

# India has not banned import of palm oil from Nepal India's statement provides relief to Nepali traders

Kathmandu: Commerce ministry issues notification restricting import of refined palm oil. Move is apparently directed at Malaysia due to its souring relationship with India. India has banned the import of palm oil only from Malaysia, while shipments from Indonesia and Nepal will be "fast-tracked" on a case-to-case basis. On January 8, India's Directorate General of Foreign Trade issued a notification saying the foreign trade policy had been amended from "free" to "restricted" for refined palm oil trade.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued a notification, restricting the import of refined palm oil into India with immediate



effect. This gave rise to backlash from Indonesia and Nepal, which expressed their discontent with the decision. However, sources in the government that the move is targeted "only" at Malaysia, due to its series of statements against India.

An official, who did not want to be identified,

said it would not be possible to issue a notification mentioning one particular country, as that would be in violation of global trading rules. He, however, said imports of palm oil (crude as well refined) from Indonesia and Nepal "will not be impacted at all", with import licences to be issued on a case-to-case basis.

The official added that these licences will be granted automatically. Importers dealing in palm oil from Indonesia and Nepal will have to clearly mention the source of import — and if it is from Malaysia, the shipment will be cancelled, the sources said.

The Indian foreign ministry spokesman, Raveesh Kumar told a

under restricted category. So let us not jump to conclusions that due to this (decision), how the trade is going to be affected," said Kumar, in response to a question by a media person.

Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said importers buying palm oil from abroad needed to keep in mind the "state of the relationship" between

**Imports of palm oil from Indonesia and Nepal will not be impacted at all.**

weekly media briefing in New Delhi that the decision surrounding palm oil was not country specific, but product specific.

"It does not mean that this has been put under prohibited list, this is

India and the other country.

Local traders said the Indian government statement provides relief to many panic-stricken Nepali manufacturers who

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## Indian Embassy celebrates Vishwa Hindi Diwas

Kathmandu: The Embassy of India, Kathmandu, in association with Central Hindi Department, Tribhuvan University, celebrated Vishwa Hindi Diwas at a programme in Kathmandu.

Minister of Federal Affairs and General Administration Hridayesh Tripathi graced the occasion as the chief guest. Charge d'Affaires at the embassy Ajay Kumar read the message of



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion. Special issue of research journal

'Sahityalok' by Central Hindi Department, TU, was also released at the programme. In addition, two Hindi books and two

Nepali books (all published under the support of BP Koirala I n d i a - N e p a l Foundation, Embassy of India, Kathmandu) were released.

Those books included Nepali translations of five stories of famous Hindi story writer Premchand and one book of Swami Vivekanda, 'Karmayog'. The books were translated by the students of Hindi Department.

Two books translated into Hindi from Nepali, namely 'Ashwathama', a poetic play written by National Poet (Rastrakabi) Madhav Prasad Ghimire and 'Utkrishta Kahaniyan', a collection of 25 modern Nepali stories written by Nepali writers were released. The stories were selected by 12Khari Media through an open story writing competition.

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# Editorial

## Visit Nepal and economy

The much-awaited Visit Nepal 2020 campaign already started with the aim of creating a buzz about the country's tourism sector across the world.

The third of its type tourism campaign, held after 2011, primarily intends to glorify Nepal as a tourism hub, especially among visiting international tourists.

To make the VN 2020 (VNY 2020) campaign successful, the government has introduced new destinations, organised national and international sales missions and appointed brand ambassadors for the event while the private sector has offered discount packages for the year-long campaign.

**The country has much potential for the development and promotion of tourism; not but what, it has not been able to make desired headway in the tourism sector**

Although the VN 2020 promotion has created quite a buzz within the country, the government is yet to put in the required effort to promote the campaign in the international market. The year 2020 alone is not enough for the development we want in tourism sector. Tourism decade will be celebrated to bring about a massive change in the tourism industry.

With the beginning of the year 2020, the ambitious Visit Nepal Year 2020 campaign has begun with much fanfare in the country. The government has given much importance to the national tourism campaign, whose basic objective is to attract as many as two million tourists from all over the world. The government has also decided to observe the 2021-2030 decade as a tourism decade to give further impetus to the tourism industry.

This is not the first time that the country has embarked upon a mega tourism event. In 1998 and 2011, the country launched similar campaigns in order to boost the tourism industry but in both cases the country failed to achieve the intended outcomes. The country then sought to launch another campaign in 2018 but it had to be postponed for lack of preparations.

The target of attracting two million tourists seems to be ambitious given that only 1.173 tourists visited the country in 2018 and it is surmised that 1.2 million tourists visited the country last year. So increasing the inflow tourists by 0.8 million vis-à-vis last year seems to be a difficult proposition but it is not impossible if sincere efforts are made by all the concerned.

The country has much potential for the development and promotion of tourism; not but what, it has not been able to make desired headway in the tourism sector. Tourism has diverse forms and manifestations. Leisure tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, business tourism, health tourism, sports tourism, religious tourism, cultural tourism and even sex tourism are some of the important forms of tourism.

It is reported that the stay of tourists in the country is very short. Such transient tourists also spend less than what we expect them to. On the other hand, we have limited areas where tourists can spend. So efforts need to be geared towards prolonging their stay by exploring new travel destinations and developing new products. The longer they stay, the more they spend. This will increase earnings from the tourism industry.

## Do Muslims matter for Modi-Shah BJP, or India?

Shekhar Gupta

*Indian Muslims have been denied their rightful place in the power structure as punishment for their voting choices. This is self-defeating.*

The perennial regret of the BJP had always been that Muslims punch way above their deserved political weight in India. It was stated most pithily in conversations by BJP leader, key intellectual voice and my former colleague in the Express Group, Balbir Punj. "Muslims," he said, "have a veto on who will rule India and who won't."

The timing of that conversation was just after Atal Bihari Vajpayee's second NDA government had been defeated in the Lok Sabha by a solitary vote in 1999 as all 'secular' parties came together against it. Not long ago (1996), Vajpayee's first NDA government was defeated in all of 13 days. The second NDA government lasted just over a year, and Punj made an arguable case that everyone who had any interest in seeking the Muslim vote, or fear of losing it, was happy to bury the hatchet to deny BJP power. The Muslim vote was much too valuable for them to lose, and their commitment to secular values, in that view stated by Punj, was merely a cynical cover. I bet this view would have been further strengthened after UPA-1 came up, with even the Left supporting the Congress-led government, all to keep the BJP out. The difference in seats between the Congress and the BJP was marginal then, 145 to 138.

The BJP had, at various points of time, tried to reach out to Muslims. Vajpayee himself was the party's friendliest and most inclusive face for minorities, L.K. Advani cultivated many prominent Muslim intellectuals, even the Muslim-Left. From participating in Muslim festivals to praise for Jinnah, to the choice of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Vajpayee-Advani BJP tried to breach the fortress of Muslim voters. But the

party lacked conviction, and failed.

The BJP translated this as the Muslim veto on who will rule India. The UPA decade, when the BJP's power declined across the country, strengthened that view. Then, Narendra Modi and Amit Shah rose in 2014, and turned the equation upside down, or inside out, take your pick. They won a full majority without much — if any — help from India's Muslim voters.

A new template had been set in Indian politics. Many BJP leaders were upfront with it: "We have now accepted we have to fight in a field with only 80 per cent voters, leaving Muslims and most Christians out." Once they accepted that reality, the challenge was simple: "Get about 50 per cent of that Hindu vote, and we could rule India with a comfortable majority." They proved this again in 2019.

A most unexpected transformation in Indian politics had come about: The large Muslim population, now nearly 20 crore, had been rendered electorally irrelevant. Don't buy into any folklore about Muslim women being grateful for the triple talaq ban, or aspirational younger Muslims having voted for the BJP. Demographic analysis of every reliable exit poll underlines this for us. It stunned the BJP's 'secular' rivals. It also left the Muslims searching for answers.

Now, put yourself in the shoes of one of our 20 crore Muslims, and the picture may look something like this: My vote has lost its power, alright. But, should I be deprived even my rightful place in the power structure? The Modi cabinet, in its sixth year now, has only one Muslim: Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, in charge of minority affairs. It is also one of those unfamiliar junctures in our history — and it's a long one — when none of the

key constitutional positions, President, Vice-President, Speaker of Lok Sabha, heads of armed forces, security and intelligence agencies, Election Commission or the judiciary, feature any Muslims.

There isn't one state with a Muslim chief minister and the one that might have needed to have one, Jammu and Kashmir, isn't even a state any more. None of the secretaries in the key ministries is a Muslim, nor any important regulator. We can search deeper, but in my quick recollection, Nasim Zaidi as Chief Election Commissioner (2015-17) was the last Muslim to hold a constitutional position of consequence, besides Hamid Ansari, of course. Among India's 37 states and union territories, there are just two Muslim governors: Najma Heptullah and Arif Mohammed Khan. Where does it leave me in today's India?

We know the arguments from the BJP: Sabka saath, sabka vikas, to begin with. The absence of major communal riots being the next. Then, we can go on. As stories by ThePrint's reporters Sanya Dhingra and Fatima Khan have recently shown, under the Modi government, the success rate of Muslim candidates in IAS etc., has, if anything, risen marginally and more minority scholarships are going to the community's students than under the UPA.

But certainly, a 15 per cent population in a truly equal state would believe it also deserves a place in the sun, a slice of the power and governance pie. We will give you the post-2014 BJP's answer to this: "You can't first insist on voting against us en bloc, as if we are enemies, and then also demand a share in power. Much chutzpah?"

The question we are raising, by choosing a headline like

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# Upendra Yadav did not quit govt to unite with RJP

*If NCP shows generosity on our issues, further cooperation is possible.*

➤ **Important bills in the Province 2 are yet to be passed. The name as well as fixing the permanent capital is yet to be finalized. What is the reason why the Provincial Assembly is repeatedly postponed while doing other important work?**

In the past years, the Consumer Committee has worked and there are 842 remaining files to be paid. The Chief Minister has been saying that in 10/5 days, it has not happened yet. We also formed a high-level investigation committee in Parliament. Unless we are paid, Parliament will not be in operation. In the matter of name and permanent capital, the process has gone ahead. We are convinced that the name and capital will be finalized within one month of the sitting of the Parliament.

➤ **What's the issue with the Consumer Committee's pending payments?**

Our Chief Minister does not know that the process is to be paid once we have done our job after we have constituted a high-level investigation committee from Parliament. The Parliament meeting is said to be held on January 13, at which time we ask the Chief Minister why our payment is not being made.

➤ **Do you see the Chief Minister's weakness?**

The Chief Minister is the highest body of the state. It is up to the Chief Minister to tell if we have any problems. Due to such obstacles, if the provincial assembly does not run, then there are various important tasks in the province that will be stalled.

The subject of failure of the province is on the one hand. On the other hand, how many problems have there been due to non-payment of 842 Consumer Committees?

➤ **What happens if the payment is not made by January 13?**

So far, we have disrupted Parliament. If this situation continues, the ministers of the state will not be allowed to go to any district. When going to the district, there are activities like displaying black flags, protesting. It is the government's inability to pay for the work done by the common people.

➤ **Can there be a situation of movement against the government?**

There is a movement for money from the aforementioned committee. Protest from the House to the street for protesting against the ruling party and the opposition.

➤ **There are separate views over the nomination of the province and the permanent capital of Province 2. How there is consensus over it?**

Discussion has already taken place by forming a committee of all the parties. If a name can be reached by consensus through discussion, then the same name is kept or voting goes on. If we go for voting, then Madhes Pradesh will be established because there is consensus in the Madhes Pradesh as RJP and Socialist Party are also in the opinion of many other parties.

➤ **But there are also separate views of NCP and Congress. So how they have to settle?**

There is a perception of the party, but talking in person has a different view than the perception of the party, the last option is voting.

➤ **In other provinces, where there is the NCP government, there has been interference from the Center on the issue of name and capital. Could NCP lawmakers in the**

**province also follow the directions of the Center?**

The right to designate any state and capital is vested in the Parliament of that province. Instruction cannot be given by the party or the center. With regard to province 2, the NCP does not seem to issue a whip.

➤ **Can the party leaders take action after disobeying the party's direction?**

If the rule does not give the authority to take action on the basis of disregarding the whip issued by a party concerning the name and capital of the state, then there is no possibility of proceeding.

➤ **Electoral cooperation is taking place in the National Assembly between RJP and NCP. In the past, you used to give the slogan of Madhesh free-UML but now there is electoral alliance. How is this easy?**

We have clearly discussed with the Samajwadi Party that we have preceded in the way we have aligned with Congress, RJP and Forum in the past. Upendra Yadav said that under no circumstances will we be aligned with the Congress. Then we also cooperated with the NC to protect our national assembly.

➤ **Has RJP agreed with the NCP only to save only two seats in the National Assembly?**

So far, only two seats have been reserved to address Madhes issues, Resham Chowdhury's release, constitution amendment are other key issues. So if NCP shown generosity on these issues, it will be possible to cooperate further.

➤ **Is RJP likely to join the federal government?**

RJP would not join the government. This government is itself in the majority. This government



## Upendra Mahato

Secretary, RJP-Nepal and Province 2  
Assembly member, Province 2

does not need our support but we can move forward by cooperating with any party addressing our issue. But we can move forward by cooperating with any party that addresses our issue.

➤ **What is the possibility of party unification with Socialist Party as it also quitted from the government?**

Yes, we asked that the unification will happen if Socialist Party comes out from the central government. But the party did not quit the government for the unification. In fact, the Socialist Party was expelled from the government. Their false propaganda is to say that we should leave the government to unite with the RJP.

➤ **But your party's demand to leave the government has fulfilled?**

We are not saying that unification is not happening but the unification is a necessity and should be done. However, now it is not fair to say that they left the government to unite with RJP. There have been discussions for unification. We have

cooperated with the NC till the election of the National Assembly.

➤ **RJP has cooperated with NCP and Socialist with Congress. How have you seen this cooperation?**

Upendra Yadav has tried to be more cunning in this matter. But because we were forced to protect our representation in the National Assembly, we cooperated with the NCP. Till today, this is the first agreement that has been in cash with the ruling party. Out of the 4 seats in the National Assembly, we have cooperated to have 2 each.

➤ **The deadline for party's general convention has postponed twice. Now when the general convention will hold?**

There are many problems seen within the party of NCP as they formed after unification of UML and the Maoist. We have formed RJP with unification of six parties so it is naturally complex to adjust and settle all issues. So after uniting of six parties, the debate and difference is natural. Now the general convention should be held at the fixed time and within the coming year we will hold the general convention.

## India has not ...

were involved in importing crude palm oil and re-exporting the product after processing it here. An estimated 50,000 tonnes of crude and processed palm oil products are currently stocked in different processing plants. But manufacturers and traders are wary of when the lucrative multi-million dollar palm oil trade, virtually closed since Thursday, would resume.

For Nepal, the restrictions could potentially wipe out its palm oil exports worth Rs22 billion or more annually, based on the current export figures.

According to the Trade and Export Promotion Centre, Nepal imported crude palm oil worth Rs9.94 billion and exported processed palm oil worth Rs11.5 billion in the first five months of the current fiscal year.

Exports of palm oil increased nearly eight times the amount shipped in the same period last year and command a 24 percent share in Nepal's total exports. Last year, Nepal exported processed palm oil, which is not produced in the country, worth Rs10.33 billion, to India.

Sources said Indonesia will be

the biggest beneficiary of the move, because Malaysia was so far India's biggest supplier of palm oil. They also said Indian refiners are happy with the decision, because this will give them more leeway in the absence of cheaper imports of the commodity from Malaysia. New Delhi had informally urged Indian importers Monday to not to import the commodity from Kuala Lumpur, which had been extremely critical of India's move to scrap Article 370 and bifurcate Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, as well as the amended law that grants citizenship to six non-

Muslim groups from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad had questioned the citizenship law, expressing concerns that it might impact India's secular image. In October last year, at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), Mohamad had joined Turkey and China in criticising India's decision on Kashmir — Mohamad accused the country of "invading and occupying Kashmir".

The Narendra Modi government was also upset with Malaysia in 2016 when controversial Islamic preacher Zakir Naik fled India and took refuge there.

## Indian Embassy celebrates ...

A musical rendition on works of prominent Hindi poets was also presented by artists of Swami Vivekananda and Cultural Centre, Kathmandu. More than 200 literary dignitaries from different walks of life including writers, journalists, Hindi and Nepali scholars, academicians and students attended the programme, according to a press release issued by the embassy.

## 122 Chinese deported

Kathmandu: Two Chinese chartered planes arrived to take 122 Chinese nationals who were deported by Nepal government on the charges of involving in various illegal activities in Nepal.

Out of two chartered airplanes, one has already landed at Tribhuvan International Airport and other is on the way. Both the airlines will be reportedly departed tonight to China.

According to Department of Immigration, the entire Chinese national have already reached at TIA. They are now under the custody of Immigration Department. The luggages have also sent to airport. They were reportedly involved illegal activities in China.

## Free media for strengthened democracy: former President Yadav

Chitwan Former President Dr Ram Baran Yadav has said democracy would be strengthened in the presence of free media.

Talking to media persons briefly, the former President said, "where democracy is stronger, media is free there. "Rule of law, good governance, transparent ruling system and economic discipline would provide a further boost to democracy, making its base consolidated, he added.

According to him, the government and the Federal Parliament own the responsibility to take the nation ahead on the basis of co-existence of the people,



communal unity and harmony. Stating that development was possible only through cooperation and coordination among the three-tier government, he presented an idea of seeking a solution to

nation's issue through the Federal Parliament.

He stressed on the giving feel of full democracy and republic to the people by maintaining unity amidst geographical and communal diversities.

## Lumbini municipality establishes sisterly relations with Catheres town of Spain

Rupandehi: Lumbini municipality of Rupandehi district has set up sisterly relations with Caceres town of Spain, which is also listed in World Heritage.

At a programme organized in the premises of Mayadevi Temple, Mayor of Lubmini municipality, Manmohan Chaudhary and Caceres municipality chief Luis Salaya Julian signed the agreement on establishment of relations.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Tourism and Culture Minister of Extremadura region of Spain, Nuria Flores Redondo, and Minister for Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment of State-



5, Leela Giri.

On the occasion, Minister Giri said the establishment of sisterly relations would held strengthen bilateral relations ties between

Nepal and Spain. Such agreement made at a time the country has been observing the Visit Year bears significance, she added.

# India provides training to CIAA officials

Kathmandu: The Second batch of 21 officers of Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) of Nepal has started their 6 day training on 'Prevention of Fraud, Bribery and Corruption' at the Gujarat Forensic Sciences University (GFSU), Gandhinagar on 6 January 2020. According to a press release issued by Embassy of India Kathmandu, this latest training for Nepali officers reaffirms India's continuing commitment for capacity building of Nepali officers. The First batch of 21 CIAA officers of Nepal had received the similar training from December 16 to 21, 2019 at GFSU, Gandhinagar. They found the training, carried out by the experienced faculty



members, was very good and fruitful. It empowered them with new and useful ideas for carrying out investigations in Nepal. This is a tailor-made course specially designed at the request of Government of

Nepal for a total of 42 CIAA officers. This course will strengthen the institutional capacity of CIAA to curb corrupt practices and enhance good governance in Nepal. The course mainly focuses on identifying factors for corruption, its impact on

the economy and methodology for its detection and prevention. The Course would enhance skills of CIAA Officers for IT-based investigations, sharpen their analytical capabilities and help them learn new methodologies which would empower them to detect, prevent and prosecute corrupt and fraudulent individuals. The officers are being trained in the prestigious Gujarat Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat which trains forensic experts in the area of Forensic Science, Crime Investigation, Security, Behavioral Science and Criminology. The course is fully supported by the Government of India under the Ministry of External Affairs' Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Program.

## Province 3 is Bagmati Province with Hetauda its capital

Hetauda: Hetauda has been declared as the permanent capital of Province 3. Earlier, it was the provisional capital for the province and now it has been confirmed as the permanent capital by the state assembly.

A meeting of the provincial assembly endorsed the proposal tabled by Chief Minister Dormani Poudyal, proposing Hetauda to be designated as the permanent capital, by over two-thirds majority.

In the voting, 105 votes out of 108, were cast in the support of the proposal. Meanwhile, in the meeting, Sajha Bibeksheel Party leader, Ramesh Poudel presented a proposal, seeking Dhulikhel of Kavre to be designated as the permanent capital and it was rejected by an overwhelming majority, as 101 members out of 104 present in the meeting, voted against it.

According to the provincial assembly speaker, Sanu Kumar Shrestha, the proposal was voted for by only three members and was thus rejected. Meanwhile, even though



ruling party members of the provincial assembly of Province 1 have been saying in public that an 'agreement will be reached among political parties over naming the province', the process of formally deciding a name has been in limbo for the past several months while the provincial government awaits a nod from the center.

Ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) lawmakers in the province said they are awaiting the directives of the party's secretariat meeting to settle the name.

A NCP lawmaker of the provincial assembly said that since the debate over HQ for Province 1 was resolved

following a directive from the center, they are awaiting a similar directive to resolve the dispute over province name as well. A NCP source said that the decision on province name has been delayed for lack of agreement between Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and party Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal over the issue. "PM Oli wants the province to be named Koshi or Sagarmatha, while Dahal wants Kirat," claimed the source.

At the time, Biratnagar was named as the capital of the 'Greater Birat Development Area', while they also agreed to develop provincial infrastructure in Itahari and Sundar Haraicha, among other places.

## Yadav arrested on fraud case

Sarlahi: Police arrested Ram Babu Yadav of Barahathawa municipality-10, Sitapur on charge of jeopardizing peace.

Acting on a victim's complaint for charging higher interest rates, police nabbed Yadav from Haripur municipality on a fraud case at the instruction of home secretary, shared Sarlahi Superintendent of Police (SP), Biswomani Pokharel.

Yadav was arrested after extending his remand from District Administration Office, Sarlahi on Wednesday evening on the defrauding case.

Pressure was mounted on police to take action against Yadav after the victim met with Nepal Communist Party chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', general secretary Bishnu Poudel, Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa and NCP spokesperson Narayan Kaji Shrestha in Kathmandu.

Earlier, police had arrested Shyam Paradeshi of Sarlahi for defrauding hundreds of thousands rupees from innocent locals in the name of interest. He was remanded to custody for necessary investigation.

# Nabil Bank signs MoU with ICICI Bank

Kathmandu: Nabil Bank and ICICI Bank, India's leading private sector bank, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that sets out a framework for co-operation and strengthen the existing relationship between the two institutions across various businesses like trade, remittances and treasury. Anil Keshary Shah, CEO, Nabil Bank and Ranju Sigtia, Head - International Financial Institution Group, ICICI Bank signed the MoU at Nabil Bank's headquarters in Kathmandu.

The banks will work in close co-ordination with each other to support the trade and treasury needs of their customers seamlessly. The initiative will enable both the banks to effectively leverage the combined strengths of Nabil Bank's deep market access in Nepal and ICICI Bank's expertise in banking and the distribution franchise across India and in key global markets.



Anil Keshary Shah said, "We are proud to partner with ICICI Bank. This MoU creates a platform for sharing knowledge and deepening network connectivity between Nabil Bank and ICICI Bank - especially for our customers doing business with India."

Speaking on the partnership, Ranju Sigtia said, "Nepal has a strong and growing, trade and investment corridor with India. ICICI Bank has been actively working with partner banks to connect customers in

Nepal with India and other overseas locations, where ICICI Bank has its presence. In line with our continuing commitment to furthering our participation in the growing India-Nepal economic corridor, we are delighted to sign this MoU with Nabil Bank".

Nabil Bank is the leading private sector commercial bank. It has 97 branches and 143 ATMs spread across the country. Nabil Bank is a pioneer in introducing many innovative products and

marketing concepts in Nepalese banking industry and represents a milestone in the banking history of Nepal as it started an era of modern banking with customer satisfaction measured as a focal objective while doing business.

ICICI Bank services its large customer base through multi-channel delivery network of 5,228 branches and 15,159 ATMs, internet banking, mobile banking and phone banking in India as at September 30, 2019. About ICICI Bank: ICICI Bank Ltd (BSE: ICICIBANK, NSE: ICICIBANK and NYSE:IBN) is a leading private sector bank in India. The Bank's consolidated total assets stood at 12,88,190 crore at September 30, 2019. ICICI Bank's subsidiaries include India's leading private sector insurance, asset management and securities brokerage companies, and among the country's largest private equity firms. It is present across 15 countries, including India.

## Indian Army Chief says PoK belongs to India



New Delhi: Newly appointed Indian Army Chief Manoj Mukund Naravane on Saturday said that Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) is an integral part of India as per the resolution of the Indian Parliament and that if ordered to retrieve the area, the Army will take appropriate action. "There is a parliamentary resolution that entire J&K is part of India. If Parliament wants it, then, PoK also should belong to us. When we get

orders to that effect, we'll take appropriate action," the Army chief said, reports ANI.

The Army chief was responding to a question on if PoK can be a part of India as stated by the political leadership.

Recently, in an interview with a news channel, Gen. MM Naravane said the Army was ready to conduct larger-scale operations in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir "should that be the mandate", reports India Today.

In the months following the scrapping of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state's special status, current and former Indian government ministers have publicly floated the idea of reclaiming PoK. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in September that Pok "is a part of India", and "we expect one day we will have physical jurisdiction over it."

## Visit Nepal Year promotional programmes held internationally

Kathmandu: The Visit Nepal Year-2020 has been inaugurated internationally.

The promotional programmes to this regard have so far been organised in Beijing of China, Doha of Qatar, Pretoria of South Africa, Ottawa of Canada, Paris of France and Cairo of Egypt. The Nepali Embassy in these respective countries took initiation for organising tourism promotional events aimed to encourage citizens in those countries to visit Nepal.

On the occasion, officials of Nepali diplomatic missions in respective countries called on the people to visit Sagarmatha (Mount Everest), world's highest mountain peak; Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha who remains as a symbol of world peace and world heritage sites of archeological and historical



importance in Nepal enriched by natural, cultural, religious and linguistic diversities at least once in life.

Egyptian nationals who had successfully completed the expedition to Mt Everest were invited to the programme held in Cairo. Information about various aspects of Nepal's tourism was shared on the occasion. It is said the Nepali Embassy in Cairo has ensured a separate service desk for the support of Egyptian citizens wishing to visit Nepal.

## Border issues will be resolved through diplomatic channel: DPM Pokhrel

Pokhara: Deputy Prime Minister Ishwor Pokharel asserted that the border issues with India would be addressed through the diplomatic channels.

He said that the process for the same was underway. "Border

issues have been a common concern to all, therefore, consent and concern from all sectors should be addressed in such sensitive issues," he said.

In another context, he said that the unification between then CPN

(UML) and CPN (Maoist Centre) was the country's need. Minister Pokharel, who is also a Secretariat member of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) said sought people's cooperation in developmental agendas. He stated

that the unification works of the party were almost complete and the party's upcoming central committee meeting will complete the remaining tasks.



## Nepal and China agree to enhance cooperation in peace and security

Kathmandu: Minister for Home Affairs Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal' held delegation-level talks with the State Councilor and Minister of Public Security of the People's Republic of China Zhao Kezhi in Beijing.

Matters pertaining to mutual interests, including the promotion of bilateral co-operation in public security, cross border crime, capacity building and border management were discussed during the meeting. Both the leaders agreed to enhance cooperation and communication between law enforcement agencies of the two countries for maintaining peace and security across the border. They reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation as agreed by the leaders of the two countries during the exchange of presidential visits in 2019.

Minister for Home Affairs Thapa



assured the Chinese side that Nepal was steadfast in its one-China policy and would not allow any anti-China activities in Nepal's territory. He thanked the Chinese side for its continued support towards Nepal's socio-economic development, including in the areas of security co-operation, human resource development and disaster relief and management.

Recalling the State Visit of President Bidhya Devi Bhandari

to China in April 2019 and the State Visit of President Xi Jinping to Nepal in October 2019, Minister said that these visits had elevated Nepal-China relations to new heights and opened new vistas of opportunities for expanding and deepening bilateral cooperation. Welcoming Minister Thapa to China, State Councilor and Minister for Public Security Zhao expressed the confidence that Nepal and China would continue to work together for promoting peace, security and development.

Zhao appreciated Nepal's commitment to one-China policy and expressed the belief that Nepal-China relations would continue to grow from strength to strength in the days to come. During the talks, Minister Thapa was accompanied by Ambassador of Nepal to China, Leelamani Paudyal and other senior officials.

Earlier, Minister Thapa visited the First Research Institute of the Ministry of Public Security and observed the various activities carried out by the institute. Minister for Home Affairs Mr. Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal' arrived in Beijing yesterday on a six-day official visit to China.

According to Deputy Chief of Mission Sushil K Lamsal Embassy of Nepal Beijing, Minister is scheduled to visit Shanghai and Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region and meet with senior officials before returning home on 10 January.

## NCP likely to sweep NA elections

Kathmandu: Ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) is likely to make clean sweep in the upcoming National Assembly elections slated for January 23.

Nineteen of the 59 seats of the Upper House will fall vacant on March 3, and elections are being held to elect 18 members and one will be nominated by the President.

As NCP enjoys majority in six of the seven State Assemblies and had won more posts of chairs and deputy chairs in local levels, it is likely to make a clean sweep in the polls. Even in State 2, where the NCP lacks majority, it has forged alliance with Rastriya Janata Party Nepal, and it is likely to share two seats with RJPN. But Nepali Congress has also



forged alliance with Samajwadi Party Nepal, and making any prediction of the election results in State 2 has become difficult as the NCP alliance has 184 votes against 182 of the NC alliance with three independent voters in the State.

But in other six states NCP is almost sure to win all seats. However, Bam Dev Gautam rejected to become a candidate for the NA elections, as there is no provision to elect Prime Minister from the NA, because he is ambitious to become PM.

But leaders Narayan Kaji Shrestha and Beduram Bhusal are candidates, and Shrestha will probably become Finance Minister as the term of Yuba Raj Khatriwada is expiring on March 3.

Of the 19 seats, one shall be appointed by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari and the rest shall be elected on the basis of majority by an electoral college consisting of provincial assembly members and chairpersons and deputy chairpersons of the local levels. A total of 45 candidates have registered their nominations for the election on Sunday. Of them, nine candidates were from Nepal Communist Party (NCP), seven from Nepali Congress, two from Rastriya Janata Party and one from Socialist Party Nepal.

## RJP-Nepal has no claims over the post of Speaker or Deputy-speaker: Laxman Lal Karna

Kathmandu: RJP-Nepal leader Laxman Lal Karna has said that his party has no claims over the position of either the Speaker or the Deputy-speaker.

Speaking at a face-to-face interaction program, leader Karna, however, said, his party will accept the position if they are offered one.

"Our party has no claim on the position of the Speaker or the Deputy. But if we are offered one, we are ready to take it,"

he said.

He also denied the reports that the two-point agreement with the ruling party will affect the Province 2 government.

"The first point of the agreement has allocated seats while the second point states partnership between the two parties. The deal is for the upcoming National Assembly election," he said.

The regional party and the ruling Nepal Communist Party shared

a souring bond until the agreement after the RJPN withdrew its support given to the government in March last year saying the government failed to keep its promise of constitution amendment.

"The agreement with the ruling party has opened new doors for more understandings in the coming days. But, the deal does not mean we have claimed the positions of speaker and deputy speaker."

When enquired about Jitendra Sonal who recently announced he would be



next Chief Minister of Province 2, Karna said: "He is the minister and is capable of holding the post of CM."

## Deuba likely to adjust event calendar, but not general convention date

Kathmandu: Nepali Congress (NC) President Sher Bahadur Deuba is ready to make a change to the events calendar expect the date of the 14th general convention, according to leader Prakash Saran Mahat.

A meeting of the Central Working Committee (CWC) of the party on December 28 has scheduled the general convention for February 19-22 next year amid a boycott from the rival faction led by Ram Chandra Paudel. The meeting has also fixed ward level conventions on November 24, rural municipalities and municipalities conventions on November 26, provincial assembly regional conventions on November 30, House of Representatives regional convention on December 2,



district-level conventions on December 10 and provincial conventions on December 31. But the rival faction called the announcements “unilateral” and decided not to attend any CWC meeting unless the

establishment faction withdrew the decisions—creating a further rift within the main opposition party. The rival faction has been holding a gathering which is being participated by 46 district

presidents questioning Deuba’s leadership and pressuring Deuba to revoke the “unilateral” decisions, which also include stretching of the current working committee’s tenure by one year and increment in the number of party’s central departments from existing 28 to 47. According to party sources, Deuba, after holding consultations with the leaders close to him, is considering some flexibility as he does not want the further conflict to affect the general convention. The rift has also blown cold air to Deuba’s hopes of being reelected as the party president. The sources added that he is likely to withdraw the decision to add new departments at the party.

### ISIS terrorists may have entered UP, alert along Nepal border



Basti, Uttar Pradesh: An alert has been sounded along the India-Nepal border after two ISIS terrorists were suspected to have entered UP, a top police official said on Sunday.

“Two wanted terrorists Abdul

Samad and Iliyas can try to enter Nepal from Uttar Pradesh,” IG (Basti range) Ashutosh Kumar said. The alert was sounded in Maharajganj, Kushinagar and Siddharth Nagar districts along the border, he added.

“It has come to the fore that two wanted terrorists Abdul Samad and Iliyas can try to enter Nepal from Uttar Pradesh,” IG (Basti range) Kumar said. Acting on this, the alert was sounded in Maharajganj, Kushinagar and Siddharth Nagar districts along the border, he said.

### Journalists thrashed in front of mayor in Janakpur

Janakpur: Three journalists, who were questioning authorities related the encroachment of public land, have been attacked by supporters of the mayor of Janakpur sub-metropolitan city at his office.

Supporters of Mayor Lal Kishore Shah thrashed journalists Amarkanta Thakur, Subhas Karna and Raja Jha after they asked the mayor questions about the encroachment of land belonging to the Janaki Temple. Federation of Nepali Journalists Dhanusa President Anil Mishra said that the municipality has not appointed a spokesperson yet and the mayor has been dodging questions about the temple for a long time. He said that the journalists went to meet the



mayor at 10 am on Tuesday to ask him about the issue.

Meanwhile, Mayor Shah accused the journalists of forcing him to speak and his supporters only asked them not to force him. FNJ has issued a statement condemning the attack on journalists terming the incident as an attack of press freedom. It has demanded that the government investigate the incident.

### Lawmakers demand action against guilty in Dilip’s killing

Kathmandu: In a meeting of the National Assembly (NA), lawmakers demanded stern action against those responsible for the killing of one Dilip Kumar Mahato of Dhanusha.

Dilip was allegedly crushed to death by a tipper few days ago in course of protesting against the illegal mining in Dhanusha. Speaking in a special hour of the session, Dr Bimala Rai Poudel said only taking legal action against the perpetrator(s) would not be enough to sort out the issue, it must be ensured that such thing would never reoccur in the future. “Uncontrolled mining should be stopped.” Other lawmakers Komal Oli and Brishesh Chandra Lal aired their voices against the killing of Mahato for his move for environment and nature conservation.

### Indian company operating casino at Marriott Hotel

Kathmandu: India’s only listed casino company, Delta Corp Ltd, is operating a casino at the Marriott Hotel in Kathmandu. Reportedly, it will be the company’s first market presence outside India. “Our subsidiary in Nepal has been issued a licence for operating a casino in Nepal,” Delta Corp confirmed to the Bombay Stock. The new venture is a result of the company’s agreement with Everest Hospitality and Hotel Pvt Ltd, to lease space at the Marriott Hotel in Kathmandu. The agreement was signed in 2017. Everest Hospitality and Hotel is a subsidiary of Nepal-based hospitality firm MS Group.