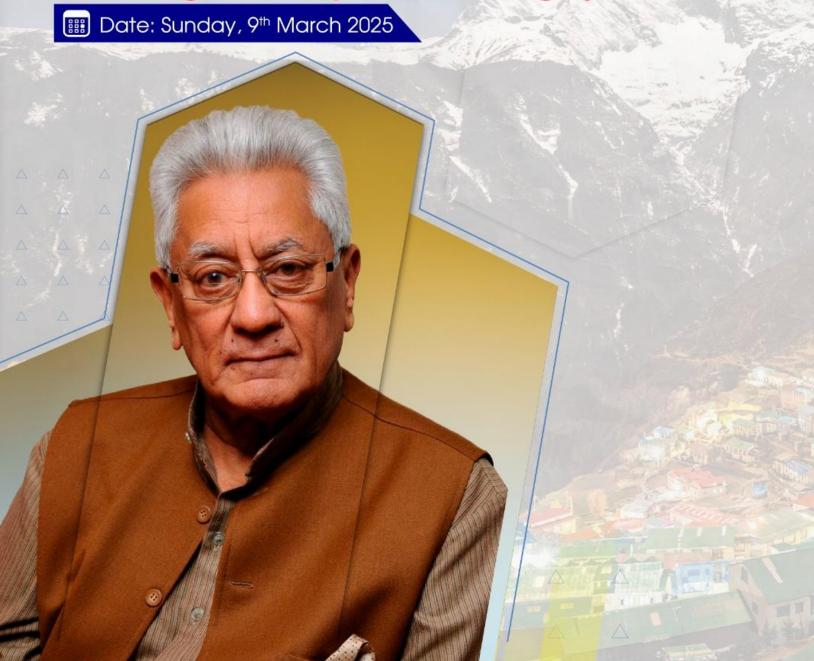
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PRABHAKAR SJB RANA MEMORIAL LECTURE

Celebrating Leadership, Vision, and Legacy





NEPAL-INDIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (NICCI)

PRABHAKAR SJB RANA MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES

Kathmandu, March 09, 2025



1ST Prabhakar SJB Rana Memorial Lecture Celebrating Leadership, Vision, and Legacy

Kathmandu, March 09, 2025

Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry (NICCI) Ace Apartments | Narayanchaur | Naxal | Kathmandu | Nepal www.nicci.org

President: Mr. Sunil KC

Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry (NICCI)

The Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry (NICCI), established in 1993, promotes bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Nepal and India. It provides market insights, organizes programs, and facilitates strategic partnerships to support member businesses. Working with both government and private sectors, NICCI fosters economic linkages between Nepal and India, and advocates for its members' interests.



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Key Takeaway



EVENT SUMMARY

The Prabhakar SJB Rana memorial lecture series was launched by the Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NICCI) on 09 March 2025, to celebrate and honor the contributions of NICCI's founding President Late Prabhakar SJB Rana in the economic growth and development of Nepal. An indelible mark has been left by the towering figure. and this event commemorated his legacy, while delving into the responsibility of his successors for carrying it forward. With more than 250 attendees from the business community, media and academia, the inaugural lecture curated a platform to underline the remarkable leadership and entrepreneurial spirit of the late Prabhakar SJB Rana.

The inaugural event commenced with an introductory documentary on NICCI, that highlighted the institution's role in promoting business relations between Nepal and India, followed by the welcome and opening remarks delivered by the immediate past President of NICCI, Ms. Shreejana Rana and Mr. Sunil KC, the President of NICCI. In detailing the achievements of the late Prabhakar SJB Rana, the focus was on advancing his work through concerted efforts, laying the groundwork and setting the tone for the evening. Mr. Ravi Rayavaram, the Vice-President further built on the developing strands of India-Nepal relations and the emerging opportunities determining the prospects of collaborative growth and development.

Speaking about the life and work of Prabhakar SJB Rana, an intimate reflection was provided by his son, Mr. Siddharth Rana, expanding on the ethos that was established through his unwavering dedication to the country, both in his personal and professional conduct. He reflected on the legacy left behind by his father, while commenting on the necessity of acknowledging the state of the current economy. He urged for a clear and actionable economic strategy that addresses the underlying issues of misgovernance. Building on the pragmatism that was definitive personality trait of Late Rana, he further mentioned how it would be more prudent to pursue practical solutions especially when looking at the condition of certain investment projects. He expressed concern regarding the trends of outmigration, urging towards harnessing the current demographic dividend.

Mr. Prasanna Srivastava, the Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, was also in attendance and addressed the progress in Nepal-India relations over the past one year. Mentioning the developments in trade and investment partnerships through mechanisms like the India-Nepal Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) and India-Nepal Joint Business Forum (JBF) in recent times, he underscored the potential of developing mutually beneficial partnerships between the economies. He also commented on the progress in sectors of energy and digital financial connectivity, and the opportunities









(From left) Mr. Suman Shekhar, First Secretary (Commerce), Embassy of India in Nepal; Mr. Prasanna Shrivastava, Deputy Chief of Mission Embassy of India in Nepal; Dr. Krishnamurthy V Subramanian, Executive Director, IMF; Mr. Sunil KC, President, NICCI; Mr. Siddhartha SJB Rana, Chairman, Tara Management Pvt. Ltd; and Mr. Ravi Rayavaram, Vice President, NICCI

for collaboration lining the startups ecosystem across borders.

Dr. Krishnamurthy V. Subramanian as the keynote speaker when delivering the inaugural lecture, delved into the ethical dimensions of Prabhakar SJB Rana's entrepreneurship endeavors. His central argument laid on the emphasis that wealth generation through ethical means is not a necessary evil but a boon, and this is a belief system that has been adopted from the ideologies of the East, built from dharmic capitalism and the civilizational ethos that enabled our ancestors to pursue and receive enormous success. Urging for disbandment of imported ideologies he spoke on the four Purusharthas (ultimate aims of

human life) that include *Artha* (wealth or prosperity), and stated that by pursuing a dharmic or righteous path of capitalism where you respect the markets, India is poised to become the third-largest economy. His central thesis was that ethical wealth creation is essential to drive inclusive growth.

The event was also marked with the launch of the Business Climate Survey 2024, and was concluded with the closing remarks from NICCI's Vice-President Mr. Ravi Rayavaram. Mr. Rayavaram gave the vote of thanks to the speaker and participants and ended his address with the acknowledgement of the NICCI staff for successfully planning and executing the event.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF A VISIONARY LEADER





BACKGROUND

Mr. Prabhakar SJB Rana, made significant contributions across various sectors, leaving an indelible mark on the country's economy and society. A pioneering figure in Nepal's business landscape, his journey from the establishment of Soaltee Hotel to the formation of the Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry (NICCI) speaks volumes about his vision, leadership, and dedication.

As the founding chairman of Soaltee Hotel, Mr. Rana played a pivotal role in setting new standards in Nepal's hospitality industry. His emphasis on credibility and transparency reshaped the sector, earning international recognition and partnerships, such as with The Oberoi Group. Moreover, he was instrumental in founding organizations like the Hotel Association Nepal (HAN) and the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Nepal Chapter, aiming to regulate and promote responsible tourism.

Mr. Rana's entrepreneurial spirit extended beyond hospitality to diverse fields, including trading, manufacturing, and hydropower. His ventures, such as Sipradi Trading Pvt Ltd and Surya Nepal Pvt Ltd, showcased his commitment to utilizing Nepal's resources and fostering economic growth. Notably, his involvement in the Upper Bhotekoshi Hydroelectric Project marked a significant milestone in Nepal's energy sector, demonstrating resilience amidst political transitions.

Beyond business, Mr. Rana's influence transcended borders, shaping diplomatic relations and advocating for democracy. His extensive network and diplomatic acumen facilitated engagements with international figures, contributing to Nepal's global standing. Additionally, his efforts to navigate political transitions highlighted his commitment to democratic ideals and the nation's stability. Throughout his life, Mr. Rana upheld a sense of humility and philanthropy, supporting social causes and heritage preservation.

In recognition of his exemplary contributions, Mr. Rana received numerous accolades. NICCI mourns his loss, his enduring impact on the country's economic and social fabric remains a testament to his extraordinary legacy.

The objective of the program was:

- To commemorate late Mr. Prabhakar SJB Rana's pioneering contributions to Nepal's business and economic landscape including promotion of sectors tourism, joint ventures, hydropower, and manufacturing as well as establishment of several other organizations including Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry (NICCI) in his visionary leadership; and
- To discuss Nepal-India bilateral trade, investment, tourism, socio-economic and cultural relations, and energy cooperation, aiming to enhance future prospects within BBIN and BIMSTEC nations.



1ST PRABHAKAR SJB RANA MEMORIAL LECTURE

Celebrating Leadership, Vision, and Legacy Kathmandu, March 09, 2025

Event Proceedings



EVENT PROCEEDINGS

The event was facilitated by Mr. Kuber Chalise, Program Consultant at NICCI, wherein the central focus was to build on the legacy of Late Rana and curate dialogue on the way forward, in terms of comprehending the trajectories of Nepal's economy, and the progress in Nepal-India partnerships.

Introductory Documentary on NICCI

A short video was presented to the participants as an introduction to NICCI's institutional vision and objectives. Past and current members of the institution discussed about NICCI's role as a non-governmental and bi-national organization with Nepali and industrialists Indian businessmen and conducting their operations in both countries. The aim as such for NICCI is to promote joint ventures, investment, and economic relations between the two nations through cooperation. The documentary also delved into the widening trade deficit between Nepal and

India, highlighting the need for the former to focus on import substitution and improve export-oriented industries.

Welcome Remarks

Delivering the welcome remarks, **Ms. Shreejana Rana**, *Immediate past President of NICCI*, addressed the participants noting how the event was a celebration of Prabhakar SJB Rana's contributions that shaped Nepal's economic landscape. She acknowledged how Prabhakar SJB Rana stood as a "trailblazer in Nepal's private sector," commenting on his impact on the state's development through his engagements in hospitality, tourism, trade, hydropower, as well as cross-border activities with India.

Speaking about the legacy, she noted that Mr. Rana was an integral figure in Nepal-India relations. He was influential as the founding president of NICCI, shaping policy

Mr. Kuber ChaliseProgram Consultant
NICCI







Ms. Sreejana Rana Immediate Past President NICCI

frameworks, advocating for investments and trade, as well as strengthening economic cooperation. Beyond the establishment of NICCI, she listed his role in the founding of organizations like Hotel Association Nepal, PATA Nepal Chapter and the Independent Producers' Association, Power (IPPAN). He emerged as a pivotal figure in the state's hospitality sector, where Ms. Rana mentioned that due to his attentiveness on the import of global partnerships international standards, he was able to propel Nepal into the global tourism map.

Through NICCI, Mr. Rana's role was crucial in splitting the Trade and Transit Treaty – signing them separately in 1996 and 1999. He was also a co-chairperson of FNCCI and CII, where he worked with government authorities in both the countries.

The event, as stated by Ms. Rana, was a part of NICCI's larger commitment to ensure that Prabhakar SJB Rana's vision was taken forward. She praised his principles of business ethics and his efforts through economic diplomacy, and claimed that now it was a collective responsibility to build on Mr. Rana's legacy by strengthening Nepal-India relations, fostering investment and ensuring sustainable growth.

Opening Remarks

Mr. Sunil KC in his opening remarks laid out the thought behind the concept of the memorial lecture series. Mr. KC outlined Prabhakar SJB Rana's "immense and extraordinary contribution" to Nepal's economic growth. Setting the general tone for





Mr. Sunil KCPresident
NICCI

the event, he moreover, addressed how NICCI's institutional mechanisms could be mobilized to further the vision of Late Prabhakar SJB Rana.

Addressing the representatives from the Indian Embassy, he stressed on NICCI's long-standing, unique, and steady association with the Embassy on matters of promoting trade and commerce in Nepal. Expressing his gratitude to the keynote speaker for bringing his expertise in economic policy, corporate governance, and banking, he cited the importance of the event for the business community and the public sector. With Mr. Siddharth Rana in attendance, he also made a note to mention the impact made by his father in the hydropower sector, carried forward by him, prompting many to invest in power trade and making Nepal sufficient by exporting to

India and Bangladesh. Iterating his appreciation to Ms. Shreejana Rana, he laid forth his ambition of

When assuming the role of NICCI's presidency on September 2024, Mr. KC mentioned that the founding President stood as a "towering business personality of the country." Driving forward with the realization of the legacy that transcends neighborhood relations, when looking at his scope of global associations and investments, the lecture series was conceptualized as a tribute to promote and further activate Mr. Rana's visions through NICCI. Mr. KC underscored the aim of conducting the future editions of the lecture biannually, creating platforms for notable speakers from India and beyond to strategically engage with the stakeholders in Nepal.

BHAKAT MEMORIAL LECTURE 20 king Loadership, Vision & Leg

Sarangi Artists; Deepson Shrestha and Kiran Nepali



Glimpse of documentary on Late Prabhakar SJB Rana

A musical Presentation by Project Sarangi

A symbolic representation of the evolution of Nepal's rich culture and heritage, Project Sarangi's Founder/Director Mr. Kiran Nepali expressed his delight at being able to play in the event. Along with Deepson Shrestha, they presented a blend of traditional and Western music, with the aspiration that they could take their music global, calling themselves the Folktronics. Their tunes provided a musical start to the evening's events.

Documentary on Prabhakar SJB Rana

As an introductory note to the documentary, Mr. Kuber Chalise laid emphasis on the enduring vision of corporate governance that Prabhakar SJB Rana had, putting a focus on his initiatives that yet continues to thrive. Mr. Rana was portrayed as a man of integrity, humbleness, fairness and professionalism, and above all a true patriot. His impact on tourism and hydropower were emphasized, along with his vision for NICCI as an institution that brought the business communities of Nepal and India together. The institutions he founded have been exemplary in terms of good corporate governance and ethical businesses, while contributing to Nepal's economy.





Mr. Siddhartha SJB Rana Chairman Tara Management Pvt. Ltd.

The Legacy

Mr. Siddhartha SJB Rana, Chairman, Tara Management Pvt. Ltd., while reflecting on the life and legacy of his father, made a note of his roles as a parent, national figure and corporate pioneer. Having been born into tremendous political privilege, it was mentioned how Prabhakar SJB Rana managed to avoid temptation as he never sought to utilize his power for personal gains. It was further stated that this allowed his children to remain free from any baggage moving forward. Even in business, with joint venture partnerships with the likes of ITC, Tata, and Bharat Petroleum from India, the family and his colleagues never had to experience the burden of him having taken advantage of his proximity to power and privilege.

When recalling the person that he was, Mr. Rana described the late Prabhakar SJB Rana as a patriot first, and then a monarchist and democrat in equal measure — a combination that many may find contradictory.

Referring to the impact that education had on Prabhakar SJB Rana's, the speaker credited the years his father spent in a Jesuit boarding school in Darjeeling, for how he was able to adapt to a changes in modern-day Nepal. Further mentioning the experiences accumulated abroad, it was brought to fore how Prabhakar SJB Rana cultivated tremendous experience and strengthened international associations, made apparent in his notable pursuits in the hotel industry in Nepal.



His entrepreneurial journey started when he transitioned from government works to pursuing business, and he was one amongst the first few entrepreneurs who sought global engagements to build brands and partnerships, approaching the Oberoi to grasp foreign trade and foreign contracting when working with Soaltee, addressing the capacity gaps of the institutions at the time. His ability to separate ownership from management was emphasized in this regard.

He remarked that the 1990s was a significant period for reforms in terms of investments, technology transfer, and management know-hows. In the same vein, he commented that it was inexcusable that such undertakings have stopped in recent times, owing to a downward spiral of malgovernance.

Despite between the second (China) and third (India) largest economies in the making, Nepal is still caught in this vortex. Observing the trends of Nepal's stagnation when compared to a state like Bhutan, Mr. Rana reflected on the lack of a comprehensive economic plan, highlighting the need for actionable strategies. Contemplating on the underlying challenges apparent in the country's economic trajectory, he underscored the pragmatism that defined Prabhakar SJB Rana, deliberating on what his father would do for Nepal in the current scenario, where he raised some important points. He put a focus on the infrastructural projects – the two airports, which he claimed were "white elephants," noting that his father would have probably approached the

Southern neighbor for partnerships, advocating for more practical solutions.

An additional and important concern that Mr. Rana did raise towards the end of his address was the issue lining outward migration in the country. Discussing how Nepal's GDP is driven my remittance, there is a distinct possibility that the youth may choose to live abroad in the future. The speaker emphasized the need to harness the demographic dividend and utilize the youth of Nepal.

Mr. Rana ended his speech by expressing gratitude for the memorial lecture series, underlining the importance of the initiative.

Special Remarks

Mr. Prasanna Srivastava, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India to Nepal, began by conveying his gratitude for the opportunity to share his thoughts in the inaugural lecture. Looking forward to the future of Nepal and India's enduring partnership, he recognized the contributions made by Prabhakar SJB Rana to help define the contours of engagement. He commented how the late founder inspired him, stating that his "commitment to fostering strong business ties and promoting cooperation between our two countries is a beacon that lights the way for future business leaders in both our countries."





Mr. Prasanna SrivastavaDeputy Chief of Mission
Embassy of India to Nepal.

Honoring that legacy, he made note of the progress within Nepal-India relations with the strengthening of economic partnership in the past year, highlighting areas of bilateral trade and investment. He mentioned the India-Nepal Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) meet in January 2025 that set its focus on reviewing matters related to bilateral trade and economic relations. On the sideline, the India-Nepal Joint Business Forum (IBF) convened, jointly organized the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI), to offer suggestions on the enhancement of trade and investment. Highlighting the education partnership between the countries, Mr. Srivastava further remarked that it was emerging as a flagship area.

When coming to cooperation in the power sector, the power agreement signed during the visit of Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, India, was emphasized. The document was inked with the objective of increasing Nepal's power export. Following this, the first trilateral power transaction via the Indian grid from Nepal to Bangladesh was inaugurated, with the aim to boost subregional connectivity. Mr. Srivastava also discussed that by exporting hydropower, Nepal became a net revenue earner last year.

Coming to digital and financial connectivity, he underscored the initiative by "the National Payments Corporation of India and BCI and Food Pay of Nepal, launching interoperability between UPI Apps of India and Food Bank QR codes for payment at





Dr. Krishnamurthy V. Subramanian Executive Director at IMF and Former Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India.

merchant establishments in Nepal." Regarding this he cited that in today's time more than 1,000 transactions were carried out by Indian tourists visiting Nepal.

The second India-Nepal start-up connect organized this year by the Embassy of India also served as a platform to recognize the potential for cooperation between the startups ecosystem of the countries. Mr. Srivastava acknowledged the tremendous opportunities when fostering mutually beneficial partnerships, when enhancing the infrastructure, especially in the energy sector, and "leveraging digital technologies for growth."

Mr. Srivastava towards the end of his speech also expressed appreciation towards NICCI for launching the Business Climate

Survey report, and encouraged the institution to continue playing a key role in enhancing the government and economic ties between Nepal and India.

Keynote Speech

In his opening acknowledgments, **Dr. Krishnamurthy V. Subramanian**, Executive Director at IMF began by expressing his privilege in delivering the first lecture in the memorial lecture series on Prabhakar SJB Rana's birthday. He put stress on the ethical approach that Mr. Rana held in his journey towards being an exemplary entrepreneur. On the matter of which, he also claimed that being a part of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has provided him with a



privileged vantage point to perceive the global economic trends, including those that impact India, Nepal and the synergistic ties between them.

The central theme of his lecture was based on the significance of ethical wealth creation, going beyond simple wealth accumulation and directed towards furthering prosperity in Nepal and beyond. He laid particular emphasis on the civilizational ethos that informs such values, also advocating for the disbandment of imported ideologies like socialism and communism, where stressed on the data and evidence that points towards the conclusion that no country had managed to become prosperous by following socialism, or its twin - communism. Pointing towards India, he mentioned that India since 1991 has pursued a market-driven economy, what Dr. Subramanian likes to believe is a form of Dharmic or righteous capitalism, where the market is respected and wealth generation is not conceived as a necessary evil, but "a boon to be respected, to be revered, and to be pursued." He referred to ancient scriptures like the Rig Veda, the latter of which contains the Sri Suktam – a hymn dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi, for wealth and prosperity, while asking Alakshmi, that is poverty and penury to stay away. Sharing a personal anecdote as well he reminisces how his education and career were made possible due to his father's job in the Indian railways, while also linking how his humble background and the knowledge of Indian ethos derived from knowledge of scriptures like the Bhagavat Gita and the Tirukkural allowed him to the understand the civilizational fruits of the Indian sub-continent.

When coming to the evolving patterns within the global economy, he argued that there would be dramatic changes in the future, where the erstwhile economic powers may not wield as much influence in the next decades. Identifying the churn with the gradual disappearance of the broad consensus on the importance of trade for the global economy post the 2008/09 financial crisis, he stated that moving forward there will be two broad pole centers – between those that will pursue the rule of law and are democracies, and the others that are not. He spoke on how India would assume a critical role in this space, recalling his own observations of the time he spent working with the Indian Government. Reciting the complete shlok of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - those for whom the entire world is a family - from the Upanishads, Dr. Subramanian summarized that India will be conducting itself as an economic leader given the civilizational ethos that drives its thinking on economic and geopolitical dimensions. Over the last ten years, he claimed that the state had also pursued inclusive growth. On this, he cited India's latest economic survey on poverty, mentioning that both poverty consumption inequality had declined significantly over the past decade.

As opposed to profiteering which can be exploitative and detrimental to the society, he advocated for profiting as a legitimate pathway towards wealth and value creation for a prosperous neighborhood. He connects this ethical positioning with the shared cultural values between Nepal and India. Dr. Subramanian argued that it was critical to go back and understand the ideas that provided



our ancestors with spiritual and economic success. He once more highlights that he was promoting "wealth creation done through ethical means which means that you create a product or service that the consumer benefits from, and thereby you create profits as well."

He particularly advocated for the common citizens to pursue a deeper understanding of the linkages between ethical wealth creation and inclusive growth, and to grasp the reality that their jobs, education and healthcare are derived from the wealth created by entrepreneurs. Dr. Subramanian concluded his lecture by expressing gratitude for having been able to be a part of the event and share this thoughts.

Launch of the Report: Business Climate Survey for Indian Companies in Nepal, 2024

A three-month long study conducted by NICCI, with the Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs (AIDIA) as a knowledge partner. The publication is a baseline research that assessed Nepal's market potential and gathered perspectives on the risks and opportunities of major Indian establishments in Nepal. Through focused stakeholder consultations, the report produced a set of observations and policy recommendations moving forward to attract investments in the country.



(From Left) Mr. Prasanna Srivastava, DCM, Embassy of India in Nepal; Dr. Krishnamurthy V. Subramanian. Executive Director at IMF; Mr. Sunil KC, President, NICCI, Hon. Udaya Shumsher Rana, Member of Parliament of Nepal





Mr. Ravi RayavaramVice-President
NICCI

Closing Remarks

Mr. Ravi Rayavaram, Vice-President of NICCI in the closing session stated that the event was a celebration of "the legacy of a visionary entrepreneur of Nepal who set global benchmarks in business." He lauded Prabhakar SJB Rana's contributions in the business sector, underscoring his impact on Nepal's culture and heritage. When discussing the enduring impact of Mr. Rana's pursuits, Mr. Rayavaram spoke of his own involvement within Surya Nepal – a company that was created with Mr. Rana's support and how the it today stood as a beacon of success for FDI investments in Nepal, having contributed slightly more than Rs. 31, 200 crores to the state's exchequer since its establishment in 1986.

Mr. Rayavaram proceeded to express his gratitude to the distinguished individuals who made the event possible. He addressed Mr. Sunil KC for conceptualizing the idea, and for his vision and leadership. He spoke about Dr. Subramanian and his distinctive work on ethical wealth creation as well as on his ideas on the potential of Nepal, and Nepal-India relations, underlining the relevance of the keynote speakers' book for Nepal. Moving to Mr. Srivastava, he thanked him for his presence and participation in the event, mentioning his continued encouragement to NICCI.

Coming to Mr. Siddharth Rana, Mr. Rayavaram stated that in upholding his father's legacy Mr. Rana had showcased that ethical wealth collection is possible, and businesses can be built ethically. He also thanks Ms. Shreejana Rana, and the past presidents for their support and esteemed presence during the event.

He concluded his address by acknowledging the efforts put in by NICCI's staff to make the event a success and extended a heartfelt appreciation for the sponsors as well.



KEY TAKEAWAY



Role of Ethics in Corporate Governance

The first edition of the Prabhakar SJB Rana lecture series was curated as a platform celebrate his legacy while both understanding the pragmatism of the visionary corporate leader, and also gauge the economic trajectory of Nepal and the region. Within the scope of the state's growth and development, the pathway towards securing its economic interests have been impacted internally by misgovernance and the lack of a clear economic plan. It becomes important comprehend geopolitical the also to sensitivities and the changing patterns of influence, furthermore, when arranging ambitions – aligning objectives of progress with regional realities, moving towards more practical engagements.

There has been notable progress in certain sectors of bilateral (Nepal-India) and regional arrangements as mentioned above, but a uniform perspective of the speakers point towards the necessity of inculcating an ethical approach when framing actionable strategies. The civilization ethos that frames our understanding of spirituality economic success was emphasized by the keynote speaker in advocating for narrative structuring based on the shared values of the sub-continent. The values mentioned referred to the ethical means of wealth creation which can lead to an inclusive economic growth benefitting communities and the society at large.



Glimpses of Event











































NICCI wishes to extend heartfelt gratitude to the sponsors and partners of the 1st Prabhakar SJB Rana Memorial Lecture

















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