

Rauthat scam

23, who were burnt alive in Rautahat

Kathmandu: Member of the House of Representatives (HoR) Mohammad Aftab Alam from the Nepali Congress (NC) has been accused of murder and destroying evidence related to a bomb explosion that happened 12 years ago. On April 9, 2008, a bomb exploded in a cowshed, and within the night the evidence was destroyed. The evidence of the scene of the crime was wiped, and it was Rukhsana Khatun who came and spoke at the Reporters Club regarding the incident, and the attempt to destroy all possible evidence regarding the case.

The Chief District Officer of Rautahat and the Police in charge all turned a blind eye and refused to investigate or accept an FIR of the incident. Shri Narayan who wanted to make a formal complaint was denied. The wounded were mercilessly thrown into the furnace of the brick kiln and were burnt alive.

With all evidence destroyed and severe political influence posed a big challenge toward the investigation. The family of Aftab was not questioned and



Alam in custody for more five days

Rauthat: Rautahat District Court has remanded Nepali Congress leader Mohammad Aftab Alam in custody for more five days for investigations into a blast and subsequent murder of at least 22 of those injured in the bomb blast that took place in 2008.

This is the second time the district court remanded him in custody for five days for investigation. Alam, who is said to be the main mastermind of the brutal killing, has not said anything during the police interrogation citing health issues.

Alam, a suspended Nepali Congress lawmaker, had denied recording the statement citing health issues when the police produced him before the District Attorney Office. However, the district police have been collecting information from those injured in the blast. Police have already recorded the statements of two injured persons.

Emerging from the court, Alam claimed that no such incident had taken place as reported in media. "The Office of the Attorney General already invalidated the case since no such incident had taken place as reported. This is the truth," he told reporters briefly. Last Sunday, the district court remanded Alam for seven days in custody for further investigation into the case.

while the entire incident was politicized. The local law enforcement and high ranking officials were involved in a massive cover-up of the entire incident, and this has been duly exposed.

The eyewitnesses to the case were influenced through monetary measures. Shree Narayan Singh was coaxed into not filing a complaint from a relative working in the local Police. Compensation was said will be provided but since the victims and members of the family of those who were brutally burnt alive refused and were determined to take the case forward.

Eyewitnesses of the incident say that the Nepal police were involved in covering up the scene of the crime and aiding to hide and destroy any remaining evidence of the incident. The enforcement was utilized not to arrest the perpetrators but to aid the culprit. Aftab Alam was finally arrested on Sunday 13 October 2019.

Sarajul Mohammed who survived the explosion who was working in Rautahat had come

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Agreement between Nepal-India to construct Butwal-Gorakhpur cross border transmission line

Kathmandu: The meeting of Nepal-India energy Joint Steering Committee (JSC) has made a major breakthrough agreeing to a modality for Butwal-Gorakhpur 400 kV Cross border Transmission Line. According to an agreement, Nepal and India will have equal share of 50/50 percent in the transmission line.

This agreement paves the way to construct the much talked Butwal Gorakhpur Cross border Transmission line.

Prior to the JSC meeting, the joint secretary-



level Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting was held and finalizes the agendas for the JSC meeting. Prabin Aryal, joint secretary of Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, led Nepali team.

For the last few years, Nepal has been pressing India to start work on Butwal-Gorakhpur Transmission line. However, both the sides failed to reach amicable agreement on the issue.

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Editorial

Arrest of Aftab Alam

Former Minister Mohammad Aftab Alam in police custody on the charge of his involvement in committing several murders in Rautahat district in April 2008. Alam, who is also a Nepali Congress lawmaker, has been accused of killing dozens of persons in a massive blast in Rautahat. The blast, which occurred at the cowshed of Alam's relative when the victims were making bombs, had allegedly left 14 dead and eight injured. Alam has been accused of taking the blast-injured and the dead to a nearby brick kiln and throwing them in the furnace to destroy any evidence.

Later, it was learnt that all those killed were making bombs to create terror in the Constituent Assembly elections to secure Alam's win.

As per the investigation by police, Alam had killed eight of the injured witnesses in a brick kiln. A team of police led by DSP Nabin Karki arrested Alam at

Police investigation has shown that Alam had killed at least eight of the injured witnesses in a brick kiln.

Idris Gate in Rajapur Municipality-1, while he was on his way to attend a tea reception organized by Nepali Congress in district headquarters, Gaur.

The Supreme Court had ordered proper investigation into the case and action as per the law on May 29, 2012. Alam was elected lawmaker from Rautahat Constituency-2 in the first Constituent Assembly elections in 2008. Meanwhile, he lost the second Constituent Assembly elections in 2013. But in the parliamentary elections of 2017, Alam won from Rautahat Constituency-2.

As part of the police investigation, two persons were arrested for their alleged involvement in the blast. Based on the statements given by the two accused during interrogation, police arrested NC lawmaker Alam, 11 years after the blast.

Alam won the 2008 CA elections and also became the minister of Labor and Transport Management. Later one of the writ petitioners was mysteriously killed. Alam contested the parliamentary elections in 2017 yet again and won. Now, police investigation has shown that Alam had killed at least eight of the injured witnesses in a brick kiln.

It is when the political parties protect criminals, politicians like Alam rise. But the political parties themselves resist when measures are taken to bar criminals in politics. During the deliberation on electoral laws in 2017, for example, at least some parties had stood in favor of prohibiting those accused of crimes against contesting the elections. But Nepali Congress stood against it. If we had stringent provisions against crime-accused, Alam would not become the lawmaker. The case of Alam should be a wakeup call for all political parties to dismantle criminalization of politics and politicization of crime—one stigma of shame on Nepali politics. There should be firm resolve among political parties to eliminate criminal elements in their respective parties. But since such resolve still looks like a distant possibility, civil society and Nepali press should keep raging against politicization of crime. Impunity, followed by crime, should not become the hallmark of Nepali politics anymore.

We have not asked Nepal to be against any country -3

So yes, security is one pillar and the U.S. Department of Defense report talks about some of the things they are doing. It is a fancy looking report, and it is one of the first things that comes up if you Google "Indo-Pacific Strategy." But it is only a single report, and I can bury it under mountains of speeches, press releases, tweets, and congressional briefings that Secretary of State Pompeo has given, and mountains more from other State Department diplomats and USAID officials and others.

If you care to look for it, Secretary Pompeo has launched the economic pillar of the Indo-Pacific Strategy and he has launched a governance pillar of the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

In early November, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce will host, along with senior officials from the State Department and USAID and private-sector CEOs, an Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok to highlight the importance of the private sector in the Indo-Pacific Region. Security is just one part, an important part, but just one part of our pursuing the vision of a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific Region.

That vision excludes no country. A good number of countries, including some of Nepal's longstanding friends and partners, have spoken out—of their own volition—in favor of a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific Region—the very principles that underpin the Indo-Pacific Strategy and have guided our engagement with the region and Nepal for decades, not just for years.

Some individuals claim there is some kind of secret motivation or that it is somehow exclusionary for the

United States to call for a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific Region when, in fact, the U.S. is engaging and promoting the same principles upon which our relationship was founded over 70 years ago.

Fundamental freedoms, respect for human rights, inclusive, responsive good governance. To those who question this, I ask: what part of "free, open, and secure" is exclusionary—or counter to anyone's interests?

Is it exclusionary to call for all countries to respect the sovereignty of others, regardless of size? I certainly don't think so. I think Nepal, as a small country, has at least as much interest as the United States does in speaking up for the fundamental principle that large countries should not invade small countries and that disputes should be settled peacefully, not through bullying or force.

How can it be anti-anyone to say that refugees deserve protection or that minority groups should not be persecuted? This is a fundamental principle of international law, enshrined in multiple international agreements.

I think Nepal, as a land-locked country, has at least as much interest as the United States in strengthening the international consensus that sea lanes and air routes should be open.

How can it be exclusionary to say that people should be free, free to exercise their fundamental human freedoms? I think all people, everywhere, are as entitled to enjoy fundamental human freedoms. Nepalis, as a people who have fought for their democracy and



Randy W. Berry
US Ambassador to Nepal

their freedoms, have at least as much interest as the United States in speaking up for the principle that human rights violations anywhere are a concern for all of us.

Isn't that why Nepal ratified the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and why Nepal maintains a mission in Geneva and a seat on the UN Human Rights Council?

How can it be anti-anyone to say that refugees deserve protection or that minority groups should not be persecuted? This is a fundamental principle of international law, enshrined in multiple international agreements.

Why would saying that it should be upheld be against any country? I think Nepalis know that we all have a responsibility to protect refugees.

That is why Nepal generously provided shelter to more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees, and America's commitment to that principle is why we took in nearly all of them—our proudest, newest American citizens. Nepal did not do that because Nepal was anti any country, and neither did we.

That's the point: supporting a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific

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Gajendra Narayan also be considered an ideal man in united party

• **What was the main agenda of the meeting of the party's political committee held recently?**

We reviewed what remained behind the unity of the New Force Party and the Federal Socialist Forum. While reviewing, we came to the conclusion that the rest of the work on unification will be completed by mid-November. So far, unification work has been completed in 42 districts. It was decided to complete the work of the ward committee of the party along with all the work under the timetable by mid-November. There was a by-election on November 30. There was discussion about party participation and preparation in the by-polls. The meeting of the party's political committee has been concluded with discussions on the country's politics and the recent visit of the President of our neighboring country, China, to its implications and future politics of Nepal.

• **Does your party also contest the by-elections?**

In the by-elections, we contest

is taking place. After we receive that report, it will be decided whether the elections will be fought alone or not.

• **During the time of unification between the New Force Party and the Socialist Forum, there was also the issue of exclusion from the group government including Upendra Yadav. Was that issue not discussed at the meeting?**

The issue of participation in government has now become a matter of public debate. Upendra Yadava, chairman of our working committee, has repeatedly said that we have not gone to government without any conditions. Upon this, the leaders of our party, including Upendra Yadav, joined the government, agreeing with the government that it would be easier to get two thirds if the present ruling party agrees to bring the proposal for amendment of the constitution by reaching a specific issue within the

about the constitution amendment and the agreement with the Socialist Forum. If they ask that there is no possibility of amending the constitution within their tenure, we will leave the government any time.

• **How unanimous is the agreement between the New Force Party and the Federal Socialist Forum on the amendment of the constitution?**

There is no difference between us on issue of constitution amendment. Before the unification, we had differences in the course of action. Earlier New Force had concluded that the constitution not a complete but its basic principle is correct. We did not say that we should revert to federalism, republic, social justice to reverse the multiparty system. There was no difference between the Federal Socialist Forum and the New Force in the agenda. The New Force supported on the fundamental elements of the constitution at that time. Both parties have similar agendas like we both are

- **In the by-elections, Socialist Party to contest everywhere.**
- **The Socialist Party has given high importance to the unity with RJP.**
- **If the government asks that there is no possibility of amending the constitution, we will leave the government any time.**
- **By mid-December, we will bring a wave in Nepali politics.**
- **We can either leave the government or unite with many other parties too.**

everywhere.

• **There is talk of unification with RJP-Nepal is also underway, if there is no unification before the by-election, and then there is cooperation with RJP in the by-elections?**

The Socialist Party has given high importance to the unity with RJP. We haven't discussed much about cooperating or doing what if unification is not completed. We have asked the district committees and standing committees to make a report on the status of our party in the area where the by-election

tenure of parliament. That is not the case of the current Socialist Party but that of the then Socialist Forum.

• **The Federal Socialist Forum has gone to the government with two-point agreement and that are not implemented yet. The issue of departure from the government has been raised even during unification with the New Force. After a long time passed of unification how the party moves forward?**

We now will remind the government once again

saying at least 10 provinces, the issue of change should go ahead, full e proportional electoral system and others. We have been united on the agenda for the past.

• **Upendra Yadav's group does not want to leave the government and your group is in favor of quitting the government, does this seem not like a contradiction?**

Party's Federal Council and Central Committee meeting is scheduled to hold on mid-November and in that meeting these agendas will enter. By mid-December, we will bring a wave in Nepali



Dambar Khatiwada
Deputy General Secretary
Socialist Party, Nepal

politics. We can either leave the government or unite with many other parties, including the RJP. There is a possibility of a new wave in Nepali politics by the last week of November.

• **Is the unification with RJP too close or is there still some homework left?**

Politically, in Nepal we call the Congress, Communist and RPP the old party. We consider RPP as the successor party of the Rana regime or Panchayat and monarchy. The Congress and the Communist have been the ruling party since 1990. These ruled till now. We call these three parties the governing party of Nepal. The Socialist Party is of the view that Nepal cannot be defeated to the governing these three parties unless all other powers come together. We urge the formation of a strong ideological political party in the country till the next election. RJP-Nepal also agrees with our ideology. Now some technical, some leadership and some agenda issues are yet to be agreed. The Socialist Party is in favor of the directly elected

president but RJP is not. Such issues can be solved by discussing them. We are very close to a consensus on unification with RJP.

• **RJP is presently adopting a rotational system to lead the party, so what happens in that regard?**

We do not go into the rotational system. We look for ways in which collaboration with key leaders can continue.

• **RJP considers Gajendra Narayan Singh as an ideal person, can it remain continue after the unification?**

What's wrong with that? In terms of ideology, it remains the Socialist Party. After the unification of the party, there is no problem for Gajendra Narayan Singh to be considered an ideal man.

• **How has your party viewed the recent visit of Chinese President to Nepal?**

We should not look as politics. It is very good for us to visit the head of the country of the neighboring nation which has emerged as a powerful nation in the world and welcome that step and use it in the national interest.

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to the capital to reveal the details of the case. Reporters Club which was located in Putalisadak in the capital was the venue for these revelations.

He was agitated and visibly frightened by what transpired and revealed at the Reporters Club that NC leader Mohammed Aftab Alam had collected bombs at his relatives' place to be used to threaten the voters in the elections. The bomb exploded and wounded several people and the ones who were wounded were thrown into the furnace of the brick kiln and burnt alive.

The insecurity following the incident made Sarajul flee Rautahat and come and seek support in the capital city. Sarajul had come in contact with the Reporters Club and had said "three people injured after the blast were thrown into the furnace which I saw happening in front of my eyes, I had also

informed the family members of those three who perished, and I realized that living in the area was a threat to his life. The ones alive after the blast were begging for mercy to be allowed to leave but were instead thrown into the furnace of the brick kiln".

He also stated that the police aided in throwing the wounded into the furnace, an individual Owase Akhtar Miya who was killed was the son of his employer. Akhtar Miya was taken by unidentified people who were campaigning for Mohammad Aftab Alam during the elections. Miya was taken by the bike-borne people to Fardahawa, and Sarajul followed them on his cycle.

After reaching Fardahawa Sarajul saw that bombs were stacked in a cowshed where 30-35 people were smoking beedis and cracking jokes in

laughter. At around 6 pm there was an explosion, instantly killing two and wounding the rest, while cries for help could be heard. Survivors were drenched in blood, and Sarajul saw Owase Akhtar Miya's face blackened due to the smoke, and he was heavily injured. Sarajul wanted to get Owase to safety but wasn't allowed by Aftab Alam's men who were on the spot. Fearing for his own life Sarajul then ran away and spent the night near the wheat field nearby, and despite his account as an eyewitness the law enforcement paid no heed, and there was a lot of pressure that undermined this case.

Over 23 people were hurled and burnt alive that day in the brick kiln as a measure to destroy evidence and witnesses. Shree Narayan Singh the father of victim Pintu has said "following the blasts, people from across the border in India come looking for their family members who

disappeared during the elections". Singh had gone to various parts of India across the border looking for his son but came to know the details through one of the survivors of the incident Saifuddin. He then went to file an official complaint because his son was never found, and was most likely burnt alive in the brick kiln. Following the incident, Shree Narayan was coaxed not to tell the authorities and was attempted to be bribed. Mother of late Owase Akhtar a victim of the blast who was later burnt alive in the furnace of the brick kiln Rukhsana Khatun was informed of the incident by Sarajul. The last remains of her son that she received was a sweater and a pair of shoes. She says "Mohammad Aftab Alam his brother Mehtab and the local police are involved in the killing of her son and the rest. They also offered her money to shut the case but she was determined to punish those responsible for the death of her son" she said.

Agreement between...

"This is a historic agreement and major breakthrough in the negotiation between Nepal and India," said Dinesh Ghimire, Secretary of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation and head of the Nepalese delegation. "Since Nepal and India both have already developed a modality in Cross border transmission line in Dhalkebar Mujafarpur, we have decided to follow a model," secretary Ghimire.

Similarly, Nepal and India also agreed on energy banking project. The two day secretary level meetings have concluded in Southern Indian city of Bangalore.

Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, secretary at the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), led Nepali delegation, whereas his counterpart Subhash Chandra Garg is heading the Indian team.

Aryal, joint secretary at MoEWRI, who was a participant in the discussions, said that the secretary-level talks agreed on the agenda prepared by their meeting earlier.

The New Butwal-Gorakhpur cross-border transmission line project is a must to implement the US government's Millennium Challenge Corporation assistance to Nepal, according to Aryal.

"Government authorities from both sides have spent a lot of time preparing the groundwork for the agreement and we hope it will be finalized this time." Aryal informed that there has been agreement to construct the transmission line on government-to-

government modality and the detailed project report has also already been finalized.

The cross-border transmission line project has been under discussion for a long time and the issue was also raised during the last JSC meeting in Pokhara on January 23. Back then, Nepal and India had agreed to sell more electricity to Nepal. Similarly, at the Pokhara meeting, both the governments had agreed to build the respective length of the transmission line that falls in their territory.

Of the total 140-km-long transmission line, 20 km falls in Nepal's territory and remaining 120 km lies in the Indian territory. Moreover, Nepal had pledged to invest 50 per cent of equity in the Indian side of the transmission line. At that meeting, Nepal had also agreed to pay cent per cent wheeling charge for seven years from the beginning of the transmission line operation.

After seven years of operation, Nepal has proposed that both countries must pay according to the quantum of energy used through this transmission line. However, India had refused to accept that proposal.

During the last meeting in January, Nepal and India had discussed opening a joint company to implement the project and there were also talks on India providing interest-free loan to fund the construction works. The meeting, however, did not make any agreement.

President Bhandari to meet Indian President Kovind in Japan



Kathmandu: President Bidya Devi Bhandari has left for an official visit to Japan from Sunday to attend the Ceremony of the Enthronement of Naruhito, the Emperor of Japan.

President Bhandari left for Tokyo after concluding the visit. According to a press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the president is scheduled to attend the Ceremony of the Enthronement of Naruhito to be held on October 22. After the ceremony, the president will attend the Court Banquet to be hosted by Naruhito.

During the visit, the president will hold meetings with

President of India Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe, according to MoFA.

President Bhandari will also attend the welcome reception hosted in her honor by the Ambassador of Nepal to Japan Pratiba Rana and the welcome program to be organized by the Non-Resident Nepali Association, Japan.

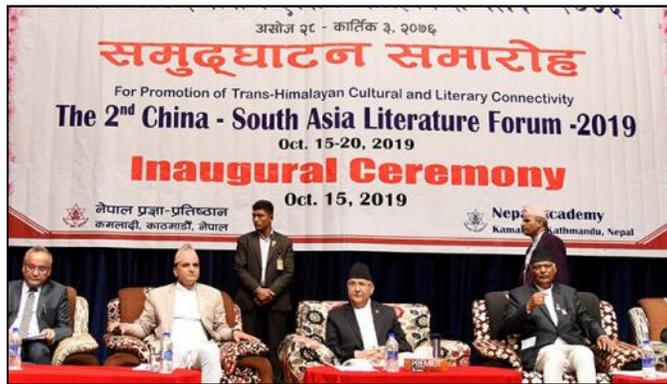
The president will be accompanied by Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa and other high ranking officials of the Office of the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Wrapping up her visit to Japan, the president will return to Kathmandu on October 23.

'Improved ties with India and China favorable to Nepal's prosperity'

Kathmandu: Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has said the relations with the neighbouring countries, India and China, have entered a new phase.

He reiterated that Nepal would move ahead together with collaboration with these countries by improving the relations.

Inaugurating the Second China and South Asia Literature Conference organized by Nepal Academy, Prime Minister Oli said enhancing the economic prosperity of the countries of South Asia through mutual collaboration by promoting the rich civilization, knowledge, research and culture was the present responsibility.



He said that Asia was the mother of this rich culture, civilization, knowledge and research heritage.

PM Oli said the Nepal visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping has been very successful and since President Xi had visited India before coming to Nepal, it had send a message as to the

kind of new phase of relations the countries of Asia are developing. President Xi paid a state visit to Nepal on October 12 and 13 at the cordial invitation of President Bidya Devi Bhandari.

PM Oli said: "India and China, the most populous countries in the world, are making their

relations cordial by forgetting the old acrimonies. Nepal too wants to move ahead together with them. Asia now wants to move ahead on the path of mutual unity, human welfare and prosperity, and not on the path of hostility."

Noting that the oriental civilization and culture is superb and enchanting, he urged all countries to preserve the good aspects of this culture and civilization.

Sixty writers and litterateurs including 20 from abroad and 40 from Nepal are participating in the conference. There is also the institutional representation from Nepal, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Sixteen working papers, including four from Nepal and 16 from the rest of the countries, will be presented and discussed during the conference.

Social transformation possible when daughters are educated: CM Raut

Mahottari: Province 2 Chief Minister Lalbabu Raut insisted the need to keep all the responsibilities related to education under State government domain.

At the bi-cycle distribution function held in Mahottari, he stressed that the State government should be handed overall authority to make leap forward in education sector.

Arguing that the federal government's education policy has collapsed the entire education sector, he said the State government was ready to take leadership in education.



Today's need is technical education, Chief Minister Raut said, pledging efforts for making the State as a hub for technical vocational education. He claimed that the state government's campaign

for 'Protect Daughters, Educate Daughters' would bring educational revolution among women.

'Daughters should be understood as boon not the curse', he said, adding, 'Social transformation is

possible only when daughters are educated'.

Meanwhile, bi-cycles were distributed at Pipara rural municipality, Jaleswor municipality and Ekdara municipality of Mahottari district under the 'Protect Daughters, Educate Daughters' campaign.

Total 272 (8th grader) girls students of the district were provided with bi-cycles on the presence of Chief Minister Raut.

Also present on the occasion were former minister, central members from Samajbadi Party, State government ministers and local leaders.

Government working for better relations with India and China: Paudel



Rupandehi: A senior leader of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) has said the current government has been able to better the country's relations with both India and China.

Speaking at a program in Rupandehi, general secretary of NCP, Bishnu Paudel, said that the government led by Prime Minister KP

Oli has been able to consolidate the relations with the two immediate neighbors. "The NCP-led government is strengthening the relationship with India that was in trouble after the 2015 blockade. Now, Nepal has sound relations with both the governments," he said.

Paudel also said the state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping also helped to improve relations with the northern neighbor. "The agreements reached with the Chinese government during Xi visit will be beneficial for the development of the country," Paudel said.

Supreme Court directs to unveil Lal commission report

Kathmandu: The Supreme Court (SC) ordered the government to release the report prepared by former Justice Girish Chandra Lal-led commission.

A joint bench of Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher JBR and Justice Sapana Pradhan Malla issued the order in the name of Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and Ministry for Home Affairs.

Responding to a writ filed by advocate Shahidhar Pandey, the apex court directed the defendants to unveil the report at



the earliest.

The government had formed a commission led by former Justice Lal to investigate into the incidents that took place during the Madhesh movement in 2015.

Strategic basis of Nepal-India-China partnership for economic development being prepared: Prachanda

Kathmandu: Major ruling party, Nepal Communist Party (NCP), chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has said the basis was being prepared for going towards a new strategy of three-country partnership for economic development among Nepal, India and China.

Recalling that it was him who had proposed this idea during his visit to China and India some years back given the special geo-political situation, the former Prime Minister said an understanding has been building to go towards that strategy, in a political way, at present after the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Addressing the greetings exchange programme and tea reception organized by NCP in Kathmandu, party chair Dahal said, "A new scenario has been developing around what is called 'Two Plus One' after discussions between President Xi and (Indian Prime Minister) Narendra



Modi. Nepal has been heading towards a new and bright future owing to the agreements and understandings signed during his (President Xi's) visit."

He argued that the country has entered a new era of preparation towards development, prosperity and socialism as the commitment has already come from Chinese President Xi that China would extend cooperation to transform Nepal from a land-locked

country to a land-linked country. The NCP chairman reiterated that a new environment of political trust has developed wherein Nepal would be benefited from the development of its neighbours.

"This visit (by President Xi) has many dimensions. An important aspect of this is that a climate of goodwill, trust and understanding has developed after Chinese President Xi

Jinping visited India and held discussions with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi there before coming to Nepal. This is important. A big responsibility has come upon the shoulder of Nepalis," he observed.

Chair Dahal said it was necessary to make a new resolve to fulfill the aspiration of the Nepali people for development and prosperity as soon as possible by strengthening the national independence and the federal democratic republic along with the national unity by making the most out of the constitutional, legal and political environment that has developed in a conducive way.

Referring to the greetings exchange programme, NCP chair Dahal said, "The commitment that we make through this type of programmes is a stronger unity among the political parties itself."

He stressed that a climate of political stability has been made through the three tier elections by making constitution with federal democratic republic through agreement among the major parties.

Nepal, Myanmar sign MoU on tourism and culture



Myanmar: Nepal and Myanmar inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in tourism and culture for strengthening relationship in this field following bilateral talks held in the presence of President Bidya Devi Bhandari and State Counselor of Myanmar Aung San Suu Kyi.

President Bhandari is currently on a five-day state visit to the Republic of Union of Myanmar at the friendly invitation of the President of Myanmar U Win Myint.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali and Union Minister for International Cooperation of Myanmar, Mr Kyaw Tin, signed and exchanged the two MoUs after the bilateral talks held at the Presidential House in Nay Pyi Taw, the capital of Myanmar. President Bhandari arrived in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday evening and held talks with her Myanmar counterpart U Win Myint at the Presidential House. Earlier, Myanmar Army presented a Guard of Honour to President Bhandari.

Indian PM Modi threatens to cut river water to Pakistan



New Delhi: Indian Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi has threatened to cut river water flowing to Pakistan and divert it to the farmers of Haryana.

Modi made the threat to woo voters addressing a campaign rally at Charkhi Dadri in Haryana ahead of the assembly elections on 21 October.

"The water which belongs to India was allowed to flow to Pakistan for 70 years...this will not happen now. We will divert the water which belongs to India, it will be given to the farmers of Haryana, water should be given to the farmers of Rajasthan," said Modi.

India shares its water with Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty. The Modi government has threatened to cut water to Pakistan even in the past accusing its neighbor of sponsoring terrorism in India.

China to provide equipment worth Rs 2.4 billion to Nepali Army

Kathmandu: Nepal and China signed an agreement regarding 150 million RMB (approximately Rs 2.5 billion) military aid to the Nepal Army. Defense Minister Ishwor Pokharel, who is currently in China, signed the agreement on the assistance — worth 150 million RMB.

An agreement to this regard was signed by Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister, Ishwor Pokharel, and Chinese Defense Minister General Wei Fenghe in Beijing today.

The assistance would be provided in three years. It was also mentioned during the recent Nepal visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Before signing the agreement, DPM Pokharel, who is currently in China, held a discussion with General Wei on mutual assistance and bilateral interest. DPM Pokharel reiterated that Nepal was firm on Panchasheel, peaceful coexistence, mutual



respect and non-interference to internal affairs in terms of Nepal-China relations.

“Nepal and China have intimate and friendly relations which gained further height with President Xi’s visit to Nepal,” he reminded, extending thanks to the Chinese government for its assistance to Nepal’s socio-economic

development.

He also made it clear that Nepal was firm on ‘One China Policy’ and it would not allow the use of its land against the neighbor.

Likewise, the Chinese Minister for Defense Wei thanked Nepal for its high-level of participation in the 9th Xiangshan Forum and 7th CISM Military World Games held recently in

China. He, on the behalf of China, expressed his happiness for being able to extend support to Nepal in its economic and military sectors’ enhancement and also said that the Chinese government was always positive to extend further support for the capacity-building of the Nepal military.

During the meeting, the two also expressed their opinion about the recent visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Nepal and assessed that the visit had helped the Sino-Nepal ties come closer. On the occasion, Pokharel extended an official invitation to his Chinese counterpart for Nepal. The Nepali delegation led by DPM Pokharel is currently in Beijing. Present in the meeting were Nepali Ambassador to China, Leelamani Poudyal, and Lieutenant General of Nepal Army Gaurav Tandul among others.

The issue was discussed and agreed during the state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping last week. China had also provided assistance to the Nepal Army last year as well.

As Xi comes a-calling, a footprint without traction



Sujeeb Shakya

Earlier this week, on September 24, in a two-day event attended by the top brass of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) which included the Prime Minister, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by the NCP with the Communist Party of China. Signed on the sidelines of the programme, “Communist Party of China’s Opinion about Xi Jinping Thought and Ideological Discussion between Nepal Communist Party and Communist Party of China”, it was in preparation for the visit of the Chinese President, Xi Jinping in October, his first since assuming presidency in 2013. The last time a Chinese President visited Nepal was 23 years ago, in 1996.

In August 2014, when the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited Nepal, Kathmandu shut to welcome him. It was called a historic visit by an Indian Prime Minister after more than a decade-and-a-half. It felt as if the India-Nepal relationship would undergo changes as a number of sops were announced. Less than a year later, when a big earthquake struck

Nepal, India was quick to respond with help and relief materials. This made everyone feel that the changes in ties were for real. But months later, India which was dissatisfied with the Nepal Constitution imposed a blockade that changed the perception about Mr. Modi and India forever. It was an act that alienated a whole generation of Nepali youth, and Nepali leaders played the nationalism card to reach out to China. Chinese interest grew after the earthquake and the blockade. With the announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), exchanges and interactions between the two countries grew. Nepal signed agreements with China to ensure it was not “India locked”, in turn opening transit and trade opportunities through its northern border.

Nepal, in its nearly 70-year journey after the Rana autocracy ended in 1950, has yet to leverage its bilateral or multilateral ties. From the days of the Shah kings who ruled directly till 2006 to the current form of a federal democratic republic, Nepal’s engagements with the outside world have been more of theatrics, speeches and little action. After the 2015 earthquake, China, India and other countries pledged approximately \$4-billion for reconstruction; India pledged more funds, but Nepal has been tepid in utilising these funds. Scouring for grants remains key while there has not been much traction on agreed projects being implemented. It has never been about seeking investments and get into a partnership model such as what Bangladesh has been able to do successfully with both China and India.

With a strong patriarchal and feudal culture embedded in Hinduism, rituals dominate Nepali life. With people from the Bahun (Brahmin) community dominating the bulk of leadership in politics and bureaucracy, there is much emphasis on rituals rather than an understanding of the deeper issues. Therefore, there is little expectation about the upcoming visit apart from keeping nationalism alive from an electoral point of view: in general about creating doubts about India to making anti-India statements.

The biggest feature of the Nepali communist ignored by parachute analysts is that communism to Nepal came through Calcutta and not straight from China. Therefore, what we see in Nepal is the West Bengal version of communism rather than a Chinese one. First, the communist movement like the one in West Bengal has been about multiple factions that keep splitting and coming together rather than it being about one single and unified party. At one point in time, people had lost count of how many communist parties in Nepal were overground and underground.

Second, the communist movement in both India and Nepal has been about rent-seeking on positions and selling rhetoric and hypocrisy. It has been about talking about Red Book during the day and on other diametric subjects later. This is in stark contrast to the Chinese societal model of hard work and encouraging entrepreneurial pursuits.

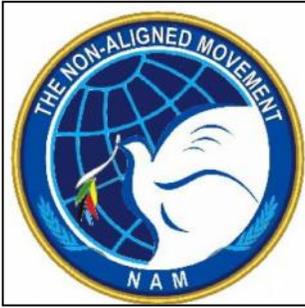
Third, Nepali communists, especially the former insurgents, still talk about Mao and the Maoist ideology. In China, Mao is a word best avoided and is jarring for the current key leadership. Finally, in China, over the years, when a majority group within the party decides on an issue, people with opposing views accept the decision and do not challenge them in the future. You can debate on an issue

but after a decision is made, you abide by it. Nepali communism has been about continuous infighting and creating fiefdoms rather than accepting an individual’s leadership.

The recent rise of the Nepali communist has been due to the empathy of and support from the Communist parties of India that were part of the United Progressive Alliance. The Maoists, while underground, received tacit support. With the communist parties in India in disarray now, the Nepali communist leaders are looking for options. With the co-chair of the NCP, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, in line to succeed Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, other leaders such as Madhav Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal who became Prime Ministers earlier with Indian support are trying to look for options in China.

While Chinese engagement in Nepal has increased post the BRI phase and with revamping of outreach policies, those backing the few projects with Chinese investments have not been happy with the government as they now face the same problems that other investors are experiencing. Foreign direct investments to Nepal are low and the way government has functioned does not really encourage large Chinese investors to look at Nepal seriously enough. The increase in Chinese businesses in Nepal has remained mostly low level examples being operations in hotels and restaurants. Till there is a complete recalibration in Nepal’s long-term vision of development, a willingness to implement investor-friendly policies and enable concrete steps towards efficiency, President Xi’s visit will be once again be one made by a “friendly neighbour or cousin”, who brings some gifts, exchanges pleasantries and then moves on. (From The Hindu)

PM Oli to attend NAM Summit in Baku



Kathmandu: Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli will be leading the Nepali delegation to the 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) being held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan from 25 to 26 of October 2019. Prime Minister Oli will leave Kathmandu for Baku on 24

October. He will be accompanied by his spouse Radhika Shakya.

The Nepali delegation includes Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Chief Adviser to the Prime Minister Bishnu Rimal, Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr Rajan Bhattarai, Foreign Secretary Shanker Das Bairagi and senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to a press statement issued by the Foreign Ministry here today, the Prime Minister will address the general debate of the Summit on 26 of October. The General Debate of the 18th NAM Summit will be held on the theme of "Upholding the Bandung

Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of contemporary world".

The Prime Minister will attend the official dinner to be hosted by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, in honour of the heads of delegation on 25 October 2019. Prime Minister Oli will also hold bilateral meetings with the Heads of Delegations of different countries on the side-lines of the Summit.

The 18th NAM Summit will be preceded by the Preparatory Ministerial Meeting on 23-24 October and Senior Officials Meeting on 21-22 October 2019. The Summit will consider the report of the

Preparatory Ministerial Meeting, review the progress achieved in the implementation of the outcomes of the 17th Summit held in 2016, and conclude with the adoption of the Baku Declaration.

It may be noted that Nepal is a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement and has been actively participating in all NAM Summits since its inception. Principles of non-alignment constitute one of the basic tenets of Nepal's foreign policy.

The Prime Minister will return from Baku in the evening of 26 October and arrive Kathmandu in the morning of 27 October 2019, adds the statement.

Nepal, India conduct joint patrolling



Kanchanpur: Border security forces of Nepal and India have begun a joint patrol in the southern region of Kanchanpur in order to check criminal activities in the Indo-Nepal border area.

The patrol began on Saturday, considering the upcoming Tihar and Chhath festivals.

The joint patrol has been initiated in order to further consolidate security provision in the border area considering the upcoming festivals, said Police Inspector at the Area Police Office, Belauri Rana Bahadur Chand.

It also to stop the smuggling of goods as well as to protect the border pillars. A joint patrol by security persons of Nepal and India also strengthens relations between the two sides and ease addressing the challenges seen in the border area. The patrol will also help facilitate cross border traveling, added Chand.

'NC supports fair investigation into Alam's case'



Kathmandu: Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba said that his party would assist fair and pressure-free investigations into the case of NC lawmaker Mohammad Aftab Alam, who has been arrested in connection with the 2008 bomb explosion in Rautahat district.

The NC had a clear stand that innocent should not be punished and guilty should not escape

penalty, he said.

"NC believes in the rule of law and it will support investigations into anyone," he said referring to the arrest of Alam.



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