



NICCI e-Newsflash

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On the occasion of Happy New Year 2070



We extend our greetings & best wishes to all for your good health, prosperity & happiness

FNCCI honours NICCI as the best Bi-national Chamber on their AGM



On the occasion of 47th Annual General Meeting on 10th April 2013 in Kathmandu, FNCCI has honoured Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry (NICCI) for the third time, as the best Bi-national Chamber for its contribution towards promotion and development of industry and commerce. Chairman of the Ministers of Council Khil Raj Regmi handed over the title to the officiating president of NICCI Shyam Kumar Lohia amidst the inaugural session of the AGM.

NICCI extends gratitude to FNCCI for this honour and shares the honour with all cooperative members and well wishers.

Earlier, FNCCI had honoured NICCI with such title in 2003 and 2008 as well. ♦

NICCI team meets Finance, Industry & Commerce Minister



A team of Nepal India Chamber of Commerce & Industry met newly appointed Minister of Finance, Industry, Commerce & Supplies Shankar Prasad Koirala on 5th April 2013 at his office at ministry of commerce & supplies. The team led by Shyam Kumar Lohia, officiating president of NICCI was comprised of Arun Kumar Chaudhary, Immediate Past President, Rajendra Man Sherchan, Treasurer, Shekhar Golchha, Executive Member and KM Singh Director.

Keeping in view the existing burning issues related to industry, trade, investment, industrial environment, NICCI team requested minister Koirala to address the problems being faced by Nepalese

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NICCI team meets Finance, Industry & Commerce



private sector and presented the suggestion in brief as follows:

- To make suitable Environment for Domestic and Foreign Investment
- To make the supply of power regular as soon as possible.
- Interest rate on industrial loans which are now very high should be reduced
- Labour issues should be solved permanently making it investment friendly
- Logistic cost in Nepal which is among the highest in the region should be reduced
- Non-tariff barrier in Nepal-India trade should be abolished
- Investors should be encouraged by maintaining peace and security

- Export oriented industries should be encouraged without any discrimination on the basis of mode of payment
- Full Fledge Budget to be brought immediately
- Election should be held as soon as possible and give the way out to the country from the political transition.

Regarding the suggestions given by NICCI Minister Koirala was very positive and assured to take initiative on the suggestion given by NICCI staying within the mandate given to the government.

In the meeting secretary of Ministry of Commerce & Supplies Lal Mani Joshi informed that the Govt. of India is very positive towards fulfilling the commitment on Railway Agreement, access road to Bangladesh and its ports via India, use of other ports of India and bring the Railways into the Dryport at the southern part of Nepal and to upgrade the laboratories of Nepal and accreditation to the report of Nepalese Laboratories as soon as they are upgraded. ♦

NICCI Kathmandu & Biratnagar team meets H.E. Indian Ambassador

A team lead by Shyam Kumar Lohia, Acting President of Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry (NICCI) comprising Lalit Kumar Lohia, President of NICCI Eastern Region Chapter, Biratnagar, Chapter Secretary General Shyam Prasad Poudel, Executive Member Yadav Pokharel and Director at the NICCI central office KM Singh met H.E. Jayant Prasad, Ambassador of India to Nepal at the Embassy of India, Kathmandu on Wednesday 10th April 2013.

Briefing the meeting with His Excellency, First Secretary (Commerce) Pankaj K. Singh informed that as on the evening of 9th April no commercial consignments bearing CTD form were stopped at the Jogbani Custom except very few petty consignments which have arrived at Jogbani customs via transport. Keeping in view the nature of such consignment,

His Excellency also assured that the remaining petty consignments which have already arrived at the Jogbani customs will also be solved addressing the technical problems for one time by one week. He further informed that such consignments that will arrive now onwards have to follow with prescribed documentation and such consignments will be checked and released accordingly on the basis of prescribed documents only.

Regarding some of the existing practical and technical problems at the Jogbani Panitanki customs put up by the delegation, His Excellency assured to resolve them by consulting the concerned authority as soon as possible. His Excellency also assured to extend necessary support to NICCI and its Chapter for making it more effective and vibrant. ♦

NICCI holds consultative meeting with Employers Council of FNCCI & its team



NICCI Executive Committee led by officiating president Shyam Kumar Lohia held an informal consultative meeting with the Chairperson of the Employers Council of FNCCI Pashupati Murarka and member of the recently constituted tripartite committee for fixation

of minimum wage Manish Agrawal on 8th April 2013 at NICCI secretariat and discussed for harmonious labour policies to make it investment and labour friendly. ♦

Govt announces budget of Rs 404.82 billion

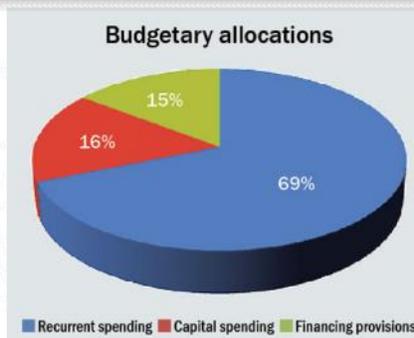
The government has announced a full budget of Rs 404.82 billion for the current fiscal year, allaying fears of fiscal strains that absence of a complete fiscal policy could have left on the economy.

The budget announcement made on Tuesday was the third in a series this fiscal year -something that happened for the first time in the country's history. Although the "full adjusted budget" presented by Finance Minister Shankar Prasad Koirala has not introduced new programmes, it has, however, taken few polices that aim import substitution. It also seeks to encourage the private sector.

The budget has arranged additional resources for some programmes related to agriculture, energy, infrastructure and exports. Given the shortage of fertilisers hitting cereal production this year, the budget has earmarked additional funds to ensure smooth supply of fertilisers.

The budget also pledged interest subsidy for the commercial agriculture sector which was earlier limited to commercial livestock. "Similarly, farmers from the mountain reason, contributing to the Pashmina industry by rearing mountain goats and sheep, will also be provided interest subsidy," states the budget.

Presenting the budget, Finance Minister Koirala said he has



managed additional funds for setting up five collection centres in areas along highways so as to ensure market for agriculture products.

For the industrial sector, budget has promised setting up another industrial estate considering the fact that there has not been any new industrial estate established in the last 25 years.

The budget has also aimed to complete the construction of special economic zone (SEZ) in Bhairawaha by the end of the current fiscal year.

The government has also promised to bear the difference between the cost and selling pieces of electricity imported from India until Nepal becomes self-reliant on power. The budget has allotted necessary funds for constructing transmission lines to evacuate energy from "super-six" projects that have been handed over to the private sector through open competition.

Similarly, the government has also allotted budget for two mega projects—Budhi Gandaki and Nalsyn-gadh.

The finance minister also said adequate budget has been allocated for "National Pride Projects" including Ranijamara Kulariya, Shikta, Babai, Mahakali Irrigation Project, Kathmandu Road Expansion, Postal Road and Mid-Hill Highway, among others. ♦

Political parties commit to hydropower development

In a rare gesture of solidarity, top leaders of seven political parties on Wednesday expressed their commitment to the country's hydropower development and decided not to hinder hydel project works. At the 47th annual general meeting (AGM) of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), the top leaders, along with Chairman of the Interim Election Government Khil Raj Regmi signed a commitment paper.

Besides Regmi, other signatories in the paper were UCPN (Maoist) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, CPN-UML Chairman Jhala Nath Khanal, Rastriya Janashakti Party President Surya Bahadur Thapa, Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Loktrantrik President Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar, Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal Chairman Upendra Yadav and Tarai Madhes Loktantik Party Chairman Mahantha Thakur. FNCCI President Suraj Vaidya signed the paper on behalf of the private sector.

With the country grappling with 10 hours of load shedding every day, the FNCCI made the leaders sign the paper in dim light powered by a generator.

The FNCCI paper has sought commitment from the political parties that they would not hinder project development by resorting to strikes and demanding financial assistance from investors and by helping reduce risks to human resources, machineries and other property of hydropower projects. The signatories also committed to help in the construction of infrastructure—access road, transmission lines and establishing subsidiary industries to produce construction materials for hydro power construction and preparing human re-



sources.

However, leaders from the CPN-Maoist did not attend the signing ceremony. A high-level FNCCI official said the CPN-Maoist denied participating in the programme, referring to their policy of not taking part in a programme attended by the interim government chairman. "The commitment paper has already been submitted to the CPN-Maoist and we will try to garner its commitment later," the official said.

Though no leader from the Nepali Congress attended the programme in person, party President Sushil Koirala expressed his party's commitment to the paper through a video link.

Interim government Chairman Regmi said the commitment will help the country move towards economic development. "It will also lead the country towards prosperity," he added. UCPN (Maoist) Chairman Dahal said the commitment is a milestone in the history of the country's hydropower sector, especially at a time when hydropower resources have not been properly harnessed.

It has also urged the signatories to include their commitment in their parties' political manifesto. "The commitment will be presented in the parliament and approved as a National Resolution," the paper says. "To ensure fruitful relationship between Nepal and neighbouring countries in terms of exchange and trade of energy, there should be support in signing trilateral or multilateral agreements."

The leaders also expressed their commitment not to nationalise, take a project under control or let foreign investors take the profit back to their countries. ♦

Import of luxury goods posts double-digit growth

Though the government has been discouraging imports of luxury goods, import of such goods recorded double-digit growth over the first eight months of current fiscal year compared to figures of the same period of 2011/12. Imports of gold, silver, energy drinks, alcohol, tobacco and cosmetics, among others grew significantly during the review period compared to last fiscal year.

Data compiled by Trade and Export Promotion Center (TEPC) shows country's gold and silver import soared by 23.4 percent to Rs 23.79 billion during the review period. Gold import alone increased by 5.7 percent to Rs 17.14 billion. The government had raised customs duty on gold by Rs 700 per 10 grams in January in a bid to check possible smuggling to India after the southern neighbor increased duty on gold to Rs 2,880 per 10 grams.

Gold and silver combined became country's third largest import after petroleum and iron & steel products during the review period.

In a bid to check widening trade deficit, the government has

been limiting gold imports to 15 kg a day since 2010/11. The government took the step after gold import rose to over Rs 41 billion in 2009/10 leading to steep rise in trade deficit and sharp drop in foreign currency reserve.

Similarly, the country imported cosmetic products worth Rs 2.41 billion in the review period, up by 27.3 percent compared to figures of the same period of the last fiscal year. Alcohol import also increased by 41.8 percent to Rs 1.18 billion, while tobacco import soared by 7 percent to Rs 1.41 billion. Import of energy drinks also increased by 40.8 percent to Rs 550 million during the review period.

However, export of prioritized products like natural honey, articles of silver jewelry and woolen products, which are among the 19 products included in Nepal Trade Integration Strategies (NTIS), dropped during the review period.

Export of woolen products, declined by 21 percent to Rs 307 million during the period. Similarly, exports of articles of silver jewelry and natural honey fell by 42 percent and 97.5 percent, respectively to Rs 99.4 million and Rs 5,000. ♦



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Goa has 2 billion tonnes of iron ore reserves: Manohar Parrikar



Goa (India) Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar on Wednesday told the Legislative Assembly that the state has reserves of two billion tonnes of iron ore, which is yet to be tapped. Parrikar told the House that there are two billion tonnes of iron ore reserves in the state, while Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) has estimated the ore to be 1.2 billion tonnes.

The Chief Minister was responding to a question raised by independent MLA Vijay Sardesai, who sought details of the mining leases in the state. Sardesai had also asked about the value of mineral assets underlying in each of the leases.

Parrikar said that the value of mineral assets below the mining leases cannot be quantified as rates of mineral depends on the market forces, which keep changing from time to time as also the quantity cannot be calculated, but can only be estimated.

When Sardesai sought to know the exact value as per the existing rates, the chief minister assured to place the details about the value on the table of the House soon.

Goa had exported 38.25 million tonnes of iron ore in the year 2011-12.

The official figures tabled on the floor of the house reveals that the export was 51.17 million metric tonnes in the year 2010-11, 47.02 MMT in 2009-10, 38.78 MMT in 2008-09 and 39.79 MMT in the year 2007-08. PTI-PANAJI

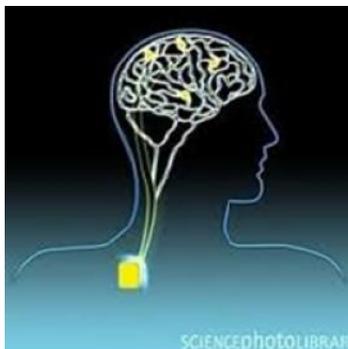
Brain pacemaker to treat acute depression

Researchers have successfully implanted pacemaker electrodes into the brains of patients suffering from major depression, with symptoms of six out of seven of them improving considerably and rapidly.

Dr Volker Arnd Coenen, neurosurgeon at the Department of Neurosurgery at the Bonn University Hospital in Germany, implanted electrodes into the medial fore-brain bundles in the brains of subjects suffering from major depression with the electrodes being connected to a brain pacemaker.

The nerve cells were then stimulated by means of a weak electrical current, a method called Deep Brain Stimulation. In a matter of days, in six out of seven patients, symptoms such as anxiety, despondence, listlessness and joylessness had improved considerably.

"Such sensational success both in terms of the strength of the effects, as well as the speed of the response has so far not been achieved with any other method," said Dr Thomas E Schlapfer from the Bonn University Hospital Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy.



The researchers have already shown in several studies that deep brain stimulation shows an amazing and - given the severity of the symptoms - unexpected degree of amelioration of symptoms in major depression.

In those studies, however, the physicians had not implanted the electrodes into the medial fore-brain bundle but instead into the nucleus accumbens, another part of the brain's reward system. This had resulted in clear and sustainable improvements in about 50 per cent of subjects.

"But in this new study, our results were even much better," said Schlapfer in a statement.

A clear improvement in complaints was found in 85 per cent of patients, instead of the earlier 50 per cent. In addition, stimulation was performed with lower current levels, and the effects showed within a few days, instead of after weeks.

The study was published in the international journal Biological Psychiatry. PTI-BERLIN

We solicit suggestions/feedback from all members and readers for NICCI e -Newsflash at secretariat@nicci.org

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