VOL 7 • ISSUE 11 • SEPTEMBER 2019 • RS 100



NEPAL'S
FAVOURITE
RIDE & DRIVE
EVENTS

NADA AUTO SHOW 2019 WHAT TO EXPECT

GOVERNMENT PUTS SPEED BREAKER ON AUTO SALES

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DIVERSIFICATION IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

Anjan Shrestha Executive Director, Laxmi Group



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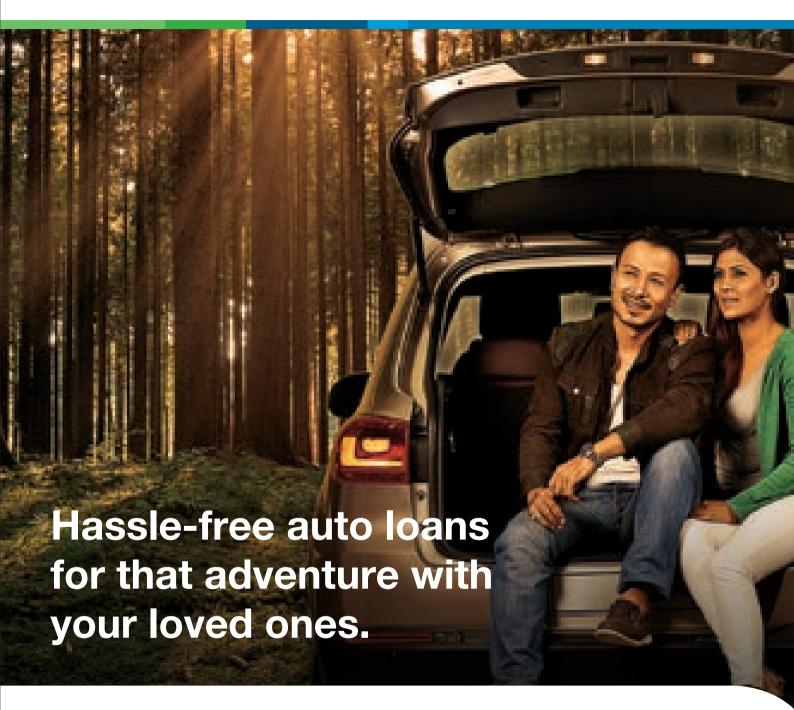












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The more I observe our function as a society, the more I feel that the attention of the public is detached from the government. The media is pushing boundaries throughout the world, news and information has never been as easy to access as it is today, yet the citizen is not engaged unless there is public outcry or outrage created by the few aware citizens or watch groups. The private citizen cannot quite manage to stay awake to the ongoing spectacle of the political drama that unfolds every day in the country when life itself is hard and circumstances ever changing.

With continual change in rules and regulations, uncertain economic environment and a speculative government in office, public life has become unstable. The common man is often unable to see, understand and forge direction for his role as a Nepali citizen.

It does not help that we live in times of unprecedented levels of corruption and lack of judicial order which makes the citizen vulnerable and alienated from rights. This is pronounced further when the top most levels of authority in the country are either mired in controversy or charged with corruption... when rule of law in the country is NOT the same for everyone... when well meaning reforms are not well thought out... when politics gets destructive... and there is repeated failure in processes.

'Your seat of authority does not give you the right to rule. The national budget is the public's hard earned money. Every little thing you do when in the seat of power has a repercussion on the life of the citizen in the most remote corner of the country' – If the leadership in government understood even these basic components of public office, they could contribute to development and prosperity of the nation instead of the increasing cynicism and frustration among the general public.

Most people will never hold a party membership, not because of lack of interest in contributing to public debate and politics, but due to the barrier and distance between the politician and the common man.

Charu Chadha

editor

# **BIZ INDICATORS**

FOREX MARKET	21.08.2019	21.07.2019	Year ago
USD	114.43	109.79	111.42
GBP	138.16	137.62	142.19
Chinese Renminbi (Yuan)	16.21	15.96	16.24
Indian Rupee (INR 100)	160.00	160.00	160.00
Euro	126.80	123.38	127.20
Australian Dollar	77.54	77.41	81.38
TOURISM	2019(Aug)	2018(July)	%Change
Tourist arrivals from India	42,365	32,535	30.21%
Tourist arrivals from Other Countries	62,356	5,786	977.70%
Total arrivals (by air only)	57,835	52,457	10.25%
GOVERNMENT SECURITIES	Lowest	Highest	Weighted Avg.
Discount rate of T-bill (Subject to latest issuance as on 2076/02/20)			
Treasury bills (28 days)	0.9106	5.3493	4.3278
Treasury bills (91 days)	0.0004	5.7495	4.4567
Treasury bills (182 days)	2.9999	5.3354	4.6249
Treasury bills (364 days)	3.1500	5.4494	4.7758
PRICE INDICES	June18/19(p)	June17/18(p)	June16/17(p)
National Consumer Price Index (base year 2014/15 = 100)	123.30	118.30	115.70

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Dr Govind Nepal Director, ISSR 68

"WE ARE BUILDING COMPETENCE AND THE CULTURE OF CO-CREATION"

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# ISTHE NAME OF THE GAME

# **Anjan Shrestha**

**Executive Director, Laxmi Group** 

Text by Ujeena Rana



What started as a modest confectionary business took a colossal size and diversified into dairy, automobiles, packaging, plastics, steel, cement, and hospitality industries. In the years since it was first introduced, Laxmi Group has gained access into a multitude of industries in the country, thus becoming a part of the Nepali lifestyle.

From a sweet maker to a conglomerate is the story of the Laxmi Group. Today, the Group has Sujal Foods, Sujal Dairy, Jaya Packaging, Sujal Plastics, Laxmi Intercontinental, Jaimalaxmi Intercontinental and Jaimalaxmi Trading as its subsidiaries. The idea, apparently, is to keep expanding and diversifying in the years to come.

### **Entrepreneurship in the genes**

It all started with a grandmother who used to make selroti and sweets at melas and during special occasions in the village. Possibly, it was this seed of entrepreneurship that was passed onto Ganesh Bahadur Shrestha (Anjan Shrestha's father) and his elder brother Buddhi Bahadur Shrestha which propelled the brothers to open a sweet shop, Laxmi Mithai Bhandar in their house in Pokhara in 1973.

"At that time, my father was faced with two options: either migrate to the Terai for better opportunities or establish something in Pokhara. He sought his elder brother's advice on this," Anjan Shrestha, Executive Director of Laxmi Group reminisces. Both brothers came to the conclusion that employment alone won't yield much savings. Also, they each had a family of their own and the responsibility to provide a better future for the children. This presented the necessary incentive to push the entrepreneurial cart forward. Hitherto, Ganesh Bahadur Shrestha was employed in government service and Buddhi Bahadur Shrestha was with Siddhartha Highway Project.

The Shresthas had already dabbled in pustakari making. "We used to make pustakari at home," recalls Shrestha. Anjan's father and uncle were later introduced to hand-operating machine and therefore the duo thought of expanding the product range courtesy of the technology. "That time our equity investment was less than 100 dollars," informs Shrestha. He adds, "I still remember we had this small confectionary factory at home.'

# **Branching Out**

Whatever they earned was invested back into the business. "We were not focused on buying land or property. We had one confectionary factory unit at home, one in the Pokhara Industrial Area but in 1984, we decided to consolidate all the factory units. After the merger,

we came up with advanced products in confectionary," he informs. That was also when the Shresthas decided to go into chocolate confectionary. Until 1989, they were involved in sugar confectionary only. "We launched Chocofun, a chocolate enrobed wafer, which in later days proved to become the flagship brand for the company," he states.

The decision, in fact. proved to be a lucrative bait for the Shresthas because it catapulted their position in the confectionary business in the country. The company claims that Chocofun is a dominant player in the confectionary market with overwhelming market share.

Laxmi Group owns an army of companies and the story of each of their beginning is interlinked with the other. Dates are stored in his mind in a labyrinth of numbers.

In 1991, the family thought of diversification. "At this time, we were the largest confectionary in the country. We had arrived in the national arena," he informs. Orange ball, Rimjhim ball, Sujal gum, Bubbly bubble gum, Lofty toffee, Swastik toffee, Chocofun, Smart Lollypop, Craveall are the products from Laxmi Group. Shrestha believes when the company was basking in success, "We were the undisputed leader in the confectionary department; we could easily compete with the international brands". And that's when they decided to diversify into unchartered lands.

"The family reckoned that we won't experience exponential economic growth if we are contained in one industry only," he states. Moreover, the second generation was ready to join the family business along with the old guards.

"At that time, Dairy **Development Corporation** (DDC) Pokhara unit was on the verge of being privatised. After ten years of rigorous effort and five tender processes, we finally got the project in 2003," he

narrates. This cemented their presence in the dairy industry.

Shrestha calls it the demand of time which encouraged the family, in later days, to meditate on something other than manufacturing. In fact, during the insurgency when the country was crippled with dormancy and the manufacturing industry faced harsh blows, the Shresthas made up their mind to dive into trading.

### The auto industry

They were toying with the thought earlier on, but the insurgency acted as a catalyst to prepone their decision to get into trading. The Shresthas were looking into some options and decided on the automobile sector. "We saw immense prospects and a generous future for the auto industry in Nepal," he states. In 2006, we got the opportunity to become dealers in Kathmandu for Hyundai Motors. "The parent company was pleased with our unparalleled performance and in 2009, we were awarded with the sole distributorship for Hyundai in Nepal," states Shrestha, with a touch of pride.

When asked, Shrestha shied away from revealing the annual turnover of Laxmi Group and Laxmi Intercontinental. He excused himself saying, "No one actually reveals numbers in Nepal." Nonetheless, he revealed that Hyundai motors enjoys one-third market share in the passenger car segment because of its design philosophy, durability and

With old and new players in the game, the auto industry, undoubtedly, witnesses stiff competition. So what does one do to outdo the others in the race. According to Shrestha, what sets Laxmi Intercontinental apart is its world class showroom giving customers a unique buying experience, sales skills of the people on the floor so that buyers show appreciation and interest in Hyundai vehicles and after-sales service as it is not

just about purchasing. "We have created state-of-the-art service centers," he elaborates

He underlines that branding and promotion strategies help but word-of-mouth is still the strongest marketing tool.

### The colossal size of Laxmi Group

The conglomerate does not identify with any particular business as its central business. The group is invariably diversifying. They are also involved in the business of auto components like tyres, tubes, lubricants and battery; infrastructure business with plans for steel and cement, and the hospitality vertical with a resort hotel business. Besides, Laxmi Group is one of the major partners in Nidaan

Anian Shrestha credits the dedication and devotion of his father and elder uncle for the humongous size the company has shaped into. The ability and openness to learn, the craving to do more, the focus and prioritisation on innovation and the appetite for risks is what Shrestha imbibes from the two cofounders of the Laxmi Group.

Along with the teachings from the first generation, Shrestha wants the third generation in the family to add knowledge and competency in the list of virtues to inculcate in order to take the group forward.

A day after giving the final paper for his SLC exams, Anjan Shrestha joined the family business. He however formally joined office when he completed the first year of intermediate level. "I used to look after sales and marketing," he recalls.

### **NADA Auto Show**

NADA Auto Show is promoted as an opportunity for every auto brand to showcase their current and upcoming models for the benefit of prospective auto buyers. The exhibition of the best models of automobiles allows visitors to understand products firsthand while being able to compare multiple brands on a single





platform. "It is an opportunity no auto brand wants to miss out on. It is the kumbh mela for auto aficionados," states Shrestha, who is also the past president of NADA

The event has played a crucial role to boost business of auto dealers. "When I was the President, we wanted to take NADA out of Kathmandu but because of the unavailability of space, we had to axe the plan," he shares. Irrespective of the current difficulties standing in the face of NADA Auto Show, he is confident that the event's grandness will only increase in the coming years.

# The Future of EVs

Despite the fact that the major rallies for environmental sustainability around the world push for 'no fuel, go green' rhetoric, auto industry pundits predict that electric vehicles (EVs) will not rule the roads any time soon. The idea for e-topia will take some time to materialise. For one, EVs are expensive. Eco-friendly lifestyle does not come cheap.

Battery technology is expensive which translates to exuberant figures tagged with the product. "Battery production and electric vehicle production has not been on mass scale as anticipated," comments Shrestha. "EVs in Nepal have a great future, but as of now, EV sales has hit a standstill. It suffers from sluggish growth," he remarks. "With Kona and IONIO combined, we only sold 120 units till date. Demand is there. People's growing interest is there. Customer inquiries are there. We are now expecting battery prices to lower," he adds.

Besides, there is the issue of charging. Charging stations are not ubiquitous even though a few of the electric vehicle distributors in Nepal have installed some. To promote EV market and to allow customers to have confidence, Hyundai Motors Nepal are installing

charging stations at malls and theaters in Kathmandu. "Labim Mall already has benefitted from our charging station. We have installed charging stations at six hotels in Pokhara. Our two service stations in Pokhara have charging stations. Chitwan, Kurintar, Butwal will have charging stations shortly," he shares.

The government, on its part, has exempted road tax for EVs. Hyundai Kona EV with 64 kWh comes at around Rs. 65, 96, 000 whereas, Hyundai Creta SX(O) of 1591 cc costs around 61,96,000. Since the cost is not par on with conventional cars, EVs are not necessarily the first option for a car buyer.

# **Auto industry in Nepal**

The private sector is already contributing to the auto industry by making most of the major international brands in the world available in the country. "We are doing as best as we can in terms of showcasing, buying experience, after-sales. The government should review and revise its

perception of automobiles," he throws the ball in the government's court.

Earlier, there was paradox at play: are automobiles objects of luxury or a necessity. The long-standing argument was because the government had placed automobiles under luxury items which resulted in the 200% import tax. "Now, you can't debate on it; it is a necessity," he challenges.

Anjan Shrestha in an interview in 2016 was quoted saying that nearly 30% of the government's revenue comes from the automobile sector. Now, the government has started another debate since the Central Bank has listed automobile sector as unproductive. "What are the parameters for announcing vehicles as unproductive?" he quizzes. "It is absolutely productive," he asserts. "If public transportation was safe, reliable, effective and efficient, there would not have been individual vehicles," he points out. B



Tree expendits

# Tackling Nature's Fury

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING CAN HELP MANAGERS DEAL WITH SUDDEN CRISES BETTER.



▲ Basant Chaudhary is a Poet, Writer, The Chairman of BLC and Basant Chaudhary Foundation. (feedback@basantchaudhary. com)

Nature is, more often than not, benign and caring. But it is unpredictable too. It can display its angry and ferocious self, at any point of time and upset our apple cart. Many a time nature unleashes its fury in reaction to mankind's unbridled exploitation of Mother Earth. But there is no dearth of instances when nature's actions have defied understanding and logic. Hurricanes, cyclones, tsunamis, blizzards, floods, forest fires, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, etc. leave us benumbed with shock and fear.

However, I will not dwell upon the correlation, if any, between human behaviour and nature's deadly disasters. This column is not the right forum for such a discussion. I only wish to bring to the notice of young managers and executives the inevitability of natural disasters and their impact on business.

That being the case, managers should be ever ready to deal with the havoc such disasters can cause. Do not be caught napping. Nepal has witnessed the traumatic impact of the 2015 quake which left the nation's body, mind and spirit devastated. Thousands lost their lives, buildings turned

into rubble, business was badly affected and, naturally, our gross domestic product figures tumbled. The fearsome impact of the great temblor is still felt.

On a global plane, year 2019 has been the worst victim of nature's fury in recent memory. Excessive rains caused floods and landslides not only in our country but all across the planet. Vast areas in different states of India are still being ravaged by floods. China too is facing the same fate. Floods have not spared the United Kingdom and USA either. According to one estimate, the US has suffered losses amounting to \$ 175 billion in the last few years all because of nature running amok.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO ENSURE THAT NATURAL CALAMITIES AFFECT OUR BUSINESS MINIMALLY AND WE ARE ABLE TO BE BACK ON OUR FEET AS FAST AS POSSIBLE?

THE ANSWER IS: BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING.



The human tragedy caused by natural catastrophes is so overwhelming that the losses inflicted upon the business world tends to get undermined if not ignored. Those entering the managerial cadres should understand at the very outset the formidable challenge posed by natural calamities. They need to know about damages that can occur and the ways to mitigate losses. Executives working for medium

and small businesses need to be particularly vigilant about downtime caused and prolonged by the irate nature. Studies show that only four out of 10 small businesses are able to survive the blow of nature. They are not in a position to sustain downtime for long. So why not take steps in advance to meet the challenge better.

So let us first identify the blow which natural disasters can deal to business concerns.

First and foremost is physical damage which is easily visible. The business location or the access to it may get flooded causing structural damage to the building. Storms and cyclones are known to have struck down trees, blown away windows causing leaks and damage to on-site equipment. Wildfires in Northern California destroyed 8,700 buildings in October 2017. Many of these buildings were business premises.

Even if your business location and facility is not actually affected, electricity and power supply disruption, localised water shortages and failure of cell phone towers can adversely affect the work at the location. Infrastructure damage can cripple the functioning of business processes.

The disruption in transportation halters delivery of orders and receipt of supplies. The supply chain management and materials management get severely hurt. With air services disrupted, executives are unable to fly to various stakeholders and conduct business. This is especially true of companies with vast networks within the country and abroad. Damaged roads, bridges, downed power lines, gas/petroleum shortages are many of the other hurdles faced by employees and customers in reaching the company's location. Business efficiency takes a hard knock as repair and rectification of the damaged facilities take time.

All this obviously pulls sales down. In case of companies whose customer base is located in a disaster-affected area, buyers may stop purchasing B

their product for a considerable period of time. Not only does this affect the bottom line, better equipped competitors get the opportunity to sneak in lure away even dedicated customers.

In places where the natural calamity, like a massive earthquake, occurs, the company may even face the loss of employees. They may have fallen prey to the catastrophe and its aftermath. We were sad witnesses to such heartrending loss when an earth quake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale and its aftershocks rocked the country in April and May 2015.

What should we do to ensure that natural calamities affect our business minimally and we are able to be back on our feet as fast as possible?

The answer is: business continuity planning. Once the preserve of big businesses it is now considered to be essential for all types of business irrespective of size. No company is perfect and immune to challenges. Imagine a worst case scenario and try to identify what your operations and processes are vulnerable to. Plug all the loopholes and devise possible solutions for all vulnerabilities. It may indeed not be possible for you to anticipate all possible weak points that may lead to downtime. But by undertaking business continuity planning, you may be able to protect your company from the pitfalls of hysterical decision making when crisis strikes all of a sudden.

Today, almost all middle and big concerns are vigorously using information technology to remain competitive. In fact, some of the smaller companies are more tech savvy than the biggies. This being the scenario, data protection and management assumes a vital position in the business world. Data is the lifeblood of your organisation. Whether it be payroll, customer payments information, or inventory

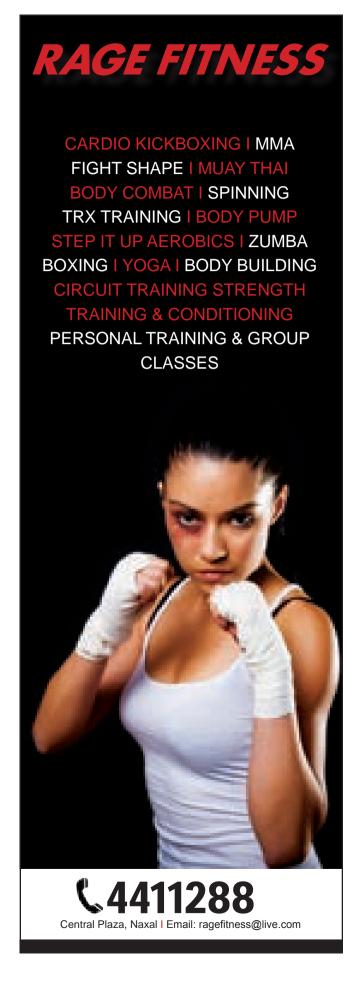
control, businesses which lose their data are at the highest risk. Keeping a backup is, therefore, of paramount importance. Most businesses today use economical and efficient cloudbased services to protect their vital data.

It is advisable for all businesses to be prepared with remote access capability to confront a crisis when it strikes. Key employees working from home can ensure that the top priority operations of an organisation continue even when a natural calamity hits the business location. The relevant employees should be equipped with laptops with adequate knowledge of accessing the network remotely.

Natural disasters often disrupt a company's interaction with its customers spread far and wide. Communication should not stop. Customers need to be told about the latest status. This can be done by regularly updating the company website or its Facebook pages. The company's automated phone system can also convey relevant details of the situation. Customers affected by delayed orders or disrupted services of the company should be informed about the company's future course of action.

The natural disaster may be sudden and debilitating but the company should have the systems in place so that the customers do not feel abandoned or lost. Without beating about the bush, the company should be upfront about the impact of the disaster. This will enhance the company's credibility among its stakeholders and also bolster customer loyalty.

Young executives should be aware of the systems discussed above. This will enable them to keep their cool when untoward natural mishaps jolt their business and things go wrong. **B** 



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# HOW ONE ENTREPRENEUR IS WAGING WAR ON POVERTY IN AFRICA

Wade believes the real problem is unemployment caused by barriers to entrepreneurship in Africa.



BRITTANY HUNTER
is a senior writer for
the Foundation for
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Additionally, she is
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Banthas, a podcast
that combines Star
Wars and politics.
Brittany believes that
the most effective way
to promote individual
iberty and free-market
economics is by telling
timely stories that
highlight timeless
principles.

Behind every successful entrepreneur is a cause or passion that pushes them to persevere even though the toughest situations. For Richard Branson, his desire to create a more reliable and affordable air travel experience for consumers helped him navigate the exhaustive

regulatory hurdles that stood in the way of creating Virgin Airlines. For Dr. Devi Shetty, <u>his desire</u> to make heart surgery more accessible to the masses fueled him as he used economies of scale to create surgical centers that now bring lifesaving procedures to more people than ever before.

But for Senegalese-born Magatte Wade, her passion for business is driven by her desire to demonstrate firsthand the role entrepreneurship plays in creating prosperity.

In addition to bringing highend, organically made skincare products to consumers via her company Skin Is Skin, which will soon be sold in <u>select Whole Foods locations</u>, Wade, as she explained in <u>a popular Ted Talk</u>, wanted to bring something else to the world: the antidote to poverty.

# Why Are Some Countries Wealthy?

Wade was born in Senegal in a small fishing village south of Dakar in 1976. Her parents moved to Europe for work shortly after she was born, so Wade was raised primarily by her grandmother for the first several years of her life. After leaving Senegal as a girl to live with her parents in France, Wade was immediately struck by the differences between her new home and her home country. She was puzzled as to why one region of the world was so prosperous, while another was struggling with extreme poverty.

In the documentary <u>Made in</u> <u>Mékhé</u>, produced by the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), Wade commented:

Why is it that a couple decades ago, China, for example, was at the same level as many African countries. And yet today ... countries like Singapore made it, countries like Hong Kong made it. Even a place like Dubai, bare land of sand—desert sand—and then all of the sudden within 12 or 15 years Dubai is one of the financial centers of the world. What happened?

The question took root and would eventually shape her career.

# The Power of Entrepreneurship

The difference, Wade came to believe, boiled down to a single word: *entrepreneurship*. She noticed that in wealthier nations, commerce and trade are allowed to occur and even encouraged. In places like Hong Kong and Dubai, she saw, it was much easier for individuals to start and operate a business than it was in her own country. And more business means more economic opportunities for the entire country.

Each year, the <u>Fraser Institute</u>, as well as other organisations like the World Bank, releases a report that ranks each country by their degree of economic freedom.

According to the <u>2018 annual report</u>, Senegal ranked 125 out of 162 countries. Hong Kong, on the other hand, leads the world in economic freedom, besting America by five spots.

Starting a business might not seem inextricably linked to economic prosperity at first glance, Starting a business might not seem linked to economic prosperity at first glance, but it's through the formation of new companies that new jobs are created.

but it is through the formation of new companies that new jobs are created. And with more employment opportunities comes the ability for more people to improve their circumstances and rise out of poverty.

In many African countries, and especially Senegal, excessive regulations prevent many wouldbe entrepreneurs from starting businesses and not only bettering their own lives but also the lives of those for whom they are creating new employment opportunities. And without a robust job market, many are forced to take on dangerous trades.

In Wade's hometown, there are few jobs available for those wanting to break the cycle of poverty. As a result, many young men eager to provide for themselves are left with no other option than to take positions as fishermen, leaving their homes and families for shoddy vessels. Many never return.

"Some of my most entrepreneurial people ... are right now serving as fish food at the bottom of the ocean," Wade tearfully told an audience recently.

I grew up with stories of people dying at sea. Why? Because they had to leave their country because there are not enough jobs, and why are there not enough jobs? Because the business climate sucks.

Wade came to believe the only way to change the situation at home would be to take on the challenge herself and bring the manufacturing of her products to Senegal.

### **How Employment Empowers**

Of her company, Skin Is Skin, Wade often says that it was born in Austin, Texas, and made in Mékhé, as Wade splits her time between those two places. Recognizing full well how regulation was inhibiting her country's economic wellbeing, she decided to brave the

bureaucratic storm and navigate through a sea of red tape to bring the production of her skincare products to Mékhé. Since she only uses the best available ingredients for her products, she imports many that she can't find within her country from elsewhere, which means everything she purchases is subject to a 45% tariff. That alone causes huge financial strains, but Wade has persisted nevertheless.

Skincare products might not *seem* revolutionary, but workers employed by Skin Is Skin say it has been life-changing.

Production manager Ibrahima N'Dour lived in a small onebedroom house with his wife and their five children before he was hired. At night while they slept, three people would crawl into bed while the rest lay next to each other on the floor, he says. After being hired by Wade, whom he considers family. N'Dour was able to move his family into a bigger home where his children have space to play and beds to sleep in at night. N'Dour is not the only one who has bettered his circumstances thanks to Wade's entrepreneurship.

Traditionally, in Mékhé, the women stay home while the men go off to fish or farm. This is just the way it has always been. Adji Maria had never held a job before meeting Wade. Now employed at Skin Is Skin, she has been able to provide not only for herself but

also for her entire family. Her work has helped her gain a sense of independence she would not have had otherwise.

In addition to economic prosperity, employment gives individuals a sense of dignity and self-sufficiency that helps them lead more fulfilling lives. Mame Mareme Cisse, another female employee at Skin Is Skin, explains, "This work has changed a lot in my life. Now I can provide everything I need for myself without having to ask anyone for it."

The jobs created by Wade's company are not limited strictly to the manufacturing of the actual skincare products, however. She is also helping other local businesses survive the harsh economic climate of Senegal. Each Skin Is Skin product comes in a hand-sewn leather bag made by CAWAAN, a family-run Senegalese company that has been making handmade leather goods for five generations.

CAWAAN, like Wade, has struggled to obtain the goods they need to offer quality consumer goods because of high tariffs. Understanding these difficulties firsthand, Wade has continued to use CAWAAN. The company has said that Wade's commitment to their businesses has "encouraged us to work hard and optimize everything."

Through one small business, Wade has been able to transform

In addition
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them lead
more fulfilling
lives.

the lives of many living in Mékhé and encourage more commerce to occur.

### Tackling Poverty One Day at a Time

Above all, Wade holds that in order to break the cycle of poverty you must strike at the heart of the problem. She believes the real problem is unemployment caused by barriers to entrepreneurship in Africa. And when it comes to doing what she can to remedy the problem, she is not content to merely stop at Skin Is Skin.

Wade has been working closely with the mayor of Mékhé—whose name is coincidentally also Magatte Wade—to provide and support more opportunities for farming, energy, training, and educational ventures. She recently created a new school curriculum in Senegal to promote entrepreneurial skills to young people by teaching children the power of business and entrepreneurship.

"I never woke up one day and said, 'Ohh, I am going to become an entrepreneur,'" said Wade, who was recently named director of the new Center for African Prosperity. "I think what happened for me is what happened to a lot of entrepreneurs and businesspeople. I think a lot of founders, the way they get into starting a business is they see something that sucks or they get inspired by something that's awesome." B



http://www.b360nepal.com/

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# NEPAL'S FAVOURITE RIDE & DRIVE EVENTS

Text by Dibesh Dangol



Distinguished Gentleman's Ride



Enfield Rendezvous and Poker Run by Sacred Summits



Saturday Ride Nepal



KTM Orange Tour by KTM - Ready To Race Nepal

here is a growing number of people who enjoy driving for a weekend getaway or on holidays. Since this trend has been picking up steam, a variety of riding and/or driving events are being organised in the country. B360 has listed out some of these ride and drive events which have become favourites amongst driving enthusiasts.

# **Distinguished Gentleman's Ride**

The first Distinguished
Gentleman's Ride took place in
2012 in Sydney, Australia. Mark
Hawwa founded this event
inspired by a photo of Mad
Men's Don Drapper, played
by Jon Hamm, riding a classic
bike wearing his finest suit. The
core idea behind this one-day
ride event is to eliminate the
stereotypes associated with
motorcycle riders and the riding
culture. The ride connects

niche motorcycle communities while raising funds and creating awareness regarding prostate cancer research and men's mental health. The first DGR in Nepal, organised by RS Moto, took place in 2016 in which 250 people participated. The following year, the number of participants rose to 400, and in 2018 there were 300 participants.

DGR 2019 will take place on 28 September globally

including Nepal and the registration has already been opened online (www. gentlemansride.com). It is a closed ride event where only registered riders can view the local ride details.

"I have participated in all three DGR rides organised here in Kathmandu. The whole idea of dressing up in dapper clothing, riding in vintage retro motorcycles, meeting likeminded motorcycle culture enthusiasts, contributing to a good cause, and having a good time with friends are what excites me about this event," shares Kapil Phuyal, a regular participant of the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride.

# **Enfield Rendezvous and Poker Run** by Sacred Summits

In 2009, Rabi Thapa, CEO of Scared Summits, along with Stewart Mclean, an Australian friend, initiated the first Enfield Rendezvous and Poker Run in memory of their late friend Binod Chhetri who was a passionate Enfield rider and adventure enthusiast. The idea of this type of event came about when Rabi Thapa and Binod Chhetri had a general talk about how motorcycle clubs abroad host such type of events to celebrate the riding culture and to have a fun game of poker.

"The event takes place during Nepali New Year's Eve and Enfield riders from all over Nepal and other countries gather in Pokhara for 2 nights 3 days. The main purpose of this ride is to celebrate the biking brotherhood and Nepali New Year," says Merina Shrestha, Manager of Sacred Summits. Along with the fun and celebration, a charity programme is also conducted on the second day.

Since its initiation, the popularity of this event has grown and it has become one of the most celebrated riding events. Concurrently, it has also come to symbolise a must-attend event for all Royal Enfielders not just from Nepal but other South Asian countries also.

"This was definitely one of the best biking events I have attended till date. Celebrating Nepali New Year and giving back to the community is a great combo and I am glad that I got to do both of these in a single event with my Enfield friends," says Dr Sarika Mehta (Member of Biking Queens – India), Participant of Enfield Rendezvous and Poker Run 2018

Unfortunately, Enfield Rendezvous and Poker Run will not be taking place this year because the Sacred Summits team is planning to come up with a separate exclusive plan targeting Visit Nepal 2020 campaign.

# KTM Orange Tour by KTM - Ready To Race Nepal

KTM rides are KTM
AG's events which are held
as per the preference of the
authorised distributors all over
the globe, which in case of
Nepal is Hansraj Hulaschand &
Co, KTM.

KTM – Ready To Race Nepal organises various ride events throughout the year from various showrooms located in various cities across the country. They have three types of ride events: Bikers Meet, KTM Orange Ride and KTM Orange Tour.

Bikers Meets are the most frequent ride events organised from various showrooms of Nepal as per the preference of the dealers where all motorcycle brands and riders can participate. KTM Orange Ride is a regional ride event organised from various KTM showrooms located throughout Nepal exclusively for KTM enthusiasts and riders.

The KTM Orange Tour is a multi-day annual event exclusively for KTM riders. The idea behind this tour is of exploration and challenging one to a once in a lifetime experience on both black topped and off-roads in the company of KTM personnel and fellow KTM riders. The duration of Orange Tour stretches between a week to two as per the destination and itinerary.

"Through this event, we aren't hell-bent on promoting KTM brand. We want KTM owners and riders to know that KTM motorcycles aren't just made for the streets and are great in rugged terrain too. The idea behind organising this ride is to create a common platform where like-minded and rideloving KTM riders can gather, camaraderie can be made and a great time had with KTM personnel as well," says Sulav Bajracharya, Marketing Officer at HH-KTM

"Everybody has their family back home. But through this tour, I gained a new and special family- the KTM Family who have similar interests to mine. During the tour, we talk about KTM, our bikes and what else can we do with our bikes besides all the fun we have on the tour," shares Anmol KC, Participant of KTM Orange Ride 2016 – Mission Mustang.

# Nepal Riders Meet initiated by FORE Nepal

The Nepal Riders Meet (NRM) is a concept initiated by FORE Nepal (Friends of Royal Enfield) which takes place during February or March to bring together all kinds of classic, vintage and adventure-seeking riders from various places, backgrounds and cultures who share one thing in common: the love of motorbikes. NRM's objective is to promote motorcycle culture, lifestyle and support local tourism. To participate, riders need to register for the event and can bring their own tent or book a dorm tent as per their financial feasibility. Various games and rides are conducted throughout the day followed by band concerts and DJ parties during the night.

Till now, three editions of NRM have taken place which were all huge successes. In NRM 2018, over 200 people representing 26 different clubs from all over Nepal and India participated, and NRM 2019 which was hosted by Royal Rhino Riders from Chitwan under the umbrella of FORE Nepal had over 300 participants representing over 40 clubs. "Our participating riders have enjoyed the event and have specially liked our hospitality, location and the idea behind organising NRM," says Merina Shrestha, Manager at FORE Nepal

# Grand Saturday Ride by Saturday Ride Nepal, a sub-body of Riders Unified

With the initiative of developing systematic group riding culture and safe riding techniques, Riders Unified organised their first Grand Saturday Ride event in 2012 in Kathmandu. This annual one-day ride event, organised in December, sees participation from more than 250 riders from all over Nepal. Since it is an open ride event and anyone can participate, the event is a common platform for all kinds of riders who love to ride motorcycles, meet other riders, listen and share their ride stories, and support the biking community.

"We announce the event details; gathering point, date and time via our Facebook page few weeks prior to the event date", shares Dipesh Shrestha, President of Riders Unified. After reaching the destination, riders participate in various motorcycle related games, share interesting stories and bond with other riders. Besides fun and games, the organisers also hold a session during which the riders are given knowledge about safe riding techniques inside the city areas and highways. Maharjan adds, "For this year's Grand Saturday Ride, we are planning to organise a ride that will especially focus on promoting Visit Nepal 2020 campaign."

"It was a great opportunity for me to ride with Nepali riders around Kathmandu and get to know the culture via this event. I thoroughly enjoyed the ride and got a chance to interact with riders and locals. I also got a chance to learn a bit of stunt-riding which is a bonus for me now," says Chantal Simons aka Chick on the Chook Chaser (Lone Woman Biking Traveller), Participant of Grand Saturday Ride 2016.

# **Imagine Nepal by M&S Events**

Started in 2016, Imagine Nepal was born out of the idea to provide impetus to the lack of event tourism in Nepal. The elements of off-road and Nepal's rugged Himalayan terrain grew as a business idea for M&S Events. "Imagine Nepal as an event is the first of its kind in Nepal. There are various elements that come together to make this event a success. We promote the concept of off-roading and luxury tourism in Nepal," states Milan Kumar Sardar

# FEATURE

Tharu, Operations Manager of Imagine Nepal.

In 2016, the destination was Manang, in 2017 it was Mustang, and in 2018, it was Rara-Bardia (Karnali Pradesh). Through these expeditions which have specially-made itineraries, Imagine Nepal wants to bring the best out of the customised routes which are experienced by convoys

of around 75 people who document their memories for mass release to promote the destinations. The event is for anyone who likes off-road expeditions and luxury travel. Moreover, it encourages every person to participate who aspires to contribute to Nepal's tourism industry.

The event takes place every year during mid-November.

For 2019, the expedition is set to begin on November 15 and Imagine Nepal will be disclosing the destination soon via a press-release.

"It was a fantastic event and definitely an adventure of a lifetime for me. It motivated people to get out of their comfort zone, not just travel and luxury, but experience different kinds of adventure

that Nepal has to offer," shared Sadichha Shrestha, Miss Nepal World 2010 and Participant of Imagine Nepal 2017 (#DaretoLomanthang). B

# INTERVIEW



# When and how did you become passionate about motorcycles?

I was passionate about motorcycles and riding since my teenage days but actively got involved in motorcycle culture in 2000. When I saw groups of riders riding together, enjoying their brotherhood, helping society and natural disaster victims through fund raising, and providing safety to communities while attending biking events, I became eager to join this motorcycle culture. From that point of my life, I have never looked back. I am and will be a part of this culture throughout my life.

# How would you evaluate the present riding scene in Nepal?

This culture is definitely growing at a rapid pace. The young generation riders are smart and aware of this culture. Many young riders want to learn from the older generation of riders and are getting mixed with various such groups. Riders have been going on rides during holidays to explore Nepal and have created their own groups which I think will lead to developing this culture even

# What is BOBMC Rider Mania? What was the idea behind the event?

BOBMC Rider Mania is a three-day annual event under the umbrella of Brotherhood

of Bulleteers Motorcycling Consortium (BOBMC), India, initiated by Vernon Dias in 2003 where Enfield vintage and classic motorcycle owners gather at the event venue to commemorate the spirit of motorcycle riders, clubs and culture. The event has been hosted by various Indian clubs in the past and the upcoming BOBMC Rider Mania will be hosted by FORE Nepal.

We wanted to host BOBMC Rider Mania for quite a few years now. To be eligible and authorised to host this event, the group/club needs to attend Rider Mania for five successive years and needs to accumulate maximum votes from fellow

member clubs. In 2016, we pitched but lost in votes due to Nepal's political instability and economic blockade. For Rider Mania 2019 also we competed for the vote and lost, but we planned to try again for 2020 and we won.

# When and where is it going to happen and what's the registration process?

**BOBMC Rider Mania** 2020 - Chalo Nepal will be taking place from January 24-27, 2020 at Pame, Lakeside, Pokhara. The registration for the event starts from September 15 via the websites www.bobmc. info and www.forenepal. org.np.

# How many participants are you expecting and what are your/ expectations from the event?

We are expecting more than 3000 participants since Nepal is hosting the first international edition of BOBMC Rider Mania. We have received positive feedback from motorcycle enthusiasts all over the world for the event.

It will definitely help a lot to promote VNY 2020 tourism campaign because we are hosting this event at the very beginning month of the tourism campaign and the sheer number of people we are expecting will definitely give a massive boost to the tourism campaign as well as to Pokhara tourism. B

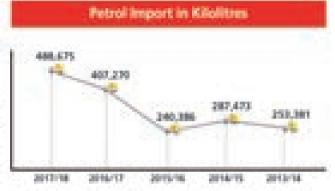
# Fuel Price Fluctuations in Nepal

Centuries ago petroleum products were regarded as just a discretionary commodity. Today, the scenario has completely reversed, making it one of the most valued and indispensable products in the global market. Day to day life has become unimaginable without petroleum products as it is extensively used in the transportation and industrial sector to make the urban life easier, quicker and more efficient. As Nepal is on its path towards development, petroleum products have already become a mainstay.

Petroleum is one of the most imported products in Nepal. According to Nepal Oil Corporation Limited (NOC), a total of 488,675 kilolitres of petrol was imported out of which 484,781 kilolitres of sales was registered in the fiscal year 2074/75 B.5. Being a land locked country, Nepal is dependent upon India for a vast majority of its imports and petrol is no exception. Out of the total import, 485,339 kilolitres were purchased from India which was valued at NPR 28 billion.



The NOC, the sole petroleum product supplier in Nepal, has noted that prices have fluctuated 29 times from 01 November 2017 to 01 August 2019. The data shows that the price for petrol had increased up to Rs. 114 on 17 September 2018 and the lowest recorded was said to be NRs. 98 on 02 November 2017. A study report entitled, "Relationship Between Money Supply, Income and Price Level in Nepal," published by the Nepal Rastra Bank states that on 14 March 2014, petrol was priced at Rs. 140 which is the highest price of petrol ever recorded. As of 07 August 2019, petrol price was at Rs. 109 per libre in Kathmandu, Thankot, Surkhet and Dipayal, whereas, in Biratnagas, Birguni, Mahendranagas, Nepalguni and Dhangadi the price was at 107.5 per litre.



Domestic petroleum companies, i.e. entities engaged in the petroleum business under the Nepal Petroleum Act, have to pay a tax rate of 30% applied as a flat rate for PY 2075/76 8.5. In addition, infrastructure tax of Rs. 4 is also levied on petrol. On the bright side, the tax laws also provide various incentives to stimulate growth and development of industries in the country. When it comes to the petroleum industry, if a person is involved in exploration and extraction of petroleum or natural gas, and starts commercial operation by Chaitra 2080 8.5., then they are eligible to receive a 100% exemption for up to 7 years and 50% rebate in subsequent 3 years.

The fluctuation in Nepal's petrol prices depends on the price in India and the tax law changes. These price trends can also be explained through the simple economic relation of price with demand and supply. Petrol is a fast depleting resource with limited supply of reservoirs. These reserves are found in selected countries such as Venezuela, the Gulf nations, Russia, etc. Convenely, demand for petrol has been ever increasing in every country leading to a hike in prices.



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# DA AUTO SHOW 2019 WHAT TO **EXPECT**

The motor vehicle industry is in full gear for the much awaited annual automobile event, the NADA Auto Show 2019. A huge spectrum of automobile brands will showcase their most coveted machines on a single platform with special offers for customers and auto enthusiasts. **B360** interviewed the marketing heads of some of the highly acclaimed auto companies on their brand **Excerpts**:

# SIJAN NEUPANE

Marketing Manager, Agni Incorporated Mahindra & Mahindra

### At the NADA Auto Show 2019

We will have a service centre like design for our stall displaying XUV 300 and Marazzo and revealing special discounts and offers at the NADA Auto Show.

# Mahindra as a preferred brand

Considering the terrain of Nepal, Mahindra vehicles are very friendly for such types of roads. For generations, people have trusted Mahindra vehicles and we are glad that we have earned the respect and trust of our valuable customers. Most importantly, Mahindra vehicles are of great build and quality.

# Advice to a first time buyer

Mahindra offers wide varieties of vehicles as per your need. It's very important for the buyer to know what s/he wants to buy on the budget s/he has.

### Flagship models

Scorpio, Scorpio Pickup, Bolero Pickup, XUV 300, Marazzo and XUV 500 are currently the flagship models.

### After-sales services

We have over 45 service centres all over Nepal so that we can reach out to our Mahindra customers nationwide. Our service centres are systematised and all aspects of the vehicles are inspected so that the vehicle can run properly and is sustainable.

Many vehicle owners prefer to visit local service centres maybe because of the connection they have with those local service centres. Local service centres are very different from authorised service centres. They do not offer thorough checkups like the authorised ones due to which many problems can occur in the future. So, I highly discourage people to go to such service centres.



































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## MARKET WATCH

## **RK SINGH**

Deputy General Manager, Shangrila Motors Peugeot

#### Peugeot as a preferred brand

Peugeot has a long history of more than 200 years. The main USP of Peugeot vehicles is its stylish design, most advanced technology, best and latest features and durability which has made it a popular brand in Nepal within a very short period.

## Importance of sales, marketing and promotional activities

Peugeot vehicles are expensive and our models are not suitable to target the mass. The market size of this segment is also very limited so our sales and promotional activities are different from brands for the masses like Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai or Tata. We are more focused on a personal approach, meet our customers personally and arrange test drive at their door step. Another important factor is our after-sales service which is important for us in order to earn our customers' trust.

## Flagship models

It's definitely Peugeot 3008

Series SUVs. It is available in two variants, GT Line and Allure. 3008 GT Line comes in 1.6L petrol whereas 3008 Allure is available in both 1.6L petrol and 2.0L diesel. Price ranges from Rs. 1.2 to 1.38 crores.

## Sales performance in previous fiscal

Last year, sales was good. We sold 62 units which we consider a good figure in this segment for a new entrant.

#### Views on taxation

High import tax has always been a debatable issue. New taxation system and Central Bank's loan policy is very unfriendly to the auto industry. It has seriously affected the market due to which sales has declined by 25-30% and shall affect imports in coming months. This will reflect in government's revenue too. However, government's initiatives to promote electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles by reducing import duties and taxes and plans to establish EV charging stations are appreciable.



## KIRAN ACHARYA

Assistant Marketing Manager, Life Automobile Jeep

### At the NADA Auto Show 2019

Jeep will be at the Auto Show where our vehicles and stall will be presented in interesting and innovative ways. We believe in innovation. We will be launching few models in the Compass segment. Trial hawk will be the focused model among all.

## Advice to a first time buyer

It's your responsibility to be safe while driving and the safety of your co-passengers as well. So, don't go with what is in trend in the market. Think and experience the vehicle and quality before you make decisions.

#### Views on taxation

Taxes and government rules have definitely impacted sales. The auto industry has been affected badly and the government should re-think its policies with good schemes for auto dealers so that we can uplift the market scenario.

## Resale value of Jeep

We believe that owning the Jeep is a prestige and we think that Jeep owners will not think about selling their vehicle.

## **After-sales services**

We have developed world class service station following international norms specially designed for Jeep. After-sales service is a major focus point for us. Preference for local service centers depends on the choice of customers. We, at Jeep, request our vehicle owners that safety and responsibility is the main priority, so always go with authentic and genuine products specified by the company's authorised service centers.





## **MARKET** WATCH

## **DIPESH SHRESTHA**

Head of Marketing and Sales, Himalayan Motorrad **BMW Motorrad** 



### At the NADA Auto Show 2019

BMW Motorrad is proud to announce its participation in the NADA Auto Show 2019. As this is the first year of operations, we have attractive offers and incentives for our Adventure 310GS and the Naked 310R models. We have cash discounts and other perks such as first free servicing and discounts on authentic AGV helmets. We are also offering exclusive on and off-road certified BMW Motorrad trainings for all our riders. Financing facilities are also available.

## **BMW Motorrad as a preferred**

BMW Motorrad is a marquee brand that has recently entered Nepal focusing on the 300cc segment. We are confident that the two models 310GS and 310R will satisfy both the adventure minded and the slick city riders of Nepal. All the models come with 10,000 km or one year servicing interval. We are expanding in Nepal and currently available in Pokhara, Butwal, and Chitwan.

### Flagship model

Our flagship model is the 310GS which is a dual purpose motorcycle, perfectly suited to the terrain of Nepal and designed to challenge any adventure. With KYB suspensions, dual purpose Metzeler tires, switchable ABS, it is designed to be comfortable on challenging terrains. This is your ideal partner on a long journey.

## Sales performance in the previous fiscal

Since December 2018, we have already sold more than 85 units. Our customers are fully satisfied with our products and services.

#### Views on taxation

Taxes determine the cost of every good we import or export and the high increment rates of taxes have definitely affected the economy. Being in an auto import business, the auto sector has been directly affected with the new laws and policies which have impacted the sales numbers.

## SWETA SILWAL, Senior Marketing and Communication Officer, Pioneer Moto Corp Datsun and Nissan

### **Datsun and Nissan as preferred** brands

Datsun offers products that are affordable to customers who are looking to buy valuefor-money cars; whereas, we have a range of Nissan vehicles appropriate for all customer bases.

## Importance of sales, marketing and promotional activities

It's very important for both of our brands. We take marketing and sales promotions very seriously which is why we often come up with schemes and activities to push sales and for brand presence.

## At NADA Auto Show 2019

The new Nissan Kicks XV Pre (O) which will be launched at the Auto Show will surely be the highlight of Nissan's stall. It will be priced around Rs. 65 lakhs.

## Sales performance in the previous fiscal

Last year went quite well for both the brands. We sold over 1200 vehicles of both brands.



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# I AM A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN I CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT I CARE FOR THE ECONOMY ....

LOVE THE EARTH...LOVE THE DRIVE...

**TOYOTA PURE HYBRID** 



AND DESCRIPTIONS MATERIAL PROPERTY AND ADDRESS.



NO SECURE MEDICAL PROPERTY. ADDITION OF BREATH



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## **BIJAY MOKTAN**

Business Head, Hansraj Hulaschand & Co KTM

## KTM as a preferred brand

KTM is an Austrian brand with the motto of Ready To Race. It is famous for its aggressive and uncompromising bikes with great power and torque figures and is the best bike available in the market in its segment.

#### Sales performance in the last fiscal

It wasn't as good as the years before. We sold more than 1500 units.

### Views on taxation

The automobile taxation system of Nepal is too high compared to other countries because none of the other countries have applied over 200% tax on import vehicles. The government should look towards other options to raise

tax rather than increasing the tax on automobile industry only.

The changes in the tax system have directly affected our business and our sales have dropped down by more than 50% compared to last year.

## Resale value

Resale is one of the most important aspects to consider while buying a vehicle. Resale value determines the actual demand of any product and its charm in the market. If the value and demand of any product is low, it reflects the brand's position in the market.

Every day the numbers of KTM bike owners are increasing which means that the value of KTM bikes is also increasing in the market. Our products have good resale value not just because of the market presence, but also due to the technologies used in our products.

## After-sales service

KTM mainly focuses on quality service and customer satisfaction. Currently, KTM is providing service to customers from all major cities with properly trained manpower. All the service points are equipped with proper diagnostic and precision tools in order to solve problems with accuracy. KTM is providing mobile service as well and our customer care department reaches out to every customer to collect feedback after service.

Some vehicle owners prefer to visit local service centers. It may be due to time factor or due to the existence of local workshop near to them or for minor jobs. For KTM, due to the adaptation of technology and presence of sensors and actuators, customers revisit KTM service centers even if they had gone to local service centers.

I suggest all the customers to visit authorised service centers as KTM bikes have technical features like ABS, EFI, EMS and TFT which might create additional problems if the bike lands in the hand of an unskilled service personnel.

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## **MARKET** WATCH

## SANTOSH NYAUPANE

Business Development Head, Raman Motors Runner

#### At NADA Auto Show 2019

We are participating in the Auto Show with a wide range of motorcycles and scooters from Runner. We will have an off-road motorcycle, Runner Hawk 200, as our main attraction. We will also offer discount up to Rs. 20,000 and free merchandise dedicated for NADA Auto Show 2019. Our stall will be kept simple so that the visitors can see and feel our products more at the Auto Show.

#### Runner as a preferred brand

Runner products are value for money products. Our products are reasonably priced and are better than our competitors in terms of quality. Runner products come with six years warranty which is more than any other competitors have ever offered.

#### Advice to a first time buver

If you are a first time buyer, I suggest you not to blindly follow any brand which your ancestors recommend. You have a wide range of new brands and models which are value-for-money product offering more facilities and warranty like Runner. Have a look, compare thoroughly, go through user reviews and try something new to stand apart from the crowd.

#### Resale value

We give best valuations for exchanges which in many cases are above customer expectation. We have done sufficient tie-ups with recondition houses and provide best resale value for old bikes for exchanges.

Runner motorcycles are also getting good resale value as the brand is getting popular in the market and I am positive that it will get better resale value in the future.



## **NIJEN LAL SHRESTHA**

Business Development Manager, Syakar Trading Company Honda

## At the NADA Auto Show 2019

We are sticking with a standard and simple stall design. This year at the Auto Show, we are planning to display four commuter scooters/motorcycles: Dio, Grazia, Hornet 160 and X Blade, and two big bikes. We are also planning to launch our Dashain and Tihar scheme at the Auto Show itself.

## Importance of sales, marketing and promotional activities

These three things hold great importance to any company out there in the market. Without these, a company cannot sustain in the market.

#### Sales performance in the previous fiscal

The sales performance of the last year was pretty good and we were able to sell 82,000 units and maintain the market share as well.

## Views on taxation

There are certain things which we cannot control. Among them one is political rules and policies. It definitely affects our sales, but we have to adapt according to the new system and policies.







## **MARKET** VATCH



## SAMIT SINGH

Marketing Head, VG Automobiles Suzuki Two Wheelers

#### At NADA Auto Show 2019

V.G. Automobiles. authorised distributor of Suzuki two wheelers for Nepal, is participating in this year's NADA Auto Show. Our stall design will be based on our corporate identity and vehicles will be displayed strategically to interact with visitors. As the festivals are approaching, we will be launching our Dashain festival discounts and schemes.

We will launch the most awaited Gixxer Series: Gixxer 250 Naked Version, Gixxer 250 Fairing Version, Gixxer 250 Moto GP, Gixxer 150 Naked Version, Gixxer 150 Fairing Version and Gixxer 150 MotoGP at the Auto Show which will be our flagship models for coming years.

## Importance of sales, marketing and promotional activities

Sales, marketing and promotional activities play a vital role for every company. These activities build awareness about the products and create interest amongst the public. The sales and marketing team provides

product information to potential customers. These interactive approaches enable purchase and ensure good public relations. Customers keep coming back because the team makes sure that they receive quality within budget.

#### Advice to a first time buyer

I would like to say to the first time buyer that Suzuki is a trusted brand offering reliability and quality. It is essential to look into a scooter or motorcycle's specifications in detail. performance and availability of genuine spare parts in the market before making the purchase. Also, make sure that the selected vehicle fits your budget. Equally important is timely servicing which should be done from experienced mechanics only. Never hesitate to ask about the product details.

### Sales performance in the previous fiscal

8000 units were sold. This has added to the increment of our market share.



## KARUN SHAKYA

Senior Marketing Manager, CG Motocorp Maruti Suzuki & Suzuki

## At the NADA Auto Show 2019

We are participating in NADA Auto Show like we have been doing since its very inception. This Auto Show is a big and the only platform of its kind for the auto industry in the country.

We are following a very simple concept in stall design that is driven by the objective of best visibility and better communication. We will display our smart hybrid range: SCross, Ciaz and Ertiga along with our best seller Vitara Brezza, Swift, Celerio and Baleno. We will disclose our festival scheme with additional offers at the NADA Auto Show.

## Maruti Suzuki and Suzuki as the preferred brands

There are many good and practical reasons for why we are the most preferred brand in the country. We have the largest product range that can satisfy the needs of all types of customers. Our cars built with 100% Japanese technology are well known for reliability and

ease of maintenance. Our cars give the best in class mileage, spare parts costs are economical and are widely available throughout the country. Our cars have best return through high resale value. We have the largest sales, service and spare part network

## Advice to a first time buyer

At the end of the day, it's the customer's decision to buy a vehicle. What we recommend is to own a brand that is easier and less expensive to run, that provides best safety features, and has high resale value to provide better return when you decide to upgrade.

### Views on taxation

Taxation has a huge impact on this business. We believe that automobiles are more of necessity than luxury in the current context and we will applaud the policies that favour the same. Policies have direct impact on the cost of acquisition which currently is unfavourable for the industry as a whole.



# CALL **102**

Text by Sajeet M. Rajbhandari

mbulances are the first line of help during a medical emergency. The crucial help that emergency services such as ambulances have given to people have immense value as a quick response medical facility when it comes to saving lives and helping masses. Calamities such as the April 2015 earthquake and multiple landslides only emphasise the necessity of good ambulance services. However, while there are a decent number of ambulances registered, it is questionable whether or not these resources have been maintained and put to good use. A lot of the ambulances that operate within the country often lack basic equipment, trained emergency medical technicians, and in some instances even a proper 24/7 operation schedule.

For an ambulance service to function properly, there are a few different parties involved who are required to work as a team in order for the service to efficiently benefit a significant demographic. The institution organising and operating the ambulances must work with emergency dispatchers who are to communicate with patients, relay the information to the closest ambulances, and then have the drivers connect to the closest health facility available. The organisation should also maintain at least three different teams of drivers and EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) in order to make sure that an ambulance is operational at all hours of the day

This interlinked system if implemented properly should work towards saving as many lives as efficiently as possible. While personal vehicles

and taxi cabs seem like an immediate solution during a medical emergency, they might not always be the best solution.

Ranjit Acharya, President of Nepal Ambulance Service (NAS), an NGO, explains, "While an ambulance may take 10 to 15 minutes to arrive on the scene, the medical procedure starts immediately after it gets there. A taxi cab will lack trained EMTs and equipment you would find in a well-equipped ambulance." Acharva adds. "The rest of the traffic won't be able to tell if your vehicle has a patient inside and you might get caught up in traffic. On the other hand, in an ambulance you can bypass this traffic." Unfortunately, this knowledge is often sidelined by a large chunk of Nepalis. As a matter of fact, a study conducted by Patan Hospital concluded that only 10% of patients arriving at emergency room were transported via ambulance while over 50% patients admitted arrived in taxi cabs. What's worse is that this 50% even included patients in life threatening triage categories and approximately 18% of these patients were dying on the way because they didn't have access to emergency health care. Furthermore, another 18% of the patients suffered from partial paralysis because they were not properly handled during the transfer.

According to Acharya, an ambulance run by NAS has an average response time of 10 to 15 minutes. These ambulances are strategically stationed at different areas across the valley in order to minimise response time. The ambulances are also fully equipped and operate around the clock. Given the numbers that respond to medical emergencies inside the



capital, Acharya claims that five life support ambulances and over 10 basic support ambulances equipped with well trained EMTs should be enough for Kathmandu to sustain itself under one emergency service. At the time of writing this article, the NAS can succeed in providing emergency healthcare service to about 250 patients in a day with each ambulance capable of treating up to 7 to 8 patients.

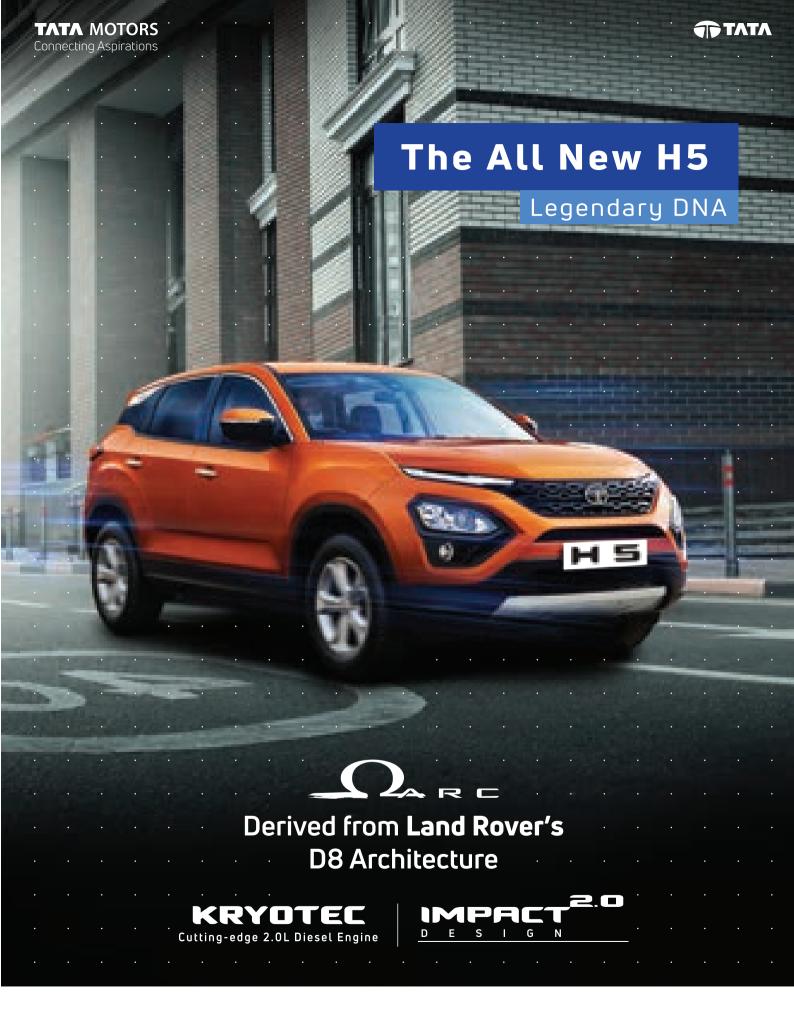
Even so, NAS is only one of the few cases where emergency health care is provided as coherently as possible. Nepal still witnesses tons of registered ambulance services, both privately run or under governmental operation that have been out of service, unmanaged or in some cases used for purposes other than providing immediate health assistance. While ambulances have been operating in Nepal for a long time, most ambulances run on their own without provisions of any dispatch centers.

As the health sector gradually developed so did the number of ambulances. But we have constantly failed to get ambulances that are actually needed. On paper, the number of ambulances in operation show a healthy number, but most of these ambulances are very poorly run and most people lack faith in them. While some ambulances

barely qualify as ambulances, with some just being small vans with a stretcher inside, others come from privately run, for-profit institutions that have alliances with specific hospitals or are simply too costly for the common citizen to afford.

While the government has made plans to use 102 as a common toll-free number that connects to all ambulances services and manage the existing chaos, little has been done by policymakers to make this plan concrete. Currently, NAS is the sole facility that makes use of this number. Even those ambulances which have been donated to the nation for various philanthropic causes have failed to see optimum use and many a times they have been lost in a blur of medical facilities competing with one another. The Indian government has gifted 722 ambulances to Nepal since 1994, but a lot of these resources have failed to witness appropriate usage.

The ambulance service in Nepal still has a considerable journey to accomplish, however slow yet steady some progress is being made. In case of a medical emergency, it is still vital action to call 102 in order to seek medical help. Rather than rushing patients in a personal or public vehicle, the existing ambulance service can still provide patients with better immediate care. B



## FEATURE

## **GOVERNMENT PUTS SPEED BREAKER ON AUTO SALES**



epal has a history of five and a half decades of official trading of automobiles. The history of India and South Korea is similar to ours. Over this period, many countries, including the aforementioned two, have transformed into manufacturing hubs for automobiles. Nepal is lagging behind mainly due to lack of specific policies.

Production of parts and automobiles is feasible in Nepal as many countries are interdependent and interconnected in preparing the finished product. "Nepal would have moved towards integrating products in the global value chain of automobiles industry if congenial policies were framed," said Suraj Vaidya, Chairman of Vaidya Organisation of Industries and Trading Houses (VOITH). He recalls Indian nationals flocking to see imported cars while docking the Nepal bound consignment of imported cars at Kolkata port. India was a closed economy back then.

After liberalisation, India moved towards production of globally recognised automobile brands.

The Government of Nepal has defined automobiles as luxury goods and treats it as high-revenue generating commodity. Automobile is the fourth largest import of Nepal and a major contributor to government revenue. Automobile traders have further asked the government to link the automobile sector with the productive sector.

Citing high taxes in double cab van in the fiscal budget, one automobile dealer said that the transport cost must be minimised to enhance competitiveness in goods and services.

In an attempt to promote "Made in Nepal" discourse, former Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai had decided to use a Nepal made car. But despite Bhattarai's priority towards domestic production, he was unable to frame any policy to uplift the country's automobile sector.

However, some companies

are in preparation of producing two wheelers in the country: Golchha Organisation, Jagadamba Motors, Syakar Trading to name a few.

Though Sipradi Trading, the authorised dealer of vehicles produced by TATA in India, had long announced the production of four wheelers in partnership with TATA Group of India, nothing has materialised till date.

Shambhu Prasad Dahal, then CEO of Sipradi Trading and the current President of NADA has said that the country should gradually move into vertical specialisation to make ground for the automobile industry in the country.

Not only automobiles, Nepal is dependent on imports of spare parts and tyres, tubes and lubricants despite having the potential to produce them in the country. The country imports tyres worth rupees eight billion every year. The country's sole tyre producing industry- Gorakhkali Tyres was shut down five years ago. Similarly, market share of

domestically produced lubricant is just 35%.

Import of automobiles and their spare parts in the first 11 months of fiscal 2018/19 witnessed Rs 84.42 billion. At the same time, the country has imported petroleum, lubricants and bitumen worth Rs 230 billion. Automobiles and fuel are the largest imports of Nepal.

The government believes that the surging import of fuel and import of luxury private vehicles are the major reason behind the huge current account deficit. Against this backdrop, the government then decided to promote electric vehicles, which is considered to reduce import of petroleum products, minimise emission and reduce use of petrol and diesel engine vehicles.

When it comes to electric vehicles (EVs) in South Asia, Nepal is considered a pioneer. The trolleybus service in the Kathmandu valley was the first electric bus in South Asia. "But we could not sustain it due to the lack of proper

governmental policy. Also, the policies lacked consistency," Vaidya said.

However, EVs are expensive. In the last fiscal 2018/19, a total of 259 EVs were imported compared to 30 in 2017/18. Share of EVs in total vehicles in the country stands at 1.4% which is near to UK and France at 1.7%.

"Though Nepal is a price sensitive market," said Karan Chaudhary, Executive Director, CG MotoCorp, "EVs are expensive and there is lack of adequate infrastructure like charging stations and reliable supply of electricity." We cannot imagine using EVs in remote parts of the country which is without electrification. There has been another debate on the Lithium ion battery in EVs as Lithium is considered a rare commodity. Despite custom duty waiver, EV market share has not increased substantially in Nepal compared to the 39.2% market share of EVs in the highest EV user country like Norway. Also, in Nepal, the government has slapped high customs duty and taxes on spare parts of EVs though there is certain waiver on EV import. "EVs is a tricky game," said Surhid Ghimire, President of Continental Trading Enterprises.

Import of passenger cars in Nepal is plummeting since Nepal Rastra Bank tightened its grip on loan facilities. If a person wants to purchase a private vehicle, s/he has to deposit 40% of the value as down payment. Similarly, there was a debate on the tightening of the trust receipt (TR) loans through Monetary Policy. "Thank God the government has not done it," remarked Chaudhary. TR loan is issued to import vehicles against the collateral of the imported vehicle, the dealers will pay back the bank after selling the commodity. Since the government has faced alarming balance of payment deficit, tightening TR loan was brought into debate

The central bank's decision of slapping loan to value ratio on automobiles and difficulty in availing loans has hardhit the automobile business, according to Chaudhary. "In Nepal 80 to 90% people purchase automobiles on loan," he added, "Tightening of loans directly affects us."

"Due to its terrain, we cannot imagine waterway or railway transport in Nepal. Only air connectivity and road connectivity are possible," said Rohini Thapaliya, Executive Director of Padma Shree Group, "Air connectivity cannot be established just about anywhere in the mountains, that's why we don't have any alternative to road transport. The government should realise this bitter truth while formulating automobile policy especially in regard to commercial vehicles."

As per NADA, a total of 18,619 vehicles were imported in fiscal 2017/18, however total imports of vehicles in fiscal 2018/19 was 18.565 units. Import of passenger cars has plummeted by 2% in the last fiscal compared to previous fiscal. Similarly, import of utility vehicles has plummeted by 100 units to 8,176 in the last fiscal. Chaudhary, who is the vehicle committee chair of NADA has said that if the situation of credit crunch continues and the banks do not ease credit in vehicle financing, de-growth of the automobile business could further deepen.

In the 14th series of the NADA Auto show slated for August 27 to September 1, automobile traders and entrepreneurs want to trigger the debate to take the automobile sector on a new discourse. As the country's current account deficit is widening, the government can take precautionary measures anytime, which automobile traders term as 'uncertainty'. "We cannot do business in uncertainty" said Ghimire of Continental Trading Enterprises, "The government must ensure that it will not make any move against the interest of the automobile sector because we are a major contributor to government revenue." B



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Raghubir Mahaseth is the current Physical Infrastructure and Transportation Minister of Nepal. Born in Dhanusha, he is a standing committee member of the ruling Nepal Communist Party and elected Member of Parliament from Dhanusha Constituency-4. Mahaseth was also elected to the Constituent Assembly (2010-2012) from Dhanusha Constituency-5 and was the Minister of Irrigation in 2011. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Engineering from Birla Institute of Technology, India.

**Dibesh Dangol** of **B360** interviewed Mahaseth to get insight into the physical infrastructure and transport works happening in Nepal, the situation of Nepal-China Cross Border Railway line and purchase of 2 DEMU trains from India, and abolishment of the transport syndicate system in Nepal. **Excerpts:** 

In March 2018, after being appointed Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport Ministry, you said that Chinese rail would arrive in Nepal within five years, i.e. 2023, which will connect Pokhara and Lumbini through Kathmandu. Could you tell us about the status of the Nepal-China Cross Border Railway Line?

The pre-feasibility study regarding this project was completed in 2018 and we received the report in February 2019. The report suggested that due to the geographical situation of Nepal, Detailed Project Report (DPR) needs to be prepared for which we are having multiple meetings with the Chinese government. The fourth meeting was held a couple of months ago between General Secretary of MoPIT and representatives from the Chinese government, and the fifth meeting is going to be held in Kathmandu soon in which the final conversation regarding DPR will be discussed. DPR will take a year to prepare, after which the process regarding construction work will start; first through a bidding process. Generally, it would have taken three years to complete such project on plain surface area, but because of the geographical condition, multiple tunnels need to be dug, which is why it will take a minimum of 4-5 years. The railway line will be about 76 kms and the construction cost will be around \$3 billion.

As for the construction model, we still haven't decided which model we will be using; full investment from government, FDIs or Public-Private Partnership. Even if we don't receive FDI or go for PPP model, the government

has to invest in the project. The government is ready and will be constructing this railway line.

On March 21, the Cabinet permitted the Department of Railways (DoRW) to begin the purchase of two DEMU trains from India, Balaram Mishra, **Director General of DoRW said that** once a written letter of the decision taken by the Cabinet is received, DoRW will send the request letter to Konkan Railways for rail procurement agreement, and after that it may take around three months to receive the trains. The agreement was signed in May. What is the status and where will these trains operate and who will benefit from this project?

According to the proposed cross border railway line which will connect Jaynagar of India and Kurtha of Nepal and is about 69 kms, the decision regarding purchasing two DEMU trains from India through G2G model was made. We went through this model because Nepal doesn't have its own train manufacturing plant, we didn't want to take Indian trains on lease and wanted to have our own trains with Nepal's flag on them. We have already sent the payment to the corresponding party and they have told us that we will receive the trains within 90-120 days.

After we receive the trains, which I think we will be receiving within a month, we will be moving towards operation process. Due to the recent floods in that area, about 90 metres of the track was damaged and repaired within a week. For operations, initially we will be bringing a few technical experts (about 5-7) from abroad for a certain time because we lack such experts in Nepal. Those foreign

experts will also be training our technical workers so that they can learn and operate. As for security and other operational activities, Nepalis have already been provided jobs for this project.

This project will largely benefit all Nepali travellers and tourists (both from Nepal and India). The railway line connects Janakpur which is known for Janaki Temple and is the birthplace of Sita, and attracts more than three lakh tourists in a year. So, there is a huge scope of increasing tourism in Janakpur, and via Janakpur to all over Nepal through this railway line. Alongside, it will also benefit industries, businesses and traders of both Nepal and India.

## What are your plans for nationwide railway lines?

Within 10 years, we have planned to construct 15,000 kms of highway roads and 2,800 kms of railway lines. The railway lines will connect major cities of Nepal like East-West Electric Railway Line which will connect Kakarbhita, Jhapa and Gadda Chauki, Kanchanpur. The DPR regarding this railway line has already been prepared along with the cross-border railway line. The prefeasibility studies of Kathmandu-Kerung and Kathmandu-Birguni railway lines have already been done and DPR regarding these railway lines will be prepared within a year and a half. Likewise, the survey work of Kathmandu-Pokhara railway line has already started and we have reached the final consultation process. The Kathmandu-Pokhara railway line will also be linked with Lumbini of which we have reached the final consultation process. We are positively working towards achieving our target to complete 2,800 kms railway line within 10 years that will connect major cities, provide transportation ease to Nepali passengers, traders and tourists, and lead to the development of the country.

## Contractors and related associations have raised disheartened issues regarding government not including such stakeholders during policy planning process. Is it true?

It's not true that we haven't held any meetings at all with contractors and related associations. We have held multiple meetings with stakeholders on a timely basis to discuss about policies and ask for their recommendations. As per mutual agreement between the construction companies and the Government of Nepal, Federation of Contractors Association was established headed by Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport which is under the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Government of Nepal. What they should realise is that we can't take all their recommendations and make them into policies because we have certain guidelines to follow as well, and whatever the Ministry is doing is for their and the country's betterment.

# What actions can be or are taken against contractors who are stalling government projects?

Before the present government, construction or infrastructure development projects were in chaotic condition. I even found out that the projects that had completed the bidding process in 1994 weren't even started or progressing. We have been able to overview all such projects, manage them and move forward positively.

While investigating many such stand-still projects, I found out that the contractors had taken the initial advance that the government used to provide i.e. 20% of the total construction fund which they don't have to pay interest on and had invested in other sectors and not into the construction process. Due to such occurrences, we have decided to be strict on such matters and have changed the policy of giving the initial fund to just 10% rather than 20%. The initial 10% of funds will also not be given wholly; initially 5% will be given and

the remaining 5% will be given after analysing the pace of construction.

Alongside, we have started to take action against those contractors who have taken Nepal Government's money or advance but haven't produced any outcome in the construction process and have refused to pay the money back to the government. The action that we have taken against such contractors include fine upto 10% of the total project cost and recently we have fined a construction company Rs 5.7 crores. We have found many such cases and actions are being taken accordingly.

Though there have been improvements by applying such policies, there are still contractors whom we are closely watching. We have even told contractors if they want to work, complete the projects and be involved in the country's development projects, the Ministry and the government are ready to co-operate with them and extend their deadline according to rules. If not, we will be blacklisting them. We do want construction businesses to prosper in the country. They shouldn't compromise on their work quality and neither will we. We have halted payments of contractors and projects that have lacked quality and weren't built according to the specifications given to them.

Because we have advanced strictly regarding such issues, the construction businesses have also become serious and positive about government projects which I think will lead to greater good in the country.

In the past, you have claimed that the Ministry had been facing problems from provincial and local government as they have returned some of the projects that the central government had handed over to them. How is this being addressed?

Before 2018, there was a Central Administrative System in Nepal, and in February 2018, Provincial Government System was effectively introduced because of which many previous laws and policies had to be changed. Due to this

transition, many projects were distributed to the provincial and local governments. We also requested these governments that if they aren't able to properly conduct these projects, we will be assisting them, and if they can, they should conduct these projects according to the budget we sent them. Initially, there were problems, but now 70% of such problems have been resolved and the remaining 30% will be resolved within this fiscal year. I don't deny that such problems haven't occurred and it is natural for such friction to occur because it has just been a year and a half that we have progressed to the current government system.

Is it true that the Physical Infrastructure Ministry's interest in Kathmandu-Terai Fast Track Road project is delaying DPR endorsement and you are not happy that the Nepal Army has been given the sole authority to construct the multibillion rupee project as you want your Ministry's involvement in the construction process?

There is no truth in this statement at all. The sole authority of this project has been given to Nepal Army by the government and our only role in this project is to send the budget to Nepal Army. The DPR of this project is to be endorsed by Nepal Army and not by MoPIT or Nepal Government. We haven't been authorised to interfere either in their work or the project, and we haven't even thought of doing so. The role of the government is to endorse the alignment only and not DPR. So, whatever statement or news has been published in the media regarding MoPIT's and me delaying DPR endorsement of the Fast Track Road project is a complete hoax.

## **What is Transport Management** Authority? What are the issues that this department under MoPIT will be looking after?

The Transport Management Authority is a governmental body under Department of Transport Management (DoTM) and MoPIT that will be formulating short and long term policies and strategies

for the betterment of public transportation system. For the initial stage, we are planning to establish the Transport Management Authority for Kathmandu valley only and call it Kathmandu Valley Public Transportation Authority. Regarding this, a bill was presented in the Parliament a few weeks back and positive discussions have been going on. After the bill gets approved, the authority will be implemented here in Kathmandu vallev. We have also already given responsibility to Sajha Yatayat, in which Nepal Government has 59% shares, to purchase and operate 300 electric buses. If the bill gets approved as per submission with no changes, the private sector and local governments can also participate and play a vital role in managing transportation system of the country.

Since the authority will be established in Kathmandu vallev initially. its responsibilities will be to make public transportation accessible, easy, reliable and safe by planning, managing and operating public transportation inside the valley. The authority will be fixing routes for public transportation and setting vehicle standards along with introducing electronic payment and information system.

As per the proposed bill, the Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City will work as the Coordinator for the Public Transportation Council, along with Mayors of Lalitpur and Bhaktapur Metropolitan Cities as Members of the Council. A CEO with prior experience of working in such sectors for at least a decade will be appointed for the authority and s/he will be responsible for executing the administrative works of the authority.

One of your main agendas after being appointed as Minister of MoPIT was to scrap the syndicate system and transform the transport associations into companies. To make this happen, MoPIT even froze the bank accounts of transport associations who refused to transform into companies and follow the government's decision.

Recently, the government decided to unfreeze the bank accounts of those transport agencies that converted into companies and agreed to support the government's movement to end the syndicate system. How would you evaluate this scenario?

The strict decision we took against transport associations who weren't complying with us was absolutely the right decision. The majority of such associations have converted themselves into companies. Those few who are still not complying will not be getting route permits. We had given them a deadline date until June 1, 2019 to convert into companies. From July 19, 2019, the registered transportation companies have begun operating all over Nepal and I can proudly say that the syndicate system has completely ended in Nepal. We decided to unfreeze the bank accounts of the supportive companies because we wanted to set an example that the government is not their enemy and wants to work with them to make better systems and policies for the country.

Before June 15, 2018, the transport associations had sole involvement in such activities and the government had no control over them which lead to the syndicate system and poor management of transportation all over the country. After that, the government decided to change the system so that the problems caused by syndicate system can be solved and managed, job security can be provided to employees, and transport entrepreneurs can come under taxation system. We have accomplished this with those transportation entrepreneurs who shared similar views, and also with the cooperation of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Nepal Rastra Bank. Above all, we are grateful that these associations didn't organise any major strikes or bandhs which could have caused major transportation problems in the country. B













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# SMART LICENSE HOW SMART IS SMART

Text by Avant Shrestha

he word 'smart' is a trending term in government speeches and dialogues aiming to maneuver public interest and gain public gratification. In all fairness, the stakeholders aiming to achieve such feat have not been helped whatsoever by unforeseeable hurdles which are too extensive to mention in the current context. We often hear about smart governance, smart cities and smart roads but more often than not the topic of smart driving license and its consequential issues have been part of public discourse.

Smart driving license was launched in Nepal by the Department of Transport Management in November 2015. It is a chip-embedded smart driving license that was launched with the ambition to replace the conventional paper based license.

As reported in various publications and online platforms during the initial launch of the smart driving license, the standard benefits of the said electronic smart driving license in layman's term is that it is waterproof,

does not break and the chip in the license stores the entire history and records of the cardholder.

According to SSP
Basant Kumar Pant, Chief of
Metropolitan Traffic Police
Division, smart license is
very important. "Through
the use of smart license we
can record details about the
commuters in our database
so that when a traffic police
checks the commuter's license,
we have the entire history of
the individual. This is done for
the good and the safety of the
people," Pant explains.

The smart driving license is expected to prevent forgery and enhance systemic revenue collection. The smart license has the technicality to completely eradicate the option for commuters or criminals to possess fake licenses. "Smart licensing system will drastically reduce the chance of vehicular theft. Those who regularly do not follow traffic rules and risk the wellbeing of other commuters can be easily apprehended and

fined," claims Pant.

The grant for the project was funded by Asian Development Bank as a part of their Information and Communication Technology Development initiative to improve delivery of various government services through ICT network. The license is reported to be linked to a centralised system with biometric data. Furthermore, during the initial launch of the smart license in 2015, the DoTM (governing body responsible for issuing driving license) had targeted to convert all existing driving licenses to new smart driving licenses within three to five years. However, due to a number of technical and operational issues there has been hindrance in meeting the target within the stipulated time frame.

## **Current Updates**

Unlike conventional paper-based driving licenses, smart digital driving licenses incorporate electronic chips that are similar to the chips of SIM cards and contain information about the driver's identity and his records. Individuals who have completed and passed the written exam for acquiring a driving license and successfully completed the trial exam are eligible to receive the smart card.

As of late 2018 and early 2019, over 200,000 applicants are still waiting for their smart driving license. As reported in a national daily early in the year, the number of applicants who have passed the examination administered by

Transport Management Office for smart driving card and have also paid the required fees has reached over 550,000 people. The number is inclusive of all applicants since the office started issuing license four years ago. Among them, 354,000 have received their license while licenses of more than 200,000 people are yet to be printed.

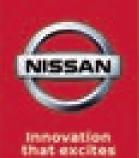
When a quick survey was done among multiple commuters who are awaiting their digital licenses, most claimed that they have been waiting for over six to nine months. And they have been driving their vehicles and presenting their supposedly driving permits in the form of the receipt they received after paying the office for the driving license.

Raghubir Mahaseth,
Minister of Physical
Infrastructure and Transport,
acknowledges the current
problems regarding smart
license. He addresses the
situation by saying, "We were
capable of managing it phase
wise. But in today's scenario,
there is a very big demand.
However 400,000 people have
already received their smart
driving license."

## **Printing Hurdles**

It was reported that the office of the Department of Transport Management (DoTM) was not able to print adequate number of smart driving licenses because of the low capacity of the printer. As a result those waiting for their licenses are frustrated and disgruntled and those who already received their smart licenses claim that the card is not of good quality.





## **NEW NISSAN KICKS**

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## **FEATURE**

It is puzzling why the Nepal government decided to outsource the printing work. In their defense DoTM claims that due to lack of proper printing equipment and capability, the department had to publish a tender notice for the supply of smart cards and smart card printing machines. The task for printing and supplying smart cards was given to an Indian printing company. And again in 2017, Madras Security Printers, an Indian printing company had agreed to supply additional 750,000 smart cards at Rs. 100 per card and three printing machines at \$980,000.

To mitigate this issue, DoTM has started the process of purchasing a 'mass printer' in a bid to ease the process of printing smart driving licenses. Minister Mahaseth states. "There is a lot of pending backlog and we are aiming to clear it. We have added four new machines and there shall be one more machine added that will print 600-800 licenses in an hour. We plan to manage and distribute licenses within 24 hours of submission of application to the public in the very near future," he adds.

## **License Status Online**

In an attempt to go digital, recently DoTM had initiated a digital system to inform citizens awaiting their digital licenses about the results of their test or trails and information on their smart card print status through the medium of an SMS. Prior to the launch of the SMS service, people awaiting the results had to visit DoTM office to see the results and physically receive the information on the license's print status. This was a major inconvenience for people.

People can receive the information by sending an SMS to 33001. Additionally, to check result for written test, users have to type 'WT <space>
[Application ID number]' and



"We plan to manage and distribute licenses within 24 hours of submission of application to the public in the very near future"

## Raghubir Mahaseth

Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport

Send it to 33001. Similarly, to check smart driving license print status, users have to type 'LC <space> [Application ID Number]' and send it to 33001.

## Is the Smart License Smart Enough?

The embedded chip in the card contains all the necessary and relevant information of the cardholder. This does seem to be a novel and efficient step that is being taken to transfer the bureaucratic system from paper to digital. However, there are major hurdles that need to be swiftly addressed.

For example, there are major problems with the chip and there have been reports that the embedded chip in the card can easily come off. There have been complaints from license holders that they have already lost the chip in their card. Additionally, many drivers who possess the license have expressed that the smart license they have received is made of substandard material and the ink and lettering fade within a short period.

Furthermore, though the smart license is designed to keep detailed information of the license holders and his/her traffic records stored in the chip, it has not come in use so far. The centralised system with



"Through the use of smart license we can record details about the commuters in our database so that when a traffic police checks the commuter's license, we have the entire history of the individual. This is done for the good and the safety of people"

**SSP Basant Kumar Pant**Chief of Metropolitan
Traffic Police Division

biometric data was designed to save time, increase efficiency during license checks and processing procedures. Plus, it was also supposed to assist the government to provide a secure system, efficient data management and to reduce fraudulent practices and systematic revenue collection. However, it has not panned out as planned.

What was supposed to help the traffic police to easily read and view the history of commuters while checking their licenses, is causing traffic police more trouble. For starters, the smart card driving license has been creating unnecessary problems to traffic police due to the absence of reading machines. Most of the processing is still done by paperor manually. The smart card is a good initiative to move into the digital landscape but its digital utility has not been put into use. In fact, during his interview to one of the national newspapers, the DoTM spokesperson informed that they only had one smart license reading machine which was being used only for demonstration.

The troubles of the traffic police do not end there. When

it comes to drivers who drink and drive, the police used to punch holes in the paper-based license. However, in case of smart license card, the traffic police can neither keep records nor can they punch a hole in it.

Additionally, there are technical errors in the card; more specifically, there seems to be undefined categories on licenses. The citizens are issued only no-professional license for both professional and non-professional drivers. This does not seem to be much of an issue within the country; however, smart license holders who are trying for foreign employment opportunities as professional drivers are facing problems because their license specifies them as nonprofessional drivers.

The DoTM has taken initiatives to deal with the reported errors with smart cards in the future and is looking to upgrade its software in order to provide internet-based services to its customers.

Four years after the smart license was launched, questions can be raised about the lingering problems that are still evident today. Why is it taking so much time? Why didn't we foresee these problems and most importantly, why weren't we prepared to solve these problems?

Smart license is a must and in this time and the near future implementation and integration of smart license is a must. However, as we stand and suffer through this transactional phase from paper to digital, it is difficult to see the logic behind the not so thought out execution of the smart driving license. **B** 



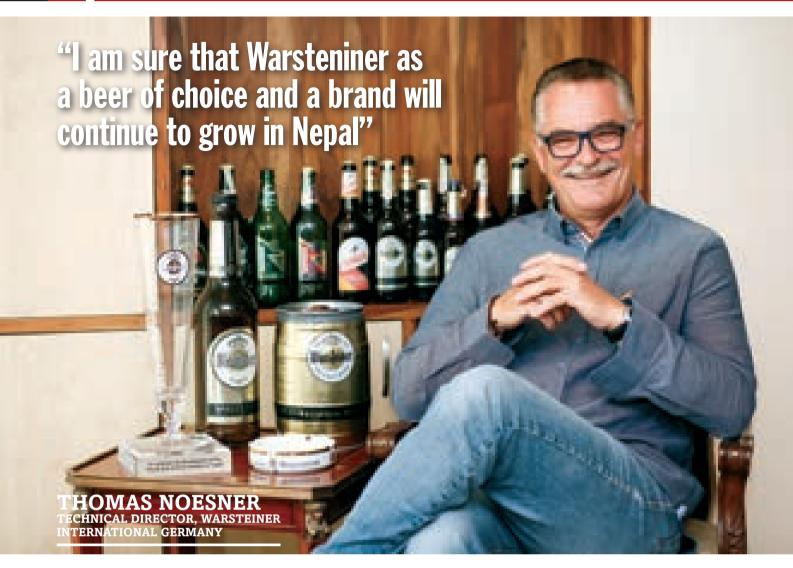
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A lifelong brewer, Thomas Noesner first started brewing as a student during his holidays. He took the classical route of working as an apprentice for three years in a brewery that basically meant that he was brewing the same time he was attending schools where 90% of his education is connected to the brewing technology. He obtained his degree as a Brew Master from the University of Weihenstephan which at the time was known for the prestigious brewing diploma. Since 1976, he has been heavily involved and working for several breweries in Germany.

Noesner has been with the Warsteiner Group since 1987. He has held the responsibility of working in various locations and breweries operated by the renowned beverage company. Today, he is the Technical Director at Warsteiner International Germany and has held the post since 2008.

**Avant Shrestha** of **Business 360** caught up with Noesner during his visit to Nepal and discussed his remarkable career with the renowned beer company, and Warsteiner's integration and performance in the Nepali market.

# Could you share with us about your role as a Technical Director for Warsteiner International?

Well, I have been in this role since 2008 and in simple terms, basically I am responsible for all the brewing, the bottling and the packaging affairs outside of Germany for our worldwide distribution. The countries that I am currently working with at the moment are Argentina, some parts of Ukraine, Great Britain and West Africa.

Additionally, I am responsible to conduct some brew checks in Warsteiner Group in Germany but that role is reducing more and more because the license business is growing and my commitment is not required there. But overall, my major job and my main target is to maintain the same quality worldwide.

Jawalakhel Group of Industries claims to have one of the most

## advanced breweries in the region, how would you rate it?

Well, I would agree with their claim. It definitely is a top standard brewery. And I am happy to say at the moment they have some modern equipment and as a result the brewery is doing really well.

We have been involved in the process from beginning stages. We were working together when the idea about constructing a brewery by Raj Brewery was incepted and I have to say that was a big advantage for all parties. In the initial stages we could always conduct routine checks and cross checks and monitor the standard of the technology and the quality of the equipment we were using for the brewery. Plus we have very dedicated and engaged brewing staff in the brewery who make all the difference. So, when you combine all these elements,

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the result of the beer is the real proof that this venture was a really good decision and the brewery is topnotch.

# What in your opinion are the three qualities that cannot be compromised for making a good beer?

That is very simple. First of all, it is the raw material. Raw material has an incredibly high impact and is one of our major focus. Secondly, it is the equipment of the brewery. And lastly, the passion of the staff; their ability to run all the equipment and technology. And, from what I have observed, the standard and dedication in Nepal is very good. I was very doubtful in the beginning to have a very young team that were not experienced, but in a very short time they really became real brewers and this is really great

# You came here in March 2018 and spoke about the logical and technical challenges. Are you happy with the standards and procedures being maintained?

Yeah, of course. In-fact they have definitely exceeded my expectation. I did not expect such a high standard and level. Our major focus is to maintain extremely long flavour stability. But there are lots of challenges for brewers all over the world when it comes to maintaining the flavour stability because as soon as you start bottling beers, they are no longer under your control.

There are lots of factors that affect the stability, for example, light and temperature influence the taste as well. And you can only make adjustments in the brewery to make it as stable as possible. And I am happy to say that the Nepali brewery and the Warsteiner brewery are being able to maintain the biggest flavour stability we have. So once again that is of course because of the equipment. Raj Brewery has always been open to upscale and introduce modern technology and we are thankful

that currently we have positive results and quality here. Of course, if we are able to mitigate some of the financial burden here, it would be better but as far as the stability of the beer goes, I am extremely satisfied.

# What kind of quality systems and control testing do you have in place for production at the brewery here?

Maintaining the quality of equipment is important because the equipment is already a kind of quality control when you combine it with a well equipped lab. And the laboratory here in the brewery is on par with the brewery in Germany, if not better. But I believe the key ingredient is the combination of equipment and the knowledge and the experience of the brewers. What we could already do here is that we have online control systems which are permanently checking some parameters combined with good equipped lab and assisted with a high frequency of quality control. I wouldn't say it is a certain type of quality control system; it is basically a combination of them all.

## Could you briefly explain to us about the German purity law and the role it plays in quality control in both Germany and Nepal?

There is no difference between our standard protocols in Germany to that of Nepal. The quality control methods are identical. We strictly abide by the purity law which basically means that we only use malt, hops, water and yeast and even the yeast is selected over decades in our brewery. Therefore, it is highly important for us to have our yeast here. We would never do a license without our yeast and the rest is identical. We do not use any chemical and additions; we do not work with sugar.

It is the oldest food law in the world and we are strictly keeping up to its code of conduct. My worry was if we would be able to maintain the stability of the beer in hot countries like Nepal. However, I can tell you that the stability of the beer works better when you do not add any unnecessary additives in the brew. As a result, the proof is Nepal again, the stability is so high and we are so happy with the quality over here. To be honest, I was a little bit proud about that. And it was all because of the effort of the team; the team is wonderful.

## Do you have to change any iteration for Nepal?

Basically we are identical
- Raj Brewery here and
the Warsteiner brewery in
Germany. The raw materials
that we use here such as
the malt is from Europe. Raj
Brewery only supplies malt
with our specification. Suppliers
are briefed that they get the
same quality as what they get in
Germany.

For hops on the other hand, we have to put in a lot of efforts, especially for the Warsteiner Brewery and for our brewery here. We do not supply hops from normal dealers. We make sure that we select the best quality of hops on the field where we have our experts monitoring the best quality of hops and we conduct checks on the plant and then we bring it to our laboratory. We observe the entire production for the hops until it is in our packages. Once again, Warsteiner and German beer are always hoppy and the more hoppy the better the beer is; this is very important to us.

## What should one expect when enjoying Warsteiner?

The taste (laughs). To be honest, it is the taste for sure. Well, German beers are bit hoppier and that is something one should expect. Of course, Warsteiner is a German style, and one can appreciate that Warsteiner is well balanced. It is not only harsh, it's a bit bitter, and it is not only sweet but it is balanced. Our main target is to balance out our hoppiness with the malty body and that is something I believe our consumers should expect and be able to enjoy.

Of course, when you come to a market like Nepal, where the hoppiness in the beers are extremely low, people generally get curious, some get critical and some love it which I believe is a totally normal process. But then again, I think we are on the right track. People who prefer Warsteiner are continuously growing; although not as fast as we expected, but we can see it clearly going up.

## Are you happy with the response that Warsteiner is getting in the Nepali market?

Yes, of course. When a new product enters the market, people often get curious but at the same time it takes time for people to get used to the new product. But I am convinced the quality and the digestive ability of our beer will convince people over time. And I am sure that Warsteniner as a beer of choice and a brand will continue to grow in Nepal.

# As an experienced brewer from a country that has perfected beer, do you think Nepal can reach the level Germany has in gaining international recognition?

I would say that Nepal is not far from the world market. I do not see that there is a big difference in Nepal and the international market anymore as Nepal already has really good beers. However, it's according to individual perception to say what a good beer is and what a bad one is because everyone has different taste.

But since each human being has a different perception, it will be the reason why a wider variety of beers will continue to increase. Currently in Nepal, the growth of the Strong Beer is increasing but I believe other varieties will slowly but eventually make an entry in the market. The more beer options in beer the better for the market. As for Warsteiner, our job is to make our product suitable to the people who decide to consume them. **B** 



# THE HARLEY EXPERIENCE

Text by Sajeet M. Rajbhandari

here are a few things in life that instill the same kind of excitement and thrill the way the deep growl of a Harley Davidson V-twin engine does. The raw power and the rustic appeal of this all-American two-wheeler catches the eye and the imagination even on the jam-packed Kathmandu rush hour street. But to really give justice to all

the horsepower that a Harley gives, you've got to take to the highways where you can really let loose. In less than a year since arriving commercially on the Nepali black top, Harley Davidson has certainly been a key gear in driving the market for high-end luxury two wheelers in the country. Here's all you need to know about what this Milwaukee brand has been up to here in Nepal.

## The road to Nepal

The journey to Nepal, for Harley Davidson, has been a long one. While Harley Davidson has survived two world wars and two economic recessions, the two-wheeler manufacturer only started commercial sale of its products in Nepal after it made its first official debut at the NADA Auto Show in 2018. Since then Harley Davidson Nepal has

been retailing their Iron 883 motorbike from their Sportster line up at their exclusive showroom in Gairidhara, Kathmandu. While the company has imported other motorbikes for their clientele and is planning to introduce af ew more from the Harley Davidson's extensive line up, Mahesh Thapa, showroom manager for Harley Davidson Nepal shares, "Nepalis

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generally have a smaller physique than their Western counterparts. Given the demographic, introducing the Iron 883 was a good step since it's one the more ergonomic motorbikes from the Harley line." The Sportsters are also one of the more affordable series that Harley Davidson has to offer. However, while the Iron 883 is priced at only about \$8999 in its native country; shipping costs and steep taxation on high CC automotive imports by the Nepal government hikes the price to become almost five times more than the actual retail price, ending up at approximately 45 lakhs in Nepali currency.

Thapa also shares details on how the company operates, "Harley Davidson Nepal is part of Harley Davidson Asia Pacific which is headquartered in Singapore. The brand answers directly to Harley Davidson in Singapore, with Harley Davidson India being the next closest region to Nepal." Furthermore, the company has also just started the Nepal chapter for Harley Owners Group, more fondly known as HOG. Not only does the team hope that HOG will introduce Nepali riders to the Harley Davidson culture but also that the group would put Nepal on the map for Harley riders all around the world.

### The showroom and the team

When you first enter Harley Davidson's showroom in Gairidhara, vou'll be amazed at how the space has been able to recreate the signature Harley Davidson style. Started off as just a bare concrete space which was still under construction, the Harley Davidson Nepal team managed to transform it to its current state. It's hard to miss the black and orange colours that signify the Harley theme. From reusing mango wood for floorboards to oxidizing the metal pillars to achieve the rustic Harley vibe, The Harley Davidson showroom is certainly a motorcyclist dream.

However, high-end motorbikes aren't the only thing you'll find yourself browsing through at the showroom. It also serves as a retail store for authentic Harley Davidson merchandise, gears and equipment. With products ranging from handlebars and engine oils to Harley Davidson apparel, the showroom is certainly a mixed bag. In fact, Thapa explains that the showroom was designed to have a very modular design, which in turn means that the showroom will have a new look to it each time you visit. Since the apparels are kept relevant to the season and style, the shelves are constantly changing. Harley Davidson

Nepal has also come up with apparel closer to home with 20 odd different styles of tees and sweatshirts that flaunt graphics that shout Nepal and Harley together. Besides, the showroom also features a fully functioning service center built for Harley Davidson motorbikes which operates with a small but dedicated team of mechanics and technicians who have undergone extensive trainings at the Harley Davidson University in Bangkok.

## The Harley Davidson lifestyle

If you are in the market for a vehicle that is just to get you from point A to point B then a Harley Davidson is definitely not for you. Thapa boldly claims, "Harley Davidson is not just a motorbike but a lifestyle." As a matter of fact, one the major reasons riders are drawn towards a Harley is because of the subculture that it has built around it. Not just for the Harley riders here in Nepal but also for riders from all around the globe, the brand has grown to become a brotherhood of sorts. "It really isn't a bike that you drive daily." shares Thapa, "It's more a bike that you drive on the weekends with your friends with your leather jacket

Over the course of less than a year since their arrival to Nepali roads, the brand has managed to sell 25 units. When asked about their stance on other luxury motorcycle brands in the market, Thapa explains that if people are willing to spend such large amounts of money on a motorbike, then they already know what they are looking for.

Thapa elaborates, "You don't need to sell a Harley Davidson, in reality people come purchase it themselves. When we first came to Nepal, people were thrilled to see Harleys driving down the streets of Kathmandu. People would come check out our bikes and people who own older Harleys came to us for maintenance."

When it comes down to it, owning a Harley Davidson would seem a lot like having something that is an extension of you. While anybody with the resources can go to a showroom and ride one home right away, Harley Davidson is a brand that truly shines its brightest when it comes to personalisation. People who seek to buy a Harley often have specific demands when it comes to their purchase; and while the Nepali government prohibits modification of vehicles, people are can still play around with various visual aspects of their motorbikes in order to make their ride stand Out

#### The road ahead

For a luxury brand that only just arrived into the country, Harley Davidson has been making steady and consistent growth. "We are the only official licensed dealership in Nepal, but that doesn't mean we are always going to be the only licensed dealership in Nepal." shares Thapa as he discusses that Harley Davidson is looking into the possibly opening up more dealerships in other cities in the days to come.

Looking to make a mark in the riding culture that has been growing in Nepal, the brand is also looking into conducting tours and events with its growing HOG Nepal group. While the bikes that Harley Davidson offers might not be the best for trips on rougher terrain of the Upper Himalayan region, the motorbike brand is counting on promises of the government in building good highways and freeways throughout the nation. Flat top roads such as the belt road project and the recently finished road to Muktinath are promising tour routes for Harley Davidson riders.

The company is also looking towards expanding its target demographic by bringing in and reselling refurbished Harley Davidson's for a relatively lower price tag. **B** 

# WOMEN ON WHEELS

Text by Ankita Jain

Overcoming societal obstacles, more women drivers have chosen driving as their career and source of economic sustenance. However, it is still uncommon to find many women chauffeurs. What's rare is to board a bus and expect a woman behind the wheel. In this edition of B360, we bring to your notice women who have chosen to take the wheel to a secure future.



She realised her passion for driving heavy equipment vehicles when she was quite young. But what she did not realise was the public accolade she would receive as Nepal's first female excavator operator!

Born to the family with no sons, she was often looked down upon as a girl child by relatives and society. She wanted to financially support her family and triumphed against many odds to take up a profession that was chosen

only by a handful of women globally. "I have never accepted that driving is only for men. I went to Nepalguni to work in an office but eventually landed in the heavy equipment department," Shrestha smiles. She started driving at the age of 17 and became a driver with the Government of Nepal under Heavy Equipment Division in

She started a with mere Rs. 5,000 a month and today she earns more than Rs. 25,000 a

month excluding her on-field earnings. For the past 20 years, this mother of two from Gorkha has travelled to nearly every corner of the country bending all the unwritten rules of the road. She further worked in Gujarat, India from 2005-2008 where she was first honoured. "I was first felicitated in a foreign land," she recalls. Post 2008, she has been awarded, honoured and felicitated by many individual organisations. "I have lost count now. My

entire house is filled with awards," she shares.

In the near future, she wants to start a driving school for women concentrating on heavy equipment vehicles. "Even today, there are many women who come to learn from me and I am happy to teach them how to operate an excavator," she says. She believes that every problem has a solution. "Everything seems difficult, but it is the way we deal with it that is important."

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I drove a three-wheeler for seven years and saved Rs 10 lakhs from my earnings. Later, with that amount and the gold jewellery I had, I made the down payment for a car.

## **BELI TAMANG**

Taxi Driver

Beli Tamang is a tough lady hardened by her struggles as she became the sole provider for her family when her husband left her. When you see her behind the wheels of her taxi expertly maneuvering the unruly cacophonic traffic, you spot nothing but a focused taxi driver. There are only 10-15 female taxi drivers in the capital.

"I have been driving a taxi for the past two years. I do not have the choice of refusing a passenger because they provide me my daily meal," says 37 year old Tamang. She quit driving a tempo and became a taxi driver, "I drove a three-wheeler for seven years and saved Rs 10 lakhs from my earnings. Later, with that amount and the gold jewellery I had, I made the down payment for a car," she shares. Today, she drives and takes home Rs. 50,000-60,000 every month.

She toils from 9am to 9pm driving in and out of the valley. Despite the luxury of a car, she misses the simplicity of driving a tempo. "Driving a taxi involves a lot of expenses. I pay Rs. 21,000 every month as my car loan EMI. Besides, insurance, servicing, petrol, and other expenses take their toll. There is hardly any savings," she explains. She quickly adds, "I don't take a day off and only if I have a spare hour, I care to eat something from a nearby



shop."

Tamang is a mother of three and the only breadwinner in the family. A major challenge faced by female drivers in the city, she says, is the unavailability of hygienic toilets. "I drive throughout the day and at times I have to drive from one corner of the city to the other looking for the toilet. There have been incidents

where I was fined for parking the car near the toilet area," she shares. She is registered with Sarathi cab services which she finds to be very user friendly.

## **FEATURE**



Harmita Shrestha, who started off as a tempo driver, says that she is delighted to see multitudes of young women drivers supporting their families financially through driving as a career choice.

In a desire to break the notion that driving is a man's job, Shrestha learned to drive a Maruti four-wheeler when she was in class nine. Despite being equipped with the driving skills, when she shifted to Kathmandu post-SLC in the mid-1990s, she started her career as a tailor. "It was a low paying job which

I wasn't interested in at all," she says. Nevertheless, she continued the job for the next five years and finally gathered courage to learn to drive a tempo.

Born and raised in Bhanu Chowk in Dharan, she got her license from Birgunj and started her driving career as a tempo driver. "I used to drive on the Nepal Airlines to Boudha and Jorpati route every day," she says. Though she earned well, she was a victim of discrimination and harassment by the traffic police. "Men would tease me. The traffic police also made life tough," she recalls.

Later, she was offered a chauffeur's job. "I worked for the government," she says. She worked for Durga Pokharel, then chairperson of National Women's Commission. Claiming to be the first woman driver to work in a government office, she used to earn Rs. 3,930 as monthly salary then.

A single mother of two, Shrestha was also offered a job with the UN. She took the opportunity, "I had a starting salary of Rs. 14,000 per month which was a huge amount then for a driver," she recalls.

41-year-old Shrestha today is the only female driver for Sajha Yatayat which operates 71 large-body buses across the valley.



## MERINA SHRESTHA

Biker

Merina Shrestha grew up playing with toy cars. "I never demanded dolls or anything girly. I used to steal my aunt's scooter or my grandpa's bike and used to try my hand at it. Well, the love for two-wheelers is ethereal," Shrestha says. Later, a push from her fiancé was all she required to conquer the roads on her Royal Enfield. Besides being a passionate biker, she is the team manager of Riders Unified NSC; an event manager and a freelancer who has been part of Nepal

Riders Meet 2017, 9th Enfield Rendezvous, Pokhara Run 2017 and many other biking events.

She has been riding for the past five years and has made biking her profession. "I do various stunts like compass, landscape, burnouts, helicopter, etc for different brands and participate in various bikerelated activities," she shares. About taking up biking as a full-fledged career, she informs, "No, we can't depend on it solely. The pay factor is not equal for men and women. Also, biking as a profession needs support from the association and the government." She adds, "The gear required for female riders is also lacking."

She works for the development of motorsports in Nepal through the platform, Riders Unified and has organised more than 50 events. Furth to promote the involvement of women in motorsports, they have been organising programs like the Ladies Riders Ride, Stunt Show and Female Ride Day. "These initiatives have led us to win various prizes, including first and second place under the Women's Category race in Racemandu, Biking Queens India, Women Empowerment

Award and more," she shares. Recently, Shrestha also represented Nepal in women's rider world relay, a worldwide motorcycle relay, intended to encourage women in motorsports.

She emphasises on establishing a safe and systematic riding culture in Nepal by producing responsible riders. "Today, influenced by social media many girls want to be bikers and use it as a fashion statement. This miscommunication needs to be addressed and we are working on it," she says.

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# THE FUTURE IS HERE

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## What prompted you to come to Nepal and work with King's College?

This is our first project that we are launching in Nepal but we have quite an experience working with Nepali students especially in Finland. They are passionate and this is something we admire. One of our alumni who is currently a faculty at King's College recommended the Demola practices and hence we are

## Could you share the details of this collaboration with King's College.

We are working on the collaboration since May 2019. We are starting our first batch in September this year. The course will be part of their curriculum and runs for eight weeks. This will be a continuous project as King's College will run multiple batches in a year. Moreover, in the launch event, we had invited representatives from local companies, embassies, government officials and so on. We also signed an agreement with five local companies to start the Demola cooperation here and run the activities.

Further, I have been here for a couple of days and had the opportunity to interact with the staff. I witnessed that they have a highly ambitious level. Also, the entrepreneur attitude and mindset they are sharing is appreciable. Having the passion to change the world, this is a good start to our collaboration.

## **How does Demola function?**

Demola innovation challenges are designed to solve real future challenges and create new service concepts and demos. With Demola, a multidisciplinary team of university students and company experts work together on an innovation challenge set by the company. During the eight-week process, the team co-creates solutions to the given theme.

The Demola process is globally standardised and professionally facilitated. Challenges in Demola are complex having a wide spectrum of possible solutions for each challenge, and enabling the team members to build curiosity toward the



topics. The outcome from the project is increased innovation capacity, creative confidence, industry interaction and more. Contracts, intellectual property rights and other legal requirements are in place; they meet international business standards and practices.

As part of our collaboration with King's College, we will train a couple of facilitators from the college staff as local Demola representatives here in the country. Demola Global will co-facilitate some of the events with our partners at King's College. We are here to build competence in society. We are in Finland for 11 years now and have facilitated 4,000 projects so far. Of course, we are a privately held organisation having a wide industry shareholders but in Nepal, I

believe it is an opportunity for us to spread the best practices that we have developed in Finland.

## How would the project facilitate students?

The project is a part of their curriculum and they will get credit points respectively. Globally, we have collaborated with 50 universities and in every alliance university, there is a Demola course. Besides, the students will have ownership of the results that they will create during the project. Further, the students will get an opportunity to work with leading companies internationally based on the projects they choose.

## With a presence in 17 countries, what has the response been?

Whether it is Latin America, China or Nepal, we have learned that it will take time for the ecosystem to get familiar with the concept and channelise it in the best way possible. Gradually, we are building competence and the culture of co-creation. For instance, we are on a constant lookout for students from the psychology sector or other human sciences that can teach us, challenge our designed project, and make us think from different perspectives.

## Are you planning to collaborate with any other college in Nepal?

We have a great team at King's College. And we would love to collaborate with other colleges as well in the near future. **B** 

**70** BUSINESS 360° | SEPETEMBER 2019



# TIRED OF **FEELING** TIRED?

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"Our major goals and responsibilities are reflected by the on-duty police out in the field. His or her nature, work ethic, behaviour and responsibility is interlinked with my leadership. There is a direct connection between his performance and my leadership skills; that is why, I believe it is essential to motivate them."



Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Basant Kumar Pant is the current Chief of Metropolitan Traffic Division. He has 27 hard earned years of experience in the police force. In his formative years, he had been posted in 19 various demanding locations. He has served most of his time in the traffic division currently serving his fourth posting.

**Avant Shrestha** of **Business 360** sat down with the chief at his station in Bagikhana to discuss his career, traffic issues in the city, and his ambition to manage the division and the traffic and road operations in the city with high efficiency. **Excerpts:** 

## Did you always want to join the police force or was it something that happened?

I was born in Dadeldhura and my father was also in the police. The fact that my father was a civil service employee was reason enough for me to be encouraged to take up the same kind of job. It was instilled in my mind from a very young age that even I should work as

a civil servant. My mind and motive never went astray. My belief was that I will work as a civil servant hence as a police officer and serve the people.

## What was your journey like before you joined the police force?

I knew I wanted to work as a civil servant but I was hesitant on where to go or which line of duty I should pursue. So I came to Kathmandu for my education and right after I completed my diploma, I tried to join the police force but unfortunately I was unsuccessful in my first

attempt. So I went for training as an air traffic controller and worked for around nine months. During that time, I, along with my colleagues, were highly frustrated. Everyone complained about the lack of proper infrastructure, nature of job and it felt like a dead end at work. There was no personal development. As a result I resigned from my job because I felt I had to pursue other opportunities. In my second attempt, I was successful in joining the police force as an inspector.

#### What were the initial days in the police force like?

After I became an inspector, my first posting was in Gaur. When I was there, I learnt about the basics of policing. And after that I went to Kailali. Then I got the opportunity as an Independent Command in Nawalparari, where I had to command a certain area as a new inspector.

#### What was the key moment in your line of duty that motivated you to dedicate your life to Nepal Police?

During my time in Nawalparasi, there was one incident. There was a person who was responsible for trafficking 50 to 60 girls and we were assigned to solve that case and apprehend the trafficker. By applying various investigation techniques, we were successful in capturing that trafficker.

The story gets interesting when the trafficker agreed to give us the details about his operations after we captured him and rescued the girls. He claimed to have sold close to 50 girls. When I asked him about his wrongdoing and whether he felt any remorse, he told me bluntly that this is strictly business for him. He compared his business to that of a butcher who does not feel sorry for the animals he slaughters. He told me that he just views girls as a product that have a price tag. He said that he needed to have a criminal mind to do his job and considered his crimes as a normal part of his life. Such investigative cases and capturing such people motivated me to move forward in this line of duty.

## How has your educational background served you in your current post?

If you have to look at my educational background, I have completed my Masters degree in Public Administration from Purbanchal University and I received my diploma from Tribhuvan University. Additionally, I have taken three international training courses and six courses in Nepal. Recently, we conducted Strategic Command and

Management Training. This training helped us in policy making and implementation.

#### What has your 27 year long career graph been like?

When you talk about my career, the graphs are all ups and downs. The thing is that this job requires my full dedication and sadly I have never been able to give adequate time to my family. I work 13 hours a day. I come in at 7am in the morning and go home only at 8:30 in the evening. Plus, I also work on Saturdays. This job requires my full dedication and I am fully committed to my role here. I believe that this assignment has been my most successful.

I was in charge in 19 posts. I have been in charge in various districts working tremendously hard while gaining lots of experience. But this job as the Chief of the Traffic Police Division has been the most successful and satisfying period in my career because my ideas and changes that I wanted to bring as a traffic police officer are more or less being implemented.

#### How did you move up to the ranks?

I was stationed in very challenging places with very challenging tasks. During the Maoist insurgency, I was stationed in Rukum among other areas. After I became SP, I got the opportunity to be the In-charge of Dhanusha, Kailali and Nepalgunj. After becoming the SSP, I got the opportunity to work at the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA). Then, I received opportunity to manage the traffic as an In-charge of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur.

I became the DSP twice and SP once and when I was assigned the post, I used to monitor the entirety of the traffic division and monitor the operations of the division. Evaluating my work is what I believe made my superiors give me the responsibility of Chief of the Metropolitan Traffic Police Division.

#### How can the Metropolitan Traffic Police Division implement international standards of traffic management and mitigate traffic congestion problems?

First of all, I would like to say that I am happy that our organisation has given us an opportunity to get exposure by participating in international trainings, gain knowledge, come back and implement these in the country.

We were given the opportunity to visit Japan, Delhi and United States to observe traffic management there. And by observing the traffic in these nations, I am constantly consulting and coordinating with stakeholders in the country to implement such procedures and methods in Nepal. When you talk about the stakeholders they are Department of Transport Management (DoTM), Department of Roads and Kathmandu Metropolitan City Office.

## What is the major role of the Metropolitan Traffic Police Division?

Well, we set highest priority to enforcing and implementing traffic rules and regulations and enhancing road safety for commuters and maintaining traffic flow. Today, we are also making an effort to introduce modern techniques and applying modern technology to regulate, monitor and control road safety.

# What are the current methods the Metropolitan Traffic Police Division is doing to better manage traffic in the city?

Currently we are aiming to install more traffic lights and improve road conditions. When we conducted a study, it showed that in Kathmandu alone, we would require 36 traffic lights in key locations. The first phase of our aim is to install these traffic lights. Similarly, we are in need of building 12 overhead bridges. We are also in talks of drawing a number of zebra crossing and installing road signs and signals in key areas. And lastly, we need to introduce mass transport system which is

still in the initial stages of the government's plan.

The three-month plan initiated by the Chief of Police has just concluded and we have planned to extend it to another three months. These include corridor management, pollution reduction management, footpath management and increasing awareness among riders and pedestrians to follow traffic rules and regulations. Plus, we have enforced a 'pick and drop' rule. Additionally, we are also researching and doing our homework on how to manage traffic in the next 50 years by holding dialogues and collaborating with various stakeholders.

## What does the general public get wrong about the Traffic Police Division?

We have very limited space where we can use our conscience because we are a force. We have to follow the National Laws, the Police Laws and Constitutional Laws and other rules and regulations.

The Traffic Police Division has only 3% of the authority among the entire Police Division. On the other hand, 97% of the authority goes to the other stakeholders and organisations. But in-spite of that, we work the entire 97%. We work everywhere. There are lots of complaints directed to us by e citizens regarding the poor road conditions, lack of traffic lights and no proper signs which can be seen as slightly unfair at times.

## What efforts are being made to use technology to better manage traffic issues in the city?

We are working with a manual traffic management strategy at the moment. But we have started to apply technology based traffic management. For example, we have started using traffic lights in some important junctions. We use the help of CCTV cameras, GoPro cameras and we even have surveillance vehicles. We have started enforcing the use of radar guns to monitor and maintain speed in various locations in the city.



#### How do you take action against traffic rule offenders?

We are applying all these methods and it gives me satisfaction to know that the offenders are being fined. But saying that does not bring us pleasure. The day when all the citizens follow the rules and when we do not need to fine them for any offenses, I believe as a traffic police division that would bring us satisfaction.

However, one thing that I am really satisfied about is that drinking and driving has reduced drastically. There are less than 100 people who are caught in drink and driving cases. As a result, the drink driving related accidents have reduced as well. Plus, we have enforced 'lane' discipline and become stricter. We have brought in new

methods to monitor through cctv, information via phones, identification of culprit and fining them.

We have made efforts to directly contact people, educate and raise awareness on traffic rules and safe road etiquettes. We are trying to raise awareness at the school level, through the community level and through the people who drive various vehicles.

Speeding, reckless driving, jaywalking and haphazard overtaking among others are the leading causes of road accidents. Additionally, there are still many people who are not inclined to follow the rules.

## What kind of efforts has the division done to raise awareness?

We have conducted lots of activities. For example, we

have made documentaries, we go door to door to spread important information, and we have collaborated with various stakeholders including the media to spread awareness about traffic rules and the importance of following them.

Then again, raising awareness is only one side of the spectrum, we have to make the rules stricter. For example, we fine individuals who cross roads in dangerous manner although we have stopped fining people at them who do not use zebra crossing while crossing the street. We have plans to bring that rule back again. We have to give them access as well. For example, we cannot fine individuals if there are no zebra crossings available. Our responsibility as an organisation with authority

is to implement basic laws and rules and it is the responsibility of the citizens to follow them.

#### What are you views on leadership?

When you talk about the present scenario, I have 1450 individuals working in my unit. 50 staff directly working under me. First thing I try to implement within them is my vision and make them aware of my main goals and then our organisational goals and the direction given to us by our superiors. We try to install the vision and goal to the ground level.

Our major goals and responsibilities are reflected by the on-duty police out in the field. His or her nature, work ethic, behaviour and responsibility is interlinked with my leadership. There is a direct connection between his performance and my leadership skills; that is why, I believe it is essential to motivate them.

#### What action is taken against officers who bend the rules?

We take internal actions against Traffic Police who are responsible for unprofessional, unethical and anti-police conduct. Just recently I had to release 50 to 60 officers off their duties for such reasons.

#### What is your personal and professional objective for the near future?

My objective is to diligently perform my duties as long as I am required to. I try to do the works that are required at an organisational level. I believe that I am an honest officer who does his work honestly. My past works and postings stand as a testament to my claim. Whatever the department requires me to do, I will continue to perform as long as I wear this uniform. Because of this uniform I have experienced professional development, my family is well taken care of, and I have been able to improve our social status. B





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ycling enthusiasts across the globe will get to witness and experience mountain biking in the world's deepest gorge, Kali Gandaki, Being organised as part of the Visit Nepal 2020 campaign, the launch will witness a mountain biking festival which will run for a week. "Our efforts will be visible during the launch which we are planning in December 2020," says Raj Gvawali, Founder and Director of Socialtours. For VNY 2020, Gyawali is leading a team which is working towards developing a lifetime experience in mountain biking in Kali Gandaki.

The festival is named Kali X. Kali denoting Kali Gandaki Valley and X signifying extreme. The weeklong festival will have various types of mountain biking events on offer: trail riding, enduro, downhill, uphill, freeride, dirt jumping and more. "It will draw a good number of mount bikers from across the world including the big names. We are trying to bring the mountain biking community together." he claims.

The mountain biking experience in Kali Gandaki already exists. "It is happening as a great ride but it isn't marketed as a tourism product," he shares. He wants to focus on repackaging of the tourism product and continue the festival for years to come, That's why, his team is working on essential elements. This involves mapping proper trails, guidelines, equipment, signage and more. Hence, they have taken up the huge challenge to take this forward and develop the Kali Gandaki rally as one of the world-class mountain biking experiences.

"With Dhaulagiri on one side and Annapurna on the other, the trail is breathtaking," he shares. Also, the road is being pitched which is good for biking as the safety levels go higher. Talking about the existing trails, there are many natural trails. "Since the natural trail is not mapped, graded and lacks signage, it isn't appropriate keeping safety standards at par. And this is what we are working on," he explains.

The festival will also create jobs for the locals in various ways as biking in Kali Gandaki is possible any time of the year. "Getting there might become challenging during the monsoon because of road conditions. However, recent

developments in transportation might solve this problem to a greater extent," he highlights. Overall, it is a year-round biking destination in different conditions at different levels. "The higher regions may be better now but the lower regions will improve a little later in the year," he informs.

Further, Gyawali claims that the mountain biking community currently runs various packages there. "The Mustang area is already in use for mountain biking with packages for seven days, five days and three days. For longer mountain biking experience, the Annapurna serves the purpose. Besides, there are a lot of activities which are already taking shape," he explains.

He further throws light on the Yak Attack which is the highest mountain bike race on the earth. "The 2019 edition will have even more single tracks than ever before and includes more Enduro sections – including the highest timed enduro section from 5416m down to 2800m above sea level," he informs. The other is the Yak Ru Enduro – an event that is equal parts bigmountain competition, alpine adventure, and exploration

through the heart of the Nepali backcountry. The best trails and scenic views of the rugged and amazing Annapurna Circuit – known primarily for its trekking routes – are showcased in this remarkable high-altitude event

On the Kali Gandaki mountain biking trail, he states, "Once we start redefining it, the packages will fall in place and people will have more options to choose from." The packages are designed in such a way that even amateurs can find a package which would suit them. "Anybody who likes mountain biking in the world is our target audience," he adds. Further, people who want to experience mountain biking can give a shot at it as well. Also, novices will get a good chance to practice. If the plan works out, there will be training programmes conducted by the local community," he shares. In a way what they are trying to do is organise an event for 2020 but also repackage the destination for mountain biking.

Once the system is ready, it will offer a variety of experiences through mountain bikes. "For the event in 2020, we are going to host multiple days of different activities. Some will be as short as probably a day," he says. The other activities will be enduro, cycling for all, family rides, mass ride, etc. Moreover. an uphill race is also on the list which will be named 'King of Mountains' or 'King of Mustang'. "Essentially, the idea is to retain people as long as we can since that means money for the locals," he briefs. About the pricing, it will depend on the equipment, access, etc. The team will set the standards and the pricing factor will be taken care of by the private industry providing the services. B





"WE HAVE THE CAPACITY TO WORK IN ANY PART OF THE COUNTRY AND HAVE A COMPLETE TEAM WHICH DELIVERS COMPLETE SOLUTIONS FROM DESIGN TO INSTALLATION".

NIKUNJ AGRAWAL DIRECTOR, PARTH INTERNATIONAL Nikunj Agrawal started his entrepreneurial journey by establishing Parth International with his brothers and partners, Abhishek Murarka and Aditya Murarka in 2010. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Management from Bangalore, a Diploma in Entrepreneurship from Ahmedabad, and a PG Diploma in International Business as well.

#### Tell us about Parth International and Featherlite in Nepal

The whole idea of starting this company was to bring the best quality raw materials and construction chemicals to Nepal for paint manufacturers. We started with stocking raw materials for paint and coating industry from Dow Chemicals, Akzo Nobel, Dupont, Huntsman, Iokal, Golchha Pigments to name a few because we found that the market was growing but manufacturers capacity was small and were unable to buy raw materials at competitive prices in large quantities. We also found lack of technical knowledge to grow the coating industry. Our main motive

became providing quality education, technical services and raw materials from world renowned brands. All the abovementioned companies account for top five positions globally in the raw material segment today.

I had personal interest and passion towards design and art as well. Featherlite Furniture I would say happened to become part of Parth International in an unplanned manner. Aditya Murarka and I were travelling to India and our flight got delayed in Delhi. We were going through an in-flight magazine at the waiting lounge of the airport where we saw an advertisement placed by Featherlite. Both of us started discussing about the potential and requirement of such brands and products in Nepal. We joined hands with Featherlite for the Nepali market in 2014 with a motive to provide best quality and ergonomic office furniture along with complete designing and technical service to the buyer. We saw a huge potential for professional furniture which was the need for the new developing Nepal. We did our market

research and found that our market was still dependent on low quality products from China or into carpentry. The major chunk was Chinese traditional Furniture which didn't have any Ergonomic R&D and the life of the products was just 6-12 Months. We also found lack of technical and design knowledge in office furniture due to unavailability in the market.

We researched that buyers who wanted to have a corporate and modern office outlay had bulky workstations which wasn't modular in nature made of solid wood and by carpentry. In some cases we also found they had to compromise with Chinese products which were made of very high quality MDF or wood powder Composite. These furniture didn't have life at all. Design services were totally unavailable as such products were just one-time sale.

With Featherlite we strive for international quality, highest level of customer satisfaction, productivity, and value for money for our clients. We also strive towards creating modern yet functional and collaborative workspaces which is much required in a developing country like ours.

#### What sets you apart from the other companies in similar business?

Firstly, we don't see Chinese and Malaysian furniture as our competition as they do not match with the quality that Featherlite has to offer. Secondly other Indian Brands available in the market that compete with Featherlite because they are Indian cannot be compared apple to apple as most of these brands do not have 100% manufacturing done in India unlike Featherlite. Only the hardware used in Featherlite is imported from the best factories around the globe. Other available brands are mostly assembled in India by importing parts and moulds from China, Malaysia and Thailand.

We have the capacity to work in any part of the country and have a complete team which delivers complete solutions from design to installation.

A Random Search of keywords 'office furniture' on Google will show 8,14,00,00,000 results within 0.64 Seconds
The list of vendors includes
everyone from MNCs to
highly localised furniture
manufacturers. With the outrage
of the internet, keeping a tab
on consumer market design
trends is no more the biggest
of affair for these vendors. The
real challenge is to read between
these trends and convert them
into customisable, highly
executable designs.

Hence the equation further boils down to experienced eyes that can decipher the trends and capabilities that can manufacture mind-blowing products. That's exactly why it's not difficult to recognise Featherlite, one of India's leading and legacy furniture brands amidst the 8,14,00,00,000 suggestions from Google.

Incorporated in 1965, Featherlite provides complete office furniture solutions to all segments of the market through its strong base of direct and franchisee offices present across 62 locations in India, two locations in Nepal, Srilanka, Bangladesh and Dubai catering to a total customer base of over 150,000. Home to an impeccable center of excellence and in-house product design team that works in tandem, the company has been exemplary in the way it innovates to produce strictly pragmatic designs and customises the products to align with the space and utilities. We are talking about a bunch of ergonomic design solutions that do justice to the price. The company today is riding along a curve of diversification and in turn high growth.

# When it comes to designing and selling office furniture, what is predominant: aesthetics or comfort and utility?

We create market and customer oriented designs as we cater to a large spectrum of customers. Our in-house design team takes care of all customer requirements in accordance with the trends and customisations. For instance there has been a paradigm shift in internal design offices. Currently desk based system is overtaking partition based modular designs. Around 80% customers today go for desk based systems which cost

15% less than partitioning in addition to further real estate utilisation opportunities. Work culture has become more collaborative in nature which we try to incorporate this aspect in our product designs.

Co-working and agile workspaces are today's need and understanding how important agility is we discuss all possibilities with our customers and design their work place.

In truth, the important link between design and production is training people which is given high focus, covering facets like design understanding, production processes and more. We analyse each step very deeply in order to maintain and improve quality of our workmanship as well.

#### Featherlite was recently listed in SiliconIndia's "10 Most Promising Office Furniture Providers". What standards do you maintain to meet this kind of recognition?

The ambience of a workplace features a crucial role in the motivation, productivity, efficiency and retaining of employees. With today's employee spending an average of over 10 hours per day within office confines, a large majority carp about the poorly designated furnishings that cause serious health-concerns, and is giving rise to the need for 'work from home' option. In response to this, several corporate establishments considered the option of ergonomics and subsequently reconfigured their interiors based on the 'home away from home' set-up.

Additionally, with the global work culture, the face of corporate furnishings struck a drastic transformation, moving from traditional work-centric cubicle farms to the current employee-centered open spaces, themed decor and ergonomic essentials.

Today the Indian office furniture sector gaits at a value exceeding \$2.5 billion, accounting for almost 17% of the country's total furniture market, with an anticipated projection of \$13.58 billion by 2021. This would indicate a CAGR of over 20% over the forecast period. Gravely

adopting the science of ergonomics, experts have emerged with several products that can cater to this huge and significant requirement. Ranging from stacking chairs, ergonomic chairs and other smart office system furnishings, the corporate structure has undergone major revolutions over the years with exclusive office furniture experts sprouting ever so often into the bigger picture of this vast furniture market. Tracing the fast pacing trends of this industry, SiliconIndia magazine has enlisted '10 Most Promising Office Furniture Providers - 2019' that brings out top players who have redesigned and re-written the interiors and furnishings of the corporate decor based on employee-centric requirements. Additionally, designing on par with global trends well infused with prime essentials of the Indian corporate culture, the SiliconIndia editorial board followed a meticulous evaluation process in tune with the views of industry experts and acing MNCs.

Along with everything that we do our certifications speak for itself. Featherlite is a Green Factory, thus focusing on environmental friendly manufacturing process.
Featherlite is a recipient of IS00 18 and TUV certified. Featherlite is also certified to be a lead free product. Featherlite is certified with Bifma platinum.

#### What is going to be new in the product line up soon?

Our furniture keeps evolving everyday according to the global workplace trends and requirements. We see addition of product lines every year based on the global market requirement and standards.

Currently Featherlite has been focusing on developing a complete range of laboratory furniture, educational furniture, auditorium seating, public seating, soft seating, sound proof furniture and sofas. Featherlite has also increased its workstation designs and range in the last year. We will be launching a new range of Featherlite products very soon in Nepal. **B** 

Shambhu Prasad Dahal is the President of Nepal Automobile Dealers Association (NADA), an umbrella body representing the country's automobile dealers. He formerly served as the CEO of Sipradi Trading. Since 2016, he is retired from active duty but still holds the position of Director of Sipradi Trading at the policy level decision making. Dahal has also worked as Audit Manager at T.R. Chadha & Co. Chartered Accountants and held the position of Director of Corporate Finance & Corporate Affairs at Tara Management.

Today, Dahal is a recognised figure in the automobile business ecosystem. He is an avid yoga and meditation practitioner who implements these into his personal and professional life.

Avant Shrestha caught up with Shambhu Dahal at NADA head office to learn about his career, the Nepali auto industry, and the NADA Auto Show 2019. Excerpts:

# You have held multiple active roles in major companies for decades and you are now in the 'think' of things. What is it like to be Shambhu Daha!?

Well, that's a difficult question because personally I have never thought about that myself. However, I would like to think of myself as an ordinary, hardworking individual. A simple individual to better put it. I have had little interest in personal or materialistic gains. I have always believed and done and will continue to put my head down and work as hard and diligently as possible.

For example, I wake up every day at 3am and practice yoga and meditation. I have been practicing it for many years. And yoga and meditation has helped me put my mind at peace. I believe that when you have a peaceful mind and try to cut the negativity out from your life, both your personal life and your career start to blossom.

#### What is the current scenario of the auto industry?

Every industry has its ups and downs. The auto industry is no different. There is a period of upward cycle and a period of downward cycle. When you look at the history of automobiles in Nepal, we have experienced hyper-growth in the past few decades and I believe this will continue. Just a few decades ago there were about 500 to 1,500 vehicles circulating within the entire industry. But just in this past one year a total of 28,000 vehicles got sold and these are all 4-wheelers.

#### Will automobile sales continue to grow or hit a roadblock?

I firmly believe that
the auto-industry has the
potential to grow. However,
the hefty import duty imposed
on imported vehicles is
unnecessarily high. But as a
business and the preference of
the general public, this industry
will continue to grow. It is
primarily because there is high
number of potential buyers
and with the growing economic
status of people, the demand
for automobiles is growing as

I also believe that having access to proper transportation is a civic right, whether it is about owning one or using a public vehicle. As our physical infrastructures continues to improve, both private and public vehicles are a must and there will be a demand for newer automobiles and this will only contribute to the growth of the industry.

#### What is your opinion on Electric Vehicles?

Electric vehicles are the future. When new technology is developed and it enters Nepal, it generally causes a stir and naturally people will be interested. But the performance of electric vehicles in Nepal depends on external factors. Nepal is one of the countries that imposes huge tax on imported cars. However, EVs are exempted from road taxes and import is relatively low. But in the end, today citizens in Nepal have spending power and it is customer choice that will determine the performance of electric vehicles in the country.

#### As President of NADA what are you key objectives?

As we all are aware NADA is the representative body of the automobile industry and the only national level organisation of automobile dealers. We take pride in ourselves as a platform to maintain communication as we are a coordinating platform.

The main objectives would be to advise and support key areas and within district level of automobile business associations for the development of the industry. This can be done by giving priorities to teamwork and focusing on addressing the challenges that the automobile industry is facing.

Lastly, I believe it is essential to build trust among the various agents including customers. There should be harmony between the government and automobile dealers so that the industry continues to grow.

#### Any key plans for the NADA Auto Show 2019?

NADA Auto Show is our flagship event and we never compromise on the standard of quality when it comes to hosting a grand event. There are thousands of visitors who come to the event every year and as a result, the expectations are always very high. Every year we try to improve on the performance of the previous year. However there are major challenges as well due to lack of space. Nevertheless we try to accommodate a number of brands both four wheelers and two wheelers, and our main goal is to showcase our quality.

## Nepal Transport Women Driver Group

Text by Sajeet M. Rajbhandari



With experience ranging from driving three-wheeled Tuk Tuks to mini buses to taxi cabs, Mina Chand Thakuri certainly knows the ins and outs of the public transportation sector in Nepal. With this experience and the urgency to help fellow women make a living for themselves, Thakuri along with a handful of ladies managed to set up Nepal Transport Women Driver Group (NTWDG); a non-profit dedicated solely to helping struggling women both socially and economically through jobs as drivers. In the eight years since its inception and with over 600 individuals taught, NTWDG has constantly strived to uplift the status of women in the nation as well as making it acceptable for women to work in the transport sector. **Excerpts:** 

## What do the current times hold for women drivers in Nepal?

When you hear the word 'woman driver', a lot of people hold the mentality that they are weak and unskilled. However from the people who we have managed to help out, they are all doing well and are competitive drivers. When you compare a lady driver to a woman who simply stays at home, you immediately see that even the minimal earnings and savings that you get from working as a driver really go a long way towards making a woman independent. What we came to figure out was that while these women do want to work and empower themselves, issues such as finances, family struggles and distance become major hindrances stopping them from learning how to drive commercially.

# Driving is viewed as a predominantly male occupation, what kind of reception do women drivers get from their male counterparts?

When it comes to male drivers, there are those that try to understand the internal situations that revolve around a lady driver, some are willing to be positive while others treat them as gullible and even demean them. There are instances where a lady driver shares too much information with someone hoping that it'll lead to a better job opportunity and ends up in a vulnerable situation.

## What kind of services does NTWDG provide and to whom is it catered to?

Our main target is women who have been held back socially, economically, politically or culturally. We are ready to teach and help any woman who wants to get up on her own feet and become independent. From women who live alone to ladies who sell corn from push carts to the ones who don't have an occupation, NTWDG is for any woman who wants to be self-reliant.

We basically help women learn how to drive and to ensure that they are capable drivers with a commercial skill. At NTWDG, we are all women who have gone through different hardships in life and we are more than happy to help a fellow woman stand up again. Further we also have provisions to provide education for children of women who can't afford it at Mount Gauri Shankar School at a minimal fee.

## Has NTWDG received any support from the government?

I personally feel that the government is seriously

lacking when it comes to helping women drivers. There are a lot of women who are more than capable of filling in what is usually thought to be a man's job. Be it driving a heavy vehicle or serving as a government sanctioned driver. It would be really helpful for both NTWDG and women drivers if the government was willing to help us infrastructurally and economically. When we approach designated authorities with plans, all we get is sugar coated words and project titles that get trashed out as soon as we walk out. What these people don't realise is that some of the women aren't even sure where their next meal is going to come from. There isn't even a minimum quota system for women drivers in government

#### What are your plans in the years to come?

One of the biggest problems we found when we started our work was that women lack awareness to come and ask for help and assistance they need. Women often see other woman drivers earning for themselves and would yearn to do the same but have no clue as to how they could get help. Word of mouth has helped increase awareness in recent times and now we have more women coming to learn to become commercial drivers. In the years to come NTWDG wants to be able to get women to start driving more heavy vehicles. Currently all of us working at NTWDG contribute Rs 200 each month to cover our fuel and maintenance costs. Occasionally, we do get donors to help us financially but we would love establish a concrete financial source so that we can keep helping more women. B





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## Top 5 Apps For Car Lovers

Text by Samrat Amatya

Traveling in a car could get much more comfortable than you are used to; all you have to do is connect two of your favourite gadgets - your car and your phone. There are some apps for your phone that make traveling in your car more enjoyable. Here are 5 of our top picks!

#### **Drivemode**

As the name suggests, the app is a driving centered app for your phone.

What makes Drivemode a comfortable, vet safe app is its voice command functionality. You can use your voice to perform various tasks like send/read-out texts, make calls, and navigate through the maps app. You can also control the music app of your choice using Drivemode. Heck, you can even reply to third party messaging apps using voice commands. I mean how cool is that! And to top it all off, the app also has Google Assistant integration for even better granular control. A bonus for you Android buffs!

#### **Google Maps**

Google Maps is one of the most necessary and reliable tools to have while traveling. And it is even more needed for people driving cars. You can easily search for the location you want to get to. It also has indications for all the restaurants, local shops, businesses, and much more.

Google Maps has an easy to follow interface. You can locate the place you want to visit and get a summary of how long it will take to get there. It also shows you the best route and alternative routes to get to your destination. And once you start navigating, it will give you a turn by turn direction as per your location. There is also



voice guidance so you don't have to take your eyes off the road. Pairing to this is a voice search! You can call up the inbuilt Google Assistant to search for phrases like "Find a petrol pump near me" among others. This is quite a handy feature to have while driving. A perfect combo of comfort and safety.

#### **Auto Care**

Owning a car comes with its fair share of responsibility. Many people don't take proper care of their car. This in return creates some expensive problems down the line. Enter Auto Care an app that helps you stay on top of your maintenance needs. You can enter your car details and service history into the app. This not only helps you keep track of your car's health but also the money spent on it.

Auto Care also comes with a clever reminder system which notifies you about your service schedule. As per this you can take your car to a service center and have it checked out. You can also manage your finance on fuel by tabulating the cost each time you refill. And, if you have multiple cars you can create a profile for each of them

#### Find my Car

Finding your car in a crowded parking space is a chore. Or maybe you are like me who forgets where I parked my car. If so, then the Find my Car app is a must for you. As the name suggests, the app helps you find your car. So how does it do that? Well, unlike some setups, it doesn't require an additional device. It uses the GPS on your phone to locate your car based on your previously saved position.

When you park your car, just open the app and press the "Mark Location" button. Once you get your location, name it and press the save button. Now when you want to find your car, open up the app and you will see the location of your car. The app also displays real-time distance and the best walking direction to your car which is really handy.

#### Audible

Reading books is a habit that we should all adopt. But many of us might not have the time or the patience to read. Enter Audible, an Audiobook service app, which provides you the books you want to read in a vocal format. This is especially great for times where you are on a long drive. You can listen to the book you have been meaning to read for quite sometimes from the comfort of your car.

Audible has a huge variety of audiobooks you can listen to. It not only helps you pass the time while driving but also helps enrich your mind. A great app to have! Do note that the app is a subscription-based service like Netflix. So yeah, you might want to get reacquainted with your loved ones outside the country. **B** 



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# Commodity Market Caught In The Trade War Crossfire



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The trade war between the US and China has remained in the news and with it the commodity market has also been affected. While the two superpowers remain at loggerheads with each other, the disruptions in the global supply chains and the trade flow have brought about a change in the dynamics of global trade and influenced metals, energy and agro commodities. This article dwells on the impact of the trade war on each category of the commodity market and also paints a picture for the times ahead

#### **Agriculture**

The agricultural markets have arguably been affected the most out of all the asset classes. Due to the export prowess of the US agriculture sector and political dominance, the US has made the primary sector as a prime target for retaliatory purpose. When Trump imposed import tariffs, China responded with their sanctions against the soybean shipments to its country. This led to a disappearance in the US flow of soybean to China triggering the replacement with the Brazilian product. The tariffs have had two major effects on the price. Firstly, due to the direct reaction to the loss of the Chinese buyers, the US grains suffered. Secondly, the price spread between different growing regions became more distinct and the volatility increased.

The pages of history show that a short disruption in the grains markets can have a significant impact. Jimmy Carter's grain embargo against then Soviet Union in the 1980s led to the emergence of new export hubs in Ukraine and South America. In hindsight, the soybean industry of Brazil may never have a better promoter and catalyst than the current trade war.

However, the exports of crude oil from the US shores to China declined to zero between August and October 2018, recovering in the period thereafter.

Trade negotiations have involved the use of crude oil imports between the two nations. On the US side, the good news is that the demand from China for their products have significantly being replaced with higher imports from other Asian nations notably South Korea. The significance of this information is that the Chinese economy has categorised crude oil

particularly from gas and oil sectors. The indicator of the positioning of the global economy, copper also slumped as the trade war inflicted uncertainty and enveloped the global economic outlook in dark clouds. The future direction of the trade war is not clear. On one hand, the clouds may clear leading to a sudden positive ending. On the contrary, the clouds could further escalate shrouding the global economy in further chaos and conundrum.



Although the commodity

trade flows on either side of the Atlantic Ocean, i.e. the European belt and the US belt, have not been disrupted yet, the EU could be the next target if the trade war intensifies. For example, in the case of US steel which is suffering from slumping demand, the effects of the trade war could spread like a virus and feed through to

the real economy. Changing fortunes of the commodity market and increased divergence in regional price have shown that the trade war in most ways is also creating trading opportunities. Market analysts have opined that as the trade war continues, the effects will be more profound and significant. New trade relationships could be formed and the global commodity flows will be rerouted to other nations as we wait for the unfolding of a new chapter in this ongoing saga. B

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#### Crude Oil

With numerous factors driving simultaneously on the oil markets, the impact of the trade war on the oil markets is unclear. The weakening global economic outlook and the higher shale oil production is inevitably offset by the OPEC production cuts and the increasing geopolitical risk in the Middle East region. Market pundits opine that the trade way may not be having the desired effect on the price of oil thus far since China was reluctant to impose import tariffs on US crude supply.

imports as an important driver to their economy. Unlike in the case of soybean, the Chinese economy does not have adequate suppliers to replace the US product in the long term perspective.

#### Metals

To protect the domestic producers, tariffs on steel imports hiked the US domestic price in comparison to global benchmark prices reflecting the price differences region wise. Steel prices have declined over the past year as the industry suffered from low demand

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## beed's take on the market

During the review period of July 21 to August 22, the Nepal Stock Exchange (NEPSE) index went down by 59.42 points (-4.67%) to close at 1213.07 points. Cautious trading due to new provisions in the monetary policy issued by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) for the current fiscal year 2019/2020 attributed as the major reason behind the bearish sentiment in the market. Investors fear further credit tightening as the new provision requires all commercial banks to issue debentures whereas new spread rate policy is going to dampen future earnings of listed Banks and Financial Institutions (BFIS). On a positive note, despite the market downfall, the total market turnover during the period fell only by 1.21% and stood at Rs 9.60 billion.

During the review period, contrary to the previous period, nine sub-indices landed in the red zone and only one sub-index landed in the green zone. The Mirofinance sub-index (+3.86%) was the biggest gainer as share value of Samudayik Microfinance (+Rs 203) and Samata Microfinance (+Rs 153) went up.

On the losing side, Hydropower sub-index (-13.86%) faced the biggest drop as the share value of Chilime Hydropower (-Rs 70) and Sanima Mai (-Rs 30) went down. Finance sub-index (-7.23%) was second in line with decrease in the share value of Progressive Finance (-Rs 14) and Guheshwori Merchant (-Rs 10). The Non-life insurance (-6.76%) also fell down with significant decrease in the share value of United Insurance Company (-Rs 200). Similarly, Manufacturing & Processing sub-index (-5.77%) decreased as the share value of Himalayan Distillery (-Rs 74) and Shivam Cements (-Rs 53) went down. Likewise. Life insurance subindex (-5.59%) decreased with the fall in the share value of Life Insurance Company (-492) and Surva Life Insurance (-Rs 170). The Commercial Bank sub-index (-4.39%) also saw a downfall with the fall in the share value of Nepal Investment Bank (-Rs 54) and Nepal Credit and Commerce Bank (-Rs 46). Others sub-index (-3.39%) followed suit with the slump in the share value of Citizen Investment Trust (-Rs 50) and Nepal Telecom (-Rs 19). Development Bank sub-index (-2.93%) also shed value with the decrease in the share value of Muktinath Bikas Bank (-Rs 60) and Lumbini Bikas Bank (-Rs 24). Hotels sub-index (-2.31%) also went down; top losers in this sub-index were Oriental Hotels (-Rs 22) and Taragon Regency (-Rs 14).

#### **News and Highlights**

The Securities Exchange Board of Nepal (SEBON) has recently unveiled a 72-point policy and programs for FY 2019/20 in order to uplift the secondary market. The list has given major focus on commitment to license commodities exchange markets and operate them effectively. In addition to this, the list also includes a book building system for premium pricing of public offering of companies and its effective implementation as well as monitoring of the 'one citizen

(-Rs 556) and Rastriya Beema as monitoring of the 'one citizen,			
	June 21st, 2019	Aug 22nd, 2019	% Change
NEPSE Index	1,272.49	1,213.07	-4.67%
Sub-Indices Sub-Indices			
Commercial Bank	1,148.38	1,097.95	-4.39%
Development Bank	1,636.86	1,588.98	-2.93%
Hydropower	1,216.62	1,048.03	-13.86%
Finance	627.42	582.07	-7.23%
Non-Life Insurance	5,104.26	4,759.17	-6.76%
Others	720.75	696.31	-3.39%
Hotels	2,070.62	2,022.69	-2.31%
Microfinance	1,460.48	1,516.89	3.86%
Life Insurance	6,040.71	5,702.96	-5.59%
Manufacturing & Processing	2,717.50	2,560.64	-5.77%

Source: Nepal Stock Exchange Ltd.



Source: Nepal Stock Exchange Ltd.

one demat account'; continuation with the process of establishing and operating another stock exchange company as well as reforming NEPSE.

Following this, SEBON has also promulgated to publicly release policy and program for every fiscal year for the development of the secondary market. Moving on, SEBON has also instructed the listed companies in NEPSE to submit their annual report in a standardised format along with their audited financial report and has endorsed a uniform corporate governance reporting format

Regarding the market trend, since disputes regarding the method of calculating capital gains tax (CGT) on share transactions have been arising, the Securities Exchange Board of Nepal (SEBON) summoned concerned officials of Nepal Stock Exchange (NEPSE) and CDS and Clearing Ltd to come up with a solution.

In the public issue front, proposed Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) of NRN Infrastructure and Development Limited (3,398,046 shares worth Rs 1.6 billion) were issued. Sanima Capital Limited has been appointed as the issue manager for the proposed IPO issuance. Similarly, SEBON has also approved IPO worth Rs 5.3 million of Sabaiko Microfinance for general public. Meanwhile, CEDB Hydropower also issued IPO worth Rs 251.8 million. Both of these issues were assigned IPO Grade 4 by ICRA Nepal indicating below-average

fundamentals

Likewise, three mutual funds were also offered to the general public, namely, Siddhartha Investment Growth Scheme-2, NMB 50 and NIC Asia Balance Fund worth 140,000,000 units, 120,000,000 units and 125,000,000 units respectively.

#### Outlook

There was no silver lining for the market as numerous regulatory provisions and lack of clarity dampened investors' confidence. Staring from confusion over treatment of Capital Gain Tax (CGT) to NRB's new provision for spread rate and counter cyclical buffer capital amongst others. On a positive note, the structural reforms and new regulations included in SEBON's policy and program for the current fiscal year is expected to improve the investor confidence, market outreach and depth substantially, which is a key ingredient for the development and expansion of the secondary market.

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#### **Finance Minister** instructs DoRI to bring economic activities within tax net

Finance Minister Yubarai Khatiwada directed the Department of Revenue Investigation (DoRI) to ensure that all economic activities in the country are brought within the tax net of the government. Addressing a management symposium organised by DoRI on August 4, Minister Khatiwada said that effective tax administration is necessary to ensure proper implementation of different social security schemes of the government and the entire development process of the country which is why it is necessary to expand the tax net by bringing in every economic activity within it.

"The government intends to bring all economic activities under the tax net and ensure people's social security. For this, the government will focus on stricter tax laws and their implementation." said Khatiwada. Moreover, Finance Minister Khatiwada said that along with bringing all economic activities under the tax net, the government will also ensure conductive business environment in the country and promote investments which are necessary to prosper the country. "The government is here to promote businesses. However, there has to be healthy competition and all businesses should operate as per existing laws," he added.

Though revenue collection has been increasing in recent years, Minister Khatiwada said that the collection has not been satisfactory. Moreover, he stated that the new provision that makes Permanent Account Number mandatory for all salary earners is part of bringing in all people under the income tax net of the government. "Our intention is to collect revenue that is driven by quality tax administration," Khatiwada highlighted.

#### **MoICS and SAWTEE hold interaction programme on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Laws**



Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS) and South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), organised an interaction programme on August 5 to discuss Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) related international laws and practices which could impact agriculture trade. Considering the recent decision by Nepal government to make pesticide residue mandatory for fruits and vegetables imports and eventual withdrawal of the decision within 18 days and ensuing public reaction, this event aimed at unknotting the issue. The main objective of the programme was to create awareness on SPS issues in agriculture trade and discuss measures that Nepal should undertake in moving forward.

Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Matrika Prasad Yadav. pointed out that despite the initial turmoil created by recent policy change by the government and its retraction, it has also created an avalanche of awareness. He stressed the need to create awareness amongst stakeholders regarding the issues related to World Trade Organisation and other regional and bilateral agreements. He reiterated the Ministry's commitment to WTO rules and regulations and said that the misalignment was a result of lapses in procedure but not of intent.

Secretary for MOICS. Kedar Bahadur Adhikari, stressed the need to build

legal, institutional and other mechanisms to regulate import as well export.

Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, Chairman of SAWTEE, stressed the need to build related institutions and coordination amongst relevant government institutions. He said, "Being a party to international agreements we have to be mindful of both the rights and duties and hence. this programme is to discuss the optimal way to protect plant, animal and human life while honouring international, regional and bilateral agreements." He further added, "We need to make an attempt to discuss this issue with relevant stakeholders to build consensus for the way forward."

Presenting a paper on "SPS measures in Nepal's agricultural trade", Dr. Paras Kharel, Research Director of SAWTEE, highlighted the high degree of import dependency on India for agricultural and food products, indicating that any disruptions at the borders will have severe implications.

Calling attention to the "letter" (allegedly sent by Indian Embassy in Nepal in response to Nepal's policy change with regard to fruits and vegetables imports), Dr Kharel pointed out that it only talked about phytosanitary certificate which in reality does not concern pesticides residue tests. His paper further delineated current sanitary and phytosanitary constraints such as lack of legislations, institutional inadequacies, human resources constraints, and most importantly, extremely poor state of testing facilities. Adoption of international standards for

commodities that currently do not have standards, upgradation of laboratories, accreditation over the most important parameters and, ultimately, the mutual recognition agreements with the major trading partners, were pointed out as the likely way forward.

Emphasising the need to protect the consumers from pesticides residue risks, Dr. Dilli Ram Sharma, Chief, Plant Quarantine and Pest Management Centre (PQPMC), pointed out the lapses made by government while implementing the policy, particularly the failure to notify the policy change in advance, six months being the legally binding international norms. He also mentioned that pesticides test on each consignment of perishable items is not infeasible but also unprecedented globally and hence, procedures like screening, certifications, risk-based sampling must be adopted to ensure that trade continues as usual and consumer health is not compromised. He also informed that agriculture ministry and its other bodies are rapidly moving ahead with necessary changes.

Jyoti Baniya, Chairman of Forum for Consumer Protection, pointed out the lack of proper legislative framework as a key constraint, for example, Nepal has not promulgated new laws to replace the outdated Food Act and Import Export Act. Nepal is vet to come up with the much-needed Accreditation

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#### Transitional justice laws and commissioner appointments need restart say various organisations

On July 29, Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Human Rights Watch, and TRIAL International said the Government of Nepal has failed to fulfill its commitment to provide justice for the victims of the country's decade-long armed conflict.

The organisations echoed statements by victims and human rights groups about the Nepal government's inaction on addressing conflict-era human rights violations, and a lack of transparency in the appointment of commissioners to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to the Commission on the Investigation of Enforced Disappearances.

"We have seen no evidence so far that the authorities of Nepal are serious about fulfilling their obligation to investigate conflict-era violations and bring all those suspected of criminal responsibility to justice in fair trials before ordinary civilian courts," said Raju Chapagain, South Asia Researcher at Amnesty International. "If the commitment to human rights obligations was as unflinching as claimed by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, the government would have acted diligently to deliver on its transitional justice responsibilities."

After being elected in 2018, Prime Minister Oli renewed promises that the legal framework governing the transitional justice process would be brought into conformity with Nepal's international human rights law obligations, as the Supreme Court had repeatedly directed. However, the government never amended the law, and instead pushed forward without adequate consultation with the establishment of a committee to recommend appointments to the transitional justice bodies.

"The failure of the

government to deliver on its commitment to ensure truth, justice and reparations for the victims of conflict-era abuses shows a dismaying disregard for the protection of human rights," said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia Director at Human Rights Watch.

The organisations called on the government to suspend the current process, and initiate a consultative and transparent process for the nomination and appointment of commissioners, follow through on commitments to amend the 2014 transitional justice law to ensure that the legal framework is consistent with international human rights standards and Supreme Court rulings, and adopt and publicise a plan for taking the transitional justice process forward.

"The legitimacy of Nepal's transitional justice process lies both on a transparent and consultative appointment process for commissioners, and a strong legal foundation to allow the commissions to fulfil their mandate," said Helena Rodríguez-Bronchú, Head of TRIAL International's Nepal program. "Societal consensus is crucial for both factors."

Amnesty International, ICJ and TRIAL International had previously submitted their Analysis 1 of the draft transitional justice legislation circulated in 2018 and had made recommendations on ensuring compliance with international human rights law. Human Rights Watch had also alerted for reform of the transitional justice law before appointing the commissioners. In April 2019, United Nations experts also wrote a joint letter to the foreign minister reminding the government of its commitment to amend the law and calling for a transparent process for appointing new commissioners after the terms of the previous commissioners expired.

"The lack of progress in holding perpetrators accountable for the suffering inflicted upon victims, their families and Nepali society as a whole, is appalling," said ICJ Asia-Pacific Director
Frederick Rawski. "Nearly
13 years after the signing of
the Comprehensive Peace
Agreement, political leaders
inside and outside of the
government are still playing
games by politicising the
process. It is about time that
they showed some courage, and
took action to ensure access to
justice, instead of continually
looking after their own shortterm self-interests."

#### Laxmi Bank and ADB sign partnership agreement to support trade in Nepal

The Asian Development Bank's Trade Finance Program (TFP) and Laxmi Bank signed an agreement on July 30 to provide loans and support trade in the country. During the signing, Laxmi Bank's CEO Ajaya Bikram Shah said, "Laxmi Bank is pleased to join ADB's Trade Finance Program as the third member bank from Nepal after completion of on-site and off-site due diligence of our financials, asset quality and operations. Laxmi Bank is already a major provider of trade finance services for Nepali SMEs, corporate, institutions and infrastructure projects. Access to this new facility will further strengthen our ability to conduct large value or complex international trade transactions. We believe this will directly benefit our clients by enhancing their acceptance in the international market especially at a time when the country is pursuing economic growth led by private sector investments in national priority sectors."

ADB's TFP has been operating in Nepal since 2009 and currently works with two local partner banks. Till date, the program has conducted more than 200 transactions in Nepal, supporting \$82 million in trade and benefiting more than 80 SMEs in a wide range of sectors including agricultural commodities, construction materials and machinery, solar panels and textiles.

ADB Investment Specialist

and Relationship Manager for Nepal, Janet Hyde also stated that the new facility will assist the country's reconstruction efforts by supporting trade flows into the country, especially those involving small and medium-sized enterprises.

#### CNI to organise 3rd Nepal Infrastructure Summit in September



At a news conference organised by CNI on August 4, it was shared that the 3rd Nepal Infrastructure Summit will be taking place on September 11-12 under the theme "Strong Infrastructure for Sustainable Development". The summit would be a follow-up on the Nepal Investment Summit 2019 organised by the government four months ago. CNI President Satish Moore said that the Summit would encourage investment for the proposed projects presented in the Nepal Investment Summit 2019 as well as draw attention of all bodies concerned along with the government to forward the task of reforming laws.

The CNI has prepared a report in coordination with Sarvangin Vikas Adhyayan Kendra based on the decision of first and second infrastructure summits and it would be unveiled in the third infrastructure summit. More than 500 national and international foreign investors will be participating in the Infrastructure Summit.



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#### **CellPay starts operations**



Cellcom Pvt. Ltd., an NRB licensed payment service provider, has started its operation of Cellpay from July 30. It can be operated with its mobile and web application without any e-wallet and provides services of payments, fund transfers and other services with your own bank account. Along with this, Cellpay claimed that it has been developed considering various international security standards to make the overall system trusted and reliable.

Cellcom's payment services include telecom services, electricity, drinking water, T.V., internet, different shops and restaurants, movie hall, fund transfer between banks, domestic remittance, P2P, P2B, P2G, B2P, B2B, B2G and other service operated in real time which targets the Nepalis people through Cellpay offering payment services to its customers.

## Demola enters Nepal in exclusive partnership with King's College



Demola, a Finland-based global innovation challenge platform, has entered Nepal through a partnership with King's College. On August 14, a formal ceremony was organised in Kathmandu to mark the launch. During the event, five different institutions including Annapurna Media Network, Young Innovations, City Planning Commission of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Katha Nepal and M&S NEXT Venture Corp signed the agreement to join Demola as

the challenge partners.

"King's as an academic institute has always believed that learning should not be limited to the concrete classrooms and prescribed syllabi. We see Demola as a tool capable of stitching an existing gap between Nepali education institutions and companies as well as government and nongovernment organisations," said Narottam Aryal, President of King's College.

Demola facilitates eightweek long projects where students and company experts work jointly on an innovation challenge, as set by the company as well as organisations. The collaboration will take place from problem identification phase to solution development phase.

According to the college, there are two additional elements to the Demola Project: Demola Facilitators and Universities. While Demola Facilitators will bring about the global knowledge and insights in solving a particular problem of a company/organisations or helping them advance with the introduction of innovation, the University will try to apply the tested and proven academic theories, to help Nepali businesses and organisations reach further heights.

#### NRB sets age bar for CEOs and Board Directors of BFIs

Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has set age bar for Chief Executive Officers and Board Directors for bank and financial institutions (BFIs). Issuing a circular to the BFIs on August 5, the Central Bank told them to implement a new rule that has set age bar of 65 years for the CEO to get appointment or reappointment. According to the new rule, the CEO will not be allowed to continue to work in any bank or financial institution after crossing the age of 69. Similarly, age limit for Board Director has been set at 70 years. However, the Board Director will not be allowed to continue in the same capacity after crossing the age of 75. However, the circular has not made it clear whether the age bar will affect those who have already got the appointment.

The Central Bank issued a new circular to the BFIs to implement the provisions that it has brought in the monetary policy for fiscal year 2019/20. Among others, the new circular requires commercial banks to lower their average interest rates spread below 4.4% by mid-July next year. The maximum difference between the average interest rates on

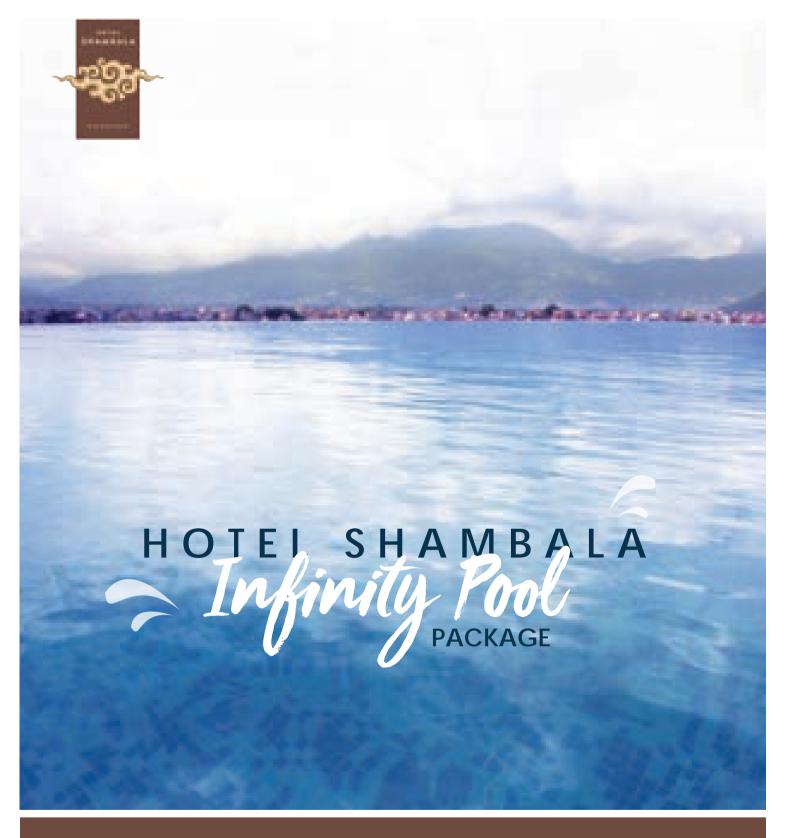
loans and deposits was capped at 4.5% earlier.

However, commercial banks that go for merger and acquisition and start joint operation by mid-July next year will get a relaxation on the deadline for meeting the interest rates spread cap. The deadline for such banks has been extended by a year with an aim to encourage 'big merger'.

The circular has also lowered the maximum limit that a BFI can collect deposits from a single institutional investor. Now, a BFI will not be allowed to mobilise more than 10% of deposits from a firm, company or organised institution, down from earlier ceiling of 15%. While reducing the general refinance rate for bank loans to small and medium enterprises, it has also lowered the maximum interest rates that BFIs can charge from them. Under the new arrangement, the central bank will provide refinance facility for loans up to Rs 1 million to BFIs at 3%. Banks are not allowed to charge more than 7% interest rates for loans floated under refinance facility. Earlier, such refinance rate was 5% while the ceiling on lending rate was 10%.

The new provision announced in the monetary policy requires commercial banks to float debentures equivalent to at least 25% of their paid-up capital by mid-July 2020 has also been introduced as the requirement in the circular. Banks failing to abide by the new requirement will face actions like a ban on the expansion of their branches and no refinance facility.

Similarly, BFIs will not be allowed to charge more than 2 percentage points in premium on their base rate as interest rates on loans up to Rs 1.5 million on agricultural, entrepreneurial and business promotion. The central bank has also allowed banks to float loans against the collateral of arable land even without road access. The central bank has made it mandatory for BFIs to provide decision about such loans within seven days with clear reasons.



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#### **Kathmandu Marriott** hotel inaugurated its modern Asian specialty restaurant 'Edamame'



Kathmandu Marriott Hotel, on August 1, marked the opening of its restaurant 'Edamame' with an inauguration ceremony attended by ambassadors from Thailand and India. Kathmandu Marriott Hotel held an exclusive elite sit down dinner for eminent guests on the occasion. The dishes served were a contemporary interpretation of Thai, Japanese and Chinese cuisines. Edmame is a relaxed, upscale, Modern Asian speciality restaurant offering a vibrant array of Japanese, Chinese and Thai delicacies that oscillate between innovative and modern culinary arts. The restaurant also features a yakitori grill, live sushi bar, dim sum station and a bar that serves Asian inspired cocktails.

Speaking at the launch, Jean Louis Ripoche, General Manager of Kathmandu Marriott Hotel said. "At Edamame we showcase a cuisine that goes beyond creating signature dishes, as it is our passion to source for the very best produce for original dishes that are full of vibrant flavours and will be a memorable experience for all diners. We hope all guests enjoyed the delectable Asian food served with a contemporary flair."

#### **Toastmasters Leadership Institute** Kathmandu inaugurated

Toastmasters International and District 41 inaugurated Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI) Kathmandu. The first training took place on July 27 at Global Academy of Tourism & Hospitality

Education, Mandikatar. Over 200 members participated from 19 Toastmasters clubs.

TLI provides great opportunities for members to ramp up Toastmaster experiences, learn and refresh their skills, network and make new acquaintances and friends. Trained club officers are the best predictors of club success.



Neeraj Gupta, DTM who is District Parliamentarian and one of the seasoned trainers from New Delhi, India emphasised the importance of TLI as he conducted the Judges Training Program, "Judging is different from evaluating or providing feedback. A Judge has to choose a winner without bias and conforming to Toastmasters' strict rules and guidelines. A member gets the same training as is used to choose the International Speech Contest in USA."

Besides core training, multiple sessions were offered throughout the day. TLI events now include every interested member and not just club officers, as it used to. Leadership planning, distinguished club goals and branding guidelines were among the sessions.

#### **Glocal announces** Glocal's 20 under 20 in association with Wai

Glocal, in association with Wai Wai, has unveiled the list of 20 brightest and influential Nepali teenagers under the age of 20 on August 7. These teenagers are from diverse fields ranging from social work, child rights activism, computer programming, science, journalism, technology, poetry, innovation, public speaking, conservation and entrepreneurship.

The annual list of game changers seeks to recognise and honour the exceptional



#### Sakchvam and Laxmi Laghubitta announce partnership for digitisation of financial services

A partnership between Laxmi Laghubitta Bittiya Sansthan and UKaid Sakchyam Access to Finance Programme was officially announced on August 9 at a function held at the head office of Laxmi Bank. The partnership is for the digitisation of the microfinance services of Laxmi Laghubitta to deepen financial inclusion. The agreement certificates were signed and exchanged by CEO of Laxmi Laghubitta, Prakash Raj Sharma and Team Leader of Sakchyam, Nirmal Dahal.

Under this project, Laxmi Laghubitta will adopt and integrate an advanced Core Banking System (CBS) to automate their services.

The CBS which has proven its capability in the digital banking process will enable the organisation to transfer their services to the digital platform. Digital devices will be used to provide various services such as loan and saving collection and withdrawal, customer registration, loan application process etc. Tablet banking will be introduced in phases.

teenagers from various fields. Glocal's 20 under 20 is an umbrella title for 20 early change makers, who are teenagers from diverse fields, stepping out to create an impact in the society. Releasing the list. Asish Thakur, Executive Director of Glocal said, "We are unveiling 20Under 20 of 2019, and so far I am delighted to see these young minds grow and thereby help their society prosper. On one hand, they have proved to be a strong team of like-minded teens and on the other, they are the future leaders."

The selected teens are Anand Kumar Sahani (17, Child Right Activist, Janakpur), Arjun Acharya (16, Social Activist, Kalikot), Babita Pariyar (18, Child Right Activist, Dhading), Bidhi Mandal (19, Entrepreneur, Janakpur), Bikram Parajuli, (18, Tech Educator, Pokhara),

Bishnu Mijar (19, Social Activist, Sindhupalchowk), Ganesh Sah Sudi (19, Wildlife Conservationist, Dhanusha), Jyoti Singh (13, Programmer, Dhanusha), Sovid Bhusan Pathak (15, Social Activist, Kathmandu), Lov Panthi (14, Innovator, Rupandehi), Nischal Bhandari (18, Social Activist, Tulsipur, Dang), Rachin Kalakheti (17, Technopreneur, Makwanpur), Rishi Kr Gupta (16, Innovator, Kapilvastu), Rohan Bagale (18, Social Activist, Chitwan), Samarth Jha (15, Social Activist, Biratnagar), Sammer Chapaign (19, Journalist, Chitwan), Samir Phuyal (16, Entrepreneur, Morang), Shivu Pandey (19, Public Speaker, Rupandehi), Supriya Maharjan Sapkota (18, Social Activist, Kathmandu) and Thalama Malla (18, Social Activist, Nuwakot).

The 20 young inspiring

#### B360 / NATIONAL

change makers were selected by a jury through an intense selection round for the impact they have created in society. These teenagers were selected from a pool of 598 applications from across the nation. The selected teenagers will be honoured at the Wai Wai Glocal Teen Hero 2019 Awards on September 1.

## Rastriya Banijya Bank also joins connect IPS

Nepal Clearing House has on-boarded Rastriya Banijya Bank in the connect IPS e-Payment System on August 1. With this the customers of Rastriya Banijya Bank will now be able to initiate online payments through connect IPS with all transactions processed directly from the bank account.

This is expected to expand the digital payment ecosystem by providing

access of multi-banking single payments platform to the customers of the bank. The bank customers can now avail the services of online fund transfer, e-commerce payment, creditor/biller payments including government tax, Loksewa application fee, Office of Company Registrar payments, Citizen Investment Trust loan repayment, credit card bill payments, mobile wallet top-up, capital market related payments and similar.

The bank's customers can enrol and link their bank accounts, with one-time verification from the bank, after which they can use the system. The payments can be done by the customers from www. connectips.com, its mobile application or through payment processor (gateway) available on the service provider's respective websites.

#### Hyundai Venue launches in Nepal



Hyundai unveiled its first sub-4 meter compact SUV, Venue, in Nepal on August 22. Venue boasts several new-age connectivity features and an unmatched driving experience. Venue conveys a fun, yet functional design in a versatile and modern compact package. For those constantly on-the-go, Venue offers adaptability to the urban entrepreneur lifestyle many

consumers experience in today's fast-paced environment. It is powered by three engines. There is 1.2 litre petrol variant that gives out 83hp and 115Nm of torque and the new turbocharged 1 litre engine that generates 118 bhp and 172 Nm of torque. There is also a 1.4 litre diesel variant churning out 89 bhp and 220 Nm of torque. Further the price starts at Rs. 34,96,000.



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#### Sanskriti International School becomes first school in South Asia to get awarded IPC Accreditation



On August 1, Sanskriti International School has been awarded with most prestigious International Primary Curriculum (IPC) accreditation and has become the first international school to get accredited in South Asia by IPC, UK. This accreditation is provided by Fieldwork Education UK for those schools which follow comprehensive, thematic, creative curriculum with a clear process of learning and specific learning goals for every subject, encouraging personal learning. With the presence of IPC in 92 countries worldwide in over 730 schools till date only 17 schools have received IPC accreditation and Sanskriti International School is among one of them.

For IPC Accreditation, a school has to go through Fieldwork Education's rigorous self-review process, culminating accreditation visit and presentation of external view for continued and focused improvement in learning. This accreditation is valid for three years and is renewed with the same process.

## Everest Bank continues its support to Teach For Nepal

As part of its CSR activities on education, Everest Bank provided financial aid as a continuation of its support to Teach For Nepal on August 4. Teach For Nepal is a movement of outstanding university graduates and young professionals who are committed to end education inequity in Nepal starting with two years of fellowship teaching in public schools.



The bank statement reads that Everest Bank has been supporting education, sanitation and drinking water in various government/public schools around Nepal. Everest Bank has always focused on customers' benefit and satisfaction with its theme of 'Service with Smile'. EBL has always been conscious of its social responsibilities and as part of its CSR activities, the bank has been organising various programs for the benefit of the people at large.

#### NADA Auto Show 2019

Nepal Automobile Association of Nepal is set to organise the 14th edition of its premier automotive exhibition NADA Auto Show 2019 from August 27 to September 1 at Bhrikuti Mandap, Kathmandu. This edition of the exhibition will showcase 23 brands in the 4-wheeler section and 19 brands in the 2-wheeler section, 12 brands of lubricants, 9 brands of tyre, 5 brands of batteries, 14 other garage equipments and auto components along with 13 financial institutions. All together 95 exhibitors comprising importers, dealers, distributors and manufacturers will be accommodated in around 160 small and big stalls. The Auto Show is expected to draw around 75,000 visitors in six days.

#### NATTA asks Tourism Minister to operate TIA round the clock

Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA) requested the government to operate Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) round the clock tohelp bring more tourists into the country. Submitting a memorandum to the newlyelected Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Yogesh Kumar Bhattarai at the ministry on August 5, NATTA also requested the minister to address air congestion issue at the country's only international airport.NATTA has also drawn the attention of the minister toward lack of sufficient parking space for aircrafts at TIA. Similarly, it called upon the tourism ministry to immediately address issues related to restrooms at the airport. "Tourists get first impression about Nepal at the airport. So, it is important that they get hassles-free services at the airport," NATAA said in the memorandum.



A delegation of NATTA led by President CN Pandey also urged the minister to begin construction of second international airport in Nijgadh of Bara, and expedite remaining works of under-construction Pokhara International Airport and Bhairawaha International Airport. He also urged the minister to upgrade Biratnagar and Dhangadhi airports. The NATTA delegation also said that the national flag carrier, Nepal Airlines Corporation should be strong and efficient to support Visit Nepal Year 2020 campaign. "The government should make its management more efficient so that it can operate flights far and wide. NAC needs to have at least four wide-body and six narrow-body aircrafts to support the tourism industry of the country," he added.

NATTA also requested Minister Bhattarai to do the needful to removing Nepali airlines from the European Union (EU) blacklist and creating environment for the national flag carrier to operate flights to major source markets like China, South Korea and the US. Other demands raised by NATTA include VAT refund for petroleum products consumed by tourist vehicles, arrangement of terminal for tourist buses, introduction of e-visa, and express counter at the immigration of TIA for the first class and business class passengers as well as Commercially Important Persons

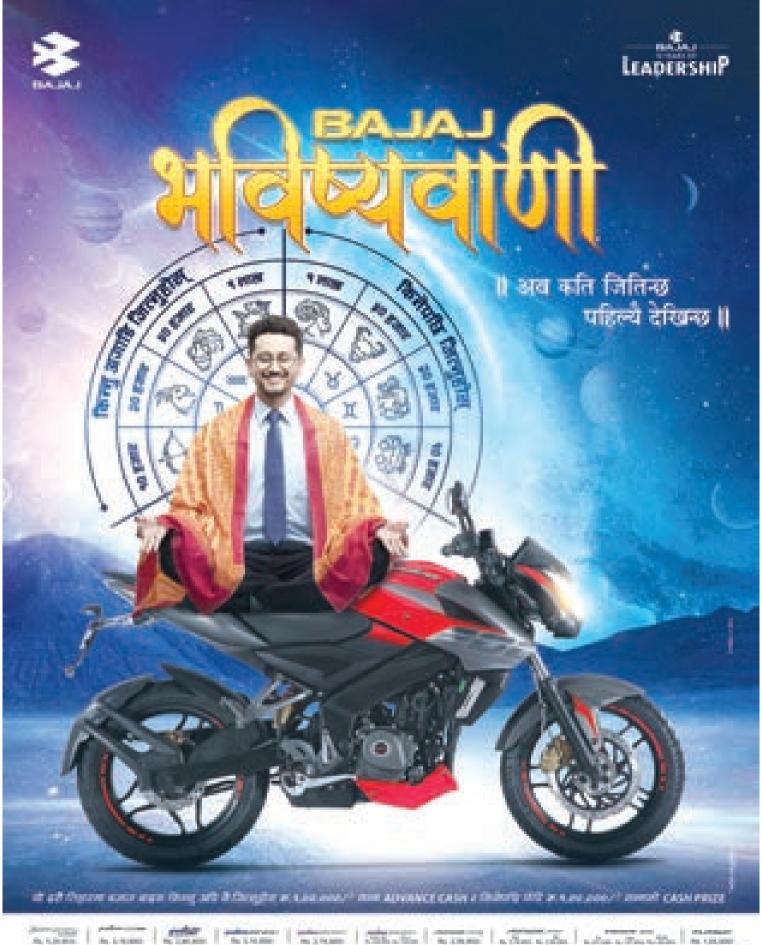
#### PATA Nepal organises Human Capacity Development training

PATA Nepal Chapter in collaboration with Nepal Tourism Board organised a two-day Human Capacity Development (HCD) training workshop on "The Art of Selling Destination, Nepal: Profitable and Sustainable" in Pokhara on August 8-9 and at Chitwan on August 13-14. PATA Nepal Chapter invited Dr Bert Van Walbeek, Managing Director from Winning Edge, Thailand, as resource person to conduct the HCD training with the aim of enhancing the awareness of MICE stakeholders about selling and promoting, both to Special Interest Tourism (SIT) and MICE market segments.

#### Asian Paints Nepal launches Royale Health Shield

Considering the preventive health care needs of its customers, Asian Paints Nepal launched Royale Health Shield interior emulsion paint on 22 August. According to the company's statement, "It is a revolutionary offering laden with extraordinary features that kills germs, helps to purify air by absorbing mal-odour in homes and emits a pleasant floral fragrance."

The product is said to include silver ion technology which kills up to 99% of infection causing bacteria when they hit the wall. The paint also purifies air through its innovative formaldehyde abatement property.















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## NAC operates trial flights to various parts of the country

Nepal Airlines Corporation started operating trail flights to various districts with a purpose of promoting internal tourism. The NAC operated trail flights to Chaurjahari and Taplejung on August 3. According to NAC Spokeperson Ganesh Bahadur Chand, the corporation also ran a trial flight to Sanfebagar of Achham on August 4, Bhojpur on August 5, Bajura on August 6 and Tumlingtar on August 7.

"This initiative is being taken by NAC to contribute towards tourism promotion for 2020. The corporation, being the national flag carrier, has a crucial role to play for the promotion of Visit Nepal Year 2020 tourism campaign," reads the press statement issued by NAC.

## Karnali announces 40 destinations for VNY 2020

Karnali Province has announced 40 tourist destinations as it warms up for Visit Nepal Year 2020 campaign. Of the 40 destinations, 20 are targeted to domestic tourists. Unveiling the destinations, the Minister for Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment of Karnali Province, Nanda Singh Budha, said the provincial government will focus on promotion and infrastructure development in the destinations.

Limi Valley, Reling. Dudhedaha Lake and Kharpunath of Humla; Rara Lake and Chayanath of Mugu; Chandannath, Patarasi and Sinja Valley of Jumla; Pachal Jharana, Chulimalika and Kot Durbar of Kalikot: and Rakam Karnali and Panchakoshi of Dailekh have made it to the list of destinations unveiled by the provincial government for international tourists. Other destinations include Kankre Bihar, Bulbule Lake, Panchapur and Bidhyapur of Surkhet; Kupinde Daha, Khiarabang and Chhaya Kshetra of Salyan; Sisne mountain, Syarpu Lake,

Musikot, and Digre Temple of Western Rukum among others.

The provincial government has decided to promote Panchdewal of Kalikot: Kalika temple. Dahachaur. Kushe Jalajala of Jajarkot; and Kharpunath Shivalaya and Patarasi Mountain of Humla as the destination for internal tourism. It has also prepared 'Ancient Karnali, Land of Civilization' as the province's slogan for Visit Nepal Year campaign. The provincial government also plans to appoint five goodwill ambassadors to promote tourism in Karnali province.

Meanwhile, Karnali Province has opened a Visit Nepal Year Secretariat at the provincial level for tourism promotion. Similarly, the province has also decided to open a liaison office in Kathmandu for promotion of Karnali Province.

#### **CG Foundation Hosts Unfolding Philanthropy**



CG Foundation organised an event on "Unfolding Philanthropy" with Dr Ruth A. Shapiro as the main guest speaker on August 20 in the capital to deepen the understanding on the scope and challenges of philanthropic practice in Asian Economies. The discussion was centred on the trends, patterns, opportunities and emerging challenges in the development sector with all the major stakeholders including the government, development partners, academics and corporate.

## Sunrise Bank expands services in seven more locations

From August 4-12, Sunrise Bank brought seven new branches into operation at Simara and Nijgadh of Bara, Naikap of Kathmandu, Kupondole of Lalitpur, Budhi Bazar of Pokhara, Tamghas of Gulmi and Kushma of Parbat. The bank also inaugurated its sixth extension counter at Saana Gaun of Lalitpur. The branches were inaugurated by senior representatives of the bank along with local representatives of branch locations.

By extending its operation through seven new branches, the bank is looking forward to serving its customers from its 120 branches, 38 branchless banking units, six extension counters and 137 ATM terminals throughout the nation.

## Turkish Airlines hosts interaction session with Asil Özbay



Turkish Airlines hosted an interaction session with Asil Özbay, a solo woman motorcycle traveller from Turkey, at its office premises in Kathmandu on August 23. During the session, Özbay revealed that her passion for motorcycle travel started when she was 17. She has so far she travelled to 28 countries stretching to three continents: Asia, Europe and Africa

Asil Özbay started her recent journey from Turkey two months ago and reached Nepal on August 17 covering the trails through Iran, Pakistan and India. "I thought that I would face a lot of stereotypes throughout my journey as the cultures and societal norms are different for solo travellers, but I was surprised to see people appreciating a lone woman rider and having interest to listen to my stories," she said.

She is a faculty member at Istanbul Gedik University where she teaches Sport Science and is currently doing her PhD in Brand Management from Marmara University, Istanbul. She has 46.1k followers on Instagram: aislozbay. Her next destination for exploration is South America.

"My slogan is 'One Woman, One Bike and One World' and I want to inspire other women to take adventurous decisions. It was - and still is - hard for me to convince my parents, but gradually they have seen the impact I have been making in Turkey and the countries I have travelled to," shares Özbay.

During the same session, Abdullah Tuncer Kececi, General Manager of Turkish Airlines for Nepal also announced that the airline company is sponsoring Özbay's and her bike's trip back to Istanbul, Turkey.



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Janata Bank



#### **HI 5**



Sachin Aryal is the General Manager of Paramount Motors, the authorised distributors of MG Motors for Nepal. He started working in the automobile industry with Continental Trading Enterprises, the authorised distributors of Kia Motors in Nepal where he worked for

six years from 2007-2013; five years as Deputy General Manager and a year as the General Manager. He obtained his MBA degree from Shanker Dev Campus in 1999.

In this issue of **B360**, Sachin Aryal shares the five things that have impacted his work and life. **Excerpts:** 

#### **Determination to work**

The person and the position I am in today is due to my determination to work hard and achieve something in my life. It's been my motto throughout. When I started working, I started from the assistant level where I had to open the depot, clean the workplace, and do every small job needed. I never complained about the work I was given and used to do it with interest so that I could learn something new every day. At the same time, I was also attending high school which back in those days was called ISc at Amrit Science Campus. By doing both simultaneously. I learned how to manage both my studies and work life. After ISc, I switched to the management field and got opportunities to work in various organisations including Continental Trading Enterprises. I learnt a lot from the jobs I was assigned to do.

#### My father

My family had to move around a lot during my childhood because my father was a government officer. We were always together which made us a complete family. During that time, I saw how hard my father had to work for us which inspired me. He always used to say "Work hard and whatever things we desire will automatically come to us." But unfortunately, he passed away when I was just 26. Though he is not here anymore, the wisdom he gave me still motivates me.

#### Motivation

From every job that I have had till date, I have learned something new and different mainly because of the support I got from my seniors. When I pitched ideas to make the

product or brand better, my supervisors always gave me creative feedback and the opportunity to implement those ideas which motivated me to give my 100%.

#### Teamwork

A workplace is greatly affected by the behaviour of colleagues. Everywhere I have worked till date whether it's the depot, Continental Group, Dugar Brothers, educational institutions or Paramount Motors, I have always been surrounded by friendly and hardworking colleagues. Because of this, I have been able to work in a peaceful environment, learn and grow throughout my professional career. It doesn't matter if the personnel are in a higher or lower position, showing and giving mutual respect is what matters most.

#### Health

I am glad that my health has never deteriorated drastically which could seriously affect both my life and work. I have seen many people of my age suffering from various types of diseases like hypertension, sugar, cholesterol, etc and I am thankful that I don't have such diseases. I am not a super health-conscious person and like to eat whatever I feel like. The reason I am healthy is that I love my work and am always happy. Being healthy has allowed me to fulfil my personal and professional duties properly. B





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#### **GET FIT**

#### **MAKE YOUR FITNESS GOALS WORK**



▲ Sandesh Palungwa Limbu, Certified professional fitness instructor, founder of RAGE Fitness, and specialises in mixed martial arts.

Many of us are real fast at making fitness goals and faster yet at breaking them. Fitness is foremost a choice. It can start as an aspiration to look a certain way or to be able to do a certain thing, but eventually it is all about how you make it a part of your life, every single day. It's not just the exercise you do but what you eat and how you live. It's the little choices you make every single moment of your life towards a healthier and stronger you. Here's a list of things that you probably think of when embarking or deciding not to embark on your fitness journey, let's look at them from my perspective:

A lot of people blame their genes on how they look and feel. It's a sore spot really: some people eat to their hearts content and more without putting on an extra kilo while others feel like they are breathing in fat. I say however you are genetically predisposed, please exercise. You need to stay active and do regular exercise to stay healthy and fit. Will you have that page 3 model body, maybe not. Will you look like your favourite body builder, I don't know. But what I do know is that if your exercise regularly, you will feel stronger, healthier and more confident.



Your environment shapes your behaviour and habits. This is real. If you are unable to stick to exercise or eating healthy, you will blame your lack of willpower and discipline and probably let it go at that. But reality is did you do enough? Did you try and shape the environment that dictates how you behave? With a little bit of thought, you can actually shape your environment to support your fitness goals. It can be something as simple as going to bed early to ensure that you are able to wake up in time for your morning jog. It could be eliminating processed foods and sugary drinks from your refrigerator. Think about it clearly and you'll find what's stopping you.

As a beginner, you want immediate results and lasting ones too. In that enthusiasm, you probably take on more than you should. But the truth is that if we challenge ourselves too much before we are ready,

You must challenge
yourself based on your
current abilities.
Too easy and it will bore
you. Too hard and it will
overwhelm you.

it is highly likely that we will eventually fail. You must challenge yourself based on your current abilities. Too easy and it will bore you. Too hard and it will overwhelm you. When you start an exercise program, try and consult a professional trainer to guide you through the ropes and also help you create a program that matches your interests and your fitness goals. Keep challenging yourself as you progress. The idea is to thrive under just the right amount of difficulty. Consistency is the key. One workout won't change anything, but think of where it will get you if you work out regularly over a year. Stretching once in

awhile is not enough but when you do it over a period of time, you will feel greater flexibility and mobility. One healthy meal is not going to matter but when you do it for a year, you will be leaner, healthier and happier. Positive change requires commitment. But when you set yourself up for consistency, remember not to be too hard on yourself. You must find a balance and gradually progress. Occasional slip ups will happen but that should not throw you off the track altogether. Remember consistency is not perfection; it is being committed to stay the course in an effective and sustainable way. Also remember that all your efforts add up! Learning to be consistent – even when you don't feel like it - is a valuable trait that will benefit you, not just in the gym. B

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#### THROUGH THE MYSTIC EYE

#### **STOP DYING TO LIVE**



Sadhguru. Named one of 50 most influential people, Sadhguru is a yogi, mystic, a bestselling author & poet. Sadhguru has been conferred the "Padma Vibhushan" by the Government of India in 2017. the highest civilian award of the year, accorded for exceptional and distinguished service.

In Sanskrit, there are two specific words for knowing. One is gyan, another is vigyan or visheshgyan. All that you can perceive and know through the five sense organs is gyan: knowledge. The word "vigyan" is loosely used today, but what it means is visheshgyan or an extraordinary way of knowing. If you perceive that which is beyond your senses, if you are able to assimilate that knowing, that is visheshgyan.

There is common sense, there is sense, and there is something beyond sense. With common sense, you can handle your survival process. You don't have to be brilliant to survive well. You just need common sense. Actually, a street-smart person could con someone who is very intelligent because someone who is very intelligent may not have the wily nature of one who is walking the streets every day. Common sense is restricted to a certain habitat within which it works.

It happened once, the Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO, was interviewing people for a job. Shankaran Pillai applied. He is very street smart and has a lot of common sense. The

interviewer asked. "Which is closer, Moon or Mumbai" They were in Bangalore. Shankaran Pillai looked up in the sky and he said, "Moon." The interviewer was startled. "What? How do you say that?" Shankaran Pillai said, "Well, I can see the Moon, I can't see Mumbai." When you are on survival mode, this kind of sense works pretty well. But if we try to use this everywhere, we will become one big mess. If you want to transcend, you need a different kind of sense.

Why is going beyond one's senses and knowing needed? If you use the word "need" in terms of whether something is necessary for your survival, it is not needed. If you had been born a chimpanzee, it is definitely not needed. But you have evolved into a human being. Wanting to live like a chimpanzee does not work anymore.

Human intelligence and awareness has come to a place where it cannot limit itself to the ambit of survival. It has to look. This is not a problem, it is a possibility. Every possibility seems like a problem to those who are not willing to take on the possibility. This is a phenomenal possibility but most human beings are treating it like a problem. And they are trying to solve the problem by constantly raising the bar of survival.

Look back at your own lives and see what your idea of survival was 25 years ago, 15 years ago, and today. The bar has constantly been raised. In every segment of society, survival has been raised to a place where even billionaires are struggling to survive among their community. I have, at close quarters, seen multi-billionaires still behaving like beggars. Their mindset is that of a beggar who sits on



the street every day, thinking, "How many more pennies can I gather?" The numbers are different but the experience of life is still the same because you raised the bar of survival.

No other generation has had as many conveniences and comforts as we do today. Nobody ever had homes as big as we do, nobody ever drove chariots with 500 horses even the emperors couldn't do that. Instead of leaving this as survival and seeing the rest as an exploration of life, we are just raising the bar. If we keep raising the bar, one thing that is definitely going to be hit is survival because the planet cannot take it. The Living Earth report says that if every human being on the planet must have what an average American citizen is enjoying right now, we need four-and-a-half planets. But actually, we only have half a planet left, not even a full one. Every generation, every step, every few years, the bar of survival is going up.

In your life, you must fix it somewhere - how much is survival. You must fix it now, not after 25 years: "This is my survival. Then what do I want to do? What is it that really matters to me in my life?" When I go to the United States, I find that in the most affluent nation on the planet, people cannot change the course of their life when they wish. Everyone is enslaved for a minimum of 30 years because they have a 30-year housing loan, a 5-year car loan and so many other things. Even if they find something really compelling that they want to pursue in their life, they can only do it after 30 years. They are just fixed.

This is not a good way to structure our lives. The idea of affluence is that you have the freedom to change the course of your life and do what you want to do. You don't have to be stuck with what you thought was the best thing when you were 20. But a whole lot of people are stuck at 14, not even 20. They still get excited about someone's body parts when they are 50 or 60. That is a tragic way to live because the essence of life is that we are able to explore as much as we can when we live here, to know and experience everything possible that is there in this piece of life that you call "myself". If that doesn't happen, you are just running on the treadmill. You may get exercise but it doesn't get you anywhere. B

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## Suman Regmi

Marketing Head, GO Automobiles

Suman Regmi is Marketing Head of GO Automobiles, distributor of Ford Motors in Nepal. Regmi also works as a part-time lecturer at IEC College of Arts and Fashion. He has been engaged with teaching since 2005. Further, he is working on a consultant project under WFP, Health Ministry, Medication for Nepal.

Regmi acquired his Masters degree in Business Studies and has previously worked in the marketing department of General Electronics in the United States.

An adventurer at heart, he swears by Einstein's quote: "Try not to become a man of success, rather become a man of value".

In this issue of B360, Suman Regmi shares his list of top brands.

#### **Favourite shopping destination**

I would opt for anything that catches my eyes, regardless of the place.

#### **Vehicle**

I am a rider. My KTM Duke 390 always gets me aching for



MacBook Pro and iPhone XS Max top the list.



#### **Eating Out**



My ears and nose are sharp for what's delicious, what's cooking and what's new in town. Moreover, I always fancy a place with good hookah, grilled pork and chicken.

#### I smell of

Armani, hands down!

#### I walk on

Adidas when it comes to casuals and Dulla for formal wear.



#### On vour wrist

I love my Tag Heuer and Galaxy Watch 4 but Timex IQ+ gets the top spot.

#### **Shades**



Ray-Ban Wayfarers. This one runs smoothly with my mood and personality.

#### **Travel Destination**



My idea of travel is to get my heart racing on a bike. And Ladakh is on my bucket list.

#### On my playlist

"Gravity" by John Mayer

#### **Could watch** this on a loop

The Shawshank Redemption

#### **Favourite app** Netflix

#### **Most visited** website

Undoubtedly, Google



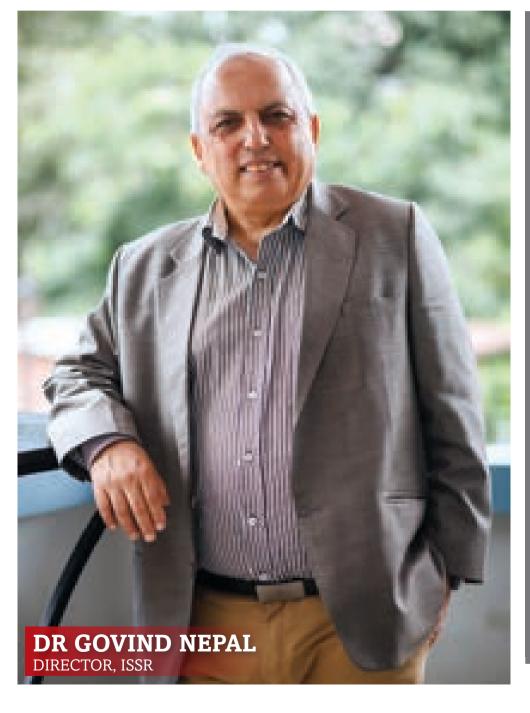
I'm not a man of fancy indulgences. Currently, my cat 'WiFi' is my greatest indulgence.







Nepal Ambuja Cement Udhyog Pvt. Ltd. Mayadevi Bural Municipality - 3, Bhairathawa, Nepal Phone: 07-1412017, 412018, Email: nepalambujo:@nepalambujo.com, Web: www.nepalambujo:ement.com Korhmondu: Signature Building, 4th floor, Teku, Phone: 01-400205, Pokhara: Baba Complex, Newnood Phone: 061-521281 THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION WAS TO LAY THE FOUNDATION OF MEGA BANK. I DECIDED ALONG WITH MY FRIENDS TO ESTABLISH A BANK WHICH IS PROMOTED BY A LARGE NUMBER OF SHAREHOLDERS RATHER THAN BIG CORPORATE HOUSES. THIS WAS AN IDEA AND I TOOK THE CHALLENGE TO SHAPE IT INTO REALITY."



Dr. Govinda Nepal is the Director of the Institute for Strategic and Socio-Economic Research (ISSR). ISSR is an independent, interdisciplinary and non-profit think tank to create awareness on socioeconomic development issues and influence public policy. After completing his Masters degree from Tribhuvan University and further studies from Moscow, Dr. Nepal worked as a Professor at TU for 39 years. A true multitasker, organisations at the same time. Some of the key roles he has accomplished are as Adviser to the government; Chief Adviser to the Finance Minister; Member of the National Planning Commission among others.

He has further worked with organisations like World Bank and Asian Development Bank as a consultant. Dr Nepal has also contributed to the establishment of different institutions like Mega Bank, ISSR and NIC Academy. He has additionally served as the Charter President of Lion's Club and Board Member of Nepal Economic Association.

Ankita Jain of B360 interviewed Dr. Govinda Nepal to gain insight into his experience as a leader and his thoughts on leadership.

Excerpts:

#### How would you describe your leadership style?

Leadership style is different for every individual. According to me, leadership combines three elements: vision, strategy and dynamism.

#### What is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess?

Well, that one characteristic should be dynamism. Leaders should be dynamic. S/he has to change her/his strategies according to the need of the hour. Leaders have to understand their organization, manpower and their capabilities, and become an organic part of the organisation. Dynamism also refers to doing something innovative. For instance, you can replicate past experience and achieve success but with changing times, you can't apply the same technique, strategy and achieve the results that you desire. One has to feel the pulse of the future.

## ISSR is recognised by the Ministry of Finance as its policy partner. What went into this?

When you are working with the government, you have to understand their vision, plan and aspiration. Also, you need to do the research work accordingly. Since the ISSR team is working for 25-30 years with the government in one capacity or the other, we believe we are appropriate enough to work with the government on policy issues. And the government now has high aspirations. For instance, the government wants to develop the country into 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepalis'. This is the motto of the government of Nepal. It is easier said than achieved. So the government needs advice and inputs regarding different issues, one of them is economic. In this organisation, we have a team of highly competent economists and this way I believe, we can fruitfully cooperate with the government.

## What has been the most important decision you have made as a leader in your career?

The most important decision was to lay the foundation of Mega Bank. I decided along with my friends to establish a bank which is promoted by a large number of shareholders rather than big corporate houses. Collecting money from masses and opening a bank really fascinated me. This was an idea and I took the challenge to shape it into reality. Now with more than 1200 promoters, we have founded a commercial bank with Rs. 2 billion.

## How do you help a new employee understand the culture of your organisation?

Induction of the employee plays the most important role. Further, proper communication solves the rest of the problems. Employees should realise that they are working for the organisation and not for any individual. This enhances their innovative approach rather than following instructions.

#### Have you ever struggled with worklife balance?

Work-life balance is a great problem. We do multitasking and concentrate least on the family. Talking about my life, I was a professor in the university; adviser to the government; conducted consultancy work, performed social work in Lion's Club... and all these at the same time. Today, when I don't have much work to do, I feel that my life has become monotonous. Moreover, my family knows that I am using all my time for different responsibilities. Though they understand me, they frequently complain. Now I believe it is high time that I devote maximum time to the family.

#### As a leader have you faced any failure?

When I was a Fundraising Adviser to the Intermediate Technology Development Group, a British INGO, now known as Practical Action; I submitted a proposal to the foundation. The proposal was about an idea of converting hospital toilet waste into biogas energy which can be further used to cook meals in the hospital. This idea was well accepted and I received the funding immediately. To go ahead with the project, I invited people who work for the biogas sector and asked for their help. Every individual turned down my idea claiming that hospitals use detergent which forbids the formation of gas required. After a big no from everyone, the lesson I learned was to never make castles in the air. I submitted the proposal without knowing the ground reality and this was my biggest mistake. The obstacle didn't end here. Since the fund was already sanctioned, I had to justify it. So, I organised a seminar inviting national and international experts available in the city who were directly or indirectly involved with the biogas. Finally, a solution was found and we succeeded in converting hospital toilet waste into biogas. But unfortunately, that produced biogas wasn't utilised by the hospital attendants claiming that it came out of waste. Ultimately, the project was a complete failure.

#### Can you explain the impact, if any, that social networking has made on your organisation?

Social networking has helped us stay updated with the news, analysis and research. It also helps to interact with experts of different fields. And without the help of social networking, such an institution cannot function.

## What are you doing to ensure to continue to grow and develop as a leader?

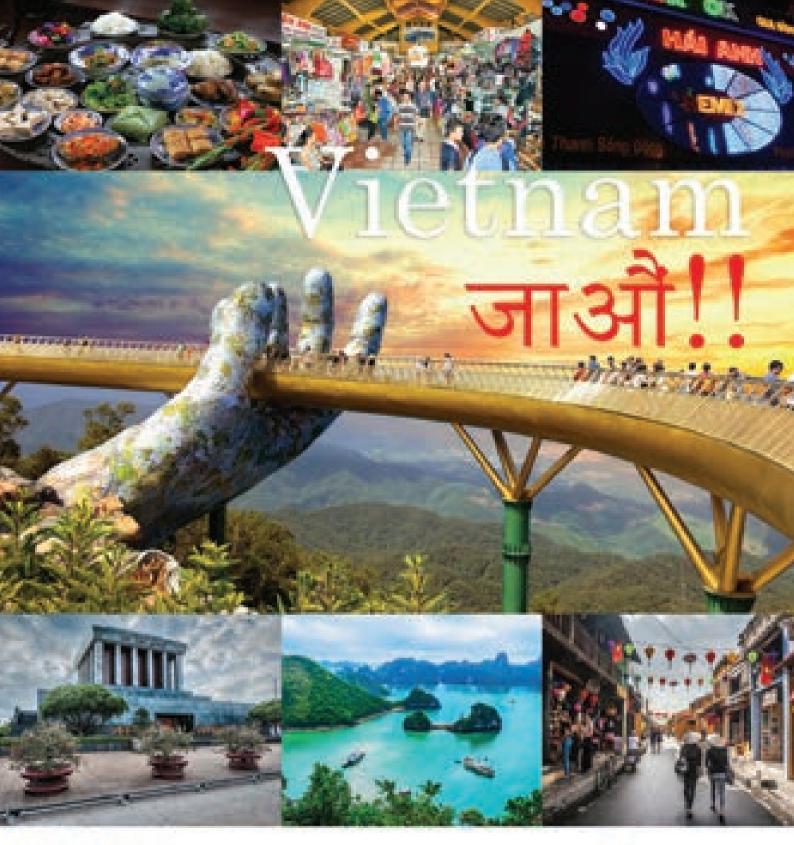
As a leader, one has to read and know the value of time. I am an early riser. I wake up at 3am and invest my first two hours on reading. Reading helps us but it is innovative thinking which helps us to grow. Moreover, I believe a leader should be accessible and have respect for the employees.

#### What criticism do you get most, if any?

I am often criticised for not communicating about the task I am doing. Further, I do not have a habit of jotting down important notes. This habit becomes problematic at times.

#### Any Nepali whose leadership skills have inspired you?

I get inspired by day-to-day people. There is a lady in my neighborhood whom I see everyday working day and night to earn meals for her family. She works throughout the day with no complaint and always greets people with a smile. Her hard work inspires me. Talking about the known faces, there is no other inspiration like Dr. Sanduk Ruit **B** 



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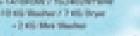
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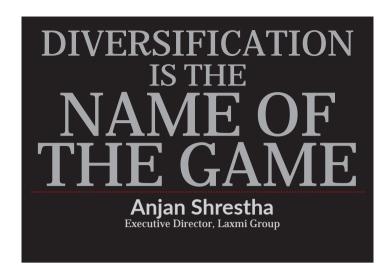
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