

**Remarks by Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka at the First
Edition of Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series
Kathmandu, 7 June 2022**

Honorable Members of Parliament
Chief Secretary of the Government of Nepal,
Foreign Secretary,
Keynote Speaker Prof. Surya Prasad Subedi,
Excellencies the Ambassadors,
Distinguished Guests,
Friends from the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good evening to you all!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all here tonight on the occasion of the very first in the Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series. The need to institute a platform for constructive and insightful deliberations on key foreign policy issues has been discussed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a long time - it is with a great pride that we embark today on the first of the series.

This lecture series is named after Professor Yadu Nath Khanal, who was himself a perfect combination of erudition, expertise, and modesty. It is a fitting tribute to him, and an apt recognition of his seminal contribution to shaping Nepal's foreign policy and diplomacy that it is named in his honour.

Let me begin by thanking Professor Dr. Surya Subedi for accepting our invitation to be the keynote speaker here this evening. Today Prof Subedi joins us in celebration but we also recognize the dedication and readiness he has shown over many years to travel all the way from the United Kingdom to be here in Nepal to share his knowledge and expertise in the service of his home country whenever needed.

Professor Subedi has succinctly encapsulated the evolution of Nepal's foreign policy from its foundation. He has also suggested future outlooks for Nepal's foreign policy. We are thankful for this contribution and dedication since it cannot be overestimated how useful it has been for the practitioners of foreign policy and diplomacy to hear perspectives from an academician with a wide international exposure.

Prof. Subedi's views have emphasized the safeguarding of our sovereignty, territorial integrity, national independence, protection, and the promotion and advancement of national interest as cornerstones of Nepal's foreign policy.

The foreign policy parameters defined by our Constitution serve as a guiding light for us and define a balanced and independent foreign policy and diplomacy. We strive to maintain friendly relations with our immediate neighbors, extended neighbors, development partners, major powers, the destination countries of our migrant workers, as well as all other countries of the world. The basis of these friendly relations are firmly rooted on sovereign equality and mutual respect; this is an approach that has always benefited us and has served our national interest well.

Rapidly changing dynamics of international politics and shifting power equation among major powers have rendered foreign policy making and practice more dynamic and complex. The world was already facing significant uncertainties in the global social, economic and international peace and security arenas. These uncertainties were further compounded by the ongoing war in Ukraine. The devastating humanitarian crisis that this war unleashed also caused other far reaching crisis that have affected millions of people globally. Higher inflation, ensuing food and energy security threats, slower economic growth and the drying up of international financial resources is contributing to significant negative supply shocks for the world economy. The growing threats to international peace and security and the escalating tension between world powers are directly linked to these uncertainties. Nepal is certainly not immune to this global tumult. Unlike in the past, today's foreign policy is not limited to a set pattern of bilateral and multilateral institutional engagements alone, it also has to deal with mega challenges, such as, climate change; financial, food and energy crises; international migration; refugee crisis; mass evacuation and repatriation of population; transnational crimes; cyber security; terrorism and so forth.

In light of a rapidly changing global political landscape, the challenges of today's foreign policy can only be addressed through the collective and collaborative efforts of all countries, big or small, operating under accepted norms of rules-based international order and through multilateralism. We consider that respect for and adherence to the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations provide a sound basis for cooperation among nations and will allow us to tackle these challenges on a global scale.

Our present Government, led by Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, remains committed to maintaining Nepal as a democratic, peace-loving, and inclusive nation, where the respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights prevail. Attaining economic development and prosperity for our people stands as the high priority agenda for economic diplomacy.

The recent local governments have consolidated our democratic foundation and forcefully restated the supremacy of the popular will. Nearly 65% of 17.7 million voters peacefully participated and elected over 35 thousand representatives, including over 14 thousand women representatives. The entire international community has appreciated this successful democratic exercise – it is an extraordinary feat needs to be highlighted and celebrated.

Dear Friends,

The first lecture in the Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series, whose aim was to share insightful assessments of Nepal's foreign policy, now concludes on the positive note that it will continue as an important event in the Ministry's annual calendar in the coming years. We look forward to these regular events as an ongoing opportunity to continue to provide insights on areas of foreign policy.

I would like to close by placing on record my special thanks to Professor Jaya Raj Acharya, a name intimate to Professor Khanal, who was with us throughout the preparation for this event but who unfortunately could not join us this evening due to a commitment outside the country.

I also thank Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and other colleagues at the Ministry for their contribution and dedication to make this event successful.

Special thanks also go to the media for their coverage of this program so that the insights that have been shared here can reach a wider audience. In addition, I am happy to announce that the lectures will be uploaded on YouTube and the Ministry's website soon.

In closing, I extend sincere thanks also to our distinguished guests for their attendance and active participation. We look forward to getting together again next year to share more topical views.

I thank you.