

Source: The Rising Nepal, 29 May 2021

Discount On Electricity Tariff For Prohibition Period

By TRN Online, Kathmandu, May 29: The government has presented the provision of no tariff for the people who consume electricity up to 20 units monthly for the period of a prohibition order.

Issuing the budget for the fiscal year 2021/022 today Finance Minister Bishnu Paudel declared the provision.

Source: The Rising Nepal, 29 May 2021

Tourism Recorded Monumental Losses In 2020, While Energy Saw An Uptick

Kathmandu, May 29: The year 2020 was a devastating one for Nepal's tourism, as shown by the Economic Survey of 2020/21.

The survey, whose report was made public by the Ministry of Finance on Friday, showed that only 230,085 tourists arrived in the country in 2020. This is a monumental decrease of nearly 81 per cent from 2019.

Similarly, from these foreign visitors, the country earned a revenue of Rs. 24.95 billion which is 70 per cent less than the preceding year.

The Government of Nepal had declared 2020 as the Visit Nepal Year with the objective of attracting two million tourists. But, it had to postpone the campaign in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The mountaineering sector saw a similar decline with the number of mountaineers scaling Nepal's peak decreasing by 95 per cent and the royalties decreasing by 98 per cent.

Most of the tourists that came to Nepal last year came from India followed by Myanmar, Thailand, China and the United States of America.

Like in 2019, a majority of the tourists that came to Nepal visited Lumbini.

Nevertheless, Lumbini recorded a 74 per cent drop in visitor numbers.

The survey attributes this dismal tourist scenario to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus that began from Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019 and spread across the world in 2020, prompting countries to restrict international travel and public mobility.

Meanwhile, according to the data presented by the survey, there are 142 star hotels and 1,151 non-star hotels, lodges and resorts in the country. Likewise, there are 10 casinos, 3,743 travel agencies, 2,797 trekking agencies, 82 rafting agencies, 84 tourist transport operators and 27 international flight operators.

In the energy sector, under the government's declaration to mark 2018/19 to 2028/29 as the 'Energy Decade', it has been able to expand electricity usage and access. As per the report, 93 per cent of the country's population had access to electricity as on March 2021. The total electricity connected to the national grid has increased by 4.1 per cent.

The survey also revealed that, of the total 1,458 megawatts of electricity connected to

the national grid, 1,299 megawatts was generated from hydroelectricity, 30.14 megawatts from solar energy, 53.4 megawatts from thermal energy, 72 megawatts from the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre and three megawatts from sugar mills through the co-generation method.

Electric Vehicles Stuck At Sirsia For Last Three Months Will Soon Get Clearance

By Dipak Prasad Gautam, Birgunj, Jun. 1: After the budget abolished excise duty on import of electric vehicles and reduced customs duty levied on electric vehicles, many imported cars stuck in the dry port of Sirsia in Birgunj are expected to get customs clearance.

To increase the internal consumption of electricity and to promote the use of environmentally-friendly means of transportation, the government on Saturday announced to remove excise duty on electric vehicles.

According to Chudamani Sharma, Information Officer at Dry Port Customs Office, not a single electric vehicle has got customs clearance in the last three months.

"However, two-wheeled electric vehicles have received customs clearance in the same time period," he added.

In the last three months, not a single electric vehicle entering Nepal through Birgunj got customs clearance, said Sharma adding that many imported electric vehicles were awaiting customs clearance at Sirsia Dry Port.

The government's announcement to remove excise duty for electric vehicles is likely to encourage the use of electric vehicles in the country.

During the budget announcement last year, the government had raised the tax on battery-powered cars.

The government later reversed its move, after widespread criticism of the decision in the budget to slap hefty taxes on electric vehicles.

Source: The Rising Nepal, 1 June 2021

Construction Work Of Solu Corridor Not Completed Even In Five Years

Solukhumbu, June 1 : As the construction work of Solu corridor 132 KV transmission line was not completed in time, the officials are working to extend its deadline for the sixth time.

The project was started in September 2016 planning to complete the construction works within 30 months but the deadline was extended for fifth time expecting to finish the entire works by May 2021.

Project Chief Janardan Gautam shared that the deadline is likely to be extended for three months.

According to Gautam, locals' obstruction in the construction works is to blame for delay in the project completion though 132 KV transmission line is being developed to export the power generated in the district.

It is said that only the foundation work of 292 towers is completed so far though 302 towers are to be constructed from Mirchaiya of Siraha to Tingla of Solukhumbu.

Gautam shared that locals in Maruwa of Udayapur district have obstructed the construction works in the sites for developing 10 other towers.