

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



OPINION
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VIEWPOINT
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PhD, MA, BL, MPA



FORUM
Hemant Arjyal

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February 07, 2025

FORTNIGHTLY

MAHAKUMBH 2025

Festival Of The Century

INSIDE



COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLOCAUST
Honoring The Victims



ECONOMY
Inflations At 5.41



VIST OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH TO NEPAL
Celebrating The Historical Ties Between The Two Nations

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व्यवसाय

देवा कर्जा

व्यवसाय सुरु तथा विस्तार गर्नको लागि

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- परियोजना कर्जा
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Kathmandu DAO Regd. No.

148/11/063/64

Central Region Postal Regd.

No. 36/067/068

US Library of Congress Catalogue

No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711

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

Printing

Megha Offset Printing Press P. Ltd.,

Dhapasi, Kathmandu

Tel. : 977-1-4363624

For Hindus worldwide, bathing in the Mahakumbha is a source of spiritual salvation. The Mahakumbha 2025 festival holds great significance for Hindus globally, as it only occurs once every 144 years. This has led to a surge in Hindu pilgrims from India and around the world coming to bathe in the Mahakumbha. Even the Bhutanese King participated in the Kumbha ritual. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also took a dip in the Prayagraj as a devout host. Despite the lack of high-level representation from Nepal, a predominantly Hindu country with a communist and socialist ideology, a large number of Hindu devotees are visiting the Kumbha, showcasing the spiritual and religious bond with India. While there are no official figures, it is estimated that around one million Nepalese are visiting Prayag Raj to participate in the ritual. This week, we have chosen to feature the Mahakumbha 2025 as our cover story, along with other current topics of interest. #Mahakumbha2025

Keshab Poudel

Editor

CONTENT

ARTICLE		
Suva BC		3
NEWSNOTES		4
BUSINESS BRIEF		10
OPINION		
Dr.Surya Dhungel		14
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLOCAUST		
Honoring The Victims		16
ARTICLE		
Manisha Pudasaini		17
VIEWPOINT		
Govind Prasad Thapa , PhD, MA, BL, MPA		18
VIST OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH TO NEPAL		
Celebrating The Historical Ties Between The Two Nations		21
FORUM		
Hemant Arjyal		22
FORUM		
Shobhakar Budhathoki		30
ARTICLE		
Bimal Khatiwada		34



COVERSTORY: MAHAKUMBH 2025: Festival Of The Century

25



Economy:Inflations At 5.41

24



ADB'S SUPPORTL: Protection of Vulture

33

The Hidden Plight: Children In Agriculture And The Looming Shadow Of Hazardous Labor



BY: SUVA BC

Child labor in agriculture remains a significant global concern, impacting millions of children, especially in areas where subsistence farming is common. This raises the question: Why does this issue persist, and how can it be effectively tackled? Currently, more than 60% of children aged 5-17 worldwide are involved in child labor in agriculture, which includes tasks like farming, aquaculture, forestry, and live-stock management. In Nepal, the situation is particularly dire, with 87% of child labor concentrated in the agricultural sector (Child labour report 2021). These numbers highlight the critical need for action to safeguard at-risk children from the various dangers associated with agricultural labor.

Poverty is the main cause of child labor in agriculture. Families in impoverished areas often depend on their children to help support the household. In Nepal, around 1.1 million children are engaged in child labor, making up 15% of the child population aged 5-17 (ILO and CBS 2021 based on Child Labour Survey 2017/18). These children often work without compensation, their work integrated into family labor structures. Although this may be seen as a cultural norm or economic necessity, it has serious implications for the health, education, and overall welfare of these children.

Children working in agriculture are exposed to various dangers that jeopardize their safety and well-being. They often come into contact with harmful chemicals, such as pesticides, without the necessary protective equipment. This exposure can result in immediate health problems like headaches and skin irritations, as well as long-term consequences like respiratory issues and neurological damage. Furthermore, children frequently handle heavy machinery and sharp tools, putting them at risk of serious injuries. The informal nature of agricultural work means that many young workers lack proper training and safety protocols. Additionally, the physical demands of agricultural labor can lead to significant health issues. Children often work long hours in challenging weather conditions, leading to fatigue and heat-related illnesses. The repetitive nature of tasks like planting and harvesting can also cause musculoskeletal disorders. These risks are exacerbated by inadequate sanitation and housing conditions, particularly for child laborers from migrant families.

Children engaged in agricultural work make educational sacrifices that perpetuate cycles of poverty. Many are unable to attend school due to farm work, trapping them in illiteracy and limiting their future opportunities. While child labor may provide immediate benefits to household income or farm production, the unseen long-term costs include diminished earning potential and entrenched poverty for future generations.

Addressing child labor in agriculture requires a comprehensive approach that tackles its root causes. Alleviating poverty is crucial, and governments must strengthen social protection programs to reduce families' reliance on child labor for survival. Improving access to quality education is essential, with initiatives offering scholarships or free meals to incentivize families to prioritize schooling over work. Empowering women in rural communities is also key, as they often manage household budgets and make decisions about their children's education and work. Providing women with resources and support, such as vocational training or access

to microloans, can create environments where children's education is valued over their economic contributions.

Collaboration among various stakeholders, such as governments, NGOs, local communities, and the private sector, is crucial for developing sustainable solutions. Public awareness campaigns can play a significant role in changing community attitudes towards child labor

and emphasizing the importance of education. Enforcing labor laws that prohibit hazardous child labor is essential for safeguarding vulnerable children. Improving occupational safety standards in agriculture can help reduce the risks associated with dangerous work environments.

To effectively combat child labor in agriculture, it is imperative to address deeply ingrained social norms and harmful practices. Many rural families consider child labor a cultural necessity or a means of survival, often viewing it as a way to teach children responsibility. This mindset needs to be challenged through targeted community engagement and educational efforts that highlight the long-term negative impact on children's development and the economic advantages of prioritizing education over labor. Gender biases and traditional roles also contribute to the problem, with girls frequently shouldering both farm work and household duties, limiting their access to education.



Addressing these practices requires interventions that are sensitive to gender and promote equal roles within households and communities, encouraging a cultural shift towards valuing education for all children. It is also crucial to establish effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms

to track progress and ensure accountability. A comprehensive framework should gather reliable data on the prevalence and types of child labor, adherence to labor laws, and the impact of intervention programs. Tools like community-based monitoring, regular audits, and digital reporting platforms can improve transparency, while sharing findings through public dashboards or community forums can enhance trust and drive collective action.

Child labor in agriculture remains a significant global issue, with millions of children exposed to dangerous working conditions that threaten their health and education. To effectively address this problem, it is necessary to tackle underlying causes like poverty and ingrained social norms, while implementing robust monitoring and reporting systems. Collaborative efforts involving governments, NGOs, and communities are essential to develop sustainable solutions that prioritize the rights and well-being of children, creating a future where no child is subjected to exploitative labor.

Suva BC, a graduate with a Master's degree in Development Studies from Kathmandu University, is a dedicated development and humanitarian professional with a strong focus on promoting human rights. She specializes in advancing child rights and protection, bringing her expertise to various development settings and effectively executing strategic plans. Suva is actively building her skills in capacity development, partnership building, and governance to foster inclusive and sustainable transformation. For further inquiries, please email suvabc1341@gmail.com.

NEWSNOTES

Bhutanese King Also Took A Dip In The Mahakumbh Along With Yogi Adityanath

Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck also took a dip in the Sangamsthal along with Chief Minister Adityanath in the ongoing Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India.

The Bhutanese king performed Ganga Puja and Aarti. After that, Akshaybatdham and Late Hanuman were also visited and worshipped.



Yogi Adityanath accompanied the Bhutanese king to Bamrauli airport by plane from Lucknow. From there, they reached Kumbh to bathe by road.

According to the Indian media, Araili reached Sangam on a

boat from the ghat and took a dive.

With the arrival of the Yogi and the King of Bhutan, the doors of the Hanuman temple and Akshaybat were closed for devotees. The place is scheduled to be opened for devotees after 4 pm.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit the Mahakumbh on February 5. In view of Modi's arrival, Yogi is looking at the management from helipad to Arailighat to Sangamsthal.

Today is the 23rd day of Mahakumbh. It is said that 37 million people have dived so far. More than 42 lakh people have bathed since 10 am today. According to Indian media, about 2.33 crore people took bath on Monday i.e. Vasant Panchami.

NA Chair Requests Israel To Take Initiative For The Release Of Bipin Joshi From Hamas

National Assembly Chairperson Narayan Prasad Dahal has requested Israel to take initiative for the release of Nepali student Bipin Joshi, who is under the control of Hamas.

Chairperson Dahal's press coordinator Dilli Mall informed that he asked the Israeli Ambassador Shmulik Ari Bash to pay attention to Joshi's release as well as the safety and employment of Nepali workers in Israel.

Press coordinator Malla said that during the meeting held on Tuesday at Singha Darbar, they discussed various issues of diplomatic relations, mutual interests and co-operation between the two countries.



In the meeting, Ambassador Shmulik informed that Israel is continuously making efforts to free Joshi, a Nepali youth who is under the control

of Hamas.

After the attack by Hamas, Nepal, Thailand and the Philippines rescued their students and now the students from Thailand and the Philippines have returned to Israel, Ambassador Bash said that such an incident will not happen again and that the Israeli government will take responsibility for their security

Maurice Herzog's Celebrated Book Annapurna : Premier 8000 Soon In Nepali

Fine Print and the French Embassy in Nepal, announced the completion of the Nepali translation of Maurice Herzog's iconic book, Annapurna: Premier 8000. Virginie Corteval, the French Ambassador to Nepal, handed over the draft of the translation to the CEO of FinePrint, Niraj Bhari.

The seminal travelogue Annapurna, recounting the triumphant ascent of Annapurna—the first 8,000-meter peak ever climbed—has captivated readers worldwide since its initial publication in 1951. Translated into dozens of languages and selling millions of copies globally, the book has profoundly shaped the world's perception of Nepal, placing it firmly on the map as a premier destination for mountain climbing and adventure tourism.

This book was never translated into Nepali until now. This Nepali translation marks a significant step in making this legendary narrative accessible to a broader audience within Nepal, allowing them to connect with a story that has inspired adventurers and readers around the world.

The translation has been financed by the French Embassy and Alliance Française de Katmandou (AFK) had been commissioned for the translation.

Niraj Bhari, CEO of Fine Print, said, "Maurice Herzog's Annapurna has played a monumental role in popularizing Nepal, selling millions of copies worldwide. Yet, it was never translated into Nepali. By publishing this iconic work in Nepali, we aim to honor the incredible feat of this Franco-Nepali expedition team as well as of Herzog and Louis Lachenal and ensure that this important story reaches the people whose land and spirit it celebrates."

On this occasion, Ambassador Corteval remarked, "The French Embassy is proud to support the Nepali translation of Maurice Herzog's Annapurna: Premier 8000, a work that helped make Nepal known to the French and worldwide. It is only befitting that this tale will now be available in the Nepali language and thus allowing many Nepalis to read in their own language. We hope that this translation will create awareness among future generations in Nepal and elsewhere."

Herzog's Annapurna is more than just an account of courage and endurance; it is a story of human resilience, teamwork, and the indomitable spirit of exploration. Beyond its gripping



narrative, the book has played a pivotal role in bringing international attention to Nepal, spurring an influx of climbers and trekkers eager to experience the country's majestic Himalayas. This surge in tourism has significantly contributed to Nepal's economy and its global recognition as a hub for mountaineering and adventure.

Translated by Ashok Shakya and Rijendra Shrestha, teachers of French as a foreign language at the AFK, this account of the first ascent of Annapurna highlights the cultural and natural beauty of Nepal, inspiring countless individuals to explore its rich heritage and breathtaking landscapes. It has cemented Nepal's reputation as a land of unparalleled challenges and opportunities for mountaineers and adventure seekers alike.

The Nepali translation will be launched on June 3, 2025, commemorating the exact day Maurice Herzog and Louis Lachenal reached the summit of Annapurna 75 years ago.

Ministry Of Energy And GIZ Signs Agreement To Implement REEEP-GREEN Program

The Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation and GIZ Nepal on Friday signed the second amendment to the implementation agreement for the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Programme – Green Recovery and Empowerment with Energy in Nepal (REEEP-GREEN).

Secretary at the Ministry of Energy, Water, Resources and Irrigation Suresh Acharya, Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal, José Luis Viñuesa-Santamaria, Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy in Kathmandu Benjamin Seidel, and other senior officials attended the signing in ceremony.

This agreement formalizes the technical cooperation agreement between the governments of Nepal and Germany which was originally signed in January 2024, according to a press statement issued by the GIZ Nepal.

The amended agreement includes an additional funding of €6 million and a three-year extension of the project, it said.

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Programme is a technical cooperation project between the Government of Nepal, the Federal Republic of Germany (BMZ) and the European Union (EU).



The project is implemented by the GIZ, under the guidance of the Ministry of Energy and aims to enhance planning and implementation conditions for measures that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency in Nepal.

Japan To Provide Medical Equipment To Bayalpata Hospital In Achham District

MAEDA Toru, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, signed a grant contract with Kunda Dixit, Chairperson of Nyaya Health Nepal, for installing medical equipment at Bay-

alpata Hospital in Achham district.

The signing ceremony was held at the Embassy of Japan in Kathmandu today. The project is funded under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Government of Japan and includes a grant of USD 66,263 (approximately NPR 8.9 million).

The project will support the installation of medical equipment to be utilized for trauma care and orthopedic surgeries at Bayalpata Hospital.

Nyaya Health Nepal was established in 2008 to improve access to healthcare for underserved communities in rural Nepal. The organization operates Bayalpata Hospital in Sanfegbar Municipality in collaboration with the provincial and local government authorities as a core medical facility for Achham, Bajura and Doti districts of Sudurpaschim Province and Kalikot and Dailekh districts of Karnali Province.

Currently, the hospital faces challenges in providing timely diagnosis and some orthopedic surgeries due to deterioration and lack of medical equipment. It is expected that the equipment provided through the GGP will enable the medical services to be more patientfriendly and effective. The Embassy of Japan hopes that this project will improve the medical environment and promote access to quality health care in rural areas of the country. We also hope that this assistance will further strengthen the friendship between the people of Japan and Nepal.



GGP was established to implement projects that directly benefit people at the grassroots level for the socio-economic development of communities. Since 1991, over 200 GGP projects have been completed in Nepal.

Japanese Embassy In Nepal To Organize Japanese Film Festival 2025

The Embassy is organizing the Japanese film festival in Kathmandu and Pokhara with the aim of promoting Japan and her culture to the friendly people of Nepal.

The Embassy of Japan in Nepal organizing Japanese Film Festival 2025 in Kathmandu (January 31 and February 1) at Rastriya Nachghar, Jamal.

They are featuring 5 Japanese films, two on January 31 (Friday) and three on February 1 (Saturday). According to the Embassy, the entry to the film is free

NEWSNOTES

on a first-come-first-served basis.

Nepal Army Organized A Photo exhibition At NA Headquarters

A photo exhibition has kicked off at the Nepali Army (NA) Headquarters in Bhadrakali, Kathmandu.



The event titled “Nepali Army Photo and Extensive Exhibition-2081 BS” was inaugurated today by Chief of Army Staff, Ashok Raj Sigdel. It has been organized on the occasion of the upcoming Mahashivaratri festival that coincides with the Army Day next

month.

The exhibition will run till January 31 and entry is free.

It features photos, arms and ammunitions and equipment reflecting the NA history and present scenario.

Highlighted themes of the exhibition include the army uniform, the military band, aviation services, equestrian traditions, national parks and wildlife reserves, peacekeeping missions, development efforts, disaster management, sports, and Army Schools, among others.

According to NA Spokesperson Brigadier General Gaurav Kumar KC, the exhibition aims to inform the public about the various roles and responsibilities of the Nepali Army.

Manisha Koirala Appointed Goodwill Ambassador For HPV Vaccination Campaign

Ministry of Health and Population has appointed actress Manisha Koirala as goodwill ambassador for HPV vaccination campaign.

The government appointed actress Koirala as the goodwill ambassador for the National Immunization Program and HPV Vaccination Campaign. On the same occasion, speaking at a



program organized in the ministry, Health and Population Minister Pradeep Paudel said that this campaign has been started to promote HPV vaccination nationwide.

He said that the Ministry of Health and Population of the Government of Nepal will provide this vac-

cine to 1.6 million girls in the age group of 10 to 14 years in Nepal.

He informed that schools have been kept as centers for providing vaccines and this vaccine will be provided to girl students from class 6 to class 10. If they do not reach the school within

the vaccination period, they will be provided in the ward, he said.

He said that actress Koirala will continue to be the goodwill ambassador for all the vaccination campaigns that will be conducted for the next three years. Minister Paudel said that the campaign to make Nepal cancer-free in every way is working as per the objective of making it effective.

He mentioned that it is necessary to work not only in the curative field but also in the preventive field. Minister Paudel said that the government is making every possible effort to prevent Nepalis from getting sick.

He said, ‘This program has been started to promote HPV vaccination nationwide.

The Ministry of Health and Population of the Government of Nepal will provide this vaccine to 1.6 million girls in the age group of 10 to 14 years in Nepal. We have kept schools as centers for providing vaccines.

This vaccine will be provided to girl students from class 6 to class 10. If the 10 to 14-year-old age group does not reach the vaccination period, it will be provided in the ward. Its promotion is necessary. It is necessary to create a situation where no one is left behind.

Speaking at the event, actress Manisha Koirala said that she was happy to participate in this vaccination campaign. She clarified about its importance and said that she will participate in the campaign. The government is starting the HPV vaccination campaign from the 22nd of January.

India’s Additional Secretary Mahawar Paid A Courtesy Call On Home Minister Lekhak

Visiting Additional Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, India, Munu Mahawar, today called on Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak.



During the meeting, held at the Minister’s office in Singha Durbar, the two exchanged views on matters relating to Nepal-India border relations, mutual interests and concerns, according to the Home Minister’s private secretariat.

Similarly, matters concerning cross-border crime and its mitigation, cooperation between border security forces of the two countries and the construction of an integrated customs facility at Dodhara Chandani of Kanchanpur were discussed during the meeting.

India Celebrates 76th Republic Day

India celebrated its 76th Republic Day on Sunday with a colorful parade displaying its military might and cultural diversity on a boulevard in the heart of country’s capital. Indonesian president was the guest of honor.



Tens of thousands of people lined the road on a cold Sunday morning to watch the long parade to mark the anniversary of the official adoption of India's Constitution on Jan. 26, 1950, nearly three years after independence from British colonial

rule.

Soldiers from India's military and paramilitary, along with their bands, marched as the country's leaders and other guests watched. Various floats displayed India's cultural diversity with one showcasing the Maha Kumbh festival, the ongoing massive Hindu festival touted as the world's largest religious gathering.

The parade took place on Rajpath Avenue, built by India's former British rulers and lined by huge lawns, canals and rows of trees. The avenue was redeveloped as part of the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of Indian independence and renamed Kartavayapath, or the Boulevard of Duty, in 2022.

Visiting Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto attended the event as the chief guest and was flanked by India's president and prime minister. A 342-member band and marching contingent from the Indonesian National Armed Forces joined the parade, the first time the ASEAN country's troops have joined any foreign parade.

India traditionally invites foreign leaders to witness the spectacle. French President Emmanuel Macron was the guest of honor last year and former U.S. President Barack Obama in 2015. Ten Southeast Asian leaders watched the parade in 2018.

USAID Nepal Halts Aid For Four Projects

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has suspended financial assistance to Nepal.

USAID Nepal has written to the Ministry of Finance informing that grant assistance received for four projects has been suspended for 90 days, according to a statement issued by the spokesperson for the Ministry of Finance, Mahesh Bhattarai.

According to Bhattarai, USAID Nepal has informed through a letter that the grant assistance received by Nepal through the Development Objective Agreement (DOAG) signed between USAID and the government of Nepal on May 5, 2022, which is paid from the consolidated fund through the budget system (On-Budget On-Treasury), has been suspended for 90 days for four projects.

The suspended four projects include USAID Health Direct Financing Project, USAID Agricultural Direct Financing Project, USAID Education Direct Financing Project and USAID Inclusive Policy Direct Financing Project.

The ministry has informed all concerned agencies not to create any liabilities towards USAID resources under the suspended projects for the coming 90 days.

Meanwhile, in a statement, the Office of Spokesperson of the US Department of State on Sunday said that consistent with President Trump's Executive Order on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid, Secretary Rubio had paused all U.S. foreign assistance funded by or through the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for review.

He is initiating a review of all foreign assistance programmes to ensure they are efficient and consistent with U.S. foreign policy under the America First agenda, read the statement.

"President Trump stated clearly that the United States is no longer going to blindly dole out money with no return for the American people. Reviewing and realigning foreign assistance on behalf of hard-working taxpayers is not just the right thing to do, it is a moral imperative. The Secretary is proud to protect America's investment with a deliberate and judicious review of how we spend foreign assistance dollars overseas," read the statement received by this daily from the Embassy of the US in Kathmandu.



TARA (Nepal)-PHDCCI (India) Organised Leadership Development Program On "Global Transition In Leadership" At New Delhi

The Leadership Development Program on "Global Transition in Leadership", organized by the National Training and Research Academy (National TARA), Nepal in collaboration with the "India-Nepal Centre" of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI), concluded on January 24, 2025, at PHD House, New Delhi.

The program aimed to equip industry leaders with the skills and insights necessary to navigate the complexities of global leadership. A 24-members' delegation from Nepal attended this two-days Leadership Development Program jointly organised by National TARA (Nepal) and PHDCCI (India-Nepal Centre).

The inaugural session was marked by the signing of significant Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between National TARA and prestigious institutions, including PHDCCI (India-Nepal Centre), Sharda University (Agra) and Jaipuria School of Business. The historic collaboration between PHDCCI India-Nepal Centre (PHDCCI) underscores a commitment to fostering leadership development, knowledge sharing, and cross-border professional growth.



NEWSNOTES

Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma, Ambassador of Nepal to India, delivered a special address emphasizing the importance of leadership training in today's interconnected world. The two-days leadership program was addressed by Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Chair, India-Nepal Centre, PHDCCI & India's Former Ambassador to Nepal; Dr Jatinder Singh, Deputy Secretary General, PHDCCI; Atul K Thakur, Secretary, India-Nepal Centre, PHDCCI; AnukoolBhatnagar, Adviser, India-Nepal Centre, PHDCCI and Former MD & CEO, Nepal SBI Bank Ltd; Dr Jayanthi Ranjan, Vice Chancellor, Sharda University (Agra); Dr Rajiv R Thakur, Director General, Jaipuria School of Business; Ms PrabinaDahal, Executive Director, National TARA; Dr Seema Sharma, Professor (Economics), Department of Management Studies, IIT Delhi; Ms Neha Dhingra, Director, CLASP; Dushyant Thakor, Deputy Executive Director, WAIPA.

The program had a series of expert-led sessions focused on global leadership trends, adaptability, and resilience. Participants will explore the evolving landscape of leadership in a globalized world, strategies to navigate leadership challenges, and methods to adapt leadership styles for diverse cultural settings.

The Key Modules of Leadership Development Program included: The Changing Face of Leadership in a Globalized World, Navigating Leadership Challenges in Global Transitions, Adapting Leadership Styles for a Global Context, Leading in Times of Disruption , Digital Transformation for Leaders and Strategic Thinking for Future-Ready Leadership

Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. Jaishankar Thanks FM Dr Rana For Republic Day wishes

External Affairs Minister of India Dr S. Jaishankar has expressed gratitude to his Nepali counterpart Dr Arzu Rana Deuba for her greetings on the occasion of India's 76th



Republic Day, which was observed today.

Dr Rana extended her greetings and best wishes to the people and government of India through Minister Jaishankar today, wishing for India's continued progress and prosperity.

Stressing the strong relations between Nepal and India, she said, "As close neighbors, we value the strong bond of friendship and close relations nurtured through centuries of shared history, mutual respect, and collaboration across various fields. We will continue to further reinforce these relations in the years to come."

In response, Dr Jaishankar through social media, X (formerly twitter), expressed his appreciation and acknowledged Dr Rana's message.

Nepali Embassy Celebrated Chinese New Year In Beijing

The Embassy of Nepal in Beijing hosted an event to celebrate the Chinese New Year and Spring Festival at the Embassy premises today, inviting the Nepali community residing in Beijing.

The event aimed at sharing festive greetings, fostering goodwill, and strengthening the connection within the diaspora.



Dr. Krishna Prasad Oli delivered welcome remarks at the event extending best wishes to the Nepali diaspora on the occasion of the Chinese New Year and Spring Festival.

In his speech, Ambassador emphasized the significant role of the Nepali diaspora in supporting Nepal's pursuit of overall socio-economic development. Furthermore, he also stressed the importance of maintaining strong connections and nurturing the shared bond that unites Nepali communities with Chinese communities.

This event was followed by a luncheon. Over 150 individuals including journalists, professionals, professors, and students studying in different discipline participated in the event.

Through such initiatives, the Embassy remains committed to celebrate festivities fostering collaboration within Nepali community and exchange ideas to enhance overall bonding and relationship.

Nepal-China Joint Monitoring Of Border Areas

Security personnel of Nepal and China have conducted a joint monitoring of the northern border area in and around Humla. The border crossing in Hilsa of Namkha Rural Municipality-5 was monitored.

As per the decision of the security personnel of the two countries, the border and border posts in the in Hilsa were jointly monitored, said Armed Police Force (APF) Inspector Krishna Bahadur Ojha, who heads the APF Border Security Post in Hilsa.

The joint monitoring was conducted to prevent any untoward incident at the border crossing, to understand the condition of the border posts and to increase coordination among the security personnel.



The monitoring team included Chinese security personnel from China and the Armed Police Force and District Police from Nepal.

Meanwhile, Nepali security personnel have been patrolling from Hilsa towards Nara and Limi. The Armed Police Force has been deployed in border security since its establishment in Hilsa transit point on the northern border in 2077 BS.

Deputy Superintendent of the Armed Police Force Devraj Rai said that although snowfall in northern Namkha during winter closes the movement in Yari and Hilsa the Armed Police Force has been deployed in border security all year round. (RSS)

Nepal Library Association Launches First Annual Magazine, Intellect Horizon

Nepal Library Association (NLA) proudly announces the publication of its first annual magazine, on the occasion of International Education Day. The inaugural ceremony took place in Kathmandu today, marking a significant milestone in the association’s efforts to promote library science and the importance of libraries in education.

The event was graced by prominent educationists, library professionals, and distinguished guests from various sectors-like the Chief of Keiser Library, Yadhav Chandra Niroula,



the Chief of Nepal National Library Pradeep Bhattarai, the Undersecretary of Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, Arun Kumar Rai, Former Head of Central Department of Library and Information Science, Nira

Manandhar, Former Chief of Tribhuvan University Central Library, Sita Sharma.

The Chief guest of the program, Dashrath Thapa, Former Chief of Nepal National Library along with Special Guest / Reviewer of the magazine, Mr. Laxman Viyogi, the Chief Editor of Urja Khabar and a renowned journalist, officially unveiled the magazine, commending the NLA’s initiative to provide a dedicated platform for sharing knowledge, experiences, and research in the field of library and information science.

Intellect Horizon aims to serve as a vital resource for library professionals, educators, and students by featuring insightful articles, research papers, case studies, and updates on the latest trends and developments in library science. The magazine underscores the NLA’s commitment to fostering a culture of learning and innovation in Nepal’s academic and library communities.

In his keynote address, Ramesh Niroula, the Editor-in-Chief of the magazine highlighted the critical role of libraries in advancing education, emphasizing their significance in creating equitable access to knowledge and bridging the information

gap in society.

The President of NLA, Mr. Pushpa Raj Subedi, expressed gratitude to all editorial team, contributors and stakeholders who made the publication of Intellect Horizon possible. “This magazine represents the collective efforts of our library professionals and stands as a testament to our dedication to enhancing the role of libraries in education and community development,” he remarked.

The launch ceremony concluded with a panel discussion on “Libraries as Pillars of Education and Development,” where experts shared insights into leveraging library resources to foster innovation and lifelong learning.

The Nepal Library Association invites everyone to explore and feedback Intellect Horizon, which is now available in print and digital formats. For more information, visit the NLA website at <https://nla.org.np/>.

Nepali Embassy In Bangladesh Organized Painting Competition

The Embassy organized, in collaboration with the Bangladesh-Nepal Friendship Society, a ‘Painting Competition’ among school-level students at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka this morning.

The Competition was held under the theme “Nepal Through My Eyes”, with an objective of providing a platform for participating students to creatively express their unique perspectives on Nepal through their artwork while celebrating the bonds of friendship between Nepal and Bangladesh.

As he inaugurated the Competition, Ambassador Ghanshyam Bhandari appreciated the students for participation and encouraged them to bring their ideas of Nepal to life on canvas through their unique artistic expressions. Underscoring that art serves as a powerful medium to foster cross-cultural understanding and bring societies together, he urged the young artists to continue unleashing their potential. President of Bangladesh-Nepal Friendship Society Mr. Moshir Ahmed welcomed the participants of the competition.



Around 350 students from 91 schools in Dhaka took part in the Competition. The participants were categorized into two age categories: 6-10 years and 11-16 years.

Four winners as well as 10 best artworks from each category will be selected by an eminent panel of judges. A separate prize distribution ceremony will be organized later to felicitate the winners and selected participants.

BUSINESS BRIEF

President Dhakal Urges The Government To Create Conducive Environment For Investment

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), said that if there is a favorable business environment and economic activity, revenue will automatically increase.

Addressing a program organized to mark 73rd International



Custom Day by Department of Custom, President Dhakal expressed the view that if the government's activities are focused on creating a clean business-friendly environment rather than setting annual and monthly targets for revenue collection, both business and revenue will increase.

“Our customs administration, which is moving with the main objective of trade, facilitation, clean and fair revenue collection, safety and protection of society, has given high importance to revenue collection in practice. However, for the overall development of the country, it is preferable for the long-term interest of the country to move ahead with trade facilitation as the first priority,” he said.

President Dhakal said that even if automatic data exchange can be done through bilateral agreements with the main countries where foreign trade is conducted to encourage legal trade and control illegal trade, the problem of under- and over-digitization and classification in the customs office can be reduced to a large extent.

President Dhakal said that even if automatic data exchange can be done through bilateral agreements with the main countries where foreign trade is conducted to encourage legal trade and control illegal trade, the problem of under- and over-digitization and classification in the customs office can be reduced to a large extent.

FNCCI, CNI And NCC Call For Withdraw The Protest Against Cable Car Construction

FNCCI, CNI, and NCC are urging for the protest against the construction of the cable car to be withdrawn. The three private sector bodies have expressed concern that the opposition will harm the investment-friendly environment. They have called for an end to the strike in the Koshi Province, emphasizing that it is disrupting educational, economic, and social activities in the region. The organizations have highlighted the importance of supporting development and tourism in the Pathibhara (Makkumlung) area through the Kevalkar construction project. They have warned that such actions will negatively impact the country's infrastructure development and create difficulties for the general public.

He emphasized that the actions causing hindrances to development projects will negatively impact the investment-friendly environment necessary for the country's

infrastructure growth. The private sector's investments in various sectors like industry, trade, banking, energy, agriculture, tourism, and communication have significantly contributed to Nepal's economic prosperity. The recent disruptions in development activities will deter both

domestic and foreign investors, affecting the progress made in these sectors. The private sector's substantial investments in tourism have created numerous job opportunities for Nepalis and the

infrastructure development in Pathibhara (Makkumlung) will enhance travel accessibility for all, including the elderly and disabled. This project will not only improve infrastructure but also boost

religious, cultural, and adventure tourism, support agricultural and handicraft businesses, and generate employment for the local community.

The statement highlights that the construction of Kevalkar will positively impact the country's tourism development. It emphasizes the importance of local agreement and support for the project.

The private sector views external interference in the construction as a hindrance to development and investment in Nepal. They urge dialogue and cooperation among the local community, relevant agencies, and private sector to ensure the smooth progress of the Pathibhara (Makkumlung) Kevalkar project.

Meanwhile, the presidents of Koshi and Gandaki and Karnali Provinces of the Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industry have also issued separate statements today and said that the Federation State Committee has drawn attention to this matter.



They believe that in order to revive the economy, which has been affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, the Nepalese government and the private sector need to work together to remove obstacles hindering development efforts.

External factors are hindering construction projects that have been approved in accordance with local sentiments and regulations, sending a negative message to potential domestic and foreign investors crucial for Nepal's economic growth.

In their statement, they have mentioned that they are providing employment to tens of thousands of people by con-

structuring tourism infrastructures in various locations across the country and significantly contributing to the economy through revenue.

They have expressed their understanding that the ongoing opposition to the cable car project led by the country's business group is detrimental to the investment environment in the country rather than fostering it.

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Ltd Has shifted Its Ghanthgar Branch To Exhibition Marg

Jyoti Prakash Pandey, Chief Executive Officer of



Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited (NIMBL), inaugurated the branch at Exhibition Marg Kathmandu. Nepal Investment Mega Bank Ltd. has shifted its Ghanthgar branch office

to Exhibition Marg in Kathmandu.

He said that this branch will provide excellent banking services and facilities to the customers. All banking services have been started from the exhibition road branch since Sunday.

The bank has relocated its branch office located at Ward No. 28 Ghantaghar, Kathmandu District, Kathmandu Metropolitan City, to Exhibition Marg within the same ward on Sunday, January 13, 2081.

At present, the bank has 283 branch offices, 65 extension counters, 66 branchless banking and 266 ATMs. The branch network can also be viewed from the bank's website: <https://www.nimb.com.np/personal-banking/branches>

Electricity Supply Has Commenced In Pokhara Using An Underground Distribution System

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has initiated the supply of electricity to the tourist city of Pokhara through an underground distribution system. The Pokhara-Bharatpur Distribution System Strengthening Project has completed the undergrounding, strengthening, and automation of the electricity distribution system, enabling electricity supply to customers in the area.

In the initial phase, the distribution line from Pokhara's Kundahar 132-11 kV substation to the West has been undergrounded, providing electricity to approximately 300 customers in the region.

The transmission and distribution system has been undergrounded in coordination with the Mugling-Pokhara road extension project, removing overhead lines and poles. The area now looks aesthetically pleasing without the sight of twisted wires, as the wires have been buried underground.

Initially, the distribution system up to Kundahar substation was planned to be underground, but later it was extended to the main entrance of the airport to prevent passengers from seeing the city cluttered with tangled wires as they leave Pokhara International Airport.

NEA's Managing Director, Kullman Ghising, oversaw the underground distribution system project and directed the gradual provision of electricity to completed areas while removing overhead structures.

Ghising supervised the work in key tourist areas like lakeside and the airport in Pokhara. He instructed the Gandaki regional office chief and project executive director to promptly finish the remaining lakeside work in collaboration with the Metropolitan Municipality, road office, and other agencies, ensuring power supply through the underground system.

The Pokhara distribution center is currently undergrounding the 11 kV and 400 volt lines in the main cities and roads of Pokhara, while also laying optical fiber in those areas. Anand Subedi, the project head, reported that the overall construction progress in the Pokhara region has reached 54 percent.



Chief Subedi mentioned that with the completion of work in the Max Street area at Lakeside, electricity will soon be supplied through the underground system. By incorporating optical fibers alongside electric wires, internet, telecommunications, and cable television service providers can offer their services using the optical fibers.

The underground system is expected to be safer than the current overhead distribution system and will contribute to maintaining the city's aesthetic appeal by eliminating unsightly wires.

With a reliable, high-quality, and safe electricity supply from the underground distribution system, disruptions due to weather conditions like wind, rain, and lightning will be minimized, reducing property damage caused by electrical accidents.

The Pokhara-Bharatpur distribution system strengthening

BUSINESS BRIEF

project has commenced with funding from the government and a concessional loan from the Asian Development Bank. Tata Project Ltd., India was awarded a contract in October 2078 for \$16.7 million to carry out the construction. The project aims to finish the work in the Pokhara area by July of next year.

IME Group's Ella Comfort Hotel has commenced Operations In Baglung District

IME Group has invested in the operation of Ella Comfort Hotel in Baglung. The hotel, located in Baglung Bazar, will offer high-quality services to tourists and visitors to the Gandaki region and local tourist attractions accessible via the Kali Gandaki Corridor and Madhya Pahari Lok Marg.

The Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation, Badri Prasad Pandey, officially inaugurated the hotel's services during a ceremony in Baglung on Saturday.

During the opening ceremony, Minister Pandey praised IME Group for their investment in tourism infrastructure, emphasizing the positive impact it has had on Nepal's tourism industry. He highlighted tourism as a key driver of economic growth for Nepal and expressed the government's commitment to its promotion.

Minister Krishna Pathak of Gandaki Province Government



also commended IME Group for their contributions to tourism infrastructure development nationwide and encouraged further investment in Gandaki Province.

He noted that President Dhakal's investments span all seven provinces, with some reported obstacles in certain areas. He extended an invitation for IME Group to consider investing in Gandaki Province. "We, the people of Gandaki, extend a warm welcome to you to develop more tourism infrastructure."

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, Chairman of IME Group and Chairman of Federation of Nepal Industry and Commerce, expressed his confidence that the newly opened hotel in Baglung will help boost tourism in the region.

He emphasized his commitment to investing in tourism infrastructure, such as hotels and taxis, across all seven provinces of Nepal. This investment aims to address the needs of Nepalis who often seek opportunities abroad due to limited investment and job prospects in the country.

Dhakal highlighted the potential benefits of investing in the tourism and hydropower sectors, stating that such investments can lead to economic growth and improve the standard of living for citizens. Therefore, the focus remains on investing in these sectors to bring about positive outcomes.

This newly inaugurated hotel in Baglung will offer high-quality services and facilities for tourists and other guests, aiming to attract more visitors from India and China through the Kali Gandaki Corridor via Sunauli in India and the Korla border with China. The hotel is expected to boost tourism, economic growth, and cultural development in Baglung and the wider Kali Gandaki region.

Federal MPs Deepak Giri and Jeevan Pariyar, along with Baglung Municipality Mayor Basant Shrestha and Baglung Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Naresh Kandel, highlighted the positive impact of the hotel on tourism infrastructure in the area and encouraged further investment. With an investment of approximately 30 crore rupees, this hotel is set to raise the bar for quality accommodation options in Baglung.

Spread across almost 4 ropanis of land, Ella Comfort Baglung features 30 well-designed rooms, including 27 guest rooms, two suites, and a Pent House. Each room is meticulously prepared to offer a unique experience in hospitality.

Sachin Dhakal, the Head of Ella Hotels and Resorts, emphasized that the brand aims to redefine stays in Baglung by creating unforgettable experiences. Dhakal stated, "At Ella Comfort Baglung, we don't just offer rooms; we craft memories that will linger long after our guests have left."

Situated just 1.5 hours away from Pokhara Airport, the hotel is easily accessible for both local and international travelers, with regular public transport services available every 30 minutes between Pokhara and Baglung.

Ella Comfort Baglung is the initial step in the brand's expansion plan for Ella hotels. Plans are underway to open an Ella hotel in Gaidakotma, Nawalparasi, with future plans to extend services to all seven provinces of Nepal.

Himalaya Airlines Supports CSR Initiative Of CEAN For Free Medical Camp

Collaborating with the Chinese Enterprises Association of Nepal (CEAN) for their Corporate Social Responsibility initiative, Himalaya Airlines supported to organize a Free Health Check-Up for the children of Prayas Nepal on January 22, 2025. The 16th batch of China Medical Team conducted the free clinic activity with much warmth and care. With their superb medical skills and full love, many senior medical experts efficiently carried out a series of

comprehensive examinations and innovative health education activities in response to the physical conditions and health needs of the children.

On the occasion of the Chinese New Year, Chinese Enterprises Association of Nepal generously donated the cheque worth Rs 6 lakh to take care of the daily essential supplies including grocery, snacks and toiletry items etc. with a year-long supply for the children.

As a member of the association, Himalayan Airlines is an outstanding example of long-term funding to Prayas Nepal since 2017, also to few other orphanages. At the event, Himalaya Airlines' President Mr. Zhou Enyong affectionately shared "Everything we do may be a small contribution, but the innocent smiles and tenacity of these children gives us an endless amount of strength. Seeing them growing up



here healthy and happy is the biggest motivation we've always had."

Since its establishment in 2003, Prayas Nepal Orphanage has remained a purely non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to improving the lives of underprivileged and orphan children. At present, the orphanage cares for 18 children, providing them with warm shelter, quality education and thoughtful psychological support, while providing life skills training to help children develop independent and confident personalities and prepare them well for the future of social and independent living.

Gautam Buddha International Airport To Handle Aircraft In Low Visibility

The Gautam Buddha International Airport (GBIA) has introduced a new technology, Required Navigation Performance-Authorisation

Required (RNP-AR), to enable flights to operate even in low-visibility conditions. This system launched on Thursday is expected to significantly reduce flight disruptions caused by poor visibility.

Earlier, the airport had planned to install an Instrument Landing System (ILS) to address visibility issues. But due to non-approval from India, these plans were abandoned. The RNP-AR system, which relies on satellite-based navigation,

was then adopted as an alternative.

The GBIA often experiences severe visibility issues particularly during the winter months of December, January, and February due to dense fog. This has frequently disrupted both domestic and international flights.

The RNP-AR system is designed to mitigate these challenges by allowing aircraft to land safely in lower visibility conditions, informed General Manager of the GBIA, Pratap Babu Tiwari.

The RNP-AR system lowers the minimum visibility requirement for landing aircraft.

Previously, aircrafts needed a visibility of 1,800 meters to land using the Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) system while the new RNP-AR system facilitates an aircraft to land with a visibility of just 900 meters, according to Tiwari.

Several international airlines including Qatar Airways, Thai Air Asia, Fly Dubai, and Jazeera Airways had suspended their operations at the GBIA due to visibility issues.

However, with the implementation of RNP-AR, these airlines are expected to resume their flight services to and from the airport.

Fly Dubai has already resumed flights while Jazeera Airways is planning to restart operations from February 1.

However, Qatar Airways is yet to confirm its plans.

The RNP-AR system has been successfully implemented at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. The system at TIA facilitates in minimum 1,100 meters visibility. After a 42-day notification period, the system was officially activated at the Bhairahawa airport on Thursday.

While the system is now operational, foreign airlines will need to obtain approval from their respective aviation authorities and

train their pilots before utilising the RNP-AR system at the GBIA, said Tiwari. So far, Fly Dubai has expressed its interest in the implementation of RNP-AR system.



The RNP-AR system is designed for narrow-body (A320) and wide-body (A330) aircrafts. Airlines operating these aircraft types will be required to equip their aircraft with the necessary systems to utilise the RNP-AR approach.

Revisiting Transitional Justice (Reflections In The Shadow Of History)

“Never Again” is the key message of the annual Holocaust Commemoration Day – January 27. Ultimate guarantee of non-repetition of the violent conflict is considered one of the major pillars of the Truth and Reconciliation Process which is expected to ensure gradual return to peace and harmony in a socially ruptured and traumatized society. The wounds of atrocities inflicted on the innocent Nepalese during the ten-year-long Maoist conflict between 1996 and 2006 will remain in the memory of surviving victims and their families for ever. While remembering the sad experiences of atrocities in South Africa during the Apartheid and its peace process, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Chairman of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), said in a **Book of Joy** (Douglas, 2015): “Forgive, but Don’t Forget”. Memorials are thus needed for future generations to learn about the nation’s past sufferings for ensuring non-recurrence.

Nepal’s journey toward transitional justice has been arduous, marked by incremental progress, systemic challenges, and the enduring pain of victims. With some reforms relating to reparative and restorative justice introduced by the Third Amendment of the Transitional Justice (TJ) Act in August 2024, renewed hopes were ignited for addressing the legacies of Nepal’s decade-long armed conflict. The recent failure of the Search Committee to help constitute two responsible new commissions—the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP)—to steer the peace process, and the failure of the incumbent government to nominate a new Search Committee as advised are quite disappointing. The continued interplay between legal frameworks, promises of the government and political leaders, supportive institutional roles of the international community and NHRC, and victims’ fading expectations, however, still retain hope to shape the nation’s path toward discovery of truth, reconciliation and justice.

Progress Through Reforms

The Third Amendment to Nepal’s TJ Act, enacted in August 2024, attempted to align the domestic framework and the Supreme Court’s directives with international human rights standards. It introduced provisions for investigating gross human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and rape. The amendment also addressed criticisms of earlier commissions, such as their lack of independence, resource inadequacy and operational inefficacy.

However, skepticism persists. Critics, specifically Amnesty International, ICJ and Human Rights Watch, including some victims and human rights experts, argue that despite a few reforms—the amendment falls short of fully ensuring accountability and non-repetition. Provisions that allow sentence reduction, amnesties for certain crimes and vague definitions of crimes and justice mechanisms continue to be points of contention, particularly for victims and human rights organizations.

Progress Through Reforms

NHRC and Supreme Court’s Role



BY: DR. SURYA DHUNGEL

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has played a pivotal role in documenting conflict-era abuses, advocating for victims’ rights and legal reforms. The improved version of the TJ Act that NHRC collaborated with victim’s network and civil society for reform is said to be victim-focused. It has recommended action against perpetrators and emphasized reparations for victims. This requires the formation of a competent and impartial Commission to professionally and strategically handle the complex problems of the post conflict society. However,

the NHRC’s recommendations often remain unimplemented, highlighting a gap between institutional advocacy and state action. In close cooperation with UN system and other stakeholders including victim’s groups, however, NHRC is preparing to create a team of experts to work on TJ process closely with TRC, CIEDP, civil society and federal institutions.

The Supreme Court of Nepal has also been instrumental in safeguarding and shaping justice. Landmark decisions, such as those rejecting blanket amnesties for gross human rights violations and narrow definitional notion, have strengthened the moral and legal foundations of Nepal’s TJ process as analysed by some scholars comparing it with Dowrykin’s interpretive and justice theory in relation to truth-finding within a TJ process (Helen Gyr, April 2023). Despite this, political interference and weak enforcement devices have hindered the judiciary’s impact on ground-level justice delivery. In the latest public interest writ petitions filed by Advocate Birendra Raj Thapaliya (August 2022) and Gyanendra Raj Aaran (February 2023), the Supreme Court has slammed the Government for non-enforcement of NHRC decisions, undue delays in legal reforms, and for its failure to steer the pace of Transitional Justice process.

The Unhealed Wounds

For many victims of the conflict, justice remains a distant dream. Families of the disappeared and brutally killed continue their decades-long wait for answers. Survivors of torture and sexual violence grapple with stigma, trauma, economic marginalization, and betrayals. Victim groups have repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with both the TRC and CIEDP, citing delays, lack of transparency, and inadequate reparations. Treatment of unhealed wounds is a far cry.

The failure to involve victims meaningfully in decision-making processes has compounded their frustration. Many feel that the TJ process is more about political expediency than genuine reconciliation. The top leaders of the major political parties have not given priority to resolve the issue. Only when the international community, including the UN senior officials and diplomatic corps, takes up the issue at the highest level, the political leaderships and government tend to listen to them. Voices of the victims and human rights groups are normally ignored. Failure of the two previous Commissions to produce any results and inability of the latest Search Committee to constitute new commissions is mainly due to differences of the political parties in picking the leaders of their choice.

Present-Day Challenges

Nepal's TJ process faces numerous challenges, including:

1 Political Interference: Successive governments have often used transitional justice as a tool for political bargaining rather than a genuine commitment to accountability. Unwillingness and inability to creating credible TRC and CIEDP led by competent persons with extensive experiences and comparative knowledge of these complex and sensitive processes, has hitherto remained a key problem with the major political parties. The tendency of looking for a loyal political leadership in Commissions suitable to the concerned political party may further delay the process for another few years. NHRC and human rights groups do advocate for a search of right leadership but interest groups prevail in preventing them for right selection. International community also back out from offering appropriate advice at the crucial moment, as they refrain from being blamed.

2 Resource Constraints: Inadequate financial and human resources support have hampered the efficiency of commissions. The government is said to have unofficially projected a tentative cost of ten billion rupees for creating a basket fund. Absence of government's own commitment, however, appears to have deterred the donor community to openly make commitments from their side.

3 Public Trust Deficit: Persistent delays and perceived biases have eroded trust in the process, and the disappointed victim groups no more have faith in the promises of the divided political leaderships. Politicization of the TJ process is still a hurdle. As stated earlier, NHRC has been preparing its plan of actions to closely monitor and support the TJ process in coordination with victim groups, civil society and international community within the framework of constitutional and legislative mandates, and in compliance of Supreme Court directives and international principles.

4 Implementation of the Act: Poor record of Nepal to ensure implementation of laws and institutional mandates, especially when a complex and sensitive tasks of global significance have to be undertaken, comparative knowledge and human resource gaps, including lack of full support from State leadership and international community could pose a huge challenge as continued support is needed from them even after the Commissions submit reports and their recommendations have to be executed. NHRC and civil society must be activated and remain watchful from the beginning till the reports are fully complied with. Public consultations and hearings during the truth-seeking and evidence collection processes require full security assurance by the state and both commissions. Witness protection, and confidentiality in truth-seeking of sexual abuses, demand special security arrangements. Logistic and forensic requirements are equally challenging.

5 International Pressure: While international bodies advocate for adherence to global standards, balancing external expectations with domestic realities remains complex. International experience and support to develop Nepal's own innovative device of guaranteeing non-recurrence of conflict. Instituting a new centre of memorials by involving universities and schools, and modernizing the modes of experience sharing through advance technology, as has been done recently in Cambodia to learn about Khmer Rouge Trial, is an example.

6 International Jurisdiction: Possible accountability to the international jurisdiction, even if Nepal is not a party to ICC, is somewhere in the back of mind of some political leaders and other potential actors who could have been remotely involved in perpetrating grave human rights violations. Even the Supreme Court in a case last year

has cited the 29 issues of Nepal that the Human Rights Committee has taken up in Geneva under ICCPR, a case of external jurisdiction. An effective national human rights handling system always mitigates the risk of international jurisdiction. Hence the urgency of the national TRC vehicle.

7 Role of Media: Above all, it is vital to recognize the importance of constructive role of media in disseminating the message of human rights situation all the time for the success of the TJ process as a nationally owned human rights protection system.

Linking with Holocaust Commemoration

As the world observes International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, Nepal's transitional justice efforts can draw valuable lessons from history. The Holocaust stands as a stark reminder of atrocities the humanity is capable of and the resilience of survivors in demanding justice. It underscores the importance of collective memory, acknowledgment of victims' suffering, and the imperative of preventing future atrocities.

Nepal's pursuit of justice and reconciliation must honour the resilience of its victims and commit to a future rooted in accountability and human rights. Like the global commitment to "Never Again," Nepal must strive to ensure that the lessons of its conflict are not forgotten and that justice serves as a foundation for lasting peace. A blend of different TJ models in the form of restorative justice, reparative justice, reconciliatory justice, truth-seeking justice, apologetic justice, prosecutorial and punitive justice may be found reflected in the updated Transitional Justice Act through the third amendment of August 2024. Skilled and fair hands are needed to balance the ideals ingrained in different models of justice.

Some elements and structural framework of Colombia and South Africa, and vague traditional notions of locally practiced justice system found in East Timor, Congo and even Angola, may be traced in our amended legislation and local federal devices. Thus available local tools could be very useful out-of-court devices. The current challenge is how effectively we can get the diverse conceptual and legal (traditional) tools applied from the hesitant and under-equipped State leadership. Bridging the gap of victim's increasing trust-deficit on the commitment of government and political parties, on the one hand, and the effectiveness of the post-conflict TRC and CIEDP mechanisms to deliver justice in reality, on the other, is a big challenge. This requires the assurance of victim's participation at all stages and levels of TJ process. Local government's role in TJ process is not clearly defined but it will unfold when public consultation process, truth seeking and public hearing efforts are initiated by ensuring public security for participatory dialogue, evidence collection and witness protection.

In conclusion, revisiting Nepal's transitional justice process is not just about addressing the past but also about shaping a future where the rights and dignity of all citizens are upheld. As the nation reflects on its progress and challenges, it must reaffirm its commitment to justice, empathy, discovery of truth, reconciliation and non-repetition—a commitment that resonates globally on Holocaust Remembrance Day and after. Now is the right time for Nepal, especially the government and political leadership, to move the stalled TJ process forward without further delay. Let this Holocaust Day of 2025 January 27 remind us all to keep eyes open and be vigilant, and commit to 'Never Again'.

Dr. Dhungel is Senior Advocate and Professor, and currently Human Rights Commissioner

Commemoration Of The Holocaust

Honoring The Victims

The International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust was observed in Kathmandu

By A CORRESPONDENT

The Embassy of Israel and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany commemorated the International Day of Remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust with a solemn “Memorial Event and Exhibition” titled *Auschwitz-A Place on Earth*.

The event served as a poignant reminder of the importance of remembrance, solidarity, and the global commitment to “never forget, never again.”

The Holocaust, which aimed to exterminate the entire Jewish population, was a systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews (including 1.5 million children) by the Nazi regime and its collaborators in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s.

In Kathmandu, the International Day of Remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust was observed with a solemn Memorial Event and Exhibition titled *“Auschwitz-A Place on Earth.”* During the event, six candles were lit in honor of the six million Jewish individuals who perished during the Holocaust. Additionally, a poignant testimony from a Holocaust survivor was shared, offering a firsthand account of the unimaginable suffering and resilience during that dark period. #HolocaustRemembrance

Dr. Surya Prasad Sharma Dhungel, a Member of the National Human Rights Commission, emphasized the importance of learning from history, stating that the Holocaust was not just a tragedy for the Jewish people or Europe, but a failure of humanity itself. He highlighted the dangers of normalizing hatred, unchecked prejudice, and denied justice. Ambassador Dean R. Thompson of the United States of America expressed solidarity and stressed the collective responsibility to combat anti-Semitism, racism, and all forms of hatred and intolerance. He conveyed greetings from Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who reiterated

his support for Holocaust survivors and their descendants, emphasizing the importance of remembering and honoring the tragic period.

Benjamin Siedel, Deputy Chief of Mission, speaking on behalf of German Ambassador Dr. Thomas Heinrich Prinz, emphasized that while the day serves as a remembrance, it also calls for action. He pointed out that the Holocaust did not start with gas chambers but with hateful words that led to division and dehumanization.



He underscored the shared responsibility of democratic citizens to stand against anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, and discrimination.

Shmulik Arie Bass, Ambassador of Israel, emphasized the importance of commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day to honor the victims and educate future generations, ensuring that such a tragedy is never repeated. He highlighted the significance of the United Nations General Assembly’s special session on January 27, 2005, which marked the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The session included a Yad Vashem Museum exhibition at the UN building in New York and the singing of the anthem “Hatikvah.” This event led to the establishment of a UN Holocaust remembrance department and the designation of January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day through General As-

sembly Resolution 60/7.

The exhibition “Auschwitz- A Place on Earth” aimed to raise awareness about the horrors of the Holocaust and the importance of preventing such atrocities in the future. The memorial ceremony included the lighting of six candles in memory of the six million Jewish victims and a poignant testimony from a Holocaust survivor, sharing their experiences of suffering and survival.

Dr. Surya Prasad Sharma Dhungel, a Member of the National Human Rights Commission, emphasized the importance of learning from history by stating, “The Holocaust was not just a tragedy for the Jewish people or Europe; it was a failure of humanity itself. It serves as a stark reminder of the dangers of normalizing hatred, unchecked prejudice, and denied justice.”

Dean R. Thompson, the Ambassador of the United States of America, expressed solidarity and stressed the collective responsibility to combat anti-Semitism, racism, and all forms of hatred and intolerance. He conveyed greetings from Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who reiterated his strong support for Holocaust survivors and their descendants. Thompson stated, “I am confident that we will continue to work together to remember and honor the victims of this devastating period.” Ambassador of Israel, Shmulik Arie Bass, underscored the importance of commemorating the Holocaust to educate future generations and prevent such a tragedy from happening again. He noted that on January 27, 2005, the United Nations General Assembly held a special session to mark the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, emphasizing the significance of remembering the Holocaust to ensure it is never repeated. The event also featured the exhibition, “Auschwitz- A Place on Earth” aiming at educating about the human-made brutality and delivering the message that such cruelty should never be repeated.

Connecting Communities And Tourism In Gandaki



BY: MANISHA PUDASAINI

The Gantabya Gandaki event, organized by Kantipur Media Group in Pokhara, brought together political leaders, government officials, entrepreneurs, experts, and local residents to discuss the future of the province. Topics included tourism policies, economic growth, industry, education, health, and employment, all crucial for shaping Gandaki's development and integrating communities into the tourism sector.

Tourism plays a significant role in Gandaki, offering adventure, cultural experiences, and stunning landscapes. From the Annapurna Circuit to Begnas Lake, the province caters to a diverse range of travelers. However, there are challenges in diversifying tourism beyond trekking and ensuring sustainable, authentic experiences that truly represent local communities. Unlocking Gandaki's potential requires a strategic vision, investment, and engaging storytelling that actively involves local communities.

Gandaki is currently facing challenges in terms of federalism and tourism development. While federalism aims to empower local communities, there are issues with coordination, infrastructure, and resources. To ensure the success of tourism in the region, these challenges need to be addressed so that communities can fully benefit from the industry.

Sung Village in Vietnam serves as a successful example of community-driven tourism, where visitors can participate in activities such as rice farming, tea tasting, and traditional crafts. Similarly, Nepal's homestays in Ghale Gaun, Bhujung, Sirubari, and Sikles have the potential for success but are hindered by issues like marketing, infrastructure, and visibility. By focusing on eco-tourism and cultural heritage, Gandaki can connect local communities with the global tourism market, providing authentic and immersive experiences.

Tourism in Gandaki goes beyond trekking guides and hotels; it encompasses local farmers, artisans, musicians, and storytellers. By involving these communities in tourism through initiatives like farm-to-table programs, handicrafts, and cultural performances, deeper visitor engagement can be achieved, leading to a more sustainable and inclusive tourism approach.

Despite the digital age, Gandaki's digital presence is not fully utilized. A robust digital strategy that includes captivating visuals, authentic visitor testimonials, and part-

nerships with influencers can help amplify the voices of local communities and highlight their unique cultural offerings. Virtual reality trekking previews and interactive online experiences can position Gandaki as a global tourism destination, encouraging travelers to engage with local communities in innovative ways.

Women are integral to Gandaki's tourism sector, yet their contributions are often overlooked. Whether managing homestays, operating local eateries, or running crafts businesses, women play a vital role in the tourism industry. By addressing challenges related to access to capital, skills development, and market opportunities, women can be empowered to assume leadership positions and be more fully integrated into the tourism sector.

As more tourists are drawn to Gandaki's stunning natural beauty, it is crucial to address challenges such as waste management, overcrowding, and environmental degradation.

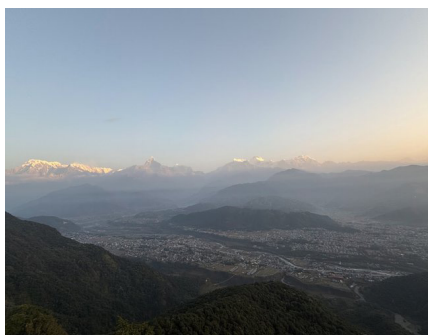
Implementing responsible tourism practices, such as eco-friendly policies and sustainable trekking guidelines, is essential to safeguard Gandaki's environment for future generations. Engaging local communities in these initiatives will help ensure that they play an active role in preserving the region's heritage and natural beauty.

Encouraging the use of reusable water bottles, establishing plastic-free zones, and promoting tourism in less-

er-known areas will not only alleviate the strain on popular destinations but also create economic opportunities for more communities.

With the right strategies, stronger governance, and community-driven initiatives, Gandaki has the potential to become a model for sustainable and inclusive tourism. By investing in the people of Gandaki, including guides, farmers, artisans, and dreamers, tourism can improve local livelihoods, preserve cultural heritage, and safeguard the environment. Additionally, improved intergovernmental cooperation and resource integration will help bridge gaps between the three levels of government, ensuring that policies translate into tangible benefits for both the tourism industry and local communities.

Pudasaini, who recently completed her Master's degree in Development Studies at Kathmandu University, has a keen interest in migration, tourism, and sustainable livelihoods. She is committed to linking global ideas with local solutions to promote fair growth and build resilient communities through research and practical projects. She can be reached at pudasaini.manisha@gmail.com



Lingering Peace Accord And Peacebuilding In Nepal



BY: GOVIND PRASAD THAPA, PHD, MA, BL, MPA

“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

— Mother Teresa

Background

Despite being a small country and the land of Lord Buddha, Nepal has fought in many wars, battles, and skirmishes. These include the Anglo-Nepalese War, the Nepalese-Tibetan War, and the First and Second Sino-Nepalese Wars. The wars involving Nepal resulted in immense loss of lives and land. Wikipedia has published long lists of several wars, conflicts, and communal riots in Nepal (Wikipedia). The Nepalese-Tibetan War (1855-1856) exhausted Nepal’s finances and ultimately resulted in a peace treaty that granted Nepal diplomatic and commercial rights in Tibet. The first Sino-Nepalese War (1788-1792) ended with Nepal being the winner in this war. In the second Sino-Nepalese War (1792), Nepal lost the war. Another war was the Gurkha-Sikh War (1809) in which Nepal again faced defeat, and Nepal was victorious in the Limbuwan-Gorkha War (1771-1776).

The Democracy Demonstrations in Nepal in 1990 with popular pressure, after the government forces killed more than 60 people ended only after King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva declared a multiparty democracy in Nepal. After six years of this declaration, the Maoist insurgency started in 1996 against the Monarchy in Nepal.

Nepal, not only suffered from wars, and battles but also from internal coups and carnages. During the Rana regime, military officer Jung Bahadur Rana seized power in 1846, ushering in a period of hereditary rule by the Rana family. The Nepali Congress party also launched an armed uprising that ended the Rana era. Nepal also faced several ethnic riots, marked by the Hindu-Muslim, and Madhesh riots in the recent past. Nepal suffered from ethnic riots between Hindu and Muslim communities. The most serious of all was the Rautahat Hindu-Muslim riot in 1972, Nepal experienced another riot in 2005 for the reason of killing 12 Nepalese in Iraq. In 2007, riots sparked in the Kapilbastu, Rupandehi, Dang, Rautahat, and Nepalgunj districts of Nepal for various reasons.

The Maoist insurgency officially started on 13 February 1996 with an attack on a police post in Rolpa, a district in Western Nepal, by members of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist). The burden of opposing the Maoists during those years fell on an undermanned, poorly armed (in some cases unarmed) civilian police force which was periodically overwhelmed and which has lost almost 1,000 officers in the

conflict. Gersomy writes about the delay in mobilizing the Nepali Army: “One of the distinguishing characteristics of this conflict was the government’s decision not to mobilize the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) during its first six years. (Gersomy, 2003).

Shree Prasad Devkota and Navin Pandey write on the support for the insurgency by poor people; “In the context of Nepal, the Maoist conflict found support from oppressed lower castes, portraying the insurgency as stemming from rage against a long legacy of oppression based on caste and ethnicity. Economic factors such as inequality, landlessness, and a general lack of opportunity reinforced by a complex caste system and related discriminatory patterns provided sufficient cause for the insurgency to be joined by people from different walks of life.” (Devkota, and Pandey, 2017) Since the end of the Maoist insurgency, Nepal has experienced political conflicts over the Constitution 2015, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and the division of power. Eighteen years have gone by without CPA’s complete implementation.

Maoist Insurgency and the Implementation of Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA)

The CPA of 1996 ended the Nepalese Civil War. The accord was signed between the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). The agreement included provisions for rehabilitating the Maoist army, abolishing the monarchy, and establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for sustainable peace. Some of the key provisions of the CPA have been partially implemented, leaving the victims’ concerns unaddressed.

Both sides agreed to stop all military action and violent activities. The Maoist army was placed in temporary camps for rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The king was stripped of his political rights and his property was nationalized. A High-level Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to investigate human rights violations and crimes against humanity. The United Nations Mission in Nepal monitored both armies. Both sides agreed to uphold international human rights laws and civil liberties, and a commission was established to help normalize the situation and provide relief and rehabilitation to victims.

A key component of the peace process was the successful management of arms and armies of the two sides of the conflict—a separate agreement governed by the Agreement on Monitoring the Management of Arms and Armies (AMMAA). The United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), with support

from UNDP and other UN agencies, then led the verification of combatants in 28 cantonment sites and identified 19,602 of them as members of the Maoist army, 2,973 as minors on the date of the signing of the ceasefire on 25 May 2006, and 1,035 as late recruits. 4,008 Verified Minors and Late Recruits (VM-LRs) were discharged under the AMAA.

Persistent Threats to Peace in Nepal

Although the CPA ended the decade-long insurgency and paved the way for a peaceful settlement, Nepal's political conflict, and strong socioeconomic underpinnings through centralized administrative structure, inequality, exclusion, and identity conflict remain persistent threats to peace. The CPA's framework for resolving these multi-faceted conflicts through several milestones it outlined is still far away. Some of these topics have been either forgotten or partially underway in the past 18 years. The successful management of arms and armies was a commendable agreement. The rebels became an integral of the mainstream political system, and a constitution was finally promulgated, though after a year's delay. There are still many outstanding issues, including providing justice to families of the victims of the conflict through a credible truth and reconciliation process. The Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, alias, 'Prachand' has been reported to ask top government officials to work as per a policy of "forgive and forget" when it comes to dealing with cases from the decade-long Maoist insurgency (NeupaneGyan, 2025). Pushpa Kamal Dahal's directive for the 'forget and forgive' policy is worrisome. Such conceit to forget the pain and apathy of victims of the civil war will again divert the CPA's spirit.

Call for Good Governance

While Nepal has been successful in sidestepping any potential post-conflict political upheaval, it is important to note that many of the deep-rooted socio-economic issues that helped spark the civil war, including sharp disparities in wealth, and marginalization of caste and ethnic groups, have not been well-addressed over the past decades. Similarly, the nation's political parties must find ways to better respond to the needs and views of the population. If people no longer believe that the democratic process will bring positive change to their lives, it can unleash forces that drive nations toward social unrest and criminal activity.

Nepal remains to ensure that development and democracy guide the country to stability and prosperity, and a shared sense of national identity and a common future. There is a need for recovery and reconstruction in all three dimensions – political, economic, and social. The overemphasis on any particular aspect such as the political dimension could further jeopardize the post-conflict situation and obstruct the way to long-lasting peace. Delivering justice to the victims of conflict remains a lingering phenomenon in Nepal. This author's house was bombed during the conflict including others. All of us, the victims of insurgency, are still awaiting justice.

Vidhu Prakash Kayastha writes about corruption, "Nepal's bureaucratic system is one of the most corrupt in the region. Many civil servants misuse their power to illegally acquire land, approve substandard construction projects, or issue fraudulent permits. This creates a system of patronage, where bureaucrats work hand in hand with politicians and business

tycoons to siphon off public resources. For the average Nepali citizen, this means unnecessary delays in accessing essential services such as healthcare, education, and permits. As a result, the public's trust in government institutions has severely eroded, and many view civil servants as obstacles to progress rather than public servants" (Kayastha, 2025)

Diversity and Inclusive Societies

Nepal consists of more than 126 ethnic people and, 124 languages (Nepal Census 2011). Nepal is a meltingpot of diversity. The Preamble of the Constitution of Nepal is perfectly framed. It contains all the best provisions for ending all forms of discrimination. It has provisions for protecting and promoting social and cultural solidarity, tolerance, and harmony. The Constitution promises unity in diversity by recognizing the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-cultural, and diverse regional characteristics. It has also strongly pledged to build an egalitarian society founded on proportional inclusive and participatory principles to ensure economic equality, prosperity, and social justice. (Constitution of Nepal, 2015). We have everything on paper. Now, the implementation of such an ideal vision is the real dream of Nepali people.

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) also recognizes the country as a multiethnic, multi-religious, multicultural, and multilingual. "Since the end of the first CA in 2012, there has been a major reaction against inclusion and federalism among the traditional political parties, and certain parts of the media, the bureaucracy, judiciary, and civil society. Inclusion is dismissed as an external agenda, weakening Nepali sovereignty, and nationally divisive." (Thapa, Deepak, et.al, 2017).

This Constitutional recognition is a significant step towards promoting inclusion and diversity. The government has implemented various policies to promote social inclusion, such as the abolition of caste-based discrimination and efforts to eliminate untouchability. Nepal celebrates and preserves diversity through some initiatives. The Government has promoted multiculturalism and respect for diverse cultures through education and awareness programs. This includes integrating multicultural principles into the education system and creating an inclusive learning environment. There have been efforts to ensure greater representation of marginalized communities in political processes. This includes the election of a constituent assembly and the restructuring of the state along the lines of federalism to promote inclusivity.

A report sheds light on the alarming state: "Indigenous Peoples, Madheshi, Dalits, and Muslims experience discrimination based on stigmatization of cultural identity and language, caste hierarchy and untouchability, skin tone, region, religion, and gender, and regrettably remain socially excluded in Nepal. As a result, they lag behind other non-excluded groups across various development indicators, including poverty, employment, land rights, education, health, and political representation. The 2022 Nepal Demographic Health Survey indicates that 26 percent of women aged 15-49 have no education, compared to only 8 percent of men (Phanwin Yoking, 2023). Such a gloomy state of exclusion constantly threatens peace and harmony in Nepal.

The benefits of diversity and inclusion are not just about fairness or ethics; it is also about tapping into a wealth of differ-

VIEWPOINT

ent perspectives, fostering innovation, and creating a sense of belonging for everyone. The inclusive environment promotes equality, respect for human rights, and freedom, creating a peaceful society where everyone feels valued and free to contribute positively. Nepal's Government is still reluctant to control rampant corruption and implement these issues to reassure belongingness among all citizens.

The Persistent Challenges to Peace

Nepal has various challenges that can make it vulnerable to conflicts, although it has made significant progress toward stability in recent years. Nepal is home to a multitude of ethnic groups and languages. While this diversity can be a strength, it has historically led to tensions and conflicts, particularly regarding representation and resource allocation. Nepal has also experienced political turbulence since the end of its civil war in 2006, including frequent changes in government, factional struggles within political parties, and challenges in creating a stable governing coalition. Poverty, unemployment, and economic inequality can fuel discontent. Many rural areas lack access to basic services and infrastructure, which can contribute to social unrest.

As some of the peace process following the civil war has made strides, issues related to transitional justice, integrating former combatants, and addressing grievances from marginalized communities remain points of contention. Nepal's location between India and China can lead to external pressures and influence, which could complicate domestic political dynamics and provoke conflicts.

The Management of Threats

While these factors contribute to Nepal's vulnerability, it is essential to recognize that the country has a strong commitment to peacebuilding, and many actors, including civil society and international organizations, are working actively to address these issues. While these challenges remain, Nepal has the potential for continued progress toward peace and stability. Steps towards peace should be taken to prevent and mitigate conflicts, which is crucial for stability and well-being.

Encouraging dialogue between conflicting parties, and diplomatic efforts can lead to peaceful resolutions and prevent escalation. These actions will help address underlying grievances and build trust. The Government should establish early warning systems to detect potential conflicts. These systems monitor social tensions, economic disparities, and political instability. Timely intervention can prevent escalation. Investments in programs promote reconciliation, healing, and understanding among communities. Other initiatives like truth and reconciliation commissions will address historical grievances and discourage outbreaks.

Strengthening the caliber of institutions, transparency, and accountability are key to peace in the country. Efficient governance reduces corruption, ensures fair resource distribution, and promotes stability. Addressing poverty, unemployment, and inequality. On the other hand, the economic opportunities also discourage the appeal to violence and extremism. The Government should also promote peace education in schools and communities. The awareness of peacebuilding amongst citizens will improve the peace in the country. There is a need for special attention to update the security sector reform. It is

pertinent that the security forces are professional, accountable, and respect human rights. A well-functioning security sector contributes to stability and progress.

Mediation and conflict resolution promote harmony in the country. We should engage neutral third parties to mediate disputes. The mediators can find common ground and facilitate agreements. Regional cooperation is also necessary to collaborate with neighboring countries to address cross-border issues. Regional peace and stability will benefit all nations currently involved in the conflicts. Good governance will address the root causes of conflicts and corruption. Understanding the underlying factors - historical grievances, identity-based conflicts, and resource scarcity will help solve long-term grievances and threats.

End Notes

Although Nepal has made speckled efforts to cultivate an inclusive society over the past decades, the prevailing traditional caste system, patriarchal norms, and religious practices continue to foster exclusionary practices against women and those belonging to lower castes and ethnic groups. In today's interconnected and globalized world, the importance of diversity and inclusion is mandatory. It is not just about fairness or ethics; it is also about tapping into different perspectives, fostering innovation, and creating a sense of belongingness for everyone. In other words, diversity and inclusion make us stronger, more adaptable, and better equipped to face the challenges of the modern world. Theresa relates Buddhism to peacebuilding, "Buddhist worldview is surprisingly following the insights of peace studies in its process-oriented paradigm, its insistence on peace by peaceful means, and its holistic framework of peace, which would play a vital role in the efforts of bringing the culture of peace into existence around the world." (Theresa, 2006).

Dr. Thapa is a retired Additional Inspector General of Nepal Police

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VISIT OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH TO NEPAL

Celebrating The Historical Ties Between The Two Nations

The visit of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh to Nepal is seen as a way to honor the long-standing relationship between the two countries and to strengthen the bonds of friendship for future generations.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Despite changes in the political and economic landscape over the past two hundred years of diplomatic relations, the warmth, friendship, and closeness between Nepal and the United Kingdom have remained constant. From

Janga Bahadur Rana's historic visit to England 150 years ago to current Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, numerous Nepali political leaders have visited the UK. Likewise, members of the British royal family, including

King Mahendra, Queen Elizabeth II, and King Birendra, have reciprocated visits to Nepal, strengthening bilateral ties.

Throughout the establishment of diplomatic relations, the United Kingdom has consistently supported Nepal's development and prosperity by assisting in the construction of roads, health facilities, and research in agriculture and forestry. The recent visit of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh marks a significant milestone in UK-Nepal relations, celebrating the shared history and the new generation of young people shaping the future.

During their visit, the royal couple will honor the Gurkha relationship, explore Nepal's beauty and culture, meet young individuals benefiting from the Duke of Edinburgh International Awards, witness improvements in maternal healthcare supported by the UK, and engage with women leaders and activists.

During their visit, The Duke and Duchess will meet a variety of individuals who symbolize the longstanding partnership between the UK and Nepal, which is the oldest bilateral relationship of Nepal. In continuation of the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the UK-Nepal Treaty of Friendship last year, they will observe the progress of the friendship for the next 100 years. This will involve witnessing

how the Duke of Edinburgh International Award is aiding young people in acquiring new skills and experiences. Additionally, they will observe the UK-Nepal development partnership in maternal health and economic development. The visit will also provide an opportunity for Their Royal Highnesses to witness key aspects of the over 200-year Gurkha partnership, from attending the annual Attestation Parade



in Pokhara where young men enlist in the British Army, to observing the support provided to veterans and their families by the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

At the beginning of their visit, Their Royal Highnesses had a meeting with Nepal's President Ram Chandra Paudel, which underscored the strong historical ties between the UK and Nepal and the high regard in the UK for the Gurkhas' pivotal role in the relationship.

During the meeting at Shital Niwas (President House), Major General Strickland DSO MBE, the Colonel Commandant of the Brigade of Gurkhas, presented the annual report on the Brigade of Gurkhas to President Paudel. This report is an important aspect of the UK's commitment to transparency with the Government of Nepal, reflecting the value placed on the longstanding partnership of over 200 years and the UK's dedication to supporting those who serve in the British Army.

This visit marks the fourteenth time that members of the British Royal family have visited Nepal, strengthening the close ties between the two nations. Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip visited in 1961 and 1986, while King Charles, as Prince of Wales, visited in 1975, 1980, 1992, and 1998. The most recent visit was by Prince Harry in 2016.

Foreign Secretary Amrit Bahadur Rai and other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry warmly welcomed Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, UK, upon their separate arrivals at TIA in Kathmandu today.

Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh are expected to remain in Nepal until February 9, 2025. The Duchess of Edinburgh, Sophie, arrived earlier, followed by the Duke of Edinburgh, Edward, on a subsequent flight.

They also visited the British Gorkha camp in Pokhara and took part in the badge distribution parade for those recently selected in the British Army.

During their time in Nepal, the Royal couple will also meet with organizations that offer healthcare and support to survivors of trafficking and gender-based violence.

Sophie is a strong supporter of the UN's Women, Peace, and Security Agenda and during a trip to Malta in October, she engaged in a discussion with members of Malta's Police Force and Human Rights Directorate about assisting victims of human trafficking. The British Embassy warmly welcomes Their Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, to Nepal, wishing them a memorable and enjoyable first visit to the country. Their visit serves as a reminder of the special relationship between the two nations! #BritishEmbassyNepal

The Pinhole Image



BY: HEMANT ARJYAL

The recent collision over Potomac that resulted in sixty-seven fatalities has not just shaken the US Aviation establishment but also the whole of the USA. The outrage was natural given that the Americans were accustomed to an extremely safe flight environment. The horrendous collision between a passenger liner and a military helicopter, that too at the heart of the US capital was just unthinkable.

USA had over two hundred thousand “general aviation” (GA) aircraft in 2021. This represents civilian aircraft operations that are used for private flying, business travel etc. That beside, there are 297 registered domestic airlines and 14 big carriers. To this add other international carriers that fly in/out of USA, the scale becomes truly massive even without considering the military side of aviation. One needs to view the above mentioned accident with this massive movement of air traffic in mind.

Annual accident data brings out interesting facts to the fore; there were 81 recorded incidents in 2024 and 22 fatalities in 9 separate instances. One may wonder about the hue and cry even as the Potomac crash was negligibly “tiny” in contrast to the colossal volume of movements. Even then, it is still perceived as an extremely serious accident, and be rightly treated as such.

Incidentally, Pokhara ATR crash (2023) alone had more fatalities (72) than the collision over Potomac. It will be interesting to see how they go

about investigating the root cause of this double tragedy and how quickly they adopt the necessary changes required to prevent its happening again. The resulting investigation recommendations will be strictly followed, unlike merely treated as a “ritualistic procedure” here.

Though comparatively small, the DC’s National Airport (DCA) with 3 runways has heavy traffic. Helicopter are generally required to fly not above 200ft (ceiling) in the DC area, that too along only designated corridors. Despite the thin margin of vertical separation, they seem to have managed quite efficiently this far.

Assume it is normal for crews to remain focused on runway threshold and instruments rather than be concerned about other surrounding traffic during landing approach. The helicopter, in this case, was asked if it had the landing craft in sight, to which the reply was in the affirmative, and there after the onus of maintaining the vertical separation rested solely on the copter. Seems that they tragically mistook another aircraft, not the one that was much closer and heading to land it crashed into. Given what we known until now, it looks like the helicopter may have not just breached the 200ft ceiling but might also have strayed from its designated path. We do not know why and how it all came to happen. For that, we will have to wait until the investigation gets completed and the findings made public. Interestingly enough, it has come to be known that, just a day earlier; another military helicopter had also

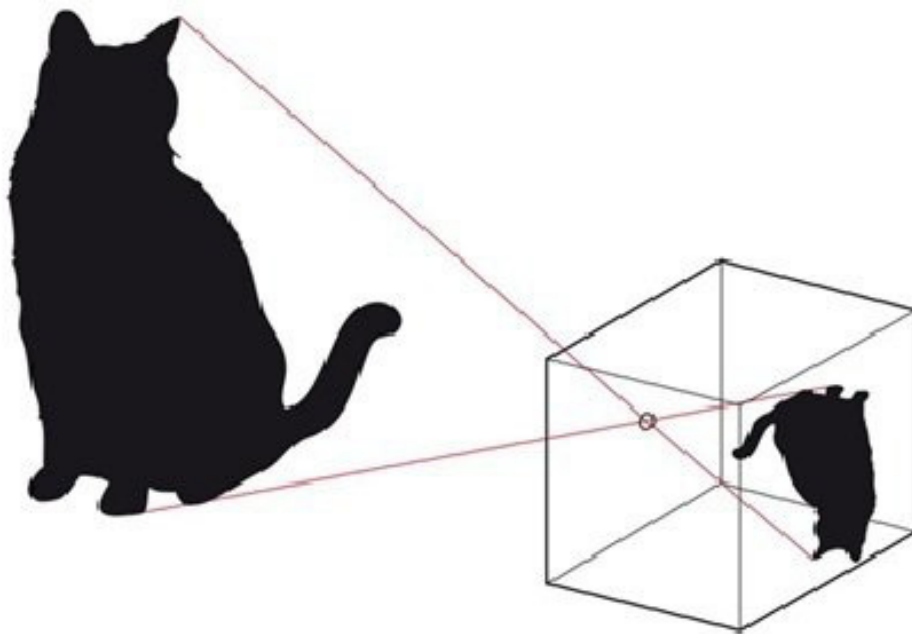
come too close to another regional jet, forcing the aircraft to make a go-around at the last moment. Obviously, it was an ominous incident happening at the same airport. The investigators will definitely dig if there were more of such happenings in earlier instances too.

From the point of view of crash with total fatalities there is nothing comparable between Potomac and one at Pokhara, except that both begin with two identical alphabets. While over there they fell into the freezing Potomac, for the Yeti's ATR it was the inhospitable

Seti gorge. The helicopter was on a training mission and the ATR was on first officer's "upgradation" check flight that didn't resemble anything like being so as the leaked CVR revealed later. However, as regards being resolute in finding the root cause and resolving conflicting issues, both will be poles apart. So much for our aviation safety, they have no qualm in making hollow claims about doing their best to keep Nepal skies safe.

Keeping on with other aviation related topic on our side, wonder why everything gets deliberately delayed here every time? The latest example related to one of RA's A320 that it almost ran out of the stipulated safe flying hour limit, resulting in grounding. It is time, the sin of keeping aircraft be treated as a criminal offense. Why do the company honchos and their masters still grumble about the "medieval" rules, while doing nothing to get it repealed or amended? It becomes clear if only one could see the inherent motive that goes behind such "smooth" operational practices. A pinhole camera might help one understand why it

is so here. What we see or get to hear every day is not the real thing, the real thing is just its opposite, as that with reversed pinhole image. The cover provided by the "medieval rule" continues to help the unscrupulous help bleed the airline and it has been so since long. They will never ever let go the legendary goose, if they could.



It is sounds very outrageously outlandish, perhaps, it also explains why Nepal has remained helplessly stuck in EASA's bad books for so long, while Pakistan was

out of it in just four years. It is true that Nepal aviation poses no challenge, whatsoever, to any other airline, nor is it likely to be able to do so in the foreseeable future. But what if, a big IF, some adversaries, nevertheless, try to stop such "unlikely" happening would not mind throwing few bread crumbs occasionally to keep our folks happy wallowing in it. Ever wondered why the vital bill that had intended to break CAAN into two separate organizations comprising of service provider and regulator was withdrawn from the parliament earlier despite EASA having taken it as a very serious noncompliance (NC) issue? The stinking mess is more due to deliberate political doing than incompetence on the part of CAAN alone, notwithstanding, greedy honchos. Now that the bill has been introduced for the second time, we hope that it will be adopted soon and help end the pathetic chapter of Nepal aviation.

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Economy

Inflations At 5.41

Despite slowing economic activities, Nepal's Price Inflation Stands At 5.41 Percent

By A CORRESPONDENT

The Nepalese economy is still experiencing a slow process, with inflation rising by over 15 percent compared to the same period last year. According to the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) report, 'Current Macroeconomic and Financial Situation of Nepal,' the year-on-year consumer price inflation was 5.41 percent in mid-January 2025, up from 5.26 percent a year ago. The report covers data from the six months ending in mid-January 2024/25.

In the food and beverage category, inflation was at 7.67 percent, while non-food and service inflation stood at 4.19 percent in the review month. This is an increase from the previous year when the price indices for these groups rose by 5.75 percent and 4.93 percent, respectively.

Within the food and beverage category, the year-on-year price index for vegetables increased by 28.52 percent, ghee & oil by 10.67 percent, pulses and legumes by 9.48 percent, and cereal grains & their products by 7.23 percent. However, the price index for spices decreased by 3.12 percent.

In the non-food and services category, the year-on-year price index for miscellaneous goods & services increased by 9.35 percent, alcoholic drinks by 7.01 percent, clothes and footwear by 6.75 percent, and furnishing & household equipment by 5.29 percent.

During the review month, the year-on-year price index in rural areas increased by 5.68 percent, while in urban areas, it rose by 5.31 percent. By provinces, the year-on-year consumer price inflation in Koshi Province was 6.73 percent, Madhesh Province 5.96 percent, Bagmati Province 5.14 percent, Gandaki Province 4.37 percent, Lumbini Province 4.83 percent, Karnali Province 4.60 percent, and Sudurpashchim Province 5.67 percent.

In the review month, year-on-year con-

sumer price inflation in the Kathmandu Valley, Terai, Hill, and Mountain regions increased to 5.03 percent, 5.60 percent, 5.41 percent, and 5.27 percent respectively.

Wholesale Price Inflation (WPI)

According to the NRB report, year-on-year wholesale price inflation stood at 4.01 percent in mid-January 2025 compared to 3.36 percent a year ago. The year-on-year



wholesale price of consumption goods, intermediate goods, and capital goods increased by 6.92 percent, 2.55 percent, and 3.14 percent respectively. The year-on-year wholesale price of construction material decreased by 4.28 percent in the review month.

The year-on-year salary and wage index increased by 2.85 percent in the second quarter of fiscal year 2024-25 compared to 5.56 percent a year ago.

Based on provinces, in the review quarter, the increase in y-o-y salary and wage index in Koshi Province is 1.30 percent, Madhesh Province 4.26 percent, Bagmati Province 1.73 percent, Gandaki Province 2.70 percent, Lumbini Province 3.37 percent, Karnali Province 3.08 percent, and Sudurpashchim Province 7.59 percent.

Merchandise Trade

During the six months of 2024/25, merchandise exports increased 31.8 percent to Rs.98.79 billion against a decrease of 7.2 percent in the same period of the previous year.

Destination-wise, exports to India, China and other countries increased 46.1 percent, 19.7 percent and 1.0 percent respectively.

Exports of soybean oil, tea, polyester yarn and thread, particle board, cardamom, among others increased whereas exports of palm oil, zinc sheet, ginger, readymade garments, herbs, among others decreased in the review period.

During the six months of 2024/25, merchandise imports increased 7.1 percent to Rs.822.37 billion against a decline of 3.1 percent a year ago. Destination-wise, imports from India, China and other countries increased 5.9 percent, 8.9 percent and 9.0 percent respectively.

Imports of crude soybean oil, rice/paddy, transport equipment, vehicle and other vehicle spare parts, sponge iron, edible oil, among others increased whereas imports of petroleum products, crude palm oil, gold, chemical fertilizer, peas, among others decreased in the review period.

Based on customs points, exports from Bhairahawa, Biratnagar, Birgunj, Dry port, Kailali, Krishnanagar, Mechi, Nepalgunj, and Rasuwa customs offices increased whereas exports from all other major customs points decreased in the review period.

On the import side, imports from Bhairahawa, Biratnagar, Birgunj, Jaleswor, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Krishnanagar, Mechi, Nepalgunj, Rasuwa, Tatopani and Tribhuvan Airport customs offices increased whereas imports from Dry port customs points decreased in the review period.

Total trade deficit increased 4.4 percent to Rs.723.58 billion during the six months of 2024/25. Such a deficit had decreased 2.6 percent in the corresponding period of the previous year.

The export-import ratio increased to 12.0 percent in the review period from 9.8 percent in the corresponding period of the previous year.

During the six months of 2024/25, merchandise imports from India by paying convertible foreign currency amounted Rs.88.56 billion. Such amount was Rs.76.25 billion in the same period of the previous year.



MAHAKUMBH 2025

Festival Of The Century

As the day draws closer to the end of the 45-day-long Mahakumbha, Nepalese Hindus are rushing to take a dip in Mahakumbha 2025. From Raxual, Sunauli, Jogbani, Nepalgunj, and other border points, numerous Nepalese pilgrims are entering India to participate in the Mahakumbha festival. It is estimated that over a million Nepalese Hindus have traveled to Prayagraj using various border points. With multiple routes of access, Nepalese Hindus from the east are also joining in to take a dip

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepalese Hindus are flocking to Prayag Raj in an organized manner, affiliating with various religious organizations and individuals. Some are visiting individually or in small groups. Nepalese pilgrims are being provided with temporary shelter by religious groups like Pilot Baba, Ishkon, and others.

Sanhitashastry Arjun Prasad Bastola, patron of the Brahmin International Organization Trust, has arranged free accommodation and meals for Nepali pilgrims at the ongoing Maha Kumbha in Prayagraj, India.

With over 10 million devotees visiting daily, Bastola ensures

that Nepali pilgrims have no trouble finding food and lodging. The Maha Kumbha, held once every 144 years, serves around 200 Nepali devotees daily. Other visitors to Prayagraj are utilizing private lodges, hotels, and other facilities for overnight stays during the Kumbha.

COVERSTORY



Maha Kumbh Mela 2025:

The Mahakumbh 2025 in Prayagraj is set to be a momentous spiritual gathering, attracting over 450 million devotees from across the globe. This sacred event, deeply rooted in Sanatan Dharma, showcases ancient traditions and cultural splendor. With state-of-the-art technology, enhanced safety protocols, and meticulous planning, it ensures a safe and transformative experience for the pilgrims.

The Maha Kumbh Mela is a major Hindu festival that takes place every 12 years in Prayagraj, India. It commenced on January 13, 2025, and will run until February 26, 2025. It is anticipated to draw approximately 400 million (40 crores) visitors, making it the largest religious gathering in the world.

The festival's origins lie in Hindu mythology, symbolizing the triumph of gods over demons. Followers believe that bathing at the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati rivers purifies sins and leads to

salvation.

To accommodate the massive number of pilgrims, authorities have established a temporary city spanning 4,000 hectares.

The Maha Kumbh Mela is not only a significant religious event but also a testament to India's capability to manage large-scale gatherings, showcasing the country's rich cultural heritage.

Significance of the Maha Kumbh Mela in Hindu Tradition



The Mahakumbh Mela of this year commenced on the auspicious day of Paush Purnima, which occurred on January 13, 2025, and will run until February 26, 2025. This year's Mahakumbh Mela is particularly special as the alignment of constellations occurs once every 144 years.

The Maha Kumbh Mela is a significant religious gathering in Hinduism, held every twelve years at four sacred sites: Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad), Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik.

This festival carries deep spiritual importance, rooted in Hindu mythology and tradition.

Mythological Background

The origins of the Kumbh Mela are associated with the Samudra Manthan, or the churning of the ocean, where gods (Devas) and demons (Asuras) collaborated to obtain Amrit, the nectar of immortality.

Legend has it that during this process, a pot (Kumbh) containing Amrit surfaced. To prevent the demons from seizing it, Lord

Vishnu, disguised as Mohini, took the pot and escaped. In the process, drops of Amrit fell at four locations: Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik.

These places have since become revered pilgrimage spots for Hindus, believed to confer spiritual blessings on those who bathe in their waters during the festival.

Spiritual Significance

The main ceremony of the Maha Kumbh Mela is the Shahi Snan, or royal bath, where millions of pilgrims bathe in the holy rivers at specific times.

This ritual is believed to purify individuals of their sins and free them from the cycle of rebirth (samsara), leading to Moksha or spiritual liberation.

The meeting point of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati at Prayagraj is highly revered for achieving salvation.

Cultural and Social Aspects



Apart from its religious significance, the Maha Kumbh Mela is a lively cultural festival that brings together various groups of people, including ascetics (sadhus), pilgrims, and visitors who participate in rituals like fasting, charity, and communal prayers. This gathering promotes a sense of unity among participants, transcending differences in caste and creed.

The event also highlights India's cultural heritage through its

traditions and customs passed down through generations.

Through the use of four dredging machines, an additional 26 hectares of land have been reclaimed, tripling the Sangam's capacity compared to 2019.

These improvements ensure a seamless bathing experience for the estimated 45 crore devotees expected to attend the Maha Kumbh.

Infrastructure and Logistics

Mela Area: The event will encompass roughly 4,000 hectares, marking a 25% growth from the previous Kumbh Mela held in 2019.

Sectors: The area has been segmented into 25 sectors, an increase from the 20 sectors in 2019, improving crowd management.

Ghat Lengths: The combined length of bathing ghats has expanded from 8 kilometers in 2019 to 12 kilometers in 2025.

Parking Facilities: Parking



COVERSTORY

capacity has been enlarged to 1,850 hectares, up from the previous 1,291 hectares.

Road Infrastructure: The total road network within the Mela area has grown from 299 kilometers to over 450 kilometers.

Budget and Economic Impact

Estimated Budget: The budget allocated for organizing the Maha Kumbh Mela is approximately ₹7,500 crore (around \$903.61 million), a substantial increase from previous events.

Economic

Transactions: The Maha Kumbh Mela is projected to generate an estimated amount of ₹2 lakh crore to ₹2.5 lakh crore (approximately \$25 billion to \$30 billion), potentially representing about 0.8% of India's GDP, as per the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).

Tourist Spending: If each tourist spends ₹5,000 during their visit, the Maha Kumbh Mela is expected to generate an estimated amount of ₹2 lakh crores. Additionally, according to CIAT, around ₹40,000 crore is projected to be generated by local guesthouses, hotels, motels, restaurants, and more.

The helicopter service charges ₹5,000 per trip and accommodates 7,000 pilgrims daily. Over a 45-day period, this service alone could potentially generate up to ₹157.5 crore in total (₹3.5 crore per day).

Sanitation and Safety Measures

Toilets and Facilities: Approximately 1.50 lakh toilets will be installed, an increase from 1.14 lakh in 2019. The number of public accommodation beds has also increased from 20,000 to 25,000.



Security Personnel: More than 45,000 police personnel, supported by over 55 police stations, will be deployed for safety and security during the event.

Surveillance Technology: Over 3,000 cameras will be utilized to monitor the area as part of



enhanced security measures.

Mahakumbha Mela

The Maha Kumbh Mela, one of the largest spiritual gatherings in

the world, commenced on January 13 in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. Considered a significant event in Hindu tradition, this massive gathering attracts millions of devotees, ascetics, and seekers from around the world.

The Maha Kumbh of this year is of great significance due to its alignment with unique celestial configurations that occur once every 144 years, enhancing its spiritual importance. January 13 holds special significance as the sun enters Capricorn or Makar on this day, marking the beginning

of Uttarayan, which is considered an auspicious time for important activities (shubh karya). According to Acharya Lalmani Panday, those who pass away during this period are believed to ascend to Vaikuntha, the celestial abode of Lord Vishnu, as Bhishma Pitamah did.

The main festival is celebrated at four sacred sites in India, each situated along the banks of a holy river, in a 12-year cycle. These sites are Haridwar on the Ganges River in Uttarakhand, Ujjain on the Shipra in Madhya Pradesh, Nashik on the Godavari in Maharashtra, and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh where the Ganges, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati rivers meet. The celebrations at each site are based on specific astronomical positions of the Sun, Moon, and Jupiter, with the most sacred time being when these positions align perfectly.



Types of Kumbh Melas

The Kumbh Melas, which last for several weeks, are celebrated at different times and locations in accordance with Hindu tradition. These gatherings are of great spiritual importance and draw millions of devotees from around the world. The frequency of the melas varies, with some happening annually and the Maha Kumbh Mela occurring every 144 years in Prayagraj.

What is Kumbh Mela?

Kumbh Mela is a religious gathering that attracts tens of millions of Hindu pilgrims and spiritual seekers from India and beyond.

The event is steeped in Hindu mythology and revolves around the belief in the purifying power of sacred rivers. Pilgrims participate in ritual bathing in these rivers, believing it cleanses their sins and brings them closer to spiritual liberation.

The festival rotates between four

main locations in India: Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad), Haridwar, Nashik, and Ujjain. Each location is associated with a sacred river - the Ganges, Godavari, or Shipra.

A complete Kumbh Mela is held every 12 years in the four cities. A half ("Ard") Kumbh is held midway between two full Kumbhs.

Authorities have confirmed that the 2025 festival will be a Maha (Great) Kumbh Mela, which occurs only once every 144 years, making it an even more significant occasion.

Why do people go to Kumbh Mela?

Kumbh Mela attracts a diverse range of attendees, including sadhus, ordinary citizens, families, and international visitors.

While the majority of participants are Hindus, people from other faiths also show interest in the event for its cultural and spiritual significance. The festival provides an opportunity for attendees to seek spiritual renewal and salvation

through rituals such as bathing in the holy rivers, which is believed to cleanse sins

and bring them closer to spiritual liberation.

For many, the pilgrimage to Kumbh Mela is a unique experience to strengthen their faith, connect with others, and immerse themselves in Hindu traditions. By embracing

the spiritual and wellness aspects of the event, Nepalese participants not only celebrate their shared heritage but also embark on a personal journey of transformation. The Kumbh Mela serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of spirituality in promoting holistic health, peace, and harmony across borders, especially considering its rare occurrence once every 144 years.

Transitioning To Stalled Transitional Justice Process



BY: SHOBHAKAR BUDHATHOKI

The country's ongoing peace process has been disrupted again after the Recommendation Committee (RC) failed to make recommendations for the appointment of officials to the Transitional Justice (TJ) Commissions. In the wake of the failure of the commissions formed twice in the past, the RC for the appointment of the Chair and members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Commission for the Investigation of Disappeared Persons was formed under the Chair of former Chief Justice Om Prakash Mishra on October 18, 2024.

In the backdrop of third amendment (September) 2024 of the Commission on Investigation of Disappeared Persons, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act (2014), the RC constituted under the Section 3(3) failed to recommend the Officials of both commission within a period of two months, and made official request to the Council of Ministers to resume the recommendation process from the scratch stating that the RC lacked to reach into unanimous decision of recommending names for the Commissions. It states that "the commissions formed twice in the past have not been able to complete the tasks of the peace process and the Officials of the Commissions should be selected only after analyzing the reasons behind it and its objective."

The statement further mentioned that "the lack of consensus on some issues within the RC, the decision of the majority and minority to conclude the peace process that could have a far-reaching impact, the process of appointing the Chair and members to be appointed to the Commission should be made more comprehensive and effective by making the search for suitable persons for the chairman and members

of the Commission more comprehensive and acceptable." The RC's statement has raised widespread doubts about its independence and autonomy, which is suspected of being influenced from undue political interference.

This act of failure to recommend the officials undermines the norms and spirit of the November 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which aims to ensure justice and reparation for the victims of the conflict, and to bring the alleged perpetrators into judicial process and hold them accountable for their involvement in human rights violations through independent and impartial process.

The process that the RC has developed for the selection of the commission's officials can be considered reasonably transparent and participatory in compare with previous ones. It has adopted the procedures that preferred impartiality and professional competence to some extent. The consultation with victims and its concern stakeholders on the draft procedure, calling for an open application, and producing shortlisted applicants through public media and observing their presentations can be considered transparent and public process.

However, these processes became rhetoric as previous and the RC was unable to exercise its independence and autonomy as the law guarantees.

These efforts couldn't reach beyond formalities. The "benefit of doubt" provided by the victims were again betrayed while making attempts to the formation of institutions of fair, credible and acceptable TJ Commissions. Furthermore, the RC's request for the resumption of the appointment pro-

cess demonstrates its influence from political entities and loyalty to political powerholders in lieu of victims. It means that the RC's incompetency to recommend officials has again derailed TJ process and further institutionalized the trauma of the victims of conflict.

Continue Amendment of the Law

TJ process is a complicated one which should be combined as core elements of politics, peace and justice. It shouldn't be nowhere close to court process. But it must go through independent and impartial process carried out by competent authorities. The amendment of the law should be continuing process and needs to carry out as per necessary. It means that the existing law should not be obstacle to deliver justice and reparation for the victims.

The recent amendment has sorted out several disputed issues that were objectionable to the victims. However, the victims and stakeholders have still strong reservation on several provisions of the law, including the definition of 'human rights violation' and 'serious human rights violation,' statute of limitation on reporting rape and sexual violence cases, reduction of sentencing, etc. Despite disagreements, the victims have demonstrated positive cooperation, resilience and participation in the appointment process of the commissions' officials, which undertaken as serious blow to the resilience of conflict victims. Therefore, the government must consider to address the concerns of victims through amending laws since the appointment process is prolonged, while 48 victims comprised of both sides have filed petition in the Supreme Court demanding the suspension of the provisions that were included through the recent amendment.

Considering the persistent pain of victims, the government has no excuse to further delay TJ process. But there are reliable public rumors floating around that the government has failed to find a Chair of the RC, which must be former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in accordance with the existing law. It creates additional chaos for the resumption of TJ process. These anomalies seen in the formation of the RC have hugely disappointed the conflict victims.

In this circumstance, the government must be proactive to restructure the RC through the amendment of law, and reimagine the composition of the RC. It could be formed under the Chair of the senior most judge of the Supreme Court if not Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. If the law is not re-amended, it can be expected additional hurdles to smoothly run the country's TJ process under the basis of

the Country's Criminal Code, the February 2014 Supreme Court Directive, and internationally established principles of TJ process.

Strengthening the Recommendation Committee

The failure of the RC to recommend officials for both Commission can be a big lesson to establish TJ mechanisms that can function efficiently, professionally and effectively. It is reported that the RC couldn't make unanimous decision to recommend the Chair of the commission out of shortlisted candidates. There was an allegation against those candidates about their competency and previous background by the stakeholders, particularly victims of conflict. If the victim groups lacked confidence to those candidates, there is always a chance to compromise justice promoting immunity to perpetrators. Due to changed political dynamics since the end of conflict in November 2006, the perpetrators are continue getting stronger and politically powerful. The lack of confidence of victims towards TJ mechanisms jeopardizes the spirit of the CPA, which envisions peace, justice, reconciliation and non-repetition.

Appointment of competent officials to the Commissions is possible only by ensuring the independence and autonomy of the RC, which should be empowered in both law and practice. It is mainly important to ensure that there is no political or any other kind of interference in their legally defined responsibilities. However, there is a tendency of appointing the RC officials depending upon proximity political parties for the purpose of recommending their politically or personally allied individuals in the Commission. Such forms of kleptocratic regime must be ended for the sake of enabling peace and justice in the country. But these chronic forms of nepotism and favoritism has totally defamed the country's democratic system and its functional institutions, including peace process.

Independence and autonomy of the RC is a must for the functional TJ mechanisms. This will make easier for the RC to formulate selection criteria for recommending independent, impartial, credible, competent, acceptable, efficient and professional persons in the Commissions. Those recommended officials must be knowledgeable and expertise on subject matters, including the country's conflict and peace process, as well as political and justice mechanisms and demonstrated high social integrity in their workspace. At the same time, the reputation, social acceptability and efficiency of such officials appointed to the Commissions determine the credibility and legitimacy of the commissions in which the competent RC is required. The empowerment

FORUM

of the RC can only be done through the amendment of law and attitudes of political actors.

The Elevation of the Commission

TJ can only be concluded if the competent commissions are formed through meaningful participation of the victims. The commissions integrity is determined by the quality of the Officials with its high-level of public credibility and acceptability. Therefore, it is worth to review the status of the commissions and its officials. The composition of the Commission may be modified as required. For example, if arrangements can be made to appoint people who have worked in specific areas of human rights or various fields of national life in addition to the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to head the commission, then the integrity of the commissions will enhance and its work will get legitimacy and credibility at the national and international level. Even though it doesn't seem possible from current political dynamics, the merger of two commissions with expansion of members will be wiser decision for effective and efficient TJ process.

As per the current law, the qualifications for chairperson and members included in sub-section (d) of section (4) requires the person worked in the field of human rights, peace, law, conflict management or sociology. Furthermore, the sub-section (f) states that "he/she has worked as a justice of the Supreme Court or Chief Judge of the Appellate Court, worked at the post of special class of the Nepal Judicial Service or possesses the qualification for the justice of the Supreme Court in the case of the Chairperson." It envisages that only persons with a legal/judicial background would be eligible for the Chair's position of the Commission, while leaving the scope of TJ process ambiguous.

The existing provisions of the Act have restricted the involvement of competent persons from other fields of the country in the Commission as Chair of the Commissions. It undermines their professional competency, integrity and efficiency of vast majority of professionals in the country. It clearly favors academic qualification guided by nepotism and favoritism over competence in the Commission. At the same time, it ignores the integrated and distinctive nature of the country's peace process and TJ mechanism envisioned as integrated approach of politics, peace and justice. Unfortunately, the Act may be construed as an attempt to make the TJ process in a court structure, which creates challenges to the RC for recommending the officials wisely, impartially and professionally.

It will be much easier to make the commission effective if it can modify this existing system of law considering an ongoing dilemma for the formation of the RC. As an alternative, the provisions of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Act can be made its reference for the amendment. It will be relevant to include the qualifications of the Chair of the NHRC as mentioned in Article 248 (6) (a) of the Constitution. It provides that apart from the judicial background, a person who has "rendered outstanding contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights or being a renowned person having been active for at

least twenty years in and rendered outstanding contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights." shall be eligible for the Chair. This will help to appoint competent persons to the Commission and make the Commission's functions effective.

Conclusion

Although 18 years have passed since the end of the conflict, the victims of the conflict are continue searching for justice and peace of mind. While seeking for justice and reparation, the suffering of victims is increasing by multiply or quadruple. In retrospect, the perpetrators are enjoying immunity, and spending a dignified life in the society. It undermines trauma of victims and justice system of the country. Without properly assuring justice and reparation of victims, the foundations for a lasting peace in the country cannot be laid and the peace process cannot be considered meaningfully concluded. It is only possible through an effective, functional and credible TJ process that can be ensured only by the appointment of the professional and competent officials in the Commissions.

The process of appointing officials to the TJ mechanisms must be acceptable to conflict victims and stakeholders, and their accessibility must be ensured. The meaningful participation of conflict victims in the TJ is a prerequisite throughout TJ process from the amendment of the law to the formation of the Commissions and its operation. The appointment of independent, impartial, competent and credible persons with high social and professional integrity is considered a prerequisite for making the Commissions result-oriented and ensuring justice and reparation to the victims of conflict.

The author is widely known as peace, human rights and public security expert.

Considering the persistent pain of victims, the government has no excuse to further delay TJ process. But there are reliable public rumors floating around that the government has failed to find a Chair of the RC

ADB'S SUPPORT

Protection of Vulture

ADB is supporting the protection of vultures by financing the Tanahun Hydropower project, which includes the construction of a resting place for vultures.

By A CORRESPONDENT

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has prioritized environmental safeguards in various projects in Nepal, including roads, transmission lines, and hydropower projects.

The vulture resting place at the Tanahun Hydropower Project aims to preserve vulture habitats and raise awareness about vulture conservation. Sachen Gautam, Communication Specialist of Tanahun Hydropower Ltd., highlighted the importance of protecting vultures and their habitat in the area.

Financed by the ADB, Tanahun Hydropower projects to build resting place for vulture, Asian Development Bank (ADB) has shown Builds Resting Place To Protect Vultures

The Tanahun Hydropower Limited has recently completed a project at the centre by installing five telescopic poles using local resources and equipment. Each pole has an iron arm covered with wood for vultures to safely perch on. Additionally, wooden caps have been placed on the top of the poles to provide a safe resting spot for the vultures after

they come for food.

The project aims to support the vultures in resting after their meals.

Vyas Municipality is running a cow protection centre along the Madi River, located approximately 6 kilometres from Damauli Bazaar. The centre, spread over about 200

away after feeding.

To address the issue of vultures colliding with the transmission line, the project has relocated the pit where dead cattle were disposed of and erected poles nearby to create a resting spot, as stated in the press release.

This initiative aims to raise awareness among the public about vulture conservation and safeguarding their habitat, ultimately transform-



ing the area into a vulture-friendly zone. Deceased cattle are placed in a pit at the centre, attracting vultures who feed on the carcasses. Vultures, as large carnivorous birds, scavenge on the meat of dead animals and do not hunt for themselves.

Previously, vultures were compelled to feed in an unsafe manner at the protection center due to the presence of a 33 kV transmission line passing through the area. Vultures that came to feed would often get entangled in the line and perish when they flew

the area into a vulture-friendly zone.

Furthermore, the construction of a dam as part of the project poses a threat to the natural habitat of native fish species in the Seti River. To mitigate this risk, a fish conservation program has been put into place in the upper reaches of the Madi River, approximately 45 kilometers from the confluence of the Seti and Madi Rivers, according to the project.

Sustainability In Development Projects: An Appraisal Of Nepal's Development Landscape



BY: BIMAL KHATIWADA

In the field of development, the term 'sustainability' has become a widely used buzzword, especially when evaluating the impact and success of development projects. As global challenges intensify, sustainability has emerged as an essential criterion for assessing the long-term effectiveness of these projects. But how well do these projects in Nepal truly meet the standards of sustainability? This article explores the concept of sustainability in development projects, critically examining its implementation, evaluation, and the factors influencing its success in Nepal.

The Evolution of Sustainability in Development Projects

Sustainability in development projects typically refers to the ability of a project to continue delivering benefits long after the initial funding phase is completed. This involves maintaining project outcomes and ensuring they contribute positively to the local community, environment, and economy over the long term. While the concept of sustainability is not new, it has gained increasing importance over the last few decades as both donors and implementing agencies aim to ensure their interventions have lasting impacts.

Development agencies, governments, and organizations frequently create projects with specific objectives in mind, such as reducing inequalities, enhancing disaster-prone areas' resilience, building climate change adaptation capacity, improving WASH services, or fostering economic growth. While achieving short-term goals is crucial during the project cycle, ensuring the long-term sustainability of these outcomes becomes vital once external funding phases end. In Nepal, the sustainability of development projects depends on various complex factors that influence the country's socio-political and economic environment.

Key Aspects of Sustainability in Development Projects

When assessing the sustainability of development projects, multiple dimensions are typically taken into account: technical, financial, political, environmental, institutional, and social. These dimensions are closely interconnected, and overlooking any one of them can jeopardize the overall sustainability of a project.

Technical Sustainability

Technical sustainability refers to the extent to which the infrastructure or systems established by a project can be maintained and operated without continuous external intervention. In Nepal, where infrastructure development is crucial, technical sustainability can be a challenge. For example, many water supply systems installed with the help of foreign aid face problems of maintenance and repair due to a lack of technical expertise and resources in local communities. Projects that fail to train local stakeholders or provide the necessary technical support often see their gains

erode shortly after completion. Exceptional schemes like the Dhulikhel drinking water supply system, Harthok Lift Drinking Water Supply system, and board model drinking water system demonstrate that with a manageable, well-structured approach, inclusive decision-making, and transparent management, remarkable achievements can be realized.

A case in point is the irrigation projects in Nepal, such as the Bhairawa-Lumbini Groundwater Irrigation Project, Banganga Irrigation System of Kapilvastu, Battar lift irrigation of Nuwakot, Narayani lift irrigation system, and many other agency-farmer managed model projects that have brought systems. However, the lack of skilled local technicians has led to issues of non-functioning systems within a few years because the technologies used are beyond the farmers' reach. When external support phases out, the sustainability of these systems becomes questionable. On the other hand, Farmers Managed Irrigation Systems (FMIS) like Sauramauja irrigation of Rupandehi, Rajapur Irrigation of Bardiya, Raj kulo of Palpa, and many others are found to be effectively operating systems.

1 Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability is a crucial factor in ensuring the long-term success of projects beyond their initial funding period. In Nepal, development projects rely heavily on international aid, making it challenging for them to sustain operations once the funding ends. This can lead to difficulties in maintaining the progress achieved during the project phase, as local resources or government support may not be sufficient.

For example, community forestry programs in Nepal have improved forest conservation and provided income for local communities. However, without ongoing external support, these programs may struggle to sustain their financial management and activities.

The country's reliance on foreign aid further complicates the issue of financial sustainability. While international donors establish financial models for projects, they often do not adequately address the long-term funding needs, placing the responsibility on local governments or communities.

2 Political Sustainability

Political sustainability in Nepal is the ability of a project to persist despite the ever-changing political landscape. The country's frequent political instability and government restructuring can lead to fluctuations in political commitment to long-term projects. When a new government takes office, there may be a shift in priorities, resulting in the abandonment of previously successful initiatives.

For instance, education and health programs funded by foreign aid have encountered difficulties in maintaining continuity due to changing political agendas. Government policy changes can divert attention from long-term projects to more immediate political concerns, impeding the effectiveness of development efforts.

Moreover, the intricate political dynamics in Nepal, where local, regional, and national interests often clash, can make it challenging for development projects to align with all stakeholders' interests. This can undermine the political sustainability of projects and create obstacles to their long-term success.³

3 Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is a crucial consideration in all development initiatives, particularly in countries like Nepal that are confronted with various environmental issues such as deforestation, soil erosion, and the effects of climate change. Ensuring that a project is environmentally sustainable means that the benefits it delivers do not result in negative environmental outcomes.

In Nepal, projects focusing on agriculture, irrigation, and forestry often struggle to strike a balance between development objectives and environmental sustainability. For instance, some irrigation schemes, while providing immediate advantages to farmers, could deplete local water resources in the long run if not managed effectively. Similarly, large-scale infrastructure projects like roads and dams can have significant environmental repercussions if sustainable practices are not integrated into their planning.

The impacts of climate change further jeopardize the sustainability of development projects in Nepal, particularly those related to agriculture and water resource management. For instance, shifts in precipitation patterns and rising temperatures may diminish the efficiency of irrigation systems or disrupt crop cycles, posing challenges to the sustainability of projects designed based on historical climate conditions.

4 Institutional Sustainability

In Nepal, institutional sustainability is crucial for the long-term success of development projects. Local institutions, including government bodies, NGOs, and community organizations, must have the capacity to effectively manage and maintain project outcomes. However, many local institutions in Nepal

lack the necessary technical and managerial skills to ensure sustainability. Challenges such as limited funding, insufficient trained staff, and political interference further hinder their ability to sustain development interventions.

For instance, local water management committees may struggle to secure resources and expertise to maintain water supply systems, while educational institutions may find it difficult to sustain quality education programs without external funding.

5 Social Sustainability

Social sustainability is considered the most crucial aspect of development projects as it has a direct impact on the long-term social outcomes. In Nepal, factors like community involvement, gender equality, and social inclusion are key determinants of the success of a project.

The integration of local communities into the project cycle is vital for social sustainability. Projects that empower communities, promote inclusivity, and address social inequalities are more likely to achieve lasting impact. However, challenges exist in ensuring social sustainability in Nepal, especially in marginalized or remote areas where social norms and power dynamics can hinder

participation.

Gender disparities have been a significant issue in many rural development projects in Nepal, limiting the opportunities for women and marginalized groups to benefit from project outcomes. This lack of inclusivity undermines the social sustainability of these initiatives.

6 The Challenge of Sustainability in a Dynamically Changing World

One of the major obstacles to achieving sustainability in development projects in Nepal is the rapidly changing socio-political and environmental landscape. The country's development path is influenced by various factors such as political instability, economic limitations, and evolving global priorities. In such a volatile setting, determining sustainability thresholds and dimensions becomes a challenging task.

Global frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) play a crucial role in shaping national development strategies and influencing the design of development projects. However, aligning projects with these goals requires a thorough evaluation of local contexts, available resources, and long-term plans. In Nepal, where issues like poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation persist, ensuring that development projects contribute meaningfully to the SDGs is a significant challenge.

Furthermore, the dependence on foreign aid and external funding cycles often leads to development projects being planned with a limited timeframe in mind. Once the funding ends, many projects struggle to sustain their progress without the necessary financial and technical resources. This reliance on aid undermines the true essence of sustainability, as projects often rely on external assistance to maintain their impact rather than building local capacity to continue independently.

Conclusion

The importance of sustainability in assessing the effectiveness of development projects cannot be overstated, yet achieving it remains a complex and challenging task. In Nepal, a multitude of factors such as technical, financial, political, environmental, institutional, and social aspects interact to create a difficult landscape for ensuring the long-term sustainability of development initiatives. While some projects manage to sustain their impact beyond the initial aid period, many others fall short of meeting sustainability standards due to a mix of internal and external influences.

To promote sustainable development in Nepal, it is imperative for development organizations, local authorities, and communities to embrace a comprehensive approach that transcends mere compliance with predetermined benchmarks and takes into account the broader socio-political and environmental context. By fostering local ownership, enhancing institutional capacity, and addressing the interconnected elements that shape sustainability, Nepal can work towards achieving enduring development outcomes. In a rapidly changing world, sustainability should be viewed as a fluid and evolving process that demands ongoing adaptation, cooperation, and dedication across all segments of society.

एमपक्स संक्रमणबाट बचाउँ र बचाऔं

- विदेशबाट आउने जो कोहिमा एमपक्सको सम्भावित जोखिम हुने हुनाले अनिवार्य रूपमा स्वास्थ्य परीक्षण गराऔं,
- ज्वरो आउने, टाउको दुख्ने, शरिर सुन्निने, ढाड दुख्ने मांसपेशी दुख्ने एमपक्स रोगका प्रमुख लक्षण हुन्,
- त्यस्ता लक्षण देखा परे स्वास्थ्य परीक्षण गराऔं,
- एमपक्स अत्यन्तै सङ्क्रामक रोग भएकाले सङ्क्रमण हुनासाथ आइसोलेसनमा बसौं,
- घना वस्ती र सहरी क्षेत्रमा यसको सङ्क्रमण छिटो बढ्ने भएकाले सचेतना बढाउँ ।



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VOL. 14 No. 01, July 17, 2020 (Shrawan 02, 2077) Publisher: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75



VOL. 13 No. 18, June 19, 2020 (Asadh 5, 2077) Publisher: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75

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