



Experts cast doubt over IGC implementation

By C K Khanal, Kathmandu, Dec. 23: While the government officials are claiming the 14-point agreement on trade, transit and investment signed with India during the 'Inter Governmental Committee (IGC)' meeting that concluded Sunday to be fruitful, experts have expressed their doubts over the sincere implementation of the agreement.

The agreement on the agenda raised as such is positive but there are doubts on the implementation of the agreement in favour of Nepal, said Pushpa Sharma, a foreign trade expert.

“We have several bitter experiences that the policy level agreement is hardly implemented by the implementing level of India,” he said.

Sharma, who is also a research director of South Asia Watch on Trade Export and Environment (SAWTEE) said that some important agenda that should be raised by the Nepali side in IGC meeting have been left untouched.

The preferential treatment given to Nepal in the form of custom free export have now been eroded as India is providing such facilities to all Least Developed Countries (LDCs), he said and added that Nepal should have raised the issue for providing preferential treatment as its close neighbor.

Besides, the Nepali sides should have raised the issue to remove the reciprocal treatment facility provided to India in agricultural and other products considering the adverse effect of the facility in Nepalese products.

He, however, said that there has been some positive agreement facilitating import from India and third country.

The agreement alone, if implemented properly could not bring any significant growth in Nepalese exports unless our supply side constrained could not be addressed, he said.

Anup Malla, chairman of Export Promotion Committee under Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCC), said that this time trade negotiation with India remained encouraging for its achievements.

Malla said that there has been several positive agreements in favour of Nepal.

“It was the historic trade negotiation with India in terms of achievement in our favour”, he said.

The agreement on allowing transshipment, re-export through India, opening Jogbani and Sunauli route for Nepal’s third country trade, allowing import of hybrid cows from India and allowing to drive imported vehicles in Indian roads are major achievement of the trade talk, he said.

Despite positive agreement, Malla also stressed on need to improve internal environment for production to improve Nepalese trade balance.

If the internal environment inside the country is not conducive for production any good agreement with trading partners could not boost our export, he said.