscal year(FY)2016\17 stated budgetary figures only in national currency. It also contained ideas of visionary B P, covering different areas, and general Subarna had shown our economy a path to walk on. Unfortunately, they did not get time to work for the betterment of this country and its people as the elected parliament was dissolved on 15 December 1960 and Koirala along with many other leaders were thrown behind the bar. In the party less panchayat polite that followed, many finance ministers presented numerous budgets with promises to do this and that and the government/s were often accused of not being able to execute the budget as is the case now. Many things stated in the budget remained unfulfilled then also but not to the extent that is seen in recent years.

Data available show that government expenditure has increased phenomenally over decades under different political systems and governments. The budget presented by Suvarna Sumsher in 1959 had swollen by about five times, compared to the first ever budget he prepared in 1951. After the abolition of the party less political system and formation of an interim government headed by NC President K P Bhattari, finance minister Devendra Raj Panday made public a budget in the tune of Rs.19 billion 79 crores 17 lakhs, which was bro-

ken into two heads (general Rs.7billion 46 crores and development Rs.12billion 33crores). Situation was very fluid both politically and economically and many thought it was almost impossible to accomplish the twin task of giving a new constitution to the nation and organize parliamentary elections in the given timeline of one year. A great leader of high moral and unparalleled level of integrity Kishun jee not only made this possible but also stopped derailment of the economy, of course with the active support of honest, wise and courageous minister like Dr. Panday. Kishun jee lost the election but got NC victorious and happily saw the rise in power of G P Koirala. Then little known Mahesh Acharya, handpicked by Koirala as minister of state for finance, presented budget for FY 2048\49 with an outlay of Rs.26 billion 64 crores and 9 lakhs of which Rs.9 billion 74 crores 48 lakh was under general expenditure head and Rs.16 billion 89 crores 50 lakh came under development head.

We wish Mahat luck in arresting further deterioration in the economy at a time when growth is expected to be around 2 percent this FY, inflation is on the rise (above 7 percent), internal demand has contracted and so has industrial output, all pointing towards an impending stagflation.

Budget ballooning works of governments have continued unabated in more recent years also. Budget made public a decade ago (fiscal year 2068\69) had an outlay of Rs. 384 billion, which swelled to Rs.1793 billion in FY 2079\80, registering an increase of 367 percent. With the exception of FY 2077\78 when the government shrank the budget by Rs. 58 billion, compared to a year earlier level, no other year has seen such a reduction. Every

government wanted to make sure that the public expenditure programme they propose was larger than that of the previous year. There is no disagreement that government expenditure should increase over time but the difficult-to-digest is the fact that these increases are taking place in the face of huge amounts remaining unspent each year. In FY 2068\69, Rs. 90 billion remained unspent, which increased to Rs. 441 billion in FY 2076\77. This embarrassingly huge unspent amount may have compelled the concerned to slash expenses by Rs. 58 billion in the following FY but this remained an exception and the authorities continued to swell budgets thereafter. Despite very poor spending performance in FY 2078\79 when Rs.323 billion remained unspent, buget in the following FY increased by Rs. 161 billion. It has become clear that the concerned are interested in spreading pleasant things rather than formulating implementable schemes for the upliftment of people. More pathetic is the situation in regard to capital expenditure, a major portion of which remains unspent each year. Equally annoying is the fact that each year the approved estimates are slashed in

half yearly review of the budget. This FY also, the budget has been slashed by 14 percent.

Irrespective of the polite and personalities running the show in the country and their countless promises over these numerous decades, people have not been benefitted and it does not look like something nice for the people is in the offing. It is crystal clear that those managing state affairs are not at all interested in the wellbeing of people and their guiding mantra/principle seems to be, 'Stay in power to make money and make money to stay in power'. The fraudulent business of sending Nepali citizens abroad as fake Bhutanese refugees in which noted politicians, their family members and high ranking government officials have been implicated, is a vivid manifestation of our top peoples' greed for money. Legal cases have been filed against some but a few very influential people (men and women) have remained untouched, despite urging from different quarters that nobody involved in this heinous crime should be spared. This incident has internationally tarnished the image of Nepal. How we wish the brain used in actualizing these kinds of criminal schemes could be used in giving momentum to our ailing economy.

It is difficult to think of a year when the stated economic growth has been achieved in Nepal. This year (FY 2079\80) also the wished growth of 8 percent is not going to be achieved admits the government. Interestingly, this admission that the economy would grow by just 2.16 percent has come in the backdrop of estimates by several multilateral agencies that the economy would grow by about 4 percent in the current FY. Further, government expenditure is exceeding revenue collection by about Rs.300 billion. Of the two types of expenditures (recurrent and capital), capital expenditure has remained disappointing as usual. Nepal's total international trade has decreased and so is the case with foreign direct investment and grant. Despite contraction in international trade and some reduction in import, Nepal's trade deficit is still alarming (Rs.1204 billion in 10 months) and it is disappointing that import of agricultural products is on the rise in this agricultural country. It may be noted that import of agricultural products has doubled in the last 5 years and in FY 2078\79 Rs.341.51 billion worth of agricultural and livestock products were imported, which was Rs.284.98 billion in FY 2077\78. In the midst of these debacles, rituals of presenting policies and programmes and budgets of the government do take place annually, which of late have failed to attract attention of people.

The season of annual rituals began with newly elected President Ramachandra Paudel presenting the policies and programmes of the government at the joint meeting of both Houses for the next FY 2080\81 (2023\2024). Like previous documents, this document also has made lots of promises, which include among others, to institutionalize socialist oriented economy, effective economic reform, quality infrastructure construction and increase in production and employment.

This was followed by presentation of Economic Survey of FY 2079\80 by Finance Minister on May 28. Mahat sees a strain in resource management emanating from contraction in economic activities. Rise in the prices of fossil fuel, food grains and raw materials in the world market are also blamed for the problems at home. Disappointing return (1 percent) on government investment in public entities is also lamented.

The most important ritual of the season took place in the joint session of the House of Representatives and National Assembly on May 29 with Mahat reading the budget for the FY2080\81, taking more than three hours for recital. The budget with an outlay of Rs, 1751 billion is Rs 42billion smaller than the budget of the current FY. Recurrent expenditure commands 65 percent of the total allocation, Rs. 374 billion comes under financial management head, and Rs. 408 billion is for grant distribution at provincial and local levels.

Capital expenditure at Rs.303 billion has been slashed by Rs. 73 billion, compared to the amount (Rs 380 billion) in the on-going budget. In the face of low capital expenses now and many years in the past and ever rising social security related obligations, this reduction does not surprise observers but they would have loved to hear Mahat sounding determined to achieve the hoped growth of 6 percent, spending at least Rs.380 billion in the next FY. Worth noting is the fact that social security and pension related expenses went up by 6 times in a decade. Revival of Parliamentarians' Development

Situation was very fluid both politically and economically and many thought it was almost impossible to accomplish the twin task of giving a new constitution to the nation and organize parliamentary elections in the given timeline of one year. A great leader of high moral and unparalleled level of integrity Kishun jee not only made this possible but also stopped derailment of the economy, of course with the active support of honest, wise and courageous minister like Dr. Panday.

Fund has also invited lots of criticism.

To source expenses, Rs. 1248 billion revenue is expected and it also hopes to get foreign grants (Rs. 50 billion), external loan (Rs.213 billion) and internal borrowing will be in the tune of Rs.240 billion. Unlike the current FY in which revenue collection has been unsatisfactory (less than Rs.1000 billion expected) and flow of resources from external front has been very disappointing, let us hope adequate income flows into the coffer and different measures related to tax relief and capital requirement succeed in encouraging internal as well as external investors. Proper utilization of the allocated subsidy (Rs.30 billion) to facilitate timely import and distribution of chemical fertilizers may provide some relief to our farmers who are seen each year urging the concerned to make the input available on time. We wish Mahat luck in arresting further deterioration in the economy at a time when growth is expected to be around 2 percent this FY, inflation is on the rise (above 7 percent), internal demand has contracted and so has industrial output, all pointing towards an impending stagflation.

Dr. Rawal is a former governor of NRB

PRACHANDA'S VISIT TO INDIA 'Incredible Success'

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda has made some historic progress in signing several agreements establishing firm political level relations in New Delhi. As expected, opposition parties led by the Communist Party of Nepal UML are expressing doubt about spreading the unclear message on their home turf. The signing of a new transit treaty and the long-term power trade agreement, which allows for the export of up to 40 MW of electricity to Bangladesh, were the two biggest agreements reached during the visit. Given their similar cultures and civilizations, the leadership of Nepal and India has shown that there are areas where agreement can be reached that will benefit the people of both countries.

The kindness and friendliness of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have contributed to his visit's "astounding success," according to PM Prachanda.

By KESHAB POUDEL

As anticipated, the main opposition CPN-UML and two other parties, Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), deemed the visit a failure and prevented the House of Representatives from conducting business for two days in order to demand clarification from Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda on his statement on border disputes and other issues.

With so many significant accomplishments under his belt and promises from his Indian counterpart, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, to continue supporting Nepal, Prime Minister Prachanda answered all the opposition's queries in the House of Representatives with confidence, silencing the bench. In his presentation to the House of Representatives, PM Prachanda, supported by his coalition allies, particularly the Nepali Congress, hailed the four-day visit to India as a remarkable success.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal handled everything with ease under the direction of the chief sec-

retary of the Prime Minister's Office, veteran diplomat Shanker Das Bairagi, and with the support of Bharat Raj Paudyal and his capable staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In Parliament

Prime Minister Prachanda defended his team's performance in front of the media despite certain slip-ups brought on by poor communication. The delegation led by Prachanda signed seven crucial agreements with India as a result of the well-organized team.



“Our team has done a great job and has supported me as needed. In a meeting with India’s national security adviser, Ajit Kumar Doval, there was some confusion, claimed Prachanda.

Prachanda emphasized the foundation and renewed trust created by the electricity trade agreement, noting that it will allow Nepal, a landlocked country, to satisfy private sector expectations.

He continued by saying that Nepal’s access to the sea via Indian ports has been strengthened by the new transit agreement. Prachanda claims that the solution to the border problems is also well understood.

The already strong relations between the two countries were strengthened, as Prime Minister Prachanda made clear in his report to the House of Representatives on his visit.

I generally kept the pledges I made before traveling to India during this four-day vacation. There were several important contracts inked, which is remarkable in and of itself. Regarding the long-term power-sharing agree-

ment, we have long pushed for the provision of 10,000 MW of electricity over a 10-year period, so I’m pleased that we were able to reach an agreement during my visit. The announcement was made directly by Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi, and the agreement’s signing represents a significant turning point in our bilateral relations,” said PM Prachanda.

The CPN-UML leader K.P. Sharma Oli continued to say that the deal will assist Nepal attract significant investments in the energy sector as he asked for clarification on the power trade and border concerns. In light of this agreement, PM Dahal also highlighted the possibility for large investments in the nation’s energy industry.

A solution to the “boundary matter” was also mentioned by the prime minister of Nepal. “I spoke with Prime Minister Modi on the boundary issue. I pleaded with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to settle the boundary dispute through the existing bilateral diplomatic process, Prachanda stated.

When asked if China was brought

up, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra responded that the two sides also discussed “wider developments in the region” at the later media conference. He claimed that when it came to talking about regional trends more broadly, “it went without saying that the two Prime Ministers talked about other regional developments, what challenges they pose to our bilateral cooperation, and how precisely India and Nepal should cooperate to mitigate those challenges.”

PM Modi On Visit

Modi referred to the relationship between India and Nepal as “HIT” or Highways, I-ways, and Trans-ways in 2014. In order to make our cooperation a smashing success, we have made a number of important decisions today, Modi claimed. To increase collaboration between the two parties in a number of areas, including trade and energy, seven agreements were inked.

The two leaders essentially erected integrated checkpoints at Rupaidiha in Nepalgunj and Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh. A cargo train from



Bathnaha in Bihar to the Nepal Custom Yard was also flagged off by them.

PM Prachanda and I determined that initiatives connected to the Ramayana circuit should be hastened in order to further promote cultural and religious links, Modi stated.

The Transit Treaty was signed by the two nations. According to Modi, the agreement also covers the building of interior canals and new railways with Nepal. The two parties also agreed that Indian Railways will train Nepali railway officials.

The two parties also inked six other memoranda of understanding (MoUs) or agreements to cooperate in areas such as cross-border digital payments, hydropower, and the oil and gas industry.

Following a meeting with his Nepali counterpart Pushpa Kamal Dahal

‘Prachanda’ on Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that India and Nepal would work together to advance their bilateral relations to “Himalayan heights” and settle all disputes, including boundary disputes.

“We’ll keep trying to reach Himalayan heights in our relationship. After their bilateral talks in Delhi, Modi and Prachanda made a statement in each other’s presence promising to settle all concerns, whether they be boundary-related or not.

PM Prachanda

The Lower Arun project, which has been given to the same company as the 900 MW Arun III project, was also mentioned by PM Prachanda during the speech. Both of these projects are now under progress.

According to PM Prachanda, this deal has also made it possible for Ne-

pal to export 1,200 MW of electricity produced by the Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project to India.

PM Prachanda also asserted that he had eliminated mistrust in the two nations’ bilateral relations.

“Modi-Ji stressed the importance of relations between India and Nepal, saying that they ought to be higher than the Himalayas. When he addressed the parliament, PM Modi mentioned his visit from 2014, which opened a novel chapter in our bilateral relations. He even referred to the occasions he attended as hits. We should now endeavor to make our relationships a huge success, Prachanda advised.

After the constitution was amended to include the disputed land at the triangular intersection of Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, and Lipulekh in Nepal’s administrative territory, bilateral relations between Nepal and India reached their lowest point.

Seven Agreements

The visit was extremely beneficial for Prachanda because seven major agreements were signed between India and Nepal during this time. These agreements include the renewal of the Nepal-India Transit Agreement, the construction of oil pipelines from Amlekhganj to Chitwan and from Siliguri to Charali in Jhapa, the establishment of an integrated checkpoint at Chandni Dodhara, the 669 MW Lower Arun project with an Indian company, the agreement to be made by Fukot Karnali Indian Company, and the agreement between Nepal and India to conduct financial transactions.



Transit Trade Treaty

The transit treaty, which was inked in New Delhi and has guaranteed additional benefits for Nepal for more than 20 years, was one of the major agreements reached during the visit. Therefore, it shouldn't be considered a minor agreement.

The promotion of agricultural products and the ease of customs were also issues of emphasis during the discussions, along with the trade imbalance and smooth cross-border trade.

According to Prachanda, "My visit will contribute to fostering a climate of trust between the two nations."

The Nepal-India Transit Treaty of 1999, which has been updated, is regarded as being crucial for facilitating Nepal's international trade.

In the presence of Prime Ministers Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda and Narendra Modi, Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Supply Madhu Kumar Marasini and Ambassador of India to Nepal Naveen Srivastava signed and exchanged the protocol.

Ramesh Rizal, the minister of industry, commerce, and supply, and Piyush Goyal, the Indian minister of commerce, had earlier spoken about the agreement during the joint news conference of the two prime ministers in New Delhi, India.

As a member of the Prime Minister's visiting team, Marasini, Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supply, stated that the Transport Treaty needs to be signed because it

hasn't been renewed in the previous four years.

If the transit arrangement was not extended, it would be impossible for a landlocked nation like Nepal. Marasini thinks this is a fantastic accomplishment. He asserted that Nepal now has water, rail, and road connection to the sea.

Long-term Power Trade Agreement

A long-term electricity trading agreement between India and Nepal is seen as a major accomplishment by both nations, among other treaties.

The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that India and Nepal have a "Long Term Power Trade Agreement" during a joint news conference that was conducted following the meeting with Prime Minister Prachanda at Hyderabad House.

A long-term power trade agreement has been signed between India and Nepal, and we have set a goal of importing 10,000 megawatts of elec-

tricity from Nepal in 10 years, said Prime Minister Prachanda and I today. "Today, Prime Minister Prachanda and



I have taken an important decision to make our agreement a super hit in the future," said Modi.

The Indian Energy Exchange Market (IEX) has now given Nepal authorization to export electricity from multiple projects totaling 452 MW. The government is attempting to sell electricity through a contract since the average price is lower when electricity is sold in a competitive market. Nepal's hydropower has a 2,700 megawatt installed capacity.

As the demand for power is 1750 MW during the peak season and electricity is produced according to the connected capacity during the rainy season, Nepal is under pressure to assure the export of roughly 1,000 MW of electricity to the Indian market in the upcoming dry season.

According to representatives of the Ministry of Energy, the inaugural agreement for long-term electricity trade has strengthened the security of Nepal's electrical market.

Inaugurated Railway

The railway service from Bathnaha to Budhanagar in Biratnagar, India, was also opened jointly by Prime Minister Prachanda and his Indian counter-



COVERSTORY

part, Prime Minister Modi.

Businesspeople in the Koshi region have long asked for the railway carrying products from the border district of Bathnaha to the Biratnagar integrated check point to be opened and made more accessible.

Construction is in underway on the eight-kilometer railway line that would connect Biratnagar ICP station in India to Bathnaha. The railway un-

derwent testing for train operation on October 8, 2018.

derwent testing for train operation on October 8, 2018.

A similar event has occurred with the “New Butwal-Gorakhpur Cross border Transmission Line,” which is essential for the transfer of power between India and Nepal.

Additionally, the transmission line is the second high capacity international transmission line. Additionally, a distinct business has been established for the project’s construction. Both the Electricity Authority of India and the Nepal Electricity Authority have equal stakes in the business.

The second international transmission line between Butwal and Gorakhpur, a 400 KV project suggested by the NEA for the exchange of energy between Nepal and India, has already been paved.

The government of India’s Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. and the Electricity Authority both control 50 percent of the stock in the joint venture

that was established to build the new Butwal-Gorakhpur 400 KV transmission line. The authority itself will construct the transmission line to Nepal.

Kulman Ghising, MD of NEA, expressed his opinion that the laying of the project’s foundation stone will hasten its completion.

The investment form for the building of transmission lines was finalized during the seventh meeting of



the mechanism of the Nepal-India Energy Secretary and Joint Secretaries on October 27–28, 2016. The project is anticipated to cost Rs. 4.62 billion (Rs. 7 billion 39 crore).

The project’s expected cost is Rs 4.62 billion (Rs 7 billion 39 crore), and financial management would be split 80/20 between debt and equity.

According to MD Ghising, the Butwal-Gorakhpur transmission line has nearly twice the capacity of the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur first inland 400 kV transmission line, which is now in use.

Although there were street protests before his effective and profitable visit by student unions linked to the main opposition CPN-UML and three communist parties, including his own, regarding India’s absorption of Nepal into an old map, everything has now calmed down. As Prachanda stated in the legislature, relations between Nepal and India have resumed being friendly and personal.

India Publishes 24 Points t Press Release following the completion of Visit of Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ to India

1. Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’, Prime Minister of Nepal is on an official visit to India from 31 May to 3 June 2023, on the invitation of the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi.

2. This is Prime Minister Prachanda’s first bilateral visit to India since assuming office in the current term. Narayan Prakash Saud, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister of Finance. Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Prakash Jwala, Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Ramesh Rijal, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies are part of the delegation accompanying the Prime Minister during this visit.

3. Both Prime Ministers held wide-ranging bilateral discussions marked by traditional warmth and cordiality. During their talks, both leaders reviewed the entire spectrum of the bilateral agenda between India and Nepal covering political, economic, trade, energy, security and developmental cooperation. Prime Minister Prachanda also called on the Hon’ble President of India Droupadi Murmu and Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankar. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval called on the Prime Minister during his stay in Delhi.

4. The two Prime Ministers noted the excellent cooperation between the two countries, including in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Highlighting the strong economic and trade partnership between the two countries, they welcomed the signing of the revised Treaty of Transit which, among others, provides access to India’s inland waterways.

5. Recalling the Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector Cooperation of April 2022, the two Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction at the progress made in power sector cooperation, that covers development of generation projects, power transmission, infrastructure

and power trade. Both Prime Ministers appreciated the growth in export of upto 452 MW of power from Nepal to India and the progress made in the construction of the 900 MW Arun-3 hydro-electric project in Nepal.

6. Both sides finalised an Agreement for Long-Term Power Trade wherein it was agreed to strive to increase the quantum of export of power from Nepal to India to 10,000 MW within a timeframe of ten years and towards this end take all necessary measures to encourage mutually-beneficial investments in Nepal's hydropower generation sector and transmission infrastructure.

7. Both leaders also jointly carried out the ground breaking of the 400 kV Gorakhpur-Butwal transmission line. The signing of the MoU for the development of 480 MW Phukot-Karnali project by NHPC and VUCL Ltd, Nepal and the Project Development Agreement for the development of 669 MW Lower Arun between Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) and the Investment Board of Nepal (IBN) was welcomed by both sides.

8. The Nepali side welcomed the decision of Government of India to facilitate the first trilateral power transaction from Nepal to Bangladesh, through Indian grid with an export of upto 40 MW of power. Both sides expressed their commitment towards greater sub-regional cooperation, including in the energy sector, which would lead to increased inter-linkages between the economies for mutual benefit of all stakeholders.

9. The Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project (PMP) as envisaged in the Mahakali Treaty is in accordance with the aspirations of people of Nepal and India. In this context, it was agreed that the concerned officials of both governments shall expedite the bilateral discussions towards early finalization of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the PMP within a period of three months. The Pancheshwar Development Authority (PDA) shall submit the finalized DPR to both Governments. The two Governments and their relevant entities shall take the lead in arranging finance for the PMP. The modalities of implementation shall be concluded within one year after approval of the DPR by the two Governments.

10. The two sides welcomed the construction of the Tanakpur Link Canal

and agreed that water will be released from the Tanakpur Barrage to the irrigation command area of Nepal through this canal in a phase wise manner based on the readiness of the necessary facilities



on the Nepali side. The technical teams of the two sides will be in touch in this regard.

11. Both sides welcomed the decision of the Government of India to fund Bheri Corridor, Nijgadh-Inaruwa and Gandak Nepalgunj Transmission lines and associated substations under Indian Line of Credit at an estimated cost of US\$ 679.8 million.

12. The two Prime Ministers appreciated the positive momentum in the development partnership and reviewed the implementation of major ongoing projects. Prime Minister Prachanda assured Prime Minister Modi on Government of Nepal's full support in facilitating time bound completion of all India assisted projects.

13. Giving further fillip to connectivity through creation of Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) between India and Nepal being built under the Indian grant assistance, both leaders inaugurated the mirror ICPs in Rupaidiha (India) and Nepalgunj (Nepal). Both leaders also conducted the ground-breaking ceremony of the mirror ICPs in Sunauli (India) and Bhairahawa (Nepal). An MoU on the construction of another ICP in Dodhara Chandani in Nepal under Indian grant assistance was also signed during the

visit. These ICPs will help improve transportation facilities to further enhance people-to-people connectivity as well as trade, commercial and economic linkages between India and Nepal.

14. In a major initiative towards enhancing Rail connectivity, both leaders presided over the inaugural run of the cross-border freight rail operations between Bathnaha (India) and Nepal Customs Yard (Nepal) on the Jogbani-Biratnagar rail link constructed with Indian grant assistance. This will further enhance trade and commercial linkages between both countries through Biratnagar, a major economic hub on the eastern side of Nepal. Further extending the Jaynagar-Kurtha passenger rail operations launched in April last year, the Kurtha-Bijalpura rail section was handed over to the Government of Nepal which will now be due for operationalization shortly.

15. The Final Location Survey report of the Raxaul-Kathmandu rail link was also handed over to the Nepali side during the visit. The Government of India also agreed to the Government of Nepal's requests for the training and capacity building of Nepali rail officials in the Indian Railway institutes and provision of one-time grant for maintenance of the railway infrastructure for Jaynagar-Kurtha rail section that was flagged off by the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal in April last year.

16. On Energy connectivity, both



leaders noted with satisfaction the benefits of Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline which was inaugurated in September 2019. In further enhancing this cooperation, both leaders also laid the foundation stone for the Phase-II of the Motihari-Amlekhgunj Pipeline in Chitwan. An MoU for construction of petroleum supply infrastructure by laying the new pipeline between Siliguri and Jhapa, and extending the existing oil pipeline from Amlekhgunj till Chitwan, as well as construction of two green field terminals at Chitwan and Jhapa, was also signed during the visit.

17. The two sides also decided to further enhance digital financial connectivity between the two countries. In this regard, an MOU between NPCIL India and NCHL of Nepal for facilitating cross-border digital payments was exchanged.

18. Both the Prime Ministers noted with satisfaction the understanding reached in February last year on the supply of urea and DAP from India to Nepal. Strengthening this cooperation further, both leaders agreed to set up a fertilizer plant in Nepal with the participation of public and private sector entities from Nepal and India to meet the fertilizer needs of both Nepali and Indi-

an farmers and with adequate assurance of market in both the countries. The two Prime Ministers directed the concerned authorities to explore the viability of such a plant.

19. The Government of India has also decided to build two bridges across the Mahakali River at Shirsha and Jhulaghat in Nepal connecting to Champawat and Pithoragarh districts in India under grant. These bridges will boost connectivity between the State of Uttarakhand in India and Sudurpaschim Province in Nepal.

20. With the aim of providing a renewed momentum to agriculture sector, the two sides discussed new avenues of bilateral cooperation like nano-fertilizers and natural farming. As part of India-Nepal cooperation in agriculture and livestock-related sectors,

15 Murrah buffaloes are being supplied to the Government of Nepal at their request.

21. The Government of India has offered to create a ground station and supply 300 user terminals to offer the services of South Asia Satellite to Nepal under grant assistance. This initiative would promote regional cooperation in space sector, and space technology applications in the areas of telecommunication and broadcasting, tele-medicine, tele-education, e-governance, banking and ATM services, meteorological data transmission, disaster response and networking of academic and research institutions.

22. Prime Minister Modi congratulated Nepal on becoming a founding member of the International Big Cat Alliance.

23. On 02 June, Prime Minister Prachanda is visiting Indore and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. His visit to these cities reflects the deep religious and cultural links between the two countries.

24. Nepal is one of the key partners of India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy. The visit of Prime Minister of Nepal to India continues the tradition of high level visit and exchanges between the two countries, strengthening the age old ties between the two countries. The productive discussions held during the visit, helped to widen the understanding between both countries and perspective on the wide range of bilateral agenda, and gave a robust direction to take the deep rooted partnership forward.

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Why ‘Revolutionary’ Communist PM Prachanda Went To Temples In India`

Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s visit to Mahakaleshwar temple, Ujjain was an attempt to showcase his ‘Hindu’ credentials for the BJP government – and to convince them his being in office was in India’s best interest vis a vis China



BY: YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

On the evening of May 31, Nepal’s Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal (“Prachanda”) raised his hands in welcome and signalled Manjeev Singh Puri, asking the former Indian Ambassador to Nepal to approach him at a reception held in his honor at the country’s embassy in New Delhi. “I have not forgotten... you asked me several times when will I wear Daura-Suruwal. Look, I have done it.”

Prime Minister Dahal donned Nepal’s official and traditional dress for the first time during a trip abroad. Dahal and his party – the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist-Centre) – have consciously avoided wearing traditional attire to maintain the radical and revolutionary image. That image was sacrificed on his trip to India.

On the third day of his trip, Dahal not only visited Indore but he did an elaborate puja at the Mahakaleshwar temple in Ujjain. He offered the deity a 108-rudraksha bead thread, clad in distinctly religious attire. Dahal was a “revolutionary” whose insurgency saw many incidents of temples being vandalised and those observing rituals (even death rituals) being killed. He has still avoided visiting any temple, including the Pashupatinath temple in Nepal. His religiosity in India, then, may well be taken as a tactical transformation to address the Modi factor – a factor which may be crucial to his political success and survival. Many, then, believe that he has not “transformed” – he has simply been tamed by hostile circumstances and politics. His visit to India five months after he assumed office as PM for the third time was for political management.

Just an hour before his departure, he managed to get President Ram Chandra Poudel to approve the Citizenship Bill that erstwhile President Bidhya Devi Bhandari had declined. Dahal bypassed parliament by getting the cabinet to go for a shortcut. The cabinet to pass sought the President’s approval bypassing the parliament. This was done to mollify New Delhi.

India has still not welcomed Nepal’s constitution, promulgated in 2015. Dahal and K P Oli (who was then waiting to take over as PM) turned down India’s suggestion to delay the promulgation till the demands of some Tarai-based parties, which included the citizenship issue was sorted out. The result was a 134-day-long economic blockade, which led to a sweeping anti-India sentiment in Nepal. Modi also lost a lot of his considerable popularity in the country.



The Citizenship Bill, among other things, provides instant citizenship with all the political and property rights to foreign women married to Nepali men. While the Bill does not address many of the more radical demands, like citizenship to men married to Nepali women, Dahal’s pushing it through likely earns him some trustworthiness in the eyes of the Indian establishment. It can be interpreted as a realization on his part that not listening to India earlier was a mistake.

Dahal had his own reasons to stoop, hoping he will ultimately conquer. Sixteen years ago, the decade-long insurgency – which led to 17,000 deaths – ended in a peace accord following a deal that India brokered between the Maoists and Nepal’s pro-democracy parties. Modi, who came to power in Delhi eight years after the deal, hailed the accord in his first address from the ramparts of the Red Fort as a “triumph of the ballot over bullet”. But now, at 71, Dahal faces the prospects of that triumph being bungled. Not only his detractors, but ex-guerrillas and political allies want the gross human rights violations probed and the guilty punished, as pledged in the peace accord signed in November 2006.

Dahal has been trying hard to grant general amnesty to the guilty but as the accord was witnessed by the international community, including the UN, his best option was to reach out to India to bail him out and, if necessary, intercede with Western countries.

Indian authorities appear convinced that the Maoist leader’s offer to side with India in containing China in Nepal, and even to put Chinese investments at bay, is genuine. Delhi seems to believe that Dahal continuing as PM would be in India’s interest. Amazingly, he also reportedly assured the BJP that he was no less Hindu than the former King Gyanendra Shah, whose efforts at making a political comeback are getting a huge public response in Nepal. His visit to Mahakaleshwar was evidence of that.

Dahal did not quite raise the border dispute – this would have spoilt the positive atmosphere he was trying to create. But this is likely to be seen as a “surrender”, and create a backlash at home. His Delhi visit will be debated, polarising people and parties in Nepal. And that will cost Prachanda the image his “revolutionary past” bestowed on him. In that avatar, the problems with an “expansionist India” used to be a political and diplomatic mantra.

The writer is a senior journalist based in Kathmandu Courtesy (The Indian Express)

“RPP Is Reviving And Thriving”

PASHUPATI SUMSHER RANA, a seasoned politician and Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) leader, is the oldest member of the current House of Representatives and has been involved in politics for more than five decades. Rana, who is well-versed in Nepali politics, has previously held all of the important cabinet positions. Rana, 82, discussed a variety of current political topics with KESHAB POUDEL, including the recent trip to India by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda. Excerpts:

How do you think India’s Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda would be received?

One of the most essential takeaways from his visit was that he had laid the groundwork for a long-term sale of energy, one of our most valuable resources and greatest expertise. In my opinion, if done so in accordance with the letter and spirit of the law,

During the visit, India and Nepal inked seven agreements, including one on the exchange of power. How do you perceive it?

I’ve always thought that Nepal’s primary resource is water, and the more electricity we can export, the better. We now have a long-term foundation for electricity export. The day Nepal’s development is conceivable is a dream I’ve always had. However, everything now depends on how they will carry out and how the agreement’s clauses are. For Nepal, which is a landlocked country, signing the transit agreement is particularly crucial. It is also crucial to begin work on the 400 kV cross-border transmission line between Butwal and Goraphur. This project is essential for selling power from Nepal to India, which is the largest market.

But the delegation led by Prachanda succeeds in obtaining the goal it has been working toward for the past three decades. Another significant event of this visit is the signing of the new transit pact. The newly modified pact allows access to further ports without relying on the traditional Kolkata ports. Nepal and India have demonstrated that they must advance together to attain economic success and higher growth in a variety of areas, including commerce and power. PM Prachanda and Modi have demonstrated that resolving the trust deficit is essential to enhancing bilateral ties rather than seeing one another with

distrust.

You have long been interested in water resources, formerly holding the ministry portfolio, and signing treaties such as the Mahakali Treaty. How do you see these developments?

This is essential because the project has been languishing. Since I initiated the negotiations, Sher Bahadur Deuba and I am pleased with the commitments made by Prime Ministers Prachanda and Modi to advance the Panchaeshwor project. Even if it is not so simple, I look forward to seeing it put into practice.

As Nepal and Britain commemorated the 1923 Treaty’s 100th anniversary, how do I, a great-grandson of Prime Minister Chandra Sumsher Rana, view the treaty?

Even though Nepal has always been an independent country, that was the first official recognition of Nepal’s sovereignty by the world’s superpower at the time. The empire of the nation will never set. It is crucial to recognize this wonderful country’s independence and sovereign status. Being Chandra Sumsher’s great-grandson makes me happy.

How do you perceive the likelihood of political stability in Nepal, which now has a hung parliament?

The number distribution among the parties doesn’t provide stability, and the current parliamentary structure is essentially unstable. But even within that, I think the current coalition is pretty powerful.

Naturally, we and UML both voted against it. Despite this, we are still firmly in the opposition and will continue to play the necessary role of the opposition party. From here, I would argue that we need to put party and politics aside when it comes to foreign policy. This has major significance.



How do you see the role of RPP?

RPP is a strong ally of Hinduism and supports both constitutional monarchy and Hinduism. Within the context of constitutional monarchy, we require a crown. We want to revert to being a Hindu state.

That is our own agenda, uninspired by anyone, and unrelated to Indian politics in any way. To help Hindus around the world identify Hindu nations, we aim to designate Nepal a Hindu state. That is destroying the nation's splendor and glory.

How much Nepalese Hinduism has influenced the BJP's ascent in India. Do you believe that Indian Hindus will support the issue that your party has raised?

Because it is so tolerant and knowledgeable, Nepalese Hinduism differs from other forms of Hinduism. Our Hinduism is not oppressive or domineering. As a way of life, Hinduism. Most Hindus identify as such at birth, and everyone is welcome to do so. We don't, in my opinion, typically preach and coerce conversion. We are really pleased of the sizeable Hindu population we have in India, Indonesia, America, and Europe. Hindus are Hindus no matter where they are. Hinduism is a way of life because it is organic.

Do you believe that a constitutional monarchy and Hindu state, as advocated by your party, are feasible in the current environment?

Since we have made the main way of looking at reality our ground reality, it only makes sense that we hope both will occur sooner or later. There is no other choice for Nepal but to become a constitutional monarchy and Hindu

state. Both components are essential to Nepal's existence and identity. Hinduism and constitutional monarchy have a strong potential of reviving in the current climate of instability and uncertainty.

How do you feel about the previous monarch traveling to various regions of the nation and the vast majority of people showing up to assist the former king?

This mass flight of citizens from all regions of the nation in support of the former King demonstrates the validity of the RPP's demands for a constitutional monarchy and Hindu Kingdom. Consider the restoration of the monarchy in Spain, England, and Cambodia as examples. Queen Elizabeth set the tone for England during her 70 years as monarch. The greater of England is England's only colony.

RPP was founded on five guiding principles. We support the nation, plurality, multiparty democracy, constitutional monarchy, and Hinduism. If there was a constitutional monarchy, it would be more grand. We support a multi-party democratic system. In 1990, I conducted negotiations with the political parties using the principles of multiparty democracy and constitutional monarchy. That foundation still exists. Unfortunately, following that, things changed.

You are now working with younger MPs from various parties in the parliament. How do you view your role as a legislator?

I'm thrilled to be a member of the parliament. They are Nepal's young, dynamic generation. The parlia-

INTERVIEW

ment is filled with wonderful women in addition to youthful men. They represent one spectrum of Nepal and are well-equipped, educated individuals.

What impact do you think the growth of the Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) will have on the RPP?

Even during the election campaign, I was unaware of RSP's existence. They suddenly appeared. They currently have 20 seats. In by-elections, they won two of the three seats. I praised them for their accomplishments. Our group agreed that the most recent entry is quite significant.

We also recognize that it is time to move on to a new generation. We have begun to involve the younger generation in our work. Following the election, the party formed a committee headed by Rabindra Mishra to develop a fresh strategy for reinvigorating the party. We must reenergize the party and organize as a result. Gyanendra Bahadur Shahi and Rabindra Mishra are the new RPP. We must leave the area. We sat close to one another. He sits next to Dr. Swarnim Wagle, a famous thinker who recently won the by-elections. I know three or four excellent people who work at RSP. Our party needs RPP to reinvigorate it. We can prevent change if we band together.

I have not observed the same level of impact this time around as you four did in 1990 when you ran the entire House of Representatives. Is this a result of the house's size?

I assumed the role of the house's common figure for a month by pretending to be the oldest member. I have continued to play the balancing role. I serve on the committee for international relations. I'm always willing to go wherever they need me. I must, however, also consider my age as a standard figure.

How do you view Nepal's political leadership managing its foreign policy in light of the current situation of growing global dominance in our neighborhood?

The management of our geopolitics is currently a major concern. That is the main issue facing Nepal right now. Nepal was compared by Prithvi Narayan Shah to a yam between two enormous rocks. The lesson from that circumstance is that finding a balance between a portion of the south and a part of the north is crucial. The leadership in Nepal had vision even during the time of the huge British Empire and the smaller China. Both of our neighbors are now essential resources. China is on the rise, and the United States of America is the most significant country in the world.

When discussing the USA, you must take into account the QUAD countries of Australia, America, Japan,

and India. We must maintain the balance between these two big forces because it is essential to Nepal's security and development.

How current is Chandra Sumsher Rana's policy of maintaining harmonious relations with both neighbors?

It still has value. He also despatched a delegation to China while maintaining excellent ties with British India. How come he did? He thought that Nepal's geopolitical existence required good relations with both the north and the south. That is the strategy we have long employed. No matter who holds power in the north or the south, I hope we will stick to that principle.

At a time when populist communist forces are in charge and are chanting anti-Indian slogans on the streets, India may believe that China is controlling Nepal. Which way do you see it?

No matter who is in power, Nepal's internal geopolitical situation is balanced between the northern and southern regions. America and China are currently the two most significant countries in world affairs. However, the two most significant countries are China and India. Between these two stones, we must reside. No matter who leads the two countries—Prithvi Narayan Shah, Maharaja Chandra Sumsher, or Prachanda—yam is a fundamental idea. Most people notice. **Along with geography, India and Nepal have similar civilizations and religious traditions. How difficult is it for Nepal to preserve its ties with its neighbors?**

Running a nation is complex in and of itself. There need to be really skilled and sensitive. It calls for managerial talent. That is uncommon under our policy. The contraction is present. We have close cultural, religious, and civilizational ties to India. Three of our borders are open. There are no Himalayas between Nepal and China like there once were because we live in the age of chips, the internet, and technology. We must adapt to the times. We move in new directions. Most crucially, however, is cheap. We must adapt to the times. Our independence and sovereignty are one constant. As a nation, we must maintain both our independence and our sovereignty.

When will your book be released?

My book will be released soon. The book's title is *We Three*. The book makes brief mentions of my grandfather Maharaj Mohan Sumsher, my father General Vijaya Sumsher, who unhappily is not well recognized but achieved a lot for Nepal, particularly in the area of foreign affairs, and me. Given how well-known his efforts are, Chandra Sumsher doesn't require an introduction.



NEPAL FOREIGN SERVICE DAY

Remembering Contributions

With the cooperation and backing of his colleagues in the Ministry, Bharat Raj Paudyal, the Foreign Secretary, has demonstrated how a small decision to observe the Foreign Service Day and remember the accomplishments of the older generation can have a major impact on society

By KESHAB POUDEL

One of President John F. Kennedy's most well-known quotes is that "One person can make a difference." Everyone should strive to live up to this maxim. As the president pointed out, Foreign Secretary Paudyal has shown how a seemingly modest decision to observe Foreign Service Day and celebrate the efforts of legends can have a big impact on the field.

Secretary Paudyal has the cooperation and assistance of both active and retired members of his ministry to make the initiative a huge success. Former secretary Dr. Madan Kumar Bhattarai has supported the initiative of secretary Paudyal collecting historical information.

Although Nepal has had a structure and people devoted to managing its international relations since its unification 250 years ago, the tradition of recognizing retired elders has just been discontinued for the past two years.

The institution's specialized nature and the distinctive qualities required of the individual working on it have not altered despite different names and positions being used for its staff.

Many people have given up their careers to serve in the foreign service, numbering in the hundreds. However, a year ago, Paudyal was appointed secretary of the Ministry, and that was when

the process of commemorating and appreciating their sacrifice and service began.

With his predecessor Shanker Das Bairagi as chief secretary and ministers with well-read and seniors and enthusiastic younger generation, secretary Paudyal found most favorable time to take two small but significant decisions to uphold and establish Nepal's Foreign Ministry and Foreign Service.

Dr. Narayan Khadka, a prominent NC politician and international relations expert, served as foreign minister during the first year. NP Saud, a second-generation leader in the Nepali Congress, is the ministry's current foreign

minister this year. They are both positive to secretary Paudyal's idea.

Remembering the past and interacting with those who once worked there gives every newcomer a sense of pride. The older generation receives several kinds of enjoyment through sharing experiences with the younger generation. In the end, these kinds of activities build the institution and foster a positive work atmosphere.

As it did the year before, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commemorated Foreign Service Day 2080 while honoring senior who have retired. Both present and retired employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were in at-





tendance.

The retired employees were honored by the foreign minister, NP Saud, and the chief secretary, Shanker Das Bairagi. In their addresses, both speakers applauded Secretary Paudyal's initiative in creating Foreign Service Day and starting a tradition to honor seniors.

The debut of the Yadunath Khanal Lecture Series was Secretary Paudyal's second significant accomplishment.

"This is an important day to think on the sacrifices, contributions, and work made by individuals who work for the Foreign Service," said Foreign Minister NP Saud. He noted that extending congratulations to retired ministry staff members is a part of expressing gratitude and respect for their contributions and efforts. "This day also reminds us of Nepal's long history living as an independence and sovereign country."

"Two essential components of independence and sovereignty are the ministry and service. The Foreign Service personnel represent Nepal and Nepalese citizens after they are sent

abroad. The foreign ministry and Nepalese mission overseas must examine the sizable Nepalese Diaspora and deal with their issues in light of the present global migration trend," said minister Saud.

Foreign Minister Saud, who attended as the chief guest, honored 14 retired employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their services while they were a part of the MoFA's cadre between 2018 and 2023. Because the first Foreign Service Regulation was published on Jestha 10 of 2018 (23 May 1961), five years after the Civil Service Act of 2013, it was chosen as the date to mark Foreign Service Day.

The longest serving foreign secretary, Shanker Das Bairagi, who spent his whole career in the Foreign Service before being elevated to chief secretary of Nepal's civil service, supported Paudyal's idea to commemorate Foreign Service Day annually.

NP Saud, the minister of foreign affairs, honored 14 people who worked in the ministry for various lengths of time and protected Nepal's interests overseas on Nepal Foreign Service Day 2080.

Minister Saud conferred the Saul and Buckeye to individuals who worked in the ministry of foreign affairs from 2018 to 2023. Those who retired the previous year were also honored.

Those included Sunder Nath Bhattarai, Kedar Bhakta Shrestha, Narsingman Man Singh Pradhan, Purushotam Lal Shrestha, Shashi Pratap Bam Malla, Badri Prasad Khanal, Govinda Dev Panta, Ramhari Khadka, Krishna Prasad Subedi, and Sri Krishna Gopal Shalike are among the fourteen individuals.

Similarly, Ram Singh Thapa and Prakash Kumar Suvedi, who retired last year, also were also felicitated.

Last year, the Ministry honored 11 living retired public officers who had previously served in Nepal's Foreign Service. Those were Hari Prasad Pokharel, Yogendra Nath Ojha, Narayan Prasad Rajbhandary, and Narsingman Man Singh Pradhan as civil servants.

Five people were honored out of the 36 people who joined the Foreign Service at its commencement. They were Ganesh Man Shrestha, Shiva Ram

Shrestha, Bhinda S. Shah, Yadav Kant Silwal, Narayan Prasad Arjyal, and Bishwo Pradhan.

Secretary Paudyal described the development of the foreign service in Nepal during the previous 250 years in his welcome speech. He mentions that Shaker Das Bairagi’s appointment as chief secretary, who will oversee the civil service of Nepal, is another significant gift to the nation. The Foreign Service Regulation 2018 acknowledged the Foreign Service as a specialized service within the civil service, even though Nepal has had a foreign-related division since its integration 259 years ago, according to Paudyal.

According to Chief Secretary Bairagi, the practice of hiring highly qualified and competent people from the selection process has persisted in the Nepalese Foreign Service.

He advised the new workers to take advantage of the ministry’s funding for advanced education and specialized training. The Chief Secretary Bairagi warned against the growing trend among employees to forgo training in favor of promotions.

“A person participating in the foreign service needed specialized abilities and high standards to carry out their responsibilities. Today is the day we honor our seniors who gave their lives and dedicated their careers to serving in our military, according to Chief Secretary Bairagi.

The Public Service Commission makes recommendations to the Government of Nepal for the recruitment of officers for the Nepal Foreign Service. Following the adoption of norms, the Public Service Commission’s Civil Services Examination was used to select the initial class of Nepal Foreign Service officers.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs oversees the Nepalese Foreign Service, which is the country’s diplomatic and central civil service. The service, which is made up of public servants, is in charge of managing Nepal’s foreign relations, offering consular services, and indicating Nepal’s participation in international organizations.

More than 30 diplomatic missions and international organizations throughout the world are staffed by career diplomats from Nepal. It is subsumed by the Department of Passport and the Department of Counselor Service.

Exercises in negotiation are a regular and essential element of the work descriptions for Nepali diplomats. A distinction was upheld early on, and

people with high levels of competence and qualification are hired.

As part of their duties, diplomats must first comprehend the situation in the nation they are in before relaying it. This demands good abilities and qualities. Diplomats can do their duties more quickly and efficiently if they use their senses in proportion to the number of sensory organs they have.

The obligations and responsibilities of Nepalese diplomats have grown as Nepalese Diasporas are expanding over the globe. Diplomats now have to consider Nepalese issues in ad-



dition to maintaining the relationships.

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step,” as the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu once stated. Secretary Paudyal initiated this move by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to commemorate Foreign Service Day honoring and remembering the sacrifice and commitment of retired members of the Foreign Service. In the future, others will be tasked with carrying it out.

CHANDRA PRASAD DHAKAL

Engaging in Investment

Indian investors are drawn to Nepal thanks to the leadership of Chandra Prasad Dhakal, president of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)

By A CORRESPONDENT

La o Zu, a philosopher, once said: “A leader is best when people hardly know him.” They will claim, “We did it ourselves, FNCCI president Chandra Dhakal worked exactly in the same way in our recent visit,” once his task is completed and his goal has been achieved.

President Dhakal was successful in persuading an Indian business group to invest in Nepal during his first overseas trip while leading a Nepalese delegation to New Delhi for the official visit of Prime Minister Pushkpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda.

President Dhakal demonstrated that the Nepalese business community is enthusiastically anticipating the investment from India in the presence of Indian minister Pius Goyal and Prime Minister Prachanda.

In strong collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), FNCCI President Dhakal invited Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal to a high-level business meeting in New Delhi.

One of the key occasions for Prime Minister Prachanda’s visit to India was the Nepal-India Business Summit in New Delhi, which was jointly organized by FNCCI and CII. He spoke at the summit and had conversations with prominent Indian businessmen.

Prime Minister Prachanda informed the larger audiences presided over by the presidents of the FNCCI and CII that the economy, which was struggling owing to covid, has progressively improved through reforms.



In his keynote speech on Thursday, Nepali Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, aka “Prachanda,” urged Indian investments in a number of industries, including mining, manufacturing, agriculture, energy, tourism, infrastructure, information technology, and hospitality.

According to him, Nepal is an ideal and alluring location for investment due to its richness of natural resources, sizable human capital pool, and potential market with good regulations and regulatory framework.

He made it apparent that the present government’s formation resulted in the reformation of the economy. According to Prime Minister Dahal, the government is driving economic growth and development through offering services to the populace, and he predicted that results would be apparent shortly.

The Indian government wants to invest in mining, agriculture, energy, tourism, and IT in Nepal.

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, president of the FNCCI, stated at the summit that the improvement of investment-friendly policies, rules, and legislation means that now is the ideal time to invest in Nepal. He highlighted that Indian businesses were making significant profits in Nepal and claimed that this was a sufficient justification for foreign investment.

The growth of Nepal’s energy, water resources, agriculture, tourism, industry, and infrastructure are all areas where investments can be made, according to FNCCI President Dhakal.

He gave the assurance that the federation would cooperate with the Indian private sector and assist it in making the necessary investments in Nepal.

The industrialists were also exhorted by CII President R Dinesh to capitalize on the geographic proximity of India and Nepal and to explore market prospects for mutual growth.

Other than Nepal and India, no two nations have such a close connection and strong cultural ties, creating an exciting and favorable economic environment. Additionally, the two administrations are taking initiative and making bold choices to change the development landscape. Speaking at the CII's India-Nepal Business Summit, he stated, "The private sector, which is a potent driver of growth, needs to echo this.

Investment opportunities exist in a variety of industries, including mining, manufacturing, agriculture, energy, tourism, infrastructure, and the hospitality sector.

"We assure you full protection of investment. We will continue reforming our investment regime. We have put in place an automated route

for FDI approval. The Nepal central bank clears the repatriation within 7 days. The investment board of Nepal provides one-stop service for the large scale investments," he said.

He also said that modern infrastructure at border areas offers opportunities for cross border investments and industrialization.

The completion of a long-term power trade deal has increased predictability in the power trade between India and Nepal, "thereby encouraging more investments in Nepal's hydro power sector," the official said.

The 900 MW Arun-III project, which includes Indian funding, is almost finished, and a number of additional power projects will undoubtedly rekindle interest in Nepal's water resources.

"We ought to have to write a new chapter in the history of our collaboration in this field. We are modernizing the cross-border connection

infrastructure with regard to trade and transit. To further facilitate the flow of goods and services, an integrated checkpoint, road, and rail connectivity are being developed, he noted.

The prime minister also spoke about the aviation industry, announcing the completion of two new airports, one of which is in Pokhara. "I encourage the airline companies to operate air service between various cities of India and Nepal," he said.

Piyush Goyal, minister of trade and industry, said there is a great deal of room for MSMEs in both countries to cooperate more during the event.

FNCCI President Dhakal demonstrated how his leadership skills benefit FNCCI outside of India in front of Prime Minister Prachanda, Indian Minister Goyal, a sizable crowd of leading industrialists, and the business community.



Logics For Supplementary EIA



BY: BATU UPRETY

The 2023/024 Policy and Program of the Government commits, inter alia, to promote sustainable and green economy, and enact development projects-related laws to simplify: (i) land acquisition; (ii) utilization of forest area; (iii) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); and (iv) procurement process. The Policy and Program realizes the need for ensuring no adverse impacts on the environment while collecting stones, aggregates, and sands from rivers. The Budget Speech commits to carryout EIA to reduce adverse impacts on the Chure environment while utilising these stones and aggregates. The government has reemphasized the enforcement of legal provisions on EIA.

All countries have adopted and best utilized the EIA process to make their development environment-friendly and sustainable. The multilateral development banks such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank require to following national system on EIA or impose their requirements before implementing any prescribed environmentally sensitive projects with their support.

Nepal has internalized and institutionalized EIA process since the last 3 decades through guidelines, and over two and half decades though environmental laws. The government does not say anything about which of the process of the EIA or its legal provision is complicated and has hindered implementation of the physical infrastructure and economic development projects. Making a public statement that EIA is a barrier for economic development process is common in Nepal from the last 27 years. Some 'influential' people blame this globally accepted and all-countries-used EIA tool a process that delays the development. There are examples of approval of EIA report in one day (total 31 days, including 30 days legally made the report public) or within time as mentioned in the law. It should be and can be done.

If the government considers the 'cost of delay decision', there are several ways for improvements. The government can: (i) mobilise a 'professional team' and

introduce a 'fast-track' decision-making process; (ii) amend Environment Protection Rules (2020) and its schedules by following the EIA principles, global practices, national experiences, and learning; (iii) issue EIA report review criteria; (iv) develop a system to issue a license to the consulting firms and/or the individuals to prepare EIA report; (v) designate independent reviewers (not consultants) for EIA report review; and (vi) ensure environmental monitoring and auditing and use results to prepare EIA report of similar projects. If under-quality EIA report is submitted, it can enforce the existing legal provisions. In spite of these improvements, if under-quality EIA report is approved, it can take actions to the approving person(s) engaged in approval process. EIA process does not block the development but may propose costly adverse impacts mitigation measures for 'environmentally highly sensitive' projects. Impacts largely depend upon the location of the project, people and 'valued' resources to be adversely impacted.

The government approved the so-called EIA report of the Nijgadh international airport which is not an EIA report of the airport technically.

Nepal Rastra Bank has issued a Guideline on Environmental and Social Risk Management (ESRM) for Banks and Financial Institutions in February 2022 by revising its 2018 Guideline. It guides banks and financial institutions to provide loan to any projects by ensuring the management of environmental and social risks. The project having government's approved 'under-quality' EIA report may not receive required loan from banks and financial institutions. In other countries, banks and financial institutions have stringent policies and mechanisms to ensure and manage project-induced environmental and social risks.

Environmental Assessment [Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) or EIA] - project level assessment - provides multiple options to make the physical infrastructure, economic, and social development environment-friendly and sustainable. It uses scientific tool to assess impacts and

provides options to manage significant impacts. IEE or EIA, being a predictive tool and being carried out during pre-feasibility and feasibility study stages, in principle, is not a panacea to solve construction and operational challenges of any project. It simply provides multiple opportunities to augment beneficial impacts and mitigate adverse ones.

Nepal's environmental law also provisions for the approval of Supplementary EIA (SuEIA) report. This concept emerged when the Kulekhani Hydroelectricity Project-III proposed to reduce its installed capacity in the decade of 2000s. To streamline infrastructure development and approval process, then Ministry of Population and Environment issued a Supplementary EIA Guideline in January 2015 (BS 2071). The Guideline guides for preparing and approving the SuEIA report. This is now provisioned in the environmental laws.

Section 11 of the Environment Protection Act (2019) provisions to carry out SuEIA if the proponent plans to make some revision in the physical infrastructure, design or form, transfer or alter the structure of any project, add forest area, or increase the capacity of the project to ascertain adverse impacts on the environment. The proponent should apply to the concerned body along with the reasons (why SuEIA is necessary), comparative table of environmental indicators and other necessary justifications. The Act provisions say that the concerned body may order to submit a SuEIA or may give permission as per the application. Rules (11) of the Environment Protection Rules (2020) elaborate the SuEIA report approval process. The law exempts the scoping and ToR, and provisions to follow the EIA report approval process with recommendation letter of only the local level. The concerned body may also instruct to simply revise the environmental management plan (EMP) of the approved EIA report to exempt from the SuEIA process. Similar provisions exist for revision of brief environmental study and IEE reports.

Interestingly, SuEIA is carried out without specific ToR. Multiple challenges crop up during the implementation of the approved generic EIA report. If the defined direct impact zone is same, additional scope of work is un-



defined, and ToR does not specify areas for further study, question arises on the need for SuEIA. In general understanding, impacts will occur in defined direct impact zone and may occur in 'indirect impact zone' and 'surrounding areas'. If the change (as mentioned in EPA, 2019) is limited to defined direct impact zone, SuEIA would not be technically required with the assumption that approved EIA report has sufficiently evaluated impacts of this zone and this can be addressed through EMP which is also provisioned in the EPR, 2020. Similar study for brief environmental study can be rethought.

As mentioned above, environmental assessment is a predictive tool. It uses seven words - (impacts) identification, prediction, evaluation, avoidance, minimisation, compensation, and augmentation. Environmental assessment must evaluate the significance of identified and predicted impacts. For evaluated significant impacts, EIA proposes to avoid, minimise, or compensate the adverse impacts, and enhance the beneficial impacts. In Nepal's approved IEE or EIA reports, impact evaluation is remarkably weak. In most cases, all impacts identified or predicted are considered significant even in case such impacts are not directly related to the project activities.

A fact-based and quality IEE or EIA report provides multiple options to mitigate adverse environmental impacts for long-lasting benefits from projects, by integrating measures into projects' detail design and implementing them as an integral part of the project activities.

INDIA-NEPAL POWER TRADE AGREEMENT

Historical Landmark

Kul Man Ghising, the managing director of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), described the preliminary power trade agreement between Nepal and India as a significant historical turning point.

By A CORRESPONDENT

A first deal for long-term electricity trading between Nepal and India has been inked after ten years of work and numerous bilateral talks. During the visit of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda to India, this historic agreement was struck.

In front of both prime ministers, Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, the energy secretary for Nepal, and Alok Kumar, his counterpart from India, signed the preliminary agreement. This kind of long-term electricity trade agreement with India has been requested by Nepal for many years.

This deal, which ensures a permanent market for Nepalese electricity, makes NEA MD Ghising, who has been working hard and participating in bilateral discussions multiple times, the happiest man alive. This is for a good purpose. Ensuring a market is a terrific thing as the MD of Nepal's largest public utility that distributes, transmits, and generates power.

Without this deal, NEA would have been forced to manage more than 1200 MW of electricity while losing \$1 billion in a single month. The deal provides the biggest relief for those who were concerned about how to handle the excess energy of over 1200 MW from the upcoming monsoon season.

According to MD Ghising, India's pledge is significant and historic for Nepal's energy industry. Ghising, a member of the Nepali delegation, said to Online News, "Now the notion that India will not buy power from Nepal has been proven untrue. India is an important electrical market for us, for this India has made a solid and reliable pledge.

On 18–20 Chait 2078, when the then-prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba visited India, Nepal and India signed a Power Trade Agreement (PTA). 'Joint Approach

Letter on Cooperation in the Energy Sector' was signed by representatives from the two nations.

According to Ghising, the PTA's

rules and regulations will be followed when trading electricity with India. MD Ghising stated, "This is the continuation of PTA." "The government sectors of the two countries will benefit from electricity trade with India, but so will the private sectors as well."

According to Ghising, this will foster a climate for more investment in Nepal's hydropower sector development and ensuring that the electricity generated here is sold.

According to him, it will foster an atmosphere where hydropower investors can do so with confidence, and the entire economy will gain from it. According to Ghising, "This is an umbrella framework (umbrella structure) for electricity trade," and "agreeing to this framework is the establishment of a new milestone in the electricity trade between Nepal and India."

The proposed agreement will make it easier to create an electricity trading market and to reach a long-term power purchase arrangement with India.

A long-term intergovernmental agreement on the exchange of electricity with India was suggested by Nepal. Accordingly, India has agreed to enter into an agreement for long-term electricity trading for 25 years, according to MD Ghising, who was a member of the Prime Minister's team during the visit to India. Within ten years, India will purchase up to 10,000 megawatts of electricity from Nepal.

The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that India and Nepal have a "Long Term Power Trade Agreement" during a joint news conference that was conducted following the meeting with Prime Minister Prachanda at Hyderabad House.

A long-term power trade agreement has been signed between India and



Nepal, and we have set a goal of importing 10,000 megawatts of electricity from Nepal in 10 years, said Prime Minister Prachanda and I today. "Today, Prime Minister Prachanda and I have taken an important decision to make our agreement a super hit in the future," said Modi.

The Indian Energy Exchange Market (IEX) has now given Nepal authorization to export electricity from multiple projects totaling 452 MW. The government is attempting to sell electricity through a contract since the average price is lower when electricity is sold in a competitive market. Nepal's hydropower has a 2,700 megawatt installed capacity.

Nepal is under pressure to ensure the export of about 1,200 MW of electricity to the Indian market since power is produced according to connected capacity during the rainy season and demand is 1750 MW during the peak season.

India's willingness to purchase Nepal's electricity had been questioned up until a few years ago. Currently, a tiny amount of electricity from Nepal is sent to India. India and Nepal agreed to a 10-year purchase of 10,000 megawatts of electricity each during Prime Minister Prachanda's tenure.

As MD Ghising said this is a "breakthrough," as we say. We need to do a lot of planning right now. It must be continued in order to finish the legal process. There will be a "umbrella agreement" in general. There are numerous items in it.

BUDGET 2080 / 81

A Document of Ritual

Finance Minister Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat delivered a ceremonial budget at a time when the nation was experiencing an unprecedented economic crisis without making any significant decisions to address economic issues. Finance Minister Dr. Mahat said that his budget was created to handle the country's crisis, while his detractors and critics referred to it as a ceremonial document.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Forgetting about his detractors and opponents, Dr. Pritviraj Legal, a close ally of the Nepali Congress and a former Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission, compared the budget to a document delivered by a doctor without the right medications for treatment.

Dr. Legal stated, “doctor’s budget looks with prescription of compounder,” in an interview with web media. Even though Dr. Mahat has defended his budget as being equipped to handle all economic agenda items, several of his plans have come under fire.

“The economy has been in a highly unusual scenario that is headed for a crisis. Dr. Mahat’s budget does not, however, contain any recommendations for how to deal with them. This budget is riddled with inconsistencies, according to former minister fiancé and UML leader Bishnu Paudel.

The budget will face more attacks as the House of Representatives debate has already begun. The Swatantra Party has previously demanded that the MP Development Fund provision that would have given each elected member Rs. 50 million be removed.

Finance Minister Dr. Mahat has yet to find strong supporters for his proposal since he presented the budget for the upcoming fiscal year 2023–2024 at the joint session of the Federal Parliament.



The budget’s call to delete several provisions was partially supported by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Confederation of Nepalese Industries. The budget of Rs. 1751.31 billion for the forthcoming Fiscal Year 2023/24 has been unveiled by Finance Minister Dr. Mahat.

Out of the overall allocation, he said that 11 trillion 41 billion 78 billion, or 65.20 percent, 3 trillion 2 billion 7 billion, or 17.25 percent, and 3 trillion 7 billion 45 billion, or 17.55 percent, were allotted to capital and the financial sector, respectively.

According to him, the expenditure estimate is 16.37 percent greater than the revised estimate and 2.37 percent less than the budget for the current fiscal year. According to him, there is a total allocation of 4 trillion 80 million dollars set aside for financial transfers to the provincial and local levels.

Some experts have referred to the finance minister’s decision to decrease the budget as a “courageous move” at a time when Dr. Mahat is coming under fire for his budget.

FM About two thirds of the budget, or Rs. 1141.78 billion (65.20 percent), has been set aside by Dr. Mahat for recurring expenses, which include funding for sub-national governments, upkeep of infrastructure projects, and government wages and subsidies. The payout to the province and local governments will total Rs. 400.8 billion.

The budget is split around 17.25 percent for development projects (Rs. 302.7 billion) and 17.55 percent for financial contingencies (Rs. 307.45 billion). “

. The amount of capital allocated has decreased from the current year’s allocation of 21.2%, or Rs. 380.38 billion. With only 48 days left in the current fiscal year, the govern-



ment has only mobilized 35.6% (or Rs. 135.4 billion) of the overall yearly target, continuing a trend of poor revenue collection.

Similar to this, the budget's priorities include the construction of investment-friendly environments, service delivery improvements, promotion of good governance, and zero tolerance for corruption.

Sources of the budget

FM According to Dr. Mahat, the expected income collection for the upcoming fiscal year is Rs. 1248.6 billion, making it the greatest source of expenditures. About 71.3% of the overall expenditure estimates are made up of revenue estimations. Foreign grants of Rs. 49.94 billion were one other source of funding for the expenses.

The 212.75 billion rupees in foreign loans and the 240 billion rupees in domestic borrowing would be used to manage the remaining sources. This translates to a deficit in the budget of Rs. 452.75 billion, or 25.85% of the total amount of expenditures.

Dr. Mahat, who presented the budget to the legislature, stated that it was created with the goal of reaching a 6% economic growth rate and 6.5% inflation control. The Nepal Rastra

Bank reports that in April of this year, the country's inflation rate was 7.76%.

The budget will also prioritize developing a digital and green economy in order to retain prosperity. In order to make the best use of resources, I have adopted the allocation bill's priority list. According to FM Dr. Mahat, the purpose of this budget is to answer the private sector's recommendations and fulfill the expectations of the general population.

He added that the budget for the upcoming fiscal year had been developed by the administration under the theme of the second phase of economic reform and structural change in the economy.

However, given the per-

formance of the current year and the lackluster outlook for the future, he is likely to have difficulty managing the resources. By Sunday, the government had only been able to collect Rs. 829.6 billion in revenue and other payments, well short of the Rs. 1101.5 billion it had spent.

Infrastructure development

In order to achieve this goal, transmission lines, micro and small hydroelectricity projects, renewable energy from solar and wind, and other initiatives are being developed, according to the finance minister. The government is planning to increase access to electricity for all households nationwide within the next two years.

According to him, 900 megawatts of electricity from projects in the private sector, including the 111 MW Rasuwagadhi, the 102 MW Mid-Bhotekoshi, the 42.5 MW Sanjen, and many more, would be added to the national grid in the upcoming fiscal year. By the conclusion of the following fiscal year, total installed electricity would be 3600 MW if this objective is met.

The Project Development Agreement for the West Seti, Seti River 6, and Lower Arun hydel projects, as well as the finalizing of the 1,200 MW Budhigandaki and 635 MW Dudhkoshi reservoir projects, are additional projects that are included in the budget.

FM Dr. Mahat added that he had allotted monies for the projects that could be finished on schedule us-



ing the projected funding. The budget for the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation was significantly cut by Finance Minister Dr. Mahat despite his pledge to use green energy. He has also increased tariffs for electric vehicles, which is in opposition to his pledge to promote sustainable energy.

The MoWERI received 87.45 billion rupees from Minister Dr. Mahat's budget, which is 21 billion rupees less than this year. The development of the distribution system and the building of transmission lines will be hampered by this lack of funding.

Through the Investment Board of Nepal, the government intends to develop a chemical fertilizer plant in the nation. For the upcoming fiscal year, Rs. 30 billion would be set aside as fertilizer purchase subsidies.

Similar to this, excavation at the Dhaubadi Iron Mines will start in the next fiscal after a thorough survey and project report were created.

To advance the mining sector in Nepal, exploration and mining of petroleum products in Dailekh, iron in Nawalparasi and Parbat, granite, slab stone, and ceramics in Makwanpur, limestone in Arghakhanchi, and dolomite in Dhading will continue.

With the announcement to allow any business to be started with just Rs. 100 in paid-up capital and free registration, the finance minister, Dr. Mahat, asserted that he had achieved substantial progress toward industrial transformation.

Burden of Social Security

Even if Dr. Mahat did not raise the elderly's social security benefits, it still costs a lot of money. Social Security makes substantial claims. Amounts for social security programs,



including senior citizen allowance, total Rs. 157.7 billion, an increase of Rs. 23 billion over the budget for the current fiscal year. The 4,000 rupee senior citizen allowance has been maintained, and the minimum age to qualify is 68.

The government has continued with the contentious constituency development initiative and has allotted Rs. 50 million for each election constituency in spite of widespread opposition from all sectors.

"I have proposed a parliamentary area infrastructure development program with an allocation of Rs. 50 million to address the local needs of development and construction expected by the people of the constituency through the people's representatives," stated Dr. Mahat.

Shortage of Fund

The Kathmandu-Terai Expressway, the East-West Highway, the North-South Corridor, and connectivity, transmission lines, and distribution system all saw significant budget cuts from Minister Dr. Mahat, despite his assurance that there would be enough money for the national pride projects.

As the nation is still suffering from the economic crisis, FM Dr. Mahat will still struggle to implement the initiatives and projects due to a lack of resources.

According to estimates, the government only reached its yearly revenue target of Rs. 1458.6 billion, or Rs. 824.6 billion, by just 56.53 percent. However, the government's spending has increased to Rs. 1098.2 billion, leaving a Rs. 274 billion difference between its income and spending.

As in the past, just 35.6% (or Rs. 135.4 billion) of the yearly target of Rs. 380.3 billion were spent on capital projects. However, the finance ministry has reduced the revenue projections to Rs. 1244 billion through the mid-term review of the budget. Even to implement its 1549 billion rupee modified budget, the government lacks the money.

Minister Dr. Mahat had promised that there would be enough money for the initiatives celebrating national pride. Similar to this, the budget's priorities include the construction of investment-friendly environments, service delivery improvements, promotion of good governance, and zero tolerance for corruption.

Dr. Swarnim Wagle, a rising economist and Rastriya Swatantra Party member who spoke in the house, referred to the budget as a ceremonial document that did little to address the nation's peculiar conditions.

Nepal's Educational System: From The Perspective Of A Student



BY: PARMITA SHRESTHA

“The only thing that interferes with my learning is my education” - Albert Einstein.

The current educational system in Nepal does not enforce effective study techniques. It encourages memorization and learning that is restricted to a few texts. There is no place for creativity, outdoor learning, or even proper breaks because of how rigorous the curriculum is. Additionally, it endangers the students' health.

Due to the arduous learning process, students are frequently caught skipping class because they find it boring or feel that it is not worth their time. For the sole purpose of the tests, this pushes students to momentarily learn.

A growing number of young people from Nepal choose to study abroad for courses that are easily accessible there every year. The main reason behind this is that the current system does not meet the needs of the younger generation.

The issue arises when the school decides to have 7 hours of instruction per day divided into 6–8 periods. The large backpack that students must carry exhausts them by the time they get home, keeping them from being active for the remainder of the day.

The National Examination Board (NEB) recently modified the 10+2 curriculum. The learning environment hasn't changed for the board yet, though. It is still the same old class, surrounded by six walls, with a teacher who is always lecturing and pupils who are either paying attention, attempting to pay attention, or have given up. Yes, they study and memorize dozens of derivations, contrasts, benefits, drawbacks, dates, locations, and much more. But if a person lacks the ability to think critically, filter information, and conduct appropriately in a variety of contexts,

one must seriously doubt the worth of that skill. As a result, in addition to teaching students facts, schools also need to teach them these abilities.

There have been a lot of worrying events in the realm of education over the past five years. There have been numerous instances of incorrect grading, abrupt and unexpected model changes, unstable systems, and irrational last-minute decisions or revisions, like the wording used in this year's grade 12 social assessment. These are crucial problems that haven't yet received enough attention to be handled for a nation that relies so largely on grades.

School is not just a place where children go to learn. The students spend a lot of time there, making it feel like a second home. This means that in addition to being ready to teach, schools should also be able to provide students' basic requirements, including simple access to good sanitation, medical care, wholesome food, and enough time for play. On the other hand, there have been numerous instances in Nepal where schools have been blamed for student fatalities. The situation where the school refused to let the student who tested positive for Covid-19 obtain treatment, the school hostel's disregard for the students' complaints about the geyser, and many others are examples of this.

Everyone has had difficulty readjusting to normal life after Covid-19, but teenagers in particular struggle with this. According to studies, teen mental health is today worse than it has ever been. A child finds it challenging to express their confidence as a result. Students don't speak up in class or actively participate in discussions in Nepali schools, where professors are permitted to humiliate the students in front of a crowd and school violence is still tolerated be-

cause they are afraid of seeming foolish and being wrong. They have a terrible fear of failing and making errors.

A few institutions have also been put on the do-not-attend list due to price. Learning is more influenced by your financial capacity in this situation. While those who are well off benefit from improved education, those who are struggling financially must attend regular institutions. Additionally, it has been discovered that many institutions and universities leak exam papers and purchase exam sites so that their students can cheat and receive high grades. This benefits the school, because in the end, it's all about money and reputation.

The existing system is not only encouraging an unhealthy lifestyle, but it is also contributing to a number of other issues. It has given individuals the impression that education and holding a degree are only a decoration or the barest prerequisites for social worth. Only your degree count determines how well you perform in a given subject; your actual knowledge and practical experience are ignored. The way teachers are handled makes it clear. Despite the fact that they believe in the strength of manpower, they are typically despised. All of this is due to the fact that, because the nation cannot offer a good scope for their field of study, teaching has become the "last resort" option for highly qualified individuals in fields of science and more.

As a result of the government's unwillingness to allow them to develop their own ideas, they have little choice but to look for employment abroad in order to find a position that they enjoy, or at the at least is related to their area of study. A excellent example would be the length of time it took the government of Nepal to authorize the production of motorcycles, which was only taken into consideration once it began receiving media coverage. When the corporation attempted to contact the government on its own, they ignored them for years.

People don't choose a certain subject of study because it fascinates them; rather, they do so because society accepts it, because it pays better, or because they have been coerced or brainwashed into doing so.

Students attend class out of need rather than with the intention of learning. because students need to be in class 90% of the time to take their exam. Students do not choose their 10+2 stream because it interests them or because they want to contribute. They only sign up to receive approval from others. They therefore neglect their health

while they toil day and night. In spite of this, countless people push their bodies to last an additional hour simply to copy another pointless page.

There are undoubtedly schools making efforts to improve the learning environment. Few schools have chosen the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, which is an international level board of education created by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), a non-profit educational organization based in Switzerland, in order to make classrooms feel more cozy and less monotonous. There are now six schools in Nepal offering IB education. Four of the six have certifications, and the other two are still applicants. Only two schools in Nepal offer the IB Diploma curriculum, nonetheless.

The curriculum is only strictly adhered to in these schools' grades 8 and 10. There, teachers have abandoned the conventional homework system in favor of more enjoyable alternatives



like project work, group projects, presentations, soft copy assignments, video production, and others. Sports have been effectively included into the daily schedule at schools. Indeed, education has surpassed the confines of a library. However, this does not imply that the system has improved or changed as a result. Only a few schools are leading

the way, and the majority of them continue to use the arduous old teaching approach that prevents kids from learning at their own pace.

Given the investments (in facilities and extracurricular activities that can get expensive, a solid infrastructure, and other requirements that can ultimately make the school inaccessible to many students owing to a hefty fee), it is not feasible for all schools to choose the IB curriculum. It becomes necessary for the government to alter the nation's curriculum as a result. A new system must be properly implemented, which could take several years, but it is necessary and will ultimately benefit the entire nation. By properly implementing new legislation protecting children and enhancing their learning, the weaknesses that exist today can easily be eliminated. The government will eventually need to take practical action to address these issues, and a flexible curriculum created by experts and professionals in the field might be the best place to start.

लोकतन्त्रको उपलब्धिको रक्षा गरौं

- विधिको शासन
- नागरिक स्वतन्त्रताको संरक्षण
- सूचनाको हक
- संवैधानिक सरकार
- आवधिक निर्वाचन
- समावेशी सहभागिताको सुनिश्चितता
- बालिग मताधिकार
- अभिव्यक्ति स्वतन्त्रता
- न्यायिक स्वतन्त्रता

यी लोकतन्त्रका विशेषता हुन, यिनको अवलम्बन गरौं।



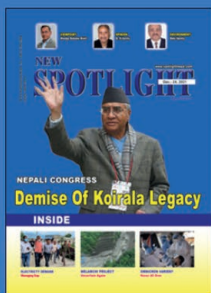
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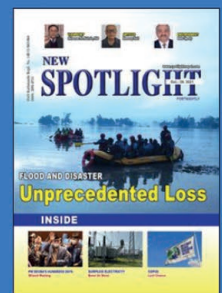
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