



**OPINION**  
Dipak Gyawali



**VIEWPOINT**  
Arup Rajouria



**ENVIRONMENT**  
Batu Uprety

DAO Kathmandu Regd. No. 148/11/063/064  
ISSN: 2091-0711

# NEW SPOTLIGHT

www.spotlightnepal.com

Nov-10, 2023

FORTNIGHTLY



## JAJARKOT EARTHQUAKE **Wakeup Call**

### INSIDE



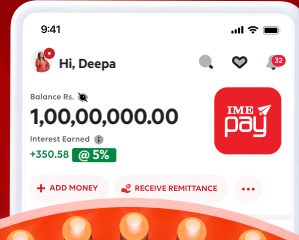
**UNSG ANTONIO GUTERRES**  
PLEADING NEPAL'S CASED



**FOREIGN MINISTER SAUD**  
CONCLUDES LANDMARK VISIT



**UPPER ARUN AND DUDH KOSHI**  
SUPPORT ASSURED



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\*सहित लागू हुनेछ ।

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www.spotlightnepal.com

**Kathmandu DAO Regd. No.**

148/11/063/64

**Central Region Postal Regd.**

No. 36/067/068

**US Library of Congress Catalogue**

No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711

(Print), ISSN: 2091-0754 (Online)

**Printing**

Megha Offset Printing Press P. Ltd.,

Dhapasi, Kathmandu

Tel. : 977-1-4363624

**Notes From The Editor**



Nepal is highly prone to earthquakes, and the recent earthquake registering at 6.4 on the Richter scale struck two districts of the Karnali province. It claimed the lives of approximately 150 people and caused widespread damage. Even a magnitude of 6 on the Richter scale can result in significant destruction in the region. Scientists have already warned that a major earthquake is expected in Nepal's western plate, emphasizing the need for the government to devise a resilient plan. Although several United Nations Secretary Generals have previously visited Nepal, the current UN Secretary General, António Guterres, is the first to extensively tour the country and raise Nepal's agenda globally. During his visit to the Everest Region and Annapurna base camp in the Himalayan region, he observed the situation and interacted with the local community. The Secretary General issued a statement urging the world to address the ecological disasters in the region. He observed the receding glacier, which poses a threat to human life. and also witnessed the once snow-covered black mountains. The Secretary General's appeal will effectively support Nepal's case as an agenda in the upcoming COP 28 in the UAE. During his visit to the mountain region, Secretary General António Guterres also visited to Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, where he appealed for peace and expressed the UN's commitment. In his address to Nepal's parliament, the Secretary General emphasized the country's severe climate change problems. Throughout his four-day visit, he extensively presented Nepal's case.

Recent high-level visits by foreign dignitaries and Nepal's top leaders to other countries indicate strong institutional and individual support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' for improving matters. Led by Minister of Foreign Affairs NP Saud and Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal, the professional cadres at MoFA have demonstrated their competitiveness and capability in handling high-level visits. The Secretary General's visit which highlighted Nepal's agenda and challenges in the global community are featured its importance as the cover story in these issues to emphasize the importance.

In addition to this, We also cover devastation caused by the earthquake. As Nepal is observing the festivals of Diwali, Nepal Sambat (New Year), and Chhath, the New Spotlight team would like to extend Happy Diwali, Nepal Sambat, and Chhath wishes to all of our readers, supporters, and well-wishers.

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor

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# Conflict Diverts Attention: How The Hamas Israel Crisis Affects Climate Priorities At COP 28



BY: ARUP RAJOURIA

The recent conflict, triggered by Hamas's attack on Israel, had led to a tragic loss of lives, including ten Nepali students, with one still missing. In response, Israel has been conducting continuous airstrikes on Gaza for nearly three weeks, with no resolution in sight. This ongoing violence is very likely to have significant implications for the upcoming Conference of Parties meeting (COP 28), scheduled to take place from November 30 to December 12, 2023, in Dubai, UAE.

The relentless bombing, which has primarily claimed the lives of civilians in Gaza, predominantly women and children, has understandably diverted the attention of global leaders. The diversion of focus not only threatens to impede climate discussions and commitments at COP 28, but also hampers resource mobilization for addressing climate initiatives. This may also affect the number of participation of heads of states and governments due to security concerns. COP 27 held in Egypt in November 2022 hosted more than 100 heads of states and governments.

Moreover, amidst this already tragic situation, there are worrisome signs of a potential regional conflict brewing. This adds another uncertainty to the situation.

The escalation of the Israeli-Hamas crisis, with the possibility of wider regional involvement, has the potential to further strain relations within the Middle East and beyond. This strain could severely strain regional and international co-operation on climate solutions, a crucial aspect in addressing human induced climate change. Achieving consensus on key climate issues becomes even more challenging in an environment of heightened regional tensions.

Additionally, this conflict has given rise to a desperate humanitarian crisis, killing and displacing thousands and causing extensive destruction. If the situation continues, Gaza may surpass Laos as the most heavily bombed country, a legacy of the Vietnam War, leaving behind unexploded ordinances that continues to kill, maim, and pose a threat.

In the wake of this crisis, funds that could have been allocated to climate-related initiatives may now need to be re-directed to address immediate needs arising from the conflict. The extensive damage to infrastructure, the looming threat of a regional war, and the humanitarian crisis will undermine all efforts towards climate resilience and adaptation. Rebuilding es-

sential facilities will likely delay progress in meeting climate targets, not only in the Middle East but also in other conflict-ridden regions, including parts of Africa.

In spite of these daunting challenges, there are opportunities for progress.

OP 28 offers a platform for nations to showcase solidarity and reaffirm their commitment to collective action to address human induced climate change. World Leaders can underscore the inseparable link between peace, security, and climate change, stressing the need to address these global challenges in a comprehensive and an integrated manner.

COP 28 also serves as a venue for climate diplomacy, fostering dialogue and building bridges among nations affected not only by the Israeli-Hamas conflict but also by ongoing conflicts worldwide. Through open discussions, countries can explore opportunities to collaborate on climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience efforts, forging a path towards sustainable peace and stability.

Furthermore, COP 28 provides an avenue to advocate for climate justice, ensuring that climate policies and actions prioritize the needs and the rights of the most vulnerable populations, including those affected by conflicts. By recognizing the interconnectedness between human induced climate change, conflict, and human well-being, COP 28 can help address the disproportionate impacts faced by marginalized communities, particularly women and children, during times of crisis.

In summary, while the Israeli-Hamas conflict casts a shadow over the upcoming COP 28 conference in Dubai, there are still opportunities for progress. World leaders must seize these opportunities to ensure that climate actions are not hindered, regional co-operation is nurtured, pressing climate concerns are addressed hand in hand with peace building efforts. By acknowledging the interconnectedness between human induced climate change, conflict and human well-being, COP 28 can still very much pave the way for a more sustainable and resilient future for all nations.

*Rajouria is a globally recognized professional in climate change and natural resources management, with an impressive track record at organizations like former CEO of NTNC, UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNEP, and USAID. He holds an MPA degree from Harvard University.*



## NEWSNOTES

### Korean Minister Chung Hwang-Keun Paid A Courtesy Call On PM Prachanda

Chung Hwang-Keun, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea paid a courtesy call on PM Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Friday

According to a Prime Minister Office, various matters, including agricultural cooperation was discussed on the occasion.

Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of South Korea

Chung Hwang-keun on Thursday (November 2) also called on President Ramchandra Paudel at the Office of the President.

During the meeting, President Paudel also extended his gratitude to the Korean government for providing technical support, human resource development and other assistance through Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

### CoAS General Sharma Returned Home Completing China Visit

Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) General Prabhuram Sharma has returned home after completing his official visit to the People's Republic of China.

He was welcomed at the Tribhuvan International Airport by the Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Sitaram Khadka. He had left for that place on the 10th of Kartik.

During his stay in China, the Commander-in-Chief participated in the opening ceremony of the Beijing Xiangshan Forum held in Beijing. Similarly, during his visit to China, he also called on CMC and Joint Chief of Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army General Liu Zhenli,



In addition to having a courtesy meeting with Liu Zhenli, he also visited various units and educational institu-

tions of the Chinese People's Liberation Army located in Xi'an City, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

During his stay in Beijing, he attended the reception organized by Ambassador of Nepal to China in honor of the CoAS. During the visit, he also visited important tourist spots in Beijing including the Great Wall.

### KAAN And KOICA Donated Medical Equipment to Primary Health Care (PHC) Center

The Primary Health Care (PHC) Center in Panchkhal, Kavre, received medical equipment worth NPR 19,05,258 with support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) through the KOICA Alumni Association of Nepal (KAAN).

A handover ceremony for the equipment took place on November 3, 2023, at the PHC Center in Panchkhal, attended by representatives from KOICA, KAN, Panchkhal Municipality, and the PHC.

Jeong-Eun Song, Deputy Country Director of KOICA Nepal, expressed the South Korean Government's commitment to strengthening Nepal's health sector through KOICA. KOICA has been



actively involved in supporting Nepal's healthcare infrastructure by establishing three hospitals in Thimi, Nuwakot, and Mugu, as well as deploying doctors and health professionals to enhance medical services.

Song commended the dedicated efforts of the PHC team and management, highlighting their invaluable contributions. She expressed her optimism that this support, though modest, would play a meaningful role in uplifting the hospital's service quality and increasing institutional deliveries in the near future. KOICA is confident that the hospital will be inspired to continue its significant work in the days to come.

### Japan Hands Over The Equipment To Dadeldhura Blood Bank

The handover ceremony of the equipment supported by the Government of Japan to the Blood Bank run by the Nepal Red Cross Society, Dadeldhura District Chapter in Amargadhi Municipality was held today. TAMURA Takahiro, the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Japan in Nepal, attended the ceremony.

Under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Government of



Japan, the project to install equipment to upgrade the blood bank facilities was supported with USD 56,364 (approximately NPR 6.6 million). The blood bank provides both whole

blood and blood components to patients who require safe blood for medical treatment.

On this occasion, Tamura congratulated and expressed his appreciation for the efforts of all those involved in the project. He emphasized that the project has been a great help to the patients of Dadeldhura and surrounding districts who need blood transfusion. He also expressed his confidence that the donated equipment will significantly improve the performance of the blood bank and contribute to the well-being of patients, their families, and communities.

**Manisha Koirala Honored In London**

London - Actress Manisha Koirala was honored at a special ceremony at the House of Commons in London on Friday by the British newspaper Asian Standard. Imran Hussain, Member of Parliament for Bradford East, UK, and Fatima Patel, Editor-in-Chief of Asian Standard, presented the award to Koirala for her significant contributions to cinema, art, and social services.

The paper acknowledged Koirala’s outstanding achievements in these areas.



The newspaper, which is distributed free of charge and is popular among the South Asian community in Britain, recognizes the contributions of various personalities from the community.

MP Hussain stated that actress Koirala’s commendable contributions to the field of art have spanned over three decades.

**SAARC Secretary-General Sarwar Assumes Office**

Newly-appointed Secretary-General of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation

(SAARC) Golam Sarwar has assumed the office.

He took charge of his duties since last Tuesday upon the approval of SAARC Council of Ministers, informed Kathmandu-based SAARC Secretariat today.



Ambassador Golam Sarwar is the Fifteenth Secretary General of SAARC and the third Secretary General from the Government of Bangladesh.

As a career diplomat Ambassador Sarwar has served extensively in different capacities both at home and abroad.

Prior to this assignment, he served as Bangladesh Ambassador to Malaysia, Sultanate of Oman and Sweden, with concurrently accredited to Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland.

**Advocating For Water As The Lifeline Of Food And Agriculture**

The 43rd World Food Day was celebrated with great momentum through a collaborative effort between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Nepal (GoN). This year’s commemoration was marked by a series of impactful events, including a symbolic walkathon, a school-level art competition, an informative press conference, and a formal program.

Underlining the theme for the year 2023, “Water is food, water is life, leave no one behind,” the FAO and GoN aimed to shed light on the intricate connection between water and food security, emphasizing the significance of efficient water resource management.

The event kicked off with a walkathon, where participants proudly displayed placards with strong messages that underlined the essence of water in ensuring both food and life. This colorful procession set the stage for the formal program that followed.



## NEWSNOTES

Dr. Jay Kant Raut, Member of the National Planning Commission (NPC), advocated for governmental intervention to address the issue of resource inequity.

Ken Shimizu, FAO Representative for Bhutan and Nepal, eloquently underscored the critical connection between agriculture, water, and the environment. He expressed deep concern over the challenges affecting water availability and reliability globally, with a specific focus on Nepal's irrigation systems that currently support only a fraction of the country's agricultural land, leading to significant productivity losses during dry seasons.

Rewati Raman Poudel, Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (Livestock) emphasized the need for a shift in the agricultural productivity system.

### French Embassy Supported A Training On Internet-Based Crime Against Minors

In the fight against crimes targeting children, the French Embassy in Nepal, in partnership with the Nepal Police, organized a 5-day training from 16 until 20 October 2023 focusing on combating Internet-based crimes against minors.

This training was given by two investigators from the French National Department for the Protection of Minors (OFMIN), and built upon the successful joint training held in September



2022 of similar nature.

The training delved into the realm of Internet paedocriminality, addressing issues related to the dark web, file-sharing services, and online forums where children and teenagers may be targeted by sexual predators.

“Protecting children from exploitation is not just a duty, but a collective responsibility that transcends borders. France is committed to working hand in hand with our international partners, like Nepal, to combat this global plague. Together, through unwavering cooperation, we can create a safer world for our children”, said BOURBAO, French Ambassador to Nepal, on the occasion.

Throughout the week, practical exercises and real-life scenario simulations were integral components of the training. This interactive approach provided Nepali police officers, coming from various departments including the Tourist Police, Cyber Bureau, Central Investigation Bureau, and the Women, Children, and Senior Citizen Service Directorate, with invaluable insights to enhance their capabilities in addressing cyber threats of this nature.

The certificates of participation were presented by Ambassador BOURBAO to the participants in the presence of the Executive Director of the National Police Academy, Additional Inspector General Sandeep Bhandari.

Nepal and France remain steadfast in their joint commitment to safeguarding minors from such heinous offenses and fostering a safer digital environment.

The partnership between the two countries on this subject has existed for many years, and judicial cooperation between the two countries has also played a major role in our combat to put an end to this kind of aggression on children.

### European Union Brings Relief To Victims Of Earthquake In Far West Nepal

The European Union is allocating €70 000 (over 9.8 million Nepalese Rupees) in response to the earthquake that hit western Nepal earlier this month. This EU funding will help reconstitute the stocks that the Nepalese Red Cross Society (NRCS) used during its emergency response, which targeted 7,500 people in the worst-hit localities in the province of Sudurpashchim, where the epicenter was located.

Namely, the funding will serve to supply new shelter and household items, including tarpaulins, blankets, and mattresses, in prevention of other disasters. NRCS also distributed health kits and hygiene awareness campaigns are ongoing.

The funding is part of the EU's overall contribution to the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

On 3 October, a 5.3-magnitude earthquake





took place in the western province of Sudurpashchim. The epicenter was located in the Bajhang district and tremors were felt in six neighboring districts. At least 36,250 people were affected, with over 1,500 houses fully destroyed and another 5,600 partially destroyed, according to first estimations.

The European Union and its Member States are the world's leading donor of humanitarian aid. Relief assistance is an expression of European solidarity with people in need all around the world. It aims to save lives, prevent and alleviate human suffering, and safeguard the integrity and human dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises.

### KOICA Completes Green School Project Activities 2023

KOICA completes Green School Project Activities 2023, further committed to enhancing and promotion of Green Official Development Assistance in Nepal

KOICA through its Korea Overseas Volunteer Program and Wildlife Conservation Nepal collaborated to host an event marking the conclusion of Phase III of the KOICA's Green School Project.



Notable attendees included Mooheon Kong, the Country Director of KOICA Nepal Office, Sanjeevani Yonjan, Director of WCN, Prof. Dr. Surya Ratna Guvaju, Chairperson of WCN, Yubaraj Adhikari, Officer at the Curriculum Development Centre, Navaraj Rijal, Education Officer from Lalitpur Metropolitan City, Sitra Ram Koirala, Education Officer (Department Head) at Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Baburam Gautam, Education Officer from Tokha Municipality, Mandodari Rijal, Education Officer from Kirtipur Municipality, as well as representatives from beneficiary schools and KOICA.

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### German Embassy In Kathmandu Hosted A Reception On German Unity Day

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Kathmandu Celebrated German Unity Day and the 65th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Nepal and Germany

The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany Dr. Thomas Prinz, and Anuza Prinz hosted a reception for the celebration of the Day of German Unity and 65 years of Diplomatic Relations between Nepal and Germany at the Hyatt Regency on 12 October.

There were over 400 guests. This year also marks 70 years of the establishment of KfW and 60 years of financial cooperation between Nepal and Germany.

KfW as part of the German Development Cooperation channels German Financial Cooperation funds from the German Government to Nepal in various sectors of cooperation.



Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chairman of the National Assembly, was invited as the chief guest for the event. Among the guests were officials from various ministries of the Government of Nepal, leaders of political parties, heads of Kathmandu-based diplomatic missions, civil society members, Human Rights advocates, businesspersons, media persons and people from various walks of life.

In his welcome speech, Ambassador Prinz said, "We are celebrating 65 years of bilateral relations between Nepal and Germany. 65 years of friendship and solidarity. We have been standing with Nepal in difficult times, be it the civil war, the 2015 earthquake or the Covid-19 pandemic. We welcome the huge progress Nepal has made and continue our support." He also conveyed his condolences to the victims of the terrorist attacks in Israel.

He said that 34 years ago, in 1989, the so-called "Berlin Wall" came down – the wall which had been dividing the Eastern and Western part of Germany since 1963.

"The "Berliner Mauer" was designed to physically prevent disaffected East Germans from fleeing to the West. The Peaceful Revolution of 1989 led to the opening of the border on November 9, 1989, which for the first time after 28 years allowed Germans to freely move in the whole of the country. It led to a new form of encounters between the East and the West, and it re-united the whole of Europe."

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### World Bank Provides Nepal Over Rs.13 Billion Loan And Grant To Strengthen Health Sector

Government of Nepal and World Bank Sign and Exchange Agreements for \$100M Concessional Loan and \$3.84M Grant to Strengthen Nepal's Health System

The Government of Nepal and the World Bank today exchanged the digitally-signed financing agreements



for a \$100 million concessional loan from the International Development Association and a \$3.84 million grant from the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Trust Fund to strengthen the quality, coverage, and resilience

of Nepal's health system. These agreements were digitally signed on October 27, 2023. This is the first World Bank-financed project in Nepal that was digitally signed.

The agreements for the Nepal Quality Health Systems Program Operation were signed by Finance Secretary, Dr. Krishna Hari Pushkar and the World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, Faris Hadad-Zervos. The agreements were exchanged in the presence of Honorable Minister of Finance, Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, World Bank Managing Director for Operations, Anna Bjerde, and World Bank Vice President for South Asia, Martin Raiser.

The program will be implemented by the Ministry of Health and Population in coordination with the Health Insurance Board at the federal level, and selected provincial and local levels in Koshi and Gandaki provinces.

The program emphasizes improving the readiness of the health system for delivery of quality healthcare, enhancing coverage of health insurance, and strengthening health emergency preparedness and response capacity at the selected provincial and local levels.

"Quality healthcare serves as the cornerstone of human capital development. The comprehensive reform agenda set forth by the Nepal Quality Health Systems Program Operation will be pivotal in enhancing access to high-quality healthcare services," said Dr. Krishna Hari Pushkar, Finance Secretary.

"We are committed to work with the government to build a resilient and inclusive public health system in Nepal that protects vulnerable populations and contributes to improved productivity and strong human capital development, which is fundamental to sustainable economic growth," said Faris Hadad-Zervos, World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

### FNCCI President Dhakal Urges Private Sector, Development Partners To Invest In Nepal

President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) Chandra Prasad Dhakal

has urged the private sector and the development partners to invest in the infrastructure development of Nepal.

In his address to the investment conference in London, the United Kingdom, he said as Nepal is seeking additional foreign capital for major infrastructure development, the country is an attractive investment destination for the foreign private investors and development partners.

On India's recent decision to include hydropower as the renewable energy, he said growing Indian market has further provided more opportunities for investment in hydropower projects in Nepal. Increasing demand for energy by the strong economy of Bangladesh has helped create additional market for hydropower of Nepal, according to a statement mentioning his speech in the conference issued by the FNCCI.

"I specially invite multilateral and bilateral development partners along with British investors for investment and cooperation in Nepal's hydropower targeting two large attractive energy markets," he said. Saying Nepal is already a popular tourist spot for British tourists, he mentioned that Nepal is ready and excited to welcome more tourists.

Informing that the FNCCI has prepared the structure to help investors seek investment opportunities and remove obstructions in investment, he urged investors to invest in Nepal with confidence.



Organised on the initiative of the Nepali Embassy in London, a discussion was held involving Minister for Finance Dr Prakash Sharan Mahat, high ranking officials of the international investment body of the UK and British private investors.

### NEA Is Received Double A In Ikra Rating

Plus' credit rating this year, as Ikra Nepal Ltd. has awarded them with an 'Ikra NP Double A Plus' rating. This is the same rating that the authority received last year.

Entities that receive a double A plus rating possess a high capacity to fulfill their financial and monetary obligations in a timely manner. Financial transactions with institutions holding a double A Plus rating entail minimal risk of loan repayment.

Ikra Nepal conducted a detailed analysis of the authority's financial situation, property, business, and financial risks, as well as its managerial capacity, internal and external environmental factors that may impact operational effectiveness. The credit rating of the authority was established based on the same analysis.

Credit rating serves to assess an individual's or an organization's credit quality and express an opinion. This



passage presents an opinion as an indicator of the risk associated with the organization’s ability to meet its debt obligations.

The government wholly owns the authority responsible for ensuring efficient,

reliable and accessible electricity generation, transmission and distribution along with domestic and cross-border electricity trading.

The government is providing support to the authority by annually allocating budget, investing in shares (cash or interest/debt capitalization), and providing other essential funds to execute its programmes for electricity development.

Kulman Ghising, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority, stated that the organization has achieved a double A plus credit rating, making it one of the safest government bodies to manage financial obligations.

The proposal to issue shares to the general public in accordance with the Nepal Electricity Authority Act, 2041 has already been submitted to the Ministry of Finance after the third round of financial restructuring.

**Tourism Entrepreneur Abhishek Bikram Shah Received Asian Professional Outstanding Hospitality Award**

Tourism entrepreneur Abhishek Bikram Shah has been honoured with the Asian Professional Outstanding Hospitality Award.

Shah received this prestigious award, which recognises his outstanding contributions to the sector, at a special ceremony organised by Season Media. The award was presented by Prime Minister Pushkamal Dahal Prachanda, and it marks a significant milestone for Shah, who is the director of West Resort. Shah, a prominent figure in Nepal’s hospitality industry, has received an accolade for his remarkable achievements in the field. His leadership and dedication have earned him a reputation as an exemplary industry professional. With more than 20 years of experience in the tourism sector, Shah holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Hotel/Motel Administration/Management.

He initiated his vocation at Solti Hotel, and later served at renowned establishments such as Hyatt Regency, Summit Group Hotel and Resort. After over two decades in the tourism industry, Shah served as General Manager for seven years at Kathmandu’s premier



tourist attraction, Chandragiri Hills Limited, where he experienced immense success.

**Professor Lok Raj Baral’s New Book Monarchy to Republic Unveiled**

Former President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav and former Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai jointly released a book titled “Nepal From Monarchy to Republic”, written by Lok Raj Baral, during a function in Kathmandu.

Additionally, three generations of Professor Baral’s students, namely Krishna Khanal, Krishna Hatthecchu, and Dr. India Adhikari, and Madhesh activist Tula Narayan Shah, attended the book unveiling.

Conducted by Madhak Maharjan from Mandela Book Point, Former President Dr. Yadav encourages the young Nepalese to read Professor Baral’s book to understand Nepal’s political evolution and history.

Dr. Bhattarai emphasizes the book’s importance and shares that it is so captivating that a reader can finish it in one sitting. Professor Baral, a renowned political scientist of the region, offers a comprehensive account of Nepal’s transition from monarchy to republic.

Highlighting important aspects of the book, Professor Khanal expressed that it is a concise and credible source for students and scholars interested in understanding Nepal’s political evolution.



Professor Krishna Hatthecchu also lauded the book as a valuable resource for gaining insights into the ups and downs of Nepal’s political history.

Dr. Indra Adhikari, a young political scientist, stated that this book serves as an eye-opening resource for the younger generation of Nepal to comprehend the significant political occurrences of the past two centuries.

Tulanarayan Shah, a Madhesh activist, noted that Professor Baral has provided an impartial description of the major political events of Nepal in a concise manner.

Large numbers of individuals from diverse backgrounds attended Professor Baral’s presentation where he discussed his book, which he began writing five months ago. During the presentation, Professor Baral mentioned that Madhav Maharjan, proprietor of Mandela Book Point, frequently encouraged him to pen this work.

In his introductory statements, Maharjan noted that amongst the many works authored by Professor Baral, this latest publication provides essential information within a concise format.

Rupa Publication has released the book and it is currently available for purchase.

# Loktantra's Moral Turpitude



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

In the nearly two decades of Nepali democracy since the sidelining of the monarchy, doing away with the country's Hindu identity and fracturing its governance with federalism – rebranded loktantra (peoples' rule) from prajatantra (subjects' rule) – corruption has become so pervasive, endemic and blatant that a more correct re-naming currently describes it as loot-tantra. The last time I explored this topic in these pages was a year after the promulgation of the new 2015 constitution which falsely raised hopes that the country was finally on the right track towards good governance.

The new constitution with massive contradictions had finally come after a decade of dilly-dallying by main political parties (Kangress, UML, Noida Maoists) mouthing loktantra but looting state revenue even at the local level. This was done via “all party committees” that essentially trained lower rank cadres of main political parties and the bureaucracy in the fine art of rent-seeking and larceny. Its bringing forth hastily was precipitated by the devastating 2015 Gorkha earthquake when party leaders realized their unpopularity as they went to the villages to distribute relief. But it was followed by a crippling economic blockade by India displeased with some of its provisions, giving the hasty bad effort a veneer of nationalism.

Alas, it has taken hardly a half dozen years – and two parliamentary elections under this dispensation – to see all hopes of any decent governance dashed. These years have resembled a bad tele serial of unending scams and corruption at the highest level of parties and governments they lead. The blatant impunity with which they do so has been aided by a now discredited civil society, partisan academia of universities and a cabal of corporate sahuji media and their editors who carried them to power and were beneficiaries of what followed.

While they continue to sing peans of praise for this kleptocracy and its kleptocrats, the rot is visible to the helpless citizenry seething with anger. Its early indications were seen in the last local and national elections where young unknown faces managed to defeat well-known candidates of major parties. Its everyday indication can be seen at the Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) with hordes of educated as well less educated youth voting with their feet against Nepal's kleptocratic loktantra and

heading to any pasture abroad that looks greener than the one at home. The situation is so dire, even engineering and management colleges previously highly aspired to are closing for lack of students.

Despite mainstream sahuji media's cheerleading of kleptocracy (their publishers are mostly in cahoots with the kleptocrats in comfortably cosy crony capitalism alliance), what has come out of the malfeasance of its leaders now in powerful alternative and social media makes for breath-taking reading. Farsightnepal reports of “corruption and impunity institutionalized through a political mechanism that has a culture of collusion across political parties at large and a kleptocratic network of politicians and bureaucrats and even the private sector seeking private gains and institutional control”.

“They steal state revenues, capture development expenditure, engage in rent-seeking from the private sector and extract natural resources, milk wealth from citizens, control institutions, favour their kith and kins in lucrative dealings, and save the big fishes when things go south — all to amass wealth and consolidate power and use that to keep the corrupt mechanism intact. As all layers of state and non-state institutions are in bed for corruption, there is little room for accountability and justice.”

Onlinekhabar details eight major corruption cases of the last five years involving all major political leaders and prime ministers, and all shockingly all hushed up. The country's flag-carrier Nepal Airlines saw its decline begin a quarter of a century ago with the Dhamija scandal under Girija Koirala and Chase Air scandal under the UML. The latest is an estimated Rs 4 billion corruption regarding its purchase of two wide-body aircrafts, in which investigations (subsequently hushed up) implicate former prime ministers Sher Bahadur Deuba and Khadga Prasad Oli. Another scandal is that of Lalita Niwas, official government land in a former Rana place that was embezzled into private ownership, and in which former prime ministers Baburam Bhattarai and Madhav Kumar Nepal were embroiled up to their gills. It was hushed, as publicly admitted by Kangress leader and former minister Minendra Rijal, to protect these two who are part of the current ruling coalition.

KP Oli's majority rule saw the onset of Covid pandemic, which proved to be a bonanza for the

prime minister's crony capitalists such as Omni, Yeti etc. who were able to import equipment and supplies at inflated costs bypassing due procurement processes, and also acquire public lands (including in national parks) at throwaway prices. Even the parliament's public accounts committees proved wholly ineffective in controlling the scams.

Oli's other henchman Gokul Banskota was caught on tape soliciting Rs 700 million bribe in a deal to purchase printing press for the government. Maoist finance minister Janardhan Sharma let outsiders into the budget making process to alter tax rates to favour businesses close to the Maoists as well as to the son of former PM Deuba in the case of sanitary pad imports, undercutting Nepal's small-scale women entrepreneurs who have made substantial progress on this front.

Gold smuggling through Nepal's only international airport took to new heights under the current dispensation, so much so that wags have said TIA should be named Suvarnabhumi (gold land) instead of the one in Bangkok. (The serial "bikini" murderer Charles Shobhraj once said he could smuggle and elephant through TIA!)

It involved hiding tens of kilograms of gold in motorcycle spare parts such as shoe brakes airlifted from Hong Kong, by Nepali and Chinese nationals AND senior Maoist ministers such as Barshaman Pun, Krishna Bahadur Mahara as well as their sons. Noida Maoist honcho and current prime minister is eager to hush these and other scandals up not only because he heads a government backed by corrupt ex-prime ministers complicit in many scams, but also because he fears exposure of his own scams involving embezzlement of Maoist fighter camp funds and justice finally catching up with him in killings of thousands of innocent Nepalis during the insurgency he led.

The Bhutanese refugee scandal involved selling refugee identity to Nepalis wishing to settle in the US and other countries. It has exposed another festering rot that implicates not just senior political figures of the current ideology-free coalition but also the wife of former PM Sher Bahadur Deuba, and in some ways UN's refugee agency as well. That sacred national identity could be sold so blatantly by senior figures in Nepal's Loktantrick government should also worry countries where such fake refugees have been resettled.

How useless was the Nepali parliament in putting a brake on the executive branch gone rogue

has been highlighted by the last summer session of parliament. It lasted six months, passed only one major bill, spent about 430 million rupees, but had sittings only for 61 days of 255 hours, of which the opposition disrupted proceedings for 30 days. Some 69 days of the six months did not see any house sittings as leaders had gone on foreign visits, or had their own party meetings or because the government could not propose any legislative business. But the members of parliament – like their near useless members of the provincial assemblies and governments – continued to receive their perks and privileges even while doing nothing.

How did it get so bad? Corruption, like the "oldest profession", has always existed, but in Nepal it has never been this pervasive and entrenched. Why? Anti-

**Despite mainstream sahuji media's cheerleading of kleptocracy (their publishers are mostly in cahoots with the kleptocrats in comfortably cosey crony capitalism alliance), what has come out of the malfeasance of its leaders now in powerful alternative and social media makes for breath-taking reading.**

corruption agencies were made toothless by these very Loktantrick leaders when they did away with its mandate to investigate policy and high-level corruption. Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) for instance has no jurisdiction to look at policy decisions by the cabinet (which is where

all the above high-profile corruptions originated); and the National Vigilance Center under the prime minister "is only empowered to take preventive and promotional measures against corruption".

In a nutshell, the impunity with which the current dispensation indulges in corruption is rooted in a few fundamental "truths". First, the same leaders who engaged in corruption since the mid-1990s are still in the top echelons of parties and governments despite three decades of scams and poor performance; and it is they who have suppressed each other's' scams in what is known as "bhagbanda" or divvying up the spoils of office. Second, we have designed a political system dependent on big money to run parties and win elections. And with legislators allowed to become executive ministers, they become bad legislators not interested in controlling the government but corrupt ministers themselves to recoup their election costs. Finally, by doing away with traditional religious values in the name of modernity and removing the institution of monarchy that was above competitive party politics, all brakes were off. Corruption will diminish only if this Loot-tantra is done away with.

## UPPER ARUN AND DUDH KOSHI

# Support Assured

*During visits to the project sites for the Upper Arun and Dudh Koshi Storage Project, delegations from Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank assured funding for these two mega projects.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepal's energy sector is undergoing a rapid shift towards green hydropower as a replacement for fossil fuels. The recent commitment from senior officials of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to fund the Upper Arun and Dhudh Koshi storage project is highly significant.

Following a survey of the project sites in remote eastern Nepal, the World Bank has a strong determination to begin development of the 1,061 MW Upper Arun semi-reservoir hydroelectric scheme. The project will be located in the Bhotkhola Rural Municipality of Sankhuwasabha.

At a high-level meeting, progress was discussed among attendees including Dr. Prakasharan Mahat, Minister of Finance, Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Minister of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, Deepak Karki, Federal Member of Sankhuwa Sabha, Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, Secretary of Energy, Kulman Ghising, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority, and Ana Wierde, Managing Director of the World Bank who leads co-financing with international organizations for this project's investment.

A team, comprising of Ramesh Subramaniam, Director General of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and his team, visited the Dhudh Koshi storage project site to demonstrate their support.

Finance Minister Mahat stressed that the Upper Arun Hydroelectric Project is about to transition into implementation. Despite having limited funds, he reassured that a significant budget has been allocated to propel the project forward and promised to not let resource limitations impede its progress.

Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation Minister Basnet emphasized the opportunity to utilize water resources for the nation's prosperity, affirming the government's preparedness and dedication to advance pro-

jects such as Upper Arun. will involve the Nepalese government, state government, and local authorities in the districts impacted by the project, as well as residents and citizens throughout the country, concessional loans from international multilateral



jects such as Upper Arun.

Basnet recognized the challenge of tree cutting for access road construction and vowed to address it in compliance with court orders, while guaranteeing that local communities have a stake in the project.

The Upper Arun project, estimated to cost \$1.75 billion inclusive of interest and price adjustments during construction, will be financed with 70% debt and 30% equity. The authority is leading the project, which aims to exemplify blended financing by utilizing a diverse range of investment sources.

The financing for the project

development partners, and loans from local banks and financial institutions.

In the co-financing effort led by the World Bank, international financial institutions will provide concessional loans amounting to \$750 million, while the World Bank will offer a subsidized loan worth \$500 million.

A financial plan has been developed to raise \$400 million from local banks and financial institutions. Under the guidance of the Hydroelectricity Investment and Development Company (HIDCL), a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed to aid in investment through shared fi-

nancing with local banks and financial institutions.

The project will collect roughly \$550 million in equity, with 51 percent from the founder shares of the Upper Arun Hydro Electric Company and 49 percent from public shares.

As part of the People's Hydropower Program, the Upper Arun project will receive initial contributions from the provincial government, the local authority in Sankhuwasabha district where the project is located, and the Nepal Electricity Authority.

Project-affected residents and citizens from across the country will hold 49% of common shares, with approximately NPR 32 billion to be raised by issuing public shares.

The project aims to have its financial management in place by June 2024, and construction is scheduled to start in mid-2025 with completion projected for 2031.

The feasibility study has been concluded, and a consultant has been selected for tender design and construction supervision. The initial preparations for the project involve building approximately 13 miles of access roads, which also includes 1.2 miles of tunnels. The project is designed to operate at full capacity for 6 hours per day during the 6 high-demand winter months. This will produce an annual energy output of 4.51 billion units, with approximately 30 percent of the energy generated during the winter months.

The electricity will be transmitted to the national system through a proposed substation in Haytar, Sankhuwasabha, via a 6 km 400 KV transmission line.

### **Dudh Koshi Storage**

Dudhkoshi Storage will be responsible for this transmission. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has pledged to invest in the 635 MW Dudhkoshi Reservoir Hydropower Project.

On Wednesday, November 1st, a team, including Kulman Ghising, Managing Director of the Nepal Electricity Authority, Ramesh Subra-

maniam, Director General of ADB, and Arnaud Cauchois, Country Director of ADB Nepal Resident Mission, visited the project site for inspection.

The project team inspected the reservoir and powerhouse site, and engaged in talks with community representatives at Rabuwa Bazar in Khotang district, where the dam is planned.

During the proceedings, Director General Subramaniam announced that this was the last inspection from a higher authority aimed at advancing the project. He assured that financial management will be carried out swiftly under the leadership of ADB. He stated that the project has received approval from the community and emphasized the urgency of finalizing the technical, environmental, and social aspects, which have been under discussion for 38 years.

The projected cost of the enterprise, inclusive of the interest incurred during the construction phase, is 2.2 billion dollars. Of the entire project fund, 1.68 billion dollars will be obtained through debt financing, while the balance will be through equity financing.

ADB will spearhead a partnership with worldwide financial institutions, contributing one billion dollars in subsidized loans, with ADB committing an investment of concessional loans worth 550 million dollars towards the development.

Arnaud Cauchois, the Country Director of ADB Nepal Residential Mission, stated that his team is making diligent efforts to expedite the decision-making process, engaging in frequent dialogue with the government of Nepal.

According to the Managing Director of NEA Ghising, the Dudhkoshi Reservoir Hydropower Project is a substantial endeavor, the largest dam project in the SAARC region thus far. He urged the local community to



remain patient throughout the development.

The ADB is overseeing financial management of Dudhkoshi, a crucial component of Nepal's power grid, with a targeted completion date of December 2024. Currently, technical, environmental, and social considerations are being finalized under Ghising's guidance.

Bimal Gurung, CEO of Dudhkoshi Hydropower Company Limited, presented the project's historical background, proposed structure, and current progress status. Technical terms were explained upon first usage. Precise, subject-specific vocabulary was employed wherever necessary.

The project's construction will impact 3,139 households located in the Khotang, Okhaldhunga, and Solukhumbu districts, of which 238 households will be fully affected and 2,901 partially affected. The project requires the acquisition of around 30,000 acres of land, and the process of land acquisition has already commenced. Further, the project will generate an annual output of 3.44 billion units of electricity.

During the dry season, 1.36 billion units of electricity will be generated, and 2.8 billion units will be produced during the rainy season. The project's construction will take seven years.

Upper Arun is NEA's first four-digit project under construction, while Dudhkoshi is the first reservoir project with enormous energy potential, aimed at stabilizing Nepal's electricity supply.

# UNSG ANTONIO GUTERRES Pleading Nepal's Case

*UN Secretary-General António Guterres is the first prominent figure to advocate for Nepal to the global community, despite multiple visits by international leaders in the past. Out of all the United Nations Secretary Generals who have visited Nepal, Secretary General Guterres is the first to prioritize the country with an extensive visit, ensuring support in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). With the institutional support of Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' political and bureaucratic leadership, Nepal has accomplished various milestones that have amplified the country's voice during this visit by a high-level delegation.*

By KESHAB POUDEL

“I learned a great deal during my time in Nepal and am dedicated to utilizing this knowledge to aid in the fight against climate change and promote the growth of the country.

Recently, I witnessed firsthand the dramatic retreat of glaciers in Nepal. It is imperative that we take action to end our reliance on fossil fuels. The UN Secretary General tweeted about my experiences, sharing video clips that highlight the urgent need for climate action and drawing attention to Nepal's vulnerability.”

He suggested that attendees of COP 28 should view the glaciers residing here. These glaciers are rapidly receding causing severe flooding, landslides, and impacting communities dramatically. If climate change continues at this pace, there will be no more ice, and the

rivers Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra will lose their supply of water. The rising sea level would lead to the invasion of salty water into the delta. Millions of people inhabit these areas, necessitating significant action to combat climate change.

A powerful message from the UN Secretary General in Nepal emphasizes the importance of Himalayan glaciers as a source of river systems that sustain crops, livestock, and the local economies of a region inhabited by more than 1.8 billion people. This situation is alarming. A diplomat reports that the glaciers have melted at a record rate, with the mountains losing one-third of their snow in the last three decades.

Despite visits from numerous western leaders and UN Secretary Generals, none have demonstrated the same level of emotional

attachment to Nepal as Secretary General António Guterres.

To illustrate his deep connection with Nepal, he stated, “When I am here, I am twice at home.” I am currently in Nepal, and my location here in the parliament brings a sense of familiarity. I served in my own parliament for eighteen years, so please allow me to address you as “dear colleagues”.

It is an honor and a privilege to revisit beautiful Nepal. I made my first trip here in 1978, and every visit continues to astound me. “

During his three-day stay, Secretary General Guterres visited all three of Nepal's ecological zones, including the high Himalayas, mountains, and plains.

In the Himalayan region, he interacted with the local community, spending over an hour at both Ever-





est Base Camp and Annapurna Base Camp, which are highly vulnerable to climate change. Secretary General Guterres spent two nights each in Kathmandu and Pokhara, where he also learned about the climate of the midlands.

He visited the sacred site of Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, to promote peace and emphasize the significance of Buddha's teachings for global peace amidst the current crisis in the Middle East caused by Hamas' attack on Israel.

He also inquired about the Nepalese casualties and injuries from the attack. Standing in Lumbini's hallowed garden, Secretary General António Guterres offered his condolences to the families of the ten Nepalese individuals who lost their lives in Israel due to Hamas.

"I extend my condolences to the families of the 10 Nepali students who lost their lives in the terror attacks by Hamas in Israel and my best wishes for the safe return of Bipin Joshi, a Nepali citizen who is reported missing. From Nepal, I will consistently advocate for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages in Gaza.

As he addressed Parliament, he asserted that there is no justification whatsoever for injuring, abducting and killing civilians."

Secretary General Guterres addressed both houses of Nepal's parliament and senior political and civil society leaders, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing the perspective of victims in concluding Nepal's transitional justice system.

With Nepal set to graduate from the LDC by 2026, the Secretary General assured full support during the transition period.

During his entire three-day visit to Nepal, Secretary General Guterres addressed Nepal's concerns regarding climate change and its impact on the country's ecosystem.

Secretary General Guterres praised Nepal's global significance for issues such as climate change, transitional justice, sustainable development goals, democracy, and visiting Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha.

During the Prime Minister's meeting with the Secretary General last month, the visit to Nepal was finally confirmed. The Prime Minister expressed his desire for the Secretary General to be pres-



ent in Nepal during the country's peace process.

Welcoming the UN Secretary-General and members of the UN delegation, Prime Minister Prachanda reminisced about receiving former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2008 during Nepal's transition to peace after a significant political transformation. Bias has been avoided by excluding subjective evaluations unless marked as such. The language is clear and concise, avoiding sprawling descriptions and complex terminology, while maintaining logical structure and causal connections. The conventional structure has been employed with consistent technical terms and formatting features. Formal register has been used with precise word choice, high-level, standard language, and balanced sentence structure. Spelling adheres to American English, while grammatical correctness has been ensured, with clear, objective language and passive tone and structure throughout.



Prime Minister Prachanda stated that Nepal's peace process has made a lengthy and successful journey, which attests to the commitment and determination of Nepali political leadership, the enduring resilience of our people, and the continued goodwill and support of the international community, including the United Nations.

"As we approach the final phase of the peace process, I am confident that we will achieve success and set a valuable example of conflict transformation for peace and democracy," he stated objectively.

In response, PM Prachanda and the UN Secretary General em-

phasized the importance of adopting a victim-centered approach to bring closure to transitional justice.

"We understand that successful transitional justice requires inclusion, comprehensiveness, and prioritizing the needs of victims. This includes a focus on truth, reparations, and justice, as well as enabling full participation from women. It is also critical that all victims of human rights violations receive meaningful redress."

"The United Nations is ready to support Nepal's victim-centered process and its implementation in line with international standards and the Supreme Court's rulings, while respecting Nepalese leadership.

The impact of climate change in Nepal, including receding glaciers caused by rising temperatures, is a major concern.

Although Secretary General Guterres has prioritized Nepal's major issues such as LDC Graduation, SDGs, transitional justice, and Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha."

During his visit to the Everest Region, Annapurna Base Camp, and Pokhara, the United Nations Secretary General conveyed the implications of climate change in a robust and objective manner. Thus, immediate and decisive action is required to combat this urgent issue.

He noted that, from the base of Mount Everest, he himself witnessed the severe impact of the climate crisis on the Himalayas. As temperatures continue to rise, the increasing glacier melts pose a significant threat to the lives and livelihoods of entire communities in the area.

As a prominent proponent of climate action and the second largest contributor to UN Peacekeeping, Nepal deserves the complete solidarity of the international community,” tweeted Secretary General António Guterres.

“It is crucial to halt the exploitation and generation of climate change to preserve the country’s incredible mountains and glaciers. Supporting Nepal, as well as other nations that suffer the consequences but do not contribute to climate change, is imperative. We observe numerous regions affected by climate change, including numerous landslides and impacted communities. Thus, I urge the international community to demonstrate solidarity by providing increased funding for adaptation, resilience building,



and community protection, as well as ensuring implementation of the loss and damage fund to benefit communities like those I have visited that suffer greatly due to climate change.

He mentioned that the effects of the climate crisis are increasing, resulting in floods, fires, and droughts that are taking lives and ruining livelihoods globally, including here in Nepal where I witnessed it firsthand during my visits yesterday and today.

During his visit to Lumbini, the Secretary General delivered a message for world peace by referencing the principles of Buddha for nonviolence and peace.

In these challenging times, the Secretary General’s message from Lumbini - the birthplace of the Lord Buddha - is straightforward: Humanity has a choice. We possess the power to take the path toward peace. Let us act now for the

sake of peace. The Secretary General thanks the Nepali government for inviting him to the country.

“This is a place to reflect on the teachings of Lord Buddha, and to consider what his

message of peace, interdependence, and compassion means in today’s troubled world,” he said.

“But inspired by Lord Buddha’s timeless example, I firmly believe that this vision can become a reality through concrete actions: actions to safeguard the rights and dignity of all; actions to cultivate healing, bridge divides, and foster mutual trust and understanding; actions to realize the Sustainable Development Goals, with particular focus on aiding the most vulnerable; and actions to halt the onslaught on our planet by rapidly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and restoring biodiversity.”

### Condolence to Nepali Killed By Hamas

The Secretary General expressed solidarity with the families of Nepalese students killed and missing in an attack by Hamas terrorists.

The Secretary General provided a condolence message to the families of the ten Nepalese individuals who were killed in Israel by Hamas.

“I offer my condolences to the families of the ten Nepali students killed in the terror attacks by Hamas in Israel and my best wishes for the safe return of Bipin Joshi, a Nepali citizen who is currently missing.” From Nepal, I insist on the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages in Gaza.

There is never a justifica-



## COVERSTORY

tion for killing, injuring, or abducting civilians. I appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the release of hostages unconditionally, and the delivery of relief at a level commensurate with the dramatic needs of the people in Gaza, where a humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding before our eyes.

Humanity is currently battling with both nature and itself.

In various places across the world, such as the Middle East, Ukraine, the Sahel, Sudan, and many others, conflicts continue to wreak havoc. Human rights and international law are disregarded as global institutions and regulations are undermined.

Tragically, ordinary individuals, including children, women, and men, bear the brunt of the consequences of these conflicts in the form of devastating loss of life and human suffering. A vast number of individuals have been forced to leave their homes in order to escape violence, conflict, and persecution, leading to a historical high of displaced people. Additionally, poverty and inequality are rampant.

### Visit a success

The three-day visit by the Secretary General holds historic importance and is considered a success. According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the visit by the UN Secretary-General to Nepal aided in enhancing the Nepal-UN partnership and provided important momentum for greater collaboration as Nepal progresses towards graduation from LDC status as well as towards accelerating the implementation of

sustainable development objectives.

“Your visit has facilitated a deepening of the Nepal-UN partnership and expansion of our cooperation in areas such as peace, development, and climate change. Nepal remains committed to multilateralism with the UN at its core,” tweeted Lok Bahadur Thapa, Nepal’s permanent representative to the UN.

“Thank you, UNSG Antonio Guterres, for highlighting the impending climate disaster in Nepal and emphasizing the need to redouble our efforts to combat climate change.” “This will remain a priority for the EU,” tweeted EU Ambas-



sador to Nepal Veronique Lorenzo. “During his visit, Secretary General Guterres delivered a statement on the implications of climate change in Nepal that will have a significant impact. All Nepalese are grateful to him,” stated Dr. Maheshwor Dhakal, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Forest and Environment and former head of the Climate Change Management Division. “The Secretary General’s acceptance of our case on a global level is a significant triumph.

However, there were some shortcomings during the visit. The United Nations Secretary General addressed all of Nepal’s major issues, but neglected to mention the

unresolved situation of Bhutanese refugees returning to their homeland,” expressed Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai, former Permanent Representative to the UN Mission in Geneva.

### Nepal’s Role in UN System

United Nations Secretary-General Guterres stated that Nepal has been a consistent supporter of the international system and a strong advocate for multilateralism, peace, and the interests of developing nations.

During his speech to the joint session of the federal parliament, the UN chief emphasized the urgent necessity for revitalization and reforms within the system.

Noting that the world is in a state of flux and moving towards a multi-polar structure, he stated, “A multi-polar world presents fresh prospects for global leadership and equitable balance.”

However, the UN Secretary-General emphasized that these opportunities require the backing of strong multilateral institutions to maintain peace, citing past events as evidence. “At the beginning of the twentieth century, Europe was multi-polar, yet without robust multilateral institutions, war erupted and engulfed the world.” We cannot afford to take that risk.

Guterres highlighted the necessity for robust international institutions that align with present-day realities. He added that developing countries require a more significant representation in global organizations.

The UN leader asserted that multilateralism should mirror and



address the world, which entails establishing the necessary institutions and resources to address new challenges and capitalize on prospects.

Guterres also stated that technology has the capacity to solve problems and boost growth. “It can exacerbate divisions and worsen inequality,” he stated, emphasizing that presently it is promoting insufficient unity and fostering excessive discord.

### MoFA’s Strategic Role

This marks the initial instance of a distinguished individual championing Nepal’s interests and advocating for the country. Acknowledgments also extend to the political and bureaucratic leadership and institutional capabilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (MoFA).

Managed by a highly efficient MoFA team under the leadership of Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal, with the support of Minister of Foreign Affairs NP Saud, the Secretary General’s visit to Nepal highlighted the country’s perspective. The three-day visit will be long remembered for its significance.

Secretary Paudyal has made significant contributions to the success of the visit, thanks to almost eight years of experience heading the UN Division and serving as a spokesperson during former

Secretary Shanker Das Bairagi’s tenure.

Although some of Secretary Paudyal’s colleagues criticized him for working individually, one of the strongest aspects of his career is his hardworking nature and extensive knowledge. Even his harshest critics acknowledge these qualities of Secretary Paudyal, who works behind the scenes throughout this entire visit.

“I am deeply grateful for the exceptional hospitality I received in Pokhara. It is one of the world’s wonders, yet endangered due to climate change.” “The purpose of my visit was to send a clear message to the world that it is crucial to put an end to the war against nature,” stated the Secretary General during a media interaction at Pokhara Airport.

“I express deep gratitude towards the Nepalese Government and its people for providing me with wonderful hospitality during my three-day visit. The facilities that were made available to me significantly contributed to making this visit a huge success,” added Secretary General Guterres.”

For him, Nepal is a familiar country, not a new one. During his time as head of UNHCR, Secretary General Guterres, a seasoned former politician from Portugal, oversaw the successful repatriation of more than 100,000

Bhutanese refugees.

Nepal’s former permanent representative to the United Nations, Amrit Kumar Rai, contributed to making this visit possible. Additionally, Secretary Paudyal, who spoke as a Nepalese leader at the UN General Assembly last year, extended an official invitation to the UN Secretary General to visit Nepal.

The Secretary General Guterres’s words express immense fondness for Nepal. “As a determined advocate for multilateralism, peace, and the interests of developing countries, Nepal will prove to be a crucial ally at the Summit. My recent visit to this remarkable nation has brought me great pleasure, and I can confirm one simple truth: Nepal is a friend to the world. Therefore, it is imperative that the world reciprocate this friendship. My recent visit to this remarkable nation has brought me great pleasure, and I can confirm one simple truth: Nepal is a friend to the world. The United Nations remains committed to the fight for making this a reality.”



# I commit To use What I Learned To Support Nepal



BY: ANTONIO GUTERRES

I learned a lot, and I commit to use what I learned to support Nepal in your struggle against Climate Change and for the development of your country.

What I have seen and experienced in the past few days will stay with me always: The sunlight hitting the Himalayas; the warmth of the people; the richness of your cultural diversity. And of course, the sanctity of Lumbini. I thank the government of Nepal for your invitation, your hospitality and your welcome to me and to my delegation.

We meet today amidst a world in turmoil. Decades of progress on poverty and hunger are being reversed in large parts of the world. Inflation is undermining household and national budgets.

Families and countries alike face financial crisis. Women are under-represented and underpaid. And I recognize the enormous effort that Nepal is doing in the way for gender equality, full gender equality. And I praise your efforts and its results.

Violence and conflict abound. While the conflict in the Middle East is thousands of miles away, Nepalis were among the many victims of Hamas' brutal attacks in Israel.

I send my sincere condolences to the families of the ten Nepalese students who were killed and express my best wishes for the safe return of Bipin Joshi, who is missing.

As geopolitical tensions rise, global divisions are becoming deeper and more dangerous. Smaller countries fear becoming collateral damage in competition between the great powers. And climate catastrophe is accelerating with a deadly force.

In responding to these crises, the world could learn much from Nepal. This country is a promoter of peace, a champion of multilateralism, and a staunch supporter of sustainable development and climate action. Nestled between two great powers, you have forged your own path to safeguard your sovereignty and your independence.

And your journey over the past twenty years has been wonderful to see. A new republic with a new Constitution has the UN Charter at its heart.

And you are preparing the final stages of your Nepalese-led peace process – healing the wounds of war through transitional justice. A process to bring peace to victims, families and communities haunted by questions, and scarred by injustice; and help put the past to rest.

And this relatively small country compared to big powers has made an outsized contribution to international peace: Of all the countries on Earth, Nepal is the second largest contributor of troops to United Nations' missions, military and police.

I am sincerely grateful to the Nepali people for their dedication, their courage, and their service in peacekeeping.

And I would like to take a moment and ask for one mo-

ment of silence, to honor those Nepalese who have lost their lives serving under the blue flag.

On climate action, Nepal is a frontrunner. You are on target to reach net zero emissions by 2045.

Thanks to extraordinary reforestation efforts, trees now cover almost half of the country.

And you are one of the pioneers of the Early Warning Systems for All Initiative – which aims to protect every person on Earth by 2027. Yet global crises are hitting Nepal hard, as they are developing countries around the world.

The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, and above all, the climate crisis, are threatening hard-won development gains and squeezing the funds available for investment. Nepal contributes a minimal fraction of a percent, 0.000 percent, to global emissions.

But monsoons, storms and landslides are growing in force and ferocity – sweeping away crops, livestock, and entire villages – decimating economies and ruining lives.

In August, landslides caused by heavy rains caused devastation and killed scores of people. And glaciers are melting at record levels. I was a witness.

And mountainsides exposed – inflaming the risk of rockslides, landslides, and avalanches. Threats will continue mounting. Himalayan glaciers provide fresh water to well over a billion people.

As they shrink, so do river flows. In the future, now we have too much floods, but one day in the future, Himalayan rivers like the Indus, the Ganges and Brahmaputra would have their flows severely limited. Combined with saltwater intrusion, that will decimate deltas in this region and beyond.

That could mean low-lying communities and entire countries erased forever; Millions of people on the move; And fierce competition for water and land. Nepal is now one of the countries that are suffering the most but other south Asian countries might become in the future terrible victims of the receding glaciers of Nepal.

What are happening in this country as a result of climate change is an appalling injustice and a searing indictment of the fossil fuel age. I am deeply concerned by those communities in Nepal facing the brutal impacts of the climate crisis.

The United Nations stands with them. The world must do the same. That was one of the reasons why I took profit of my visit to the Everest base camp to issue a video for the whole world showing the drama of the receding glaciers and the impact that will have in the future.

Nepal and other developing countries need far greater international support to aid development, accelerate climate action, and weather the current global storms.

*Antonio Guterres is the United Nations Secretary-General. Excerpts of the statement made at Joint Session of the Parliament.*



## सामाजिक सञ्जाल प्रयोग गर्दा सतर्कता अपनाऔं

### सामाजिक सञ्जालमा:

- जातीय, धार्मिक र साम्प्रदायिक सद्भावमा खलल पुऱ्याउने,
  - राष्ट्रिय सुरक्षा, राष्ट्रिय एकतामा आँच पुग्ने,
  - कुनै व्यक्ति वा संस्थाको प्रतिष्ठा र आत्मसम्मानमा ठेस पुऱ्याउने,
  - जातीय भेदभाव, छुवाछुत, श्रमप्रति अवहेलना हुने,
  - शान्ति-सुरक्षामा खलल पुग्ने,
  - प्रचलित कानूनले रोक लगाएका सामाग्रीहरु प्रकाशन वा प्रदर्शन गर्ने,
  - जनमानसमा भ्रम सिर्जना गर्ने,
- जस्ता विषयबस्तु पोष्ट वा शेयर गर्नु हुँदैन। त्यस्ता कार्य कानूनतः दण्डनीय हुन्छन्।



नेपाल सरकार  
विज्ञापन बोर्ड

FOREIGN MINISTER SAUD

# Concludes Landmark Visit

*Foreign Minister Narendra Prasad Saud has concluded his highly significant visit to the United States, during which he engaged in discussions with US Secretary of State Blinken and other senior American officials to exchange views.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

For Foreign Minister Narayan Prasad Saud, a youth leader of Nepali Congress, the schedule is busy with visits and meetings with international officials from powerful countries.

His schedules are well-planned and arranged with the support of carrier diplomats and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During this transitional period of leadership change within the Nepali Congress, there is intense competition among youth leaders to secure positions. Minister Saud, who was groomed under Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba, has identified an opportunity to establish himself in the international arena.

After his recent visit to the United Nations and China, where he successfully carried out a mission to bring Nepali students back from Israel, Minister Saud completed another high-level

visit to Washington D.C.

In the past five years, Foreign Minister Saud is the second Nepali official to pay an official visit to the United States, with CPN-UML leader Pradeep Gyawali having also done so in the past.

Minister Saud and Antony J. Blinken, the US Secretary

of State, held a bilateral meeting at the Department of State in Washington, D.C. During the meeting, they discussed matters of common interest regarding bilateral, regional, and international issues of common concern. The exchange of views was ob-

mutually beneficial areas.

Foreign Minister Saud emphasized the development priorities of Nepal in the context of its graduation from the least developed country and requested increased support from the United States in various areas, in-



jective and free from bias.

During the meeting, the representatives of both Nepal and the USA expressed satisfaction with the current state of bilateral relations while reaffirming their commitment to expanding and deepening engagement across

cluding trade, investment, market access, food security, and IT. To further promote Nepal's exports, he also requested that the United States consider reauthorizing and expanding the Nepal Trade Preference Program (NTPP) and GSP facilities by adding new exporta-



ble items of interest.

Minister Saud expressed gratitude to the US government for its ongoing support of Nepal's socio-economic development, including recent aid provided through USAID and the Millennium Challenge Compact. Both parties emphasized the crucial need for timely implementation of MCC projects.

Secretary Blinken acknowledged Nepal's progress in strengthening democratic governance and conveyed the US government's desire to see Nepal as a strong and prosperous democracy. Secretary Blinken assured the Foreign Minister of continued US support for Nepal's developmental endeavors.

The two sides exchanged views on Nepal-US cooperation in multilateral forums, as well as regional and global affairs, including the ongoing situation in the Middle East.

Ambassador Sridhar Khatri and senior officials from the Ministry and Embassy accompanied Minister Saud during the bilateral meeting. Secretary Blinken was accompanied by US Ambassador to Nepal Dean Thompson and senior officials from the Department of State.

Along with the Secretary of State, Foreign Minister Saud met with other high-level officials in Washington, including a powerful U.S. senator and senior, influential officials from USAID, USIP, and DFC.

Foreign Affairs Minister Saud met with Senator Chris Van Hollen to discuss the overall context of bilateral relations, emphasizing the importance of exchanging between parliaments.



Additionally, Minister Saud held meetings with high-level officials such as Samantha Power, Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Alice P. Albright, Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. He will meet Congressman Mike Carey, Nepal Caucus Co-chair in the US Congress.

Other engagements of the Foreign Minister will include a talk program at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), interactions with the Nepali-American business community and IT advisory network, and meetings with representatives of the Non-Resident Nepali Association and Nepali-American professionals.

Managed by Bharat Raj Paudyal, a competent and professional foreign secretary, the Nepali delegation includes Ambassador to the United States of America Sridhar Khatri, Joint Secretary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ganesh Dhakal, and senior officials from the Nepalese Embassy in Washington, DC. Their purpose is to support Minister Saud in making a successful visit.

As the delegation aimed to negotiate trade issues, it included Presidents Chandra Prasad Dhakal of FNCCI and Ajit Shah, President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Nepal.

The Minister held both virtual and in-person discussions with Nepali-American IT professionals and business owners employed by various companies in the United States and worldwide. The discussion illuminated the advancements in Nepal's IT industry and the involvement of Nepali-American entrepreneurs in facilitating its growth.

Amid Nepal's endeavor to broaden its diplomatic engagement in its quest to secure support after graduating from the LDC category, the visit of Foreign Minister Saud to the United States and his rendezvous with high-level American officials, including Secretary of State Blinken, holds significant weight.

# Belt And Road: No Belt, No Road – The Stalled Journey In Nepal



BY: DR. BIPIN ADHIKARI

It's been over six years since the memorandum of understanding, then known as the One Belt One Road Initiative, was signed between Nepal and China. However, there seems to be a conspicuous absence of tangible progress on the ground. The project's implementation plan, as it stands, is still in the discussion phase between the two countries.

By now, over 30 international organizations and 150 countries have endorsed what is now known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which was initiated by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. There is indeed a progress in the Chinese point of view. The cumulative value of imports and exports between China and other BRI participating nations has soared to \$19.1 trillion, demonstrating an average annual growth rate of 6.4 percent. Moreover, two-way investments between China and other BRI countries have surged to \$380 billion, with China contributing \$240 billion. Under the BRI umbrella, China has committed to over 3,000 projects, with the mobilization of up to one trillion dollars in investments. It is certainly impressive.

Nevertheless, it is evident that while China aims to encompass all ongoing projects with Nepal within the BRI, not a single project has taken off under this banner. China's assertion on December 31st that the Pokhara International Airport, a bilateral deal predating the 2017 memorandum of understanding, represents its flagship project in Nepal under the BRI, caught many by surprise. The government had, in March 2016, entered into a \$215.96 million soft loan agreement with China for the construction of the new airport in Pokhara, with no reference to the BRI, despite the policy concept's existence in China. Beijing's assertion emerged just ahead of the new airport's inauguration by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal. While each project is individually signed as a distinct arrangement, and the BRI serves merely as a framework, the question of why China categorizes it as a BRI project remains speculative in Nepal.

## Enthusiasm for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

The government and people of land-locked Nepal exhibited significant enthusiasm for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), especially in the wake of the 2015 blockade imposed by India. Beyond the evident economic incentives, the Nepali population sought alternatives to their reliance on India for transit and essential goods and services, which had left them vulnerable to supply disruptions. When discussions commenced after Nepal and China inked the framework agreement on the BRI in 2017, the atmosphere was highly promising. Nepal was quick to identify and initially earmark 35 projects for implementation under this initiative. These projects held long-term benefits for Nepal, with a strong focus on enhancing connectivity and infra-

structure. Subsequently, the list of prioritized projects was streamlined to nine. The day for kick-off has not arrived yet.

In 2019, during the second BRI Forum held in China, a pivotal development emerged as the outcome document incorporated the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network within the BRI framework. A notable component of this initiative was the construction of the Kathmandu-Lhasa Railway, aimed to establish a railway connecting Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, to Lhasa, Tibet, with the potential to significantly bolster trade and connectivity between the two nations. Furthermore, there was a commitment to invest in Nepal's hydropower sector, a critical facet of meeting Nepal's energy demands. In this connection, when Chinese President Xi visited Kathmandu in October 2019, the two sides jointly pledged to transform Nepal from a land-locked country to a land-linked one. Nevertheless, despite this initial optimism, the second term of the BRI has also concluded, and the third term has commenced through automatic renewal provisions. There is no further progress. Key factors contributing to this transition were the political instabilities of 2020 and the change of government in July 2021.

## BRI in 2023

When Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal embarked on his visit to China from September 23 to 30, 2023, Prime Minister Li Qiang reiterated China's readiness to collaborate with Nepal to enhance connectivity across various domains, encompassing ports, roads, railways, aviation, communication, and electricity.

The shared aspiration is to expedite the establishment of the trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, with the ultimate goal of transitioning Nepal from a land-locked nation to a land-linked one. In addition, China expressed its willingness to increase imports of high-quality agricultural products from Nepal and encourage Chinese enterprises to actively participate in Nepal's development and construction, spanning production capacity, agriculture, and infrastructure facilities. During this visit, they also jointly witnessed the signing of more than ten bilateral cooperation documents, spanning economics and trade, agriculture, science and technology, culture, publishing, digital economy, green and low-carbon development, inspection and quarantine, as well as development assistance, among others.

The joint statement, released during the final phase of the visit, serves to clarify several important perspectives. In a diplomatically polite manner, Nepal declined China's invitation to join President Xi Jinping's Global Security Initiative (GSI),

a novel concept proposed by China. However, Nepal agreed to advance the cross-border connectivity projects, demonstrating its commitment to regional development and cooperation. Nepal expressed support for the Global Development Initiative (GDI) presented by China and indicated its willingness to explore participation in the Group of Friends of the GDI. Additionally, both sides reaffirmed the significance of the 2017 agreement to cooperate under President Xi's BRI and expressed their intent to expedite consultations for the finalization of the delayed BRI implementation plan. Notably, the GDI, GSI, and Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) represent three pivotal new initiatives introduced by President Xi, which will underpin China's foreign policy during his third term.

The joint statement also acknowledged the successful opening of the Lizi-Nechung port and the resumption of passenger services at the Zhangmu-Khasa port, with a commitment to maintain communication for the future opening of other border ports, including Chentang-Kimathanka and Riwu-Olangchungola, in the near future. China has initiated the fourth phase of the Araniko Highway maintenance project, signaling its commitment to enhancing the quality of infrastructure. Additionally, it has expressed its intention to undertake repairs on the Syaphrubesi-Rasuwadghi Highway once the ongoing demolition work is finished. The two nations have also reached an agreement to commence construction of a 220 KV Cross-Border Power Transmission line, extending from Jilong/Keyrung to Rasuwadghi/Chilime, further reinforcing connectivity in the region. To foster railway cooperation, the 8th Working Meeting on China-Nepal Railway Cooperation is scheduled to convene shortly. Moreover, Beijing is poised to launch an initiative aimed at training Nepali railway professionals, thereby bolstering expertise in the sector. The two sides agreed to maintain communication for the opening of Chentang-Kimathanka, Riwu-Olangchungola ports at an early date.

### Global Community with a Shared Future for Humankind

At the international level, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) faces its own set of challenges. The third International Belt and Road Forum, which took place in Beijing on October 17-18, featured a particularly meaningful theme. Unlike previous forums, it was titled 'High-quality Belt and Road Cooperation: Together for Common Development and Prosperity.' This shift in emphasis is significant, highlighting the forum's focus on elevating the quality of BRI cooperation. During the event, three high-level sub-forums, encompassing connectivity, green development, and the digital economy, were conducted, alongside six seminars. This forum was a commemorative event marking the 10th anniversary of the BRI.

As China grapples with its own domestic economic

challenges amid a slowdown in growth, the forum highlighted a shift toward emphasizing smaller, yet more strategically impactful projects. This new approach places a strong emphasis on low-investment, high-yield endeavors that can enhance the BRI's relevance. For instance, such projects encompass bamboo and rattan-weaving programs in Liberia, biogas technology initiatives in Tonga and Samoa, and the promotion of mushroom-growing technology in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Rwanda. Furthermore, the BRI's focus on the digital silk road has prioritized investments in telecommunications and digital infrastructure. As part of this evolved strategy, China has curtailed financing, imposed limits on external lending by Chinese banks, and reduced the size of investment deals to nearly half of their size five years ago. Additionally, China has transitioned away from being the sole creditor within the BRI and initiated a platform where other countries and international banks can provide financial support. This is certainly helpful.

### Conclusion

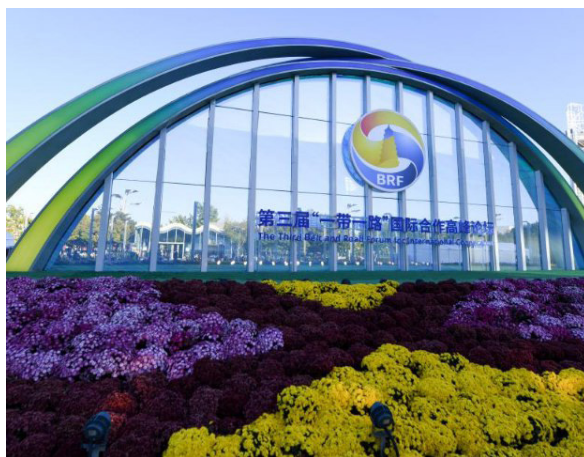
China's success in the Belt and Road Initiative, both in Nepal and globally, will be gauged by the actual project deliveries, their quality, and the achievement of stated objectives.

In conclusion, the Belt and Road Initiative has embarked on an ambitious mission to reshape the global economic landscape. While it has garnered support from numerous countries and offers the promise of enhanced connectivity and development, it is not without its share of challenges and concerns. As the initiative moves forward, it must address the raised criticisms, ensure environmental sustainability, and navigate the complexities of our ever-evolving global landscape.

The key to its success lies in demonstrating the effectiveness of the initiative through flexible and mutually beneficial approaches tailored to the unique circumstances of each participating country. By doing so, the BRI can work towards achieving its goal of shared development and prosperity in a rapidly changing world.

As of today, for Nepal, the Belt and Road Initiative remains a subject of discussion without tangible progress - No Belt, No Road; the journey is still stalled. China must substantiate its commitments. The trans-Himalayan railways, for example, should not be relegated to the backburner. Any example China sets will undoubtedly serve as compelling evidence that developing countries hold significant potential to benefit from China's involvement.

*Dr. Adhikari is associated with School of Law at Kathmandu University (KUSOL) (Founder Dean and Professor of Law), University of Nepal Infrastructure Development Preparatory Board (Executive Member), Supreme Court Bar Association (Senior Advocate) and Constitution Watch Group (Member. For full article visit: <https://www.spotlightnepal.com/2023/10/26/belt-and-road-no-belt-no-road-the-stalled-journey-in-nepal/>*



## NEPAL'S UN VOTING

# Unexpected Decision

*Despite death of eleven Nepali students, Nepal's failure to condemn the terrorism act in words and deeds in UN General Assembly voting*

By KESHAB POUDEL

It has been three weeks since the deadliest terrorist attack in Israeli history, carried out by the Hamas terrorist group from Gaza. Israel is still reeling from the shock of the attack. The total death toll of Nepalese citizens in Hamas terrorist attacks has reached 11, with one person missing and two hospitalized, following the announcement of receiving three bodies of Nepalese students. The families of these students, who have lost their loved ones, are also in shock.

Since the October 7 terrorist attack by Hamas, the situation has changed considerably. Israel has launched a combined air and ground offensive against a Hamas terrorist base located in Southern Gaza. Israelis assert that their current conflict with Gaza is not a matter of retaliation or revenge. Instead, their goal is to prevent Gaza's terror-government, which took power after Israel withdrew from the Strip in 2005, from being able to repeat its barbar-

ic actions. Additionally, Israel aims to deter its more powerful enemies and restore its citizens' faith in their ability to live safely in the region.

Following the recent attack, there is a widespread consensus in Israel that the ongoing conflict is necessary to protect its citizens from those who seek their destruction. De-

mains divided, Jordan submitted a resolution to the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of the Arab group, calling for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, the group responsible for launching hundreds of rockets aimed at Israeli cities and civilians. However, the Arab group rejected Canada's proposed amendment to denounce the terrorist acts of Hamas against Israel.

Countries are typically divided on such resolutions based on their own interests and alliances. In the voting on UN Resolutions calling for a ceasefire in Gaza between the Israeli Army

and Hamas terrorists, who killed 11 innocent Nepali students pursuing academic courses in Israel, Nepal failed to express sympathy and provide justice to the families of the Nepalese students and the 1400 Israeli and other nationals affected by the conflict. While the



spite the feelings of shock, horror, anger, and concern, Israel remains committed to its principle of valuing life over death, even as it faces an enemy who celebrates the opposite. Therefore, victory is Israel's only choice.

As global opinion re-

resolution claimed to be for humanitarian purposes, the situation is indeed complex and multifaceted. This also indicates that Nepal's Middle East policy does not distinguish between legitimate states and terrorist organizations like Hamas. Nepalese officials argue that the vote is intended to protect over 1.5 million Nepalese currently working in the Middle East and Gulf States, as well as to support the humanitarian cause of the Palestinian civilian population. However, Nepal has maintained a neutral stance on condemning the terrorist group Hamas, choosing to abstain from voting on a Canadian-sponsored resolution condemning their heinous acts in Israel on October 7.

It is worth noting that although six percent of Nepal's population are Muslims, none of them have demanded that the Nepalese government express support for Hamas terrorists. As a close neighbor of Nepal, India, which has the second-largest Muslim population and the largest number of Indians working in Arab and Gulf countries, voted to condemn Hamas Terrorist in the Canadian resolution and was absent in the Jordan sponsored Arab resolution that prioritized the country's interests. Arab and Muslim nations have their own compulsions and interests, leading them to reject the amendment resolution condemning Hamas Terror.

Standing with the Arab-sponsored resolution and



abstaining from the Canadian amendment resolution, Nepal failed to provide justice for the families of victims, including five deaths in the constituency of Minister of Foreign Affairs Saud, who were victims of Hamas' terrorist act. Nepal's failure to denounce the terrorist act of Hamas and instead vote for a resolution that puts moral pressure on Israel sends a contradictory message.

Establishing diplomatic relations 65 years ago, Nepal chose to recognize and accept Israel's sovereignty and right to live peacefully as a nation. Through the leadership of Prime Minister BP Koirala and King Mahendra, bilateral relations between these two small nations thrived in the early years with a spirit of mutual respect. The noble principle of the right to live was followed in establishing diplomatic ties. Over the years, there have been numerous shifts in global politics and international relationships, but the core nature of the small nations Nepal and Israel

remains constant. Nonetheless, Nepal's policy towards the Middle East has been unstable at times. Over the years, there have been numerous shifts in global politics and international relationships, but the core nature of the small nations Nepal and Israel remains constant. Despite changing geopolitical circumstances, Nepal has maintained its support for the Arab cause, even when Nepali citizens have been victimized by Hamas terrorists. Although communist regimes dominate Nepal, some factions continue to praise Palestinian terrorist acts. Prem Suwal, a member of the Parliament from the radical communist party based in Bhaktapur, expressed support for Hamas during a House session.

Nepal's foreign policy has recently undergone a recalibration at the neighborhood level while still maintaining its core values of non-alignment. The shift has been led by foreign minister Saud, who is also a young leader of the Nepali

Congress and Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal, a well educated and knowledgeable diplomat.

Despite the fact that a Hamas terrorists organization killing eleven Nepalese students, Nepal's officials voted in support of the Jordan-sponsored resolution backed by the Arab League, in line with their traditional policy. For the past six decades, Israel has been supporter of Nepal's development efforts. However, on October 27, Nepal voted in favor of a UN resolution with a majority of 120-14 and 45 abstentions, rejecting a Canadian amendment. The decision upset Israel's officials as they had hoped for Nepal's support due to their shared experience as victims of Hamas terrorist attacks.

Nepalese officials have defended their decision to support the resolution calling for a ceasefire and peace in the Middle East. They clarified that Nepal voted in favor of a humanitarian truce, not in support of Hamas' terrorist actions. The officials emphasized the urgent need for essential supplies such as food, water, medicine, and fuel, to reach the 2.3 million people in Gaza. However, the resolutions goal is to achieve a truce in Gaza that leads to a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers.

Nepal's dilemma is also a reflection of its ruling alliance. Led by Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, who has spent his entire political career hailing Palestinian terrorists as liberation warriors,



the present rainbow coalition has the same foreign policy. This might be the reason why Foreign Minister Saud and the Prime Minister Prachanda hold different approaches in dealing with the Middle-East. Foreign minister Saud condemned the acts of Hamas terrorists, while the government led by Prachanda has yet to term Hamas violent acts as terrorism.

Israel's U.N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan, described it as "a day that will be remembered in infamy", and stated that Israel will continue its operation until Hamas' terrorist capabilities are destroyed, and hostages are returned. The only way to eliminate Hamas is by rooting them out from their tunnels and undergrounded city of terror.

Despite being a victim of a terrorist attack by Hamas that resulted in 11 casualties, numerous injuries, and the repatriation of over 300 Nepalese citizens, the government of Nepal appears hesitant to classify Hamas as a terrorist organization. While Nepal has several options available, their decisions to absent from participating in an amendment resolution condemning the Hamas terrorist

act and instead voting in favor of a different resolution during the UN vote sends an incorrect message.

As King Mahendra and BP Koirala established diplomatic relations respecting the sovereignty of Israel and the rights of small nations, Nepal missed an opportunity to demonstrate solidarity and friendship towards a small nation facing a threat to its survival. It should have unequivocally condemned the terrorist act of Hamas, aligning itself with its own stance. Nepal should have made it clear that all forms of terrorism are unjustifiable and condemned the atrocities of Hamas terrorist.

What Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu said in recent press meet is significant. He said, 'today we draw a line between the forces of civilization and the forces of barbarism. It is a time for everyone to decide where they stand.'

# What You Can Do To Help Israel - Dispelling Myths



BY: HANAN GODER-GOLDBERGER

As Israel has gradually resumed control and cleared the border areas flooded with terrorists, the extent of the Hamas massacre has been revealed:

As of today, we have counted more than 1,400 people murdered, among them babies, children, women and elderly people. This number includes 10 Nepalis that participated in the “Learn and Earn Program” and more than other 50 nationals. Entire families were butchered in their homes. Infants were mutilated and children gunned to death with their parents. Approximately 260 young men and women were slaughtered, most of them shot to death, at a music festival. More than 3,800 people were injured, many of them still hanging between life and death. 200 have been abducted to Gaza, their fate unknown. In addition, Hamas terrorists launched more than 6000 rockets against its civilian population.

The Hamas attack in the south was the premeditated mass murder of innocent civilians. The launching of rockets against the Israel’s population is a further attempt to terrorize and kill innocent citizens.

It is time to dispel myths and come to reality:

The first myth is the unholy equation made by many mainstream media outlets, in a futile attempt to preserve a non-existent balance, to deceptively describe the conflict as “violence on both sides.”

However, while Israel seeks peace and coexistence, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, including Hamas, choose death and devastation. While throughout the conflict Israel has made great efforts to minimize harm to civilians, the militant Palestinians aim at innocent civilians as their primary objective. Hamas commits a double war crime – targeting Israeli civilians while using the residents of the Gaza Strip as human shields.

There can be no comparison. There is no equivalence between those attacking innocent civilians and those defending themselves against such attacks.

While Israeli rockets are used to protect civilians and Palestinian civilians are used to protect to their rockets.

The second myth is one, repeated by many, that the use of force is ineffective or inherently immoral. This is false. There are times when the use of force is a necessity, an obligation and the only moral course of action. Facing the depth of evil of terrorists like those in Hamas, who set out to murder babies and slaughter innocent people in their beds, it is the obligation of every state or entity to stop them from accomplishing their goals and to prevent such atrocities by any available means.

It is unacceptable that the right to use force in self-defense is questioned in relation to Israel. Like every other state in the world, Israel has the right and the obligation to protect its citizens

and to take all necessary measures to defend its people.

It is abhorrent that there are those who question that right. When media personalities and others question Israel’s right to self-defense, the people of Israel ask: how many Israelis must be killed in order for that right to be recognized, as it is for any other nation on this planet?

The third myth to be highlighted is one that touches on the essence of the conflict between Israel and the extremist Palestinians. The falsehood that needs to be dispelled is that the conflict is only about tangible elements, like territory, water or other material assets. One of the most clichéd statements is that ‘if Israel would only do this or that then there will be peace.’ The attack on southern Israel demonstrates the fact that Hamas, like other extremists in the Palestinian camp, have no interest in compromise or coexistence. They wish to eradicate Israel and refuse to recognize it in any shape or form.

This is an existential battle, in which Israel’s survival is at stake. Israel has gone a long way in trying to achieve peaceful coexistence. It recognized the Palestinian Authority and relinquished territory to the Palestinians. Israel vacated the entire Gaza Strip, including the dismantling of all Jewish settlements in that territory. However, Israel was not rewarded with peace. Instead, the territories it vacated were then turned into terrorist training camps and launching pads for attacks. There is a growing realization that peace will only come when the majority of the Palestinians choose coexistence over conflict and eject the extremists from their midst.

There are many who ask how they can help Israel at this time of need. It warms the hearts of the people of Israel to witness such offers of support and they are deeply appreciated.

Beyond the emotional and material support provided by many, no less important is moral support. Public statements by elected officials, solidarity communal gatherings in synagogues and churches, and the illumination of public buildings in blue and white (the colors of our flag) are all fine examples of reassuring actions.

In today’s world of social media, everyone has a voice and anyone can be an ambassador of good will. If you wish to support Israel, spread the word of truth and help us dispel the myths.

Israel highly values the support extended to Israel by Nepali Government and so many citizens. Condemning the attack by the Hamas Terrorists and standing with Israel in this difficult time is essential and reminds us the historic decision taken by B. P. Koirala to establish diplomatic relations between Nepal and Israel in 1960.

*Hanan Goder is an Ambassador of Israel to Nepal*

# JAJARKOT EARTHQUAKE Wakeup Call

*The Jajarkot earthquake has served as a stark reminder of the potential for a major seismic event in Nepal and India. With a death toll surpassing 157 and over 197 injured, it is evident that the seismologists' prediction of a large quake in the western Himalayan region is becoming more urgent. This earthquake measuring 6.4 Richter scale severely shook the Jajarkot and West Rukum districts of Nepal and also impacted large portions of northern India, including New Delhi. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, being on the same continent and affected by the earthquake, was the first leader to express solidarity and offer support to Nepal.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

After experiencing several recent earthquakes, including one in Kathmandu, the 6.3 magnitude earthquake that occurred on Friday night, November 3, and was felt in many parts of Nepal and Western India, including New Delhi, serves as an early warning for preparation.

According to seismologists, a bigger earthquake, possibly exceeding 8 Richter scale, seems to be on its way. Given that Nepal and India are located in a seismic zone prone to earthquakes, it is expected that they will experience frequent seismic activity. Nepal must remain alert at all times, recognizing that earthquakes can strike at any moment.

The recent midnight earthquake resulted in over 160 fatalities and over 200 injuries. However, the Nepal Army, security forces, and local institutions responded promptly.

The earthquake in Jajarkot, Nepal resulted in over 150 deaths and 175 injuries, according to Indian officials. The quake caused buildings to collapse in the area and even shook buildings as far as New Delhi in neighboring India.

Nepal's National Seismological Centre reported that the earthquake occurred on Friday (November 3) at 11:47 p.m. (1802 GMT) with a magnitude of 6.4. The earthquake was measured at 5.7 by the German Research Centre for Geosciences, who downgraded it from the initial reading of 6.2. The U.S. Geological Survey recorded the

quake at 5.6.

India demonstrated solidarity providing a prompt response of support along with Nepal's security agencies, political leadership, civil service, and

ed Indian Prime Minister Modi on Twitter. He expressed his condolences to the families of the victims and hopes for a speedy recovery for the injured.

With extensive experience in rescue and relief efforts, the Nepal Army



local civil society. India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, expressed profound sadness over the loss of life and property resulting from the earthquake in western Nepal stating "India stands in solidarity with the people of Nepal".

"India is prepared to provide any assistance deemed necessary," stat-

promptly mobilized their forces in the affected region and successfully rescued numerous individuals.

Earthquakes that strike the western region of Nepal have an impact on the Gangetic plains because the soft soil in the areas amplifies the seismic energy. Seismologists attribute this phe-



nomenon to the collision between the Indian plate and the Eurasian plate. The recent earthquake in Jajarkot, which was caused by this collision, also affected western India, including New Delhi.

India's National Centre for Seismology (NCS) stated that the earthquake's epicenter was in Nepal, approximately 227 km north of Ajodhya in Uttar Pradesh and 331 km west-northwest of Kathmandu. The earthquake hit around 11:30 pm.

Indian seismologists assert that earthquakes in the Himalayan region will have a significant impact on population centers such as Delhi and the Gangetic Plains. This is due to the amplification of seismic energy caused by soft soil. CP Rajendran, Adjunct Professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies in Bangalore, supports this view.

The areas susceptible to future significant seismic activity are the Indus-Gangetic-Brahmaputra Plains, extending from Jammu in the Northwest to upper Assam in the Northeast, according to the source.

In Bihar, the earthquake that struck Kathmandu on October 22nd was reportedly felt, as indicated by the NCS report. The seismic shock's epicenter, with a magnitude of 5.3, was located 72 km to the northwest of Kathmandu and at a shallow depth of 10 km.

Likewise, the seismic events that occurred in Nepal on November 3 were felt in Delhi, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Punjab. According to reports, more than 70 earthquakes were felt in the hour following the strongest earthquake of magnitude 6.2.

Seismologists have warned that these consecutive earthquakes could predict larger seismic shocks in the western Nepal Himalayan region. A preliminary examination of the reports

published by the center supports these warnings. The National Centre of Seismology (NCS) presents a geographic overview of the regions in India affected by the Nepal earthquakes,

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ed by the Nepal earthquakes, including the deadliest earthquake in recent years in Jajarkot. The National Centre of Seismology (NCS) presents a geographic overview of the regions in India affected by the Nepal earthquakes, including the deadliest earthquake in recent years in Jajarkot. This quake, with a death toll of about 9,000 people, is the deadliest since 2015. During that year, two earthquakes devastated the Himalayan country, reducing entire towns, centuries-old temples, and other historic sites to rubble. Over a million houses were destroyed, causing a significant setback for the country's economy estimated at \$6 billion.

Officials were concerned that the death toll from Friday's earthquake could continue to climb, as they were unable to establish communication in the hilly region near the epicenter. The area, which also experienced tremors, is located some 300 miles west of the capital Kathmandu, and has a population of 190,000 with numerous villages scattered throughout remote hills.

According to police spokesman Kuber Kadayat, over 155 fatalities

have been reported in the neighboring Rukum West district and Jajarkot, both located in the Karnali province. The epicenter of the earthquake was located in the village of Ramidanda.

Numerous residences have collapsed or experienced structural damage. In fear of aftershocks, many residents were hesitant to seek shelter inside unstable homes, opting instead to spend the entire night in chilly, open areas, as relayed by Sharma. "Even I have not been able to enter," he stated.

To access the affected regions, search and rescue personnel will need to clear roads that have been blocked by landslides resulting from the earthquake, according to police officer

Namaraj Bhattarai.

**PM In Inspection**

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal flew to the affected area on Saturday, November 4th, accompanied by a 16-member army medical team to oversee search, rescue, and relief efforts, according to a statement from his office.

On the X social media platform, Dahal expressed a deep sense of sadness for the loss of life and property caused by the earthquake and ordered immediate rescue and relief operations conducted by security agencies.

Local media footage displays numerous crumbled facades of multi-storied brick houses and large pieces of furniture scattered throughout. Videos on X showed individuals running into the streets as some buildings were evacuated.

Many homes have collapsed and others have developed cracks. Thousands of residents spent the night in cold, open areas as they were too frightened to enter the cracked houses when aftershocks struck," Sharma stated. "Personally, I have not been able to enter."

The 6.4 magnitude earthquake

## DISASTER

struck Jajarkot at 11:47 PM on Friday night, causing severe damage to the remote hill district and neighboring Rukum West.

The international community expressed its solidarity and support for Nepal following the recent earthquake. Numerous countries, such as India, China, Russia, and the United States, have offered their assistance.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveyed his condolences over the loss of lives and extensive damage caused by the earthquake in Nepal.

The Chinese government announced the provision of materials valued at \$1.3 million for the affected regions. These materials include tents and blankets from the China South Asian Countries Emergency Supplies Reserve and are expected to arrive within the next few days. These materials include tents and blankets from the China South Asian Countries Emergency Supplies Reserve and are expected to arrive within the next few days.

Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed condolences for the impact of the earthquake in Jajarkot, and offered support and sympathy to the Nepali people affected by it. He wished for the speedy recovery of the injured.

The United States Embassy in Kathmandu expressed sorrow for the loss of lives in the earthquake and confirmed the readiness of the USA to help Nepal recover from this tragic event.

Furthermore, the federal government has authorized the immediate disbursement of \$1.3 million to support earthquake victims. Furthermore, several other entities, such as the provincial

government, political parties, and the private sector, have pledged to provide financial and other critical aid to the victims of the earthquake.

In addition, provincial and local governments, including the Metropolitan government, have already announced support to assist earthquake victims in rebuilding their residences.

Recently, relief materials were delivered to Aathbiskot in Rukum West to assist those affected by the earthquake. The Nepali Army helicopter has delivered supplies provided by the Karnai Province government.

The local government has begun distributing provisions which currently include biscuits, noodles, and tents received from Surkhet.

Tek Bahadur Chand, the store chief of the Aathbiskot municipality, confirmed that they will also receive additional aid for other regions.

The government has imple-

and rehabilitation of those affected.

The government will offer \$200,000 to each family of the quake victims, and the injured will receive free treatment at government hospitals. The affected will also be provided with temporary shelters.

### Expert warns of bigger earthquake

According to seismologists, this earthquake is generally considered moderate, resulting in damage up to house collapses with low human casualties. However, the damage this time exceeded expectations, underscoring the inadequacy of our structures.

Dr. Lok Bijay Adhikari, a senior seismologist at the National Earthquake Monitoring & Research Center, observed that weaker structures have difficulty withstanding minor shocks, as demonstrated in this instance, particularly when the earthquake occurred at night, catching people off guard within these vulnerable buildings.

NSET President, Dr. Amod Mani Dixit, suggested that individuals should prepare for more significant earthquakes. "Another earthquake might happen in the Jajarkot region. There was an extensive earthquake in 1505."

Even though 500 years have passed since the catastrophic quake, no major earthquakes have occurred in the region between Gorkha and West Kangada. Therefore, we must prepare for the possibility of another big earthquake at any time," stated Dr. Dixit.

He further added that earthquakes of magnitude 6 and 7 are common and we must be ready for them as they occur more frequently than magnitude 8 earthquakes.



mented an integrated action plan to construct earthquake-resistant housing within one year to aid in the recovery of those impacted by the Jajarkot earthquake. This effort will support search, rescue and relief efforts.

In addition, the government has gratefully accepted formal offers of assistance from neighboring countries and friendly nations to aid in the relief

# Journey From Being Skilled Workers In Korea To Entrepreneurs In Nepal



BY: PARK TAE-YOUNG

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Chung Hwangkeun's presence at this workshop. I would like to thank Kim Unduck, the Chief of EPS Center in Nepal and Prakash Subedi, president of ANKUR for their efforts to prepare today's workshop together with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Nepal.

It is my privilege to address a group of migrants who embody the spirit of resilience, ambition, and the pursuit of excellence. We gather here to celebrate and acknowledge the accomplishments of our esteemed returnees, who after gaining valuable experiences in Korea, have returned to Nepal and embarked on the journey of entrepreneurship. Your success is not only an inspiration to us all but also a powerful testament to the potential of strengthening bilateral relations between our countries.

In Nepal, the Employment Permit System (EPS) has been in effect since 2008. About 97,000 people have grabbed job opportunities so far. Currently, about 44,000 people are currently working in Korea. For this year only, a total of 20,000 people are expected to be dispatched to Korea by the end of 2023.

Let me begin by expressing our profound appreciation for your dedication and hard work. Your journey from being skilled workers in Korea to entrepreneurs in your homeland is nothing short of remarkable. You have harnessed your expertise, the knowledge you've gained, and the experiences you've accumulated to create businesses that not only contribute to our nation's economy but also serve as a bridge between our two countries.

It is essential to recognize the vital role that individuals like you play in fostering stronger bilateral relations. Here are some key ways you can contribute to this noble endeavor: Knowledge Transfer: Share the best practices and skills you've acquired in Korea with local businesses and entrepreneurs, thereby elevating the quality and competitiveness of the industries in Nepal.

Economic Collaboration: Seek out opportunities for business partnerships, trade, and investment that can enhance economic ties and create opportunities for growth in both countries.

Mentorship and Training: Mentor aspiring entrepreneurs and provide training programs that nurture local talent and instill the values of innovation and professionalism.

In particular, an ODA project of the Korean government will be explained at today's Workshop. The name of the project is "The Project for strengthening stage-wise support system for the stable reintegration of Korea returnee migrants in Nepal", and it is carried out from this year to 2028. I think the information of this project will be very helpful as the project is focused on each and every one of you, EPS returnee migrants.



In conclusion, your return to Nepal has not only enriched your personal and professional lives but has also enhanced the prospects of our nation. Your journey exemplifies the power of knowledge, resilience, and the potential for cross-border collaboration. As you continue to build and expand your businesses, I encourage you to remember that you are not only business owners but also ambassadors of goodwill and cooperation.

will and cooperation.

Your success is a shining example of what can be achieved when individuals with vision and determination are provided with the right opportunities. Let us work hand in hand to strengthen the bilateral relations between Korea and Nepal. Together, we can build a brighter and more prosperous future for both our nations.

I want to thank each one of you for your invaluable contributions and for being the driving force behind our shared vision of stronger bilateral relations. I have no doubt that the future holds great promise, and your dedication will continue to inspire us all.

I hope that today's workshop will be a good opportunity for ANKUR members to share business ideas and build networks, and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Nepal will do its best for EPS returnee migrants' success and development.

*Park Tae-Young is the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal. Excerpts of the statement delivered at a program organized by ANKUR Nepal, an organization of Korea returnee migrant, on November 3.*

# A Climate Tree without Roots



BY: BATU UPRETY

Recent visit of the UN Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres in Nepal has heightened climate change concerns and stimulated climate community to further advocate on evidence-based impacts of climate change in the mountains, and its consequences to the people and their livelihood, socio-economy, and natural resources. UNSG has observed snow-melting, glaciers retreating, and climate-induced disasters such as landslides, and interacted with the local people, further realised climate vulnerabilities and risks in the mountains, threatened future of the mountain communities, and accelerated impacts of climate change to the billion of people in the downstream. Local people have informed the UNSG at the base camps of Sagarmatha and Annapurna Himal about the high rate of snow-melting, increasing loss lives and properties from climate-induced disasters, drying-up of water sources displacement of people, decline in crop production, and increase in landslides.

While delivering a statement at the Parliament of Nepal on 31 October 2023, UN Secretary-General reiterated that “glaciers are melting at record levels”; “Nepal has lost close to a third of its ice in just over thirty years” and told “I am deeply concerned by those communities in Nepal facing the brutal impacts of the climate crisis. The most vulnerable must be at the centre of efforts to build climate resilience”. This would greatly contribute to address climate crisis in the mountains by mobilising additional supports to protect people and natural resources from climate-induced disasters and make economies resilient by reducing climate vulnerabilities and risks.

In 2021, Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma, President of CoP26 at his opening speech informed the climate community about his visit at Jomsom and talk with “communities literally displaced from their homes from a combination of droughts and floods” and expressed that “the rapidly changing climate is sounding an alarm to the world to step up on adaptation, to address loss and damage, and to act now to keep 1.5 alive”. That realisation should have contributed to note the “importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including in the cryosphere” in the Glasgow Climate Pack.

Reviewing the news during UNSG’s visit, Rt. Hon’ble President and few politicians have urged the UNSG to voice Nepal’s climate crisis at the global fora. However, climate change has not been an agenda of the political parties in Nepal. Position-based statements on climate change are made sometimes with unrealistic commitments.

Nepal’s participation on UNFCCC process dates back to its adoption in 1992. It has attended all CoPs and delivered statements during the high-level segments and climate summits. Each statement focussed on snow-melting, glaciers retreating, and climate-induced disasters. Rt. Hon. President Mrs. Bidya

Devi Bhandari delivered a statement at the climate summit in 2018 (CoP24) at Katowice, Poland. Two Prime Ministers, Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba and Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal addressed the World Leaders Summit in 2021 during CoP26 at Glasgow and Climate Conference (CoP15) at Copenhagen in 2009 respectively. During CoP15, Nepal organised ‘Summiteers Summit to save the Himalayas’ on 11 December to draw the global attention to the impacts of climate change in the Himalayas. A cycle rally was organised in Paris in 2015 before the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Current Prime Minister is expected to attend the CoP28 at Dubai. On 3 November 2023, the Prime Minister has instructed the secretaries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Forests and Environment (climate change focal point) to prepare for CoP28 to provide global leadership on climate change issues and submit a ‘claim’ effectively.

Recalling the past, Prime Minister at CoP15 called upon the mountain countries ‘to come together, form a common platform and collectively raise concerns in the international arena’ and launched the Mountain Initiatives (MI) in 2009. Nepal organised side-event during CoPs and sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) from 2010 onwards to further inform the climate community about climate change impacts in the mountains and national initiatives; also organised expert consultations, South Asian Parliamentarian workshop and an international conference of mountain countries on climate change in April 2012 which agreed on Kathmandu call for action. Nepal accessed bilateral and multilateral fundings, including from dedicated climate funds to prepare and implement adaptation plans and programmes, and comply with the reporting requirements such as national communication. These funds are mobilised to implement adaptation and mitigation programmes. Nepal showed leadership in localising adaptation actions by implementing a national framework on Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA), committing to channel at least 80 percent of the climate fund to field activities through a climate policy, channelling fund through the climate change budget code, and mainstreaming gender with further commitment on gender responsive LAPAs. However, fund mobilisation modality in few projects requires rethinking.

Now, MI is functionally ‘dead’. The government planned to host the Sagarmatha Sambaad, a multi-stakeholder forum in April 2020 with the theme on ‘climate change, mountains and future of the humanity’. The Sambaad was postponed due to COVID-19 and seems now dormant. Nepal deserves special appreciation in taking new initiatives and dropping it at any stage along with the change in political and administrative leadership. Non-continuation of ‘good initiatives’ is a perennial problem.

UNSG’s call on the adverse impacts of climate change

in the Himalayas might greatly influence negotiations at CoP28 to be held at Dubai, UAE from 30 November to 12 December 2023. It is good to record that CoP28 provisional agenda includes an agenda item “mountains and climate change: highlighting the need for the protection of vulnerable mountain ecosystems while building the resilience of mountain peoples, and economies to reduce loss and damage” as per the submission of a mountainous country Andorra. If this provisional agenda is adopted as it is, it would require effective participation to identify and prioritise key areas requiring implementable decisions on mountains and climate change. Visibility in negotiations would count a lot. Nepal’s visibility in CoPs and SBs was high in 2013 and 2014 when she coordinated 48 LDCs and negotiated with developed and other developing country Parties to the UNFCCC on behalf of the LDCs.

UNEP has launched an Adaptation Gap Report (2023) on 02 November with a message that adaptation is “underfinanced and underprepared” and “inadequate investment on climate adaptation leaves world exposed.” The report highlights the “urgent need for rapid acceleration of global adaptation action” and has estimated the need for adaptation finance @ of US\$ 387 billion/year for this decade. This report would provide a basis for further negotiation on adaptation and loss and damage in CoP28.

One can see several permanent climate negotiators. The current chairperson of the LDC Coordination Group from Senegal should have almost two decades of continued participation in UNFCCC negotiation. In Nepal, nomination of an official for UNFCCC meetings is considered an incentive. Realising non-continuation, the government approved the concept of forming a code-of-conduct-based multi-stakeholder ‘core group’ for climate negotiation in early 2012. It worked till 2016 and then seems non-functional. Nepalese working in non-governmental sector have attended SBs and CoPs being a government delegate from Togo, Malawi, Bhutan or Senegal. It seems that Nepal dropped the idea of 2012 to developing and utilising country capacity on climate negotiation. It is necessary to revitalise the ‘climate core group’ and develop country capacity on relevant agenda items of national priorities such as adaptation, mountain, and carbon trade. Negotiation being a step-by-step process and taking note of issues raised and decisions made on several agenda items, continuation is a must. Few may be the ‘tourist negotiators’ whose interventions require ‘close watch’.

Nepal is currently the Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the LDCs. To fulfil additional responsibilities, concerned official(s) should participate and closely monitor outcomes of relevant events. As climate change has become a ‘hot cake’, Nepal needs to effectively participate and collaborate in several events to voice the concerns and priorities of the LDCs. Unfortunately, Nepal did not attend the LDC ministers meeting on UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement held at Dakar, Senegal on 28 September 2023. Taking note of the urgency of protecting the climate vulnerable mountain people, unwillingness in such participation would have multifaceted impacts to maintain existing representation and leadership. Non-participation in key events, making the declared initiatives ‘dead’, non-competitive

technical and managerial supports, post-poning or shifting of responsibilities, and wishing to be outside the key events or non-inclusion of focal point in major events call for rethinking the institutional arrangement on climate change.

Taking note of provisional agenda of CoP28 and CMA5 (CoP serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement), it would be useful to designate knowledge-based and dedicated person(s) for specific agenda items of national priorities such as adaptation and LDC matters, including Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation, mitigation including Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition, loss and damage, work programme on just transitional pathways (to achieve the Paris Agreement goal), technology development, transfer and management, capacity building, gender and climate change, carbon trade, finance and mountain and climate change (if adopted).

Recalling inclusion of biogas under the Clean Development Mechanism to engage Nepal in carbon trade in 2007, negotiation may take place at three levels - technical, diplomatic, and political levels. At the country level, participation, negotiations, and reporting at UNFCCC



process are coordinated by the climate change focal point. The focal point should be updated with scientific information and country priorities to effectively participate and/or provide guidance to the national negotiating team. Non-involvement or inclusion of the focal point in major events and non-identification of national priorities may likely weaken the outcomes of national interests. This can be linked with the recent visit of UNSG where climate change focal point was not visible. Nepal may take initiatives to follow-up the UNSG’s message about the impacts of climate change in the Himalayas at CoP28. Let us hope, CoP28 to be held at arid desert climate (dryland) will make remarkable decisions to protect the highlands - the mountains.

Nepal’s climate concerns are internationalised through statements without operational decisions, simply like a big tree without roots. Uprooting or failing climate actions or non-mobilising resources would have long-term consequences. Nepal should be prepared to communicate political messages on mountain issues through CoP decisions for further actions.

As Andorra has submitted a dedicated agenda “mountains and climate change” for this CoP28, Nepal may wish to fully support and make extra efforts for its adoption. If adopted, windows to address impacts of climate change in the mountain will open.

## स्वास्थ्यकर्मी तथा स्वास्थ्य संस्थाको मर्यादा कायम गरौं

कसैले पनि स्वास्थ्य उपचारको विषयलाई लिएर,

- स्वास्थ्य संस्थामा आगजनी गर्नु,
- स्वास्थ्य संस्थामा तोडफोड वा हानि नोकसानी पुऱ्याउनु,
- स्वास्थ्यकर्मी वा स्वास्थ्य संस्थामा कार्यरत कर्मचारीलाई कुटपिट गर्नु तथा चोट पुऱ्याउनु, धम्की दिनु, गाली-गलौज गर्नु वा अभद्र व्यवहार गर्नु,
- स्वास्थ्य संस्थामा तालाबन्दी गर्नु वा घेराऊ गर्नु,
- स्वास्थ्य संस्थाले प्रदान गर्ने उपचार सेवामा बाधा पुऱ्याउनु,

यस्ता कार्यहरु कानूनबमोजिम दण्डनीय भएकोले स्वास्थ्यकर्मी तथा स्वास्थ्य संस्थाको मर्यादा कायम गरौं, असल नागरिकको कर्तव्य निर्वाह गरौं।

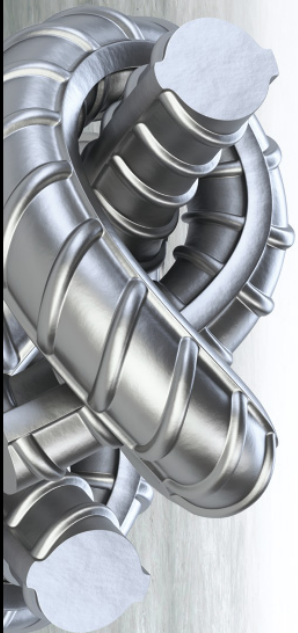


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