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VIEWPOINT
Dr. Tilak Rawal



OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



FORUM
Prabal Adhikari

NEW

SPOTLIGHT

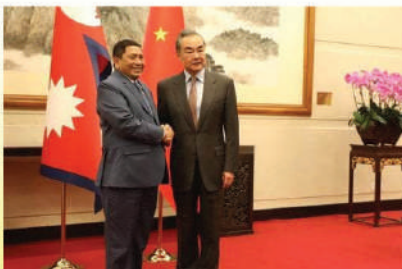
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FORTNIGHTLY

ECONOMY Growth At 3.3

INSIDE



DPM'S SHRESTHA'S CHINA VISIT
High Profile, Low Key



MAHA KUMBHA IN BARAKHSHETRA
A Sacred Festival In Sacred Koshi
(Kaushiki) River



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The current political landscape in Nepal is marked by instability, with frequent collapses of governments at both the federal and provincial levels. The recent change in the coalition at the federal level has triggered a domino effect, leading to changes in coalition governments across all seven provinces. Despite the shift to a federal structure with provincial governments, the political situation remains unpredictable. While local government units, elected for a five-year term, provide some stability, they lack control over resources, relying on grants from higher levels of government. As Nepal ushers in the Nepalese New Year 2081, the ongoing political crisis continues to pose challenges for its citizens. However, there is a glimmer of hope in the form of the recent economic update from the World Bank, indicating a rebound in Nepal's economy.

Due to the ongoing political instability and the absence of a single-party led government, we have made the decision to feature an economic agenda as the cover story for this week. Additionally, we have provided coverage on the recent visit to China by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Furthermore, we have highlighted the recent advancements in the generation, supply, and distribution of electricity in Nepal, as well as the significant progress made in the tunnel construction of the Tanahu Hydropower Project. Lastly, on the occasion of Nepal's New Year 2081, we extend our wishes for a prosperous and joyful Happy New Year to all our valued patrons, readers, and well-wishers.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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Sharing Pain With A Nepali Family

Israel's ambassador to Nepal, Hanan Godar, expressed condolences and solidarity. He visited the families of a victim of Hamas terror living in pain on March 4

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although global communities has been gradually shifting tone on Hamas terrorist outfit, Nepalese families who lost their love one in the terrorists attack are yet to recover from the pain and tragic events.

Even Nepal's government, which took stand against Hamas terrorists, seems to forget the pain and agony of families of victims of Hamas attack. However, ambassador of Israel Nepal Hanan Godar has been visiting the families of the terrorist attack sharing their pain and suffering and consoling and sowing solidarity of the family.

Others might of other agenda, visiting and meeting of the families by Ambassador State of Israel shows that it shares the pain with Nepalese families as with the families of Israel who have lost their love one in Hamas terrorist attack. On March 4, Ambassador Hanan Godar went to the house of Nepali victim in remote areas of Madhesh.

Whether they live in Israel, Nepal or any other parts of the world, the families have lost their near and dear in Hamas terrorists act are yet to reconcile. The families of hostages including Nepal's Bipin Joshi have to suffer a lot unknowing the fate.

In his efforts to visit the families and injured of the Hamas terrorists, ambassador of Israel to Nepal Godar paid a visit to the house of Ananda Sah, who has killed in Israel by Hamas Terrorist.

"Oh, this family is our family too," expressed ambassador Godar, a soft spoken and kind heart diplomat from Israel.

When the Israeli envoy reached the house of Dhanusha's son Anand Sah, one of the ten Nepali students who were killed in an attack by the

terrorist organization Hamas in Israel last October, a very sad scene was seen.

When the Israeli Ambassador to Nepal Godar reached the small hut of late Anand Sah's home in Sapia, Lakshminiyan rural municipality of Dhanusha district, it was unbelievable for the father, mother and families of late Sha, When he encounter, Ambassador Godar



not only hugged his father, but even said, "You are our family, showing solidarity with them.

At a time when atrocities, inhuman killing rape and other assault of unarmed innocent civilians are facing, visiting home of victims by Israel ambassador Godar Israel government has shown solidarity with the families.

Through the road, Lakshminiyan Village of Dhanusha District was a dirt road, Godar, the Israeli ambassador, reached the house of 22-year-old Anand, who was killed.

The meeting was very painful with families of Sha and ambassador Hanan Godar could not control themselves to express pain. As families cried expressing pain, ambassador Hanan Godar's eye fill with tear.

"When he saw the conditions of families of victims weeping and pain, ambassador Godar could not control himself. His could not avoid tear in his

eye. He hugged Anand's family including father, mother and sister and asked them to take care of mother and father who cried," said editor Rauniya.

Victim Anand was the only son of a poor family among the ten Nepalis who were killed in the attack by Hamas on October 20th, 2023. With a lot of pain and suffering, when ambassador Godar reached the house, Anand's mother held cried and wept.

Anand's father, Soman Shah, was telling him that he had lost his only son who had graduated because he had spent ten years in Qatar teaching his sons and daughters, Godar could not contain himself.

Ambassador Godar responded that Anand went to Israel as a guest, but after the incident, they are now a family.

He said that Israel will continue to support Anand as much as possible. Ambassador Godar said that when he met Anand in Nepal before going to Israel, he found him to be a very energetic young man with big dreams.

In his recent visit to Israel last week, ambassador inspected Anand's living room, He also said that he met with his friends and rescue workers. Ambassador Godar said that the reprehensible attack on the unarmed and innocent students was a very tragic crime for Israel and the world.

He handed over his watch, which late Ananda Sha wears with joy, found by the rescuers in Israel, to his family. Suggesting Anand's family not to feel alone, ambassador thanked the Nepali government and the media for their support and condemnation of Hamas regarding the terrorist attack.

Asking Anand's family not to feel alone, he also thanked the Nepali government and the media for condemning Hamas regarding the incident.

NEWSNOTES

Ghodejatra Festival 2080 Completed

The Ghodejatra Festival 2080 has been completed with various programs. The ceremony was held at Sainik Manch, Tundikhel with an exhibition of horse arts. The President and Supreme Commander of the Nepalese Army Ramchandra Paudel attended the program as a chief guest.

The ceremony included Tangan horse race, charger horse race, tent pegging, cross tent pegging, show-jump, musical ride and art performance of military dogs. Chief of the Army Staff (CoAS) Prabhu Ram Sharma and other top rank army officials welcome President Paudel.



In the ceremony, the Chief Guest President gave awards to Deputy Soldier Famous Bania and Deputy Soldier Niroj Thapa

who were first and second in musical ride and Deputy Soldier Ashok Khakurel and Pyut Om Prakash Yadav who were first and second in So-jump.

Vice President, Prime Minister, Chief Justice, Speaker of the National Assembly, Speaker of the House of Representatives were present on that occasion. Similarly, the horse procession was observed by ministers, heads of various constitutional bodies, secretaries of the Government of Nepal, heads of other security agencies, Ambassadors, military attachés of various countries, military and non-military dignitaries, media persons and common people.

Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations Mechanism Concluded

The fourth meeting of the Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations Mechanism (BCM) was held at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) in Bern, Switzerland today.

Head of the Europe-Americas Division of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal, Joint Secretary Ganesh Prasad Dhakal and Assistant State Secretary for Asia and the Pacific in the FDFA of Switzerland, Heinrich Schellenberg led the respective delegations. Nepali delegation included Ambassador of Nepal to Switzerland, H.E. Ram Prasad Subedi and the Embassy Officials whereas the Swiss Delegation included



officials from the FDFA and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed entire spectrum of Nepal-Switzerland

relations including economic ties, development partnership, multilateral cooperation, and contemporary global issues such as climate change and human rights. The two sides also discussed the exchange of high-level visits, Nepal's graduation from LDC category, progress made towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, and ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation on trade, investment, tourism, science & technology, and vocational training, among others.

On the occasion Joint Secretary Dhakal requested the Swiss side to encourage the participation of their investors in the upcoming Nepal Investment Summit being held in Kathmandu this month.

The Nepali side thanked the Swiss Government for consistently placing Nepal as a priority country for Swiss Development Cooperation. While expressing satisfaction over Nepal's progress, the Swiss side assured of their continued support to Nepal's development endeavors.

Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations Mechanism was established in 2015 and the next meeting will be held in Kathmandu on mutually convenient dates.

Minister Basnet Stated That Climate Change Has The Greatest Impact On Water Resources

Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Shakti Bahadur Basnet unveiled the Response Strategy on Water Resources Management And WASH Services.

This strategy was prepared by the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat in collaboration with the Ministry of Drinking Water and Jalsrot Vikas Sanstha, a non-governmental organization focused on water issues.



The Nepal Government Water and Energy Commission Secretariat received support from the Global Water Partnership Program-Nepal/Jalsrot Vikas Sanstha in implementing the Water Resource Management component of this program.

In his address at the event, Minister Basnet emphasized that water resources are the most affected by climate change.

Minister Basnet emphasized the importance of accepting the study report on water resource management and implementing its recommendations into policy.

He highlighted the need to prioritize easy management of water, identifying and addressing problems, and taking a comprehensive approach to managing water resources.

Minister Basnet also stressed the significance of integrating legal arrangements related to climate and giving priority to the allocation of budget for the multilateral use of river basins.

The study report, published under the World Water Leadership Program, provides insights into the obstacles and challenges in water resources management.

Minister Basnet emphasized the importance of taking water management seriously in order to address the identified issues and make progress. He expressed his satisfaction with the study’s focus on integrated water resource management.

He also highlighted the need to prioritize the multi-lateral use of river basins and allocate budget resources while considering legal and structural concerns. The study report, published under the World Water Leadership Program, identifies obstacles and bottlenecks in water resource management for climate enhancement.

Sushi Chandra Tiwari, Secretary at the Ministry of Energy, Irrigation and Water Resources, mentioned that the approach will assist Nepal in developing new water resource programs in a comprehensive manner considering the effects of climate change.

The Acting Secretary of the Ministry of Drinking Water, Meena Shrestha, stated that the strategy was developed through thorough deliberations with the expectation of receiving support for integrated water supply and sanitation systems.

Ifran Akhtar, the head of WASH at UNICEF Nepal’s country office, highlighted that the strategy will play a role in reaching the SDG objectives.

Bal Krishna Prasai, Vice President of JVS and former secretary, expressed his delight in contributing to a project aimed at supporting the government of Nepal in the water sector.

India Provides Financial Support To Build High Impact Community Development Project In Sankhuwasabha

Pasang Nurbu Sherpa, Chairman, Chichila Rural Municipality and Avinash Kumar Singh, First Secretary, Embassy of India, Kathmandu laid the foundation stone for the construction of Diding Basic School Building at Chichila Rural Municipality-3, Sankhuwasabha District.

The building will be built with Government of India’s financial assistance at the cost of NRs.40.29 million under ‘Nepal-India Development Cooperation.

Political representatives, government officials, social workers, representative of the school management, teachers, parents and students were also present on this occasion.

The Government of India grant under ‘Nepal-India Development Cooperation’ will be utilized for the construction of double storied academic and administrative block with other facilities for this school.



The project is taken up as a High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP), under an Agreement between Government of India and Government of Nepal being implemented through

Chichila rural Municipality, Sankhuwasabha. The project is an important example of the robust development partnership between India and Nepal.

Chairman, Chichila Rural Municipality in his remarks appreciated the continued developmental support of the Government of India in upliftment of the people of Nepal in priority sectors.

209th Group Of Peace Corps Volunteers Sworn In

Twenty-two Peace Corps Volunteers were sworn in by Ambassador Dean R. Thompson and the Peace Corps/Nepal Country Director Troy Kofroth to begin their two-year service in Nepal. The new Volunteers join the nearly 4,000 Peace Corps



Volunteers who have served in Nepal and are the 209th group of American Volunteers to come to Nepal since 1962 when the governments of Nepal and the United States of America signed an agreement to establish the Peace Corps program here in Nepal.

“President Kennedy said at the program’s founding in 1961 that “Men and women will be expected to work and live alongside the nationals of the country in which they are stationed--doing the same work, eating the same food, talking the same language.” It was true then and remains the same now – Peace Corps Volunteers live with Nepali host families, eating alongside them and other fellow community members, learn and use the Nepali language, and work for a small stipend rather than a salary.” said Ambassador Thompson.

The twenty-two Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in January 2024 and underwent 11 weeks of intensive language, cross-cultural, and technical training in the Kavre District in preparation for their service. The Volunteers have been assigned to five districts in Gandaki and Bagmati provinces to teach English in government schools and to work on food security and health projects in coordination with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Health and Population, and Agriculture and Livestock Development. With this new group, there are forty Peace Corps Volunteers serving in seven districts of Nepal.

Japan Assists In Improving Learning Environment In Gorkha District

Kikuta Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, attended the inauguration and handover ceremony of the new classroom building of Shree Rameshwary Secondary School in Gorkha District.

On the occasion, Ambassador Kikuta congratulated and appreciated the efforts of all those involved in the project. Ambassador expressed his hope that the new school building will be properly managed and maintained, that the various training programs will continue and that the learning environ-

NEWSNOTES

ment at the school will become even more child friendly in the future.

Ambassador Kikuta also mentioned that this is not the first time that Japan has supported this school, as there is another classroom building that was rebuilt under the Emergency School Re-



construction Project after the 2015 earthquake. Ambassador expressed his expectation that the school, which has a close relationship with Japan, will promote disaster management initiatives and that these initiatives will

spread to other schools in Gorkha district and throughout Nepal.

He added that he hoped the students of this school would play a leading role in people-to-people relations between the two countries as well as in the development of Nepal in the future.

The new classroom building has been constructed as part of a project supported by the Government of Japan under the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects scheme.

The project is being implemented by Japanese NGO Child Fund Japan, and is currently in its second year of a three-year project. The project aims to improve the learning environment and increase students' attendance in Gorkha district, not only by constructing classroom buildings, but also by providing training to improve the capacity of teachers and programs to support the establishment of community-based child friendly schools.

Korea And Nepal Have Forged A Strong Partnership Across Various Sectors: Ambassador Park Tae-Young

The Nepal-Korea Golden Jubilee Edition of the KOTTAN and Trekking Map in Korean Language was officially unveiled by Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Hit Bahadur Tamang, Ambassador of Republic of Korea Park Tae-Young, and Korea Tours And Trekking Association of Nepal (KOTTAN) president Amar Bahadur Shahi. These publications were released to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Korea.

During the Annual General Meeting of KOTTAN and the unveiling of the Nepal-Korea Diplomatic Relationship Golden Jubilee Edition and the Trekking Map in Korean Language, Minister Tamang stressed the significance that Nepal attaches to its relationship with the Republic of Korea.

He emphasized that the Golden Jubilee celebration marks a major milestone in the diplomatic ties between Nepal and Korea. Minister Tamang delivered a speech at the Annual General Meeting of the Korea Tours and Trekking Operator Association of Nepal (KOTTAN) and the launch of the Nepal-Korea Diplomatic Relationship Golden Jubilee Edition.

He also announced the release of a Trekking Route in the Korean language. Minister Tamang acknowledged the

remarkable increase in Korean tourists visiting Nepal in recent years, solidifying Korea's position as one of the top ten contributors to Nepal's tourism industry.

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal Park Tae-Young mentioned that the Nepal government is collaborating with the Korean government to initiate direct flights by Nepal Airlines to Seoul, which is expected to boost the number of Korean tourists visiting Nepal.

He emphasized the significant role played by KOTTAN in increasing the influx of Korean tourists to Nepal and ensuring their safety and security during their visit. Ambassador Park Tae-Young highlighted the strong partnership between Korea and Nepal, built on mutual respect, cooperation, and cultural exchange, spanning over the past fifty years.

He described the current period as a historic and crucial time for both nations. The Ambassador also extended his congratulations to KOTTAN on their 7th Anniversary and the publication of the Nepal Korea Golden Jubilee edition journal, acknowledging their vital contribution to promoting tourism and strengthening the bond between the two countries.

The Ambassador highlighted that Nepal welcomed over 23,000 Korean tourists last year, with the number of visitors from Korea to Nepal steadily increasing. He also mentioned that the relevant ministries in the Republic of Korea are actively addressing the issue of Nepal Airlines' direct flights to Korea.

The Ambassador emphasized that Nepal is a stunning mountainous country with numerous captivating tourist destinations. He expressed optimism that more Korean tourists will choose to visit Nepal in the upcoming years, underscoring the role that KOTTAN must play in attracting them.



Amar Bahadur Shah, the President of KOTTAN, stated that his organization has been diligently working to boost tourist numbers since its inception in 2007. He viewed the Golden Jubilee Celebration of diplomatic relations between the two nations as a significant milestone.

Shah also underscored the importance of producing more literature in Korean language, suggesting that providing maps in Korean would greatly assist Korean tourists in navigating various locations.

Treasurer Ngawa Ngima Sherpa mentioned that significant efforts have been put into making the trekking routes more accommodating for Korean tourists by displaying signs in Korean language. Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Tamang, Ambassador Park Tae-Young, and President of KOTTAN Shahi recently unveiled Nepal's Map in Korean language and the Nepal-Korea Diplomatic Relationship Golden Jubilee Edition.

Israeli Ambassador Goder Paid A Courtesy Call on DPM Lamichhane



The Ambassador of Israel to Nepal, Hanan Godar, called on Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Rabi Lamichhane at the Ministry of Home Affairs on Monday.

The safe release of Bipin Joshi, who was captured by Hamas during their attack on Israel on October 7th, was among the topics discussed during the courtesy meeting.

Ambassador Godar highlighted the government of Israel’s concern for Joshi’s condition and informed about the initiative to provide a monthly allowance by Israel’s national insurance called “terror victims allowance” to the family of Joshi and the families of the 10 Nepali students who lost their lives in the Oct 7 attack.

The DPM and the Ambassador expressed their mutual wish for a peaceful solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, according to the DPM’s secretariat.

Additionally, cooperation prospects in agriculture, information technology, job creation, and further strengthening of Nepal-Israel relations were touched upon during the meeting.

KOICA Held Consultative Workshop For Its Volunteer Partner Organizations

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) organized a Consultative Workshop for its Volunteer Partner Organizations on March 29, 2024 in Lalitpur.

The workshop aimed to review and evaluate KOICA’s volunteer program by sharing and exchanging the best practices and creative ideas to improve the volunteer program in Nepal among volunteer-related organizations.

The workshop gave a platform to discuss ways to promote a better working environment for Korea Overseas Volunteers and effective implementation of the Volunteer program in the future. About 54 volunteer partner organizations and officials from different ministries and departments participated in the program.

Mooheon Kong, the Country Director of KOICA Nepal Office, extended a warm welcome to the participants and stressed the significance of collaboration with recipient organizations to strengthen the KOICA program in Nepal. He highlighted the significant milestone of the 50th year anniversary of bilateral relations between Nepal and Korea in 2024, underscoring the enduring partnership between the two nations.

Additionally, He emphasized KOICA’s proactive approach towards addressing environmental concerns by identifying the environment sector as a new area of interest, with

active implementation of projects and programs in this field since 2021. He further added that the feedback of the program will be instrumental in improving program and ensured that the cooperation aligned with the needs of the government of Nepal.

Ram Pramod Yadav, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance, highlighted the growing significance of Korean Overseas Volunteers (KOVs) in Nepal, acknowledging Korea as a crucial partner country in deploying volunteers across various sectors including education, health, agriculture, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). He commended KOICA and Korea for their remarkable achievement in supporting projects and dispatching volunteers. During the workshop, KOICA Nepal shared its overall activities including KOV program, satisfaction survey, and the Green ODA Programs that the KOICA Nepal Office has been implementing have been shared.

Simultaneously, KOVs working at Chaitanya Secondary School in Banepa and Shree Public High School in Dharan shared their ongoing activities, with a focus on Art Education and Computer Education respectively. Similarly, Shramik Shanti Secondary School in Lalitpur shared a successful project completed by a former KOV, which was related to the Computer Education sector.



Moreover, representative from Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration Mahaendra Kumar Sapkota shared his experience with KOICA and KOV program. He appreciated the KOICA’s KOV program and expected more number of KOVs in future in all provinces of Nepal. The workshop also facilitated discussions on the experiences of volunteer recipient organizations. KOV Recipient organizations also provided their constructive feedback in making the KOV program better in future.

Yoonhee Chung, Deputy Country Director of KOICA, addressed the recommendations and suggestions presented by the recipient organizations and ministries and gave some suggestions with regards to the safety and security of KOVs.

The KOICA Volunteer Program is one of the main pillars of the KOICA programs. KOICA volunteer program aims to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development and to promote friendly relations between Korea and host countries. Volunteer program is an important aspect of KOICA’s cooperation program in Nepal which supports to transfer of Korean knowledge, expertise, and technology directly at the grassroot level. Now there are 10 volunteers who are actively working in various sectors. KOICA is committed to increasing the number of volunteers in Nepal.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Government Needs To Take More Initiatives To Increase

President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Chandra Prasad Dhakal, has said the external sector of the country's economy is in good health stating that the economy has not been able to make progress due to the low demand in the market.

Addressing the 67th Annual General Meeting of Morang Chamber of Commerce and Industry, president Dhakal said the government needs to take more initiatives to increase market demand.

He pointed out the need to amend the laws before the investment summit. "If the amendments are not made, it will send a negative message to potential investors," said Dhakal.

Dhakal informed the FNCCI has proposed to amend 12 laws and regulations to create conducive environment for foreign investment. Dhakal also mentioned that the subsidized loan facility that was being provided to businesses has been stopped and requested the government to restart the subsidized loan facility. Due to the halt in the facility it has affected entrepreneurship, he added.

President Dhakal congratulated Morang Chamber of Commerce and Industry for its contribution to the chamber movement and in the economic development of the country.

He said that the Morang Chamber of Commerce and Industry has played important roles in promoting entrepreneurship in the eastern region, supporting small and medium industries and enhancing the competitiveness in businesses.

NIMB's 37th AGM Concludes Successfully

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited successfully concluded its 37th Annual General Meeting for the fiscal year 2079/80 at Nepal Pragya Pratishthan building, Kamaladi.

During the fiscal year 2079/80, the bank achieved a net profit of 3.72 billion. (Note: Due to the merger with the former Mega Bank Nepal Limited effective from 2079/09/27 the comparison of income/expenditure with the previous year is not available.)

In the fiscal year 2078/79, the combined deposits of the former Nepal Investment Bank Limited and Mega Bank Nepal Limited stood at 304.3 billion, witnessing an increase to 360 billion by the end of the fiscal year 2079/80.

Furthermore, the bank's total loans and advances remained steady at 312 billion by the end of the fiscal year 2079/80.

In comparison, the combined total loans and advances of the former Nepal Investment Bank Limited and Mega Bank Nepal Limited in the previous fiscal year

amounted to 314 billion.

The successful integration of the banks has significantly contributed to the overall growth and financial stability of Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited.

In recent years, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has supported the merger policy to reduce the number of banks.

In the fiscal year 2079/80, Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited and Mega Bank Nepal Limited had been operating under a unified business operation in the name of Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited since 2079/09/27.

Following the merger, the bank's paid-up capital reached 34.13 billion, and its total shareholder equity stood at 55.60 billion.

Presently, the bank serves over 3.2 million customers through 270 branches, 267 ATMs, 16 revenue collection counters, 63 extension counters, and 46 banking correspondents. Recognized for its quality services and facilities, the bank has also been awarded the "Best Bank 2023" title by the international publication EuroMoney.

The election of executives has been postponed pending compliance with the honorable Supreme Court's decision, while all other items presented in the general assembly have been approved by the assembly.

Global IME Bank And IFC Sign Agreement On Advisory Services In Risk Management, Gender And Climate Finance

Global IME Bank Limited and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) have entered into a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on advisory services in risk management, gender finance, and climate finance.

The agreement was signed by Ratnaraj Bajracharya, Chief Executive Officer of Global IME Bank Limited, and Mehdi Cherkaoui, South Asia Regional Advisor and Upstream Manager of IFC.

Under this partnership, IFC will offer consultancy services on credit risk, operational risk, market risk, and asset and liability management framework for

Global IME Bank. Additionally, IFC will assist in aligning the bank's risk management policy with international standards.

IFC will also conduct capacity building programs on basic climate literacy and targeted capacity building programs for climate finance.

Furthermore, IFC will provide specialized guidance to Global IME Bank in Nepal to enhance climate change mitigation efforts by expanding access to climate finance in key sectors such as clean transportation, climate-smart agriculture, and solar projects.

The Bank anticipates that the consultation from IFC as part of this agreement will bring a fresh perspective to risk management, gender finance, and climate finance in Nepal.

Global IME Bank stands out as the premier commercial bank in the private sector, boasting a branch network that covers every district in the country. With over 1,100 service centers, including 354 branch offices, 379 ATMs, 277 branchless banking services, 67 extension and revenue collection counters, and 3 foreign representative offices.

Global IME Bank has extended its reach to cater to a wide range of customers, offering top-notch services to over 4.6 million clients through a variety of services and amenities. Additionally, the



bank has been instrumental in bringing in remittances from numerous countries such as the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, India, Jordan, Hong Kong, among others, thereby making a substantial contribution to the country’s economy.

Nepal Government, Multilateral Developments Banks, And International Financial Institutions Agree On Harmonization Of Disbursement Practices

The Government of Nepal and six Multilateral Developments Banks (MDBs) and International Financial Institutions



(I F I s) — A g e n c e Française de Développement, Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, OPEC Fund for International Development, and the World Bank—agreed to work together to harmonize disbursement

procedures and practices to help enhance operational efficiency and achieve Nepal’s development goals.

The agreement was reached at a two-day ‘MDBs Disbursement Harmonization Workshop’ organized in Kathmandu on March 25-26, 2024, by the MDBs and IFIs, in close partnership with the Ministry of Finance.

“Fostering a unified disbursement system among all MDBs will help facilitate allocation of funds, enhance operational efficiency, and ensure timely disbursement of funds to the government to achieve development results,” said Dr. Krishna Hari Pushkar, Secretary, and Ministry of Finance.

The Government of Nepal and MDB-IFIs agreed to focus on the following in their future collaboration:

- Harmonize flow of funds, reporting, legal and disbursement arrangements for the three-tier structure of government.

- Standardize reporting templates across MDB-IFIs’ operations in Nepal to reduce the administrative burden on the government.

- Strengthen and align country system with MDBs-IFIs to the extent possible.

“Unprecedented challenges demand urgent action and the need for harmonization among the MDB-IFIs. The World Bank, in its continued efforts to improve operational efficiency and support better development results for our mutual clients, is committed to work with co-financing partners in the area of disbursement harmonization,” said Pamela O’Connell, World Bank Vice President and Controller.

Government representatives and MDB-IFIs agreed to carry forward the momentum by way of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and MDB-IFIs which will be prepared and implemented in a phased manner. The Kathmandu Declaration would be a model to be emulated in other countries.

Complete 220 kV Marsyangdi Corridor Soon: MD Ghising

The Nepal Electricity Authority has requested to complete the construction of the line from Markichowk of Aanbukhairi Rural Municipality of Tanahun to the New Bharatpur Substation located at Aanptari of Bharatpur Metropolitan City of Chitwan under the Marsyangdi Corridor 220 kV transmission line project swiftly.

A team including Managing Director of NEA Kul Man Ghising and Deputy Managing Director Pradeep Kumar Thike monitored the construction of transmission lines and substations and urged them to speed up the construction of the Markichowk-New Bharatpur transmission line as it is important for the supply of electricity in the national grid during the rainy season.

The team discussed the matter with the project management and contractors and got information about the construction situation, the problems being faced, the schedule for completion of the construction, according to the NEA.

From the side of the project, it was informed that the construction is being affected due to the lengthy legal process to use land of forest area and tree felling approval, and poor performance of the construction company.

Ghising said that if the construction of the Markichowk-New Bharatpur section cannot be completed by June, there may be a situation where 200-300 megawatts of electricity will be wasted.

“Currently, Marsyangdi-Bharatpur and Damauli-Bharatpur 132 kV transmission lines are only single circuit, from which only about 80 megawatts of electricity can be supplied. Electricity can be brought from Markichowk to Kathmandu, but since the capacity of the transmission line is not enough, it is not possible to supply more electricity from Kathmandu to Hetauda. This will also affect the export of electricity to India,” he said.

Ghising requested the chief district officer of Chitwan and the head of the division forest office to facilitate the approval process for land use and tree felling in the forest area and request them to provide necessary support to complete the construction of the important transmission line as soon as possible.

Under the project, 69.69 hectares of national forest will be used and 10,225 trees will have to be cut for the construction of the transmission line from Udipur in Lamjung to New Bharatpur via Gorkha, Tanahun.

The meeting of the Council of Ministers on February 8 gave approval for land use and cutting of trees in the forest area. A total of 80 towers are to be constructed in the Markichowk-New Bharatpur section. Among them, 35 towers have been laid and five towers have been erected.

The four substations of 220 kV capacities are being constructed under the Marsyangdi Corridor Transmission Line Project. The construction of New Bharatpur substation in Chitwan has been completed. Substations are under construction at Udipur and Khudi in Lamjung and Dharapani in Manang.

The Marsyangdi Corridor 220 kV transmission line project has been started to supply the electricity generated from Marsyangdi and its tributaries into the national transmission system. About 1,600 megawatts of electricity can be supplied through the transmission line, said the NEA.



Under the project, a 113 km double-circuit transmission line from Bharatpur in Chitwan to Dharapani in Manang is under construction. The estimated cost of the project is around Rs. 16 billion with the investment of the government and the concessional loan of the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Prachanda Outsmarts Again



BY: DR. TILAK RAWAL

Not long after addressing the nation highlighting his government's performance in the last one year, the great show man of Nepali politics Prachanda dramatically broke the alliance with NC and formed a new alliance with CPN UML in the first week of March, clearly outsmarting his ruling partner Deuba who became like a fish on the dry sand restlessly gasping for air. Maoist Chair moved faster than NC Chair in reaching Oli. He being someone immensely enjoying political power for decades in Nepal, it was natural for Deuba to approach lawmakers belonging to different parties with the sole object of breaking the new alliance. People, however, found this restlessness highly unbecoming of a leader whose party NC was headed in the past by people of high moral and vision such as B P Koirala and KP Bhattarri. Good that some NC leaders with little bit of sense still seen in them stopped the power-hungry leader from making these kind of moves and excessively accusing Prachanda of betrayal. Probably as a result of this advice, Deuba stopped fidgeting much and was also not seen publicly leaking the political wound inflicted on him. It is interesting that despite frequent changes in power equation under Prachanda, he has been getting the confidence vote in the Parliament, the vote of confidence which he received in the House on March 13, 2024 being the third he sought and got since he formed the government after the last general elections. UML and NC are taking turn in cooperating with the Maoist leader whose party is at number 3 in terms of strength in the Parliament. As per the need and convenience, he has been seen outsmarting not only Deuba but also Oli with whom he shares a love-hate relationship since long. Countering NC's (mainly Deuba's) accusation, Prachanda said the new alliance was necessary to protect the constitution and to respect people's desire for development and to promote broader interest of the country. He also accused some NC ministers of nonperformance. Most Nepalis, however, are indifferent to these kinds of political changes.

Non-performance of government's over the years, which is shown by low growth and increasingly difficult living

conditions, has thoroughly frustrated people who take even the presentation of annual budget as nothing more than a ritual. Increasingly large number of people have also begun to feel that state affairs are handled by a political cartel consisting of about 4 top party leaders, both ruling and opposition, who are taking turn in running the show in the country. Indeed, decisions on major issues, mostly related to major scandals, are taken by this unofficial cartel. Notwithstanding the unhappiness of the people about lack of political stability in the country, our leaders have been taking these frequent changes in usual

Moreover, people have now clearly understood that a major change in the way this nation is governed is necessary to deliver the goods to the hard-hit people who have not only developed negativity but an attitude of indifference towards state affairs, too. They are clear that corruption cannot be controlled and the derailed economy put back on track as long as Nepal continues to be governed by the cartel consisting of aging and ailing leaders with thoroughly tarnished image. May Lord Pashupatinath continue to save this nation. Happy New Year 2081!

terms, which have been adequately manifested by their actions and utterances. It is interesting that not only Deuba, who sounded very clear about dislodging the government right from day one, NC leader Shekhar Koirala, leading the opposition camp within NC and publicly differing with Deuba on several issues, has gone on record expressing his confidence that NC would soon form a new coalition government. Koirala's assertion has further cemented the belief that this new alliance would not last long. This kind of observation made prior to the upcoming investment forum is likely to negatively impact the outcome of it and further hurt the already injured economy. Hope Koirala succeeds in giving a stable, meaningful government dislodging the current dispensation. Otherwise people will cease to see the difference between Deuba, waiting for his sixth stint as prime minister, and an untried Shekhar who many hope will sincerely try to work for the betterment of Nepal and its people, given a chance. Any leader with some sense of sincerity towards the nation should understand that the root cause behind mass exodus of people from Nepal is poverty, which again is the result of improper management of the economy. Indeed, Nepal needs a sincere, honest leader at the top with skills to better manage the slow-moving economy.

Our economy is definitely not doing well, which is adequately shown by data made available by no other than allied government agencies. Notwithstanding some positive signs seen in balance of payment (BOP), current account, massive increase (21 percent) in remittances and foreign exchange

reserve (21.7 percent), external trade is still in huge deficit and the country has to rely on imports to meet basic requirement including agricultural products. Indeed, our government and the central bank could be happy about some positive indicators, but one cannot ignore the reality that these remittance-based positive signs on the external front are far outweighed by the unchecked deterioration in our trade position. Last fiscal year (FY2079\80) was the worst FY from several stand points in recent times but the worrying thing is that things are not looking better in the current FY 2080\81, too. It may be noted that compared to the eight months of last FY both export and import have declined in the corresponding period of this FY-export declined by 4 percent and import by 2.7 percent. While decline in import is said to be as a result of ban on import of some item by Nepal government, a sharp decline (42 percent) in official rice import in the 8 months of this FY, due basically to restrictions imposed by India

on its export, could also be one contributing factor. It is, however, believed that illegal import after imposition of Indian restrictions, has kept the supply of rice and prices in the market stable, despite its huge apparent decline in import. Current increase in rice production in Nepal (from 54lakh 86 thousand ton to 57

lakh 24 thousand ton) could have also contributed a bit. As far as the question of augmenting export is concerned, domestic production of exportable items, which could also substitute import, is the only solution. It is, however, very difficult to expect producers to produce more at a time when farmers are wasting their produces on the road due to lack of market. Dairy farmers are accusing dairies, even government-owned DDC, of nonpayment of milk purchased from them since long. Even production-linked budgetary incentive schemes do not produce the intended outcome in such a situation. Further, export items like tea, which has been doing well in recent years, is facing different nontariff barriers as far as its export to India is concerned. In the meantime, data made available show that both acreage under and production of Chaitra dhan(off season paddy) has decreased over a period of three years, production decreasing from 561 thousand tons in FY 2078\79 to 520 thousand tons in FY 2080\81 and cropped area decreased by 16 thousand hectares during the period.

Multifaceted problems confront the economy of Nepal, the much talked about problem in recent days being the one related to debt servicing, which is a result of government's failure to collect the intended revenue. It is said that government will need about Rs. 500 billion to service the debt, which has forced the authorities to rely excessively on borrowing, both internal and external. An amount of Rs.126 billion was paid in the eight months of this FY. It may be noted that in the eight months of this FY, public debt has already touched Rs. 2388 billion of which external loans amounted to Rs.1202 billion and internal loan was at Rs.1185 billion. It may also be noted that in the eight months, only 45 percent (Rs.645 billion)

Increasingly large number of people have also begun to feel that state affairs are handled by a political cartel consisting of about 4 top party leaders, both ruling and opposition, who are taking turn in running the show in the country. Indeed, decisions on major issues, mostly related to major scandals, are taken by this unofficial cartel.

of the targeted revenue (Rs.1422 billion) was collected. Looking at this lackluster performance, it is almost certain that the authorities will borrow the entire sum (Rs.240 billion) targeted to borrow internally. Nothing with certainty, however, can be said about the wished external borrowing (Rs. 212billion) as its flow has got a lot to do with the performance of capital expenditure because these project-tied loans are released on reimbursement basis. Let us be clear that there is no harm in borrowing from different sources as long as the borrowed money is used for productive purposes but the worrisome fact in our case is that new money is borrowed to pay the money borrowed earlier and to meet unproductive expenses. Further, looking at the progress on capital expenditure front, which is far less than the projected annual debt servicing requirement, it may be difficult to borrow more from cheaper external source.

These debacles on several fronts clearly show that not enough is done to achieve the intended growth of 6 percent. Citing low level of internal demand and consumption as the cause, the World Bank has recently made it public that Nepal's economy would grow by only 3.3 percent, revising its earlier estimate of 3.9 percent. Who should be held responsible for this pathetic situation has remained a big, unanswered question before us?

Prachanda did not spin words in expressing his unhappiness with the performance of some of his Cabinet colleagues, the prominent one being finance Minister Dr. Mahat. It is undoubtedly clear that Mahat failed, as did many of his predecessors, to measure up to the expectation of people but it would be unwise to hold him solely responsible for the mess that the economy is in today. Mahat should not hesitate to confess that he could not arrest the deterioration in the economy but Prachanda and other critics of him should not forget that serious slackness in economic activities or deterioration in the economy started long before he got this post from the Deubas. A highly educated Mahat can also talk about the moderate level of inflation during his period and cite a few cases of improvements seen on the external front in the eight months of this FY. In terms of performance, it will be difficult to put him below his predecessors who had also failed miserably to increase capital expenditure, which remained at Rs. 81 billion (26.82 percent) in the 8 months of this FY. Moreover, people have now clearly understood that a major change in the way this nation is governed is necessary to deliver the goods to the hard-hit people who have not only developed negativity but an attitude of indifference towards state affairs, too. They are clear that corruption cannot be controlled and the derailed economy put back on track as long as Nepal continues to be governed by the cartel consisting of aging and ailing leaders with thoroughly tarnished image. May Lord Pashupatinath continue to save this nation. Happy New Year 2081!

Dr. Rawal is a former governor of Nepal Rastra Bank.

DPM'S SHRESTHA'S CHINA VISIT

High Profile, Low Key

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Narayan Kazi Shrestha concluded his high-level low key visit to China successful

By A CORRESPONDENT

Formed just a week ago after parting ways with the Nepali Congress, the Communist-dominated coalition government has embarked on its first high-level foreign visit starting from the People's Republic of China.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Narayan Kazi Shrestha paid a high-level visit in a discreet manner. The visit occurred amidst speculations in the Indian media regarding the India-China factor contributing to the sudden collapse of the NC-Maoist Center coalition.

The Indian media drew parallels between this sudden change and the election of a pro-Chinese government in the Maldives. Prime Minister Prachanda, facing a challenging situation with the growing rivalry between India and China, could not risk allowing his DPM Shrestha to have a highly publicized visit. Both DPM Shrestha and his Chinese counterpart kept the visit low-key.

Despite holding several high-level meetings with Chinese officials and communist party leaders, the visit only resulted in a few statements released by the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu. During the meeting with

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing, an agreement was reached to open 14 traditional border crossings between Nepal and China, with hopes that the Sijang government would fa-

Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Wang and Foreign Minister Yi in Beijing. During the meeting, the discussion mainly focused on strengthening the relationship between



cilitate this initiative.

Minister Shrestha informed that he had a bilateral meeting with the Chairman of the Chinese People's

the two countries.

Minister Shrestha also emphasized Nepal's commitment to the One China principle and expressed

his dedication to preventing any activities against China in Nepal. He further stated that Nepal has always prioritized its relations with China, highlighting the long-standing cultural, commercial, and emotional ties between Nepal and Tibet. Minister Shrestha also mentioned that the relationship between the two countries is based on the principle of Panchsheel, and he expressed his satisfaction with the problem-free nature of their relationship.

Despite the absence of any official joint statements concerning the visit, Chinese senior officials conveyed their thanks to Deputy Prime Minister Shrestha for his statements. Chinese Ambassador to Nepal, Chen Song, also expressed his appreciation to DPM Nepal and praised him for the fruitful visit, which resulted in the agreement on 9 points during the 9-day trip.

It is noteworthy that the Chinese side also supports the nine-point statements released by DPM Shrestha.

Nepal-China Has further strengthen the mutual harmony, respect and trust Between The Two Countries: DPM Shrestha

Nepal-China relations have been further strengthened through the recent my official visit to the People's Republic of China.

The visit, which took place from 16 to 24 March at the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, aimed to enhance mutual harmony, respect, and trust between the two countries.

This visit has not only solidified the historical ties between Nepal and China but has also elevated the friendly relationship to a new level. Additionally, I had productive discussions with high-ranking Chinese officials, including Wang Huning and Wang Yi, on various bilateral issues of interest.

During my visit, I had the opportunity to meet several important figures, including Yuan Jiajun, Secretary of the Chinese Communist Par-



ty, Chongqing Municipal Committee, Wang Junzheng, Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, Tibet Autonomous Region, Governor of the People's Government of Sichuan Province Huang Qiang, and Vice Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China, Sun Haiyan. We engaged in discussions regarding various aspects of Nepal-China relations.

I am pleased to share some significant achievements that took place during my visit. Following our discussions, the China-Rasuwagadhi-Kerung, Tatopani-Jhangmu, Yari-Puran, and Nechung-Lichi (Korla) trading posts have been successfully operationalized.

Furthermore, the Chinese side has expressed readiness to reopen the 14 traditional trade borders between Nepal and China that were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This development is expected to greatly facilitate the daily lives and business activities of our Nepali brothers and sisters residing near the Chinese border.

Both sides have also reached an agreement to establish a Joint Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers of Nepal and China. This commission will serve as a platform for regular high-level discussions on various aspects of our longstanding

and friendly relations. Additionally, we have held fruitful discussions on finalizing and implementing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Implementation Plan.

Since 2016, Nepal has been providing free visas to Chinese tourists visiting our country. In light of this, I have also requested the Chinese side to reciprocate by offering free Chinese visas to Nepalis who wish to visit China. I am pleased to inform you that the Chinese side has responded positively to this request.

China, a crucial and dependable development ally of Nepal, has affirmed its dedication to offering an elevated level of collaboration to Nepal. The two parties have concurred to invigorate mutual cooperation by efficiently executing the agreements between Nepal and China and conducting regular meetings of the current mechanisms. In accordance with the 2012 Agreement on Trans-Frontier Pasturing by Border Inhabitants inked between Nepal and China, the Chinese side has shown willingness to permit Nepalese residents in the border region to utilize grazing land in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and electrify certain Nepali villages along the border.

Both parties have shown enthusiasm to reinstate direct bus service between Kathmandu in Nepal and



Lhasa in China's Tibet Autonomous Region. I have urged the Chinese side to streamline the export of Nepalese products such as cooked buffalo meat, haulage (grass), plant-based medicinal items, vegetables, and fruits. The Chinese side has pledged to extend the required assistance.

The Chinese side has welcomed my proposal to establish a multi-functional laboratory in specific areas along the Nepal-China border. They have expressed readiness to provide essential funding and technology to enhance Nepal's agricultural sector's productivity.

Both parties have reached an agreement to increase the number of flights between Kathmandu and Pokhara in Nepal and various cities in China. This initiative is aimed at boosting trade relations and fostering closer ties between the two nations, as well as attracting more Chinese tourists to Nepal. I have urged the government and private sector to actively engage Chinese investors in the upcoming 3rd Nepal Investment Conference scheduled to take place in Kathmandu on 28-29 April 2024.

The Chinese leadership has assured their support in encouraging Chinese investors to participate in the conference. Furthermore, I have par-

ticipated in the Pre-Investment Summit organized by the Nepali Embassy in Beijing on 26th March 2024, where I called upon Chinese investors to consider investing in Nepal.

It has been agreed that the relevant authorities of both countries will collaborate to successfully promote Visit Nepal Year 2025 in China, with the aim of attracting more Chinese tourists to Nepal.

Both sides have expressed their willingness to enhance connectivity between Nepal and China by expanding international roads, railways, air routes, electricity transmission lines, and other infrastructure projects.

Discussions were also held on the industrialization of Nepal, increasing productivity, and developing human resources through cooperation between China and Nepal. I have specifically requested the introduction of Chinese knowledge and technology to Nepal to support these efforts.

During my trip to China, I had the opportunity to visit the Huawei Beijing Research and Development Executives Exhibition Center and the Seres Phoenix and International Logistics Hub in Chongqing. It was truly remarkable to witness China's remarkable achievements, particularly in the information technology sector

and industrialization.

Furthermore, we engaged in a constructive discussion regarding the establishment of a Development Corridor connecting Nepal, Tibet, Chongqing, and Sichuan. Both parties have reached an agreement to initiate and execute tangible projects, with a particular focus on agriculture, tourism, hydropower, and infrastructure.

I extended an invitation to His Excellency Wang Yi, a distinguished member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, to visit Nepal. His Excellency Wang Yi has graciously accepted the invitation and expressed his intention to visit Nepal at an appropriate time later this year.

During my visit, I also had the opportunity to explore the Nepali Embassy in Beijing, the Nepali Consulate General in Chandu, and Lhasa. Accompanying me were esteemed individuals such as Bishnupukar Shrestha, the Nepalese Ambassador to China, Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Navraj Dhakal, the Nepali Consul General in Lhasa, Suresh Raut, the Nepali Consul General in Chandu, and Surendra Kumar Yadav, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Nepali Embassy in Beijing, among others.

The visit I made has fostered a stronger sense of mutual understanding and respect between Nepal and China. We engaged in detailed and clear discussions regarding areas of mutual assistance and cooperation. I firmly believe that this visit has played a significant role in reinforcing the long-standing, diverse, and amicable relationship between Nepal and China.

Translation of 9 points press note issued on March 24, 2024 in Nepali by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister following the completion of his visit to People's Republic of China.

Heartly Greetings On Occasion Of Happy New Year -2081



NEA ENGINEERING COMPANY LIMITED
Trade Tower, Thapathali, Kathmandu

Maldevelopment And Technology: Ethos Harbingering Coming Apocalypse



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

Cultural Theorist Michael Thompson of IIASA says interesting ideas emerge from the periphery and not the center. This is because the center (of global order or dominant civilization) is a prisoner of its own hype, political correctness if you will of both its left and its right. The periphery is not bound by those shackles and is free to think the unthinkable. I came across ideas that demolished comfortable assumptions (in the form of two books) that shook my own thinking twice in peripheral Pakistan, the first time a dozen years ago and the second time in January this year.

In a meeting in 2012 organized by Pakistan's Planning Commission and its Academy of Sciences on the country's energy options, I came across in the conference's bookstall a book by Ghulam Kibria titled *Technology Acquisition in Pakistan: Story of a Failed Privileged Class and a Successful Working Class*, published in 1998 by Karachi's City Press. Kibria is no relaxed ivory tower academic: born in pre-Partition Raj and an engineering graduate of Aligarh Muslim University, he gained shopfloor experience in Europe before returning to Lahore to start his own machinery business and eventually becoming an activist with the famous Orangi pilot project and Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER).

The book's sixteen chapters begin by trying to understand technology and how its modern version was helped into being by the nature of British society that saw the beginning of the industrial revolution. It then travels the globe, looking at how countries that successfully industrialized such as Japan, China, Korea, Thailand and the Soviet Union acquired and internalized modern technology. What is insightful in these descriptions is how technology was NOT transferred out of goodwill of the industrialized West but was developed indigenously through reverse engineering as a response to colonization.

Non-trade barriers have been put up against such indigenous efforts through the system of intellectual property rights. In what resembles continuing neo-colonization, such efforts at indigenous development are labeled as theft, even as it must be remembered that the industrial West too

engaged in such "theft". That is the history of silk and tea "stolen" from China (recounted by Alan Macfarlane in his 2003 *The Empire of Tea* (Overlook Press, New York)) or the better flour griding technology stolen from Hungary in the 1870s by the main American grain traders Pillsbury and Washburn (described by Dan Morgan in his 1979 classic *Merchants of Grain: the power and profits of the world's five giant companies at the center of the world's food supply* (Viking Press, New York)).

The book then describes how, in sharp contrast to say Korea or China, Pakistan, which inherited from the British a very rich technology base, especially in the mechanical engineering of railways, squandered that capacity and failed to progress. Rather than promoting the country's very creative mistri through social, institutional and legal reforms, its elites and middle class aligned with the military to retain a suffocating feudalism, which condemned it to remain the periphery of capitalist West. Proving this point, the book begins by tauntingly recalling the country's military dictator Ziaul Huq and his early 1980s visit to Japan's Toyota factory. The general formally asked the Toyota management to share its management technology with Pakistan; but the Toyota president, with very Japanese courtesy, politely reminded the dictator that if they did so, "where would we sell our cars?" In another incident, an electronics mistri in Karachi was asked by a visiting World Bank team from whom he acquired the technology: the mistri asked the translator if the sahib was mad not to realize that no one give away technology, that he had mastered it himself. The basic message in all of this for the entire developing Global South is that technology is capacity whose entire ecosystem must be painstakingly built bottom-up indigenously and simply cannot be transferred.

In January this year, I was invited by Islamabad's Center for Strategic and Contemporary Research to a conference on rethinking disaster risk management in South Asia, where I came across their remarkable publication *Downfall* by Prof. Ilhan Niaz, who is professor of history at Quaid-i-Azam University. It is a historian's heavy-hearted

take on the inevitable civilizational collapse (unless very difficult countermeasures are taken that he outlines at the end) from the interlinked calamities of climate change-induced global warming and biodiversity loss, both fueled by the blind pursuit overconsumption and limitless economic growth.

Drawing on insights from scholars of yore – Herodotus, Ibn Khaldun, Voltaire, Malthus, John Stuart Mill and Darwin – and referenced with 206 detailed endnotes for a book of only a hundred pages, his first chapter begins by debunking the widely held belief that the impending crisis was unforeseen. Past thinkers mentioned above have clearly foretold that, regardless of formal political systems, plutocratic elites who have a grip on power have historically been blinded by decadence that prevents them from taking difficult but wise decisions to save their civilization, the planet and humankind with it.

Puffed up by baseless optimism of quick panaceas, they revel in seemingly Green measures that are meaningless. Despite awareness of plastic pollution, we recycle only about a tenth of it with “the rest dumped into

landfills and water bodies to result in more plastic than fish in our waters by 2050”. Also, while the blame game about who the biggest CO2 emitters are is routinely traded between countries, the truth is “just 100 companies (mostly Western) account for over half the (cumulative) GHG in the atmosphere since 1850”. This has serious implications for the current panacea on the table: assigning blame for loss and damage to compensate those who are damaged. How will that initiative be moved and (obviously) resisted by the global 1% primarily benefitting from this cost externalization to the environment and the marginalized poor?

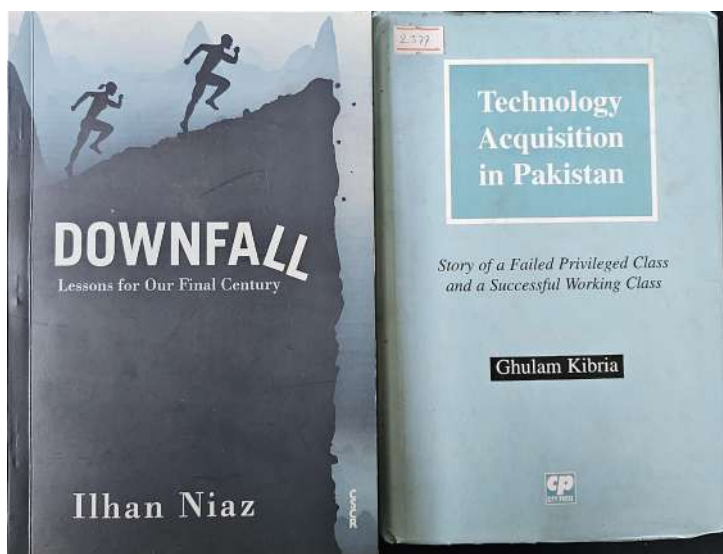
One of the strongest essays is on the myth of endless economic growth that economists and policy makers in thrall to it labour under, seemingly oblivious of the massive contradictions that underlie that belief. In 2010, the global average per capita income was \$8500 just at the point where humankind’s consumption of natural resources had reached the upper level of what the Earth can renew. Currently it is \$11000, and resource extraction has crossed any stretched concept of sustainability. Rather than demonstrate sane statesmanship to limit growth and resource extraction at the \$8500 level even while leveling out socio-economic inequality and allowing civilization to avoid ecocide and

collapse, the dominant current mantra is more unlimited growth. The author argues in his other essays that it will only lead to geopolitical wars and retreat into some kind of fascism and tribalism by 2100 – and collapse of civilization as we know it much more widespread and horrific than that of Roman or others – if major course corrections are not enacted between now and 2035.

Having laid out the apocalyptic scenario – and the drivers leading to it – the author concludes with very tough measures that need to be taken to avert the global disasters. The first is to pick up the from the works of Fernand Braudel and others to acquire a heightened historical consciousness away

from the present-minded individualist vacuum. This would lead to abandoning the suicidal fascination with endless economic growth of contemporary capitalism to a more well-being oriented stationary state. It would also need countries to abandon what are obviously petty squabbles in light of the massive apocalyptic darkness staring back at us. Retreating into growing insularity and xenophobia or cold war will be suicidal. It is time to pay the bill for the wild, resource-prolific partying of 1975-2025, but it can be done if the science and technology we already have can be used not for growth based on senseless globalization but on localization of much of production to meet everyday well-being needs. These measures would require not popular (and populist) leaders but wise ones in the Platonic sense, which in turn would require us to move away from “democracy” as currently propagated to one of wise and just governance.

On the face of it, these are very tall orders demanding near complete reordering of global governance as prevails today; but the ominous day of reckoning facing humankind is no less colossal. Ignoring it will not save the coming generation and what remains of the current one from the impending disaster. Download the book from the link above, read it, mull over its message, debate them with friends and colleagues, and think about how we can all reduce our consumption footprint while maintaining basic decent living to serve the larger purpose of human and planetary well-being.





ECONOMY Growth At 3.3

The economy of Nepal is progressing positively despite encountering obstacles, as highlighted in the latest World Bank report revealing a growth rate of 3.3%. Despite a hung parliament and three coalition Governments in quick succession, the nation's efforts towards economic revitalization persist. The reports also emphasized Nepal's growth resurgence despite the limited private investment.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Nepal's economy is projected to expand by 3.3% in FY24, primarily due to the resurgence of tourism and an uptick in hydropower exports. Private consumption is expected to be the main driver of growth, fueled by a significant rise in remittance inflows.

The World Bank's biannual country development update highlights these trends. Finance Minister Barshaman Pun, who has been in office for 18 months, is striving to implement more flexible policies to support economic recovery. Minister Pun emphasized the importance of collab-

oration to stimulate the economy and assured that the government will implement necessary measures to create a conducive environment for the private sector.

Despite the challenges faced by Nepal's economy, there are some positive developments such as improvements in the balance of payments, a notable increase in remittances by 21%, and a rise in foreign exchange reserves by 21.7%.

However, the country still grapples with a significant trade deficit and relies heavily on imports, particularly for essential goods like agricul-

tural products. While there are positive signs emerging and The World Bank's report provides some optimism, Finance Minister Pun and Central Bank Governor Maha Prasad Adhikari may find solace in these encouraging indicators.

The positive signs of remittance-based on the external front are overshadowed by the unchecked deterioration in our trade position. The last fiscal year (FY2079\80) was the worst in recent times, and unfortunately, the current FY 2080\81 does not show signs of improvement. It is worth noting that both export and import have

decreased in the first eight months of this FY compared to the same period last FY - export declined by 4 percent and import by 2.7 percent.

The decline in import is attributed to the ban on the import of certain items by the Nepal government. Additionally, the significant decrease (42 percent) in official rice import during the first 8 months of this FY, mainly due to restrictions imposed by India on its export, may also be a contributing factor. Despite the apparent decline in rice import, illegal imports have helped maintain a stable supply and prices in the market after the Indian restrictions were imposed.

The recent rise in rice production in Nepal, from 54 lakh 86 thousand tons to 57 lakh 24 thousand tons, may have played a role. When it comes to boosting exports, increasing the production of exportable goods that can replace imports seems to be the only viable solution. However, it is challenging to expect producers to ramp up production when farmers are forced to discard their produce due to a lack of market access.

Dairy farmers are lodging complaints against dairies, including the government-owned DDC, for delayed payments for milk purchases. Even budgetary incentives tied to production fail to yield the desired results in such circumstances. Additionally, export commodities like tea, which have been performing well in recent years, are encountering various



non-tariff barriers when it comes to exporting to India.

Meanwhile, data indicates a decline in both the acreage and production of Chaitra dhan (off-season paddy) over a three-year period, with production dropping from 561 thousand tons in FY 2078\79 to 520 thousand tons in FY 2080\81, and the cropped area decreasing by 16 thousand hectares during the same period.

Nepal's economy is currently facing a variety of challenges, particularly in relation to debt servicing. The government's inability to meet revenue collection targets has brought significant attention to this issue. It has been estimated that the government will require around Rs. 500 billion to service its debt, leading to a heavy reliance on borrowing, both domestically and internationally. In the first eight months of this fiscal year, Rs. 126 billion has

already been paid towards debt servicing. During this period, the total public debt has reached Rs. 2388 billion, with Rs. 1202 billion coming from external loans and Rs. 1185 billion from internal loans.

Only 45 percent of the targeted revenue (Rs. 1422 billion)

was collected in the same period, indicating a lackluster performance. It is highly likely that the authorities will need to borrow the entire targeted internal sum of Rs. 240 billion. The external borrowing target of Rs. 212 billion remains uncertain, as it is dependent on the performance of capital expenditure. Dr. Tilak Rawal, former governor, highlights the concern that new borrowing is being used to pay off previous debts and cover unproductive expenses, emphasizing the importance of utilizing borrowed funds for productive purposes.

The report indicated that the accommodation and food services sector took the lead, driven by a notable surge in tourist arrivals. Additionally, financial and insurance activities experienced growth, while wholesale and retail trade saw a decline.

The industrial sector also played a role in the economic expansion, with increased hydroelectric production providing support. Agriculture witnessed a rise in paddy production, thanks to better seed availability and favorable weather conditions.

Given the unstable and unpredictable nature of the government, ensuring stable policies and programs, predicting Nepal's long-term economic recovery remains challenging. However, a positive development is the growing flow of remittances.



Institutional Response And Leadership on Climate Negotiations



BY: BATU UPRETY

Mr. Evans Njewa, chair of the LDC Group on Climate Change for 2024 and 2025, and lead negotiator for Malawian climate change since 2005 stated the importance of water for life, impacts of climate change on water resources, and effects of extreme weather events to accelerate water-induced disasters. He reminded the decision of CoP27 and CoP28 to protect water resources and expected additional decisions in CoP29 on water security. He advised the countries to uplift this water security issue through the national climate change focal point(s) in a closeout workshop on Global Water Leadership (GWL) Program held in Malawi on 14-15 March 2024. The GWL workshop was attended by the government focal persons and GWL coordinators from the Central African Republic, Malawi, Nepal, Palestine, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Participants assessed efforts made towards building climate resilient and inclusive water services. Mr. Njewa informed that Malawi as a chair of the LDC Group on Climate Change will host a strategy meeting in the last week of March 2024.

The LDC Group was formed in 2001. Mali, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Maldives, Lesotho, The Gambia, Nepal, Angola, Congo, Ethiopia, Bhutan, and Senegal have served as the chair of this Group till 2023. Nepal served as its chair for 2013 and 2014 and organized the strategy meeting in early 2013. The chairing country will have two years tenure, but Angola and Congo shared for one year each.

Representing the LDCs:

Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement have constituted several bodies to advance the implementation of these instruments with provisions for representation from the UN regional groups (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern European, Latin American and Caribbean, and Western European and Others). On climate change regime, there are several constituted bodies which are represented by the UN regional groups and negotiating blocs such as Group of 77 and China (134 developing countries), or Small Island Developing States (SIDS, 57 countries) or LDC Group (45 countries).

The constituted bodies where LDC Group nominates a representative on behalf of 45 LDCs are: (i) Adaptation Committee; (ii) Adaptation Fund Board; (iii) Advisory Board of Santiago Network (deals with loss and damage); (iv) Consultative Group of Experts (deals with national reporting requirement); (v) Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with climate change impacts (WIM ExCom); (vi) Facilitating Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous People's Platform (FWG LCIPP); (vii) Green Climate Fund; (viii) LDC Expert Group (LEG); (ix) LDC Fund Board; (x)

Paris Committee on Capacity Building; (xi) Supervisory Body established under Article 6, paragraph 4 of the Paris Agreement (deals with mitigation of GHGs emissions and sustainable development mechanisms); and (xii) Standing Committee on Finance. These constituted bodies have specific functions as decided by the Parties during the CoPs, CMPs or CMAs.

The chair of the LDC Group communicates the nominee to the UNFCCC Secretariat after review of his/her expertise.

Of the constituted bodies, Nepal, at present, is representing the LDC Group for FWG LCIPP, Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, and the Adaptation Fund Board. Nepal is also representing the Asian group on LEG.

The 45th meeting of LEG was held on 20-23 February 2024 in Bujumbura, Burundi to, inter alia, develop its work program for 2024 and 2025, discuss on priority needs of LDCs for support such as to implement NAPA and NAPs, interact with Green Climate Fund Secretariat, GEF and its agencies, including others. Nepal did not attend this meeting and missed the opportunity to highlight the concerns, needs and priorities of the Asian LDCs, including Nepal, and strengthen functional relationship with designated climate funds and agencies.

Those engaged in climate change negotiations should attend sessions of the subsidiary bodies and CoPs and other meetings. Delegate must enjoy frequent travel, sometimes long waiting in transits, and be ready for meetings whole day and night depending upon the issues. Recalling my participation between 2007 and 2016, frequent travel to a trusted representative is sometimes painful. In 2014, I received 19 invitations in my capacity as the Chair of the LDC Expert Group. I prioritized meetings to support the LDCs and could manage to attend 13 meetings by even landing in Kathmandu in the morning and flying to attend another meeting in the afternoon. Few Nepalese climate negotiators have frequent travel at present. It is natural and should be promoted to develop country capacity. Participation in negotiations is not an incentive rather an obligation for the poor people.

Climate change negotiation is becoming complex and requires better understanding of the issues. For example, delegates took over a decade to decide on funding for loss and damage. It is not only necessary to build negotiating capacity, but continuation of participation counts a lot. Some climate negotiators have over two decades of experience. If Nepal wishes to develop country capacity and benefit from climate regime, a dedicated permanent team of negotiators is urgently required. The team must ensure continued participation of a diplomat with legal expertise and with subject matter expert(s).

Non-participation in events or meetings of such bodies raises questions on compliance of a trust to a country and its



expert as s/he was given the responsibility to flag and negotiate on LDC issues. Hence, it is the moral responsibility of the representing country to ensure the participation of the nominee and provide logistics where necessary as s/he is representing a bloc of climate vulnerable countries and communities. The trust of a negotiating bloc must be maintained to get support on national agenda as well. Country may greatly suffer in its national issue from a negligence of non-compliance.

Strategy Meeting: To facilitate agenda-based negotiations, develop negotiating capacity, identify and priorities issues for theme-based negotiations with the developed and developing country Parties on behalf of the LDCs and workout various strategies to benefit from climate regime, LDC Group has designated 8 thematic leads (coordinators) namely on: (i) adaptation; (ii) agriculture; (iii) Article 6 (voluntary cooperation on climate targets - NDCs); (iv) capacity building; (v) loss and damage; (vi) mitigation; (vii) technology; and (viii) transparency. Co-coordinator(s) are normally selected, irrespective of the country, based on regularity in attending key negotiating sessions, expertise and interest on subject matter, negotiating capacity, willingness and health to attend even mid-night or early morning meeting(s), capacity for last-hour decision and so on.

In some cases, LDCs advise the competent negotiator to lead the theme on behalf of the LDCs. In case of representation on the constituted bodies, the climate change focal point of the interested country officially sends its interest with CV of the official to represent the LDC. The LDC chair evaluates the CV and his/her past performance on negotiation, taking note of country's interests, ensuring regional balance, and following the defined criteria, select the nominee (as required) and officially informs the UNFCCC Secretariat about the nominee. Hence, the country and the nominee are responsible to the LDCs for effective engagement in the climate negotiations. If the country does not nominate the thematic lead or chair or member of the constituted bodies, it affects all LDCs. Hence, the country and the nominee should consider it an obligation.

The strategy meeting was held at Lilongwe, Malawi on 26-27 March 2024 and it was attended by thematic coordinators, LDC Group nominated experts to different constituted bodies of the UNFCCC, KP and the PA, and designated 'elders' having long experience on climate change negotiations. The country chairing the LDC Group organizes the strategy meeting normally

in March before the start of climate change negotiations. Such a meeting reviews outcomes of the previous CoPs, provides guidance to the theme-based lead negotiators or those representing the LDCs in the constituted bodies. The meeting helps to further understand the CoP28 decisions, and discuss on guidance and strategies for future work, particularly on its thematic areas to negotiate as LDC bloc with other negotiating blocs who are Parties to the UNFCCC, KP and the Paris Agreement. This provides sufficient guidance for climate negotiations in 2024.

As a chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the LDCs, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa addressed online the Strategy Meeting on 26 March 2024. Mr. Thapa 'underscored the need to have decisive actions to limit temperature rise and bridge significant gaps in climate finance'.

Nepal's Representation:

Nepal has represented and may represent the LDCs, Asia and the Pacific region, and Group of 77 and China in climate negotiations. In recent years, discontinuation of Nepali delegate(s) in negotiations has made our participation comparatively weak in developing government and/or country capacity.

Between 2008 and 2016, Nepal offered its service as a rapporteur to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) from Asia-Pacific group in 2008, chairs of the LDC Group for 2013 and 2014, LEG for 2014 and 2015 representing Asian LDCs, and Adaptation Fund Board representing the LDCs in 2016. The administration of the then Ministry of Environment timely nominated its officials to attend each session and meeting of the UNFCCC and constituted bodies. In 2018, the government decided to dissolve the then Ministry of Population and Environment and merged the environment and climate change with forests by naming the Ministry of Forests and Environment. Since 2017, Nepalese engaged in climate change negotiations and serving as the representatives of the LDC Group or Asian Group started facing challenges for participation.

Institution and leadership: Recalling institutional development on the environment and climate change, the Government of Nepal renamed the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) in 1992 into the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) and again renamed as MoFSC in 1993 by establishing the Environment Protection Council. It happened so as MoFE could not deliver on environment conservation and limited its activities on forests. Cross-cutting nature of the environment was neither understood nor did it coordinate multi-sectors. In September 1995, the Government established the Ministry of Population and Environment (MoPE) with defined functions by considering the environment a cross-cutting area that requires joint and collaborative efforts of multi-stakeholders. The MoPE survived for a decade, grounded the need for environment conservation in several policies, plans and programs, and was merged with science and technology in 2005. Merging and separating environment continued till 2018 and the government finally renamed MoFE like in 1992.

Recalling the human resources, programs and budgetary provisions, the then Ministry of Environment worked as a dedicated ministry and discharged its functions effectively during the last two decades. When MoFE was renamed, environment

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and climate change - the cross-cutting and nationally and internationally prioritized themes - started enjoying the 'shade effect' of a big tree. Country needs and priorities on climate change were overlooked, diluted, and undermined, including the multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary initiatives required to address environment and climate change challenges.

Reviewing the administrative leadership, environmental secretaries were and are foresters from research service for about the last 12 years. Nearly a decade, national needs and priorities on the environment and climate change were overlooked in many cases. Impractical legal provisions such as on environmental assessment, ambitious national and international commitments on climate change, and carbon trade, looking environment and climate change through a single sector 'eye' reduced opportunities and benefits from change negotiation processes.

Considering the state of forests, conservationists in 1993 advocated then MoFE that those who could not win the battle (of forest management) is again sent to fight with the environment battle. This resulted to rename the then MoFE to MoFSC. Environment and climate communities are recalling the institutional responses of 1993 as leadership has greater role in responding the key barriers, facilitating the processes, acknowledging the good works, developing the capacity at institutional, individual, and country levels, accessing and mobilizing resources for the cause of climate vulnerable communities and natural resources such as water and biodiversity, and so on.

Recalling the ground-breaking works on climate change during 2009 to 2016, and report prepared and published between 2017 and 2023, time has come to rethink the institutional arrangement on the environment and climate change. During 2009 and 2016, Nepal prepared National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA), and a national framework on Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA) to localize adaptation activities, formulated climate change policy with provision for mobilizing at least 80 percent of the total fund for rural level climate change activities, accessed and mobilized over US\$ 200 million for implementation of climate adaptation and resilience activities, channeled climate finance through a climate change budget code, launched, inter alia, Nepal Climate Change Support Program - a flagship program also recognized under the Nairobi Work Program in 2015 in Paris, and led and contributed in climate negotiation process by being the chairs of the LDC Group for 2013 and 2014, LDC Expert Group for 2014 and 2015, and Adaptation Fund Board for 2016.

Between 2017 and 2023, the government re-issued climate change policy and LAPA in 2019, included climate change provisions in the Environment Protection Act (2019) and its Rules (2020) by making the carbon trade complicated and 'non-functional', accessed about

US\$ 92 million, including for readiness activities from Green Climate Fund, prepared National Adaptation Plan (2021-2050), and submitted a highly ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2020, prepared long-term strategy for net zero emissions, national framework on loss and damage in 2021 and NDC Implementation Plan in 2023, and has mobilized resources to piloting climate adaptation activities in few municipal-

ities.

Taking note of environmental stewardship, climate negotiation process over a half-decade, challenge in managing cross-cutting issues by a sector, and accelerated climate- and water-induced disasters, national priorities and international obligations on the environment and climate change, time has come to establish a new institution to address environment and climate change challenges through cross-cutting approaches.

Recently, climate communities are reviewing a preliminary draft Bill on Climate Change. The Bill provisions for establishing a National Climate Authority, a broad representa-



tion-based National Climate Council under the chair of the Prime Minister, and proposed provisions on climate change mitigation and budget, GHG emission reduction targets, carbon trade, climate change fund, formulation of mitigation and adaptation plan, safety of physical infrastructures and investment protection from climate change, and international cooperation and collaboration. There are several provisions that require extensive consultations to make the provisions country-specific and to respond national needs and priorities, promote socio-economic and infrastructure development climate-smart and inclusive, avoid and/or minimize conflicts with the existing policies, legal provisions and coordination mechanisms with clarity on fundamentals, including climate science, and prioritization of greatly affected economic and infrastructure sector for immediate investment, including from climate finance.

Taking note of the proposed Authority, it is high time to establish the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change by rearranging the existing dedicated departments and divisions on environment and climate change without any additional administrative and budgetary liabilities to the government to benefit from environment conservation and climate change regime. It will greatly contribute to timely address the recent concerns and commitments of the government on climate change.

As of now, trust of the 45 LDCs on climate change negotiations and support from friendly countries and multilateral institutions is encouraging. In view of the political commitment shown in Dubai during CoP28, the Government of Nepal is encouraged to develop 'country capacity' to access and mobilize resources for the benefit of the poor and climate vulnerable communities and promote environment-friendly and climate resilient social and economic development through institutional rearrangements on environment and climate change to the earliest possible.

“साना किसानको समृद्धि, कृषिको रूपान्तरण र उद्यमशिलताको विकास”

लघुवित्तको कार्यक्रम मार्फत ग्रामीण समुदायमा उद्यमशिलताको विकास गर्दै समुदायका हरेक सदस्यलाई आर्थिक समृद्धिको बाटोमा अगाडि बढाउन साना किसान लघुवित्त वित्तीय संस्था लि. ले अग्रणी भूमिका खेलिरहेको छ। ७९ प्रतिशत महिला सदस्यहरूको सहभागिता रहेका साभेदार संस्थाहरू मार्फत यस संस्थाको अगुवाईमा स्वरोजगार एवं रोजगारीका अवसर अभिवृद्धि गर्ने कार्य भईरहेको छ। देशको समग्र गरिबी निवारण गर्ने कार्यमा सघाउ पुऱ्याउने उद्देश्य लिएको यस वित्तीय संस्थाले देशभरी एघार (१२) वटा शाखा कार्यालय र केन्द्रीय कार्यालय मार्फत सेवा प्रवाह गरिरहेको छ।

७७ जिल्लाका १ हजार ६ सय ३२ वटा संस्थाहरू मार्फत २२ लाख परिवारका ८८ लाख सदस्यहरूमा थोक कर्जाका साथै क्षमता विकास, प्रविधिको हस्तान्तरण, युवा उद्यमशिलताका लागि पैरवी लगायका सेवाहरू समेत उपलब्ध गराउँदै आएको छ। यस लघुवित्तले नेपाल सरकार, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय दातृ संघ/संस्थाहरूको सहकार्यमा समुदायमा आधारित सहकारी संस्थाहरू मार्फत सामाजिक तथा सामुदायिक कार्यक्रम संचालनमा समेत सहयोग पुऱ्याउँदै आएको छ।

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केन्द्रीय कार्यालय बबरमहल, काठमाडौं।

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WAKEUP CALL FOR NEPAL

Energy Security Splashing Shame On Water Resources



BY: PRABALADHIKARI

The direction of wind has changed these days as it often changes when a season turns over. This time, people are whispering in each other's ears some new things which they had almost forgotten. Unfortunately, time and again, the whisper I am hearing goes around the fear of power cuts in the country. More understandable word to the people of Nepal may be used as loadshedding.

Nepal had long hours of load shedding in the past. Experience of the past is enough to them; the people know how traumatic and harrowing it can be in their daily life. Here I remember Leon Brown who said, 'History repeats itself endlessly for those who are unwilling to learn from the past.' Do we fall under that category which Leon Brown visualized?

A surprising reality is that Nepalese people forget a lesson as fast as they learn from the past. A country which faced the loadshedding for almost half of the day has not started any reservoir hydropower projects in the country yet except the one with just 140 MW capacity under construction in its central region. Now that India has granted approval only for 554 MW of exchange-based power export to Nepal for three months from April to June of the ongoing year with its restriction to solar-hours only, it has become the talk of the town for the fear of repeating the scary history. Till 31st March, this approval remained to be 650 MW and 54 MW from India's Power Exchange for India-Nepal 400 kV Muzaffarpur-Dhalkebar and 132 kV Tanakpur-Mahendranagar transmission lines respectively. As per the Procedures of India's Designated Authority, maximum time period of one year is allowed at a time from the date of approval in case of trading in Indian power exchanges. Nonetheless, India's Guidelines associated with cross border power trade states that Government of India reserves the right

to import/export electricity from/to neighbouring countries for reason of larger policy interests.

By and large, in addition to 70 million kilowatt-hours (units) of energy Nepal is entitled to receive on a continuous basis annually, free of cost, from the date of the entry into force of Nepal-India Mahakali Treaty in lieu of the eastern afflux bund of the Tanakpur Barrage, constructed by India at Jimuwa in the far western region, Nepal can receive Indian power under three modes of import: Under the old, historic mechanism of Nepal-India Power Exchange Committee (PEC) through various links connecting Nepal with the bordering states of India, from the Indian Power Exchanges through bidding and bilateral power purchase agreements with Indian entities. Currently, there are no such bilateral PPAs signed with the Indian entities for importing power to Nepal probably for the reason of high pricing of electricity. But Nepal may explore this option also by blending thermal and solar power to lower the price. As such, meeting the entire domestic demand of electricity will be tough, but not impossible despite some hardship to industries.

We live in an era marked by global warming, climate change, energy transition, etc. However, energy security is appearing as a threat to Nepal despite the reality that the percentage use of electricity in the country is still minimal vis-à-vis total energy consumption in different forms. On one hand, we need to gradually reduce non-electricity-based energy uses, thereby fostering energy transition, so that our own green energy would spread to the best extent possible all over the country. On the other hand, we should zero in on the target of increased per capita electricity consumption, too. Nepal's immense water resources, a nature-blessed treasure, can be turned into hydropower for its socio-economic upliftment, but Nepal's track record reveals a bleak and

gloomy picture that the country is at around 3,000 MW in terms of total installed capacity, including some negligible thermal and solar, in 113 years of its hydropower development's history. The installed capacity merely comprises a tiny portion for the contribution of storage hydropower projects -Kulekhani I, II and III – 106 MW in total.

As per the data of Nepal Electricity Authority, the only power procurer as a vertically integrated entity in the country, it has signed power purchase agreements for about 9,500 MW as of the first half of March, 2024, and the combined capacity for Run-of-River (ROR), Peaking Run-of-River (PROR) and Storage hydropower projects corresponds to 6,396 MW, 2,758 MW and 140 MW respectively. The resulting ROR-avalanche has buried the prospects of energy security of Nepal under the contrasting scenario of power surplus in wet season and power deficit in dry season.

In the present context, on top of the reduced power supply, both in terms of quantum and hours, from India, Nepal is hamstrung in this April-onward dry season by reduced domestic generation from its hydropower projects more than ever. As such, one cannot absolutely dismiss the risk of some power cuts in the country, but the system operator, to reduce the intensity of disruption, is left with some few options available within our own system like the use of stored water in Kulekhani reservoir, operation of PROR plants for peaking energy and drawl of some high-price and take-and-pay power from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh under the PEC mechanism.

To overcome this seasonal shortfall of power for future, solar power integration is a mid-term solution for Nepal, at least for energy shortage during the solar hours of the day, whereas non-solar hours may undergo seeking support from operation of peaking pondage and reservoir plants. It also offers a modest hedge against the country's dependency on power import from India during the solar hours. In this regard, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) needs a steadfast commitment to the im-

plementation of its recent and visionary Board decision for scaling up nationwide solar power integration into the national grid, thereby providing a significant boost to it as a policy turn amid the nation's hydro-everywhere environment.

Since the grid-connected solar capacity of the country has reached only about 107 MW contributed by both NEA and the private sector, the capacity, after the recent move and also having considered some already-embarked efforts under the PPAs signed for about 175 MW, will rise to about 1,000 MW in the timeframe of 24 months. Of course, it does not mean that solar

option is going to deliver a roller-coaster ride to the country seeking energy security, but it brings solace to a country in power distress and to the national utility, NEA, in price benefits over the costlier, external energy sources, besides tending to help diurnal supply adequacy in system operation.

With far-sightedness, Nepal at large must be prepared for a

stable and sustainable landscape of energy security for self-reliance. Although it may resonate something with an emotional content on behalf of the nation, it should not prompt any suspicions towards the increased need of cross border power trade, adequate grid connectivity and bilateral energy cooperation with India and the remaining part of South Asia at present and in future.

The development of dam-based hydropower projects will have multiple benefits like hydropower, irrigation, water supply, flood control and navigation. Among them, flood control and irrigation benefits will be important to lower riparian countries because of the regulated flows they receive. But the prospects of downstream benefits could even be sometimes contentious to siphon off decision-makers' attention from storage hydropower projects in Nepal owing to the fears of possible ultra-patriotic protests linking the dam construction with its downstream benefits not being negotiated. In principle, counteracting these notions is not necessary and bringing more benefits to one's own country is what



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every nationalist is desirous of as a commonality of national interest. But it's related to the transboundary river governance between the countries sharing the rivers and there are many pertinent and valid concerns which require a meticulous examination and mutual understanding. It calls for permanent collaboration and everything has its own pros and cons which need open discussions at the right time. Indeed, in some cases, it becomes a huge headache to the lower riparian countries with respect to different concerns such as changes in water availability and quality, dam safety and water-related hazards when huge dams are unilaterally built by upstream countries.

By and large, river-based treaties cause issues and concerns – backlashes or criticism– in either riparian countries despite the best efforts to avoid them during the agreement or treaty. We need not go far to observe this situation outside South Asia. India and Pakistan signed the Indus Water Treaty in 1960 providing a framework for irrigation and hydropower development, around ten months later than when Nepal and India signed the Gandak Agreement. The Treaty was hailed even at the international level; it was negotiated on the same principles as the UN Convention and, furthermore, the World Bank was involved in doing this. In lower riparian Pakistan, the Treaty is still considered as a great sell-out, a cowardly act and an unpatriotic move. Likewise, in upper riparian India, the then Prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru was blamed for buying peace by giving away India's water and not receiving adequate compensation for water resources. Both countries have been entangled in disputes now regarding the riparian use of water. Further, India as the lower riparian country has been revolving around the grievances concerning the building of Chinese dams upstream on the Brahmaputra.

In case of Nepal, we have three treaties/agreements on water resources in existence: the Kosi Agreement, the Gandak Agreement and the Mahakali Treaty. When the issue of sharing downstream benefits arises, we don't have such mechanisms or procedures agreed between India and Nepal so far. Moreover, a pressing question besieges us whether we can delay the construction of storage projects in Nepal till the deal, which bears uncertainty, is clinched with India. Of course, we have no time to wait because we need energy security and economic prosperity through it and this is so urgent that climate change may constrict the nature-blessed largesse in future.

Some ultra-patriotists of Nepal are even selling

the propaganda of applying international experiences like Columbia River Treaty (1964) between USA and Canada and the Treaty on the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (1986) between lower riparian South Africa and upper riparian Lesotho. If Nepal can, that's really great and we all will be celebrating the moment. However, nobody concerned requested the attention of parliament for requiring to agree with India on equitable sharing of benefits of our transboundary rivers before ratifying the next treaty. No voices were heard that the earlier river-based agreements needed to be amended first as per the international practices and then only Mahakali Treaty could be considered for signing. Finally, we all know that the issue could not receive attention of the country even when Mahakali Treaty was ratified in 1996 by the parliament of Nepal by more than two-third majority.

The development of dam-based hydropower projects will have multiple benefits like hydropower, irrigation, water supply, flood control and navigation. Among them, flood control and irrigation benefits will be important to lower riparian countries because of the regulated flows they receive.

Even after that, both Water Resource Strategy (2002) and National Water Plan (2005) of Nepal envisioned the strategy of resolving riparian issues between neighbouring nations and achieving the expected benefits from treaties and multipurpose projects by 2017.

Without any progress towards it yet, we are bound to reckon that it's easy to say but difficult to do.

We must emphasize cooperation on water resources and power sector with neighbouring countries by placing national interest at the centre. There are ways to accomplish it in congenial atmosphere through dialogues at the levels of bureaucrats, diplomats and politicians. After all, Nepal must adjust its priorities to confront energy insecurity by starting construction of large-scale storage hydropower projects in the country along with the continuity in developing ROR and PROR projects because it's the time the sound of the wakeup call is spreading all around. It is obvious that the country continues to be distressed for years to come in absence of the sufficient hydro-storage capacity. The campaigns for storage hydro projects in the country should continue, undeterred. Simultaneously, the country needs to advance the deep reforms that the power sector has long needed, especially in broader privatization, corporatization and value-chain liberalization.

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MAHA KUMBHA IN BARAHKSHETRA

A Sacred Festival In Sacred Koshi (Kaushiki) River

The Maha Kumbha in Barahkshetra is a revered festival that takes place in the sacred Koshi (Kaushiki) River.

By Keshab Poudel

The Maha Kumbha Mela in Barahkshetra is set to begin today, signifying a momentous occasion in the hallowed land of ancient Jambhu Deep. This area is home to numerous sacred sites linked to revered deities, and the politicization of its geography has stirred controversy within the Sanatan religion.

In Nepal, the occurrence of Mahakumbha Mela has caused confusion among the populace, as the traditional Kumbha Mela is typically held at four sacred riverbanks in India. To distinguish the Koshi Mahakumbha, some have proposed renaming it as Kaushiki Mahakumbha.

President Ram Chandra Poudel is set to inaugurate the 12th annual Mahakumbh Mela today at Chataradham, a sacred site in the Barahkshetra Municipality of Sunsari, Nepal. This significant Hindu pilgrimage and festival holds immense spiritual importance for Hindus. The Kumbh Mela, rooted in Hindu mythology, commemorates the places where drops of divine nectar fell.

It is celebrated at five locations, including Chataradham in Nepal,



as well as Haridwar, Prayag, Nashik, and Ujjain in India. The Mahakumbh Mela at Koshi river, also known as Kaushiki Mahakumbha, is linked to Saint Rishi Kaushik. Renowned heritage and environmental conservationist Prakash Mani Sharma suggests that “Kaushiki Mahakumbha” would be the most appropriate name for this event. Efforts will be made to establish

Mahakumbh as Kaushiki Mahakumbha through proper channels, as stated by Sharma on his Facebook wall.

What Is Kumbha?

According to Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumbh_Mela

, Kumbh Mela or Kumbha Mela is a major pilgrimage and festival

in Hinduism. It is celebrated in a cycle of approximately 12 years, to celebrate every revolution Brihaspati (Jupiter) completes, at four river-bank pilgrimage sites: Prayagraj (Ganges-Yamuna-Sarasvati rivers confluence), Haridwar (Ganges), Nashik (Godavari), and Ujjain (Shipra).

The festival is marked by a ritual dip in the waters, but it is also a celebration of community commerce with numerous fairs, education, religious discourses by saints, mass gatherings of monks, and entertainment. The seekers believe that bathing in these rivers is a means to prāyaścitta (atonement, penance, restorative action) for past mistakes, and that it cleanses them of their sins.

The festival is traditionally credited to the 8th-century Hindu philosopher and saint Adi Shankara, as a part of his efforts to start major Hindu gatherings for philosophical discussions and debates along with Hindu monasteries across the Indian subcon-





continent.

However, there is no historical literary evidence of these mass pilgrimages called “Kumbha Mela” prior to the 19th century. There is ample evidence in historical manuscripts and inscriptions of an annual Magha Mela in Hinduism – with periodic larger gatherings after 6 or 12 years – where pilgrims gathered in massive numbers and where one of the rituals included a sacred dip in a river or holy tank.

Jagat Guru Bal Santa Mohancharan Devacharya, the founder of the Kumbh Mela, anticipates the participation of high-level dignitaries including the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Chief Justice, government ministers, and other prominent figures. Additionally, religious leaders from Nepal, India, Bhutan, the Americas, Australia, Canada, Europe, and more are expected to attend.

Over 2,000 security personnel, including members of the Nepali Army, Armed Police Force, and Nepal Police, will ensure the safety of visitors. Organizers have constructed bathing areas, sanitation facilities, temporary shelters, and medical centers to accommodate the large number of expected devotees.

Koshi Mahakumbha Mela

As the Mahakumbha Mela in Koshi River nears its final prepara-

tions, followers from various regions of Nepal and India are beginning to gather in Barahachhetra, Koshi province, to participate in the sacred bathing ritual. Scheduled to commence on April 9, the Mahakumbha Mela in Barahachhetra, Koshi Province, is gaining recognition among the Santani Communities in the area. Information regarding the event can be found on the personal website of Jagatguru Shri Balasant Mohancharan Devacharya, who initiated the Mela in Koshi.

According to <https://www.jagadgurunepal.org.np/>

, he proved that Chataradham located in Sunsari, Barahachhetra, Nepal, is the ancient Haridwar. He was conferred Jagatguru title by the formal decision of the 140-year-old “Kashi Pandit Sabha”, in presence of hundreds of distinguished scholars of Vedic Sanatan Dharma, on April 14, 2010. He was conferred with the title of Jagatguru at the age of 33.

Jagat Guru And Mahakumbha

For a considerable period, Jagat Guru has persistently conducted research in the religious domain of Nepal, diligently studying the religious, archaeological, historical,

cultural, and touristic sites that are on the verge of disappearing.

Nevertheless, there are individuals who contend that the name should be altered to Kaushiki Mahakumbha, as a gesture of reverence towards Kaushik Rishi, whose name is associated with the Koshi river.

Despite the present era necessitating unity among Sanatani or Hindus, the organizers of Koshi Mahakumbha must also strive to prevent any divisions.

Origin Of Koshi

The name of Koshi river links to the name of Saint Kaushik who brought Koshi river in earth. Kusaha, where the breach in the Kosi River embankment took place on 18 August 2008, is said to be a diminutive form of Kaushik Ashram, the home of the Rishi Vishvamitra, believed to be the author of the Rig Veda, one of the holiest books of the Hindus. There are a few other villages in the area named Kusaha as well, and in all likelihood the sage could have lived in any of those, too. According to Hindu mythology, Kaushiki, or the River Kosi as it is called today, is Vishvamitra’s elder sister. Let us look more closely at some of the stories and legends from this part of Southasia.

One story is about an eminent ascetic named Richeek, of Rishi Bhriugu’s lineage, who was given to deep meditation. One day, he went to the palace of King Gaadhi, son of King Kaushika, and asked for the hand of his daughter, Satyavati. Gaadhi was



a royal and Richeek an indigent Brahmin, and hence the king turned down the proposal. But as Richeek was leaving, the king, making what he believed to be an impossible demand, told Richeek that if he could present him with a thousand horses, as fair as the moon, as swift as the wind and each with one dark ear, then he would accept the proposal. Richeek proceeded to beseech the god Varun for the horses, which the latter made available through the River Ganga. Legend has it that it was at Asvatirtha, near Kannauj in Uttar Pradesh, on the banks of the Ganga, where the river delivered the horses. Richeek went to the king with the thousand horses, and the king dutifully allowed his daughter Satyavati to marry the poor, aged ascetic.

Male progeny of Kaushik are known as Kaushik, while females are known as Kaushiki. As such, Satyavati was called Kaushiki and Visvamitra was called Kaushik, and thus Kaushiki was the elder sister of Visvamitra. When she died, Satyavati is said to have taken on the form of the River Kaushiki. Years later, when Vishvamitra was moving from Ayodhya towards Sonebhadra (the Sone River) with Ram and Lakshman, he acquainted the two princes with his elder sister. The verses relating to this episode appear in Valmiki's Ramayana. In the Bal Kaand section (Verse 34), the episode is narrated as follows: Renewed Koshi expert Dinesh Kumar Mishra <https://www.himalmag.com/reportage/the-legends-of-kosi>



Mahakumbha In Koshi

Nepal's sacred Maha Kumbh Mela, a spectacular religious festival, begins on April 9th at the holy Chatara Dham on the banks of the Sapta Koshi River in the Baraha Kshetra of Sunsari district. The festival, held every 12 years, offers a unique and extraordinary display of faith for pilgrims from around the world.

The Mahakumbha Mela in Chataradham is to be held this year from coming April 9 to May 10 in Barahkshetra Municipality-1 of Sunsari.

Some three million pilgrims from home and abroad are expected to visit the grand fair, said Joint-Chair of the Organizing Committee and Mayor of Barahkshetra Municipality, Ramesh Karki.

Meanwhile, 80 percent of the work related to the preparation of the fair has been completed, said vice president of the main organizing committee, ward president of Barahkshetra-2, Hom Prasad Gautam.

In Barahkshetra, Kumbha Mela has been organized since 2059 BS, with Ardha Kumbha mela held in every six years and Purna Maha Kumbha mela in every 12 years.

Kumbha Mela is being organized since a long time in four places of India Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh), Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh), Nashik (Maharashtra) and Haridwar (Uttarakhand).

It is said that the Kumbha Mela is being organized in this area as the Barahkshetra located on the banks of the Saptakoshi River and the Pindeshwar Dham of Dharan are linked with the Kumbha Mela, a gathering of Hindu devotees held four times over the course of twelve years, as per Hindu Mythology.

With the beginning of Koshi Mahakumbha on Tuesday, it is imperative for Jagati Guru to promote unity among all Santantis of Bharat Barshe, Bharat Khande Jambu Dip, emphasizing that spiritualism transcends boundaries unlike politics. It is hoped that Koshi Mahakumbha will foster unity among Hindus and Sanatani.

A Significant Achievement

The Tanahu Hydropower Project, with a capacity of 140 MW, has achieved a major milestone with the completion of the headrace tunnel.

By A CORRESPONDENT

The Tanahu Hydropower Project, with the strong support and guidance of Kul Man Ghising, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority, and the dedicated efforts of Kiran Kumar Shrestha, Managing Director of Tanahu Hydropower Ltd, is making significant progress. The construction of the coffer dam is advancing well, and preparations are underway to begin the construction of the dam. Additionally, the recent breakthrough of the Headrace Tunnel is a noteworthy achievement.

Despite facing delays caused by various factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, contract terminations, and tender awards, the project has encountered several obstacles over the past eight years. However, considering the current pace of progress, it appears that the project is likely to be completed according to the ongoing schedule.

The under-construction 140-megawatt Tanahu Hydroelectricity Project recently witnessed a breakthrough in its headrace tunnel. This reservoir-based project harnesses the water from the Seti River, which flows along the border of Rhishing Rural Municipality and Byas Municipality-5 in Tanahu.

To activate the tunnel, Energy,



Water Resources, and Irrigation Secretary Gopal Prasad Sigdel and Kul Man Ghising, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority and Chairman of Tanahu Hydropower Ltd, jointly initiated the switch.

The tunnel, which is part of Package 2 of the project, spans a length of 1,493 meters from its intake point. It has a diameter of 7.4 meters and will be lined with concrete. The water will flow through the tunnel and be collected in an underground powerhouse via a 213-meter penstock.

During the ceremony commemorating the breakthrough of the tunnel, Sigdel, the Secretary of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, expressed his contentment with the advancement of the reservoir project, which has been under construction for a considerable period of time. Sigdel urged all parties involved to ensure the timely completion of the main dam construction.

Drawing from the knowledge gained from reservoir projects like Kulekhani, there is now a sense of direction and confidence in developing similar projects such as Dudhkoshi, Nalgarh, and Budhigandaki. Ghising, the Managing Director of the NEA, stressed the significance of completing the project on schedule and called upon all stakeholders to take responsibility.

He acknowledged that significant milestones have already been achieved in the project, including diverting the river for the main dam construc-



tion and successfully breaking through the main tunnel. To ensure the project's timely completion, the responsibility of expediting the dam construction lies with the project management, consultants, and construction professionals.

In addition, an announcement was made regarding the initiation of the Lower Seti Hydroelectric Project, which will harness the power of the Madi River to generate 126 MW of electricity. Kiran Kumar Shrestha, the Managing Director of Tanahun Hydropower Ltd, the project's promoter, and Mr. Shyamji Bhandari, the Acting Project Manager, provided the audience with an update on the project's progress and the challenges faced.

The construction of the project is divided into three packages, and the overall physical progress currently stands at 54 percent. The entire project is expected to be completed by May 2026. Package-1 involves the excavation of the main dam's foundations and the construction of a temporary cofferdam to divert the river during the dam construction.

This phase is progressing well, with the aim of completing the foundation excavation by the second week of June and commencing the construction of the main dam's foundation in July. The physical progress for Package 1 is currently at 29 percent. The construction of the 140-meter-high dam under Package-1 is being carried out by Song Da Corporation, Vietnam-Kalika Construction Ltd JV.

Sino Hydro Corporation, China is currently engaged in the implementation of Package-2, which involves the construction of the project tunnel, powerhouse, as well as the supply, instal-

lation, and operation of hydro-mechanical and electromechanical equipment. Following the completion of the underground power plant excavation, work is now underway on the construction of the concrete switchyard, installation of penstocks, and equipment within the power plant. The tailrace construction has already been finished, with the overall physical progress of this package standing at approximately 55 percent.

Meanwhile, under Package-3, KEC International from India is responsible for constructing a 34.7 km 220 kV double circuit transmission line from Damauli to Bharatpur in Chitwan. KEC International Limited, India is overseeing this project. Out of the 94 towers along the transmission line, the foundations for 76 towers have been laid, and 62 towers have already been erected. The overall construction progress for this package is currently at 72 percent.

Furthermore, as part of the project's social development program, the Tanahu Rural Electrification and Distribution System Strengthening Project have been successfully completed by the Project Management Directorate of Nepal Electricity Authority for the electrification of Tanahun District.

Under this project, two substations of 33-11 kV were constructed and commissioned in Ghiring Rural Municipality-4 and Bandipur Rural Municipality-6 for local power supply.



A 33 kV line has been constructed to supply electricity to the mentioned substations. To ensure that Tanahun district receives sufficient, reliable, and high-quality power supply, distribution transformers of different capacities were installed at various locations and 11 kV lines were built.

Under the community development program, a total of 56 projects, including education, health, drinking water, road construction, river embankment construction, and more, have been successfully completed in the project areas. Currently, there are seven ongoing projects.

Numerous skill-based trainings have been organized to enhance the livelihood and income of the individuals affected by the project.

The overall estimated cost of the project amounts to \$505 million, which has been funded by various sources. These sources include \$150 million from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), \$184 million from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), \$85 million from the European Investment Bank, and \$86 million from the Nepalese government/NEA.

Upon the completion of the project, the 140 MW Tanahu Hydropower Project, which is a storage type project following Kulekhani, will significantly contribute to Nepal's energy security.



Japanese Film Festival And Japan Day In Kathmandu



BY: PARMITA SHRESTHA

The rising popularity of Japanese films among Nepalese youths has led people from all walks of life to consider the annual Japanese film festival as the ideal venue to enjoy these movies. Japanese films are known for their unique and high-quality nature, being both realistic and captivating.

This has piqued the interest of Nepalese individuals of all ages, especially the younger generation. The Embassy of Japan in Nepal, in collaboration with the Japanese Language Teachers Association Nepal (JALTAN), organized Japan Day in Kathmandu along with a four-day Japanese Film Festival.

The films were screened with English subtitles in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Japan Day included a variety of activities such as demonstrations of Kimono / Yukata / Happi coat wearing, Japanese calligraphy writing, origami making, and traditional Japanese toy playing. The event attracted a significant number of attendees, including those who were able to converse in Japanese.

During the Japanese Film Festival, a total of 10 movies were showcased at two venues. Out of the 10, I had the opportunity to watch two movies.

The first film, “Kamome Diner,” was a delightful and heartwarming comedy that revolved around the life of a Japanese woman who relocated to Finland and opened a diner. The movie deviated from the conventional structure of strong climaxes and anti-climaxes, instead offering a charming and graceful portrayal of the woman’s journey to fulfill her dreams for the diner. Despite its simplicity and

lack of intense drama or action, the film beautifully depicted both Finnish and Japanese lifestyles. Although it differed from the movies that I (and most people) typically watch, it felt authentic and had no shortcomings.

While it may not cater to everyone’s preferences, it is certainly worth giving it a chance, especially for those seeking relaxation through a lighthearted film..



The second movie, “Only the Cat Knows”, offered a unique viewing experience in comparison to the initial film. It was a heartwarming (and humorous) movie with a classic plotline, yet it managed to end on a gratifying note. The cat was noticeably absent for a significant portion of the film (much like the love shared between the couple), and there was no clear emphasis on the cat possessing any special knowledge. This led me to

question the reasoning behind the movie’s title. Nonetheless, this did not detract from my overall enjoyment of the film.

With a plausible storyline and creative narrative, I was engrossed. The emotional storyline touched the hearts of many viewers. The film not only depicted everyday life but also shed light on the Japanese perspective on marriage. Despite the contrasting experiences, both movies had similarities: they were authentic, sincere, captivating, easy to follow, and ended on a positive note. They were both entertaining and informative. I am thrilled to have taken part in both the Film Festival and Japan Day celebrations. It was a truly remarkable event, impeccably organized and carried out.

Helvetas Nepal's InElam Project

Promoting Dairy Chain

Helvetas Nepal's InElam Project supports a dairy project in close collaboration with the Hariwan Municipality to improve the livelihoods of hundreds of women.

By Keshab Poudel

Women farmers in Gela Village, Sarlahi district, have found relief with the establishment of a Milk Chilling Center that connects their production center to the market chain.

The center, supported by Helvetas Nepal's InElam project in collaboration with Hariwan Municipality, began operation on October 22 of this year and has brought about a drastic change.

The opening of the Chilling Center and its connection with the Manglam Dairy Factory of the Municipality has been a great relief for Usha Mahato, Chairperson of the Mithila Nari Women Upliftment Agriculture Group.

The partnership between Helvetas Nepal and Hariwan Municipality is proving to be a model for entrepreneurship development.

The women's group was formed by milk-producing farmers who were unable to sell their products due to the unavailability of chilling centers nearby. The Municipality has connected over 600 farmers to a commercial milk production center by providing dairy equipment.

Mahato stated that prior to the center's opening a few months ago, they had cattle at home but lacked nearby facilities and markets. As a result, they had to send their milk far away. The center has

days.

Mahato Municipality has partnered with Manglam Dairy to ensure that the milk collected from the villages is sold at the best possible price in the market.



made a significant difference in their lives.

Now, women are bringing dairy products ranging from 1 to 5 kilos from morning until evening. After the milk arrives, we store it in a chilling vat. Mangalam Dairy then collects the milk every 2 to 3

The establishment of a Chilling Center and milk gauging facilities has enabled farmers like Mahato to avoid dumping surplus milk due to the lack of nearby markets and chilling facilities.

In municipal areas, many farmers were giving up this centu-



ries-old profession due to the risks involved in dairy farming. However, the collaboration between Helvetas Nepal's InElam Project and Hariwan Municipality is changing the situation, and women are returning to the old profession.

Mahato stated that they had been raising cattle for decades, but there were no dairies to sell the milk and no chilling center to store it. Farmers would bring their milk to the chilling center, and the dairy factory would collect it daily. This has completely eliminated the risk of waste. Mahato also mentioned that their income has increased by 10 to 15 percent.

Cattle rearing is one of the most important sources of income and nutrition for rural communities in Hariwan and Madhesh province.

Dairy enterprises provide nutrient-rich milk to rural and urban communities.

The rising urbanization and growing middle class in Nepal, including Hariwan and Madhesh Province, have led to an increase in demand for milk.

Strengthening the efficiency of the Hariwan dairy market can

offer significant opportunities for smallholders to expand their milk production and sales.

Villagers in Sarlahi face several obstacles when trying to continue their dairy businesses, including unorganized markets, transportation difficulties, and inaccessible input and extension support services.

The lack of storage facilities incentivizes farmers to mix unsold milk with the next day's batch, leading to higher levels of milk spoilage and contamination,

as well as financial losses.

Small-scale dairy farmers face obstacles that make it extremely difficult to increase milk production and make a reasonable profit.

The dairy industry produces curd, cottage cheese, ice cream, and hard cheese for both local consumption and export to foreign countries.

Collaborating with Helvetas-Nepal, we have been doing good work. Improved collaboration between the Municipality, Helvetas Nepal, and entrepreneurs has made livelihoods easier. Entrepreneurs have also created employment opportunities for others. As a result, employment has increased, and entrepreneurs have developed. Keshab Raj Thapa, an ESP and ward chair of the municipality, expressed satisfaction with the higher outcome compared to the investment.

Our collaboration between the InElam Project of Helvetas, local government, agricultural sector, private sector, cooperatives, and Enterprise Service Provider (ESP) has successfully revived the dairy industry, improving the live-



lihoods of poor and marginalized communities.

Helvetas Nepal's InElam Project has demonstrated exemplary work in generating employment opportunities for women in Karnali and Madhesh Provinces.

In collaboration with local municipalities, entrepreneurs, agricultural cooperatives, and youth entrepreneurs, InElam has implemented several schemes.

Sabal Kumar Singh, General Manager of Manglam Dairy Industry, stated that the project connected their factory with the chilling centers, including Hariwan, which secure milk collection centers for farmers. According to Singh, the establishment of chilling centers is a win-win situation for them.

Instead of working abroad in Malaysia, Thapa took the Enterprise Service Provider (ESP) training and started Krishi Bikash Kendra, which not only sells products but also promotes agricultural development.

"The InElam project decided to support milk producing farmers because they were unable to get market prices due to the unavailability of collection centers in their vicinity," said Hari Gurung, Project Manager of the InElam project of Helvetas Nepal. Our ESP has supported the formation of women's groups, and the community has linked over 600 people to commercial milk production by providing milking equipment.

Helvetas-Nepal's InElam project has shown how a project can support individuals who are deprived of opportunities in Nepal, and even those who are employed and in search of better opportunities go abroad in search of opportunities.



"I am happy to see that dairy farming is coming back and farmers are now rearing cattle. More than half a dozen milk cooling centers are collecting the milk and supplying it to the factory, helping the poor and marginalized farmers to improve their livelihood," said Thapa, ESP.

Singh, Managing Director of Manglam Dairy, said his factory produces high quality hard cheese that is exported to the European market. "We have been producing it with the local milk."

Dairy farming is one of the most important sources of income and nutrition for rural communities in Nepal and Madhesh Province.

"Strengthening the efficiency of Hariwan's dairy market offers great opportunities for smallholder farmers to expand the production and sale of milk," said Hari Gurung, Program Manager of the InElam project. "Helvetas Nepal has supported by investing in the purchase of the milk cooling vat. Our strong cooperation with the community, established by ESP, is a model.

"Farmers have been pro-

ducing and selling milk to the market for a long time. However, the lack of storage facilities results in higher levels of milk spoilage and contamination, as well as financial losses. Given these obstacles, it is extremely difficult for Madhesh's small dairy farmers to increase milk production and make a reasonable profit," says Akriti Rana of Helvetas Nepal.

This situation began to change in Hariwan Municipality in 2019, when InElam began supporting a group of dairy farming women to form self-help associations and pool their resources and knowledge to improve milk quality and livestock productivity. The women formed the Dairy Products Cooperative: one group per village. Each center received a grant to purchase equipment for storing and testing milk quality.

Although InElam's support is small, the results it has brought to the dairy sector in Hariwan Municipality and Sarlahi District are exemplary.

मुखको स्वास्थ्यमा ध्यान दिऔं

दाँत तथा मुखको रोगले मानव स्वास्थ्यमा गम्भीर असर पार्ने हुँदा:

- चिनीयुक्त वा दाँतमा टाँसिने खालका खानेकुरा कम खाऔं,
- रेसादार खाना, फलफूल र हरियो सागसब्जी सेवन गरौं,
- फ्लोराईडयुक्त टुथपेष्टले दुई मिनेटसम्म दिनको दुई पटक ब्रस गरौं,
- खाना खाईसकेपछि राम्रोसँग ब्रस वा कुल्ला गर्ने गरौं,
- डेन्टल फ्लसको मद्दतले दाँतमा अड्किएको खाना निकालौं,
- सुर्तिजन्य पदार्थ तथा मद्यपान सेवन नगरौं,

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