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VIEWPOINT
Hanaa Singer-Hamdy



ENVIRONMENT
Batu Uprety



ARTICLE
Parmita Shrestha

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Feb 09, 2024

FORTNIGHTLY



NEPAL-KOREA 50 YEARS

Everesting Friendship

INSIDE



PM PRACHANDA
Uncomfortable Coalition



BARAHISHE SUBSTATION
At Final Stage



IFC AND GLOBAL IME BANK
Partnership for Cause

HBL

रिकरिङ्ग
खाता



एक, एक गरी पुरा हुनेछ, हरेक बचतको एकमुष्ट सपना

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For the past fifty years, Nepal and the Republic of Korea have maintained cordial and friendly diplomatic relations. The Republic of Korea has provided significant support in various sectors of Nepal's economic and human resource development during this time. As Nepal and the Korea celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of their diplomatic relations, their bilateral ties continue to deepen. The RoK has demonstrated its true friendship to Nepal by providing various forms of development support. The Korean private sector is a significant investor in Nepal, particularly in the hydropower sector, making Korea the fourth largest foreign investor in Nepal. Notably, the Korean private sector's investment in the 201MW Upper Trishuli Hydropower Project is one of the largest by any private sector in Nepal. The EPS program is one of the most successful programs in providing employment to Nepalese workers. It not only employs unskilled Nepalese workers in Korea but also connects Nepal and Korea through their shared cultural and spiritual aspects, such as Buddhism. Commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Korea is a matter of pride and importance for all Nepalese. We have decided to write a cover story on the commemoration of 50 years of establishment of diplomatic relations as our cover story for this week, given the close and friendly relationship between the two countries and Korea's support towards Nepal's development.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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PM PRACHANDA

Uncomfortable Coalition

Despite thumping majority in the House of Representatives, the government led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda is unable to deliver

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although the winter session of the House of Representatives has already started, the government has yet to table some of the important bills required to execute the federal structures.

Nepal's economy is now moving towards the recovery stage with some economic activities taking place. With the revival of tourism and an increase in foreign currency reserves, the government is more confident economically.

The delivery is still poor. Many earthquake victims in Jajarkot, Rukum East, and Rukum West have not received relief materials or the promised grants for temporary housing.

The reconstruction of school buildings, hospitals, and other infrastructure is still a long way off. With only four months until the monsoon season, any delay in distributing grants for the construction of temporary housing will put the victims in a very difficult situation.

Although Prime Minister Prachanda has made several verbal commitments, there has been no progress due to a lack of support from concerned ministers.

Reportedly, Prime Minister Prachanda is unhappy with the performance of Finance Minister Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Health Minister Mohan Bahadur Basnet, Minister of Physical Planning Prakash Jwala, and his own minister of Tourism, Gopal Kirati.

The other coalition partners are also dissatisfied with Home Min-

ister Narayan Kazi Shrestha's performance due to his unilateral actions against leaders affiliated with other coalition partners.

Prime Minister Prachanda has been instructing ministers to perform according to his wishes. In a recent meeting, Prachanda emphasized the need for the government to focus on delivering results rather than making statements. He stated, 'We must improve our delivery performance.'

very different. Given the nature of the government, Prime Minister Prachanda is unable to deliver as he promised.

For a long time, he has been making efforts to reshuffle the cabinet by removing some ministers from his coalition partners and his own. With the reluctance of the coalition partners, he is working with those ministers he does not like.

Recently, Prime Minister



He also directed to release the first and second installments of the grant for the construction of temporary houses for the earthquake victims. Following Prime Minister Prachanda's directive, the Ministry of Finance has released the money for the first installment.

With an overwhelming majority in the House of Representatives, Prime Minister Prachanda's coalition government looks stable and strong. However, the reality on the ground is

Prachanda has taken the initiative to strengthen personal relations with CPN-UML leader K.P. Sharma Oli. This has greater significance. Maintaining viable relations with Oli increases his bargaining power with the current coalition partners.

Whether the political leaders like it or not, there is no alternative for this coalition now. For the time being, Prachanda seems to have a safe journey but not in his own tenure.

NEWSNOTES

Japan Hands Over Judo Uniforms To Nepal Judo Association

Kikuta Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, handed over 240 Judo uniforms to Nepal Judo Association. The handover ceremony was held at the Embassy of Japan in Kathmandu .

The handover ceremony was attended by Deepak Harsha Bajracharya, the president of the Nepal Judo Association and its members.

Among the participants were Debu Thapa, who competed in the Beijing 2008 Olympics. In addition, four active Judo players who are training to target the Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026 also participated and received encouraging messages from Ambassador Kikuta.

The Judo uniforms were provided by the All Japan Judo Federation (AJFF) and the non-profit organization JUDOs, under the Project for Sports Diplomacy Enhancement by the Government of Japan, the program to promote mutual understanding between Japan and her friendly countries through sports.

JUDOs has been continuously cooperating to promote judo in Nepal, dispatching an international instructor and a world champion judo player, providing judo uniforms and tatami mats for use at the judo hall. Similarly, support



has been provided by the public sector.

The Multipurpose Martial Arts Center (MMAC) in Kathmandu, which has been used by many judo players, was

built in 2002 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Matsumoto City, Japan and Kathmandu City, and was jointly funded by Matsumoto City and the Government of Japan.

At this occasion, Ambassador Kikuta emphasized that through daily practice of judo, young judo players can acquire not only judo skills, but also healthy bodies and indomitable spirits, and learn courtesy as well. Thus, he is confident that judo can contribute to helping the physical and mental growth of youth.

The Embassy of Japan hopes that the judo uniforms handed over today will encourage the enthusiasm of Nepali judo lovers, thus will play a positive role in the healthy growth of the Nepali youth, who are the future of Nepal. The Embassy would be delighted if the goodwill from Japan will further enhance the friendly relationship between our two countries.

Nepal's Parliamentary Delegation Met Chief Minister Of Utter Pradesh Yogi Aditya Nath

Visiting Nepalese parliamentary delegation led by Raj Kishore Yadav, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on International Relations and Tourism, paid a courtesy call on chief minister of Utter Pradesh State in Lucknow.

Chief Minister Yogi in X wall writes, I met parliamentary delegation from home of Pashupatinath and neighboring Nepal at official residence in Lucknow.



Similarly, the delegation of Governor of Utter Pradesh State Anandi Ben Patel in Rajbhawan.

During the meeting, Governor Patel said that she is expecting the acceleration of the academic exchange between Nepalese and Universities of Utter Pradesh. She expressed the hope the implementation of MoUs signed between the Universities of Utter Pradesh and Nepal for the exchange of mutual benefits in academic sector.

USAID Announces \$1.37 Million To Support Jajarkot Earthquake Recovery Efforts In Nepal

The United States Government through USAID has announced \$1.37 million to support recovery efforts following the devastating 2023 earthquake in Jajarkot, Nepal.

The 5.6-magnitude earthquake that struck on November 3, 2023, in Jajarkot and Rukum West districts, claimed the lives of at least 154 people and injured hundreds, as well as damaging and destroying homes and buildings. This resulted in widespread displacement, disruption of essential services, and urgent needs for shelter, food, clean water, and medical care.

USAID's support, implemented through Save the Children, will help earthquake-affected communities withstand



the winter, recover from the destruction caused by the earthquake, and ultimately build back better.

Immediately after the earthquake, USAID pivoted existing programs to provide critically needed relief sup-



plies, water quality kits, and support for physical rehabilitation. This rapid support was provided in addition to more than \$23.3 million USAID invested in disaster risk reduction and resilience in Karnali since 2019, as well as longer-term recovery, reconstruction, and rehabilitation work in the months ahead.

NA Chair Tirmilsina Praises The Efforts Taken By Israel and Ambassador Hana Goder To Safely Release Bipin Joshi

The Israeli Ambassador to Nepal, Hanan Goder, on Thursday paid a courtesy call on National Assembly (NA) Chairperson Ganesh Prasad Timilsina.

During the meeting held at the office of the NA Chairperson, Chair Timilsina requested Ambassador Goder and the State of Israel to take stronger steps for the release of Bipin Joshi, who was taken captive by Hamas during the October 7th attack.

Timilsina praised the State of Israel for its assistance to Nepal, including scholarships, employment opportunities, cooperation in agriculture, and training of the Nepali army, and expressed the hope that Nepal-Israel relations would continue to progress



through mutual support and cooperation.

In reply, Israeli Ambassador Goder said that Israel would leave no stones turned for the safe return of Bipin. Ambassador Goder also said that the National Assembly, which is the upper house of Nepal's federal parliament, had played a pivotal role in strengthening Nepal's democracy.

JICA Chair Discussion on: "Economic Development Policies and Practices in Nepal and Japan"

JICA Nepal office organized "JICA Chair" academic symposium in collaboration with the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Tribhuvan University (TU) on 30 and 31 January 2024 with gross 50 participants, calling on Prof. Hiroyuki Itami, Business Management Scholar, Hitotsubashi University, Japan. The theme of the seminar was "Economic Development Policies and Practices in Nepal and Japan", referring to the various changes in economic and developmental activities over the years.

Prof. Itami delivered key lecture on Japanese-Style Management behind Japan's Economic Growth. His presentation emphasized on theory of 'Peoplism', human oriented principle for organizing economic activities in a corporate setting from the experiences of Japan. Following his lecture, the symposium provided an opportunity to discuss what is needed for economic development in Nepal, taking

consideration of social value including cultural, geological, and social condition, and so on.

From the Nepali side, mainly represented by Moderator/Speaker of the discussion, Prof. Mrigendra Bahadur KARKI, Executive Director, CNAS TU, suggested that economic development in Nepal should be comprehended as one of factor of integrated development including social economic welfare.

In one hand, the symposium this year discussed widely on the positive implications of Japanese experiences and principles of management, in the other hand, Nepalese values and accumulations should be taken in consideration for customizing development models. Various interactive sessions during the symposium led to productive discussions amongst the panelists and the audience who successfully developed new insights through sharing Nepalese and Japanese experiences.

'JICA Chair' is an initiative of Japan International Cooperation Agency launched with an objective to develop future leaders in developing countries. JICA Chair is organized in JICA partner countries in collaboration with the leading universities to strengthen existing research and education programs as well as becoming a starting point to new initiatives. JICA Chair's activities include intensive lectures conducted by leading professors and lecturers dispatched from Japan to disseminate Japan's development experiences in various fields such as politics, economics, public administration, law, and others.

Nepal's Parliamentary Delegation Met External Affairs Minister Of India Dr. Jaishankar

Visiting Nepalese parliamentary delegation led by Raj Kishore Yadav, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on International Relations and Tourism, paid a courtesy call on External Affairs minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar in New Delhi.

An eight-member Nepalese delegation led by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on International Relations and Tourism Yadav is currently visiting India.

In his X, External Affairs Minister of India D.



NEWSNOTES

Jaishankar writes,” pleased to meet a Nepali Parliamentary delegation led by Chairman Raj Kishor Yadav. “

He said that a good discussion on our deepening cooperation and closer linkages. He said that appreciate the broad-based sentiment in the delegation in favor of stronger cooperation between Nepal and India.

Four Lost Antiques From Nepal Arrived In Kathmandu

Four stolen antiques from Nepal arrived in Kathmandu from various museums in New York, America, on Wednesday.

Two Bhairav masks of copper repousse stolen in 1994 from Dolakha and exhibited at Rubin Museum, NYC and Dallas Museum of Art were returned today to Dept of Archaeology en route to their hometown. Also stone Uma Maheswar from Om Bahal, Patan and Durga from Hanuman Ghat, Bhaktapur.

Dallas Museum of Art, Rubin Museum of Art and Brooklyn Museum of New York returned four artworks to Nepal.

Organising a press meeting on Wednesday at the Department of Archeology, President of US-based Newa Guthi Bijay Man Singh handed over the artworks to the DoA.



A pair of gilt bronze Bhairava Mask, Uma Maheswari and a ten-armed Durga statue were handed over on the occasion.

A pair of gilt bronze Bhairava masks, dating to the 16th century were stolen from Nakchen Pradhan family of Bhimeshwar Municipality Ward No.

2, Dolakha district on March 7, 1994, and reached Dallas Museum of Art and Rubin Museum of Art, USA through several channels.

These masks depict the god Shiva, one of the Hindu trinity which also includes Brahma and Vishnu. They were required for ritual worship during the annual Indra Jatra festival in Nepal.

They were then smuggled to Hong Kong, sold at auction in New York, and subsequently entered the collections of the Rubin Museum of Art and the Dallas Museum of Art.

The stone sculpture of Uma Maheshwari (16th century) was stolen from Chyasal Hiti Falcha of Om Bahal in Patan, Lalitpur, in between 1980 to 1990. The sculpture was located at Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA.

The 10-armed Maha Laxmi/Durga, an artwork created in the 17th or 18th century was stolen from Hanumanghat in Bhaktapur and was located in Subash Kapoor’s

collection.

She expressed deep gratitude to all the museums, the members of the America-based Newa: Guthi, the DoA officials, art lovers and media for their initiative and cooperation in returning the artifacts to Nepal.

British Army Chief Sirl Sanders Paid A Courtesy Call To CoAS General Sharma

General Sir Patrick Sanders, Chief of Army Staff of the United Kingdom, paid a courtesy call to General Prabhuram Sharma, Chief of Army Staff of Nepal, at Nepal Army Headquarters.

The two discussed matters of mutual interest, including the long-standing relations between Nepal and Great Britain, as well as the harmonious relations between the armies of the two countries.



A troop of the Nepalese army paid tribute to the Chief of the British Army at Nepal Army Headquarter before the courtesy meeting.

Lieutenant General Ashokraj Sigdel welcomed the Chief of the British Army, who was visiting Nepal from January 29th to February 3rd, at the Tribhuvan International Airport.

Nepal-India Relations Have Advanced Smoothly: Foreign Minister Saud

Foreign Minister Narayan Prakash Saud has said that Nepal-India relations have advanced smoothly in a unique way.

Addressing a programme organized here today on the 75th Republic Day of India, Minister Saud said that the deep relations existing between the peoples of the two countries would be strengthened further by resolving the issues raised in different stages on the basis of dialogue and discussions. “As the issues of Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 and border are multidimensional topics between the two countries, a decision should be made by being objective and practical,” the Foreign Minister said.

As both the countries are close friends, Minister Saud said that differences on the common agendas even cannot be imagined and added that the security personnel deployed on the border security need training and instructions to give



good treatment and good conducts on the peoples in the bordering region.

During the meetings with Indian leaders and citizens alike, the minister said that the Indians are cordial towards Nepal and Nepalis and added that he has realized the Indian side's mentality to resolve the border issues in Susta and Kalapani through a taskforce in a cordial manner.

Asia-Pacific Countries to Tackle the Specter of Illicit Small Arms in Preparation for Global Meeting

A pivotal gathering of Asia-Pacific countries to tackle the specter of illicit small arms has begun in Kathmandu.

The Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourth Review Conference on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in All Its Aspects (UN PoA) and its International Tracing Instrument (ITI) kicked off today will take place until the 25 January 2024.

As a mark of the importance of this gathering, the President Designate of the Fourth Review Conference, Her Excellency Ms. Maritza Chan Valverde of Costa Rica, as well as Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs are in attendance, along with delegations from over 25 countries in the region.

The UN PoA, established in 2001 at the UN General Assembly, is a critical, politically binding framework. It encompasses commitments by Member States to enhance control measures over small arms, including through improved national regulations, stockpile management, import/export controls, and international cooperation. The



introduction of the ITI in 2005 further strengthened this framework, by emphasizing the need for effective marking and record-keeping

of weapons, thus aiding in their traceability. These measures are integral to the global effort in addressing the challenges posed by the illicit arms trade and align with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Nepal Government Unveils National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights

The Government of Nepal, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS) has launched the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, a significant milestone in promoting responsible business and strengthening human rights standards in Nepal.

The National Action Plan (NAP) endorsed by the

government on 27 December 2023 – is a clear commitment from the Government of Nepal to promote economic development while safeguarding the rights of its citizens and the environment. NAP will be effective for next five years from 2024-2028. With this, Nepal has become the second country in South Asia and the 41st globally to adopt such a strategic framework.

Amidst the event in Kathmandu, Honorable Minister, Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari, Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security launched the NAP. Addressing the event, Minister Bhandari said, “The private sector affects the daily lives of every individual in Nepal. For this reason, it is important to ensure that businesses respect human rights throughout their operations.”

The NAP was developed in alignment with national provisions and commitments to human rights, as well as international human rights standards like the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) – the most authoritative and widely adopted set of principles for responsible business, unanimously endorsed by the UN Human Rights



Council in 2011. It outlines expectations and duties of the government and businesses in Nepal to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights through a comprehensive set of actions across six thematic areas – labour rights, migrant workers' rights, consumer protection, environment and Indigenous People's rights, women and children's rights, and non-discrimination, gender and social inclusion.

During the event, there was a unified call for collaboration and coordination for the successful implementation of the NAP. “I hope that this National Action Plan will enhance standards and practices regarding business and human rights to achieve tangible results for affected individuals and communities, and thereby contributing to socially sustainable globalization,” said Toshiyuki Endo, First Secretary at the Embassy of Japan in Nepal.

“This milestone presents a clear opportunity for diverse stakeholders to come together to enhance responsible business through a collaborative process over the next five years,” said Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labé, Resident Representative for UNDP Nepal. “UNDP remains committed to supporting the Government of Nepal in implementing the NAP,” she added.

The NAP aims to support companies in managing human rights risks within their operations and supply chains, ensuring they are prepared for an accelerated global shift toward responsible business conduct.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Jibcha Mandal Appointed DG of Electricity Development Department

Jibcha Mandal has been appointed as Director General (DG) of Electricity Development Department. The responsibility was assigned to him on Monday (February 5) by the ministerial decision of the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation.



Earlier, Chiranjeevi Chatout, who was the director general, has been transferred to the ministry and the responsibility has been assigned to the deputy director general of the department. He entered government service as an engineer in the department in November 2053 and was promoted to joint secretary in January 2071.

Before entering the responsibility of the department, Mandal completed his responsibilities as an electrical section in-charge at Janakpur cigarette factory and as a deputy professor under the electrical engineering department at Western Regional Campus Pokhara.

Mandal has completed his graduation in Electrical Engineering from Aligarh Muslim University and Masters in Hydro-power and Management from Roodkee University under the Colombo Plan.

FNCCI, CNI Condemn CBI Actions Arresting Industrialist Arun Chaudhary

The Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) jointly issued a statement condemning the CBI's move to arrest Industrialist Arun Kumar Chaudhary without proving any wrong doing.

In the statement, they mentioned that it had come to their notice that Chaudhary had been arrested and put in custody for investigation without adequate legal evidences..



FNCCI and CNI also demanded the release of Chaudhary and urged the government not to harass industrialists when the country is facing a major economic crisis.

FNCCI and CNI, through the statement, have also drawn the attention of the government to the negative impact that such arrests could have on the investment climate of the

country.

They have also stated that arresting people without substantial proof does not fall under the ambit of CBI. "There could be negative repercussions on the business environment of the country if business people who have invested millions of rupees and hold respectable positions in various business associations are arrested without notice and are not given the opportunity to clarify their arguments.

NIMBL Opened Two Branches In Lalitpur

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited (NIMBL) has expanded 2 new branches in Lalitpur.

Bank Lalitpura Metropolitan City Ward no. 15 Satdobato branch and Lalitpur Metropolitan City Ward no. Bhainsepati branch was brought into operation on 10 th January. All banking services

have started from Thursday from the new branches.

The bank is currently providing services through 266 branches, 63 extension counters, 113 branchless banking and 257 ATMs across the country



NRNs In Qatar Should Invest Back Home: FNCCI President Dhakal

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), has urged the Nepali immigrants in Qatar to invest in various sectors of Nepal.

Addressing the conference of 'Nepal Business Association Qatar' held in Doha, Dhakal called for investment in Nepal's tourism, infrastructure development, renewable energy and agriculture sectors.

"Nepal has a lot of potential for investment in areas like tourism, infrastructure development, renewable energy and agriculture. Likewise, Qatar's development experience in the fields of renewable energy, tourism and hospitality, infrastructure development, urbanisation, and information technology can be used in Nepal," he said according to a statement issued by his secretariat.

According to Dhakal, Nepali workers have contributed to the economic growth and development of Qatar so Nepalis in Qatar should establish a technical school in Nepal to create skilled workers.



He argued that the provision of citizenship made by the Nepali government for non-resident Nepalis should also encourage the Nepalis scattered around the world to invest in Nepal.

As the Government of Nepal is going to hold an investment conference in collaboration with the FNCCI to attract foreign investment in Nepal, he urged them to promote the investment environment and opportunities in Nepal and encourage Qatari investors to come to Nepal.

Dhakal said that the government has expressed its commitment to create an investment-friendly environment by removing many legal obstacles.

"Within a few years, Nepal will be upgraded from a Least Developed Country (LDC) to a developing country. It will create many possibilities in Nepal's economy and Qatar can become a major partner in our drive to diversify the economy," he said.

He also said that the recent high-level agreement on energy with India is positive and it has paved the way for investment in hydropower and energy trade in our country.

Nepal And Germany Sign Financial and Technical Cooperation Agreements

Shreekrishna Nepal, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, and Dr. Thomas Prinz, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Nepal, signed Financial and Technical Cooperation Agreements on behalf of their respective governments for a grant assistance totalling up to 56,000,000 Euros (Fifty-six million Euros) from the German government. The grant was the sum pledged by the Federal Republic of Germany in 2022.

The Financial Cooperation Agreement shall support the

private and public sector to expand energy transmission lines, to promote solar energy, gender equality and to improve maternal care and childcare in remote areas in Nepal. The Technical Cooperation Agreement focuses to support gender equality and social inclusion in Nepal and local and provincial economic development - especially in Western Nepal (together with the European Union and Finland). Moreover, the Agreement shall promote renewable energy and energy efficiency, strengthen quality infrastructure for sustainable economic development and support the health sector strategy in Nepal.



2023 marked the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Germany. The Federal Republic of Germany has consistently contributed to Nepal's development efforts in diverse ways over the years. It has been actively contributing to the fields of energy, health, good governance as well as

aiding Nepal in meeting its Sustainable Development Goals. Through this grant, the German Government targets to further enhance its commitment and continue its valuable support to the people of Nepal.

“Our friendship with Nepal is deeply cherished. Germany has been supporting Nepal's hydropower and energy endeavours, among others, since long. Through collaboration and support, we aim to contribute to its continued progress and prosperity,” said Ambassador Dr. Thomas Prinz on the occasion.

Coca-Cola Nepal, WaterAid Nepal And CIUD Installed Groundwater Recharge System In Balaju

With the aim to address the increased demand of Urban Water, Coca-Cola beverages Nepal in partnership with Centre for Integrated Urban Development (CIUD) and WaterAid Nepal (WAN) successfully implemented a groundwater recharge system in Balaju Park.

Coca-Cola Beverages Nepal, Centre for Integrated Urban Development (CIUD) and WaterAid Nepal (WAN) jointly handed over the groundwater water recharge system, which was installed within the premises of Balaju Park in ward number 16 of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC), to the deputy mayor of the KMC, Ms. Sunita Dangol, On January 19, 2024. The project commenced on October of 2023 officially and concluded on 19th January 2024.

The recharge system consists of 21 filter chambers, 21 recharge wells, two distilling chambers, recharge trenches of 75 feet and seven bamboo check dams. These recharge structures are the key outputs of the project titled ‘Groundwater Recharge in Balaju Park Area in the Kathmandu Metropolitan City: Addressing Increased Urban Water Demand’ which was implemented by CIUD, in financial support from Bottlers Nepal Terai Limited (BNTL), and in technical support from WAN. It has been estimated that the system will help in recharging approximately 30,000 kilo liter of water per annum thereby enhancing the water table of shallow groundwater of the area.



The key objective of the project was to maintain the water table of the park area thereby rejuvenating the discharge of the stone spouts, the famous Baish Dhara and the community wells

and spring sources. It has been anticipated that this project not only helps in maintaining the groundwater table of the peripheral areas of the project site, but also make the communities aware and local authorities accountable for such initiatives which is necessary to cope with acute water shortage due to the rapid urbanization and the climate change impact.

NIBL Stable Fund Extended Received Good Response

The application date for the NIBL Stable Fund has closed on January 30.

Since this issuance and sale was opened from January 16 to January 19 at the earliest, as no applications were received during that period, the application date has been extended to January 30.

Under NIMBS Capital Limited's plan management and NIBL Mutual Fund under the fund promotion of Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited, NIBL Stable Fund closed-end plan Rs. 1.10 billion Units of 1 Billion, are being issued and sold at the rate of Rs. 10 from January 16.



Nilgiri Hydropower Projects Started The Test Of Tunnel

The construction of Nilgiri Khola-2 ‘Cascade’ hydropower project with a capacity of 71 MW has been completed in Narchang, Annapurna Rural Municipality-4 of Myagdi. The Nilgiri Khola Cascade is the largest hydropower project constructed in Myagdi so far.

Upendraraj Gautam, the representative of Nilgiri Khola Hydro Power Company Limited, the promoter company of the project, said that they are going to start testing by pouring water into the tunnel of the completed project. “During the delivery of water to the tunnel, the flow of river water from Chotepa to Dovelna will decrease, so we have requested not to fish, bathe, leave cattle, quadrupeds and travel,” he said.

After the construction of the dam, tunnel, power house, transmission line, switchyard, the test has been prepared in coordination with the Nepal Electricity Authority in Rohwar. The descender (sand settling pond) constructed in Chotepa was already tested by pouring water. A 4,275 meter long tunnel has been constructed from Chotepa to the power house in Dovelna.



According to the project, the construction of Humkhola Dam and Chotepa Power House on the Nilgiri First has reached its final stage. After the construction of the building of the power house, the installation of the equipment has started. About 80 percent physical progress of Nilgiri-1 has been achieved. A switchyard has been built in the power house premises of both the projects. The switchyard of Nilgiri-1 was damaged by a landslide last winter.

Both the projects estimated to cost 13 billion rupees are run-of-river in nature. The electricity generated from Nilgiri Khola is connected to the central grid through a 220 KV capacity Dana substation. A transmission line of 220 kV capacity of 7.4 km distance connecting Dana substation through Chotepa-Dobilna has been constructed.

Call For Degazetting The Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park



BY: BATU UPRETY

Conservation communities have repeatedly appreciated Nepal's continued efforts of over five decades in protecting areas and species of national and international importance and managing large chunk of pristine wildlife habitats from Terai to high mountains. About 23.4 percent of the total area is now managed in 12 national parks (NPs), 1 wildlife reserve (WR), 1 hunting reserve (HR), 6 conservation areas (CAs) and 13 buffer zones (BZs) for conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Importance of categorising protected areas (PAs) into NP, WR, HR, CA and BZ in Nepal and upgrading of WRs into NPs requires clear understanding at all levels. The Koshi Tappu WR, the Ramsar site, is expected to remain as it is. In general, human activities are not allowed within NPs and a NP is not downgraded to other categories of PAs. This helps to understand why Nepal upgraded Parsa and Suklaphanta WRs into NPs.

The National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (1973 with amendments) has defined these categories and includes provisions for gazetting and degazetting NPs, WRs and CAs. The Act prohibits number of activities within NPs or WRs and it empowers the government to prepare and implement guidelines and procedures for the implementation of laws. In the recent years, the government is providing permission to construct and operate infrastructures within NPs by issuing guidelines and procedures. However, upgrading WRs to NPs and allowing infrastructure construction within NPs contradicts with the basic principles of establishing and managing the NPs and other PAs. This relates with the proposed 94.5m high dam in the Shivapuri-Nagarjun NP (SNNP).

SNNP is only 12 km far from the Kathmandu city. It was initially managed as Shivapuri Watershed and Wildlife Reserve and was upgraded to a NP in 2002 during the International Year of the Mountains. SNNP was established to protect a source of freshwater, origin of Holy rivers Bagmati and Bishnumati, area of rich biodiversity in the mid-hill, a biological corridor, and a 'living museum' for conservationists and researchers. SNNP forests harbour, inter alia, 1402 species of plants, 65 species of mammals and 348 species of birds, and with several religious places, including of Shivapuri Baba. SNNP's website informs prohibition of, inter alia, the construction of houses, huts, shelter, or any other structures inside the park; digging mines, stones, boulders and remove other materials; and block, divert or disturb water channels and ponds etc.

Understanding on NPs is simply inspiring the conservationists and urging advocates of the Nagmati high dam to reconsider the conversion of a terrestrial forests of 65 ha into an aquatic ecosystem. Nepal is accessing loan from the Asian

Development Bank (ADB) to construct this high dam within SNNP which is rated high seismic zone. If the proposed high dam is collapsed, broken or damaged due to unnatural events like earthquake or 'design fault' or under quality construction or other reasons, it will directly affect or wash way lives and assets, UNESCO World Heritage site and Hindu temple - the Pashupatinath, religious sites such as at Gokarna, Guheshwori, and Sankhamul, including culture and civilisation along the Bagmati river. Nepal inscribed the Pashupatinath temple into the World Heritage list in 1979.

Browsing the EIA reports of ADB (2013) and Nagmati Dam Project, made public by the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) in September 2023, several issues come up for rethinking on the environmental ground. EIA reports have made all possible efforts to justify this high dam in the proposed location without justifications on economic, ecological, and cultural values of the 'to be lost resources' within and outside SNNP and attempts to disconnect unbelievable threat and risk to social and cultural assets and values along the Bagmati River. Engineering justification overrules the ecological, economical, cultural, and societal values and religious attachments.

The EIA report prepared by the proponent and submitted to MoFE for environmental clearance concludes that "negative impacts can be minimised/mitigated through the established procedures and implementation of proposed measures in this EIA report" and "therefore, this project should go for the implementation". For record, the name of the EIA team leader coincides with the former Park Manager who spent, may be over 3-decades, in establishing, planning and implementing programmes, protecting, and managing NPs or PAs. Several concerns emerge from EIA report as well.

The EIA report mentions, inter alia, the project location in a "tectonically complex area" and "high seismic-prone zone"; "dam site in a seismically high-risk location"; and "risk to communities and assets downstream of the project area if the dam breaks ..". Three alternatives are analysed: (i) construction of other new reservoirs in the SNNP; (ii) inter-basin transfer using water from Melamchi tunnel; and (iii) reducing withdrawal of water from Sundarijal Water Treatment Plant (WTP). The first alternative (60m high dam at the Bagmati river) was eliminated being only 30 percent of the storage capacity of 8 million m³ required to meet the downstream flow and unit cost twice as that of Dhap and proposed Nagmati dams. The second alternative (inter-basin transfer) was rated unfeasible with the likely scenario of no water availability to augment the low flow in the Bagmati River during the dry season. The third alternative was linked to

drinking water supply and considered unfeasible. Construction of series of smaller dams was considered unfeasible in practice. For storage location alternatives, the EIA report mentions alternative locations at Mahadev Khola and Thosne Khola. Without any convincing criteria-based analysis, and storage location alternatives were rejected due to mainly economic aspect and construction of a 94.5 m high dam at the Nagmati River within SNNP is made feasible taking a single criteria of water volume available to augment the flow in the Bagmati River.

The EIA report mentions several adverse impacts, inter alia, from the conversion of terrestrial into aquatic ecosystems, fragmentation of wildlife habitat, loss of lives and livelihoods downstream due to flooding from sudden dam failure, triggering landslide in unstable slopes, and loss of over 80 thousand trees and pole-sized plants. The report also mentions flood outburst due to dam failure that will washaway four religious Hindu temples - Gokarneshwor, Gajeshwori, Pashupatinath and Sankhamul with the rated impact of direct nature, high magnitude, regional extent, and of long-term duration.

It is natural that proponent makes every effort to justify own proposal. The EIA report itself may not entertain significant impacts that may block project implementation. Taking note of the location and potential impacts of this proposed high dam, decision-maker(s) and people at large must be convinced on identified impacts (which will happen), predicted impacts (which may happen) and significant impacts evaluated based on specific criteria. For this nature of project, impact evaluation criteria may include, inter alia, river flow augmentation, local needs, protected area category, religious and cultural values, seismic-prone zone, national policies, laws and priorities, international commitments and obligations being a Party to nature & biodiversity related legal instruments, and member of nature conservation organisations. Resources and values - physical, biological, socio-economic, and cultural - that should get high priority largely depends upon the nature and location of the project, and its impact areas. Impacts evaluation criteria are overlooked in this 2023 EIA report.

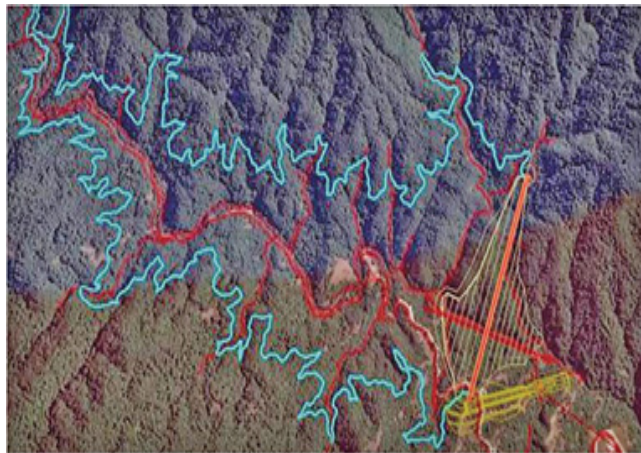
Results of EIA study and environmental auditing of few projects help to update our understanding:

1. In mid-1980s, the East Rapti Irrigation Project (ERIP) completed the detail design and planned to divert the water from east Rapti River with ADB support for irrigation by constructing a dam in the Rapti River whose left bank belongs to the Chitwan National Park, the World Heritage Site. Conservationists flagged issues on potential adverse impacts of ERIP mainly on rhino habitat. In late 1980s, EIA of ERIP was carried out which recommended to irrigate the command area through Farmers' Managed Irrigation System (FMIS) without damming the river. The EIA study brought back the detail design completed irrigation project into reformulation stage. The whole command area originally proposed for dam project was irrigat-

ed through FMIS without any dam and without adverse impacts along the Rapti River.

2. The post-construction Environmental Impact Audit Study (2003) of 144 MW Kali Gandaki "A" Hydro-electricity Project outlined number of outstanding issues related to partial or non-compliance of contract clauses on mitigation measures. The outstanding issues include, inter alia, riparian release of 4m³/s and additional release of 2m³/s on religious days, reservoir sedimentation, low intensity of siren warning, construction of cremation sites etc. The Environmental Management Unit regularly faced budget problem. The study recommended to address additional outstanding issues including disposal of wastes stored at Thulobagar, plantation of 35 ha and so on. Single species compensatory plantation was observed in few areas.

3. A generic EIA report of the Melamchi Drinking Water Project was legally approved in late 1990s and non-compliance of several environmental requirements in this project urges to implement the environmental management plan (EMP) and monitor for their effectiveness. Location of the water diversion area, particularly the left bank, compels to think on 'engineering selection'.



4. Approved EIA report of the said Nijgadh airport is technically simply an EIA report to clear forests, not of the airport. Even if EMP is implemented it will not address impacts of airport both during construction and operational stages.

5. Hope, the 24m high Dhap dam project implemented EMP, and documented lessons learned for replication in other similar projects.

It is very difficult to know state of EMP implementation in Nepal. Present approach of keeping the approved EIA report safely on shelf does not meet the environmental objectives and make the project environment-friendly. Review urges to improve the quality of EIA report, implement impact-based proposed mitigation measures, and judge the effectiveness of implemented measures to address the project-induced environmental impact(s) honestly.

Looking the baseline information, alternative analysis, impacts and proposed measures as contained in the EIA report of the Nagmati high dam, time has come double think in issuing environmental clearance to project implementation in such an ecologically, geologically and culturally sensitive areas. The government may wish to think on conservation values of SNNP, threat of high dam in seismic zone, and judge priority to lives and livelihoods, and protecting ecological, cultural and religious values. Infrastructure quality in several projects in Nepal compels to consider it a 'death-trap' venture for people living along the bank of the Bagmati River. If the government wishes to construct this project, it is urged to degazette the SNNP to at least follow the conservation principles as per national and international commitments and re-realise the importance of the National Park.

NEPAL-KOREA 50 YEARS Everesting Friendship

The Republic of Korea (RoK) has made significant progress in the last fifty years since the establishment of diplomatic relations. Nepal has also benefited from Korean economic prosperity. Korean companies have invested heavily in Nepal, and they have provided employment to a large number of unskilled Nepali workers through the EPS program. Korea is now the fourth-largest foreign investor in Nepal. Nepal and Korea, although geographically distant, share many historical and cultural similarities. Every year, 30,000 Koreans visit Nepal for trekking in the Himalayas and pilgrimage to Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha. Additionally, many young Nepalese people are learning Taekwondo and enjoying K-Pop. Nepal-Korea relations are deepening further.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Nepal and Korea are celebrating fifty years of diplomatic relations. During this time, the two countries have made many significant partnerships.

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Nepal has recently published a book titled 'You Can Also be an Owner' (Tapati Pani Malik Bann Saknu hunch), written by Shiva Prasad Pokharel. The book is a testimony of 26 Nepalese migrant workers who returned from Korea and are now contributing to transforming Nepal's economy through the establishment of SMEs.

In the forward of the book, Korean Ambassador to Nepal, Park Tae-Young, who himself was a family member of a Korean migrant work-

er in the Gulf in the 1960s, shares his painful thoughts about his family when communication systems were not as advanced as they are today. Despite the pain experienced by his generation, the Ambassador writes about how his father used his skills and earnings to help transform Korea and make it prosper later in life.

The book tells the stories of unskilled Nepali migrant workers who worked in Korea and later contributed to Nepal's prosperity upon their return. This highlights the 50-year relationship between the two countries. While EPS is one sector supported by Korea, it also serves as an important area for transferring knowledge and wealth to Nepal, which can lead to broader changes back home.

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lic of Korea in Nepal recently published a book titled 'You Can Also be an Owner' (Tapati Pani Malik Bann Saknu hunch), written by Shiva Prasad Pokharel. The book is a testimony of 26 Nepalese migrant workers who returned from Korea and are now contributing to transforming Nepal's economy through the establishment of SMEs.

The book's foreword features Korean Ambassador to Nepal, Park Tae-Young, who shares his personal experience as a family member of a Korean migrant worker in the Gulf during the 1960s. He reflects on the challenges his family faced due to limited communication systems at the time. Despite the hardships, the Ambassador highlights how his father utilized his skills and earnings to con-



tribute to Korea's transformation and eventual prosperity.

The book tells the stories of Nepali migrant workers who worked in Korea without any skills. These workers later contributed to Nepal's prosperity upon their return. The book highlights the 50-year relationship between the two countries. Korea supports EPS, which is one sector that serves as an important area for transferring knowledge and wealth to Nepal. This can lead to broader changes back home.

Nepal and Korea.

This book stands not only as a testament to their individual journeys but also as a powerful symbol of the fruitful outcomes of bilateral employment cooperation. The 26 businessmen featured in this book are living proof that the exchange of skills and experiences can yield personal growth and substantial contribution to the economic landscape of Nepal.”

These 26 business owners are heroes to create jobs in Nepal and to inspire other returnees to have a dream. Each success of 26 heroes also

started from their dream. Their stories exemplify the spirit of bilateral employment cooperation, demonstrating that collaboration between Korea and Nepal can be a powerful catalyst for personal and economic development. Thanks for your contribution for this book and joining today here

Nepal and Korea, despite their geographic distance, shares many historical and cultural similarities. More than 100,000 Nepalese have worked in Korea under EPS, and over 30,000 Koreans visit Nepal annually for trekking in the Himalayas and pilgrimage to Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha. Many young Nepalese people are learning Taekwondo and enjoying K-Pop.

Therefore, the recent high-level political meeting was highly valuable. The meeting between South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda on September 21, 2023, during the United Nations General Assembly was remarkable.

They held a bilateral summit in New York to discuss how to deepen cooperation across various domains,

including Korea's investment in Nepal.

Korean investment in Nepal

In the last fifty years, the Republic of Korea has made significant strides in technological innovation and economic development, positioning itself as the 13th largest economy in the world. The rise of South Korea is also greatly benefiting Nepal and Nepalese people, despite lackluster progress.

South Korea has made remarkable economic progress with globally renowned private sector companies such as Samsung, LG, and Hyundai. As a result, Korean investment has also increased in Nepal, particularly in various sectors including hydropower.

Nepal aspires to become a leading hydropower exporter to India by generating over 27,000 MW with zero emission targets by 2045. Therefore, the investment by the Korean private sector in the 216 MW Upper Trishuli-1 is highly significant.

The project has made almost 40% progresses as of the end of January 2024, with a total estimated cost of

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\$647.4 million to be financed entirely by foreign capital.

The Nepal Water and Energy Development Company (NWEDC) constructed this hydropower project with shareholders including Korea South East Power Company (52%), Daelim Industrial Company (16%), Kyeryong Construction Industrial Company (10%), International Finance Corporation (12%), and the local Nepalese partner Bkesh Pradhanang (10%). It is the first private company to invest in the largest hydropower project with an operation target of 2027.

The appointment of Kul Man Ghising as MD in 2018 made all the difference for this project, which had been delayed for years due to various reasons. Nepali partner Bikesh Pradhanang made enormous efforts to convince Nepali officials about the project's importance in Nepal's energy sector.

Additionally, the Korean government and companies completed the 14.8 MW Modi Khola Hydropower Plant in 2000 and the 30 MW Chameliya in 2018. The 132 kV transmission line constructed under Chameliya has greatly contributed to the livelihood of Sudur Pashim Province.

In a recent program, the Ambassador of Korea to Nepal, Park Taeyoung, assured Nepal that Korea will continue to cooperate in realizing

Nepal's hydropower development potential.

As Nepal and South Korea celebrate the 50th year of their diplomatic relationship, the friendly relations between Nepal and Korea are deepening further with economic, cultural, and religious linkages.

Foreign Minister NP Saud expressed pride in commemorating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the Republic of Korea. He emphasized the deep relationship and understanding between the two countries. Saud also acknowledged South Korea as Nepal's best partner and friend, which has consistently supported Nepal's economic development since the establishment

of diplomatic relations.

During the program commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Korea and Nepal, and the Launching Ceremony of the Commemorative Logo and Book on Success Stories after the EPS program, Foreign Minister Saud stated that Nepal always gives high priority to its relations with South Korea.

He acknowledged that the financial and technical support provided by the Republic of Korea has helped Nepal improve the living conditions of its people. He thanked the government and people of the Republic of Korea for their generous support.

Minister Saud highlighted the importance of the employment provided by Korea to Nepali workers under EPS. He also emphasized the contribution of Nepali returnees to Nepal's economic progress. Minister Saud urges Korean investors to invest in Nepal.

During the event, Minister Saud, the Chief Guest, praised the close cooperation between the two countries in various fields, such as the economy, employment, education, and people-to-people exchanges since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1974. He also expressed his hope for further cooperation between the two countries in the future.

Kewal Prasad Bhandari, the



Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security, stated that Korea is an attractive market for Nepali migrant workers in terms of safety and earnings. He noted that Korea has made significant progress in the last 50 years, establishing itself as a country with highly skilled workers and a leader in the technology sector.

Secretary Bhandari also mentioned that the two countries have undergone many changes and made significant progress in the last fifty years. Many large Korean companies are investing in Nepal, which is contributing to economic prosperity and progress, as he stated.

It is an honor to be here today for the launch of the 50th-anniversary logo and slogan commemorating the diplomatic ties between the Republic of Korea and Nepal. We are also launching a book about the inspiring success stories of businessmen who worked in Korea and returned to Nepal to start their own businesses.

Our two countries share a significant history. This milestone is a testament to the enduring strength of our bond.

Fifty years ago, our countries began a journey of friendship, understanding, and collaboration. Today, as we reflect on the past five decades, we can be proud of the progress we have made together. The last 50 years have been a story of shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to building a better future for our people," said the ambassador.

Park Taeyoung announced that the Embassy will organize various programs in cultural, economic, and development areas to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties in 2024. He expressed that mutual cooperation programs will deepen the

close ties and elevate the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

Mooheon Kong, Country Director of KOICA Nepal, highlighted KOICA's support for Nepal's development. He presented how KOICA has been supporting Nepal's development endeavors.

Nepal and the Republic of Korea share many commonalities, including the religious aspect of Buddhism. The relations between the two countries have remained deep and stable over the last five decades. Since the



establishment of diplomatic relations fifty years ago, the Republic of Korea has remained a dependable friend to Nepal, providing all necessary support for economic development.

South Korea has experienced remarkable economic development and established itself as a hub of technological innovation. Nepal has benefited greatly from Korea's progress.

Over 100,000 Nepalese workers have already worked in South Korea and returned to Nepal. The Republic of Korea is one of the largest foreign investors in Nepal, investing in the hydropower and technological sectors.

For 15 years in a row, the Korean government has designated Nepal as a priority cooperation country for development in vocational training, health, agriculture, and ICT. KOICA has implemented 157 devel-

opment projects and provided degrees or training opportunities to around 2,000 Nepalese people over the past 30 years.

Nepal has also received significant foreign investment from Korea, with Samsung Electronics operating a state-of-the-art TV factory since last April. A Nepalese company, in partnership with Hyundai Motors, is preparing to start Nepal's first automobile production in Nawalparasi in the first half of next year. Additionally, a Korean wig company, Mandumo, has invested in Nepal and hired 680 Nepalese women. To attract more investments by Korean companies, a bilateral investment treaty with Nepal is necessary, and we are working on it.

This year, Nepal has secured the top position among Korea's 16 EPS partner nations for the first time. This year, 20,000 individuals were provided with opportunities to work in Korea. Since 2007, over 100,000 Nepalese

migrant workers have worked in Korea on equal terms with Koreans. We also provide follow-up support for resettlement and start-up preparation for returning workers.

Nepal-Korea relations

The Republic of Korea and Nepal established diplomatic relations in 1974. This year, 2024, marks the 50th anniversary of their establishment.

A recently published book by the Republic of Korea on success stories after the EPS program is a testimony to how Nepalese have been learning and working in Korea, contributing to operating enterprises and SMEs in Nepal.

The high-level officials of the Government of Nepal and the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal, Park Taeyoung, recently unveiled

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the commemorative logo to mark the 50th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Korea and Nepal.

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea and the Government of Nepal will jointly use the logo for programs related to Korea.

The logo celebrates the 50th anniversary of Korea and Nepal by incorporating their flags' colors and elements along with the phrase '50 Years.'

The slogan 'Everesting Friendship - Korea-Nepal 50th Anniversary' combines 'Mt. Everest,' representing Nepal, with the word 'Everlasting' to promote the eternal friendship and partnership between the two countries.

The book contains success stories of 26 Nepali returnees who established their businesses in Nepal with the skills learned from the Republic of Korea. These skills were acquired through various programs, such as the Employment Permit System (EPS).

The book is a collection of success stories from 7 Nepali returnees in the manufacturing sector, 6 in the agriculture sector, 8 in the service sector, and 5 in the education sector. The Embassy believes that this will inspire and encourage more Nepali Returnees from South Korea.

Ambassador's Remark

Nepal and South Korea have established cordial relations with steady growth in exchanges of mutual cooperation in multiple areas, including the economy, infrastructure, development, and employment since the establishment of diplomatic ties.

Park Tae-Young, ambassador to Republic of Korea to Nepal, spoke at the launch of the 50th-anniversary

logo and slogan commemorating the diplomatic ties between the Republic of Korea and Nepal. He also spoke at the launch of a book about the inspiring success stories of businessmen who returned to Nepal to start their own businesses after working in Korea.



The ambassador stated that this milestone represents a shared history and a strong bond between the two countries.

He reflected on the past five decades and expressed pride in the progress achieved through friendship, understanding, and collaboration.



The journey of the last 50 years is a story of shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to building a better future for our people," ambassador in his statement.

The emblem is a symbol of the enduring friendship between our nations as well as collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal and our Embassy in shaping a meaningful representation of this significant milestone. Today,

as we unveil the result of cooperation between the Ministry and the Embassy, we can witness the strong bonds that have flourished over the past five decades.

As we celebrate this golden anniversary, we must also look ahead to the future. Our diplomatic ties have endured the test of time. Now, more than ever, it is crucial for us to strengthen our cooperation for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The global landscape is constantly changing, and by deepening our collaboration, we can navigate these changes together with resilience and solidity," said Ambassador Park Tae-Young of Korea to Nepal.

Ambassador Park Tae-Young said, "Let us envision a future where our nations continue to grow and prosper together. May the spirit of friendship and cooperation guide us in creating a world of shared prosperity, peace, and mutual understanding."

Ambassador Park Tae-Young expressed his hope for even greater achievements and closer collaboration between Korea and Nepal in the next 50 years. There are many opportunities for this to happen.

South Korea And Nepal: Five Decades Of Diplomatic Relations



BY: PARK TAE-YOUNG

It is both an honor and a privilege to stand before you today on this momentous occasion – the launch of the 50th-anniversary logo and slogan commemorating the diplomatic ties between the Republic of Korea and Nepal and another launch of a fascinating book about the inspiring success stories of businessmen who after working in Korea, returned to Nepal to start their own businesses.

This significant milestone not only marks a journey of shared history but also stands as a testament to the enduring strength of the bond between our two countries.

Fifty years ago, our countries embarked on a journey of friendship, understanding, and collaboration. Today, as we reflect on the past five decades, we can take pride in the progress we have achieved together. The journey of the last 50

years is a story of shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to building a better future for our people.

The emblem is a symbol of the enduring friendship between our nations as well as collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal and our Embassy in shaping a meaningful representation of this significant milestone. Today, as we unveil the result of cooperation between the Ministry and the Embassy, we can witness the strong bonds that have flourished over the past five decades.

This book stands not only as a testament to their individual journeys but also as a powerful symbol of the fruitful outcomes of bilateral employment cooperation. The 26 businessmen featured in this book are living proof that the exchange of skills and experiences can yield personal growth and substantial contribution to the economic landscape of Nepal.

These 26 business owners are heroes to create

jobs in Nepal and to inspire other returnees to have a dream. Each success of 26 heroes also started from their dream. Their stories exemplify the spirit of bilateral employment cooperation, demonstrating that collaboration between Korea and Nepal can be a powerful catalyst for personal and economic development. Thanks for your contribution for this book and joining today here.



As we celebrate this golden anniversary, we must also look ahead to the future. Our diplomatic ties have weathered the test of time. Now, more than ever, it is crucial for us to strengthen our cooperation for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The global landscape is ever-changing, and by deepening our collaboration, we can navigate together these changes with resilience and solidity.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the leaders and people of

both Korea and Nepal for reaching this historic milestone. It is a testament to the dedication and commitment of countless individuals who have worked tirelessly to build bridges, foster understanding, and promote cooperation between our nations.

As we stand at the threshold of the next 50 years, let us envision a future where our nations continue to grow and prosper together. May the spirit of friendship and cooperation that has characterized the last five decades guide us in creating a world of shared prosperity, peace, and mutual understanding.

Congratulations once again on this momentous occasion. May the next 50 years be filled with even greater achievements and closer collaboration between Korea and Nepal.

Park Taeyoung is the ambassador of Republic of Korea to Nepal. Excerpts of his statement delivered at a program organize to commemorate the 50th Anniversary between the Republic of Korea and Nepal.

BARAHISHE SUBSTATION

At Final Stage

With constant inspections and direction, 220 kV Barabishe Substation Is In Final Stage

By A CORRESPONDENT

The construction of the 220 kV Barabishe substation in Bahr-bise municipality of Sindhu-palchok is nearing completion. Constructed under a concessional loan from Asian Development Project, the construction progress of the 220-132 kV substation is at about 95 percent completion. Additionally, a 400 KV substation is also under construction in Bahr-bise.

Over the past year, several strategically important transmission line projects funded by ADB have become operational, including the recently inaugurated 220 kV Kaligandaki Corridor Transmission Line.

The managing director, Kulman Ghising, has been regularly making field visits and monitoring progress on other important projects, such as the 220 kV Bardaghat-New Butwal Transmission Line project, which is now in its final stage.

The power transformers, in-

cluding 220 ÷ 132 kV, 160 MVA and 132 ÷ 11 kV, 5 MVA, have been connected and are ready for use. The installation of substation equipment that uses Gas Insulated System (GIS) technology is in its final stage. All control room equipment has been delivered to the construction site, and device connections are progressing rapidly.

The 102 megawatt Madhyabhotekoshi hydropower project, built in Sindhupalchowk under the leadership of Chilime Hydropower Company, a subsidiary of Nepal Electricity Authority, will connect to this substation.

The project's electricity will flow to the Bahr-bise substation through a 220 kV transmission line. The project has constructed towers for a 220 kV single circuit transmission line that is about 4 km long, running from the switchyard of its power plant to Bahr-bise substation. Currently, about 2 km of transmission line wire

has been stretched.

However, the project is unable to lay the remaining 2 km of wire due to obstruction by local residents of Palanti, located in Bahr-bise Municipality-3 and 4.

The construction of Madhyabhotekoshi hydropower project structures is complete and undergoing testing.

The authority is facing pressure to complete the Bahr-bise substation quickly to avoid wasting the electricity generated by the project. This is because the electricity is not yet connected to the national transmission line.

On Saturday, the authority's high-level team, including Managing Director Kulman Ghising, Deputy Managing Director of Generation Directorate Dilghayu Kumar Shrestha, and Deputy Managing Director of Project Management Directorate Tara Prasad Pradhan, monitored the substation construction site and instructed that the remaining works be completed immediately.

The team discussed the construction problems with project management and construction professionals. They also discussed equipment supply, the construction completion schedule, and local issues that were obstructing the transmission line. In addition, the team visited the Madhyabhotekoshi hydropower project and obtained information about the ongoing testing.

The Managing Director, Ghising, instructed that the construction of the substation be completed within two months by increasing the manpower. All equipment has been supplied, and some connections are in the



final stages.

The progress of the final phase of substation construction is satisfactory. Additionally, the construction of the new Khimti-Bahrbise and Bahrbise Lapsifedi (Kathmandu) transmission line has reached its final stage. If there are no further issues, the construction will be completed within the next 2-3 months. Ghising encouraged everyone to take the final initiative and do their part.

The construction of the twelve-phase substation has been delayed due to the poor performance of the joint venture between Chinese companies Guangxi Transmission and Substation Construction and Shenzhen Claw Electronics, as well as the COVID-19 epidemic. However, the construction of the substation is still mandatory.

The authorities have made temporary arrangements for the electricity flow in Madhya Bhotesh.

Shivashree Hydropower, the promoter company of the 22 MW Upper Knife A hydroelectric project, will double the 132 kV single circuit transmission line. The high-level team has requested immediate commencement of the work on the line to be constructed by Shivshree Hydropower from Lamosanghu substation to Bahrbise.

The company needs to lay seven kilometers of wires out of a total of ten kilometers of lines. Additionally, they will have to build about three kilometers of new transmission lines from near Bahrbise Bazar to the substation. All the necessary equipment



for the transmission line has been supplied, and the foundations for five out of eight towers have been laid.

The Tamakoshi-Kathmandu transmission line and substation construction has begun to transmit electricity from the Tamakoshi and Sun-koshi rivers' hydroelectric project and their tributaries to the national transmission system. The Asian Development Bank is providing concessional loans for the construction of transmission lines and substations.

The Tamakoshi-Kathmandu 220-400 kV transmission line project is currently constructing a 42 km transmission line from New Khimti substation at Ramechhap to Bahrbise. Only 8 out of the 118 towers on the transmission line are still under construction,

with 7 of them being built in the forest area of Sindhupalchowk.



One tower near the New Khimti substation is not being constructed due to local obstacles. The transmission line wire has been stretched for 30 km. The contractor in charge of constructing this section has stated that if the issue is resolved, the work can be completed within three months.

A 46 km 400 kV double circuit transmission line is currently under construction from Bahrbise to Lapsifedi in Kathmandu. The transmission line consists of 122 towers, with only 4 towers remaining to be constructed due to obstruction by the locals of Lapsifedi.

As both projects are financed by concessional loans from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the acceleration of construction activities will help to increase ADB's portfolio in the energy sector.

Since the government has already announced to achieve the zero emission target by 2045, there is a need for huge investment in the energy sector, especially in the expansion of transmission and distribution system. ADB's support is crucial to achieve this.

NEA

High Speed In Transmission

With the completion of construction of Matatirtha substation, the Largest 220 kV Substation Kathmandu valley, the quality of distribution system will drastically improve in the valley

By KESHAB POUDEL

At a time when the construction of transmission lines and hurdles due to land compensation process, tree felling and inefficiency of contactors have been facing a series of obstacles, the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has made a major breakthrough in recent months in accelerating the pace of construction and completion of ongoing projects.

The completion of the 220 kV Matatirtha Substation, the largest in the Kathmandu Valley, is a major achievement. Linked to the 220 kV Trishuli-Kathmandu and 220 kV Marsyangdi Corridor, the substation is the largest to date. Upon completion, Lapsipedi Substation, which is being completed at a fast pace, will be the largest with 400 kV transmission line connection.

As his promise to accelerate the construction of transmission line and substation in his second term, the completion of Matatirtha is a milestone for Kul Man Ghising, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).



By spending a lot of time in field inspection, observation and site visit, Mr. Ghising has been able to accelerate the pace of construction. Stalled for almost a decade, the construction of the 400 kV Hetauda-Inruwa Transmission Line project is moving at a faster pace with the aim to complete the Inaruwa-Dhalkebar

section within a few months.

After his recent site visit, MD Ghising also said that the Barabishe substation is also nearing completion. The completion of this substation will help to evacuate the 110 MW

power from Middle-Bhotekoshi.

Matatirtha Substation

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has finished construction of the Matatirtha 220-132 kV substation in Chandragiri municipality, Kathmandu, as part of the Marsyangdi-Kathmandu transmission line project.

This substation will provide electricity to the Kathmandu valley for the hydroelectric projects in the Trishuli and Marsyangdi river catchment areas, and it will also enhance the integrated electricity system in the country. The substation has a capacity of 320 MVA. Matatirtha is now the largest substation hub for electricity supply in the Kathmandu Valley.

According to Ghising, Managing Director of the NEA, the construction of the Matatirtha sub-





station has been completed, and all equipment, including power transformers, has been successfully tested.

To charge and operate the Matatirtha substation at 220 kV, a 220 kV Trishuli 3B hub or Markichoke substation should be built. However, it appears that the construction of the Markichoke substation will take some time. According to the speaker, the Matatirtha substation will be charged at 220 kV.

The infrastructure for 220 kV has been prepared to supply electricity to the Kathmandu valley. After the electricity supply from this substation, the electricity supply in the Kathmandu valley will be more sufficient, reliable, and of higher quality. Additionally, the country's integrated electricity system will be strengthened.

The Masryangdi-Kathmandu 220 kV double circuit transmission line has been completed from the Markichoke substation at Ambukhairni in Tanahun to Kathmandu. The purpose of this transmission line is to bring power from the Mas-

ryangdi river watershed area to the Kathmandu valley. The transmission line was charged to 132 kV in June 2079 and is now operational. Additionally, a 220-132 kV substation is currently under construction at Markichoke as part of the project.

The Trishuli-Kathmandu 220 kV transmission line has been completed and is now operational. It brings electricity from the Trishuli river watershed area to the Kathmandu Valley. The Masryangdi-Kathmandu and Trishuli-Kathmandu transmission lines have been connected to a bridge at Badbhanjyang and integrated into the Matatirtha substation through a multi-circuit line.

Tara Prasad Pradhan, the deputy executive director of the authority's project management directorate, stated that electricity from Masryangdi and Trishuli will be supplied to the Kathmandu valley through the Matatirtha substation via 132 kV to Suchatar, Chobhar, and other areas. Additionally, the electricity from Matatirtha can be transferred to Hetaunda through a

132 kV transmission line.

The authority is building a 132 kV substation in Chobhar. The construction of the 132 KV line from Matatirtha to Chobhar has been completed. Executive Director Pradhan stated that they have signed the contract agreement for the construction of a 132 kV underground transmission line from Chobhar to Patan in Lalitpur and a 132 kV substation in Patan.

The contractor who was awarded the contract for the construction of Matatirtha and Markichoke substations under the Masryangdi-Kathmandu transmission line project had their contract canceled due to unsatisfactory performance. A new contract was issued in December 2020 to complete the remaining work.

The project is being funded by the Nepal government, authorities, and a concessional loan from the Asian Development Bank. The estimated cost of the two substations is approximately Rs 2 billion.

IFC AND GLOBAL IME BANK

Partnership for Cause

Under the leadership of Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Global IME Bank is the first private sector bank in Nepal to be selected by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group. With the largest network in all of Nepal, IFC's \$56 million investment in Global IME Bank to strengthen gender and climate finance in Nepal is likely to bring a drastic change

By A CORRESPONDENT

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, the bank's founder, has always dreamed of making Global IME Bank a global brand to invest in Nepal's economic development and the prosperity of small and micro enterprises.

Dhakal, who was born in the remote areas of Baglung and started his venture from a small business, understands the difficulties of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to get the finance for establishment and expansion.

As Global IME Bank has been one of the commercial banks of Nepal focusing on providing loans to SMEs, particularly women-led businesses, IFC's investment in the bank will have a drastic impact in expanding SMEs and promoting climate-friendly projects.

Despite the efforts of Nepal Rastra Bank to increase the number of women-led SMEs in Nepal, the number of women-led SMEs is very low especially in the rural parts of the country.

As Babacar S. Faye, Resident Representative, IFC Nepal and

Ratna Raj Bajracharya, Chief Executive Officer of Global IME Bank share the agreement in the presence of Martin Holtmann, IFC's Country Manager for Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan, Dr. Neelam Dhungana Timsina, Acting Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank and Dhakal, the Bank's Chairman, Global IME Bank sets a

globally. With an experienced and respected CEO at his side, Dhakal's Global IME Bank will have a solid foundation to use the financing in the interest of women-led SMEs in climate-friendly sectors.

To improve access to finance for smaller businesses in Nepal, including women-owned



new record as the first commercial bank in Nepal to receive funding from IFC.

For Dhakal, it is a great moment to see his bank branded

enterprises, and to promote climate-friendly projects, IFC is investing \$56 million in Global IME Bank Limited (GIBL), the country's largest commercial bank. The goal is to

INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION AND GLOBAL IME BANK LTD. PARTNERSHIP

\$56 MILLION LOAN AGREEMENT AND UNCEM



increase the bank's competitiveness in the small and medium enterprise (SME) finance market, while improving financial inclusion, creating jobs, and supporting the country's climate change goals.

IFC's largest investment in Nepal's financial sector will enable GIBL to support the SME segment and help businesses recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly women-owned SMEs and those in rural areas. IFC's financing will also contribute to climate change mitigation efforts in Nepal by increasing access to climate finance in several areas, including clean transport, climate-smart agriculture, and solar projects.

Fifty percent of the loan proceeds will be split equally between climate and gender financing for the bank's SME and retail clients. The remaining 50 percent will be used exclusively for on-lending to SMEs in the country. This is the first time a development finance institu-

tion has provided gender finance to a bank in Nepal.

"We are delighted to receive the continued strategic support of IFC, which not only gives us strength and confidence, but also a mileage to stand tall among peer institutions as well as internationally," said Chandra Prasad Dhakal, Chairman of Global IME Bank Limited. "As the bank has a nationwide network, we will use the available resources to finance the women-owned SMEs."

SMEs generate 22 percent of GDP and employ nearly two million people. Yet access to finance remains a major constraint for 44 percent of SMEs, with the SME financing gap estimated at \$3.6 billion.

The situation is even worse for WSMEs, 52 percent of which have limited access to finance. Furthermore, Nepal is ranked as the 10th most vulnerable country to climate change by the Global Climate

Risk Index (2021), making climate finance critical to Nepal's goal of net zero emissions by 2045. "Our bank currently has 4.5 million depositors, which is a significant achievement considering we started with no business, no seed capital, and had to take care of our families," said Chairman Dhakal.

Dhakal believes he can do even more. Creating an organization that provides many types of jobs and pays taxes to the government is possible even without a foundation, as long as there is an environment. Dhakal said that Global IME, despite being the 19th largest bank, paid the highest income tax. This is a matter of pride for us.

Dr. Neelam Dhungana Timsina, Acting Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, said that NRB is more than happy to welcome foreign investment in Nepal. Dhungana said that foreign capital is the catalyst for the development of Nepal and NRB is ready to provide necessary support

in this regard.

“As the world becomes increasingly aware of the impact of business on climate and environment, this loan agreement reinforces our commitment to sustainability through climate and gender finance. Recognizing Nepal’s potential in green energy development, our commitment extends to bridging the resource gap in the energy sector. In addition, our initiative aims to address gender inequality by providing financial support for the economic empowerment of women in rural Nepal. We are grateful to partner with IFC in this endeavor,” said Ratna Raj Bajracharya, Chief Executive Officer of Global IME Bank.

IFC will also help GIBL establish its climate and gender finance business lines and assist the bank in developing a risk management framework.

“One of IFC’s strategic priorities in Nepal is to support financial inclusion and financial sector stability. Accordingly, this investment aims to strengthen the nascent gender and climate finance markets and catalyze more private sector financing for climate-smart assets and WSMEs,” said Martin Holtmann, IFC Country Manager for Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan. “IFC’s targeted allocation aims to empower more women in the country, while creating jobs and strengthening climate and economic resilience.”

Babacar S. Faye, Resident Representative, IFC Nepal, said IFC’s investment will help Nepal’s SMEs access financing.

This is the third partnership between IFC and GIBL. In 2022, IFC extended a trade finance facility under its Global Trade Finance Program (GTFP), which included a special provision for green trade finance. At the time, it was IFC’s first global green trade finance line.

Global IME Bank



Established 17 years ago to provide financial services in the country, Global IME Bank aims to be a leader in Nepal’s financial sector and has the largest network in the country.

Currently, Global IME Bank is a comprehensive financial institution consisting of 21 banks and financial institutions, including 5 commercial banks, 10 development banks and 6 finance companies. Reconciling the interests of 21 presidents, 21 CEOs and 7 boards of 21 organizations and management is not an easy task.

Global IME Bank, the largest commercial bank in Nepal, is a global brand working locally.

With representative offices in the United Kingdom, Delhi and Australia, we have also opened a branch in Korea after receiving approval from the National Bank. It is important to note that Nepal’s problem is not the lack of a credit rating. The country rating process has progressed as expected. In addition, there is a plan to expand internationally.

The bank is committed to growth, as evidenced by its “Vision-2025” strategic plan, which aims to double its business through the skillful use of modern technology and digitalization. This forward-looking approach positions Global IME Bank not only as a financial institution, but also as a key player in driving innovation and efficiency within the banking sector.

Global IME Bank has an extensive reach across Nepal and beyond. It has consolidated its nationwide presence with a network of 355 branches, 377 ATMs, 274 branchless units and 65 extension counters covering all 77 districts of Nepal. This network ensures accessibility to customers from urban centers to remote regions, contributing to financial inclusion and economic development.

As the saying goes, commitment unlocks the doors of imagination, enables vision, and gives us the right stuff to make our dream a reality. Dhakal’s commitment is coming true.

PROYEL

Youth In The Jajarkot Earthquake

Funded by the European Union and led by Helvetas-Nepal in a consortium with two local NGOs, Promotion of Youth Empowerment in Local Governance Process (PROYEL) supported Bheri Municipality. The Youth Panel (YP) members of Bheri Municipality, formed by PROYEL, demonstrated the importance of youth involvement in effectively carrying out rescue and relief operations in disaster.

By KESHAB POUDEL

The PROYEL was launched in January 2022 in Bheri Municipality of Jajarkot District of Karnali Province. Its aim was to engage youth in the local governance process and the recovery process of COVID-19. Following the Jajarkot earthquake, the program proved how an organized group of young people can assist to disaster relief and recovery operations.

Over the course of the last 20 months, Helvetas Nepal, with funding from the European Union, and in the collaboration of two local NGOs organized a number of

programs in five municipalities in the Karnali Province and three municipalities in the Madhesh Province through PROYEL.

This project aims to create an enabling environment for young Nepali citizens to engage in the local governance process, contributing to COVID-19 recovery and development

in Nepal. After the earthquake, the project is also involved in the recovery of earthquake victims in Jajarkot district.

Prem Bahadur

BK, a former member of the Youth Sounding Board (YSB) and coordinator of the Youth Panel (YP) for the Bheri Municipality in the Jajarkot district exhibited how youth may significantly contribute to recovery in disaster by collaborating closely with local governments.

BK gave his viewpoint during a session hosted by Bheri Municipality and PROYEL in Jajarkot to review the project's programs and activities in the municipality.

Right after the November 3 earthquake with a





magnitude of 6.4 that rocked the Jajarkot and Eastern and Western Rukum districts, resulting in the deaths of over 160 people, 360 injuries, and the destruction of hundreds of houses, BK has been in constant communication with YP members from various wards, giving them instructions to work in tandem with the wards of Bheri Municipality to execute rescue and relief efforts.

BK believes that the youth of these areas will have ample opportunities in the reconstruction phase. Helvetas Nepal, along with the PROYEL project, is ready to engage them in other programs.

“We are implementing the ENSSURE project in Karnali province, which is related to youth employment, and planning to support the reconstruction process.” said Dr. Prabin Manandhar, country director of Helvetas Nepal.

We will need support from members of the Youth Panel. With 42 percent of the population being youth and 42 percent of elected representatives being young, youth are at the forefront of the country, and our project is no exception. “

Dharmasara BK, 22, and Binisa Oli, 19, are members of the Youth Panel in wards 9 and 8, respectively, of Bheri Municipality. They

report that the youth in their wards have been actively supporting rescue and rehabilitation efforts.

Mayor Chandra Prasad Gharti of Bheri Municipality acknowledges the Youth Panel’s role in search and rescue, relief distribution, and data collection. “The earthquake victims of the municipality are grateful to the Swiss Government and Helvetas Nepal for their quick response in providing emergency relief materials, including tarpaulins and tents for temporary shelter,” said Mayor Gharti. Mayor Gharti expressed gratitude for the support of PROYEL’s Youth Panel members in distributing emergency relief materials to those in need and collecting data.

All 13 wards of Bheri Municipality have a Ward Panel. PROYEL’s youth panel proved to be a valuable asset for the municipality and other organizations during the disaster.

Aagya Pokharel, Pro-





ject Coordinator of Helvetas Nepal's PROYEL project, stated that the Youth Panel members assisted Helvetas Nepal in distributing emergency relief materials. "Our panel members delivered the relief materials to remote villages. The project also provided valuable lessons learned. We are now planning to utilize our youth in earthquake-resistant reconstruction," said Pokharel.

Helvetas Nepal, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation aid have initiated relief operations in the earthquake-affected regions of Jajarkot and Rukum.

Dal Bahadur Gharti, acting chief administrative officer of the Bheri Municipality, expressed gratitude for the support provided by Helvetas Nepal and the PROYEL project during this time of need.

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act

of 2074 and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Rules of 2076 provide a comprehensive legal framework that directs the entire disaster management process within the country. The legislation envisions the role of youth in disaster management in compliance with the National Youth Policy.

A Youth Panel was

formed in August with 6 girls and 9 boys representing 8 wards, with the support of Women Empowerment Action Forum (WEAF) based in Birendranagar, Nepal. Aagya Pokharel, Project Coordinator of Helvetas Nepal's PROYEL Project, stated that the Youth Panel began its functional work with Palika since then.

Youth Panel members from all wards of Bheri Municipality actively participated in rescue efforts and distributed emergency supplies during the earthquake.

PROYEL is taking the initiative to link the Youth Panel in the reconstruction phase, including panel members involving in different skills training and other similar planning. The Youth Panel, which started at the local level, has a visible presence in Jajarkot.



JENESYS Friendship Ties Program: Learning From Japan



BY: PARMITA SHRESTHA

Nepalese students have been participating in Japan's education system and visiting the country for over 122 years. Japan remains an attractive destination for Nepalese students seeking higher education. Many Nepalese have already pursued higher education in Japan and are currently working in various sectors, contributing to Nepal's overall development with impressive impacts. Individuals who have studied in Japanese educational institutions are in leading positions in various fields such as medicine, engineering, science, public administration, agriculture, horticulture, and the economy. After visiting Japan through the JENESYS program, I realized the rational decision of my ancestors in choosing Japan for their careers.

Nepal has had a friendly relationship with Japan for centuries. Since Nepal and Japan established diplomatic relations in 1956, Japan has provided support to Nepal for its all-round development. Japan has implemented Official Development Assistance (ODA) programs in several sectors in Nepal to strengthen the alliance between the two countries. These programs have helped to foster human resources, transfer technology, and develop infrastructure through various technical cooperation projects.

The Japanese government, people, and diplomats working in Nepal have been very supportive of Nepal and its people in their efforts to transform the country. I am

grateful for their support. I am inspired by the Japanese Ambassador to Nepal, Kikuta Yutaka, and his staff at the embassy for encouraging me in my writing and providing necessary support. I find the response I received from the Japanese Embassy regarding my work to be incredible. My visit to Japan under the JENESYS Program further strengthened my positive impression of Japan.

Participating JENESYS Program

The JENESYS Program is a part of Japan's Friendship Ties Program, which aims to connect people from different parts of the world. Recently, I participated in the JENESYS SAARC Program, which aimed to foster

and strengthen ties and connections between Japan and the SAARC countries, including Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

There were 48 participants in total, divided into two groups with different activities. Group A focused on: Connectivity and Economic Cooperation were the themes of Group A and Group B, respectively.

Each group consisted of 24

members, with 8 participants from each country. I joined 7 other Nepalese participants on this journey. Although the thought of traveling with unknown members to a different country was exciting, it was also nerve-racking. Upon arriving at Narita airport, I was immediately reassured by the dedication and effort put in by JICE (Japan International



Cooperation Center) for this event. Our names were on the tags, and we were smoothly guided to our hotel, where our room keys and food were ready for us. Meeting my roommate put me at ease as we had a lot in common despite our age gap. We were in different groups, A and B, so we didn't have much opportunity to communicate except when we were in the same room.

Everyone we interacted with during the program was respectful, friendly, and easy to talk to, including the member from Nepal. On the first day, despite political differences, participants from India, Nepal, and Pakistan socialized and found common interests between their nations.

During the program, we attended an informative session by JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) about their support for SAARC countries. This gave us insights into how Japan has been helping these nations. The lecture was given by MS. KOTAKE Yoko, South Asia Department Planning Division, JICA, and was both conspicuous and informative.

Afterward, we participated in a workshop where we brainstormed future projects for our countries as if we were JICA. We shared our ideas within our group and finally decided on one idea. It was interesting to see the creativity and ideas flowing.

We explored Akihabara, a busy city with well-managed crowds, and experienced the convenience of easy directions. The ride to Nagano on the Shinkansen was very pleasant. With pocket Wi-Fi access, I explored the train system, viewing stations and the train's current location. Time passed quickly, even faster than the Shinkansen. During the trip, I enjoyed a delicious traditional Japanese lunch called Shojin Ryori. It was fascinating to experience the differences in culture, even within Asia, as the food tasted nothing like our traditional dishes.

Our visit to Zenkoji Temple demonstrated the blending of different cultures. We learned about various beliefs, including the use of an incense burner to bring good health and fortune, the story of the cow, and the pitch-black tunnel (Key to Paradise) that runs under the altar and ensures eternal salvation.

During my meeting with Mr. Toshifumi Miyazawa, a prefectural council member in Nagano, and Toshiro Maruyama, the Mayor of Hakuba Village, I learned how

to become a better community member. Hakuba Village, although cold, is filled with warm people. It became clear that our community can only progress if everyone feels the need to make it better and supports it, regardless of personal benefits. In addition, MIYAZAWA not only taught us but also demonstrated through the development of the Northern Alps how a community can prosper when resources are used wisely, and people care for their community.

His advice and claims were well supported by their thoughtful utilization of their limited arable lands, over 100 locally produced certified products, and more. He emphasized the importance of working with our geographical terrain, rather than against it. This is crucial advice that can benefit Nepal, a country with diverse topography. By simply observing the surroundings, one can see how much people value community and development.

Every day, I was amazed by Japan's creative and innovative approach to problem-solving. The Northern Alps Eco Park not only recycles PET bottles but also recycles the heat generated from the process. Proper protocols have been established to ensure the safety of the environment and people.

Staying with the local family was heartwarming. We connected over meals, family photos, and games despite language and cultural differences.

The host family made every effort to bridge the communication gap.

Later in the program, we tried on Yukata and played with traditional Japanese toys. It was a memorable experience. The toys were simple yet challenging, making them entertaining.

At the end of the program, we had to present our final presentation to a large audience. I was one of the presenters in my group, and sharing our work was a highlight for me. We received valuable feedback, which helped me improve my presentation skills.

Overall, the JENESYS SAARC Program was an unforgettable experience of learning, friendship, and cultural exchange. It showed me the beauty and progress of Japan, and the kindness of its people. I have memories that I will treasure forever.



LDC GRADUATION

Challenges Ahead

The Center for Development (CDD) recommends that the government take all necessary steps to prevent damage to the trade sector.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Chandra Ghimire, former secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Supplies, stated that Nepal will encounter significant trade challenges after graduating from Least Developed Country status in 2026.

Former secretary Ghimire presented his paper on Nepal's graduation from LDC: Challenges and Opportunities at a program organized to mark the Sixth Anniversary of the Center for Diplomacy and Development. Ghimire highlighted that Nepal's preparation is poor in terms of policy and legal frameworks as the country is set to transition from a least developed country (LDC) to a developing country in 2026.

Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sewa Lamsal inaugurated the event. Dr. Maheswar Dhakal, joint secretary at the Ministry of Forest and Environment, presented his paper on Climate Change Impacts and takeaway message from COP 28 to Nepal.

In the first presentation, Secretary Ghimire stated that Nepal has not yet met the three major eligibility criteria laid down by the United Nations for promotion.

Secretary Ghimire revealed that Nepal's exports will be severely impacted, especially for Small and Medium Industries.

Nepal is close to achieving a higher per capita income and Human Assets Index, but ranks low in

environmental and vulnerability indices. Nepalese industries will face tough competition once the country graduates.

Secretary Ghimire stated

in exports. He also mentioned that proving the LDC requirement for Rules of Origin is difficult.

Additionally, he highlighted the positive changes that



that Nepal's trade will be limited to a few countries once LDC preferences arrangements are removed.

He also noted that the end of non-reciprocal preferences received through the Generalized System of Preferences in several countries is a crucial factor.

Secretary Ghimire stated that the South Asian Free Trade Area will remove LDC provisions

LDC graduation will bring, such as boosting national confidence and image on the international stage. However, a country's efficiency in capitalizing on graduation will determine its success.

Secretary Ghimire suggested that Nepal should consider several measures to prevent graduation from becoming a trade catastrophe. One suggestion was to obtain a



grace period for preferential market access.

Additionally, Ghimire highlighted that the cost of production in Nepal is much higher than that of our South Asian neighbors, ranging from 20 to 30 percent. He also mentioned that transportation costs are another issue.

Finally, Ghimire emphasized that policy conflicts that paralyze the prospects of implementation should come to an end. He has stated that graduating from LDC status is a significant achievement. However, it is not a time to gloat. The ultimate question is whether the benefits outweigh the losses.

As the chief guest, Secretary Lamsal made it clear that Nepal has no option but to qualify from the LDC by 2026, ensuring necessary policy reforms and legal changes in the remaining years.

She stated that the government of Nepal has already begun

to reform policies, laws, and regulations. Foreign Secretary Lamsal stated that Nepal is raising the issue of climate change because it is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world.

CDC Chair Mohan Krishna Shrestha stated in his opening remarks that Nepal is scheduled to upgrade from a least developed to a developing country status on November 24, 2026, in just three years.

Shrestha stated that the promotion would boost morale, despite the formidable challenges it presents.

Nepali people's talent and expertise can turn these challenges into opportunities. After graduation, Nepal is expected to lose many trade facilities, but this also provides an opportunity to reshape our thinking and find new avenues to deal with emerging challenges, particularly in trade areas.

If we face setbacks in one

area, we should strive to excel in others. To improve, we must focus on our strengths and advantages. By effectively implementing these objectives, we can accelerate our development pace in the future. Our economic diplomacy should prioritize six objectives: promoting tourism, exports, foreign direct investment, foreign employment opportunities, and increasing foreign aid.

Joint Secretary Dhakal highlighted Nepal's steps towards seeking additional funding for the country's mitigation and adaptation sector in his paper.

Former President of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bhawani Rana, urged the government to take all necessary measures to prevent significant damage to Nepal's foreign trade following graduation. The event was attended by foreign diplomats, scholars, and former Nepalese diplomats.

In summary, Mitrabandhu Paudel, Vice President of CDD and Principal of LACM, stated that there are many challenges ahead regarding LDC graduation and climate change.

The guest, former Secretary Shanker Prasad Pandey, was welcomed by Shanti Laxmi Shakya, Executive Member of CDD, and Executive Member Pandey gave a vote of thanks.

The 16th Plan Is pivotal In steering Nepal Towards A Prosperous Future



BY: HANAA SINGER-HAMDY

First and foremost, my heartfelt congratulations to the National Planning Commission (NPC) for crafting an outstanding draft of the 16th Plan. The effort put into organizing extensive consultations at provincial levels and incorporating valuable feedback into the draft deserves commendation. Equally, the inclusive consultation with development partners and the support from the UN system, particularly UNDP, reflect a commitment to collaborative decision-making.

The 16th Plan's focus on job creation, enhanced productivity, health, Education, and sustainable resource management is a commendable Achievement. Addressing issues like equality, and social justice, and Strengthening the federal governance system promises to steer Nepal toward Prosperity.

In today's dynamic world with climate change, geopolitical tensions, slow Economic growth, and global mobility, Nepal faces significant challenges. Despite its minimal contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, the country bears substantial impacts. While applauding Nepal's leadership in setting ambitious NDC targets and timely adaptation policies, bold actions are still needed. Strengthening institutional and community capacities is paramount for accelerating adaptation and mitigation efforts.

The issue of foreign employment and remittances is also a pressing concern, with over 700,000 workers migrating in 2023 due to a lack of domestic job opportunities. Despite the increase in remittances, the country faces challenges such as trade deficits, insecure working conditions, low business productivity and widespread informality. The 16th Plan must address these issues and promote inclusive economic growth.

Urbanization, while accelerating, poses challenges in terms of housing, drinking water, waste management, and pollution in Nepal's cities. Simultaneously, rural areas face a shortage of workers, impacting local economies and food security. Vulnerable groups, including the poor, women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations, bear the brunt of these challenges.

I am confident that the 16th Plan will provide a conducive policy environment for addressing these issues, ensuring basic service delivery, and tackling development and

humanitarian challenges. The plan's emphasis on equality and social justice is commendable, and I urge Nepal to set a clear roadmap for implementing the constitutional rights of women and marginalized groups, translating the constitutional vision into practical socio-economic development. As Development Partners have been relentlessly working to support Nepal in its journey through the Green Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) partnership platform to meet Nepal's development goals we hope this to be well reflected in the 16th Plan.

As Nepal approaches LDC Graduation in 2026, the 16th Plan needs to be forward-thinking. Its successful graduation can be a springboard to even greater achievements for its next development chapters. The success of Nepal in reaching the graduation threshold and steadily maintaining its commitment to the graduation despite the headwinds is a beacon of hope for us all and a stellar example of the operation needed to rescue the SDG and our collective common goods.

However, with many international support measures phasing or being impacted, post-graduation, careful preparation is essential to become competitive while meeting stringent measures on environmental and labor standards. This will need a referent skill set that this plan together with the smooth transition strategy and SDG acceleration plans would need to catalyze and lay the foundation for in the post-LDC phase.

As Nepal began developing the National Vision for SDG Acceleration, preparing for the SDG Summit in 2023, through its progress that surpassed the global average, Nepal has also begun writing the next chapter, with an SDG Focus chapter in the 16th plan. And I hope that the 16th Plan turns out to be instrumental in achieving the 2030 SDGs.

In conclusion, the 16th Plan is pivotal in steering Nepal towards a prosperous and sustainable future. It requires unwavering and collective action from all stakeholders and development partners. As a co-chair of the International Development Partners' Group, I assure our collective support in making Nepal's next chapter a reality.

Hanaa Singer Hamdy is the UN Resident Coordinator in Nepal. Excerpts of her remark at the 16th Plan and the LDC Graduation Smooth Transition Strategy Consultation Program.



InElam

Surkhet's Farmers Reap Windfall From Dragon Fruit

The Helvets-Nepal's InElam Project's introduction of dragon fruit as a cash crop is helping farmers in Surkhet. For impoverished and marginalized farmers in the rural Surkhet District of the Karnali Province, this has meant lucrative employment opportunities.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Chetan BK from Lekbeshi Municipality in Surkhet district of Karnali Province dedicates most of his time to tending his dragon fruit plants. BK, a former Indian army dropout and aspiring foreign worker, began cultivating dragon fruit after attending a training jointly organized by Helvetas and local Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperative, Satakhani of Lekbeshi Municipality Ward no 9 Surkhet District.

Eventually, with the close collaboration of local Small Agricul-

ture Cooperatives, Helvetas Nepal's InElam project provided BK with financial and technical assistance to grow his dragon fruit.

His brother, who has a degree in agriculture, previously worked in an agricultural office where he was introduced to a dragon fruit farm, is his big asset. Upon consulting with his brother, he started the farm planting dragon plants.

With the help of their entire family, the two brothers began with 250 plants on three ropanis of land two years ago. To secure a loan,

BK's grandmother agreed to use her land as collateral to local cooperative.

In the first harvest, it was not much but they earned more than Rs. 400,000 in second year. BK said that they produced more than 3 tons of dragon fruit. Initially, they were skeptical about the new crop and the market. However, after seeing its attractive returns, they decided to add more plants. This year, they plan to add another 300 plants.

BK claims that the yield from growing dragon fruit is four

times greater than the yield from growing cereal grains. The local market and surrounding markets, like as Surkhet and Kohalpur, are where the fruits are sold.

Chetan BK's wife, Sangita BK, said that the dragon stopped her husband from taking a job abroad in Malaysia. She stated that her spouse is earning more money at home than he is when he travels.

BK fixed Rs 500 per kg for the white kind of dragon fruit and Rs 700 per kg for the red variety last year. Seventy percent of the loan with interest has already been paid by BK's Subhakamana Agriculture and Animal Firm Private Limited, which was financed by Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd Satakshani of Lekbeshi Municipality ward no 9 Surkhet.

The manager of Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd, Hari Prasad Paudel, stated that other farmers are requesting loans to plant dragon fruit in response to BK's success.

To cultivate the fruit, the farmer must erect a pillar for every four plants to provide support. The plants grow vines on which they bear fruit. Each plant can produce up to 30 fruits per season and begins



yielding fruit within a year of being planted.

According to Tek Bahadur Singh of Helvetas Nepal, this is one of the most successful initiatives of InElam in terms of improving the livelihoods of poor and marginalized communities.

They have recently had their first harvest and are optimistic about good production in the second lot as well. Several local farmers in

the municipality have planted over 3,500 exotic fruit plants, including both white and red varieties of dragon fruit.

Due to good market connections and high demand, dragon fruit farmers are earning four times more than they usually earn from traditional crops. According to Akriti Rana from Helvetas Nepal,

the cash crop is also discouraging people from seeking employment abroad.

Dragon fruit farming has become popular among farmers, with the white variety growing and yielding fruits faster than the red variety, although the latter fetches a higher price in the market. Most farmers have learned how to cultivate dragon fruit through online resources.

They report having no difficulty selling their fruits. Raskoti stated that the villagers were initially surprised by the new fruit variety. However, after tasting it, they began to purchase it.

The local government is currently offering production-based subsidies to farmers to encourage the cultivation of exotic fruits such as dragon fruit, according to Hari Prasad Poudel, the manager of the local cooperative.

According to Hari Gurung, team leader of the InElam Project, dragon fruit is easier to sell in department stores and fruit shops due to its novelty and attractiveness to buyers.

Dragon fruit is a cactus species that originates from Mexico and grows in hot and dry areas. It has a sweet and sour taste.





Farming this fruit can provide self-employment opportunities for the unemployed and help alleviate the unemployment problem to some extent. Acquiring skills in cultivating Dragon Fruit can lead to employment opportunities. Developing an interest in Dragon Fruit may inspire readers to promote its cultivation. Dragon Fruit is renowned for its distinct taste and nutritional and medicinal benefits. This fruit has great potential in the Nepalese context.

Pioneering farmer Hira Bahadur Gharti also served as the chair of the Dragon Association Surkhet. With Helvetas' assistance, his Karnali Dragon Fruit Firm sells more over Rs. 3 million worth of dragons every year. Regular inspection trips are also conducted by his farm and nursery to the province's farmers.

Nepal is a country with a strong agricultura sector, with numerous productive fields and a majority of the population depending on it for their livelihood. However, there is a need for a drastic change in agricultural practices to improve the economic and socio-political standards of the people.

"A part of Helvetas Nepal's mission is to promote cash crops

by distributing necessary technology and providing other assistance, such as advocacy." "This is a way to transform the livelihoods of marginalized and economically backward people in rural Nepal," said Dr. Prabin Manandhar, Helvetas Nepal's country director. "InElam project has been implementing various programs in this regard in collaboration with various stakeholders."

The sector faces many pressing issues. Changes should be made in a manner that provides a sense of security to each farmer in their occupation. To ensure improve-

ment in the agriculture sector, it is crucial to coordinate with the relevant authorities to address the existing problems.

Dragon fruit is proof that a commercial crop can significantly improve farmers' lives. A nation can attain economic development in the agriculture sector by enacting policies that give priority to native products, facilitate market access, and discourage the importation of goods. Support for Dragon Fruit from Helvetas Nepal is important here.



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