



OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



VIEWPOINT
Dinesh Bhattarai



ARTICLE
Parmita Shrestha

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Editor and Publisher

Keshab Poudel

Contributor

Sabine Pretsch

Design/Layout

Sahil Mokthan, 9863022025

Marketing Manager

Madan Raj Poudel

Tel: 9841320517

Nabin Kumar Maharjan

Tel: 9841291404

Editorial Office

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4530250

E-mail

spotlightnepal@gmail.com

P.O.Box: 7256

Website

www.spotlightnepal.com

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Notes From The Editor



In the name of anti-corruption efforts, Nepal has experienced a number of political upheavals. Whether in the panchayat era, multi-party democracy, or the current republican federal model, all have experienced comparable crises brought on by corruption. As is customary, Nepal's current regime, led by Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, who has sworn to eradicate corruption, is facing similar charges. As a result, the country is experiencing yet another round of political unrest. The recent disturbance of the House of Representatives, gold smuggling, fraudulent certificates, and land scams are all indicators of where Nepalese politics is headed.

Prime Minister Prachanda, who heads a seven-party coalition, has declared he will speak to the UN General Assembly in September and travel to China following New York as the nation approaches a critical period. Nothing can be ruled out politically with one month to go. The NC is increasingly calling for the formation of a new NC-UML administration after the dramatic arrest and release of NC lawmaker Dr. Sunil Sharma on the accusation of forging a certificate. However, we have chosen to make this week's cover story the opening of the Nagdhunga Tunnel. The national economy and road building will be significantly impacted by the tunnel that was built with assistance from Japan's ODA. It is the first contemporary road tunnel, constructed over 123 years after the first road tunnel was carved out in the vicinity of Churia. As the Nepal energy Authority marks its 37th anniversary, we also discuss a number of concerns pertaining to the country's supply of energy.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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Prachanda speaks

Opponents of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda are assembling to overthrow the government as he gets ready to travel to China and the UN General Assembly.

By A CORRESPONDENT

The government's handling of the Lalita Niwas property, bogus certificates, and gold smuggling have drawn criticism, and Prime Minister Prachanda has announced two international travels for the month of September.

It is too soon to say whether Prachanda will travel to New York and China at a time when his rivals are uniting against his government. Given the political climate at the moment, his visit is most likely to be made by a government that is weak and disadvantaged.

KP Sharma Oli, the leader of the main opposition party, recently warned Prime Minister Prachanda not to think of ruling the country in the same way as Pakistan and Bangladesh do.

His reference to recent government actions to arrest those involved in numerous scandals, including MP Dr. Sunil Sharma in the CBI's phony certificate issue. Former Prime Minister Oli also chastised the Prachanda government for utilizing the police to silence dissidents.

Former Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, a close political ally of Prachanda, has pledged to expose all corruption in Nepal. He was referring to money laundering at the Maoist cantonment during the peace process.

Others are calling for the arrest of prominent Maoist leader Krishna Bahadur Mahara in the gold smuggling case. During the press conference, the Prime Minister told the journalists that the probe would be free and impartial.

In an hour-long meeting with journalists, Prime Minister Prachanda openly declared his anticipated tour to China and the United Nations, knowing the political circumstances and comprehending the regional and global political milieu.

During his travel to China, Prime Minister 'Prachanda' has stated that he will hold bilateral talks with

Chinese President Xi Jinping. PM Prachanda further stated that during his current visit to China, he will sign several key cooperation agreements.

When asked about BRI project implementation, the Prime Minister stated that conversations will take place and that he will propose to the Chinese side grant cooperation under the BRI framework for project implementation.

He is expected to attend the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in Washington, DC, USA.

On September 16, he is slated to depart Kathmandu for the United States of America.

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister shared this information with editors of major media outlets at the Prime Minister's official house in Baluwatar. The Prime Minister stated that he will go for the United Nations General Assembly on September 16 and will fly to China from the United States on September 21.

Prime Minister 'Prachanda' has stated that the government has made progress toward good governance, and recent achievements indicate in that direction.

In a meeting with editors from several media outlets today at his official residence in Baluwatar, he stated that the gold swindle and accompanying arrests were the latest manifestation of the government's commitment to good governance.

A large amount of gold has been confiscated, and several people have been imprisoned, he added, adding that the main opposition has obstructed parliament rather than praising the administration.

According to the Prime Minister, blocking the parliament cannot be justified under any circumstances because it is the location where people's opinions are raised and heard.



Prime Minister Prachanda also stated that the current government inquiry has uncovered the involvement of not just airport police and customs, but also bigwigs and some foreigners in this unlawful activity. Unlike in the past, the police have been instructed to conduct an investigation without leaving any of the perpetrators behind.

When asked about the involvement of Maoist commander Krishna Bahadur Mahara and his son in the case, he claimed the police would clear it up in a day or two and that he had urged them not to spare anyone found guilty.

Prime Minister Prachanda stated on the occasion that the recent scams involving Bhutanese immigrants, the seizure of enormous amounts of gold, and the Lalita Niwas were only the beginning. He underlined that the government will pursue individuals responsible for such crimes and will leave no stone unturned in its probe.

"I have stated my commitment to ensuring good governance, justice, and service to the people of the country since becoming Prime Minister for the third time, and I am working accordingly."

Although Prime Minister Prachanda stated that he has been working day and night to ensure that the people have good governance and effective service delivery, each concern made by the social and populist media are impossible to address.

NEWSNOTES

UN Resident Coordinator Hanaa Singer And Health Minister Basnet Review Health Sector Issues

The United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator in Nepal, Hanaa Singer-Hamdy, today paid a courtesy call on Health and Population Minister Mohan Bahadur Basnet.



During the meeting, the two discussed issues related to coordination and cooperation between the Government and UN agencies in the health sector of Nepal.

The minister informed the UN coordinator that the government has a policy

to improve the access of citizens to health services and ensure free treatment for those who cannot afford it.

He welcomed the UN's cooperation with Nepal during emergencies, including the 2015 earthquake, natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, and looked forward to an increasing level of such cooperation in line with the Government's efforts to improve the health system.

The UN Resident Coordinator assured that the areas requiring UN cooperation in Nepal would soon be assessed through discussions and consultations and the programmes would be designed accordingly. She emphasized the need to clarify the modalities of cooperation with the provincial level together with the federal government.

Ambassador Of Korea To Nepal Tae-Young Park Delivers A Speech

Tae-Young Park, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal, in his felicitation address, shared insights into Korea's development journey and highlighted the key role of well-trained human resources in national progress.



He expressed optimism that the completion of the Masters by the civil servants would enhance their capacity to contribute significantly to Nepal's develop-

ment and strengthen the Nepal-Korea relations.

In the course of the event, Ambassador Park presented the certificate of admission and a memento to the scholarship recipients as a gesture of good wishes for their future endeavors in Korea.

Organized jointly by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the KOICA Alumni Association of Nepal (KAAN), Jeong Eun Song, Deputy Country Director of the KOICA Nepal Office, also delivered a speech at the Departure Orientation Program for the 2023 group of Master's and Doctoral Scholarship Awardees.

This event was held on August 11, 2023 at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Nepal. The main objective of this program is to share experiences and provide essential information to the partic-

ipating students about their upcoming program, life in Korea, details about the university they will be attending, departure procedures and more.

Binod Bidari, President of KAAAN also addressed the program. The program was attended by the Masters Scholarship Awardees of 2023, KAAAN members and officials of KOICA Nepal office.

To date, a total of 165 government officials have successfully completed their master's degree programs through KOICA's scholarship program. Government officials pursuing master's degrees with the support of KOICA have been recognized in Korea for their outstanding academic achievements. This year, a group of 16 government officials were selected in the KOICA Scholarship Program. Among them, 2 awardees are for Ph.D. programs in Agriculture and Health, while the remaining 14 are for Master's programs in various fields. They are expected to depart in August 2023.

In addition to the long-term program, KOICA is also implementing short-term fellowship programs. By October 2023, a total of 79 government officials from different ministries/government institutions (Ministry of Health, Office of the Attorney General, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Ministry of Forest and Environment, Ministry of Water Supply) will be capacitated on topics such as waste and sewage management, implementation of NVQS, cybercrime for Nepali government lawyers, TVET instructors on e-learning in Nepal, health insurance system in Nepal, and early warning system, respectively. All these programs have been officially requested by the Government of Nepal and will be implemented under KOICA's technical assistance.

Since 1995, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has been implementing the Capacity Improvement and Advancement for Tomorrow (CIAT) program as one of the important development cooperation programs of KOICA. This program aims to conduct Human Resource Development (HRD) through Short Term Training and Master's Degree Scholarship Program for government officials and to provide capacity building training focusing on sharing Korea's experience and technology for development. Till date, we have more than 2007 government officials who have taken part in KOICA's Capacity Building Program.

Non-Resident Ambassador Of Indonesia Paid Courtesy Call On CoAS General Sharma

Non-resident Ambassador of Indonesia to Nepal Heru Hartanto Subolo paid a courtesy call on Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) of Nepal Army General Prabhu Ram Sharma at Nepal Army Headquarters.

During the meeting held at the office of the CoAS, bilateral interests and mutual relations were discussed. The Nepal Army believes that this kind of meeting will help to make the relations between the two countries more harmonious and strong.



Madan Puraskar Guthi shortlists Five Books For Madan Puras-



'मदन पुरस्कार-२०७९' श्रेष्ठ सूची



kar 2079

Madan Puraskar Guthi has announced the list of five books shortlisted for Madan Puraskar 2079. Out of 313 books received by the Guthi, five books have been nominated for this year's award.

The short-listed titles are - Ijoriya (Subin Bhattarai), Aithan (Bibek Ojha), Chakravuyhma Nepalko Jalsrot (Dwarikanath Dhungel), Thangra (Pragati Rai) and Matakko Ghar (Sanjay Bista). The Guthi Annual General Meeting will announce the final winner from the shortlisted candidates before Dasain.

Amira Dali receives The Order Of Japan

KIKUTA Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, presented the 2023 Spring Imperial Decoration, Order of Japan (Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays) to Ms. Amira Dali, former President of AOTS Nepal Alumni Society, at a function held at the Ambassador's official residence on August 9.

Ms. Dali was awarded the decoration on April 29, 2023, in recognition of her contribution to promoting friendly relations and mutual understanding between Japan and Nepal, especially in the fields of economy and business, as President of Nepal AOTS Alumni Society, a non-governmental and non-profit organization of former trainees of Japan's training program, the Association for Overseas Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Partnerships (AOTS).



She also has a long experience in promoting economic cooperation between Japan and Nepal. After completing her master's degree in Japan, she worked at the Nepal office of a Japanese trading company and was responsible for designing several ODA projects for Nepal.

In addition, as a founding member and president of Love Green Nepal, a Nepalese NGO, she has been committed to helping Nepalese people at the grassroots level and has facilitated people-to-people exchanges between Japan and Nepal through NGO activities, such as providing scholarships and sending young Nepalese women to study in Japan and hosting student interns from Japanese universities.

Japanese decorations are awarded to foreigners twice a year, on April 29 and November 3, at the same time as decorations and medals are awarded to Japanese nationals. The Order of the Rising Sun is bestowed upon persons of merit in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the nation or the public. It is also awarded to foreign nationals who have made outstanding contributions to the promotion of relations between Japan and their countries in the fields of politics and diplomacy, research

and education, medicine and social welfare, economics and industry, and culture and sports.

KU And Australia's Crown Institute Of Higher Education Sign Historic Agreement

Kathmandu University has signed a historic agreement with Australia's Crown Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) to jointly offer dual degree programs with students receiving degrees in both Nepal and Australia. The agreement was signed in the presence of Australian Ambassador to Nepal Felicity Volk and KU Vice-Chancellor Professor Bhola Thapa.

"This is the first time that we are starting a formal undergraduate program in Australia. It is a new beginning for the entire higher education system in Nepal, not just KU," said VC Professor Thapa.

CIHE Director Deepak Khadka said the collaboration would help bring Australian students to Nepal and not vice versa. "Such collaborations help position Nepal as a destination of choice for affordable, quality education for international students," Khadka added.



Under the dual degree program, which will begin in the 2023-24 academic year, students will spend the first two years of their studies in Nepal, followed by two years in Australia at CIHE. The collaboration will provide students with world-class education and internationally recognized qualifications, and support the development of the higher education sector in Nepal.

In addition, KU and CIHE, one of Australia's leading higher education institutions, signed a memorandum of understanding for joint research, exchange of faculty, students and staff, and exchange of materials, publications and information, among other academic activities.

Professor Thapa said the signing of the agreement was a step towards establishing a university in the true sense of the word. Thapa said the agreement was part of KU's initiative to partner with the best global educational institutions to provide quality education.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Ambassador Volk said that educational exchange is the bedrock of Australia-Nepal relations. "We recognize the imbalance in student exchange between Australia and Nepal and the challenge Nepal faces with mass migration," she said.

"The loss of a generation of youth, including students, to overseas locations is one of the greatest tests Nepal faces. As part of its response to this challenge, it's imperative that the government of Nepal develop viable policies and practices to support quality education in Nepal and make it easier for international students to enroll in study programs here," Volk added.

KU Registrar Professor Achyut Wagle said the agreement is a step towards building a unique brand of education to provide excellent education to the next generation of students.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Chen Song and FNCCI President Dhakal discuss business and investment issues

Chinese Ambassador to Nepal, Chen Song, has said that Chinese investors are eager to invest in Nepal, so the latter should create an investment-friendly environment.

“Chinese investors are attracted to manufacturing, agriculture, energy and other sectors,” he said during a meeting with Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) President Chandra Prasad Dhakal at his office.

However, Ambassador Chen said that an easy environment should be created to bring in foreign investment and arrangements should be made to get easy returns. He said that even in China, policymakers were initially apprehensive about foreign investment, but the situation has gradually improved. According to Chen, policy stability and favorable treatment for investors are needed to make the country an investment destination.

He also informed that there are discussions on opening the Tatopani border crossing and bringing a Chinese bank to Nepal. The Chinese bank is needed to facilitate cross-border trade between Nepal and China. Traders have been demanding it for a long time.



At the meeting, Dhakal said that Nepal could become the main destination for Chinese investment and tourism. He drew

Ambassador Chen's attention to the good potential for foreign investment in Nepal's manufacturing, energy, tourism infrastructure and other sectors.

He also said that there is a need for direct flights from major cities in China to all international airports in Nepal to promote tourism. Dhakal requested that Nepal should be included in the priority list of main destinations for Chinese tourists.

He said that FNCCI is working for the promotion of small scale entrepreneurs and requested the Chinese Embassy to support these entrepreneurs for their observation visit to China. He drew the attention of the Ambassador to the possibility of a Chinese bank coming to Nepal.

President Dhakal emphasized that the Chinese government should also take initiatives for the effective operation of the Tatopani border crossing, which has been closed for a long time.

The NEA Held A Rally To Promote The Use Of Electric Vehicles

Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, has said that the use of electric vehicles should be encouraged for a cleaner environment. Speaking to journalists at a function held here today on the eve of the 38th anniversary of Nepal Electricity Authority, he said that the use of

electric vehicles is essential for a clean environment.

“Electrification enables economic development and improvement of the country,” said Minister Basnet. He said that through electricity, the authority has made important contributions to the country's economic development, development and clean environment. Minister Basnet said that we should start promoting electronic products to increase electricity consumption and use of electric vehicles.

The Nepal Electricity Authority has organized the marketing and use of electric vehicles to promote consumption of the country's pure green energy. On Saturday, the authority will use an electric car to celebrate its 38th anniversary. Earlier this year, the authority's headquarters was authorized to operate electric vehicles.

Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Kulman Ghising, managing director of the authority, officials of NADA Automobiles Association of Nepal, electric vehicle users and others attended the event.

Upper Sungen's 14.8 MW Is Incorporated Into The Power Transmission System

Upper Sanjen, Rasuwa's finished 14.8 megawatts, is now connected to the national transmission grid. The project was finished and production testing began by Sanjen Hydropower Company Limited.

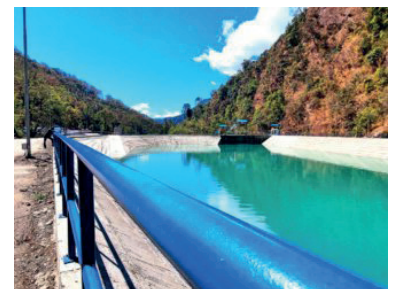
According to Sudan Singh, the project's head, production testing began on Saturday (July 20th) after the internal testing was completed.

“Since Saturday, we have been testing the project by connecting it to the power system.”

After the Authority begins production testing, it will be given free electricity for two weeks before commercial production begins. Because the transmission line was not completed on time, the project's power was added to the structure of Chilime's electrical flow via an alternative transmission line.

The project's electricity will be connected to the 220 KV Chilime hub substations under a transmission arrangement. However, because the 220 kV Chilime-Trishuli transmission line has not yet been completed, it will be built as an alternative.

The project was originally planned to generate electricity. However, as a result of the global spread of the corona virus, the compa-



ny has informed that production has been delayed due to a delay in the import of equipment from the Chinese customs border.

The anticipated cost of finishing this project was 2 billion 218 million rupees.

This project will generate 85.87 gigatonnes of electricity per year. According to the corporation, the dry season will produce 11.02 gigatonnes of electricity while the wet season will create 74.85 gigatonnes of electricity. On November 10, 2069, the corporation signed the civil structure contract and began building. The project was supposed to be completed by the fiscal year 2077/78; however it has been postponed for a variety of reasons.

This company is also nearing completion on the 42.5 MW Sanjen project. The corporation stated that once all of the project's work is completed, it will begin manufacturing in December of next year.

This project was also launched by the business in 2070. This project's electricity will also be linked to the Chilime Hub-Substation. The project's cost was anticipated to be 5.2 billion 42 million rupees, however the business stated that the cost could rise owing to construction delays, increases in dollar value and inflation, and other factors.

Himalaya Airlines Donates Funds To Lowa Prasad Bal Griha

Himalaya Airlines donates funds to Lowa Prasad Bal Griha under 'Step Towards Education' campaign

In continuation of its "Step Towards Education" campaign under its Corporate Social Responsibility, Himalaya Airlines has made a significant contribution towards the renovation of the kitchen and dining facilities of Lowa Prasad Bal Griha, a non-governmental and non-political social organization run by Lowa Prasad Sudhar Sangh for the orphaned and underprivileged children.



During a handover ceremony organized at the orphanage premises on August 3, 2023, President Zhou Enyong handed over a cheque of Rs. 3,96,000/- to Chairperson Usha Karki. In addition to the substantial cash donation, the airlines also donated kitchen utensil sets, sketch books and various

sports games like cricket set, carrom board, badminton sets, basket balls, ludo, jump ropes, hula hoop, etc. to enhance the lives of the resident children. Located at Sundarijal, the organization currently provides shelter, education, care and a nurturing environment to a total of 13 children.

The funds will be used to facilitate the renovation of the kitchen and dining area of the building, creating a more conducive and comfortable living space for the children to maintain a healthy, home-like environment.

"Base in Nepal and serve in Nepal" is the commitment that Himalaya Airlines has long made and adhered to. Since its inception, Himalaya Airlines has been doing its best to contribute

to the society. Through this donation to Lowa Prasad Bal Griha, we wish to provide better living and accommodation conditions for the children staying here and hope that they will grow up to be contributors to the future of the nation," said Mr. Zhou Enyong, President of Himalaya Airlines.

Usha Karki expressed her gratitude and welcomed the airline's gesture of donating the sports games to encourage the children's interest in various sports activities. "We are extremely grateful to Himalaya Airlines for their caring contribution to our organization. Their generosity will go a long way in improving the lives of the children in our care," she said.

FNCCI Team Calls To Resolve Energy Sector's Problem

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Shakti Bahadur Basnet today said that problems in the energy sector would be solved collectively.

All problems related to the sector would be solved only through joint efforts of the government and the private sector, the minister said at a discussion with office-bearers of Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), including its president Chandra Prasad Dhakal, at the ministry. He said that the holistic development and expansion of the energy sector and generation of new employment opportunities would require concerted efforts by the government and the private sector.

Stating that the government has a plan to promote domestic investment in the energy sector, he said, "Foreign investment can be attracted only after promoting domestic investment. We need additional investment. For this, efforts are being made to make legal and policy arrangements."

The government has made policy arrangements to involve the private sector in the construction of transmission lines and power trading, the minister said.



The issue of exporting 10,000 megawatts of electricity in 10 years as per an agreement reached during Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda's' recent visit to India would soon bear fruit, he said.

Similarly, a power trade agreement with Bangladesh would be signed soon, he said, adding that the government was working to export 40 megawatts of electricity to Bangladesh immediately.

Speaking on the occasion, FNCCI President Dhakal said that the investors face problems in selling the generated power as the Nepal Electricity Authority buys power only as per the requirement. He also urged the government to motivate the private sector to invest. On the occasion, Dhakal submitted a memorandum to the minister mentioning the problems faced by the power producers.

Revisiting Water-Induced Disasters



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

It is the time of the year when newspaper cover pictures invariably flip dramatically from showing long lines of dry pots waiting to be filled at community water standposts with headlines like “kagakul basti” (Thirsty Settlements) in May to “Sadak Ma Khola” (Rivers Overflow into Streets) once the monsoon rains start in June. It is a ritual piously followed by editors of major dailies without bothering to reflect on why this invariably happens year after year. For too long weaned on the wrong belief that Nepal is rich in water resources (it is NOT: as with the rest of semi-arid South Asia, we are rich in four months of floods and eight months of drought), they rarely provide answers or insightful op-eds.

That state of affairs might finally be changing with two maverick non-party mayors – Balen Shah in Kathmandu and Harka Sampang in Dharan. The former has made it his mission to reverse river bank and flood plains encroachment by demolishing structures (illegally and with a lot of land mafia corruption underlying them) built on such lands. The latter has had exemplary success in bringing water to his city with off-beat schemes that never entered into the thinking of central agencies in Kathmandu. The planners’ eagle’s eye approach of missing specific tree for the forest has never given space to the toad’s eye view of ground reality that dedicated mayors and ward chiefs face every day, slogans of federalism and decentralization notwithstanding.

The kind of “flood” Kathmandu and other cities experience, with streets running full of water as if it were a river, is not because of too much rainfall: indeed, during the most recent flooding one saw in Kapan rainfall was not the extreme of cloudbursts but a normal monsoon event. It happened because houses were built on the river’s natural flood plains forcing it to seek its old path, in Kapan’s case the main road built by forcing the river underground into 48” hume pipes. The now built areas were previously rice fields that now no longer store the rain to allow most of it to seep into the groundwater, thus recharging wells and dry season flow of rivers. Whatever rain occurs now has to immediately run off cement roof tops to whatever drainage it can find because building permits have been issued without requirements of rainwater harvesting and recharge of groundwater. Furthermore, whatever stormwater and regular drains have

been built are not only inadequate in size but are frequently blocked by discarded plastic and other garbage.

Similarly, urban water shortages are hardly due to any decrease in overall precipitation in the country. The first cause is booming urban population demanding more water as Nepalis give up on farming because they cannot compete with imported foreign grain and vegetables and move to cities in droves. Second, urban water supply system’s underground pipes leak like a sieve. An old estimate of 1987 for technical loss and outright theft when I was member of the Pokhrel Commission investigating World Bank’s failure with its 12-year water supply projects was 70% for Kathmandu Valley. I have not seen signs of any positive management improvement to decrease this number. Third, springs in the hills and wells in the Tarai are the main sources of drinking water in Nepal, and they are drying up. The primary cause is misuse of pump technology leading to over-pumping without any commensurate recharge or other storage plans. Other causes are neglect of traditional ponds that held back rainwater from immediately running off (contributing to flooding) and allowed for slow seepage to underground storage from which springs drew their sustenance.

Both floods and droughts as such are caused mainly by mal-development, which is within our power to correct as the two mayors are trying, and not by climate change, as yet one might add, since climate change will make things much worse in the future if such mistakes are not corrected. Unfortunately, climate change has become a useful but very wrong means of escapism for both national agencies and international development outfits, allowing them to smokescreen their past mal-development activities (such as allowing flood plains encroachment, bad water projects etc.). Climate change – brought about by industrial capitalism using the atmosphere as its pollution sink that results in more heat energy trapped within it leading to extreme weather events as it dissipates that heat – is on its inexorable march. And the procedural fetishism of all the COPs seem unable to come up with any meaningful measures to slowing it down, let alone reversing it. Countries like Nepal on the fatalistic receiving end can do little about it, but it can undo its own mistakes of mal-develop-

ment which otherwise will make climate change impacts on floods and droughts much worse.

A few years back, researchers from Nepal Water Conservation Foundation together with Policy Entrepreneurs Inc. and International Water Management Institute-Nepal supported by Canada's IDRC conducted a study of water-induced disasters and "those left behind", i.e., those being (in the context of a remittance economy) women, children, aged and the handicapped. Its findings brought up several surprises as open-minded researches often do. The first was that, in Nepal's context, it is not just floods and drought that are water-induced disasters, serious though they are, but include water-borne pesticides, lightning strikes, and marijuana farming as well. Misuse of pesticides – many of them banned abroad and even those not banned

but over-used or handled improperly – are finding their way into food chains and water bodies. They have led (in pocket vegetable growing areas) to cancer among even young children and girls

(since most vegetable farming is done by women in a male out-migrating remittance economy), to wild animals in Chitwan National Park dying, and to fish stock in the Kulekhani reservoir coming down from 50 tons a year to 5 tons.

Lightning paradoxically turns out, especially in the mid-Hill Mahabharat range, to be a water-induced disaster that is very poorly studied and not much done about. Villagers say lightning strikes have increased over the years, the causes being both climate change-induced increase in extreme events such as thunder storms as well as poor earthing of rural electrical distribution systems that have now expanded to over 90% of Nepal's population. Women groups reported mass killings by lightning strikes of both livestock in their sheds as well as poultry farms, causing immense economic loss and forcing them back into poverty with the loss of a major income source.

Such disasters as well as drying up of local springs have harmed the livelihood of rural families who (especially the poorest among them) are forced to look for alternative sources of making ends meet. For this, they turn to what has traditionally grown in the Nepali hills in many different species and is used in Shivite religious rituals –

ganja (or cannabis, hemp, marijuana etc.). Under pressure from the US, Nepal's King Birendra was forced to ban its cultivation, even though it grows wild in Nepal and even in one's city lawn if one does not mow it, and it requires no irrigation or other scarce water supply needs! Reagan administration, unable to control drug demand and misuse within the US resorted to pressuring countries like Nepal and bombing Columbian villages to curtail supply. Even though the US and Canada have now legalized its cultivation and use, Nepal continues to honour its commitment to the US, much to the harm of its marginalized farmers in the mid-hills trying to eke out a living.

Where an unfortunate gender dimension enters this picture is in the mismatch between ground social realities and the law regarding cannabis. It is a cat-and-mouse game between poor villagers carrying it to the market and the police; and the ones arrested are not the rich transborder dealers (who seem to be in

good terms with the authorities) but the poor porter (mostly a male) who is incarcerated for an extended period of time. This adds to the burden of the woman who perforce becomes the head of the household responsible for all duties including that of the arrested man.

An interesting aspect of this research was that most of the women researchers were scientists who resented being labeled with the gender tag, a tension that exists within the feminist movement between women professionals and agency gender experts. Along the course of the research, however, they came to appreciate gender's intersectionality with their own water science. They also began to appreciate the difference between Northern versus Southern approaches to gender studies in that the former is based on methodological individualism that prioritizes the individual within the state, whereas the latter sees the woman as part of the social order that places – especially during disasters – family first, clan and neighbourhood second, and the state last. This also is the future challenge that mayors such as Balen and Harka will have to grapple with as they address second generation issues with urban floods and water scarcity.

Where an unfortunate gender dimension enters this picture is in the mismatch between ground social realities and the law regarding cannabis. It is a cat-and-mouse game between poor villagers carrying it to the market and the police; and the ones arrested are not the rich transborder dealers (who seem to be in



Classic example of urban encroachment into a river's realm...



And what happens when a river decides to reclaim its path: boulders brought down by small Kulekhani tributary in Palung circa 1993 cloudburst

NAGDHUNA TUNNEL A Breakthrough

In a momentous joint program attended by Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Prakash Jwala, and Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, Kikuta Yutaka, the Nagdhunga Tunnel Project achieved a significant breakthrough. This marks a important milestone in fulfilling the long-awaited dream of Nepalese travelers to traverse through their first modern tunnel. The tunnel's construction has been made possible through generous financial assistance from the Japanese government under the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) program and the entire work will be completed and vehicles can be passed through the tunnel by September 2024.

By KESHAB POUDEL

In the presence of Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Prakash Jwala, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, Kikuta Yutaka, JICA head, other senior officials, technicians, and workers, a momentous occasion unfolded. With a single push of a button, the thin wall of the tunnel linking Sisne Khola of Dhading and Thankot was erased, and the res-

cue tunnel of Nagdhunga Tunnel was officially breakthrough.

On (Monday, August 7), in accordance with Nepali and Japanese culture, the evacuation tunnel of the Nagdhunga-Sisnekhola tunnel, currently under construction, experienced a momentous breakthrough. The final blast was successfully executed, completing the 'breakthrough' of the res-

cue tunnel.

A special program was held to commemorate this significant event, taking place at both the route of the tunnel from Dhading (west) to its exit in Kathmandu (east).

The atmosphere instantly filled with joy and happiness as the people present at the ceremony celebrated this remarkable achievement.

COVERSTORY



become a game-changer for Nepal's transportation network, the anticipation and excitement among the Nepalese population are growing. It is expected to open up new opportunities for trade, commerce, and tourism, fostering prosperity and connectivity in the region.

As the project nears its final stages, authorities from both Nepal and Japan are continuing to collaborate closely to ensure all necessary safety standards and quality measures are met.

The dedication and support from the Japanese government in this endeavor have strengthened the ties between the two nations and showcased Japan's commitment to contributing to Nepal's development.

Minister Jwala's Remark

Minister of Physical Infrastructure, Jwala, enthusiastically declared this day as a historic milestone with the opening of Nepal's first modern tunnel road. He expressed optimism that the tunnel will be completed by the next year, enabling smooth vehicular movement.

In his speech, Minister Jwala extended heartfelt gratitude to the government of Japan for their invaluable assistance in building crucial infrastructures in Nepal. He emphasized that Japan's contributions to

After relentless hard work to open the tunnel, there couldn't have been a more deserving moment to revel in the success.

The tireless work on the tunnel is progressing swiftly, and it is expected to be fully completed, enabling the smooth passage of vehicles, by September 2024. This state-of-the-art tunnel not only signifies a crucial infrastructure development but also stands as a symbol of the strong bilateral relations between Nepal and Japan.

The foundation stone for the tunnel was laid in October 2019, and since then, dedicated efforts have been invested in its construction. The tunnel spans an impressive length of 2.68 km and comprises two sections: the main tunnel, which is 9 meters wide, and the rescue tunnel, measuring 4 meters in width. This modern infrastructure project is a testament to the strong collaboration between Nepal and Japan, symbolizing their commitment to progress and connectivity.

The completion of the evacuation tunnel marks a major milestone in the Nagdhunga-Sisnekhola tunnel project, and it is expected to significantly improve transportation and accessibility in the region. This achievement represents a remarkable feat of

engineering and underscores the mutual efforts of both nations to enhance their ties and foster development.

Once operational, the Nagdhunga tunnel will alleviate traffic congestion, reduce travel time, and enhance the overall transportation experience for both local commuters and tourists. The project's successful completion will undoubtedly bring about positive impacts on Nepal's economy and tourism sector.

With the tunnel poised to





Nepal's development sector have been immense, highlighting the support received during the earthquake reconstruction.

During the ceremony, Minister Jwala also conveyed special appreciation to the Government of Japan and JICA for their unwavering support in constructing this landmark project. He firmly believed that this breakthrough infrastructure would significantly enhance the trading of goods through improved vehicular movement, thus fostering prosperity in the country's economic conditions.

The completion of this tunnel stands as a testament to the strong bilateral relations between Nepal and Japan, and it reflects the fruitful collaboration in bringing essential infrastructure projects to fruition. Minister Jwala's words conveyed a sense of optimism and determination to continue fostering positive relationships and advancements in Nepal's development journey.

Minister Jwala provided clear directives to the construction company, emphasizing the importance of completing the tunnel route within the extended deadline.

He assured the government's support in overcoming any practical complexities that may arise during the construction process. Additional-

ly, Minister Jwala personally inquired about the progress and condition of the tunnel route to stay informed about the developments.

Ambassador Kikuta's Remarks

For Japanese ambassador to Nepal Kikuta, the attending the breakthrough ceremony is second major events following the wrapping up major school reconstruction project. All the 274 school buildings, which were destroyed by earthquake in 2015, are reconstructed with multi-hazard resil-

ient structures which are child, gender and disable friendly to provide improved learning environment for the students based on the concept of BBB which increases resilience not only physically but also socially.

Ambassador of Japan to Nepal Kikuta congratulated all the stakeholders, both Japanese and Nepali sides, for coming so far in spite of so many obstacles and wished them the best of luck for a smooth completion of the remaining work.

He has also emphasized the importance of ensuring proper safety measures in the construction site. Nepal is a mountainous country like Japan. Thus, tunnels would take an indispensable part in the transport sector in Nepal. Japan has a highly developed tunnel construction technology and rich experiences.

Modern Project

Being the first-ever modern high tech road tunnel construction in Nepal with technology transfer from Japan, this project holds immense significance. Its successful implementation not only promises to improve the traffic situation at the construction site but also paves the way for future advancements in Nepal's transportation sector.

Monitoring the progress, Secretary at the Ministry of Physical





brings the dream of a modern, efficient tunnel route closer to becoming a reality,” said Duwadi.

Nagdhunga Tunnel

The Nagdhunga Tunnel, funded with the support of the Japanese government, marks a significant milestone in Nepal’s modern infrastructure development.

As the first modern highway tunnel designed to accommodate larger vehicles, it is set to bring about transformative changes in road construction within the country.

While Nepal had constructed 500 meter long first road tunnel in the Churia region in 1917, the Nagdhunga Tunnel stands out as the longest and most advanced of its kind in the nation.

After the construction of first Churia tunnel under a leadership of Nepali engineer Colonel Dilli Jung Thapa, Nepal entered in tunnel technology. However, it took almost another 106 years to complete the modern tunnel in Nepal.

Nepalese Are learning

According to project head Naveenman Shrestha, our technicians

Infrastructure and Transport, Keshav Kumar Sharma, is actively involved in the project. On a recent occasion, Minister Jwala conducted a thorough assessment of the tunnel works to gauge its status and progress.

Due to the unavoidable delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and other factors, the construction period of the tunnel has been extended by 14 months. As per the revised timeline, the entire project is expected to be completed, allowing vehicles to pass through the tunnel by September 2024.

“Today, Nepal embarks on a new phase of modern infrastructure development,” expressed Secretary Keshav Sharma of the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure, recognizing the transformative impact of this groundbreaking project on the nation’s infrastructure landscape. The collaboration with Japan in this endeavor marks a testament to the deepening ties between the two countries and reinforces the commitment towards progress and prosperity in Nepal.

According to Spokesperson Narayan Duwadi, the main tunnel still requires approximately 500 meters to be dug, while the rescue tunnel lacks around 35 meters of completion. In response, construction activities have

been significantly accelerated to ensure that vehicles can operate along the tunnel route by the next year. It is noteworthy that the foundation stone for this 2.68-kilometer tunnel route was laid around four years ago.

Duwadi, spokesperson for the Nagadhunga-Sisnekhola tunnel project, shared that out of the total 2,557 meters, an impressive 2,556 meters of digging work has already been completed. This indicates that the tunneling work of the project is at an advanced stage, with 91 percent completion. Furthermore, the overall physical progress of the project stands at an encouraging 80 percent.

“The project’s steady advancement highlights the collective efforts and commitment to achieving this significant infrastructure development, which is set to revolutionize transportation in Nepal. The diligent work of all involved stakeholders



COVERSTORY

are also learnt from Japanese technology. This is the first modern high quality tunnel in Nepal. Nepali Construction Company is constructing the tunnel using Nepali workers. This is the main part of the JICA ODA loan support to Nepal.

This means Nepalese contractor company, engineers and other technician will learn the tunnel road in Nepal. This is first of its kind contributing to the local socio economic development ending the traffic congestion at the entry point of Kathmandu.

Earlier, the Japanese government had provided grant assistance to build the 158 km BP Highway, also known as Banepa-Bardibas Highway and Koteswor-Suryabinayak road section.

A joint venture (JV) of Nippon Koei, Eight Japan Engineering Consultants, and Nippon Civic Consulting Engineer in association with GEOCE Consultants, and ITECO-NEPAL is consulting the construction project while Hazama Ando Corporation, a Japanese construction company is contracted for the construction purpose which was also contracted to build the Banepa-Bardibas Highway and Koteswor-Suryabinayak road section.

First Modern Tunnel

Funded by the Government of Japan through JICA and the Nepal government, the project's total cost

amounts to Rs 22.14 billion, with the Nepalese government contributing Rs 5.85 billion and JICA lending the remaining Rs 16.5 billion (equivalent to JPY 16.636 billion) under ODA.

This low-interest loan assis-

construction period of 42 months. However, due to unforeseen challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the project completion date has been extended to April 25, 2024.

The tunnel spans a total length of 2.68 kilometers and consists of two lanes, each with a width of 3.5 meters, a median width of 1.5 meters at the center, and 0.5-meter-wide spaces on both sides for drainage facilities.

Notably, the tunnel will be equipped with 24-hour ventilation (Jet fan) and lighting systems, ensuring safe and efficient passage

for commuters and cargo vehicles. Additionally, an evacuation tunnel, stretching 2.55 kilometers, has been incorporated for emergency services. The project has made significant progress, with approximately 49 percent of the physical work already completed.

As the tunnel offers a modern, high-quality infrastructure, Nepalese engineers have had the opportunity to learn essential skills from Japanese technology, enhancing their expertise for future development projects.

The Nagdhunga Tunnel Construction Project is a testament to the enduring partnership

between Nepal and Japan, exemplified by Japan's contribution to several strategically significant infrastructure projects in Nepal, ranging from hydro-

Low-Income Least Developed Countries like Nepal.

Construction of the tunnel began in October 2019 with a planned

between Nepal and Japan, exemplified by Japan's contribution to several strategically significant infrastructure projects in Nepal, ranging from hydro-



power and drinking water to health, aviation, education, disaster management, and road development.

By sharing its modern tunnel technology with Nepal, Japan has further solidified its commitment to enhancing Nepal's infrastructure and promoting socio-economic progress within the country. With the successful completion of the Nagdhunga Tunnel, Nepal's transportation network is set to achieve new heights, fostering economic growth and prosperity for the nation.

Japan's Support

Japan has been a steadfast supporter of Nepal's modernization process, offering financial and technical assistance for various infrastructure projects since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries on 01 September 1956.

The scope of support from Japan ranges from essential infrastructure development to livelihood enhancement, encompassing diverse areas such as Trout Fishing in Junar, fish and rice improvement in Janakpur, and the highly acclaimed

"one village, one product" initiative that has brought about significant changes in the agriculture sector.

It is worth noting that this is not the first model infrastructure project in Nepal to benefit from Japanese assistance. Thanks to the generous support from the Government of Japan, numerous strategically important infrastructure projects have already been successfully completed. These

projects include hydropower ventures like Kulekhani, Kali Gandaki A, and the Tanahu Hydropower project, which play crucial roles in meeting the country's energy needs.

Additionally, Japan's aid has extended to areas such as electricity distribution improvement, modernizing the navigation system at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), drinking water facilities, healthcare advancements, aviation infrastructure, educa-

tioned livelihoods and strengthened the foundation for a promising future.

Japan has provided much needed technical and financial support to Nepal in its all major infrastructures projects including electricity, drinking water, road, health, education, town planning and agriculture.

Building the first storage Kulekhani Hydropower project almost 38 years ago, Japan contributed immensely to stabilize Nepal's power supply system, providing the livelihood improvement for local community promoting fishing.

JICA supported to build water treatment plant of Melamchi project and TUTH Hospital is another example where hundreds of Nepalese learnt medical education and tens of thousands Nepalese have been getting medical benefits from it.

Japan's recent support constructing new modern building for Bir Hospital has already enhanced the capacity.

The breakthrough of the rescue tunnel of Nagdhunga Tunnel marks a significant

milestone and symbolizes a new beginning for Nepal's infrastructure development. It underscores the continued importance and relevancy of Japanese support in driving Nepal's progress and growth. Once again, Japan's steadfast assistance has played a pivotal role in shaping the development landscape of Nepal, paving the way for a brighter and more promising future.

ditional initiatives, and disaster management and road sector development. The long-standing partnership between Nepal and Japan has played a pivotal role in fostering progress and development across various sectors in Nepal, leaving a positive and lasting impact on the nation's growth and prosperity. The collaborative efforts have not only enriched infrastructural capabilities but have also



Kissinger's Journeys To China: Contrasting 1971 And 2023



BY: DINESH BHATTARAI

Then

In July 1971, U.S. President Richard Nixon's National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger made a secret visit to China. The visit was in line with President's 1967 Foreign Affairs article in which he wrote, "it was unwise to leave the largest country out of the international mainstream for too long." During the secret visit, Kissinger discussed reestablishing and normalizing diplomatic ties between the United States and the Communist China. In his opening remarks to the then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, Kissinger said, "Reality has brought us together, and we believe that reality will shape our future." Welcoming Kissinger back home from Beijing, President Nixon called the visit "the most significant foreign policy achievement in this century" and termed it as "the week that changed the world." President Nixon visited China in 1972. Prof. Stephen Sestanovich at the Columbia University writes, "In making the opening to China, Nixon and Kissinger had ignored the experts and bureaucrats, who preferred a gradual, step by step attempt to address long standing bilateral problems between Beijing and Washington. (Kissinger derided these as a "shopping lists of mutual irritations.") The duo "had also ignored the moralists, who opposed dealing with blood-soaked totalitarians." They accepted "ideological truce," with China and wanted to show what could be achieved by "a hard-boiled, quid pro quo approach to foreign policy." Both boasted China as a supporter of America's power, influence and global presence.

The August 1969 border rift between the Soviet Union and China opened up the possibility of an American-Chinese deal—a partnership of opposites that could signify a 'triumph of realism over idealism and pragmatism over ideology.' Kissinger worked to widen the potential and exploit the border clash to American advantage. America used Pakistan as a conduit to go to China, and turned a blind eye to the "genocide" happening in the then East Pakistan. With Sino-American rapprochement, Kissinger "played on Russian fears," and offered "a lifeline to strengthen the balance of power." Going by today's standards of toxic populism, he didn't care about his appearing "soft on communism and indifferent to American values." He assured Chinese leaders that America "will never collude with other countries against the People's Republic of China, either with our allies or with some of our opponents. The US will not take any major steps affecting your interests without discussing them with you and taking your views into account." Kissinger's diplomacy was rooted in "an unrelentingly realistic assessment of the world and all its unbeautiful complexities," as the leading realist Hans Morgenthau once noted, "the very act of acting destroys our moral integrity. Whoever wants to retain his moral innocence must forsake action altogether."

Kissinger's biographer Niall Ferguson writes "no Ameri-

can statesman has been as revered or as reviled as Henry Kissinger." Kissinger spent his childhood in Hitler's Germany, and grew up as a Jewish refugee in America. His hard work and deep study propelled him from his refugee origins to a leading geo-strategist and to power corridors in Kathmandu. Kissinger worked to bring an end to the Vietnam War. His policy of realpolitik was instrumental in opening to China which in turn transformed the global geopolitical dynamics. He was appointed Nixon's Secretary of State in 1973.

NOW

Kissinger turned centenary on May 27, 2023. He travelled to Beijing in July 2023. He is said to have made no less than hundred visits to China. He met Chinese President Xi Jinping in the building where he had met Chinese leaders way back in 1971. President Xi showered fulsome praise on Kissinger, commending his pivotal role in "normalizing diplomatic relations between the US and China" some fifty years ago. He added, "The Chinese people never forget their old friends and Sino-US relations will always be linked with the name of Henry Kissinger." Chinese media hailed centenary's intellectual brilliance. Global Times described Kissinger with a "razor sharp" mind. Kissinger told his host that he was a "friend of China." Xinhua quoted him as saying that "the relationship between our two countries is a matter of world peace and the progress of human society." Kissinger emphasized the importance of upholding Shanghai Communique valuing "One China principle," referring to Beijing's claim over Taiwan. President praised the "splendid strategic vision" of Kissinger's diplomatic effort and expressed hope that, "you and other insightful Americans will continue to play a constructive role in bringing US-China relations back on the right track." Kissinger was also received by Chinese defense minister Li Shangfu, who had refused to meet his US opposite Lloyd Austin on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue 2023. Chinese Premier called on Washington to adopt the "correct strategic judgment" and he still held out hope for improved relations. Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that Kissinger, "has made historic contributions to breaking the ice in China-U.S. relations, and played an irreplaceable role in enhancing understanding between the two countries. The US's China policy requires the diplomatic wisdom of Kissinger and the political courage of President Nixon."

State of Sino-US relations

The US-China tensions are a stark reality revolving over the future of Taiwan which China considers as its own. President Biden has repeatedly said that Washington would intervene, should China invade Taiwan. This is taken as a signal to end US "strategic ambiguity." Citing human rights abuses in Xinjiang, enhancing support to Taiwan, and a trade war with China have lately emerged

in the U.S. foreign policy arsenals. A lot of bitterness and hostility has developed against China in the USA for over a decade. When President Xi met President Obama in California in 2013, they acknowledged the existence of “areas of tensions” between their countries. Even in a “fluid and polarized” American politics, there has appeared a rare “bipartisan consensus viewing China as a rival rather than a partner.” Relations are at the “historic lows” since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979.

The Biden administration’s policy seems no different from his predecessor. The first high-level meeting between Chinese and U.S. officials in Anchorage, Alaska in March 2021 manifested strategic competition more seriously. China considers the QUAD, AUKUS, and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, even the US grant assistance to Nepal under Millennium Challenge Corporation -Nepal Compact clearly designed to counter and contain China.

The Biden administration appears to be aiming to re-establish high-level contacts with China’s leadership after an incident involving a Chinese balloon scandal. High-ranking officials including Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, and presidential envoy for climate change and most recent Secretary of State John Kerry visited Beijing to resurrect diplomatic talks. None of them were extended the level of reception and treatment by China than to Kissinger. Kissinger’s visit made more news than the rest.

Daniel W. Drezner writes in *Politico* that “Great power politics, however, remains the one area where even Kissinger’s bitterest critics acknowledge that he had some juice,” amidst the deteriorating US relations with China. Even at 100, Kissinger has the ability to maintain privileged access to the corridors of powers both in Washington and Beijing. At a time when there is an inhospitable political climate for China, Drezner writes, “Both Xi and Kissinger’s preference for a bygone era of Sino-American comity will matter little inside the Beltway.”

The BBC suggested that, “given his outsized stature in China,” Kissinger “could act as a backchannel for U.S.-China negotiations.” However, Department spokesman Matthew Miller was reported to have told the press, “We are aware that Henry Kissinger was travelling to China. He was there under his own volition, not acting on behalf of the United States Government.” Analysts interpret Kissinger’s visit in various ways: Chinese appearing desperate to use the centenarian to mend ways-sending message that Sino-American relations would be much better “if Washington reverts back to the foreign policy of a decade ago,” a part of Washington’s efforts to restore official communications, and as unique due to the unprecedented warm reception and treatment at the hands of the Chinese compared to previous visits. Kissinger was projecting a bright future for China-U.S. relations through the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation, in order to eliminate ‘misunderstanding, co-exist peacefully, and both sides not work to isolate the other side.’



Nepal in geopolitical lenses

China is Nepal’s immediate neighbor, close friend and development partner. Nepali Prime Minister BP Koirala made forceful plea before the 15th UN General Assembly for the restoration of China’s rightful place in the United Nations on September 29, 1960, at a time when the Western world called it a “Red China.” Nepal’s proximity to China’s autonomous Tibetan province, attracts Western’s geopolitical interests and attention. Nepal consistently maintains One China policy, not allowing any hostile activities from its soil.

The United States is the second country having diplomatic relations with Nepal after the United Kingdom. Welcoming King Birendra at the White House in 1983, President Ronald Reagan described “Nepal as a neighbor on the other side of the world.” This underscores the value of Nepal for the US, despite geographical distance. President extended US support to Nepal’s peace zone proposal and advised working closely with neighbors to make it a reality. After meeting the king, Henry Kissinger described Nepal as “a little country between two elephants,” emphasizing the need for a “Zone of Peace.” In his book “World Order,” Kissinger notes Nepal’s historical ability to balance relations with China and India, ensuring its independence.

Big powers are re-balancing. Geopolitics is back in focus, marked by a significant shift with India as an “indispensable” partner for the US in the intricate geopolitical landscape of the 21st century. China and Russia, once at distant during the Cold War, now share “friendship with no limits.” India appears cautious about Russia moving too closer to China, and expanding its ties with Islamabad. During the Cold War, the US sided with Pakistan. Kissinger didn’t say very much to the liking of India in the past. According to The

Economist, (June 15, 2023), Kissinger as the US National Security Adviser to President Nixon, is known in India as “the former enabler of a viscerally anti-Indian President.” Kissinger praises for the way, “the Indians conduct their foreign policy, now because it shows balance,” and calls India’s foreign minister S. Jaishankar “the practicing political leader that is quite close to my views,” (The *Economist*, June 15, 2023).

1972 opening helped China rise to prominence, transforming and shaping the world, but not without seismic effects. China’s rise reverberates worldwide, fundamentally altering the geopolitical landscape. Positioned at the crossroads of competing and conflicting geopolitical interests, Nepal must exercise heightened care and vigilance to shield itself from the unpredictable impacts of these waves on its stability, sovereignty and development. As a steadfast non-aligned nation, Nepal can play the pivotal role of a balancer on the global stage.

Dinesh Bhattarai, Ph.D., Faculty Member Institute of Crisis Management Studies (ICMS) Tribhuvan University. He also served as a foreign relations advisor to Prime Minister Sushil Koirala. He is a career diplomat.

KULA MAN'S TWO YEARS

A Long March

Kul Man Ghising, the managing director of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), has accomplished a great deal during his two years in the position despite a lack of funding, the sluggish administrative structure of the NEA, and the lack of cooperation from various government stakeholders. Due to rising electricity demand and power generation, NEA must make significant investments in its transmission and distribution networks. In addition, interministerial collaboration and support from provincial, local, and public institutions are essential to the development of an NEA transmission and distribution system that can evacuate and continuously supply power to every household. MD Ghising is on a long march to get rid of as many humps and bumps as she can.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Managing Director Kul Man Ghising was interrupted by several brief power outages on August 10 as he spoke at a press conference to highlight his two years of leadership at Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) in a crowded meeting room on the fifth floor of the central office.

In a news conference attended by the NEA's top brass as well as other junior employees, MD Ghising demonstrated how teamwork and hard work contributed to NEA's expansion of transmission and distribution over the past two years.

The frequent power outage at NEA's headwaters during a press conference where NEA's MD spoke raised the question of whether the recent frequent outages were simply technical or

the result of employees' lack of cooperation with management at a time when everyone in attendance had experienced one type of frequent power outage or another, believing that the disruption had been caused by a lack of transmission and distribution.

Although MD Ghising credited the entire NEA team for the advancements made over the previous two years, his workers don't appear to have done so yet. The press conference's gesture implied that they do not fully trust and support the manage-



ment in return.

Even some journalists wonder if it's merely a technical issue or perhaps NEA staff members are becoming uncooperative with management. Nevertheless, despite frequent power outages, MD Ghising read out his hour-long speech and answered the media's questions.

MD Ghising remained speaking despite power outages frequently blocking the microphone, demonstrating his underlying conviction to take action to improve Nepal's electrical supply.

The system's infrastructure has been encouraged to be improved and strengthened in response to consumer complaints about occasional power disruptions. By estimating the power consumption of 11 main cities, including the federal capital Kathmandu Valley, by the year 2050, the building of 400 kV, 220 kV, and 132 kV transmission lines and substations has been done in stages. Transmission and distribution substations have begun to be automated as part of the Digital NEA program, which aims to modernize and automate service delivery, according to MD Ghising.

What is inspiring is MD Ghising's brave commitment to transform Nepal's transmission and distribution systems capable

of providing dependable and uninterrupted electricity in his remaining two years, despite facing numerous obstacles, non-cooperation from government agencies, particularly the Ministry of Forests, apathy from local governments, and resistance from local people.

"There are difficulties everywhere, such as those related to funding, purchasing land, clearing forests, and so forth. To organize and carry out the transmission line project, I only have



one choice. To upgrade the distribution infrastructure in the valley alone, I require more than Rs. 50 billion. According to MD Ghising, NEA need up to Rs. 600–700 billion to upgrade the transmission and distribution network.

MD Ghising stated in modest terms that the government has only allotted Rs. 70 million for this fiscal year. "I'm making plans for my two-year term. I'm making plans for the next 50 years. In the next two to

three years, NEA must build the transmission line and upgrade the distribution system. Otherwise, load shedding would resume. Earlier, a lack of electricity was the reason for load shedding. The lack of a transmission and distribution system will now be the source of load shedding, according to MD Ghising.

Two years Progress

In the past two years, NEA has achieved some noticeable improvements, particularly in the electricity transmission and distribution networks. Over 1383.37 MW of additional energy had been added to Nepal's grid in the last two years.

The system's entire installed capacity as of now is 2822 MW, with the remaining capacity being divided between 2078/79 and 2079/80 (up to the 24th of Shrawan 2080/81).

According to MD Ghising, 1383 MW of power were added in 2078/079 and 2079/080, respectively, with additions of 751 MW and 632.37 MW.

Only around 1774 megawatts of power purchase and sale agreements have been completed in the last two years, compared to the approximately 8052 megawatts of deals that have been completed thus far.

In addition, the authority has already finished the 2290

ENERGY

megawatt draft power purchase and sale agreement. Power purchase and sale agreements for a total of 2168 megawatts are in the process of being written.

The company had a Rs. 6 billion profit when he took over as MD of NEA. Nevertheless, as compared to the total profit of Rs. 13 billion previous year

The per capita energy consumption has increased from about 235 units to 380 units as a result of the system's strengthening.

Due to a coordination issue with the relevant agencies, the work to underground the electricity distribution system for the Kathmandu Valley, Bharatpur, and Pokhara Metropolitan Area has begun. Despite a slight delay, the construction work has advanced to finish the project.

Transmission Line Delay

MD Ghising inspects transmission line construction sites, supervises contractors, and bargains with locals for over 90% of his spare time, yet he hasn't yet reached his objectives. Many unfinished transmission line projects have been finished in the last two years, while many more are still experiencing challenges from diverse sectors. Officials from the Ministry of Forest and Environ-

ment, in addition to local NGOs and the community, are to blame for the obstruction of numerous transmission line projects across the nation. A tower for a 220 kV transmission line in the Bardaghat area has failed to be built due to the ministry's clearance order, costing the nation significantly in lost revenue.

The NEA is being pressured to give the landowner an



exceptional sum of money in compensation, with the help of a few NGOs with a presence in Kathmandu. According to reports, NEA will receive up to Rs. 50 million for a plot of land on which to build the tower.

"A transmission line must be built in order to move electricity to a supply area. This requires complete support from numerous stakeholders, according to MD Ghising, who painted a grim picture. "Despite the fact that the pace is still slow, our persistent efforts have had an impact."

Despite all of this, there are currently 8867 MVA capac-

ity substations and 5742 circuit kilometers of transmission line in operation. In two years, NEA plans to finish 900 circuit km of 400/220/132 kV. A total of 17 substations with a combined 10500 MVA capacity have been built. There are 54 capacity substations being built, according to MD Ghising.

Export of Electricity

NEA has begun exporting a sizable amount of electricity to India for the first time ever. Since November 2021, Nepal has been exporting power to India in quantities ranging from 39 MW to the current 450 MW. The Indian Ministry of Power is now approving an additional 600 MW worth of projects for export to India.

NEA MD Ghising has already established a plan for the following two years, just like he did for the first two years of his leadership. Support must be given to MD Ghising's proposal to upgrade distribution networks and expand transmission, given Nepal's NDC commitment to having no emissions by 2045. Even though it is a lengthy journey, MD Ghising needs the assistance of all interested parties in both words and deeds in order to offer electricity to everyone.

NEA Has Made Significant Progress In The Last Two Years: MD Kul Man Ghising

The Government of Nepal appointed me as the Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) for a period of four years on August 10, 2021 through a decision of the Council of Ministers. Accepting the most difficult challenge of my personal life, I returned to NEA for a second term to fulfill the responsibility given to me by the Government of Nepal.

Improvement of NEA's financial condition, good governance within the organization, electrification to provide electricity to every citizen's home, expansion and strengthening of transmission and distribution infrastructure structures to make electricity supply reliable and dependable, promotion of large hydropower projects for production, increase in domestic consumption, export of surplus electricity, and other initiatives have increased.

Increase the profit of the organization and make it a strong, disciplined and respected organization in the country; increase electricity production and reduce leakage; expand access to maximum customers; reduce financial expenses; expand and improve transmission and distribution lines and substations; improve management; and provide customers with consistent, high-quality and reliable service. And we're working tirelessly to generate enough power. Electrification reached 95 percent two years ago, up from 89 percent.

The system's infrastructure structures have been improved and strengthened in response to consumer concerns about occasional power interruptions.

The development of 400 kV, 220 kV, and 132 kV transmission lines and substations has been phased, with the power consumption of 11 key cities in the country, including the federal capital, Kathmandu Valley, projected by 2050. Transmission and distribution substations are being automated as part of the Digital NEA program to modernize and automate service delivery.

Contracts for some long-stalled transmission and distribution projects were cancelled and new contracts were issued to accelerate project construction. Regular inspections and monitoring of unexpected sites were carried out to complete projects under construction.

Major Achievements During the Period Financial and Administrative Reforms

The Authority's profit was 6.1 billion rupees in fiscal year 2077/78, but rose to 13.3 billion rupees in fiscal year 2078/79. According to the unaudited financial statement of the authority for the fiscal year 2079/80, the profit is 12.3 billion rupees. Last year, due to the prolonged dry season and reduced water flow in rivers and canals, power generation by the Authority and private sector hydropower plants decreased and electricity imports increased slightly to meet domestic demand, affecting profits.



The authority's revenue from energy sales and other sources was about Rs. 81 billion two years ago, but it is now over Rs. 1,018 billion. The Authority's profit has increased from Rs. 11 billion to Rs. 36.6 billion.

- The valuation of the Authority's real estate has been completed. In addition, the third financial restructuring of the Authority was planned and the process of issuing shares of the Authority to the public under the Authority Act 2041 was advanced.

- The performance management system was maintained as a standard for power leakage control, electricity tariff arrears collection, etc., based on the principle of "the right person in the right place" to improve customer service. - It was decided to establish a centralized payment and online payment sys-

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tem.

- For budget and expenditure control, the centralized payment and online payment system was made functional. The authority has invested about Rs. 48 billion in the last two years to expand and improve the transmission and distribution system. It has also accumulated about 30 billion rupees in the state fund from loans, interest and royalties.

Distribution and Customers

Electricity leakage has been reduced from 17.38 percent in 2077.78 to 13.46 percent at present. Distribution losses have been kept to a minimum of 9.76 percent.

About two years ago, 89 percent of the population received electricity through the national grid, but this figure has now risen to 95 percent. The provinces of Madhesh, Bagmati and Gandaki are essentially fully electrified. Koshi Province is 95 percent electrified, Lumbini Province is 98 percent electrified, Karnali Province is 67 percent electrified, and Sudurpaschim Province is 82 percent electrified.

Out of 753 local levels, 505 are almost fully electrified by the government system, 227 are electrified in most places and 21 are electrified by solar, micro and small hydro power. All preparations are being made to implement the government's announcement to electrify the entire country within the next two years.

Per capita energy consumption has increased from about 235 to 380 units. 800 MVA of industrial power load has been permitted in the last two years.

Due to a coordination problem with the relevant authorities, work on undergrounding the power distribution system of Kathmandu Valley, Bharatpur and Pokhara Metropolitan Area has started. Despite the delay, the work has been completed.

- Customers will receive a single phase connection in three days and a three phase meter in ten days as planned. The online application for three-phase connection has been set up. The smart meter connection program for three-phase users has been advanced.

- The NEA app was used to provide customers with a variety of information and services, including electricity tariff payment.

- 50 kV The availability of transformers for

loads up to 100 kV remained unchanged.

- 200 kV for milking center, cold storage, community drinking water and community irrigation consumers. Assuming that electricity can be supplied through the Authority's transformers.

- Make a clear arrangement in relation to the charging station and for marketing, the electric line up to the location of the charging station. Electricity can be supplied through V. P. Co. transformers.

- The Authority has supported around 2.2 million customers for free energy, irrigation, drinking water, religious facilities, charging stations and other services.

- Approximately 40,000 meters were distributed free of charge to low-income households.

- Call centers have been established and are operational in all provinces to address customer complaints regarding energy supply.

- The installation of smart meters in Ratnapark and Maharajganjvitaran Kendra regions has been satisfactorily completed. The installation of smart meters throughout the country will be completed in the coming days.



Charging Stations and Street Lighting

1) Smart meter installation has been completed at Ratnapark and Maharajganj distribution centers. Installation of smart meters across the country will be completed in the coming days.

2) Architectural lighting has been designed and installed in Buddh, Swayambhu and Pashupati-nath for temples, monasteries and other structures on the country's historical lists.

-3) To promote the use of electric vehicles and thereby increase electricity consumption, 51 charging stations have been constructed throughout the country and 13 more are under construction. Similarly, more than 100 charging stations have been installed in various parts of the country in line with the government's strategy to support the private sector.

Green Hydrogen Initiative

Under the Green Hydrogen Program, a feasibility study report on the production and use of green hydrogen in Nepal has been prepared with technical assistance from the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), Korea, and Kathmandu University, and is being implemented. As a model project, the authority

plans to build a green hydrogen factory.

1) Architectural lighting has been designed and installed in Buddh, Swayambhu and Pashupatinath to illuminate temples, monasteries and other structures on the country's historical lists.

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Transmission Line

Internal:

1) There are currently 5742 circuit kilometers of transmission lines and 8867 MVA capacity substations active.

2) 400/220/132 circuit kilometers in two years. The transmission line construction has been completed. When the circuit is 9300 kilometers long. Construction is in progress.

3) The construction of 17 substations with a total capacity of 10500 MVA has been completed. 54 capacity substations are under construction.

4) In order to meet the country's electricity demand by 2050, a master plan of transmission and substation structures has been developed by dividing major cities, including Kathmandu, into 11 clusters. As a result, construction will be completed gradually by pooling resources.

5) 400/220/132 kV from the Hulaki Highway in the Madhesh region to meet the power needs of growing urbanization and industrialization. Construction of an east-west transmission line has started.

400 kV Butwal-Lamhi-Chinchu, Doodhara-Daichi (Attaria). The transmission line segment has been thoroughly studied and the construction phase has progressed steadily.

A comprehensive analysis of the transmission line crossing the Madhyapahari highway is underway. The 400 kV Arunhav-Tingla-Dudh-koshi-Dhalkebar and Arunhav-Inaruva-Anarmani transmission lines have been constructed and are under financial management. Extension of transmission

lines, installation of capacitor bank and improvement and extension of distribution structure have been widely advanced for reliable and quality power supply.

International:

Construction of 400 kV Butwal-Gorakhpur transmission line has started.

Second 132 kV circuit Kushah-Kataiya. Second circuit 132 kV Parwanipur-Raxaul and double circuit 132 kV Mainhiya-Sampatiya. The construction of the transmission line has been completed.

400 kV Inaruwa-Purnia and Lamki-Wareli. Nepalgunj-Nanpar 132 KV line and Attiraya (Daichi)-Tanakpur 220 KV line. The transmission line construction process has progressed.

400 kV link between Ratmate and Rasuwagadi in China. The transmission line study has been completed.



Electricity

Trade

Nepal started exporting 39 MW of electricity to India for the first time in November 2021 and now exports over 450 MW of electricity.

- The Ministry of Power in India is now reviewing another 600 MW of projects for export to India.

- 132 kV is connected to several areas in Bihar and Nepal. PTC will sell approximately 300 megawatts of power from India's central grid to the Bihar grid via transmission lines. India, the Bihar State Power Corporation and the Authority have entered into a tripartite agreement.

- A five-year medium-term power purchase agreement for 200 megawatts was signed with the Indian power trading company NNVN to supply power to the Indian state of Haryana. The agreement has been submitted to the Indian Ministry of Power for approval.

- India's NNVN is nearing completion of a three-way agreement with the Bangladesh Power Development Board to export power to Bangladesh.

Internal:

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- So far, the total installed capacity of the system has reached 2822 MW, with hydro and solar projects totaling 1383 producing 751 MW and 632.37 MW respectively in 2078/79 and 2079/80 (up to the 24th of Shrawan 2080/81).

- So far, about 8052 megawatts of power purchase and sale agreements have been signed, with only about 1774 megawatts negotiated in the last two years. In addition, the authority has already finalized a draft power purchase agreement for approximately 2290 megawatts. A total of 2168 megawatts of PPAs are currently being drafted.

- The base price for solar power is Rs. 5 and 94 paisa, and a procurement contract for about 100 megawatts of solar power is being auctioned for the first time.

Power generation

The final stage of raising funds for investment in the 1060 MW Upper Arun Hydropower Project has been completed. The construction of the office and staff quarters at the project site is nearing completion. Construction of approximately 24 kilometers of access roads, including 2 kilometers of tunnels, has begun. Selection of consultants for project construction supervision is nearing completion.

The Arun-4 Hydropower Project Authority and the Sutlej Jalvidyut Nigam, India, signed a Memorandum of Understanding for an installed capacity of 490 MW. To advance the project, the process of establishing a joint venture was advanced.

- Land acquisition and other preparatory activities are underway for the 210 MW Chainpur Seti project.

The final stage of development has been completed for four 270 MW hydropower projects under the supervision of Chilime Jalvidyut, a subsidiary of the authority.

The land acquisition process for the 635 MW Dudhkoshi Reservoir Hydropower Project has commenced and the essential investment process with the Asian Development Bank and other donors has been initiated.

Following the completion of financial man-

agement for the 99 MW Tamakoshi Fifth Hydropower Project, the procurement process to select contractors to commence construction has progressed.

-In addition, the construction procedure for the 60 MW Modi hydropower project has been invited and is well underway. The study for Sunkoshi 3 and several pumped storage projects such as Utarganga and Andhikhola has started.

The authority will face more challenges in the coming days. The first is to institutionalize the gains made so far, while the second is to manage the market for the electricity generated. The third is to improve the reliability and quality of the electricity supply.

I further emphasize my determination to resolve the issues and focus all possible efforts in the coming days to provide adequate, regular, reliable

and quality electricity to the people of the country and to establish a competent and profitable authority.

Nepal's Power Trade and Access to the International Power Market

In the last two years, the Nepal Electricity Authority has signed 1774 MW of power purchase and sale agreements. During this period, the Authority has made available an additional 1500

MW of PPAs for RoR hydropower projects. As a result, 1105 MW of PPAs have been approved and more are in the pipeline. Currently, there are 6750 MW targeted for RoR. And the 4500 MW gap towards RoR is being filled accordingly.

In the last two years, a total of 1246 MW of power generation capacity has been upgraded and connected to the national grid.

The Government of India has approved the export of 452 MW of power from 10 hydropower projects to India and the power is being exported in accordance with the terms of the agreement. The Authority has been exploring the power market for the past two years by soliciting bids to export and import power in India and reviewing bids from Indian generators and power trading organizations. While the bid did not immediately benefit the authority, the experience is expected to help Nepal in market design and expansion.

In addition to the power export projects ap-



proved by Nepal, the authority has signed an agreement with the Indian trading company NNVN. The capacity will be certified by the Government of India in the near future and preparations for export will continue. In total, the Nepal Electricity Authority has generated 1073 MW from 19 hydropower projects, including these. Two Indian power trading companies, PTC India and NNVN, have applied to the Government of India for power certification.

Nepal has decided to enter the Indian power market for the first time through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bihar State Power Holding Company Limited (BSPHCL) and Nepal-Bihar 132 kV. The Indian power trading company PTC India and N.V. Pvt. They have entered into a power purchase and sale agreement.

Between New Butwal and Gorakhpur, NEA is constructing second 400 kV submarine transmission line. It is gaining international experience in infrastructure construction by forming a 50:50 joint ventures. The Power Grid Corporation of India is going to develop the Indian portion of the transmission structure, and construction of the line has commenced following the signing of an ITSA with the Power Grid.

The line is expected to be completed in approximately three years with an initial exportable capacity of approximately 2500 MW.

NEA will directly participate in the construction of two other 400 kV cross-border transmission lines, Inaruwa-Purnia and Dododhara-Bareli. According to the Indian side, the construction will be completed in 2027.28 and 2028.29. In ten years, the international transmission structure will be completed, enabling the export of about 10,000 MW of electricity to neighboring countries.

In the case of Bangladesh, 40-50 MW is likely to be exported. The Bangladesh Energy Export Authority, the Bangladesh Power Development Board, and the Indian power trading company NNVN have signed the tripartite power sales agreement, and the authority is preparing for Nepal's entry into the South Asian sub-regional market this year.



NEA has generated 25 MW of solar power and 62 MW of private sector power. The total solar power generated is 87 MW. When connected to the national grid, the maximum price per unit is Rs. 5.94. The final stage of bid evaluation for procurement of 90 MW of solar power through PPP has started.

The Tanakpur substation in India is connected to a power line with a capacity of 50 MVA and a voltage range of 220-132 kV. The capacity of the power transformer has been increased to 100 MVA at the cost of the authority, allowing the authority to import/export more power.

Kataiya-Kushaha and Raxaul-Parwanipur 132 kV transmission lines connect to India. The addition of a second circuit to the transmission lines has increased power reliability and transmission capacity.

Through Nepal-India discussions, the Nepal Electricity Authority has proposed additional transmission lines to connect with Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand in India, and studies and construction have been completed in this regard.

The Mainhaha-New Nautanuwa and Kohalpur-Nanpara 132 kV transmission lines connecting Nepal and Uttar Pradesh are nearing completion. This paves the way for Nepal to export electricity to Uttar Pradesh during the rainy season.

The capacity of the Tanakpur-Mahendranagar transmission line is 132 kV. With the completion of future hydropower projects in the Far West region, the capacity of the line will be increased to 220 kV. At the request of the Nepal Electricity Authority, preparations are being made to begin studies on the construction of a new line between Nepal and India at this voltage level.

Kul Man Ghising is the Managing Director of the Nepal Electricity Authority. This is an excerpt from his remarks at a press conference on August 10 to mark the end of his two-year tenure as Managing Director.

Nepal's Tiger Success Story: The Inconvenient Truth



BY: ARUPRAJOURIA

As the dust settles on the Global Tiger Day and it is no longer the headlines, it is important to take stock of the current state of tiger conservation efforts. While there is good news to celebrate, such as Nepal's success in nearly tripling its tiger population in just over a decade, there are still significant challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the long-term survival of tigers in their home range countries.

Tigers have been an important part of Nepal's wildlife for centuries, and the country has a long history of tiger conservation efforts. Tigers are the top of the food chain predators that play a pivotal role in the ecosystem. They help to keep populations of prey animals in check, which in turn benefits other species. Tigers are also a source of income for local communities through tourism and other forms of sustainable use.

Nepal's incredible feat of nearly tripling its tiger numbers in just over a decade, was celebrated worldwide. Indeed, the increase in tiger population, from 121 in 2009 to 355 in 2022, is an impressive accomplishment that has brought this species back from the brink of extinction in the country.

Nepal's success in enabling wild tiger populations to recover is part of a wider global push to boost wild tiger populations. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), there are at least 40 percent more tigers in the wild than there were in 2015. Although tigers are still endangered and face multiple threats, the recovery shows that solving complex conservation challenges is possible and within our reach.

However, while the world is busy counting tigers, the cost to local communities remains overlooked and poorly documented. Besides human fatalities, there are other costs – such as livestock losses, livelihood disruptions, and plain fear. All of this

makes it difficult for people to co-exist harmoniously with wildlife. And it's not just tiger attacks; human casualties have increased significantly in Nepal due to conflict with other important species like rhinos, leopards, and elephants.

One of the biggest challenges facing tiger conservation in Nepal is human induced climate change. As the climate changes, tigers are facing habitat loss, changes in prey availability, and increased competition for other predators. The changing climate is also leading to the spread of diseases such as canine distemper, which can be fatal for tigers. These factors will make it harder for tigers to survive, and will eventually contribute to the decline of tiger populations.

Furthermore, conservation colonization, or eco-colonizing, a term used to describe the misappropriation of resources and the reproduction of colonial dynamics by some international conservation organizations (INGOs), is another significant concern in tiger conservation efforts in low income countries. This phenomenon can undermine the work of national and local organizations, hinder effective resource utilization, and perpetuate power imbalances. Some examples of conservation colonization include taking credit for the work of other organizations, accessing vertical funds, diverting resources for non-conservation purposes, and lacking transparency in financial practices which can lead to resentment and distrust.

Another important aspect of the comprehensive approach is ethical practices by INGOs. Encouraging international conservation organizations to adopt ethical approaches that prioritize the well-being of both wildlife and local communities is essential. This involves promoting transparency, accountability, and collaboration with local stakeholders.

To address these challenges, conservationists

in Nepal must adopt a comprehensive and inclusive approach. One important aspect of this approach is engaging local communities. Recognizing the importance of involving local communities in conservation efforts and addressing their concerns is crucial. This can be achieved through community-based conservation initiatives, promoting alternative livelihoods, and ensuring that the benefits of conservation are shared equitably.

Adaptive management is also a crucial component of the comprehensive approach. Developing adaptive strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change on tiger populations is necessary. This includes identifying the most vulnerable tiger populations, implementing habitat restoration measures, and promoting climate-resilient landscapes.

Conflict resolution is another important aspect of the comprehensive approach. Implementing effective measures to reduce human-tiger conflict, such as the development of early warning systems, community-based conflict resolution mechanisms, and the provision of compensation for livestock losses, is necessary.

Additionally, women play a crucial role in tiger conservation initiatives, but they often face unique challenges. Studies have shown that women are impacted differently by conservation endeavors, and their lack of formal education can hinder their participation. Taking an intersectional gender-sensitive approach and understanding the different perceptions

and attitudes towards wildlife can lead to more inclusive and effective conservation strategies. By empowering women, providing educational opportunities, and addressing their specific challenges, we can create a more equitable and successful approach to tiger conservation.

It is worth noting that the upcoming Conference of the Parties (COP) 28, scheduled for later this

year, will provide an important platform for discussions on global biodiversity conservation, including tiger conservation. The conference will bring together representatives from governments,



INGOs, NGOs and other stakeholders to discuss strategies and commitments to protect and restore biodiversity. This presents an opportunity for Nepal and other tiger range countries to advocate for stronger conservation measures and address the challenges of climate change and conservation colonization on a global scale.

By addressing the challenges of conservation colonization, climate change, and community engagement, conservationists can work towards ensuring the long-term survival of tigers in Nepal. With increased investments and transparency in conservation efforts, Nepal can continue to be a global leader in tiger conservation, and help ensure the long-term survival of these flag ship species for generations to come.

BHARATPUR-BARDAGHAT TRANSMISSION

After 13 Years

A 74-kilometer 220-kV transmission line takes nearly 13 years to build because to legal disputes, NGO obstruction, World Bank social protection regulations, the Ministry of Forestry, and an inexperienced contractor. However, the project will change the game.

By A CORRESPONDENT

The process of building transmission lines and handling distribution is still going too slowly, despite the fact that the nation's power production and demand are both rising quickly.

Each of the more than a dozen transmission lines being built in Nepal is being obstructed and disrupted. This week marks the charging of Bharatpur-Bardaghat 220 kV after 13 years of obstruction and inconvenience. The last portion of the 220 kV Bardaghat-New Butwal line is still being built.

The construction of a transmission line such as the 220 kV Bharatpur-Bardaghat-New Butwal project is a testament to how difficult it is to economically transform a community that is poor and neglected.

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project is a testament to how difficult it is to economically transform a community that is poor and neglected.

One year after the World Bank withdrew, despite tremendous



pressure, the building of the Bharatpur-Bardaghat 220 kV transmission line has been finished, and the infrastructure is prepared to transmit up to 1000 MW of power.

Although this strategically significant game-changing transmission line project should have been finished approximately five years ago to benefit many people, it was finally finished ten years ago and has had a significant positive impact on Nepal's electricity sector.

From Bharatpur in Chitwan to Bardghat in Nawalparasi (Bardghat Susta East), a 220 kV double circuit transmission line has been built.

The new Bharatpur Substation at Bharatpur Metropolitan City-11 Anptari in Chitwan to Bardghat Substation in Nawalparasi (Bardghat-Susta West) 74 km double circuit transmission line has been built.

The transmission line has a 1000 MW maximum capacity. The 132 kV voltage level will be used to commission the 220 kV double circuit transmission line initially.

After the transmission line is finished, it will be simpler to carry electricity from Bharatpur to the west, according to NEA Managing Director Kulman Ghising.

According to Ghising, managing director, "the construction of the dilapidated project was completed after continuous efforts due to obstruction from local people demanding change in the route of the transmission line,"

issue with tree felling, and subpar contractor performance.

The sole 132 kV single circuit available at the time allowed elec-

tricity to travel from Bharatpur to the west. More power needed to be sent from Bharatpur to the west, but the capacity of that connection wasn't being kept up. More electricity will be able to flow easily after the 220 kV line is built, and the voltage will also rise.

There are now 3 circuits, one of which is the original one, that transport electricity from Bharatpur to Bardghat. One circuit may provide up to 170 MW of power by charging a 220 kV line to 132 kV. The outdated single circuit was producing a power output of about 90 megawatts.

Construction is now underway on the 220 kV transmission line that will connect Bardghat to the brand-new Butwal Substation in Sunwal Municipality-13 Bhumhi in Nawalparasi. With a goal of finishing it by next month, work is now being done on the line. The 220 kV transmission line between Hetaunda and New Butwal Substation will then be connected following that.

The transmission line between Bharatpur and Bardghat is 74 kilometers long. The transmission line has 246 towers. In October 2010, Central China Power Grid International Economic and Trade Company and the project's construction were bound by a contract.

There are still challenges in the way of the Hetaunda-Inaruwa 400 kV transmission line's completion, which is scheduled for 2015. Local opposition to the substation in Lapsifedi is a problem.

It's interesting to note that only one NGO is responsible for the legal and other disputes, but all of these initiatives are either supported by the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank.

The contract with the aforementioned company was terminated in July 2014 as a result of subpar performance, and NEA then released a fresh tender to complete the remaining work. A deal to finish the remaining work was made in July 2015 with the Chinese business Hengton Optics Electric.

Some villagers in Nawalparasi Vinayi Triveni Rural Municipality-2, Dumkibas, petitioned the High Court to amend the transmission line's path.

Following a request by the community, the High Court issued an interim order on April 21, 2021, halting the building of two skyscrapers in the region. On June 26, 2022, the High Court issued a stay on the order.

According to project manager Santosh Sah, construction began after an agreement was reached in March 2022 following ongoing conversations with the villagers over compensation and indemnification concerns.

More power could not be sent from Bharatpur to Bardghat because the Dumkibas obstacle prevented the transmission line from being built. A year ago, the 56 km single circuit transmission line from Bharatpur to Arun Khola in Nawalparasi was put into operation.

The finished 220 kV transmission line between Bharatpur and Bardghat was tapped at the Arun River and joined to the pre-existing 132 kV transmission line. At the Arun River, the Bardghat-Bardghat 132 kV transmission line was divided and joined to the Bharatpur-Bardghat 220 kV line.

The Hetaunda-Bharatpur-Bardghat 220 kV transmission line project was started with funding from the Government of Nepal, NEA, and a concessional loan from the World Bank to increase the transmission line's capacity and ensure the dependability of Nepal's integrated power system.

The remaining work was carried out with funding from the



government and NEA after the World Bank left the project in October 2021.

Construction on the Hetaunda-Bharatpur and Bharatpur-Bardghat sections of the project began. The Hetaunda-Bharatpur section's construction is complete, and one 132 kV circuit has been conditionally loaded and put into service.

Transmission line and roadway projects with multilateral funding have experienced delays before in Nepal. However, these initiatives aid Nepal's infrastructure and contribute to its economic success. The project, which was almost a decade late, is now finished. For NEA's MD Ghising, who has worked hard to remove the obstacle to this project, this is the best news possible.

78th Hiroshima Day: A Look Back



BY: PARMITA SHRESTHA

A world-changing calamity occurred on August 6, 1945. That calamity is now known as the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. The bombing ended World War II and is the sole atomic bombing to this day. The incident sparked numerous debates, including the need to halt all nuclear power research, the use of nuclear power to accelerate tasks essential to human life, and the ethical implications of nuclear weapons.

Lise Meitner and Otto Frisch,

that, the United States dropped the “Little Boy” bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and the “Fat Man” bomb on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. These attacks prompted Japan’s surrender on August 14, 1945, officially ending World War II in the Pacific on September 2, 1945, when Japanese delegates signed the surrender document.

The “Little Boy” bomb exploded around 1,900 feet over the city, instantaneously killing an esti-

dedicated to remembering the departed souls of the victims of the 1945 Japanese disaster. This year’s anniversary also included conversations about how nuclear science and technology may help Nepal’s development.

Nepal Commemoration Program

On the occasion of the 78th Hiroshima Day, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST), Government of Nepal, in collaboration with the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST), Hiroshima University Scholar’s Alumni Nepal (HiUSAN), and Nepal Development Research Institute (NDRI), organized a workshop titled “Workshop on Nuclear Science and Technology for Peace and Development” on August 6, 2023.

High-ranking government officials from various ministries and departments, academics, NAST scientists, non-governmental organizations, and private sector participants attended the event.

The Chief Guest, Pramila Kumari, State Minister of Education, Science, and Technology, emphasized the significance of Japan-Nepal bilateral relations and collaboration for Nepal’s socioeconomic growth. She emphasized the importance of research and technological growth, for which such a workshop served as the foundation for bringing together young intellectuals, researchers, and scientists in a debate forum. She stressed that she is dedicated to moving on with the proposals and duties proposed by the researchers and scientists.

Prof. Dilip Subba, the recent-



two Jewish physicists, discovered nuclear fission, the process of splitting uranium atoms and releasing large amounts of energy, in January 1939. This discovery laid the groundwork for the development of the atomic weapon. Progress was made over time, and the United States launched the top-secret Manhattan Project, commanded by John F. Kennedy.

The Trinity test, conducted on July 16, 1945, demonstrated the atomic bomb’s success. Following

estimated 70,000 people and injuring tens of thousands more in the weeks and months that followed due to radiation sickness. Three days later, on August 9, 1945, the second atomic bomb, “Fat Man,” was dropped, killing approximately 40,000 people.

On August 6, Nepal commemorates the Hiroshima Incident Memorial Day, bringing together scientists, peace activists, and members of the general public. This event is



ly appointed Vice Chancellor of the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, said that nuclear energy has been utilized to protect foods and food irradiation globally. However, Nepal has not reached such a level yet and lacks adequate research and facilities in that sector.

The event's chairperson, Ms. Pramila Devi Bajracharya, Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, stated that while the program was organized to commemorate the terrible bombing in Hiroshima 78 years ago, the event will be fruitful in discussing the positive aspects of technological advancement of nuclear science to use in the agriculture sector such as avoiding post-harvest loss, food safety, and technologically sound food ecosystem, et cetera.

Prof. Shinji Kaneko, Executive Vice President of Hiroshima University, stated that the aftermath of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings profoundly influenced the international landscape of peace and security, creating a sense of urgency to prevent another Hiroshima or Nagasaki.

He highlighted that the nuclear weapon testing during the cold war had long-term consequences on human health and the global ecosystem, and that the threat of nuclear weapons remained the same as it was previously.

Inspired by the people of Hiroshima's experiences and goals, comparable social movements have formed since then, both within and

outside of Japan, calling for and hoping for a peaceful future free of nuclear weapons. Prof. Kaneko mentioned that Hiroshima University was founded with the same vision of a peaceful world in mind. He expressed his gratitude to the Nepalese people for maintaining hope.

Bishow Babu Pudasaini, Joint Secretary of Nepal's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, presented a paper on the legal framework of nuclear science and technology in order to encourage science and technology in the country.

Dr. Jaya Kumar Gurung, Senior Research Expert at Nepal Development Research Institute (NDRI), presented a paper titled "Food for Thought" on the potential of E-beam technology. He discussed the possible use of E-beam technology in agricultural growth. He opened the floor to discussion on three primary points: the possibility of using nuclear science and technology in food irradiation, three key priorities to bring forward right now, and potential technological challenges.

Dr. Ranjan Prakash Shrestha, President of Hiroshima University Scholar's Alumni Nepal, spoke about the formation of HiUSAN and Prof. Shinji Kaneko's visit to NAST. He also helped Prof. Shinji Kaneko, Executive Vice President of Hiroshima University,

deliver his speech.

The necessity for greater study in this area of nuclear physics was one of the main problems raised during the floor discussion in order to improve understanding among the general public and stakeholders. Utilizing nuclear science and technology has enormous promise, particularly in Nepal where food irradiation methods are being used. To do this, it is necessary to create clear legislative, regulatory, and safety requirements. Similar to this, it is crucial to support institutional setup, highly skilled human resources, and awareness among the key stakeholders in order to effectively apply nuclear science and technology (e-beam technology) for food irradiation in Nepal.

Like any other action, using nuclear bombs has advantages and disadvantages. The bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki mark a turning point in history, forever changing how people see war and posing difficult moral dilemmas regarding the use of nuclear weapons. In order to prevent the horrors of another nuclear war, reflection on these events is essential because it serves as a reminder of the significance of diplomatic efforts for peace and collaboration. In Nepal's situation, greater attention should be paid to how nuclear energy might be used for the country's growth and benefit.

Parmita Shrestha is an Intern with New Spotlight.



NEPAL-ETHIOPIA YSB EXCHANGE

Sharing Experiences

Constituted by the European Union Delegation (EU Delegation), the Youth Sounding Board (YSB) in Nepal and Ethiopia have successfully demonstrated effective ways of involving and engaging the young population in the development process.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Although over half of Nepal’s population is comprised of youth, the country has the lowest youth development indicator in South Asia. Due to the lack of youth-specific programs, their participation and engagement in decision-making and governance levels are negligible.

To address these challenges, the European Union stepped in to provide youth-targeted programs in Nepal. The EU started the Youth Sounding Board (YSB) globally in 2021 and launched it in Nepal in 2022.

During her visit to Nepal, Jutta Urpilainen, EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, prioritized engaging with YSB members, highlighting the EU’s commitment to the youth.

Over the past year, the first cohorts of the YSB in Nepal and Ethiopia have worked closely with the European Union Delegations in various capacities. YSB members have actively participated in events, stakeholder meetings, project visits, and other activities organized by the European Union Delegations. Thanks to the ini-



tiative of the EU Delegations of Nepal and Ethiopia, the first-ever virtual Nepal-Ethiopia YSB Exchange program was successfully concluded.

During the exchange program, YSB members from Nepal and Ethiopia shared their experiences and working methodologies while engaging in insightful discussions on the critical challenges faced by youth in their respective countries.

Stefan Lock, the Head of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia, emphasized

the Delegation’s continuous support in involving the YSB members in the EU Delegation’s programs, fostering meaningful collaborations and enriching experiences for both parties.

“Many delegations of the European Union around the world are cooperating with Youth Sounding Boards. The Youth Sounding Board in each country is an advisory board comprised of young people helping to make our engagement in each partner country more relevant to the needs and ideas of youth,” said Mr. Lock.

“Young people in Ethiopia and Nepal and around the world are not only the future, they’re also the present. They have the capacity to design change and to enact change, and we must listen to them and support them. We, as EU delegations, have learned a lot, and the young people have made us see new perspectives. Their voices are relevant and powerful and we hear them loud and clear.”

In his opening remarks, Dr. Marco Gemmer, Head of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation to Nepal, highlighted the activities of the YSB and the importance of the virtual





exchange program.

“In the past year, the first group of Youth Sounding Board members in Nepal and Ethiopia has been involved in many activities. These have including thematic events, project activities, visits to engage with local governments, and planning meetings with the government. Despite being 5000 kilometers apart from each other, the Youth Sounding Board members from Nepal and Ethiopia have a lot to share with each other and can learn from each other,” said Dr. Gemmer.

Isaac Bezabih, a YSB member from Ethiopia, presented an overview of the youth’s involvement in various activities and the objectives of the exchange.

“The main objectives of our program here is to share lessons learned from the first year Youth Sounding Board experience, to foster cross cultural collaboration and also share youth experience between Nepal and Ethiopia, beyond the scope of Youth Sounding board. So, in Ethiopia, the Youth Sounding Board plays a crucial advisory role in the European Union delegation with active thematic committees consisting of different talented youths from various regions, backgrounds, professions. The Youth Sounding Board aims to bring about real and lasting change in how the EU engages with young people in its development cooperations effort,” said Isaac.

Abhinandan Basnet, a YSB member from Nepal, provided an in-

sightful overview of the issues and composition of the YSB in Nepal.

“The YSB consists of 25 youth members aged between 18 and 28 and they represent the three provinces of Karnali, Sudur Paschim and Madhesh in Nepal. This ensures that the board represents the unique perspective, needs and challenges of each province. Targeted provinces - these provinces were selected due to their underdeveloped nature, low social and economic quality, and limited access to resources and opportunities compared to Kathmandu. Including representatives from these provinces helps the YSB address the specific issues faced by young people in these regions,” said Basnet.

“The Youth Sounding Board (YSB) works under 3 thematic groups. The YSB comprises thematic groups that focus on specific areas of interest and concern, and reflects the projects that the implementing partners are involved in. This includes promoting women’s participation in election, conducting outreach programs for climate smart entrepreneurship, engaging in GBV policy discussions and enhancing youth employability.”

During the discus-

sion, YSB members from Nepal, including Namuna Giri, Aagya Shrestha, Neha Karki, and Sonali Singh Patel, addressed governance, gender inclusion, and climate change issues along with their implications.

Namuna Giri YSB-Nepal said, “I am going to talk about governance, peace and security in relation to YSB. Nepal, during the reign of King Birendra, from 1972 to 2001, made an indirect proposal to be declared a Zone of Peace. It has been observed that about 112 countries were in support, except for India and the then Soviet Union. Looking back and observing today, the political instability, the extreme dissatisfaction of the people in their government, and the poor representation of youth in higher change making positions arise whether Nepal could ever achieve the status of a peaceful nation or even vouch for it.”

Adonias Beyene from YSB-Ethiopia said, “the youths have a vital role to play in the governance, peace and security. It is because they are 65% of the continent, if we ignore this 65% of the population; we are not working on any development of the country. So, that’s why it is very crucial and important for the youths to play a role in governance, peace and security.”

Sonali Patel YSB-Nepal also stated her views on climate change and its impact on Nepal. Sonali said, “when it comes to climate change, many of us are still living in delusion that it is not real, that it is a hoax. But, as an environment conservation enthusiast, I’d like to emphasize that climate change is very much real. It



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is unequivocal that climate change is happening and the impacts of climate change can be seen throughout the world, although the impacts are not equal in all parts.”

Aemon Berhane from YSB-Ethiopia said, “Ethiopia has one of the youngest populations within Africa. 70% of our population is under the age of 30 and according to the World Bank, the youth unemployment rate is 5.72%, a 0.78% increase from the past two years ever since COVID happened. And this is primarily with regards to low level of education within our education systems, the lack of job opportunities

and the rural, urban migration. The YSB can really help in a way that we want to be able to work on policies with stakeholders, to improve the quality of education given to our young population and to be able to better invest in educational system and the quality of teaching,” said Aemon.

On the topic of youth unemployment in Nepal, Aagya Shrestha said, “The problem here is with the quality of education we have been receiving. The education system in Nepal often fails to equip young people with the skills and qualifications needed by the job market, resulting in massive youth unemployment.”

In her closing remarks Neha Karki, YSB-Nepal said, “we feel much empowered and we feel so much more ready to raise our voice – louder - and create an impact in our community and in our country. And at the same time, we are learning so many things about INGOs and the EU, and also

from this inter-cultural exchange that is happening virtually at this moment – this is a great opportunity for us to connect with you and we are sure that YSB is growing globally and we all very much look forward to see what it’s going to bring.

Similarly, Bezabih from Ethiopia said,” the Youth Sounding Board in Ethiopia has successfully fostered inclusive dialogues and representation among youth throughout the country. This is one of the things that we feel is really functioning well and working very much in a visible way where we can see it working. The



Youth Sounding Board plays a crucial advisory role in the European Union delegat

platform also bridges the gap between the young people and also the European Union, and also empowering youth to share policy decisions, this is something very vital and important.”

At the national level, the EU encourages YSB members to take part in youth-oriented projects funded by the EU. For example, the Promotion of Youth Engagement in Local Governance Process (PROYEL) project, implemented by Helvetas Nepal is currently in progress in eight municipalities of the Madhesh and Karnali Provinces.

Dr. Prabin Manandhar, the country director of Helvetas Nepal, believes that engaging youth in local governance and decision-making is essential.

Aagya Pokharel, Program Coordinator of PROYEL, commented, “Helvetas Nepal has been providing support to YSB board members to engage in local-level governance, climate initiatives, youth entrepreneurship, and employment-generating sectors into the PROYEL Project Areas.

Pokharel added, “Helvetas -Nepal has been fostering collaboration between our Youth Panel Members and YSB under PROYEL. Youth Panel Members interact with local level governments and YSB, the central level decision-making body.”

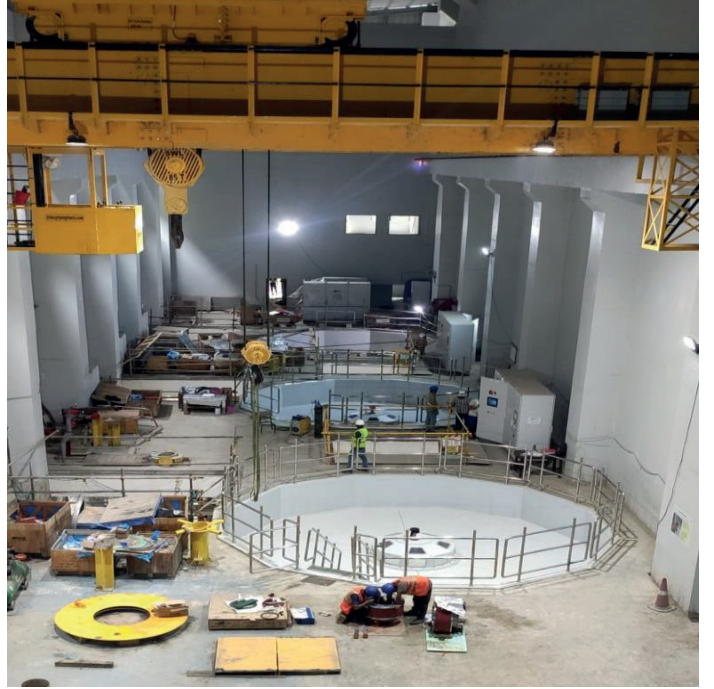
This exchange was a groundbreaking initiative, marking the first step towards building a global youth community and forming connections among YSBs. It enabled the sharing of experiences and mutual learning, allowing them to strengthen their engagements with the EU Delegations. The YSB hopes to bring about real and lasting changes in how the EU engages with young people in its development cooperation efforts. Catch all the details of the exchange here:

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- संक्रमित व्यक्तिले प्रयोग गरेका टावेल, रुमाल, सिरानी, तन्ना जस्ता वस्तुको प्रयोग नगर्ने,
- जथाभावी आँखा नछुने, छुनैपर्ने भएमा छुनु अघि वा छोडिसकेपछि साबुन पानीले राम्रोसँग हात धुने,
- व्यक्तिगत सरसफाइमा ध्यान दिने।



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