

Upendra Yadav's U-turn

Humiliated Yadav under pressure

Kathmandu: Last week, Deputy Prime Minister and Law Minister Upendra Yadav's Socialist Party has expressed serious dissatisfaction over the cabinet reshuffle without consulting the coalition partner claiming that was against the political spirit and culture of the joint government.

But after assuming the new ministry, Yadav's statement took a U-turn, telling reporters that the prime minister need not consult with the ministers and can change the ministries as he likes. "It's the prime minister's right to change the portfolios of his ministers," Yadav told reporters.

Yadav has assumed charge of Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MLJPA) without consulting his party on Monday even though most of the leaders of the party including another co-chair Dr. Baburam Bhattarai have been insisting for withdrawing support to the government. As Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli



The Nepal Communist Party has been courting the RJP to replace the Socialist Party in government, as it requires a coalition partner to have a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

changed not only Yadav's ministerial portfolio but also sacked State Minister Surendra Yadav from the post without consulting with the party leader, it was believed that the SPN would withdraw support to the government lead by the Nepal Communist Party (NCP). The recent meeting of the

party's central executive committee had also decided to hold talks with the ruling party and the government over its disagreement on the reshuffle and amendment of the constitution.

The change of Yadav's portfolio and sacking of state minister was an indication that Primer

Oli does not want SPN in the government. However, Yadav has termed that Prime Minister Oli would have given new ministerial portfolio by regarding his experience for the new ministry. However, many of the party's own leaders and cadres have been left wondering what has compelled Samajbadi Party to remain in Oli-administration despite a host of disagreements.

However, some political analysts have said that Yadav's decision to accept humiliation was indicative of his declining political influence in the Madhes in particular and in the country in general.

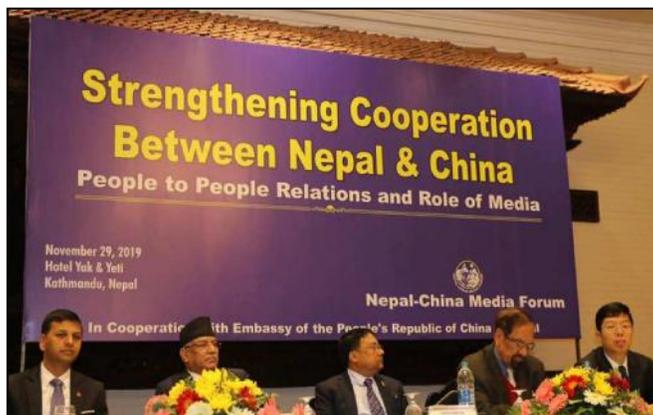
Yadav, according to leaders, has warned that the RJP, which also has an equal number of Members of Parliament in the House of Representatives, could either join the federal government or break the existing coalition in Province 2, leaving his party in disarray and essentially weakened. The ongoing talk for merger with

Continue in page 4...

'Nepal should not agree to 'China-India Plus' cooperation model'

Kathmandu: Chairman of the ruling Nepal Communist Party Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Thursday said that Nepal should not agree to 'China-India Plus' cooperation model pushed forward by the two immediate neighbors.

Inaugurating a one-day seminar entitled "Strengthening Cooperation Between Nepal and China; People to People Relations and Role of Media" organized by Nepal-China Media Forum in the capital, Dahal said that Nepal is in favor of trilateral cooperation between China,



Nepal and India, but not the 'China-India Plus' concept.

"I believe, the China-India Plus or 2+1 concept does not talk about equal shares between China, Nepal and India, rather, it suggests that the first two countries will have bigger roles and the third one will have fewer roles when it comes to forging such partnership," he said.

Dahal who has been pushing forward the idea of having a trilateral strategic partnership between China, Nepal and India

Continue in page 4...



Editorial

Border diplomacy

As the government done nothing than issuing a ritual statement describing Kalapani as an integral part of Nepal, the issue of border encroachment would take a nasty turn. The political parties, regardless of opposition or government allies, and the civil society leaders have come heavily against of the government for not taking proper initiation against of the border encroachment by the southern neighbor India through the diplomatic and political channel.

Though the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) has lately sent a note to New Delhi calling for a bilateral dialogue over the encroached Nepali territories occupied by Indian security forces, the leaders of the different political parties and the civil society leaders have termed as futile initiation taken just to be proved nationalist and to face save from the widespread criticism.

Addressing an election gathering in Pokhara, NC president Sher Bahadur Deuba had alleged the Prime Minister Oli for betraying the nation by handing over Kalapani and Lipulekh to India. India would have unveiled the new political map placing Nepali territories inside Indian borders in Kalapani only after receiving consent from Prime Minister Oli, NC President Deuba, who is also the leader of the main opposition party and forth time Prime Minister of the country, said.

As the government has failed even to publish its political map to give counter to the controversial political map published by the India, the people in general have also been raising questions marks over the motive and intention of the government for dillydallying to hold talks with the Indian government.

Not only the NC president Deuba but also the NSP Chair person Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, who is also the former Prime Minister, has also argued that Prime Minister Oli's response to the recent border encroachment by India has exposed his stand on nationalism.

The statements, regardless of NC president Deuba or NSP Chair Bhattarai, sound like the old tactics of Nepal Communist Party (NCP) leaders particularly the Primer Oli to score political points exploiting the nationalist sentiment by pointing fingers to others.

As NCP leaders have also begun to intensify a counteroffensive measures, it is likely that relations between the political parties, particularly the government head NCP and the main opposition NC, would reach miles away on the name of establishing their nationalist credential by dismissing others as pro-Indians or anti nationalists.

As India unveiled a new political map incorporating some Nepali territories including Kalapani on November 2, the government should have taken immediate initiation through the high level political as well as diplomatic channel rather than opting ritual styles of making statements just to be proved nationalist.

Many evidences including the Sugauli Treaty signed between Nepal and the East India Company, and treaties signed later with Independent India acknowledge the Mahakali River as the boundary between the two countries but not the lesser-known man made stream.

Though the government has failed even to unveil Nepal's political map on the basis of historical evidence, the civil society leaders have come up with the new political map of Nepal denoting that Limpidhura as the origin of Mahakali River which demarcates the border between the two countries as mentioned in the Sugauli Treaty. Considering to the huge public uproar across the country against of the political map of India, the government and the political parties, particularly the government head NCP should dear to take firm position in favor of the nation rather than indulging on the counterattacking the critics by delivering futile statements just to be proved as nationalists.

India, Nepal must seek mutually acceptable solutions to controversy over new map

—Shyam Saran—

The India-Nepal border is unique in that neither country has allowed a political boundary to interrupt the age-old traffic of people who share ties of kinship, religion and culture.

Residual revolutionaries of the Left competed with the supposedly pro-India Nepali Congress to castigate India for releasing maps which showed Kalapani at the India-Nepal-China trijunction to the north and Susta to the south as Indian territory.

The notion of boundaries as lines drawn on a map is a recent concept — as is the nation state. This is particularly true in the Subcontinent, where empires and kingdoms shaded into one another across ambiguous frontiers rather than be separated by boundaries marking sovereign jurisdictions. The India-Nepal border is unique in that neither country has allowed a political boundary to interrupt the age-old traffic of people who share ties of kinship, religion and culture. This is now being threatened by territorial nationalism on the Nepali side and an emerging security state on the Indian side.

It is easy to trigger anti-Indian sentiment in the Kathmandu Valley, which remains the crucible of Nepali politics and the arbiter of its domestic and foreign policies. As we witness in our own country, nationalist sentiment can be a potent instrument for political mobilisation, but its orientation could be positive or negative. This depends on the political leadership but equally on how aware and enlightened a citizenry is. In Nepal, political groupings of every persuasion have been unable to resist the temptation to conjure up a bullying and overbearing India to present themselves as the fierce custodians of national interest. This is what we saw at play in the demonstrations held recently on the streets of Kathmandu. Residual revolutionaries of the Left competed with the supposedly pro-India Nepali Congress to castigate India for releasing maps which showed Kalapani at the India-Nepal-China trijunction to the north and Susta to the south as Indian territory.

These latest maps have nothing to do with Nepal. They were published to reflect the recent bifurcation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) into the two new Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh. There was no change in the depiction of India-Nepal boundary. Yet, the perception was created that

the publication of the new map was a departure from the past and constituted pernicious cartographic aggression. It is true that Nepal has, in the past, claimed territory in the Kalapani area and Susta as its own. The two sides agreed that these differences should be resolved through friendly negotiations and their foreign secretaries were mandated to undertake this exercise. As far as one is aware, these talks are yet to take place. If this is an issue with the potential to arouse such strong public sentiment on the Nepali side, then such inaction is inexplicable. My own experience has been that the Nepali side raises such issues for rhetorical purposes but is uninterested in following up through serious negotiations. This is what happened with Nepali demands for the revision of the India-Nepal Friendship Treaty. The Indian side agreed in 2001 to hold talks at the foreign secretary level to come up with a revised treaty — one that, in the Nepali eyes, would be more “equal” with reciprocal obligations and entitlements. Only one such round of talks has taken place.

While I was in Nepal as ambassador, a request was made to put the issue on the agenda of the foreign secretary level talks held in 2003 but without any expectation of actual discussion. When we conveyed our readiness to have a substantive discussion on the treaty revision, the agenda item was dropped by the Nepali side. The purpose was to merely show that the Nepali side was taking up the issue seriously with India. I believe it would be a good policy on the part of India to regularly offer to take up such outstanding issues bilaterally even though the Nepali side may wish to side-step. If efforts are made to rake up such issues for political gain, then India would be able to list publicly the occasions when it has offered to resolve them through friendly negotiations. At the moment, raising these issues as means of hoisting their nationalistic colours is of little risk to the Nepali political parties.

It is not widely known that the two countries have managed to settle about 98 per cent of their common border and these are reflected in the 182 strip maps initiated by them. More than 8,500 boundary pillars have been installed reflecting the agreed alignment.

The Kalapani controversy has

arisen due to a difference of perception as to the real and primary source of the Mahakali river. The Treaty of Sugauli concluded in 1816 locates the river as the western boundary with India but different British maps showed the source tributary at different places. This is not unusual given the then state of cartographic science and less-refined surveying techniques. We have similar problems regarding the alignment of the McMahon Line on the eastern sector of the India-China border. With regard to Susta, the problem has arisen as a result of the shifting of the course of the river, again a frequent occurrence in rivers shared by neighbouring countries. There are only two ways to deal with this challenge — either to accept a shifting border as the river itself shifts or to agree on a boundary which remains fixed despite changes in the course of the river. The latter is usually the more rational choice. But such matters require friendly consultations aimed at mutually acceptable outcomes not emotionally charged grandstanding.

Just a few days before this controversy erupted, the prime ministers of India and Nepal inaugurated, through a video conference, the much awaited Motihari-Amlekhgang pipeline, which will enable safe, secure and assured supply of petroleum products to Nepal. These supplies were trucked across the border in the past with frequent incidents of pilferage and contamination in transit and interruptions due to natural disasters or road blocks set up during political protests. This is a demonstration of what cross-border cooperation can achieve to benefit both countries. The ugly anti-Indian protests in Kathmandu provide the self-defeating counterpoint.

There are six to eight million Nepali citizens living and working in India. They enjoy immense goodwill and a congenial and friendly environment wherever they are. Political leaders in Nepal should reflect on this extraordinary asset their country enjoys built over centuries of benign togetherness. Its thoughtless erosion may prove to be costly for both our countries.

(The writer is a former foreign secretary and senior fellow CPR. He was India's ambassador to Nepal 2002-4.)

Border issue is just a political tactics

Upendra Yadav is constantly being humiliated. We urge him to come out of government. Unity is not possible if he continues to be witnesses of the government.

• **RJP-Nepal has only talked about its general convention but it is not still confirmed when it will hold?**

RJP-Nepal was constructed after unification of six Madhesi parties. From the center to the local level, the organization was operating as per the former parties' and it is also same now. The party has given directives to all district committees. By the end of this month, the results have come from all over the districts.. The directive has been issued to form a committee at the ward level, the municipality level, the regional level and the district level.

• **There have been controversies in relation to the formation of committees. Even disputes have also seen in the area of party's presidium leader. When such disputes would be resolved?**

Yes, disputes were seen. We have given additional 20 days more time in order to resolve such disputes. There may be different reasons for disputes in the district. All the reasons have not reached the central office. Someone may have worked violating the directives. Whatever the dispute, it has been decided to go to the polls through a democratic process if the dispute is not resolved through discussion.

• **According to the rotational system of the party, all top leaders had led the party and now second phase rotational system also begun but no one could hold the general convention. Are not they failed?**

No, they are not failure in their mission. The decision that they made to hold the general

convention within one year was not in a position to be implemented. In that time the country was in election and we have also to participate in it. The preparation that takes place before the convention can take one and a half years. Now a unified committee is being formed. If the current directive had already been issued earlier, the general convention could have been held within one year and a base would have been prepared for the convention. Now discussions are also under way for unification with other parties. That's why due to these some reasons, the general convention was delayed.

• **Earlier, the party also fixed the date of general convention to be held by November. There were enough times but why does not the party hold?**

If the committee had been formed at that time, it would have been possible to have the convention at the specified time. It was our weak part. Now a foundation has made for the general convention and also it is possible to hold. The infrastructure was not ready so we could not hold the convention at the stipulated time.

• **When will the party hold the convention now?**

The infrastructure has been prepared. The meeting of the office bearers will decide for the new date of general convention. Now, the time, circumstances, environment is favorable and again another date should be fixed.

• **There has been a long discussion about unification with the Socialist Party. In**

particular, did RJP-Nepal fall into the trap of Upendra Yadav or raised the topic of unification to delay the general convention?

We have not fallen into trap of anyone's. In fact, the unification of Madhesi parties is need of country and even Madhesh. Unification of the RJP and the Socialist Party is essential for building an alternative power. We now understand that Nepal is moving forward in a one-party system. In a multi-party competition, the Communist Party of Nepal is trying to take this country into a one-party system. This is a danger to Madhes and the country. Since the Congress is a traditional and old party, it is not in a position to face it. When RJP-Nepal was formed, our aimed was also to make alternative force. In that time, we also offered the Socialist Forum to join in our unification. It is our old decision to unify with the likeminded parties having issue of federalist and Madhes. It is our view to unite with the present Socialist Party. Since the Socialist Party had sent a letter with the same view, the process has begun as both parties have shared the common requirement.

Many of our issues are common between two parties. Our view is that the present government is anti-Madhes, anti-federalism. Since Upendra Yadav has been in this government, it is our view that unity is not possible as long as this government is in place. We are also repeatedly urging him to leave the government as soon as possible. It is not



Santosh Mehata

Spokesperson, RJP-Nepal

possible to sit in the government by building a single alternative force and fulfilling the agendas of Madhes.

• **Prime Minister has changed the portfolio of Upendra Yadav and one of state minister also sacked from his party. But Upendra Yadav is not in mood to leave the government. In this situation how the unification is possible?**

Our expectation was that he would come out of the government after this episode. He is constantly being humiliated. We urge him to come out of government. Unity is not possible if they continue to be witnesses of the government. If unity can't be held, we look at the way in which RJP alone can create alternative powers.

• **There are also issues of border dispute now, it was alleged that the Madhesi parties have not paid much attention to it?**

Where there has a border dispute? We have not felt the new border dispute. Kalapani, Lipulekh,

Lymphadhura issues are not today's. They are a very old issue.

• **But why has this issue arose now? Wherever the border was set between India and Nepal, India has made the same map public. Border dispute is nothing new and why we speak.**

But how it comes to be a national issue now? Now the government is also saying that India will solve the problem through diplomatic ways.

Since it is time for by-elections, the issue has been raised. This issue has been raised in some areas of Nepal because it is going to be consumed. For election purposes such issues will come from time to time. If we had found any intervention by India, we would have raised the issue immediately. There is controversy over Kalapani and both Nepal and India have accepted it. There is currently a secretary-level talk on the border issue between Nepal and India. 90% of the border dispute has been resolved. Many new pillars have been made.

Mahato ruled out immediate unification with Socialist Party



Kathmandu: Presidium Coordinator of RJP-Nepal Rajendra Mahato has said there is no possibility of immediate unification with Socialist Party Nepal due to the latter's reluctance to leave the KP Sharma Oli government. "There is a need for a new force in the country as an alternative for Congress and communists. We will move forward toward building that force in the coming days. But the alternative force cannot be built by staying in the government," Mahato,

'Nepal should not...

for long, stressed that this type of partnership should be formed on the basis of equality. "Nepal cannot become merely a transit point between the two immediate neighboring countries. Rather, Nepal should also have its equal share when we forge such partnership," he said.

Dahal, who is also the former prime minister, said that there should be a strategic trilateral partnership between China, Nepal and India. "Recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Nepal after spending some hours in India. Why did he do so? We also need to take these things into consideration," he said while suspecting that Xi and Modi might have developed some sort of common understanding vis-à-vis their relationship with Nepal. Dahal's remark has come one and half months after Xi paid separate visits to Nepal and India in the second week of October this year.

According to media reports, Chinese President Xi and Indian PM Narendra Modi dwelt on "China-India Plus" cooperation model when they met during an informal summit in India's Chennai on October 11 and 12.

During the meeting, Xi and Modi had underscored the need to explore the gradual expansion of the "China-India Plus" cooperation to South Asia, reports said. In another context, Dahal said that India's continued encroachment upon Nepali territories is intolerable adding that the border-related issues should be resolved through diplomatic and political dialogues.

"Nepali territories Kalapani and Susta have been encroached by India for long. These border issues should be resolved through dialogue. This is an opportune time for the government to take up this matter with India since there is an all-party consensus on the issue," he said.

He also said that media can play a significant role to foster ties between the two countries. "In this era of advanced technology, media plays huge role to enhance ties between societies and countries. Connectivity through media is also equally important," he said.

Nepali Congress leader Dr Ram Sharan Mahat stressed the need for promoting people-to-people contacts between Nepal and China in addition to economic and political ties.

who has spoken about unification with Socialist Party on numerous occasions in the past, said talking with media persons at Janakpur Airport on Friday. He revealed that the party is in talks with Socialist Party and other parties to build a democratic alternative force. He refused to comment on the recent Cabinet reshuffle saying why ask the way to a destination one does not intend to go. "We are not in the government and it is not an issue of our interest either," he quipped. He stressed that there is no chance of RJP joining this government until the demands including Constitution amendment, withdrawal of cases against protesting friends, and others are addressed. "We cannot support the government until our demands are addressed. We have, therefore, withdrawn our support to the government and playing the role of opposition."

Upendra Yadav's ...

the RJP has also been stalled for some time because Samajbadi Party refused to quit the government.

One of its three general secretaries has claimed that the RJP, which is in touch with KP Sharma Oli's aides, could join the federal government, which could ultimately put the coalition government of Province 2 at a risk.

"It will be easy for the RJP to join hands with Nepal Communist Party in Province 2 if we quit the government in the centre," said a party leader requesting anonymity. "But we don't think RJP could take such a suicidal step as the people have voted for the coalition government with us."

With ruling Nepal Communist Party being the largest party in Province 2 with 32 seats, in contrast to Socialist Party's 29 and RJP's 25 seats, NCP has been trying to break the existing alliance. The NCP has its solo government at all six provinces except Province 2. The two parties have been running a tight majority government with 54 seats in the province. Even a single member could cost Lalbabu Raut's provincial government led by the Socialist Party.

But RJP leaders say Socialist Party's claim that their party could join the Oli administration is nothing but a ploy to defame the party.

The RJP leaders are more suspicious over the role of Yadav after he refused to sign an agreement prepared by leaders Mahantha Thakur and Baburam Bhattarai on November 12. According to Jha, the agreement was about expressing commitment for party unity to create a strong alternative force. "Yadav would neither go for party unity nor leave the government," Jha said.

Although party leaders said they were offended that Yadav's portfolio was swapped and the party's state minister for health Surendra Kumar Yadav was released without informing the party, they will remain in government for at least the next few weeks. The party will continue to hold talks with the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) and the government until the results for by-elections are out, according to Shrestha.

But party insiders claimed that the Socialist Party will not be quitting government anytime soon, even though Bhattarai has been demanding that Yadav leave the government and begin unification

process with the RJP, the other Madhes-based political force.

Some party insiders believe that the Nepal Communist Party has been courting the RJP to replace the Socialist Party in government, as it requires a coalition partner to have a two-thirds majority in Parliament. According to sources close to the prime minister, Oli has been displeased with Yadav's vocal criticism and wanted to evict him from the Cabinet. However, ruling party Co-chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal and others convinced Oli that they needed Yadav's support and have asked him to wait.

Oli's displeasure is evident in the manner in which he treats the government's coalition partner.

The Socialist Party is often not even informed and only finds out after the decision has been made.

Yadav's humiliation!

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli changed Socialist Party's chairman Upendra Yadav's portfolio without consulting him. Yadav, DPM and Health Minister in the previous cabinet, has been assigned as the DPM and Minister for Law, that too, at a time, when he was on a visit to Delhi.

According to the Balwatar sources, PM Oli was not happy with the performance of Upendra Yadav and his Socialist Party. The government had announced to celebrate the constitutional day with fanfare.

Yadav went to the US to escape the government celebration. On the other hand, Yadav's party leaders in Nepal didn't take part in the programmes organised to celebrate the constitutional day. Accordingly, Yadav's party is performing a role like that of the opposition though it keeps remaining in the government, and this attitude had seriously hurt PM Oli. Therefore, Oli had decided to humiliate Yadav so that he will quit the government.

Why Yadav is participating in the government, that too is very surprising. Dr Baburam Bhattarai in the Socialist Party wants the party to quit from the government but Yadav's group in the very party wants to stick in power even though PM Oli is not keen on implementation of the agreement between the Nepal Communist Party and the then Federal Republic Forum before Yadav joined the government. The main thrust of the agreement was amendment of the constitution.

On the other hand, Yadav's party is holding informal meetings with the Rastriya Janata Party for unification of the two parties. Sources say that the two parties have reached to the stage of merger soon. The Indians have also shown keen interest on the unification of the two parties.

President Bhandari participates in Bibaha Panchami Festival

Janakpurdham: President Bidya Devi Bhandari on Friday participated in the Sita Rama Bibaha Panchami Festival in Janakpurdham. She welcomed and honoured the wedding procession that came from Ayodhya – the capital of Kosala, the kingdom of Lord Rama.

In the day of Bibaha Panchami, Janakpur celebrates the wedding of Lord Rama and Goddess Sita with various programmes, worships and procession from Ayodhya to Janakpurdham – ancient capital of Videha, the kingdom of Janak.

President Bhandari felicitated priest of Digambar Akhada Baishnav Das, General Secretary and Secretary of World Hindu Council Milendra Pandey and Rajendra Singh Pankaj, Kanhaiya Dasji Maharaj, Bhैया Dasji Maharaj, story teller Madhavi Bijaya Laxmi and Rambhushan Das amidst a programme organised at the Barha Bigha Rangabhumi



ground in Janakpurdham. She also observed a ballet performed by Mithila Natyakala Parishad which depicted the matrimonial activities of Rama and Janaki. President Bhandari worshipped at the Janaki Temple and accepted Prasad. Panchakanya, main Priest of the Temple Ram Tapeshwor Das, Manantha Baishnav and Mayor of Janakpur Lal Kishor Shah and other dignitaries had welcomed her at the temple.

Minister for Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation Padma Aryal said that Sita had an important contribution to promote Nepal around the globe.

According to her, characters of Lord Rama and Goddess Sita are an immense resource of education for the people of modern age as well. Maintaining that the event like Bibaha Panchami would help to develop Janakpurdham as a touristic attraction, Aryal said

that the federal government was committed to the development of Janakpur and entire Terai Madhesh region.

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Yogesh Bhattarai said that the Bibaha Panchami was the festival that exhibited the cordial cultural relations between Nepal and India. He said that the relations between the two countries and people should be spotless and cordial.

He urged the Indian tourists to make a trip to Nepal during the Visit Nepal Year 2020. He informed that the Janakpur-Pokhara aviation service would start soon.

Chief Minister of State 2 Lalbabu Raut said that his government had planned to create connection between the two countries as it had been maintained since Treta Yuga – the period of Lord Rama.

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri said that the relationship between the two countries was cordial since Treta Yuga.

Export to India has gone up



Kathmandu: Exports to India have increased. The export to India has gone up by 35.8 percent in the three months of the current fiscal year.

Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the central bank, stated that the trade deficit with India has decreased with the increase in export to the southern neighbour in the last three months.

However, exports to China and other countries have decreased. Trade deficit with India last fiscal year was Rs 764.3 billion.

Although export to China and other countries has gone down by 19.9 percent and 11.7 percent respectively in the current fiscal year, the total export in the same period has increased by 14.4

percent, NRB stated.

Export to India until October 17 in the fiscal year 2019/20 was equivalent to Rs 27.17 billion.

Nepal's export to India includes palm oil, cardamom, ayurvedic medicines, jute products, yarn (polyester and others) which has increased while the export of goods like corrugated zinc sheets, juice, readymade garments, woollen carpets, wire etc. to China and other countries has decreased. Meanwhile, the total imports has decreased by 10.03 percent and reached Rs 334.95 billion in the last three months of the current fiscal year.

This import had increased by 43.06 percent in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Nepal to hold talks with India on border dispute: Minister Baskota

Kathmandu: Government Spokesperson and Minister for Communications and Information Technology Gokul Baskota said the government will hold talks with India to settle border dispute being based on proofs.

“We have laid our claim for the lands for which we have enough evidence for ownership. We don't want a single inch of land for which we can't gather ownership proofs,” Minister Baskota said a press meet organized to make public Cabinet decision.

He said that the government is making diplomatic efforts though



the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to settle the border dispute. “Talks to settle the dispute have already started,” he said.

Indian embassy celebrates Constitution Day

Kathmandu: Indian Embassy in Kathmandu has celebrated India's Constitution Day. Ambassador of India to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri addressed the program inside Embassy of Indian Premises.

During the program Indian nationals, school children, & officials of Embassy read out preamble of The Indian Constitution. They also sang



patriotic songs rendered by SVCC, Kathmandu.

China to conduct detailed feasibility study on Kerung-Kathmandu railway

Kathmandu: The Chinese government has agreed to prepare the detailed project report (DPR) and detailed engineering works of the much-hyped 75-kilometre-long Trans-Himalayan Kathmandu-Kyirong railway project from the beginning of 2020. During the fifth meeting held between the concerned government officials of both the countries, the Chinese team agreed to prepare the DPR. China will bear all technical costs for the study. Nepal has to manage expenses on land compensation and resettlement of the locals. In the bilateral meeting, both the sides also discussed on proposed Kathmandu-Pokhara-Lumbini railway. It was informed that the length of the proposed railway will be 157 kms. The Chinese team, to conduct field study,

is going to Lumbini today.

As per the agreement, China will conduct the DPR and other engineering works and Nepal will provide support for the EIA preparation works. Similarly, the Nepal government will provide necessary security for Chinese officials while conducting engineering works on Nepal side.

China Railways First Survey and Design Institute Group, a Chinese firm, will do the DPR, EIA and other necessary engineering works. It has already completed pre-feasibility works of Kathmandu-Kyirong, Kathmandu-Pokhara and Pokhara-Lumbini rail networks last year.

During Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Nepal on October 12 and 13, both the governments had inked a memorandum of understanding on Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity



Network with a view to contributing to Nepal's development, including cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to enhance connectivity.

In June, the fourth meeting of the Joint Steering Committee was held in Beijing. In that meeting, both the governments had agreed to simultaneously

accelerate works on the detailed feasibility study and DPR of the project.

China had conducted a pre-feasibility study at its own cost and submitted the report on the Kathmandu-Kyirong rail network to Nepal in August last year. The study had concluded that the project was feasible and would cost around Rs 257 billion.

Indian Women's Association hands over two electric vehicles to Nepal's PADT



Kathmandu: President of Indian Women's Association (IWA) Namrita Puri handed over two eight-seater electric vehicles with high-end Lithium-ion batteries to Member-Secretary of Pashupati Area Development Trust (PADT) Pradip Dhakal. Amid a program held on the premises of Pashupati Temple, Puri handed over the vehicles that were manufactured by an Indian Company Gayam Motor Works.

Speaking during the program, IWA President Puri stated that these eco-friendly vehicles will be helpful for the pilgrims visiting the holy Pashupati temple especially for elderly and differently-able people, women and children. These vehicles will also create employment opportunities for two women. "Handing over of e-vehicles will be another milestone in strengthening cultural and religious ties between people of India and Nepal and bringing

people of the two countries closer," Indian Embassy in Kathmandu stated in a press release on Wednesday.

Indian Women's Association is an organization of Indian Women under the patronage of Embassy of India with the aim to provide a friendly meeting ground for Indian Women resident in Nepal.

It provides a forum for interaction with Nepali women and works to promote goodwill and friendship between the Indian and Nepali communities. IWA organizes philanthropic activities to benefit women and children in Nepal.

Recently, IWA organized charitable events with Nava Indradhanus English Boarding School in Kathmandu, Koseli Foundation, Bal Sarathi, Nepali Snehi Kaakha, and Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital.

Pashupati Area Development Trust is established to conserve and operate the Pashupatinath Temple and adjoining Area, which is enlisted as UNESCO's World Heritage Site.

DPM Pokharel inspected work of Fast Track



Kathmandu: Deputy Prime Minister and defense minister Ishwor Pokharel inspected the construction of the Kathmandu-Terai-Madhes Fast Track project. He visited Makkhubesi, Sisneri, Budune, Rajdamar, Bagdev area and zero points of Nijgadh.

During his visit to the site, Deputy Prime Minister Pokharel was briefed by the site in charge of the areas about the state of construction.

He was also briefed about the challenges faced during the construction and obstruction before the project to complete in time. Vice-chairperson of National Planning Commission Professor Dr. Pushpa Raj Kanel, Chief of Army Staff General Purna Chandra Thapa, Defense Secretary Reshmi Raj Pande, secretary of Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport Devendra Karki, General and joint secretary of Ministry of Finance.

Chief Minister Raut vows for implementation laws guaranteeing child rights

Janakpur: Chief Minister for Province 2 Lalbabu Raut has pledged to enact mandatory laws for the effective implementation of early childhood development policies and programmes. Speaking at an inaugural session of a 'consultation programme on constitutional rights and responsibilities for early childhood development in provincial structure' at Janakpur, the Chief Minister highlighted the need of guaranteeing child's proper health and development right from the mother's womb as they were the future of the society. Child's right to health and development would be



guaranteed through the enactment of mandatory laws towards that end. The programme was organised by State Assembly members'

coordination group for early childhood development. He also instructed the group to prepare the draft of required laws, pledging that the group would not face

budget constraint for the same. Underlining the need of launching a separate campaign for child development, which as he said would also aid in enforcement of 'Educated Girls, Safe Girls' programme being operated in the state, the chief minister said the state government was ever ready to make the campaign successful. Group coordinator and SA member Govinda Neupane chaired the programme which was attended by House of Representatives members Satya Pahadi, Ekbal Miya, Sarita Giri Yadav and SA members Parameshwor Shah, Babul Shah and child development experts.

Russian President invited to visit Nepal

Kathmandu: Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali held delegation-level talks with Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation in Moscow on Monday.

The two ministers exchanged views on various aspects of bilateral relations, said a press statement issued by the Embassy of Nepal in Moscow.

During the meeting, the two ministers underscored the importance of the exchange of high-level visits, including the judicial, parliamentary and business exchanges. Minister Gyawali handed over the invitation of the President of Nepal to the President of the Russian



Federation to pay a state visit to Nepal. He also handed over the invitation of the Prime Minister of Nepal to the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, the statement said. Minister Lavrov said that the

visit of Foreign Minister Gyawali to Russia was important in view of the gap of 14 years since the last visit from the Nepali side. Minister Gyawali stated that this visit was an indication of the importance Nepal attached to its friendship with the Russian

Federation.

The ministers agreed to harness the immense potentials to enlarge the scope and enrich the substance of the bilateral cooperation, especially in the areas of investment, trade, tourism, education, energy, infrastructure development, and culture and people-to-people relations, the statement said.

The two sides underlined the need of building a strong economic partnership commensurate with the bond of friendship they have been cherishing since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1956.

They agreed to explore ways and means for enhancing economic and trade relations for mutual benefit, the statement said.

Prachanda fallen in love with Madhesh

Bara: Former Prime Minister and chairman of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) Pushpa Kamal Dahal has said that he has fallen in love with Madhes.

Addressing a mass meeting organised in Nijgadh for the effective implementation of national pride projects in province 2, Dahal also explained the reason for his love affairs—Madhes elected him in the second Constituent Assembly elections in 2013. It means he was parted with Kirtipur from where he was



elected in the first CA polls in 2008.

Of course, Dahal has fallen in love with many places of Nepal. Earlier, he had said that he was in love with Ilam. Maybe, he first fell in love with Rukum and Rolpa from where he waged a violent conflict killing 17,000 Nepalis. Before that he was in love with India from where he led the brutal war in Nepal, probably in the instruction of his masters.

But none of his love affairs lasted long. And everybody knows he is in true love with the chair of the Prime Minister in Singh Durbar.

Breakthrough in bulk cargo movement

Kathmandu: India has agreed to allow Nepal to use its inland waterways for the transportation of goods to and from the third countries via Kolkata Port.

A two-day meeting between Nepal and India on Review of the Transit Treaty that agreed to allow Nepal to operate inland waterways from Kolkata Port to three different river ports near Nepal-India border – Shahebgunj in Jharkhand, Kalighat in West Bengal and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.

With the new agreement between the two countries, Nepal can operate its own ships up to these ports, said Navaraj Dhakal, Joint Secretary of Bilateral and Regional Trade Division at the Ministry Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS).

India has also agreed to allow Nepal to use three border entry points to carry cargo. "This is a kind of a breakthrough in terms of inland waterways and



diversification of transit facilities. It will help Nepal in foreign trade," said Dhakal. However, Nepal has to use land route to Nepal to carry goods to and from Shahebgunj, Kalighat and Varanasi.

It will reduce Nepal's cost of trade which has been one of the major impediments in Nepal's

international trade.

Likewise, the meeting agreed to open Dhamra port in Odhisa and Mundra port in Gujrat for Nepal for cargo movement. It has diversified Nepal's transit facilities.

Similarly, another agreement was reached to open Biratnagar-Jogbani and

Bhairahawa-Sunauli border for bulk cargo movement via railway. According to the MoICS, India is positive to implement transshipment facility to Nepal-bound cargo containers from the third countries with the Electronic Cargo Tracking System.

A nine-member Nepali delegation led by Dhakal and eight-member Indian delegation led by Joint-Secretary of the Commerce and Industry Ministry of India Bhopinder Singh Bhalla deliberated on various bilateral trade and transit issues in the meeting.

Nepal and India had signed the Transit Treaty in 1978. The treaty was renewed in 2013 although it has a provision to renew automatically. The two countries review the treaty to incorporate the latest issues and address the problems in bilateral trade.

PM's intention on Kalapani in doubt!



Kathmandu: Nepali Congress (NC) President Sher Bahadur Deuba has raised question on the nationalist image of Prime Minister (PM) KP Sharma Oli and said the latter is not a nationalist.

He even accused PM Oli of giving consent to India to release the map showing Kalapani in India.

Deba claimed in Pokhara that India issued the new map after consulting PM Oli. Since then the NC President continued the diatribe against the PM and pointed that Oli was submissive to India. He said the PM was unable to take initiative to resolve the border dispute with India. "Oli is being submissive on Kalapani. Oli is, therefore, not a nationalist," Deuba said addressing an election rally in Dang. "He took votes in the name of nationalism and giving rights to the people of indigenous ethnicities but he has not given those rights," he added.

'I'm in govt to amend constitution'

Kathmandu: Deputy Prime Minister Upendra Yadav has said he was in government to accomplish the mission of the constitution amendment. DPM Yadav said it during a joint press conference with the Constitutional and Judicial Journalists' Forum, and Parliamentary Journalists' Society in Kathmandu.

Also the Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, DPM Yadav reiterated that time had come for the implementation of an agreement on constitution amendment. "Constitution amendment is the country's need. If the States are not given authority, federalism is



meaningless. My party's mission is the constitution amendment," he underscored. He, however, said problems could be solved through dialogue and consensus.

Modi wishes Oli's speedy recovery

Kathmandu: Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi wrote a letter to Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli wishing him speedy and full recovery after Oli's recent surgery.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issuing a press statement on Sunday has said Modi writing a letter has expressed best wishes for speedy and full recovery as well as good health of PM

Oli. Indian PM also offered on behalf of the government and people of India all possible help and assistance for further medical attention and advice. Modi acknowledged that PM Oli's leadership and remarkable partnership has been of immense benefit to the people of both countries. Modi conveyed that he looked forward

to continue working with PM Oli to take Nepal-India relationship to newer heights.

Likewise, Bhutanese PM Dr Lotay Tshering has also expressed his best wishes and prayers for good health of PM Oli, according to the statement. Oli is hospitalized at Manmohan Cardiothoracic Vascular and Transplant Center inside the

Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH) premises since Tuesday. He suffered peritonitis and was kept on a ventilator following appendectomy on Tuesday.

He had reached the hospital Tuesday morning after abdominal pain. He was diagnosed of appendicitis and peritonitis and underwent laparotomy (incision on abdominal wall) and appendectomy (removal of appendix).