

Smartest Industry Minister Nabindra Raj Joshi
Siddhi B Ranjitkar

Minister for Industry Nabindra Raj Joshi is the smartest minister because he has done something no economic or political genius has so far thought of. He is involving financial agencies of Nepal Army, Nepal Police and Armed Police Force of Nepal, hopefully some others too in running the State-owned industries that have been deliberately set aside causing the loss of billions of Nepalese rupees (NPR) to the State and to the nation and the people. Unlike other ministers that have been only seeking commission on the decisions they make, Minister Joshi has been engaging in the businesses from which he would not receive any commission but benefit to the entire nation and the concerned people particularly the workers and consumers.

Minister for Industry Nabindra Raj Joshi has said that the three securities agencies such as Nepal Army, Armed Police Force of Nepal, and Nepal Army will run the Hetauda Textile Mill with their joint investment. In the first phase, the mill will produce the necessary clothes required for the uniform of the employees of those three securities agencies, and for the uniform of school students, the news in "gorkhapatra" of October 28, 2016 stated. Thus, the Hetauda Textile Mill will have a new life after one-and-a-half decades of hibernation.

First of all, all these three securities agencies would not need to buy the clothes from the foreign countries thus saving the hard-earned foreign currency. Then, these agencies would not need to face the criticism for real or imaginary cases of taking handsome amount of commissions from the traders while purchasing the clothes for the uniform of their staffs and employees. They also will benefit from earning the profits from running the mill.

The nation will gain a lot, too, as a lot of people will have the employment opportunities from the opening of the mill. Workers previously working in the mill will have their jobs back again. Many support staffs will have new employments. Folks running the support services to the mill and its workers and employees will also benefit a lot from the opening of the mill. It will add at least a few amount to the national incomes of the country.

Minister for Industry Joshi has already opened up the pharmaceutical company that had been closed for years in Kathmandu, and he has been working on reviving other nationally important industries such as paper factory, rubber factory, cement factories and so on. Minister Joshi will be remembered as the icon of the industrial development in Nepal if he would open up as many closed industries as possible. Even in such a short time, Minister Joshi has performed remarkably. Hopefully, he would serve the country meaningfully making all the industries work again.

None of the high brains working in the National Planning Commission or in the ministries such as the industry and finance has ever thought of involving the securities agencies in reviving the closed industries. This is an innovative idea probably none has thought in the past. This might be what some experts like to call public-private partnership (PPP) in running the mill. That is why I call the minister Joshi smartest minister.

These securities agencies have a lot of money as the savings of their staffs and employees. They have been looking for better investment than simply depositing the money in banks for earning meager interest. So, these agencies will certainly earn more from investing in the industries, and running them than simply stashing away in banks. These agencies will be able to run the mill better than the State agencies, as they will work as private agencies rather than the State agencies. So, they might be able to take prompt and effective decisions on running the mill than any State agency could.

These securities agencies might be interested in investing in the infrastructures such as the Kathmandu-Hetauda Fast-Track Highway, and hydropower projects provided the concerned ministers are willing to involve these securities agencies. In such case, everybody will win.

Nepal does not lack the resources but lacked the folk such as Minister Joshi to work selflessly for the country for the people. On October 23, 2016, Minister for Tourism Jevan Bahadur Shahi told the anchor of the "antar-sambad" of the Radio Nepal morning program, "We are begging in a golden bowl." This is an enough hint at Nepal has sufficient resources for development on its own but its ministers have been begging. The minister is one hundred percent correct in saying so.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the voters that have voted for such an extraordinary folks like Minister Joshi, and another Minister Shahi that has at least dared to talk about the real situation in the country. Hopefully, Minister Shahi also would act as Minister Joshi did. In the future elections, voters would surely vote for the folks that have performed extraordinarily.

In the past we had the ministers that had sought nothing but the rent for the decisions they made. For example, while Dr Ram Sharan Mahat was the finance minister, and Girija Prasad Koirala was the prime minister immediately after the general elections in 1990, the State sold the Bansbari Shoe Factory to an Indian company that took away the Chinese machines to India closing the factory in Kathmandu. The State sold the two brand new Boeing airplanes belonging to the then (Royal) Nepal Airlines Corporations, and took on lease an old airplane ruining the airlines. These prime minister and minister closed the Trolleybus Company, and Sajha Company that had been smoothly running the public transport. These are only a few examples of so many things the State had sold at the time of Prime Minister Girija and Finance Minister Mahat.

If I have the correct memory once the then Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat had said that taking commission was not wrong in other word not a sin. So, anybody could imagine how much money the concerned State officials must have made from selling the State-owned industries, and airplanes as commission on selling, and then another commission on taking another airplane on lease.

I still vividly remember once the then Minister Dr Ram Sharan Mahat said that the State had saved a large amount of money shedding its responsibility for the Janakpur Cigarette Company. However, he did not say how much money any State official had made out of it. Surely, somebody must have made some money at the cost of the nation.

As a doctorate on economics, Dr Ram Sharan Mahat knew and knows even today if he had not forgotten the economics while indulging in the politics that closing the Janakpur Cigarette Factory had been a great loss to the nation. All the workers and staffs working in the factory have lost the livelihood sending most of them back to under the poverty line. The farmers that have been producing tobacco have lost their market. They need to switch on to different crops. Many other support service companies also lost their business. So, the nation lost a lot for the State saving a certain amount.

Now, if somebody compares the deeds of Minister Joshi with that of the then Minister Mahat then everybody could easily see how Minister Joshi has made the benefits to the nation and the folks involved in the industries. All the workers are back to work means increase in the GDP no matter how small it is. Then, the staffs that have been working in those industries, and the service-sector folks providing the services to those industries have got back their jobs, too. All these things Minister Joshi did at no cost to the State, as he has successfully mobilize the idle resources the Nepal Army, Armed Police Force, and Nepal Police have.

Voters need to think over whether they would vote for the builders of the national wealth such as Nabindra Joshi or sellers of the State-owned assets. Voters are the sovereign folks that could change the fate of the country. So, voters need to think twice whether they would vote on the party line no matter who s/he is or vote for the best person like Nabindra Raj Joshi and brighten the country. Choice is of course theirs.

October 29, 2016