

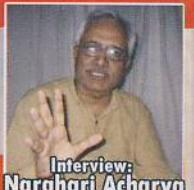


Commentary
Yubaraj Ghimire

INSIDE:

FOCUS : NAPA Draft

MAOIST CANTONMENT: Breaking Barriers



Interview:
Narahari Acharya

NEW

SPOTLIGHT

July 30 Aug. 19, 2010

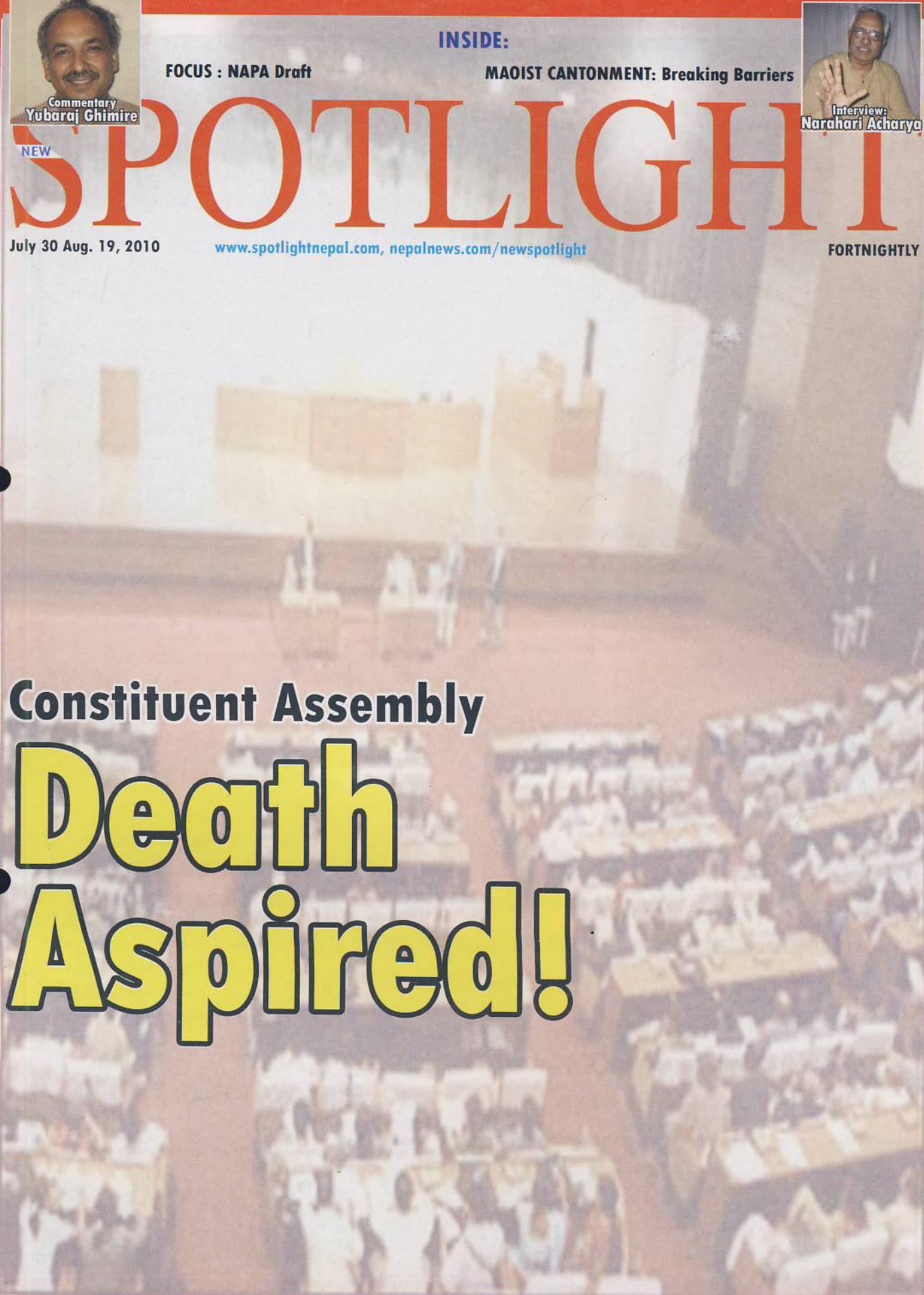
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FORTNIGHTLY

Constituent Assembly

Death Aspired!

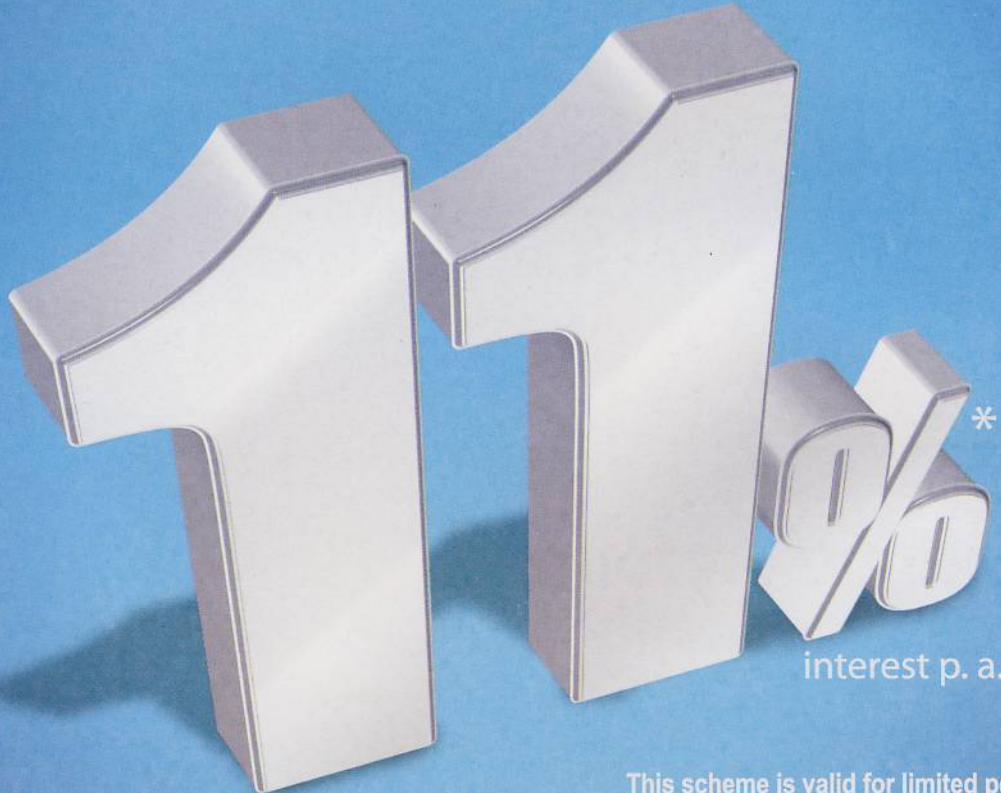
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From The Editor

The search for a new prime minister has hit a roadblock. Two attempts for a consensus candidate failed. Ditto for the search for a majority prime minister. The third round slated for Monday seems unlikely to be any different. Almost a month after he stepped down, Madhav Kumar Nepal remains a caretaker head of government. As the constituent assembly struggled to elect the country's new executive chief, questions over its capability to make a new constitution have understandably increased. Critics point out that the 601-member body has already wasted the first two months of its extended one-year life. No disputing this. And indications are that the remaining 10 months are unlikely to be any different. Even die-hard supporters of the CA have begun to question its relevance. This is very alarming. Even more alarming is the growing frustration of the ordinary people. It is in their hopes that the future of the country does rest. If that hope crumbles, nothing can stand, not even the CA. This is why people have been forced to think of writing obituary of the august body. We pray that does not happen. But we are afraid there may be no one to answer such prayers.

Keshab Poudel
Keshab Poudel
Editor

NEW SPOTLIGHT FORTNIGHTLY

Vol. : 04 No.-05 July 30-2010 (Shrawan-14,2067)



Cover Story: CONSITUENT ASSEMBLY Breathing It's Last

8



INTERVIEW: Narahari Acharya

12



ENVIRONMENT: NAPA Process

22

NEWSNOTES

ECONOMIC BRIEFS

NEWS CLIP

COMMENTARY : Yubaraj Ghimire

MAOIST CANTONMENT: Breaking Barriers

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE: Super Govt?

VIEWPOINT : Dr. A.B. Thapa

ABROAD

NIBL: Extreme Expedition

PADDY PRODUCTION: Rice Wrongs

Business: The Body Shop

OBITUARY: Dr. Raghav Dhoj Panta

REGION : SHYAM SARAN

RICE: Soaring Price

Art

HEALTH : BUDDHA BASNYAT

2

4

5

6

7

11

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

27

28

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India Chair Set Up At TU

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Embassy of India, Kathmandu and Tribhuvan University for establishment of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Long-Term Chair in Central Department of Political Science, Tribhuvan University. Ambassador of India in Nepal Rakesh Sood and Vice Chancellor of the University Prof. Dr. Madhab Prasad Sharma signed the MOU recently.

Under the terms of the agreement, ICCR in consultation with the University shall appoint a suitable Indian academician to hold the Chair for a period of two years. During the period, the visiting Professor would contribute to the academic life of the University by engaging in teaching, research and mentoring. The Chair would commence from October 2010 and will continue till October 2012. ICCR shall meet the costs relating to the salary and furnished housing, medical insurance, international passages in respect of the



Indian academician and his/her spouse. The University shall provide suitable office space, secretarial assistance and paraphernalia for the office.

The establishment of the Chair is part of Government of India's ongoing cooperation with the Tribhuvan University. Government of India has

already assisted Tribhuvan University by constructing the buildings of the departments of Chemistry, Botany and Zoology, University Library, Students' hostel to provide accommodation for 50 students, girls' hostel to provide accommodation for 80 girl students, and 24 staff quarters.

Meanwhile, the Chief of the UN Human Rights Office in Nepal (OHCHR), Richard Bennett met with Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (UCPN-M), Chairperson Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) and stressed the importance of respecting the professional freedoms of lawyers and human rights defenders (HRDs). He told Prachanda that OHCHR-Nepal is very concerned about recent information that some lawyers and human rights defenders, directly and indirectly, have been publicly castigated by Maoists for some of the work they carry out.

EU Calls Euro 2.4 M Grant Proposals

The European Union Delegation to Nepal announced a Call For Proposals (CFP) in the framework of the EU thematic programme "Non-State Actors in Development" on 9 July 2010.

The overarching objective of the programme is poverty reduction in the context of sustainable development

including the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed targets.

The specific objective of this actor oriented programme is to support the self-initiatives of the Civil Society Organisations and strengthen their capacities to promote inclusive and empowered society in partner countries, in close cooperation with local authorities, local communities and most vulnerable population groups.

The outcome of last year's CFP (with combined funds from 2008 and 2009 budgets) was that six grant contracts amounting to 3.5 million Euros (NPR 331.80 Million) in the domain of education and peace building were signed. These projects have started their implementation and they are running smoothly.

For this year the budget is approximately 2.4 million Euros (NPR 126.44) and awards of between 6 to 8 grant contracts are expected.

All interventions proposed should take into account the government's policies and plans. The interventions should be coherent with the overall national intervention in the sector or subsector.

The target groups of the call for proposals are the poorest and most vulnerable/ marginalised /excluded groups.

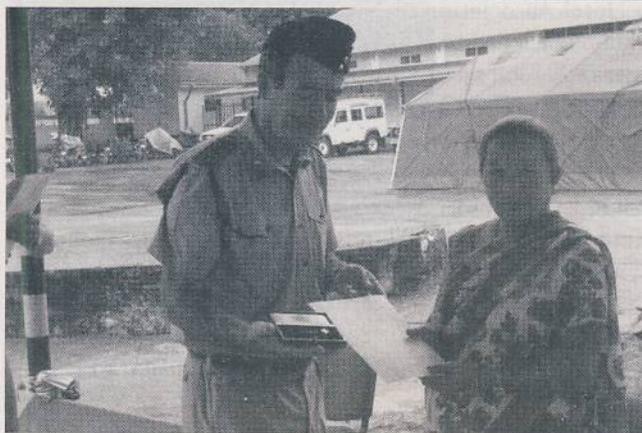
EEC Holds Meeting

European Economic Chamber (EEC) - Nepal held its 5th Annual General Meeting on 15th July 2010 Thursday, (31 Ashad 2067) in Kathmandu. President Dibya Mani Rajbhandari inaugurated the program. A strong 70 member General Assembly chalked out a policy at the AGM to guide the chamber for another one year.

European Economic Chamber (EEC) - Nepal as active bilateral chamber was established in 7th March 2005 to strengthen socio-economic ties between Nepal and the European Union. EEC - Nepal offers its services to companies, associations and organizations, especially in the field of business information and business contracts in 27 member states of the European Union.

Authorities Vow To Implement Verdicts

Local government authorities, including the Senior Superintendent of Police of Mahakali zone and the Deputy Superintendent of Police in Baitadi, have assured the National Dalit Commission (NDC) and the Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR) to swiftly implement two ground breaking discrimination related verdicts. The first verdict issued in January 2009, relates to a sentence of two years' imprisonment issued by the Baitadi district court to the main perpetrator and a fine of rupees twenty five thousand. In this case, twelve Dalits were physically assaulted and robbed after they refused to follow discriminatory rituals. The second decision, issued by the same court in March 2010, is in relation to an assault of the father of a Dalit groom during a wedding ceremony for practicing "rituals reserved for high-caste communities".



British Gurkhas Recognised For Service

Colonel Andrew McFarlane Mills Late RE (Royal Engineers), Commander British Gurkha Nepal, presented six Elizabeth Crosses and Memorial Scrolls at British Gurkhas Dharan (BGD) to dependants and family members

On 1st July 2009 Britain introduced a new form of recognition, called the Elizabeth Cross, and a Memorial Scroll for the families of Service personnel who die on operations or as a result of terrorist action. It is not a posthumous medal for the fallen, but is the tangible recognition of the British Nation for the families of the fallen to recognise their tragic loss and sacrifice. The Elizabeth Cross and Memorial Scrolls are being presented to the deceased's next of kin and recognising deaths in qualifying circumstances dating back to 1 January 1948.

Dependants and family members included Maniprasad Rai, Mrs Jogmaya Rai, Mrs Krishnamaya Rai, Mrs Motisara Rai, Mrs Turimoti Rai, WOI (Warrant Officer Class 1) (Retd) and Deoman Limbu.

UK Eases Visa Rules

The UK Border Agency announced that it is partially lifting the Tier 4 visa application suspension in Nepal.

The suspension will be lifted for students who want to study the following higher education courses: foundation degrees and degree and post graduate courses. The suspension is also lifted for Child Students.

On 12 August the UK Border Agency will lift the suspension on the remaining courses, with the exception of English language courses. The UK Border Agency

will continue to keep the suspension of English language courses under review.

On 12 August, the UK Border Agency will introduce a secure English language test requirement for Tier 4 (General Student) visas worldwide. Applicants who are studying courses

below degree level, excluding a foundation degree and an English language course, need to pass a secure English language test. This test must be taken with a UK Border Agency-approved provider before the applicant applies for a CAS from the sponsor.

It is important that applicants follow the current Tier 4 guidance carefully, complete their applications fully and submit the correct supporting documents. There have been some significant changes to the Tier 4 policy in 2010. Tier 4 guidance and application forms are available to customers free of charge.

If applicants submit fraudulent documents or false information, their visa applications will be refused. They also face an automatic ban on entry to the UK for the next 10 years for any category of visa.

ADB President In Nepal

Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Haruhiko Kuroda visited Nepal from 26th to 29th July 2010. His trip coincided with the 20th anniversary of the

establishment of ADB's resident mission in the country.

During the visit, his first to Nepal as ADB President, Kuroda met senior government officials to discuss ADB's ongoing assistance, and to reaffirm continued support for the country's development objectives. He also made field trips to ADB-assisted projects and met with the projects' beneficiaries.

Following the establishment of the Nepal Resident Mission, ADB has significantly increased its assistance to Nepal, with the amount set to double in 2009-2010 to \$559 million, from \$258 million in 2007-2008.

Since ADB first began extending assistance to Nepal in 1969, it has provided nearly \$3 billion in concessional loans and grants for investment projects, and about \$138 million in technical assistance grants.

The major sectors that receive support include agriculture and natural resources, education, finance, governance, water supply, sanitation and urban development, transport and communications.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members – 48 from the region. In 2009, it approved a total of \$16.1 billion in financing operations through loans, grants, guarantees, a trade finance facilitation program, equity investments, and technical assistance projects. ADB also mobilized cofinancing amounting to \$3.2 billion. ■

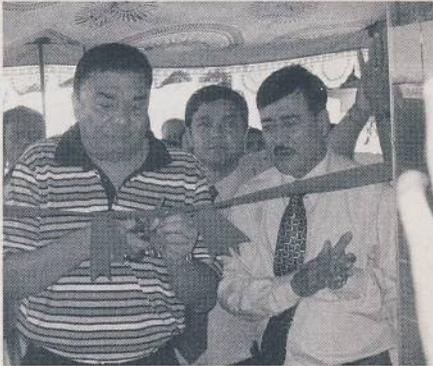


President Kuroda with Nepal's Finance Minister Mr. Surendra Pandey (far right). Accompanying the President were CD Barry Hitchcock (first from left) and SARD DG Sultan H. Rahman (second from left)

Himalayan Bank's New Branch

Manoj Bahadur Shrestha, Chairman of Himalayan Bank Limited (HBL) inaugurated Bank's Gorkha Branch amidst a function. This is the 31st Branch of the Bank. Addressing the function, Mr.

Shrestha expressed that the opening of Bank's branch in this area is an important milestone from the perspective of valuable business that Bank has anticipated to get. He opined it is an opportunity to serve



the inhabitant of Gorkha and its surrounding areas with its technical advance, globally recognized but practically simplified versions of banking products and services.

Shrestha highlighted the current activities and achievements of the Bank as of the end of fiscal year 2066/067. According to him, deposit base of the bank has reached to the size of Rs.37.46 billion and loan portfolio is over Rs.29.18 billion. HBL registered the gross operating profit of Rs. 867.54 million.

Kamal Mani Kafle, chief district officer of Gorkha, Ram Joshi, president of Gorkha Chamber of Commerce and Industries, local businessmen and other senior executives of the bank were also present at the inauguration.

Food Insecurity Hurts Human Resource

The National Planning Commission (NPC) officials have stated that there is a dearth of nourished human resources in the country. Releasing a report on "Food Security in Nepal," on July 21, the officials said that 28 percent of Nepali population lives below the poverty line. According to the report, of the 88 developing countries in the world, Nepal ranks in 57th position in terms of states facing food scarcity. Likewise, in the food security index, Nepal is ranked at 142nd of 177 countries.

Mega Bank Starts Transaction

Mega Bank has started transactions from July 23. Touted as 'five-star' bank, the latest commercial bank to come on the block has over 1200 promoters spread across 63 districts in the country. With its launch, the number of commercial banks in the country has reached 28. The bank has announced that it will invest in diverse fields from farmers to big industries and trade in order to contribute to the economic development of the country. It has announced that persons depositing over Rs 1 lakh in the Savings Account during the initial phase of the bank's opening will get 10 percent interest per annum. In Fixed Account, if a depositor saves money amounting to Rs 5 lakh to One million will enjoy 12 percent interest. If the amount crosses Rs One million, the interest will rise to 12.25 percent.

38 New Hotels Added In Kathmandu

Last year, 38 new hotels were added in Kathmandu. Outside Kathmandu, two new three-star hotels were added. According

to Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN), on average, Rs 1.5 million is needed to build a decent hotel. These hotels will have 15-20 rooms and can give employment to eight persons.

Resort At The Gateway To Lumbini

A resort built with the investment of Rs 180 million has been opened in Bhairahawa city, also known as the Gateway to Lumbini. The resort, which will come into operation from September, will have all kinds of modern facilities including swimming pool, bath, steam bath, Jacuzzi, spa, gym and lifts. The resort will have the capacity to house 90 guests in 40 rooms all of which are air-conditioned. The resort has been built by Bhairahawa-based entrepreneur Chandra Prakash Shrestha.

ICAN Awards Institutions With Best Financial Reports

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal (ICAN) has awarded various financial and industrial institutions for preparing best financial reports with National Best Presentation Accounts (BPA) 2009. The recipients of the award include Nabil Bank, Global Bank and Everest Bank from among banking institutions and Annapurna Finance (Pokhara), Ace Development Bank and United Finance Company from among financial institutions. Likewise, Everest Insurance, Prudential Insurance and Nepal Insurance Company have been awarded the BPA from among insurance companies. Butwal Power Company and Unilever Nepal were given the award from among manufacturing sector while Oriental Hotel received the same from among hospitality, health and transportation sector. Credit Information Center will receive the award from among public sector. The winners will be eligible to compete with similar winners in the SAARC region.

BOK Launches New Product

Bank of Kathmandu Limited on 24th July 2010, launched its regional savings account for customers in Gandaki and Dhaulagiri zone, "BOK Pokhara Bachat Khata". The bank will donate NPR 100 per account opened to *Bindhyabasini Dharmik Kshetra Bikash Samiti* for the development of Bindhyabasini temple and its area in Pokhara.

"BOK Pokhara Bachat Khata" offers 7.5% interest rate and the account can be opened from Pokhara and Khairnitar branches of the Bank.



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According to corporate communication officer Ms. Binda Singh, In order to provide standardized services Bank of Kathmandu plans to introduce various deposit products for customers residing in various regions. Regional account will further help benefit customers in different regions and will also be able to inculcate saving habits amongst them. Bank of Kathmandu recently launched "Gramin Mahila Bachat Khata" to address the needs of women in semi-urban and rural community. ■



Police Nab Fake Al Qaeda

Chief of Kohalpur Nursing Campus in Midwestern town of Nepaljung was charged for writing a letter in the name of Al Qaeda with huge donations. According to civil society members, she sent a number of letters to locals demanding ransom and threatened to bomb their residences and kill them in case of failure to hand over the money. The local police raided the house of Tiwari and confiscated letters which were prepared to send to other people. She sent a letter on 15 of July to local people demanding 500,000 rupees.

Complaint Against Bomjon

After earning media fame through



his long days of fasting and meditation, Ram Bahadur Bomjon landed in serious controversy following his physical assault to 17 villagers from the nearby village. According to local police, Bomjon hijacked 17 common people out of 24 who went to collect forest products.

After release from Bomjon, local people registered a complaint against him at the police station. The police is enquiring now about the incident. In the meantime, Bomjon rejected the charges by the local villagers. "When they entered our camp, I asked our volunteers to arrest them. I physically assaulted villagers when they did not respond to

my call not to disturb me," said Bomjon, in a press conference. "I will not attend police station in this case."

Local people are putting pressure on police to book Bomjon for his misdemeanor and they have already lodged the protest against malpractice conducted by Bomjon. *Nayapatrika Daily*

Gathering At Embassy

Nepalese political leaders are yet to learn a lesson that it will no pay them when they start discussions and debates on the political issue in foreign missions. This was what exactly happened when Nepalese leaders started discussions in a premise of Indian Embassy. Political leaders were invited at the Embassy which organized a reception to bid farewell to Deputy Chief of the Mission Alok Sinha. The leaders included Maoist leaders Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, Dinanath Sharma, senior UML leader K.P. Sharma Oli, Pradip Gyawali, Nepali Congress leader and prime ministerial candidate Ram Chandra Poudel, general secretary Bimalendra Nidhi, spokesperson Arjun Narsingh K.C, foreign minister Sujata Koirala, culture minister Dr. Minendra Rijal, former speaker Daman Nath Dhungana, former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa, president of Madheshi Janadhikar Forum Upendra Yadav, and TMLP president Mahanta Thakur.

As soon as the reception began, Nepalese political leaders started discussions on the coming political scenario of Nepal. The same day congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel was unanimously nominated to contest the election and he was the center of reception. From formation of new alliance to the elections of prime minister, they discussed all the issues at the Embassy. *Janaastha Weekly*
Pilot Baba's Disclosure

India's renowned saint Pilot Baba disclosed that one of the influential leaders of Nepali politics secured 20 million rupees to declare Nepal as a secular state. "According to my personal information, one Nepali who played an important role to declare Nepal as a secular state got 20 million rupees." Addressing a program organized by Pilot

NEPALI PRESS

Baba World Peace Foundation, he did not disclose the sources. "I don't want to do any discrimination against any religion or faith. For me all are one but my question how can one justify selling identity and faith of the country," Baba said. Nepal is my Gurudham. Thus, I always have good faith on Nepal." Baba also met President Dr. Rambaran Yadav. He is taking part in several programs in Nepal during his 10-day stay in Nepal.

Nagarik Daily

Media Persons Manhandled

Private security guards and locals roughed up journalists covering a program attended by ex-king Gyanendra in Bhaktapur. The former king was attending the closing of a Mahayagya, a Hindu religious ceremony, being organized at Chitapal VDC -7 of the district.

Reports say former king Gyanendra's private security guards as well as those participating in the ceremony had misbehaved and even manhandled those just wanting a few comments of the former



monarch on the latest political situation of the country.

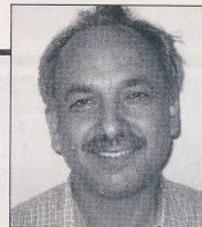
Bhola Thapa, President of Federation of Nepali Journalists, Kavre Chapter and Manoj Basnet, district correspondent of Kantipur Daily, sustained minor injuries in the incident.

Similarly, the video camera of the Bhaktapur and Kavre correspondents of Kantipur and Sagarmatha Televisions, who reached there to cover the event was also damaged in the mele.

Meanwhile Former King Gyanendra issued a statement expressing regret over the incident. nepalnews.com

Conscience: Lost Or Crushed?

-YUBARAJ GHIMIRE



Sharada Chaudhary is apparently a political novice. She has not yet developed a thick skin to public criticism. That is why she takes public comment a bit too seriously. This member of the Constituent Assembly (CA) tried to take her life by consuming poison recently. She was fed up that people, especially her voters, were saying that she was in the assembly just to gobble up perks and allowances like any other member, and that making constitution and delivering it within the extended deadline (May 28, 2011) were quite unlikely. She survived, thanks to timely attention and anti-poison treatment. But the incident shows the level of respect and trust people have on their representatives that they elected with so much hope and expectation a little over two years ago. A series of amendments to the interim constitution, frequent changes in the schedule to prepare the constitution ostensibly to deliver it on May 28 (2010) and ultimately the House decision to extend its tenure without anyone, including the Speaker, owning any responsibility for this failure have together been responsible for the House and its members losing respect from the masses.

None of the 599 members stood against the resolution of the House extending its own tenure. Bijedra Paswan's conscience apparently pricked him as he declared that he would return the allowance he had taken as a member during the period when the House could not complete its mission of writing the constitution.

In fact, Speaker Subhash Nembang succeeded in fixing the blame for the delay in constitution delivery on the Prime Minister. Immediately before and after May 28, the Speaker met Prime Minister Madhav Nepal thrice asking him to quit as that would pave the way for formation of a National Unity Government and that such a government would facilitate the early delivery of the constitution. Nembang certainly was right in his approach and inference that a consensus government would create a conducive situation for timely delivery of the constitution. But even in the absence of such a government all these years, especially after the CA elections, he has gone around the country promising that 'we are committed to deliver the constitution on time (May 28, 2010)' and that 'no one should doubt our commitment and ability'. But he, as the custodian of the collective conscience and acts of the House, chose not to own any responsibility for its failure to deliver the constitution on May 28. He simply tried to get away with the plea that a change of government leadership would just do fine. The House refused to take into account the building anger from the masses and their perception that the leaders of the big three parties as well as the members of the House

together are not serious about preparing the constitution. It extended its own tenure by a year. That brought the morale and the morality of the House to such a lowest ebb. Sharada Chaudhary's latest act reflected how indefensible the 'honourable members' of the House have become. Certainly, the big parties that are organised can defend the act of extending the tenure of the House, but the ones like Chaudhary who belongs to a smaller party, cannot afford to ignore the voice of their conscience altogether. If the voice of conscience is lost or crushed by the dictates of political bosses, some people might try to take a different course. Chaudhary is a case in a point.

None of the 599 members stood against the resolution of the House extending its own tenure. Bijedra Paswan's conscience apparently pricked him as he declared that he would return the allowance he had taken as a member during the period when the House could not complete its mission of writing the constitution. Sharada Chaudhary responded to the situation in her own way, but if someone asks: does Nepal's House have any member who values conscience or morality at all? The answer is 'No'. Way back in 1975, when Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi extended the tenure of the Lok Sabha to six years from five years, two conscientious members—veteran socialist leader Madhu Limaye and 26-year old Sharad Yadav, Limaye's ardent follower then—resigned the House membership asserting they would not want to be MP beyond the term people have elected them for. Ultimately, that House lost the moral status, and Indira Gandhi lost the election that followed. The current Nepali leaders have failed to assess the loss of face after this inglorious, unethical and unconstitutional act. There is no dearth of Nepali leaders turning to India for advice, but none of the 599 in the House, chose to follow this shining example of display of morality in politics in the South. The extension of the House tenure is unconstitutional because the government, while moving the constitution amendment bill following a three-party agreement, did not quite stick to the only provision—declaring state of emergency—that is explicitly mentioned in the constitution.

That dilution in the moral and constitutional status of the House, and people's growing hatred and dislike for CA and its members as well as the big parties are going up without check. The latest failure of the House to elect a new Prime Minister, continued presence of Ram Chandra Poudel and Pushpa Kamal Dahal—both declared defeated twice after voting—in the fray is sending a dangerous message that the country is being held in ransom by parties who cannot take a decision in the interest of the nation and its people. Why would this country need a House—devoid of minimum morality—that has failed not only to elect its leader, but also to keep its collective promise to deliver constitution on time? ■



MAOIST CANTONMENT

Breaking Barriers

Amidst deep differences between the Maoists and the non-Maoist parties on how to integrate and manage the Maoist combatants HIMAL magazine has come out with startling revelations. Excerpts:

Going by the UNMIN, 19602 verified combatants are supposed to be in seven camps and 21 sub camps across the country.

But according to HIMAL, 4000 have already left the camps. Some of them have ended up as member of the Constituent Assembly, personal secretary to the CA member and YCL chief.

Recently the Maoists notified the government that only 61 are missing. But it has been learnt that the Maoist commander Pasang has, in a confidential report to the party headquarters, admitted that 2500 to 3000 combatants have left the camps.

One of the UNMIN-verified combatants who left the camps is currently the member of the constituent assembly.

Rajkaji Maharjan was elected from Lalitpur. He is the battalion commander and heads the party's security cell that looks after the security of the party leaders.

He draws double salary from the government coffer, as a combatant and as a member of the CA.

The personal security officer of senior Maoist leader and CA member Agni Prasad Sapkota also draws double salary.

A verified combatant, Bidur Bharati, gets 5000 rupees in the camp and as secretary to Sapkota he receives officer-

level salary in the CA secretariat

Commander of the 3rd division, Kali Bahadur Kham who is reportedly at large over his alleged involvement in robbery of Chinese businessmen and illegal yarcha gumba business, lived in a rented house in Gongabu, Kathmandu, not in the camp, according to the police.

Shyam Sundar Yadav, another verified combatant who is supposed to be in the Sindhuli camp, is the YCL chief in the south eastern Dhanusha district.

More than 4 billion and 690 million rupees have gone as allowance to the combatants for food and stipend.

The party imposes a monthly levy of 1000 rupees on each combatant's salary of 5000 rupees. Another 1000 rupees is collected from the combatants "to run the expenses of the combatant-turned YCL cadres".

In total, 50 million rupees goes to the Maoist party fund from the government coffer every month even as the combatants continue to suffer.

By **KIRAN NEPAL** and
SAROJ DAHAL

CONSITUENT ASSEMBLY

Breathing

It's Last

It failed to produce a new prime minister in four attempts in less than a month. Ironically, the same body has been expected to produce a new constitution. Having belied the expectations in its first two years, the constituent assembly shows no sign of being any different in its extended one-year life of which two months have already gone waste over the fight for the control of the seat of power in Singh Durbar. Not surprisingly many have begun to write its obituary

By SAROJ DAHAL

As the parties play number games to win a majority for a new government, a Rabin Sayami cartoon in the Nepali daily *Nagarik* on July 28 makes a typical satire on the constituent assembly.

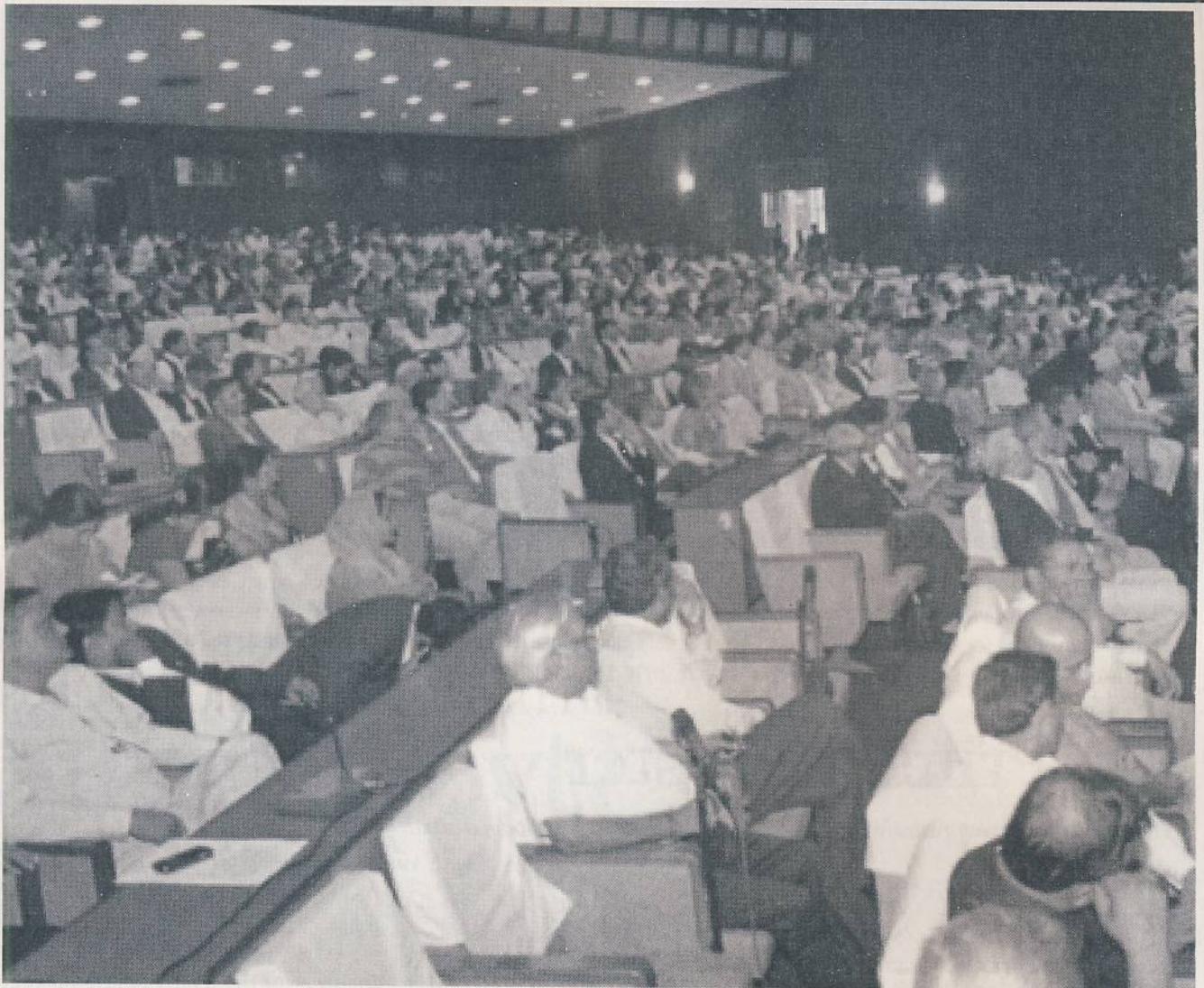
On the left side is a blackboard that gives the numerical strength of the parties including the Maoist, Nepali

Congress, the UML, the Madhesi outfits and small parties.

Another blackboard, on the right, looks at the number from a different angle. It says, the true equation in parliament is: Liars (200), Sleepers (200), Cowards (200) and Loser (1) make up 601 members,

The cartoon reflects the growing frustration of the ordinary people over the constitution-making body as it, as legislative parliament, gets embroiled in the parties' dirty games to strike the ball inside the power net.

It was such public frustration and anger that cleared the ground for the



CA Members : In deep sleep ?

premature death of parliament eight years ago.

The same atmosphere is building now. The CA being made the butt of joke and its members jokers. In the five-star hotel's cocktail circuit as well as the roadside tea stalls.

After the extension of the CA's tenure, the three major parties in the recently prepared a new timetable of constitution-making, according to which the constitution should be ready by April-May next year.

Chairman Subhas Nemwang, who never gets tired of claiming that just 20 per cent of works remain to be completed for the new constitution, could not hide his pride in having the time table passed by all parties.

But even before the ink on it had

dried, his "achievement" lay in tatters.

One major component of the "timetable" hit the roadblock in the face of the opposition from Madhesi and other parties.

The formation of a new state restructuring commission within two months is set to become stillborn - with the Maoists agreeing to get rid of the exercise.

Two months have already gone, but not the differences on fundamental principles of new constitution.

Debates have not started on arriving at a meeting point. Instead, all attention is focused on the numbers game and horse-trading in the race for power. Few seem interested in the slow walk to a new constitution.

This has fueled the popular frustration, and given ammunition to the critics who want to see the CA die.

"If it can not give a new constitution, if it can not give even a prime minister, what's the purpose of keeping it," that's the question doing fast rounds in many houses.

Agrees Nepali Congress spokesman, Arjun Narsingh KC, "yes, the people are increasingly getting fed up with the CA and the legislative parliament."

The level of frustration has reached to such a point that the people have now stopped taking interest in who becomes the prime minister next.

This adds ammunition to the opponents of the CA that formally got rid of monarchy in its first meeting.



Probably sensing the signals of the times, political forces also seem to have prepared themselves for any eventuality.

Already sections of all the major

parties had been secretly rooting for the CA's demise.

They almost came close to their goal.

But apparently for lack of enough

No Prime Minister!

The search for a new prime minister looks set to become a prolonged affair

By SAROJ DAHAL

After two failed attempts to find a consensus prime minister and as many abortive bids to find an elected head of the government, next Monday sees yet another round of what looks set to be a dull drama.

Almost a month after prime

minister Madhav Kumar Nepal stepped down, the search for his successor is still on.

The caretaker prime minister has been taking care of the beleaguered nation.

But the major parties are deadlocked

over election for a new executive chief.

As of writing this, there was no indication of a breakthrough.

The Maoist chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and the Nepali Congress vice president Ram Chandra Poudel are unlikely to prevail over each other.

With the faction-ridden UML and the front of the four Madhesi outfits undecided, neither Prachanda nor Poudel can garner the required majority in the 601-member house.

According to sources, the ensuing another round could be held a week later.

That also in all likelihood would prove inconclusive. But it would possibly open a Pandora's box.

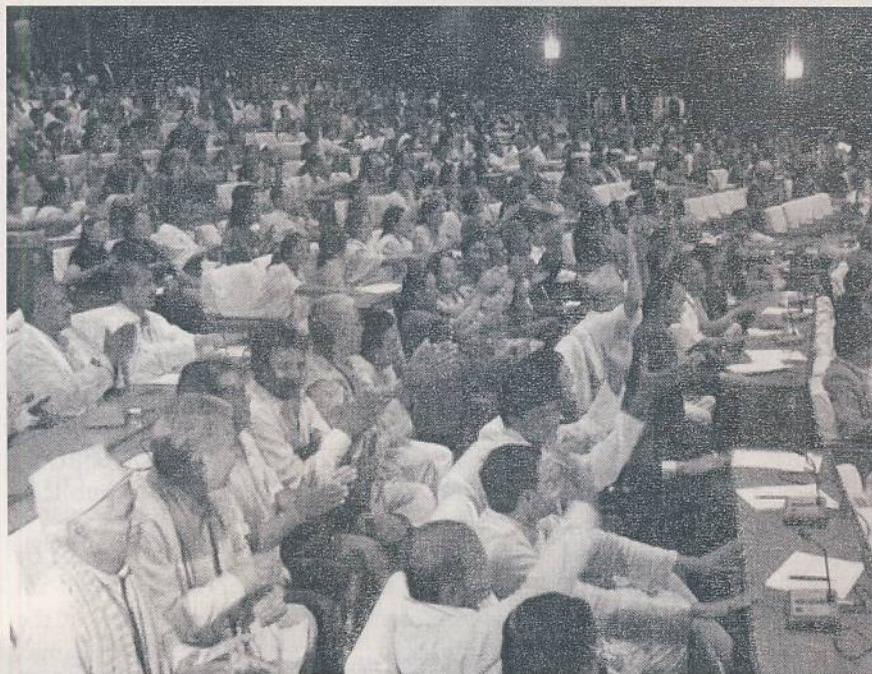
With the UML standing on the verge of a vertical split and the division within the Maoist leadership also deepening by the day over who should be the prime minister, the voting on the CA floor threatens to be a free-for-all irrespective of the party loyalty or affiliations.

The eventual casualty: the constitution making process and the body that is supposed to make it.

Said an analyst, the stalemate is unlikely to end without another "12-point" accord.



Poudel (Left) and Prachanda: Who will win ?



CA Members : What do they stand for ?

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE Super Govt?

The role of PAC is to work on the report presented by Auditor General and address the matters raised by them

By KESHAB POUDEL

Is the Public Accounts Committee supreme to all other committees of the Legislative Parliament? If not, what jurisdictions does the PAC have that allow it to indulge in all kinds of state activities as if it were a super government?

The committee which claims to be a messiah of ethical matters is itself in controversy as the morality of its chairman is in question. According to parliamentary practices, the chairman of the PAC should be a member of the opposition party. However, the current president Ram Krishna Yadav is from ruling Nepali Congress.

"We have been playing effective role to contain the corruption and irregularities of the country. Since committees are also a mini house, we can ask anybody anything in case of wrongdoing," said chairman Yadav. "Some people are trying to discredit us."

Even some members are questioning his continuity. "He should have resigned on moral grounds to pave the way for a member of UCPN-Maoist to head the committee," said a member. "It is unethical for him to continue as the chairman."

PAC seems to be working as another supreme government under the Legislative Parliament in summoning the executive chiefs of government corporations, ordering cancellation of tender bids in passports, and questioning procurement agreements between foreign companies and the government.

This is not a new practice. Although Nepal's newly elected Legislative Parliament has modified everything, what it has not is the legacy of Panchayati Public Accounts Committee of the past.

The clause 110 of the Conduct of Business of Legislature Parliament

Rules 2008 says seven committees in the Legislative Parliament pursuant to Article 58 of the constitution are there to make the government responsible to the Legislature-Parliament and provide necessary direction and suggestion to the government having made evaluation and monitoring the activities of the government made in the past and being made at present.

According to clause 110, each of the seven committees has its own jurisdiction and roles. The working areas of Public Accounts Committee include looking at Public Accounts and Reports of the Auditor General.

However, the PAC is deviating from its jurisdictions. At a time when Auditor General's Office continues to raise the concern over the increase volume of unsettled accounts and misuse of public funds, the PAC is busy in other lucrative issues.

There is no issue and area where the public accounts committee has not involved. From aircraft purchase deal to leasing the land by National Trading Corporation and recently on the issue of Machine Readable Passports, it seems that PAC can go anywhere and to any extent.

"Because of the lack of activities of other committees, Public Accounts Committee seems to have entered to fill the vacuum. If we were active, PAC should have shrunk to its own," said a member of Development Committee.

Fed up with the extra activities of PAC, some lawyers are trying to file a case in the Supreme Court demanding to interpret PAC's role and jurisdiction.

Although PAC works in a number of scandals and cases, nobody raises any question about its jurisdiction. The PAC has good method to scandalize the issue. It invites the media and does the media trial balloon.

"We have to settle the question whether PAC is supra body within the parliament. If it is just a committee like others, it must work under its jurisdiction," said advocate Madhav Basnet. "PAC is now acting as 'Loktanrik' Royal Commission. Nowhere in the world, PAC do investigation as police."

By summoning executive officials and ministers, the PAC is making itself as a super government. Its performance on the issues of unsettled account, however, is dismal. ■

"The Situation Is Frustrating"

NARAHARI ACHARYA

People have not seen any change in the working patterns of parliamentary political parties and people are yet to see the transformation in the Maoist ways of violent actions.

Nepali Congress leader and Constituent Assembly member NARAHARI ACHARYA is well known for his stand on Loktantra. Acharya holds the view that only a republican and federal Nepal can give stability to a democratic system. He compelled his party leaders to accept the Maoist agenda for Constituent Assembly and write a new constitution for a stable and prosperous Nepal. After the elections of CA, Nepal became Loktantrik, Federal, Secular and Republic. However, the political reality has not changed yet and the CA is unable to draft the constitution. It has failed to give the country a legitimate government of late. Acharya spoke on these issues to KESHAB POUDEL at his residence Monday afternoon. Excerpts:

You have been saying that a Loktantrik, Secular, Federal and Republican Nepal will address all political ills by bringing stable governments. The recent political trend has shown otherwise. How do you look at this?

Despite certain level of instability, the federal, secular and republic Nepal is much better than what it used to be. The mandate of Janandolan II was not only to abolish monarchy but to set up new culture and new values for new Nepal.

What were the other mandates?

People had resentments and complaints over the role of political parties, particularly on their pro-status quo views. People also wanted change on the status quo behavior of political parties and wanted to bring the Maoists to peaceful politics from their violent activities.

Have they changed?

People have not seen any change in the working patterns of parliamentary political parties and people are yet to see the transformation in the Maoist ways of violent actions. Of course, violence is substantially reduced but they too are unable to change themselves.

Why have they not changed yet?

Individuals who discredited the previous political system are still in the influential positions. The present crisis is the crisis of all these failures. Those who were responsible to create the problems are still influential.

How do you feel when you see nothing has changed despite political changes?

The situation is frustrating. Because of lack of a long term political vision among the top political leaders, the country is compelled to face the present

political crisis. One can see there is a tendency among the top political leaders not to take right and bold decisions. Political leadership is below average standards. Although Maoists always talk about the need to jump, they too are unable to change themselves. They too are heading in a similar direction. The activities taken by political parties after the elections of CA have tarnished their images.

What do you say of the faith of political parties on democratic, federal and republican values?

Leading political figures accepted change by compulsion not by conviction. Since an overwhelming number of political leaders at the helm of political parties do not want change, Nepalese are yet to taste the federal democratic republic.

You reposed your trust on Maoists. How do you see their behavior now?

Maoists were different before the elections. They are trying to follow old ways.

How do you see the commitment of other political parties?

After intense pressure from the party workers, leaders of other parties also took the decisions on federalism, loktantra and republic, but they are not honest on the agenda. They often expressed that the present agenda of change is not their own agenda. The recent example is the statement given by prime minister Madhav Nepal who said that his party accepted the CA just on the pressure of Maoists. Actually, he was not in favor of this new change.

What is the state of NC?

Nepali Congress too has a large number of persons at the helm of party who are yet to accept the change. After the major changes, no political parties have held their general assemblies. This is the reason the debate is yet to take place.

Do you mean Maoists are still better?

Maoists who claim that they are the main forces of change too are giving up secularism, federalism and republic. Maoist leadership has shown that they can go to every extent, even the opposite side, in the case of forming their government. Their recent meeting with Kamal Thapa's party to seek their support in the runoff elections accepting all their demands exposed them badly. Janandolan gave us a height in the world. Unfortunately, the main actors of the change are now making efforts to dilute the cause.

How can we settle the present crisis?

There is still a long way to go. There is the need to start intense debates nationwide on the new political trends. We must transform political leaders who consider themselves as all powerful. It is true that they are in the headline and control the resources. But it is not going to be true for all times.

Just a few weeks ago, the tenure of CA was extended for a year. If the CA is unable to write the constitution and unable to form the government, what is the use of CA? What do you suggest?

The recent activities indicated that the two years' tenure has nothing to do with the delay in constitution writing. Of course, it is very difficult to write an inclusive constitution accommodating all the views in such a short span of two years. We have completed some technical works but we have never made any efforts to build consensus on democratic ideals.

Why is there such a failure?

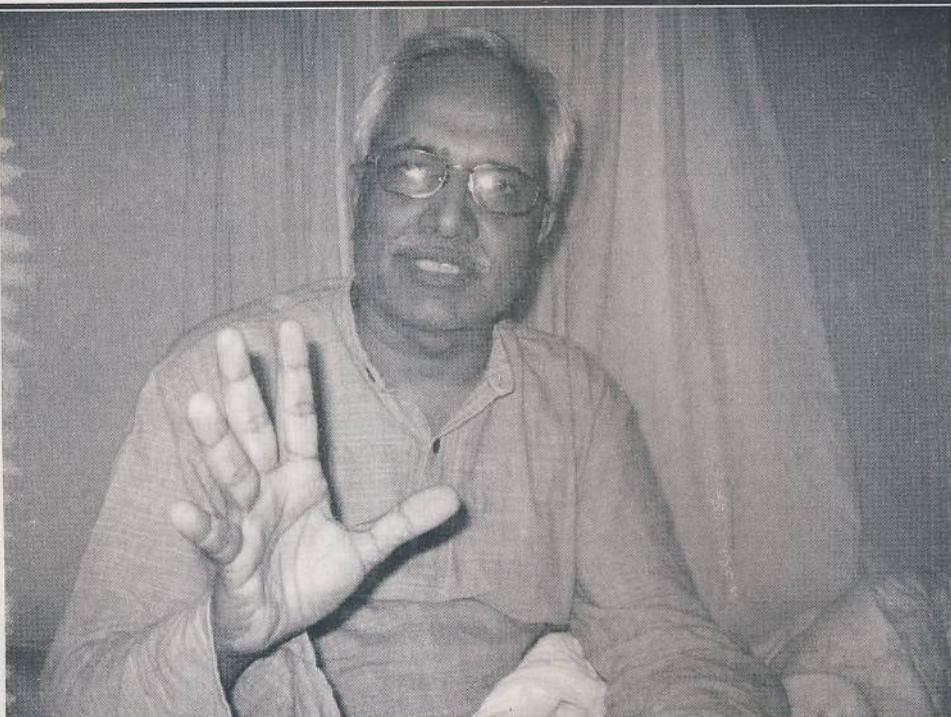
No committee is able to produce a consensus report. Even we were unable to maintain political consensus made through the 12 points agreement and interim constitution on the modality of the government and political system. Even the largest political party rejected the foundation laid by interim constitution and 12 point agreements.

Don't you think it is the failure of the leadership in CA?

Frankly speaking, the CA did not find leadership at all. The Chairman of Constituent Assembly has limited himself just as a speaker of Legislature Parliament. He was unable to show his own presence in the Constituent Assembly. The Constitutional Committee is also unable to function properly because of appointment of Madhav Nepal as a prime minister.

Maoists often claim that they made every effort to give their leadership to CA?

Despite the larger presence in the CA, UCPN-Maoist is unable to lead the Constituent Assembly. Other political parties have only negligible strength. Whether it was in India or South Africa, the top political leaders took the initiatives. It was Jawahar Lal Nehru and Sardar Ballab Bhai Patel who tabled all motions in India. Similarly, Nelson



Mandela took the initiative in South Africa. It is unfortunate that no senior political leaders ever attended the meetings of CA here in Nepal.

What are the main functions of CA?

Political leaders are taking the CA as just a hung parliament. This is the reason we have changed three governments in two years. We are now uncertain who will be the prime minister even after completing the elections the third time.

Is there any solution for the present crisis?

After extending the tenure of CA, it is unjustifiable to say that Maoist leadership is unacceptable to us. If political parties have such mistrust of Maoists, the tenure of CA should not be extended. We have to accept the fact that Maoists make up the largest party with strong presence in CA. Similarly, Maoists also need to understand that they cannot impose the revolution like Mao did in China as this view is already outdated. Maoists have not participated in the CA elections to establish communism in Nepal. No country in the world wants to see Maoists as a communist party. UCPN-Maoist must accept this reality. Other political parties also need to realize that it is their failure that raises Maoism.

What do you suggest now?

The present crisis will be settled in case Maoists and Nepali Congress correct their ways. There is the need to evaluate the whole political process in the new context. If we don't take some drastic steps, we will not be in a position to write the new constitution.

After extending the tenure of CA, it is unjustifiable to say that Maoist leadership is unacceptable to us. If political parties have such mistrust of Maoists

Taming The Monstrous Kosi To Prevent The World's Greatest Catastrophe

- DR. A.B. THAPA

Kosi river held back between the embankments since the last half a century and now flowing well above the adjoining lands has already turned into the world's deadliest river. World might be heading for the rerun of the worst flood disasters reminiscent of the past Yellow river disasters when each time the flood took the life of a record number of people. Already the peoples of Nepal and India are in grave danger. Unfortunately the governments of both countries are seen even until now unable to get to the root of the Kosi flood problems. Indian Government was even telling just few years back that the Kosi flood control problem does not exist. During the run up to the 1997 Indo-Nepal joint committee meeting on Kosi several letters were received from the Govt. of India explaining our government that the Kosi flood control problems have already been solved once for ever after the completion of the construction of the embankments

Birth of a Monster

The Yellow River of China known as "the Sorrow of China" resembles to a considerable extent the Kosi River similarly known as "the Sorrow of Bihar". The killer Yellow River has already been tamed after the completion of the construction of several storage dams and it has completely relinquished its aggressive character, whereas the greatly feared Kosi River held back by side embankments and now flowing well above the adjoining surrounding lands remains a **great danger to life and property of millions** of our region. Judging from the angle of similarity between these two rivers the way they roamed rampaging their vast floodplain quite often completely changing their course, it appears, the world might be very close to the deadliest catastrophe triggered by the failure of the Kosi embankments.

Governments of India and Nepal were completely taken by surprise when last year the eastern embankment was suddenly breached and the Kosi shifted its course to the east. Despite last year's horrifying flood disaster experience both the governments are not as yet seen taking much interest to find satisfactory ways to protect the life and property of millions from the oncoming Kosi floods feared to strike again anytime soon.

The Kosi has already turned into a monstrous river. Now the safety of the peoples living in the Kosi floodplain must be

at the top in priority of both the governments.

World's Worst Natural Disasters

Among the world's top five worst natural disasters are the 1931 Yellow River flood in China, the 1887 Yellow River flood, the 1938 Yellow River flood, the Bhola Cyclone of 1970 in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and the 1556 Shaanxi earthquake in China. The next five in order of severity are the 1839 Cyclone in Coringa India, the 1642 Kaifeng flood in Henan province China, the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami in various nations, and the 1138 Aleppo Earthquake in Syria.

The 1931 Yellow River flood devastated the China in summer. It took the lives of people numbering between one to four millions. It is the worst natural disaster ever to have been recorded of any time. The 1887 Yellow River flood resulted from a long period of rains which caused the river water to rise above the man made dikes. When that happened, it resulted in the worst natural disaster ever recorded prior to the 1931 flood. It is believed that between 900,000-2,000,000 people had lost their lives in that horrible disaster. The 1938 Yellow River flood disaster claimed the lives of people numbering between 500,000 and 900,000.

Already the peoples of Nepal and India are in grave danger. Unfortunately the governments of both countries are seen even until now unable to get to the root of the Kosi flood problems.

Existing Kosi Project

The Kosi embankment and barrage had been designed for a maximum flood discharge of only 9.5 lakh cusecs. Within the last 50 years twice the flood discharge close to 9 lakh cusecs have been recorded. Surprisingly, the maximum flood discharge recorded within the last 40 years was only around 5 lakh cusecs. As a result, it was not necessary to face up to the problems of the breach in embankment.

The annual rate of the sedimentation upstream barrage based on the observations as of the early 1980s is about 5 cm per annum. It implies that within the last 50 years after the commissioning of the barrage a layer of 2.5 meters thick sediments might have

already deposited on the river bed. At present the capacity of the embankments to safely hold back the maximum flood might have been reduced to the extent as low as only about 5 lakh cusecs, and even such greatly diminished capacity is decreasing further year by year due to continued bed level rises.

A New Cycle of Disasters

It is pretty obvious that in future the breaching of the Kosi embankments even during minor floods would be a regular phenomenon and on such occasions there would be a rerun of the last year's flood disaster episode. If there would be a breach in embankment at the time of maximum flood discharge close on nine lakh cusecs., a discharge already recorded twice within the last fifty years, there could be a total devastation of the north-east Bihar. Most of the low lying areas would be quickly submerged way deep inside the water particularly if the breach coincides with prolonged incessant rain. Too many people would not have time to reach the safety of the high grounds. No wonder in similar circumstances the loss of life in China used to be in astronomical number!

Physical Process

When the Kosi bursts the embankment at extremely high river discharge several very adverse hydraulic factors would be brought into play. All of them are compounded to result in the most dreadful flood disaster. In this process the relegated old Kosi channels would be reactivated one after another.

If there is a breach in embankment, say at a flood discharge of 9 lakh cusecs, perhaps the initial flow channeled through the newly reactivated Kosi old channel could even reach 18 lakh cusecs, which would be the combination of the base flood discharge and the flow from the negative surge moving upstream. These hydraulic phenomena would result in very rapid current of the positive surge heading downstream all along the fully reactivated old channel expected at that time to be full of water drained from the local catchment.

Sediments Play Havoc

Sediments previously heaped up on the river bed of the Kosi would be quickly flushed down to the reactivated channel by the fast running flood water gushing out from the original course. Soon the upper reach of the newly reactivated channel would be throttled with sediments. Thereafter the bulk of the flood water would be concentrated on the next adjacent reactivated channel. This

channel too would be choked with sediments. This process of reactivating the old channels would be repeated again and again until the Kosi flood water reaches the far end of its floodplain unless the flood quickly subsides. Thus the sediments would be playing havoc. Prevention of the breach in embankment must be at the top in priority.

Buffer Channel

At present the capacity of the present Kosi river channel to hold back big floods is greatly reduced. It would not anymore be possible to confine always the river within the boundaries of the embankments to prevent the rerun of the last year type disaster. However, the loss of life and property can be greatly reduced by preventing the Kosi to roam freely to rampage its vast floodplain. For this purpose one of the relegated old Kosi channels must be developed as a buffer channel for the diversion of the high flood water in excess of the carrying capacity of the present Kosi course. A spillway must be provided to discharge safely the flood water across the embankment into the buffer channel, which could also help to hold back the sediments already accumulated on the river bed.

Postponement of Kosi Dam Project

It would be a big mistake to opt to implement at the very beginning the mammoth Kosi dam project to resolve the rapidly worsening flood situation. It will take a very long time to complete the detailed study and construction of the optimum sized Kosi dam project, that might have a dam perhaps the highest in the world and a hydropower plant capable to generate about 16,000 MW in accordance with further studies based on more correct recent data and well tested evaluation procedures recently applied in the Karnali project study

Recommended Method of Kosi Flood Control

The implementation of relatively small Sun-Kosi Project and the Tamar-1 Project provided with adequate flood control storage would suffice to resolve the present Kosi flood problems at least for a period of next 50 to 60 years. There could be a possibility to incorporate to a limited extent the provision for the Arun river flood storage also by raising the present dam height of the Arun-3 project.

The useful life of the above proposed reservoirs could be prolonged to last for ever by applying the technology widely used in China to vent sediments as a density current. Further aggradations of the Kosi river bed could also be prevented if it is found commercially feasible to transport in big barges the sediments drawn from the Kosi river near Chatra for use in construction by using the proposed Kosi canal waterway.

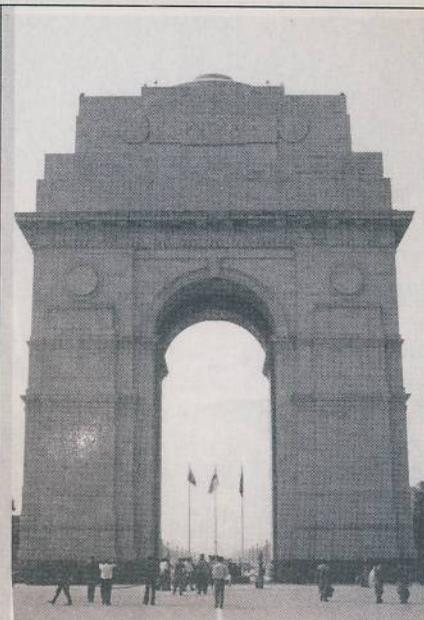
Delhi Diary

By ABIJIT SHARMA

Hello from Delhi. I have been in the Indian capital for about a month and have been admitted to the prestigious Delhi University. As I sit down to write down this journal, the clock has already ticked the 11th hour at night. I suddenly realize that I forgot to do the dishes. "Well", I say to myself "I'll do it the first thing in the morning. It's my place, and I can run the things the way I want". So, then, here I go.

My month long stay in Delhi has been full of emotions: excitement, frustration, nervousness and a sense of pride and responsibility. I landed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport on 28th of June, in order to get admitted to the Delhi University. I had a sense of excitement. I had never been to Delhi before although in recent days I had been hearing a lot about its transformation. Then again, it was the first time I was leaving my home and like any other student, I felt sad and depressed. Being the only child made it even worse for both my parents and me. My mother couldn't control her emotions and neither could I. All I could say to my mother was "The same child whom used to get a lot of thrashing from you for not remembering the multiplication table in Grade I, is now going to Delhi on his own. Be happy Mamu, your son has grown up".

The first thing one notices as soon as he/she lands at Delhi is, no doubt, the 'Delhi Heat'. Delhi experiences extreme temperatures during both the summers and winters. My next few days, where I had to run around for my admissions, were extremely exhausting and strenuous due to the heat. Now, when I talk about Delhi, how can I miss out on the development it has made? On my way to my local guardian's home, I was bewildered at the progress which I had



heard about quite a lot. There were 8-10 lanes of well maintained roads, skyscrapers, shopping malls, internationally reputed information centres, street lights, and a long traffic jam even at midnight. Delhi, instead of looking like an impoverished Indian city, looked like a magnificent European city.

The next few days with Krishna 'Dai', my local guardian here, was quite a learning experience. Krishna Dai, who himself was a DU student and had come from Nepal just like me five years back, now works for the well known Wall Street Journal. He was undoubtedly an encouraging and an inspiring source for me. I really look up and respect him for what he has achieved at such an early age and promised to take him as a source of inspiration.

On the other hand, I was overcome with home sickness, which everyone had warned me about. I missed home, my family and my friends. I started missing Nepal. As a normal Nepali teenager, I always complained about the state of Nepal; power-cut, traffic jam, and the always disturbed political environment. I always, selfishly, dreamt of getting away from Nepal as soon as possible and settling abroad. But once I was away, I realized the importance of patriotism and the importance of own country. Yes, I miss Nepal very much. ■

Photo: by EEE Team



NIBL

Extreme Expedition

Supported by NIBL, the Extreme Everest Expedition collected more than 1800 kilograms of garbage from trails to Mt. Everest

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Nepal is celebrating year 2011 as the tourism year, efforts to clean up the Mount Everest region will definitely give a strong message in the international tourism market that Nepalese are doing something to clean the tourist destinations.

Nepal's Himalayas, particularly Mt. Everest, are facing threats from global warming to increasing number of mountaineers and growing volume of uncollected garbage.

Nepal Investment Bank Ltd (NIBL), a leading bank in the country, funded the Extreme Everest Expedition 2010 (EEE) to clean up garbage from above 8,000 meters on Mount Everest. The project in the region, commonly referred to as the 'Death Zone', was successfully completed.

"We are proud that we organised this program which helped to clean up tons of wastes," said Prithivi Bahadur Pande, Chairman and Chief Executive Director of Nepal Investment Bank Ltd. "EEE's cleaning campaign is only the beginning of an effort to spread

awareness on environmental pollution, climate change and the urgent need to clean our planet and the environment around us. With the help of a documentary, EEE hopes to take the message forward to the local, national and global levels in the coming months. In doing so, EEE also hopes to help promote Nepal Tourism Year 2011," said Pande.

A team of 20 Sherpas led by Namgyal Sherpa, under the coordination of Chakra Karki, set out to the Everest Base Camp on the 25th of April 2010 and cleared out 1800 kilos of garbage, equally divided between degradable and non-degradable wastes. The waste was piled onto a symbolic 'Mountain' at Everest Base Camp. Out of 20 members, 6 members climbed Everest. The team spent 6.4 million rupees to carry out a month long campaign.

The degradable waste was brought to Namche Bazaar and given to the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC) - which is responsible for the disposal of wastes in the area. The non-disposable garbage was carried on yak and jopkyo to Lukla airport and flown out to Kathmandu.

According to a press release issued by NIBL, EEE 2010 also rescued two bodies - one of a Swiss climber, Gianni Goltz, who died last year, and that of a Russian climber, Sergey Duganov. Both bodies were successfully brought down from above 8000 meters by helilifting them off the mountain from Camp 2.

"We are very happy to see our dream materialize, something we never thought would happen. The volunteers carried almost 200 kilos of garbage down with them. Everyone was so sincere about their contribution," said Namgyal Sherpa

"May 29th is a historic day, and to think that we have shown our respect to two people we have the utmost admiration for, namely Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary, by maintaining the sanctity of our mountains is heartening," said Chakra Karki.

Addressing the concluding program, Minister for Culture, Parliamentary Affairs and Constituent Assembly Minendra Rijal thanked NIBL for taking a lead in such an important campaign. "Launching the campaign, NIBL showed that it also wants to get involved in such social work," said Rijal.

Former president of Nepal Mountaineering Association Ang Tshering Sherpa discussed the plight faced by the Himalayas due to the climate change. Similarly, tourism Entrepreneur Yogendra Shakya and industrialist Shekhar Golchha also highlighted the importance of the program.

Extreme Everest Expedition was documented by its team - who in addition to climbing and cleaning above 8000 meters - also shot their endeavors with 6 specially engineered high-definition cameras on the mountain. They came down with over 33 hours of footage. The feature documentary chronicling their efforts is currently in post-production and will premiere first in Kathmandu in a 7-day theatrical release in the Jai Nepal cinema hall this December.

Along with NIBL, the other groups in the campaign included Hulas Steel Industries Limited, Nepal Mountain Association, The Himalayan Times, Hotel Association Nepal, Surya Nepal, Everest Insurance, Ace Development Bank, Be Human Nepal, Chaudhary Group, The North Face, Himalayan Paint House, and Friends of the Himalayas. ■



Rice : Short supply

PADDY PRODUCTION

Rice Wrongs

Last year's GDP growth projection fell short of 2 percent – and the slight fall in paddy production alone was responsible for 1 percent

By A CORRESPONDENT

The last one year was characterized by protracted political conflict, the incessant instability, the scores of bandhs and strikes, and industrial unrest.

But, surprise, it was the other inconspicuous natural event that had the most damning effect on the national economy.

The monsoon last year entered the country 13 days later than normal and

the total precipitation was also not up to expectation.

The less than normal rainfall resulted in 11 percent decline in paddy production. And this alone was responsible for the lion's share of economic woes.

The budget had projected the GDP growth of 5.5 percent for the fiscal year 2009/10 but the Economic Survey published recently showed that the growth of 3.5 percent only could be realized.

“There was two percent gap between our projection and the actual growth. Of this two percent, the decline in paddy production alone was responsible for one percent,” said Finance Minister Surendra Pandey.

Huge Contribution

The paddy production occupies around 20 percent of the economic growth.

The overall agriculture contributes to one-third of the total GDP. And paddy alone covers one third of the total agriculture production.

Such an important natural produce is, ironically, dependant on the whims of natural phenomenon called monsoon.

“It is unfortunate that we still have to make GDP projection looking at the sky,” said Minister Pandey.

Last year, the government had expected the paddy production of 4.5 million metric tons. But it fell short by 500,000 metric tons.

“Last year, the monsoon entered the country on June 23 instead of normal date of June 10. The rainfall was less than normal leading to loss in agriculture, particularly, paddy production – which is water-intensive,” said Dr. Hari Dahal, spokesperson at the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

Uncertainty

This year, too, the monsoon entered the country a week later on June 17.

“Till now the rainfall has been scattered. The monsoon was very week initially but in the last one week it has picked up pace. However, there has been drought in some parts and floods in other parts. The distribution of precipitation is not normal,” said Dr. Dahal.

Till the third week of July, the rice plantation has been completed in around 60 percent of the fields.

“In mountainous regions, plantation has been completed in 75 percent of the fields; in hills the figure is 69 percent; and in Terai the figure is 55 percent,” Dr. Dahal said.

Until and unless the situation is not improved by extensive investment in irrigation facilities, Nepal's dependence on rainfall will continue – rendering the agriculture production at the mercy of the whims of natural phenomenon. ■

Business

The Body Shop

How entrepreneurship makes a Nepalese product into an international brand

By NITISH DEV BHATTARAI

Anita Roddick, the founder of the THE BODY SHOP, was an outstanding business woman of the century. She strongly believed that trade with developing countries would help more in improving the lives of marginal families of these countries than by giving them funds in the name of aid. As a result in 1988, THE BODY SHOP started a campaign called "Trade not Aid". It was focused on trading with developing countries. Anita decided to choose Nepal as one of the working countries to take her idea of Trade Not Aid forward. Mara Amat, a well known international designer, was sent here in Nepal in 1989 to find something that can be traded for THE BODY SHOP from Nepal.

Mara Amat found what she was looking for in the handmade paper. The paper was traditionally made and engaged marginalized people. The paper was made by 'Lokta' which is found in the Himalayan region of Nepal. This paper is a unique product of Nepal and can be converted into different paper products like stationeries, packing materials and gift items. Mara visited many handmade paper units and one such company was the General Paper Industry. Mara was happy to work with General Paper and informed her findings to The Body Shop. To give the final shape to the program, Anita Roddick came to Nepal to see the handmade paper in operation and to understand the impact of such activities for marginalized people.

"We were lucky that we had successfully run a non smoking campaign in our factory, which attracted her to do business with us. After discussing about the business, we were very happy to note that there is interest in Anita Roddick to work with us to carry her philosophy of Trade Not Aid," recounts Dr. Milan Dev Bhattarai, the managing director of the General Paper.

But there was a problem - the handmade papers could not meet the quality requirements as demanded internationally.

The Body Shop to carry on Trade Not Aid idea in an environmentally friendly way. It added one more feather on the hat of Trade Not Aid program. But this was not the end of the story. Mara Amat and her team also dedicated their time to train 14 members of General Paper to produce different stationery items like note books, and packing items like paper bags and boxes. Such training programs were followed by the design team of The Body Shop. The idea was to put these



stationery items with the products of The Body Shop in the retail chains. It was expected that customers would be interested in these handmade products while buying their regular items. Unfortunately this did not happen. In a few years time, it was realized that the shops were not able to sell the stationary items. Everyone started realizing that something went wrong in this noble Trade Not Aid idea. Anita Roddick boldly shared her experiences with BBC in a program titled "Paper the crapper" to tell people that Trade Not Aid

program should be carefully carried out not only to choose regions but also the products.

After careful thinking, The Body Shop moved from stationery items into packaging items. It was not that difficult for General Paper as similar handmade papers and manual techniques could be used for packing items. Mara Amat came back again to train staff of the General Paper to make boxes and other packing items.

In the meantime, The Body Shop, encouraged by its success stories with Trade Not Aid ideas, reworked the philosophy and termed it a Community Trade. One of the features of the Community Trade is to provide 4% premium to the company with every order. Such fund goes for the welfare of the community.

General Paper established General Welfare Pratistan (GWP) to carry on community development activities. With the fund of community welfare, GWP is focused on girl's education, AIDS awareness, environment maintenance and income generating

programs. Get Paper Industry (name changed from General to Get in 1997) has started a school in its community which is named "Anita-Milan Int'l academy" which reaches the community children till class 5. There are many scholarships that are focused on girls so that parents will send their children to school instead of making them stay at home. Other 5 such schools have been doing the same. More than 125 girls are getting scholarship every year as per the "send Your Daughter to School Campaign". ■

LATE DR. RAGHAB DHOJ PANTA

Stand Alone Economist

The death of Dr. Raghav Dhoj Panta is a big loss to the Nepalese economic sector

By A CORRESPONDENT

Dr. Raghav Dhoj Panta served in the Population Commission and taught economics during his early career. He then led the National Planning Commission as its acting vice chairman. In all that he did, he never compromised with anyone on his stand until he died.

Because of this, Dr. Panta often fought a lonely battle. He always expressed realistic views so far as economic policy of the country was concerned. Some of his economic stands looked different than what neo-liberal economists hold, but his arguments often proved right.

Thanks to his backing, then finance minister late Rabindra Nath Sharma, a politician, enforced the Value Added Tax

system in Nepal, which is the backbone of Nepal's present revenue collection.

Soft spoken and easily accessible, Dr. Panta, till his last breath, was actively involved in suggesting the economic policy of Nepal through the Institute of Economic Policy.

Dr Panta was very critical of urban-centric growth which he believed widened the rich-poor gap.

Late Dr. Panta was a frank and bold person. He had a dream and wished to start a school of economics even at his last days.

"Nepal's total economic structure is dependent on poverty," claimed Dr Raghav Dhoj Panta, executive director,

IFDS. Dr Panta held the view that the vicious cycle of poverty was beneficial for the 'haves'.

He was very critical about pegging the Nepalese currency with the Indian currency. In his writing, Dr. Panta strongly put forward his views that Nepalese currency needed to float in the free market.

During the nine months of CPN-UML government in 1995, when it made every effort to tamper Nepal's economic data and reverse the liberalized economic system, he published several articles criticizing it. CPN-UML members like Dr. Dilli Raj Khanal, Dr. Mangal Siddhi Manadhar and others even produced a statistic book tampering the data. However, Panta did dare to expose them through his study and research.

Late Dr. Panta was a frank and bold person. He had a dream and wished to start a school of economics even at his last days.

Senior economist and former acting chairman of National Planning Commission Dr. Panta passed away at the age of 66. He was undergoing treatment for liver. Panta is survived by his wife, a daughter and a son. Though Dr. Panta died, his legacy in Nepalese economy will remain for a long time to come.

Climate Champions

Youth For Change

British Council selected 10 youngsters as climate champions for the year 2010

By NITISH DEV BHATTARAI

As climate change is going to have long term effects on a country like Nepal, the best way to contain them would be to mobilize youth to generate awareness and build their capability.

Realizing the importance of youth, British Council has been organizing a program to mobilize the youth to generate awareness. Like in the last year, this year too, ten Nepalese youths have been selected as climate champions.

A raft of new Project raising awareness on climate change Nepal, ranging from street drama to cycling ambassadors, and community videos to changing business practices, was launched on Friday July 16, 2010 by climate champions selected by the



British Council and its partners.

The 10 successful champions, selected from a tough field of competition of more than 170 applicants, were chosen for their ability to project innovative and exciting plans for

community involvement in raising awareness on climate change.

"This is a good opportunity for us to show our talent to generate awareness among the people. I am happy to say that I was selected as a new Champion," said Saurav Dhakal. Other young champions too held similar views.

The winners comprise of Abhimanyu Magrati, Abishek Shrestha, Saurav Dhakal, Bhuwan K.C., Ram Babu Regmi, Jony Mainaly, Khasing Rai, Sailendra Dangol, Saunak Bhatta, Sunita K.C. The winners were presented with certificates by Purshottam Ghimire, joint secretary, Ministry of Environment.

"The selection of the ten new champions

provides another opportunity for young people in Nepal to learn about how climate change will change their ways of life and to work with their community in adapting into it," says Paula Middleton, Country Director, British Council.

India's China Challenge

SHYAM SARAN



One of the key challenges for India's foreign and security policy for the next decade and beyond will be the management of China's emergence as a great Asian and, increasingly, global power. This challenge is further complicated by the simultaneous, though less spectacular, emergence of India itself as a country with significant and increasing economic and military capabilities. For both countries, Asia remains the principal platform for power projection.

In fashioning an appropriate China strategy, India must recognise that the essential character of India-China relations is and will remain competitive. We represent two contrasting but long-standing civilisations. Each has its own deeply rooted cultural ethos despite the shared legacy of Buddhism. In more contemporary times, China has seen its emergence in Asia as regaining its historical, though sometimes mythical, status as a pre-eminent power, at the summit of a hierarchical economic and security architecture in the region. There has been and will continue to be resistance to the emergence of any rival centre of political and economic power. This has been a consistent theme throughout the past 60 years of China's posture towards India. However, in a classic exercise of the Chinese art of "walking on two legs", China has also sought to cultivate a more positive and benign relationship with India, to avoid tipping India into an overt and threatening military alliance with one or more of China's adversaries. More recently, tactical alliances with India have been useful to China in safeguarding its interests on several global issues such as climate change and multilateral trade. The "Copenhagen spirit" is a manifestation of this. Tactically, there may be, at times, a more friendly and cooperative approach. At other times, there may be negative pressures, such as activism on the unsettled border or a more threatening posture on the Tibet issue. What is critical for us to recognise is that this does not deflect China from its strategic objective of preventing India from challenging her march towards predominance and pre-eminence in Asia.

Let us look at the historical record. China has never hesitated to use its alliance with Pakistan to keep India tethered firmly in South Asia. We have a rare example here of a nuclear weapon state actively assisting a non-nuclear weapon state in acquiring both strategic weapons and the means of delivery. The target was India. This has been for China a low-cost, low-risk means of constraining India without having to confront her directly. In fact, at crucial junctures, China has refrained from intervening on behalf of Pakistan. This happened in 1965, in 1971 and again more recently during the Kargil conflict. In December 1971, the US NSA, Henry Kissinger, virtually pleaded with his Chinese interlocutor, Ambassador Huang Hua, that China should carry out some military operations on India's borders to relieve the pressure on Pakistan. But China did not bite. China has worked against India's claim to permanent membership of the UN Security Council and lobbied actively to deny India the waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers' Group to enable her to participate in international nuclear commerce. But China has avoided being the only holdout in publicly opposing India. This points to an important aspect of Chinese behaviour, that is, some aversion

to risk-taking in pursuing its diplomatic objectives relating to India. We need to build upon this in our engagement with China.

India must learn to pursue its interests with the same unsentimental calculation that China displays in advancing her perceived interests. We, too, need to learn to "walk on two legs" and pursue a more nuanced policy. We should welcome constructive engagement with China on issues where our interests are convergent. At the same time, we should not hesitate to demonstrate our willingness to defend our interests with firmness. It was interesting to see that during our NSA's recent visit to China, the two sides spoke of the need to respect each other's "core concerns". This is a good sign provided there is clarity about what these core concerns are and how legitimate they are perceived to be by others. We should not accept that China's territorial claim to the South China sea is its legitimate core concern.

There is no doubt that in the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis, China has acquired greater diplomatic clout in relation to other major powers. This has the potential of shrinking our own room for manoeuvre and increasing our vulnerability. However, precisely because of our own display of economic resilience and dynamism, and the significant acquisition of military, in particular, naval capabilities, our diplomatic clout, too, has increased. The sheer weight of India's sub-continental profile makes it an indispensable partner in tackling any global or cross-cutting issue such as energy security, non-proliferation and public health. Here is an opportunity to expand our own strategic space vis-a-vis other major powers, including China.

It has been our experience that China has been more accommodating towards India whenever it has felt that India's range of options had expanded. It was China which proposed a "strategic and cooperative partnership" with India in April 2005 and negotiated what is undoubtedly, from India's standpoint, a favourable set of "Basic Principles and Political Parameters" as the basis for resolving the boundary issue. This happened in the aftermath of the historic strategic partnership forged between India and the EU in November 2004 and the impending and significant upgradation of Indo-US relations envisaged for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's state visit to Washington later in July that year. The more diplomatic options India is perceived to have, the more diversified its relations with other major powers, the greater the display of accommodation on the part of China on Sino-Indian issues. Therefore, we should actively pursue coalition-building globally as well as with all those major powers who wish to see a more plural and loosely structured economic and security architecture in Asia. This would include Japan, Indonesia, Australia and Vietnam. We should promote a more inclusive arrangement in the region, welcoming the participation of the US and Russia. This is not a containment policy towards China. It is a strategy of expanding India's options, which would help manage relations with friends and adversaries alike. After all, even friends should know that we have alternatives available ■

*Sharan is India's Former Foreign Secretary
This Article Published in Business Standard, India*



Planting Rice: Early harvest

RICE

Soaring Price

The effect of last year's drop in paddy production has permeated to the commodity market.

By **UMA KANTA KHANAL** in Jhapa

Low rainfall resulted in the decline of paddy production by 11 per cent last year, according to government records. This year, the market price of rice is very high.

The most common Sona Mansuli rice now costs Rs.3,500 per quintal. Two months ago the of the rice per quintal less than Rs. 800. Prices of other brands of rice such as Basmati, Mansuli and Dalle have also soared similarly.

When ready rice is comes out of the mills, the above mentioned rates are applied. But when it reaches the capital, west Nepal and the retail market, the rates go higher.

Rice is the most important cereal crop in Nepal. But the fluctuation in rice production has become very common because of erratic rainfall.

Last year, the rainfall was not enough. The traders and the rice mills operators also claim that last year's low production of paddy affected its normal price because of its high demand this year. Ramesh Minda, a supplier of Makhkhan Rice, said, "The rainfall was not enough last year so people had less paddy production. This is one of the reasons that the price of rice is high this year."

According to Minda, there is a tight security in the Indian side which is causing difficulty to the importers of paddy and rice from India. The Indian paddy and rice cover twenty five percent of Nepali market.

"It is very hard to get Indian products now. Sometimes the carriers illegally pass a very little amount," Minda said.

The decline in rice production in the bread basket of Nepal i.e. the Terai

region, has affected the commodity supply of the state, agriculture technicians say. But the government is not yet showing its seriousness on this matter. The rise in the price of rice has affected not only the people who find it hard to manage their hand to mouth problems but also the middle class people.

"Nepal was the exporter of rice and paddy, but for the last three years its production has hardly reached the consumers," a technician from Agriculture Development Office, Jhapa, Saligram Bhattarai said.

According to traders, there is a big demand of rice in western parts of Nepal. It is very hard to fulfill the demand. Vice-president of an association of industries dealing in rice, edible oil, and pulses, Ganga Bisan Rathi said, "Because of big demand of rice in the western Nepal, there is less chance of reduction in the price of rice."

Market has been affected by the supply side.

The paddy which was harvested in May-June has reached the market but it has also not fully supported for the price reduction. According to Rathi, there is no chance of price reduction until the new paddy harvest reaches the market. It seems that Shrawan, Bhadra and Ashwin will be crucial for Nepali people to meet their hand to mouth needs.

This year, 60 percent of paddy cultivation is now expected to be a 'quick heal' for the Nepali people. ■

NEW SPOTLIGHT

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National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) Draft

Final Process

Despite delay in the implementation of the project for more than six years, Nepal has finally prepared a draft NAPA.

By KESHAB POUDEL

The long wait to see the NAPA has ended following the release of the NAPA draft document by the Ministry of Environment for public reactions. Prepared in a record time following the guidelines set by UNFCCC, the NAPA document will open many avenues for Nepal to implement adaptation programs. Nepalese experts have shown that they can formulate any document given solid political backing and technical support.

Till a year ago, there was a sense of uncertainty about the NAPA. However, Nepal's team has made the impossible thing possible. There may be lacunas as well as shortcomings since no one can make a perfect document. What is important is the publication of the NAPA draft in time with the identification of projects for implementation.

To make NAPA document as a document of Nepal, the NAPA Project has already sent it out for wider consultations seeking suggestions and opinions before it is sent to UNFCCC.

"We want to make it Nepal's document and not the document of Ministry of Environment," said Dr. Ganesh Raj Joshi, secretary at the ministry. "We can accommodate suggestions and opinions given by experts and various stake holders before it will be announced in August."

What is NAPA?

Recognizing that the developing countries needed assistance in developing plans to address the adverse effects and impact of climate change, in 2001, the 7th Conferences of Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC decided that the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) should be assisted in preparing National Adaptation Programs of Action or

NAPAs to address urgent and immediate needs and concerns related to adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change.

According to a UN document, the COP also requested the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to provide funding for preparing NAPAs as the first activity supported by the LDC Fund which was established a few months before the COP7 (the COP had just been established). The GEF Council authorized GEF support to LDCs for the preparation of NAPAs.

NAPAs seek to provide a basic framework for communicating "the urgent and immediate adaptation needs

of the LDCs." The 7th COP recommended that NAPAs should be action-oriented, country-driven, and widely endorsed. To achieve this, the COP issued several recommendations regarding the process for preparing NAPAs.

According to the recommendation, NAPA teams should include Government and civil society, and the teams should "identify key climate-change adaptation measures, based, to the extent possible, on vulnerability and adaptation assessment."

However, "if a State wishes to depart significantly from the process recommended by COP 7", the GEF will consider the reasons for the alternative process.

NAPAs also provide an avenue for linking issues associated with implementing the three Rio Conventions (CBD, UNCCD and UNCCC).

The implementing agencies through which GEF will provide assistance are UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank. Because NAPAs and initial national communications are closely interlinked, GEF recommends that a State keep the

'It Was Prepared By Nepalis'

DR. GANESH RAJ JOSHI, secretary at the Ministry of Environment wants the NAPA draft to be widely circulated and extensively debated across the country.

What benefits will Nepal have from NAPA?

After implementation of NAPA draft, we will be in a better position to acquire funds. NAPA draft is the document of our country. We can have access to resources from the Least Developed Country Fund for the adaptation program.

Do you have access to other funds also?

We also acquire money from Clean Development Mechanism which is contributed by developing countries. We want to have access to it. We want to focus now on the resources coming from other development partners.

How many areas has the ministry identified as key?

We have identified 6-7 areas as

priority projects in six sectors. In agriculture sector, the priority is on farm soil and water conservation in mid hills and high hills. Churia

Watershed management and Development is another area.

Who prepared the draft?

It was prepared by Nepali experts. We had a core group led by joint secretaries of sectoral ministries with support from Nepalese experts and then there is another group of experts and discussions. There were wide consultations within the sectoral ministries and there was a discussion in the Ministry of Environment. This helped to build the sense of ownership on the draft. We have also sent the draft proposal at regional level and district level for intense discussions. We have modified the document on the basis of suggestions.



same agency for both. UNFCCC set the time frame for the preparations of NAPAs as the documents are expected to be completed within 12 to 18 months of the availability of funds.

NEPAL's NAPA

The Nepal NAPA report is structured according to the guidance provided by the Least Developed Countries Expert Group.

"The succeeding sections set out the introduction and national setting, the Nepal adaptation program framework, NAPA preparation processes and the methods and criteria used in the prioritization process, identification of key adaptation needs, lists of top priority adaptation response measures and finally conclusions," said Purushotam Ghimire, National Program Director of NAPA.

NAPA draft documents six vulnerable areas where Nepal has to face challenges due to the climate change. The areas include Agriculture and Food Security, Forests and Biodiversity, Water Resources and Energy; Climate Induced Disasters, Public Health and Urban Settlements and Infrastructure.

The Thematic Working Groups formed to prepare programs and to propose projects has already suggested the projects for implementation. Forest and Bio-diversity group proposed 33 projects, the Water Resources and Energy group 23, public health 17, Agriculture and Food Security 101, Urban Settlement and Infrastructure 51 and Climate Induced disaster 18.

Highlights of Recommended Projects

The Water Resources and Energy Thematic Working group, among others, suggests promotion and up-scaling of Multi Use System (MUS) for the benefit of poor and vulnerable households in mid hills and Churia range of Nepal, water induced disaster management, Adaptation of National Energy Strategy and Formulation of Integrated Energy Policy and Plans.

Similarly some of the important recommendations given by Climate Induced Disasters are flood management to reduce the vulnerability of communities and increase their resilience, GLOF monitoring, risk reduction, and community based risk reductions.



Urban Settlement and Infrastructure group recommends construction of Water Retaining Structures as sustainable adaptation measures to address the effect of climate change, piloting water harvesting structures such as ponds for ground water recharge, dampening peak flows in urban areas, enforcements of building codes in municipal areas, incorporating climate change dimensions and others.

Public Health group recommends that reducing Public Health Impacts of Climate change in Nepal through evidence based research and piloting. The group suggests disease outbreak investigation and energy response throughout 75 districts of Nepal, program scale up on vector borne, water and food borne and natural disaster and others.

Agriculture and food security group suggests promotion of crop species and varieties for different eco-development regions vulnerable to climate change, on-farm soil and water conservation initiatives to support hill and mountain communities vulnerable to climate change and improved farmers' access to inputs, finance and service strengths adaptation to climate change and others.

Forest and Bio-diversity group proposed conservation of medical plants and NTFP in high altitude and mid and far west, integrated Watershed

Management in Churia to ensure ecosystem and community resilience on climate change, integrated wetland management in terai and community based forest fire management in mid-hills.

The team leaders include Dr. Hari Dahal, Agriculture and Food Security, Shankar Prasad Koirala, Climate Induced Disaster, Gorkhaly Urban Settlement and Infrastructure, Adam Raj Bhatta, Public Health Krishna Prasad Acharya, Forests and Biodiversity, Pravin Raj Aryal, Water Resources and Energy.

"It was Prepared by Government led multi-stakeholder Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) which were established to ensure the engagement and ownership of a wide range of stakeholders and key government line ministries," said Purushottam Ghimire, program director of NAPA.

"The observations and projections indicate that the key impacts are likely to include: significant warming, particularly at higher elevations, leading to reductions in snow and ice coverage; increased climatic variability and frequency of extreme events, including floods and droughts; and, overall increase in precipitation during the wet season but a decrease in the mid hills.

The process of NAPA

Six months after signing the project agreement in November 2008, the first

"I Own The Draft Document"

THAKUR PRASAD SHARMA

Minister of Environment **THAKUR PRASAD SHARMA**, has made a number of contributions in the environment sector. During his tenure, Nepal prepared the NAPA draft. Nepal had been unable to draft it for the last eight years. At a time when the document is under public discussion and scrutiny, Sharma spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on the completion of NAPA. Excerpts:

Nepal wasted some seven or eight years without doing anything to prepare the NAPA. How do you feel when the NAPA draft was completed during your one year tenure?

I don't want to comment on my predecessors. I appreciate the role played by them. I am a person with positive views. I really feel proud that we were able to draft NAPA in the last one year. We have made a number of achievements in the last one year. NAPA is one of them. There used to be negative perceptions when we started the NAPA but I took them in a positive way. Now, there is a NAPA draft and we have already sent it to UNECC. We have identified six sectors and prepared the NAPA document on this basis. We are now implementing projects in these six areas. When we will send the proposals, we will get a lot of fund and support. Despite lacking institutional capabilities and manpower, what we have achieved is commendable. This is a great success. NAPA is now in pipeline. The role of government is now to carry out the programs at the grass root level.

inception workshop was conducted in May 2009. It took another four months to form the Thematic Working Group. However, NAPA project is able to present the prioritization of projects and first draft of NAPA at the end of May 2010. **After the presentation of the draft,** national and regional consultations on the draft of NAPA have already been completed and it is in the process of finalization.

The Ministry of Environment provided able coordination and oversight of the NAPA preparation project. The

Do you take ownership?

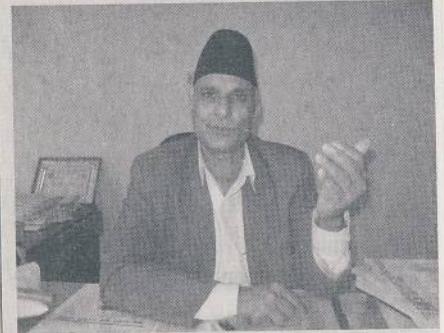
Yes. Of course, I completely own the draft document which was completed during my tenure as a minister. I am proud of it. Nothing is perfect and there may be certain lacunas and weaknesses. The sectors we have identified may not truly be represented or our study may be incomplete. I cannot claim that this document is perfect but I can claim that it is the best document prepared by our experts within a very short period of time. One may criticize it is as an incomplete document. But, we have got a document. The NAPA is directed towards what we have pursued as an idea in the last one year. One can correct and improve the document if there is something lacking in it. I don't think there is any major mistake in the NAPA draft. If there is something wrong, we can still correct them.

Do you mean you are satisfied with the document?

There is nothing to be dissatisfied about. The way we have completed the work with a team spirit is a major achievement. Even there is an alternative energy program; we have achieved a lot of progress. We have now a document at our hand and we have a program like mountain alliance. Once we complete the meeting of the mountain alliance, we will establish ourselves as a leader. I have not seen any documents of the past. Nepal's environment ministry and its officials have established themselves as competent persons in the international arena. Now, Nepal has programs and projects. NAPA and mountain alliance

United Nations Development Program acted as GEF Implementing Agency and channeled resources from the Least Developed Countries Fund and from bilateral donors including DFID and Danida into the NAPA project.

"I can claim that NAPA is the document owned by ministry of environment and best document prepared within such a short period of time. I am certain that this document will be implemented by August," told Minister for Environment Thakur Prasad Sharma. "NAPA draft is one of the major



are part of them. This is a pro-people document. You can see the results within three or four months.

Did you organize the discussions at grass roots level?

Yes, the NAPA drafts were discussed at the regional level as well as district levels. In this way, this is one of the drafts prepared following the discussions at the district level.

When will NAPA go for implementation and how about the PPCR?

The NAPA will go to implementation by August. Pilot Project for Climate Resilience (PPCR) came as a part of it. PPCR will be blended in NAPA. PPCR will be part of NAPA and the program will help to improve the data in the NAPA document. NAPA document is owned by the Ministry and there is the need to have funds to implement it. There is also Local Adaptation Program of Actions (LAPA). This will immediately go to local level actions. DFID is supporting us to implement LAPA. LAPA will address the immediate programs faced at local level.

achievements of my tenure as an environment minister."

Even international experts agree that Nepal's NAPA document is a good document. "Nepal is the last country to prepare NAPA but it produced the best document," said Saleemul Haq, senior fellow of Climate Change Group in International Institute for Environment and Development.

Whatever one says about the draft document, Nepal has been able to map climate change vulnerabilities. Prepared by Nepal's experts, the Nepal NAPA

'This Is The Historic Document'

Member of National Planning Dr. **DINESH CHANDRA DEVKOTA** is one of the busy members of the commission. In his two years tenure as a member, Dr. Devkota has supported the Ministry of Environment to prepare NAPA. Dr. Devkota spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on the issues.



How do take the NAPA draft?

NAPA draft document is one of the best documents prepared by Nepalese experts. This is the historic document. We have constituted different thematic groups under the lead of joint secretaries of various ministries, involving local communities, NGOs, civil society and experts. It took a year to formulate it.

Have you read it?

I have read it thoroughly and I found it very intensive and good compilation of information.

What is your other impression?

After reading the document thoroughly, I find that this is the best document which identifies the areas for adaptation programs. This is the property of the country. Even if the draft document is good at present but it needs to be modified in the changing context of the country. NAPA is not a property of Ministry of Environment only but it is the document of the country. The Ministry of Environment and the country is taking the ownership of this document.

What steps are needed to make NAPA more popular?

We need to send it to various stakeholders including cabinet, ministry of finance and others. After finalization of the draft, we will have a long shopping list with us to go to the international community for adaptation. It is not necessary that we can implement all the programs. After NAPA document, we will select the programs to implement it. It is a major contribution of Ministry of Environment to prepare the NAPA draft. The government has now to launch the program on it by itself. We need to accommodate private sectors, NGOs and government office in NAPA. NAPA has so many good things that will be incorporated in our three years interim plan.

Why NAPA?

Our per capita income is below 400 US\$ and we need to protect our infrastructure and build it to adaptive situations. In this way, NAPA is important we don't have lack of resources but what is lacking is to build the projects adaptive to hostile environment.

What does everyone need to do now?

We need to develop a sense of ownership among various stakeholders and ask them to incorporate it. There is the need to disseminate the NAPA document so that everyone can understand it. Particularly, all the implemented partners need to read it. We need to disseminate this knowledge up to the people of grass root level. During the process of implementation, our thrust should be to disseminate all kinds of information at the grass root level.

provides opportunities to mainstream climate change into national development. The wide level of people's participation and donor's interest and their contribution is also important.

Climate Change vulnerability in Nepal is mapped along with NAPA drafting. During the process, there were

several consultation meetings with stakeholders involving hundreds of individuals and organizations. Conceptualization of NAPA and development and conceptualization of LAPA exercise, climate awareness raising and community sensitization were carried out throughout the country.

'Nepal's NAPA Is The Best'

SALEEMUL HUQ, a senior fellow of Climate Change Group of International Institute for Environment and Development, visited Nepal recently. As a renowned expert, Huq has been actively involved in the process of climate change since last many years. Huq spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** about climate change and preparation of National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA). Excerpts:



How do you look at the climate change issue?

Climate change is a long term problem and it is a long term process. A country like Nepal needs to build up a team. There are so many issues involved in it like mitigation and adaptation.

How do you view Nepal's NAPA process?

Of course, it was delayed a little bit because of many confusions regarding the involvement of the agencies. Had the process started earlier Nepal would have completed the NAPA a long time back.

Despite a long delay and confusion in the early days, Nepal has now the NAPA draft. Is not it an achievement?

I agree that Nepal has done it in record time. Nepal may be the last country to prepare NAPA but it produced the best document. After going through the document, I can say that this is going to be one of the best documents.

What more do you say about the NAPA draft?

There are knowledge, information as well as projects for implementation. However, Nepal has to go a long way from here. During the process of NAPA, more people got involved in it. After Nepal's finalization of the document, it can apply for various funds needed to implement the projects.

Why is NAPA important?

NAPA is a prerequisite to seek resources from various donors for Nepal's priority projects. The document also highlights Nepal's priorities and vulnerable areas.

How can Nepal implement it successfully?

The Ministry of Environment should form a group representing all government's line ministries, departments as well as scientists, academia, NGOs, civil society and media.

How important do you think will the coming COP 16 be? Will it be like the COP15?

All the COPs will not have similar hype as it was for COP 15. The nature of COP is dependent upon the nature of delegation. During the COP 15, more than 100 heads of states and governments took part in the meeting. The COP meeting has records of going up and down. I can say the COP of 2015 will be more important because Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IPCC is going to present its report.

What are the challenges for a country like Nepal?

You have to build knowledge and you have to encourage the young people so that they will carry this process.

With NAPA as a learning process, there is flexibility in programs and plans, understanding among coordinating partners, balance among diversified interests and expertise. Situation handling, screening of information and climate change are at the center of concern. There are

“We Want To Finalize The NAPA Soon”

Nepal has completed the draft of the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) and sent it for public discussions. NAPA program director **PURUSHOTTAM GHIMIRE**, who is also the chief of the Environment Division in the Ministry of Environment, spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** about various aspects of the program.

What is the aim of NAPA?

Nepal's development goals, and therefore the NAPA Framework, are set under the overriding aim to reduce poverty in the country.

What is NAPA for?

NAPA are a means of prioritizing urgent and immediate adaptation actions. In Nepal, given the adaptation needs and frameworks the NAPA emphasis on urgent and immediate adaptation needs is important. In addition, with donor agency support to what has become known as the 'expanded NAPA', the Ministry of Environment - the Government's climate focal point - has the opportunity to widen the lens of adaptation planning to include programmatic and bottom-up approaches to adaptation, and to find ways whereby integration of strategies for low carbon development and adaptation can precipitate a series of co-benefits and economies of scale.

How did the process work?

Micro-level impacts assessments were undertaken through three transect appraisal exercises during November 2009 in the Western, Central and Eastern regions of Nepal. Over 60 Government and non-government TWG members participated, who then conducted analyses of the outputs of the transects according to both agro-ecological zones and also thematic areas. The outputs of these analyses were combined with the draft stocktaking reports to produce thematic synthesis reports, subsequently summarized into a single “NAPA

Summary Report”. A number of other consultation activities were conducted alongside those mentioned above.

How were the priorities set?

The climate adaptation response measures prioritization process was carefully undertaken and was made as consultative as was possible. Multi-criteria analysis was used in a step-wise process that culminated in identifying the most urgent and immediate climate adaptation response measures according to national interests and criteria.

Have you made vulnerability assessment?

The vulnerability assessments and the work of the TWGs gave rise to “long-lists” of adaptation options under each theme. Prioritization of adaptation options for inclusion into the final NAPA document was conducted through a process that involved an examination of the criteria TWGs used to identify adaptation options. These were systematized by the NAPA Team and an aggregated set of criteria that pooled common criteria used by the TWGs was derived and then approved by the TWGs.

What is the role of the ministry?

The Ministry of Environment provided able coordination and oversight of the NAPA preparation project. The United Nations Development Program acted as GEF Implementing Agency and channeled resources from the Least Developed Countries Fund and from bilateral donors including DFID and Danida into the NAPA project.

How do you see the role of donor communities?

The Ministry of Environment would like to acknowledge the support of our development partners to the expanded NAPA process in Nepal including



support to climate change knowledge management. The support given by Embassy of Denmark, DFID, GEF and UNDP is very important for us.

Will you have adequate resources?

We don't have problems of funds, but getting the funds through a fast track is the problem. If you look at the priority of NAPA, conservation of the Churia comes on top of the list. The government also considers this project as important. In the coming budget, there will be some specific projects for Churia conservation where the government is also planning to put 200 million rupees. We are also trying to get 8 million Euro from the European Commission. We discussed with the Ministry of Finance to put same amount of money. According to an estimate, the Churia project will cost about 1 billion rupees. These are the major outcomes of the NAPA project.

Is there a sense of ownership among all stakeholders?

Yes, we take complete ownership of the project. Thanks to the intensive participation of the common people as well as various line ministries, everyone sees NAPA is a draft of the country. The Minister for Environment was the focal point minister, but the team as a whole discharged the responsibility.

opportunities as well. Nepal learnt a lot from NAPA by mainstreaming climate change into national development.

As studies have already indicated that climate change is going to affect a society like Nepal, by preparing the draft

of NAPA in schedule, Nepal has shown that it has technical capability and data to back such studies. It is almost certain now that NAPA will be published in the August but the challenges now are how it will be implemented.

Although there may be some lapses, Nepalese professional teams and NAPA project of Ministry of Environment showed that Nepalese have the capability and expertise to prepare documents at par with others in the international arena.

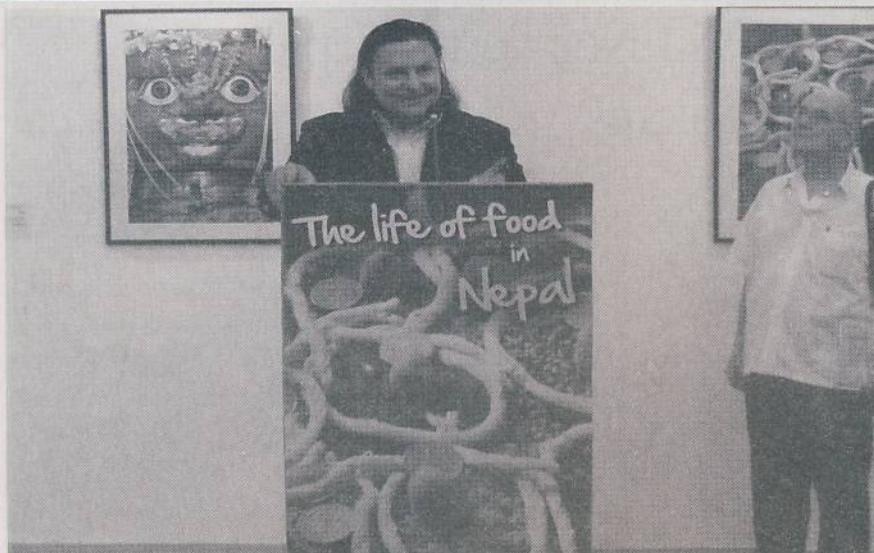


Photo Exhibition

Life Of Food

WFP organises a photo exhibition to highlight the food cycle of Nepal

By NITISH DEV BHATTARAI

The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) hosted a six-day photo exhibition recently to celebrate the central role food plays in the life and culture of the Nepalese people. The exhibition was held at the Nepal Art Council Gallery, Babar Mahal, Kathmandu.

The six-day exhibition, entitled "The Life of Food in Nepal", showcased 46 photographs taken by various photographers from across the country to portray the life of food, the diverse fields on which different crops are grown, the daily dedication and rituals of preparing the food for the table and the gods.

The participating photographers include James Giambone, Mani Lama, Bikash Raunihar, Chandra Shekhar Karki, Narendra Shrestha, Kiran Pandey, Bhim Ghimire, Bijay Rai, Bikash Karki, Hari Maharjan, Krishna Mani Baral, Laxmi Ngakushi, Naresh Shrestha, Pradip Shakya, Rajesh Gurung, Sanchit Lamichhane, Manoj Poudel, and Ashok Raj Shakya. All of the photographers

were awarded a prize by Richard Ragan who is the WFP's country representative.

"From the grains that feed our bellies to the rituals that inspire Nepal's spirituality, food is the glue that holds life together, and we wanted to tell a story about the life of food in this country", says Richard Ragan.

"This exhibition is principally a celebration of Nepal's vibrant food culture, but it is also about raising awareness on issues around food insecurity in this country. By describing the life of food through the lenses of the countries' most talented photographers, we believe the story is much more powerful than mere words can describe," Ragan said in answer to a query as to what the exhibition was meant for.

The exhibition included a number of short feature documentaries, including the first ever 3D animation made in Nepal, especially for the World Food Program. People who attended the exhibition got the exclusive preview of the animation. ■

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More Medical Colleges Will Not Solve Nepal's Health Problems

BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD



Medical colleges have mushroomed like English boarding schools in Nepal. Experts say that a sign of a failed state in the developing world is the opening up of more new banks. We certainly have new banks opening up. But keeping pace with the new banks are new medical colleges in Nepal. From just a medical college or two about 15 years ago, we now will soon have almost 20 medical colleges. To be sure just like many of the English boarding schools, many of these new medical colleges too are commercial ventures which were opened by savvy business people. They are obviously making so much money that it is generating a lot of incentive

? And there literally seems to be a stampede of students trying to get into medical schools with their parents urging them on and providing the necessary finances if possible. (Unfortunately the medical fees are so massive that for most Nepalis, medical college is a distant dream even if with a requisite aptitude).

An important question is, will new medical colleges help solve Nepal's health problems? Most people who graduate from a medical college in Nepal will certainly want to go abroad and acquire more knowledge and wealth and probably settle down there. You can argue this will be global gain,

to help out in addressing the stark health issues this country faces.

What in my opinion, may help address Nepali health issues are lessons from Sri Lanka. Despite the just concluded tragic civil war, Sri Lanka has the best health indicators in South Asia. Average life expectancy is 73 years and infant mortality is 13 per 1000, incredible statistics for South Asia. Soon after independence from Britain, Sri Lanka invested heavily in public health and women's education and this investment is paying them rich dividends today in health. An important point has been focus on primary care, especially maternal and child health through a multilayered health system with adequate provisions of basic services at the community level. They have not only talked about this as is common practice, they have put their money where their mouth is: For example, incredibly, Sri Lanka (at least until 2005) did not have a single magnetic resonance scanner in the public sector, symbolizing their emphasis on primary and secondary care. In sharp contrast many countries (Nepal included) boast expensive tertiary care institutions with low funding of primary and rural care.

So, new medical colleges may satisfy our academic thirst for knowledge and that is a good thing in and of itself. You can't go wrong by the acquisition of knowledge. But insofar as solving Nepal's health problems is concerned, we will need to zoom in on the Sri Lanka model. ■

An important point has been focus on primary care, especially maternal and child health through a multilayered health system with adequate provisions of basic services at the community level. They have not only talked about this as is common practice, they have put their money where their mouth is: For example, incredibly, Sri Lanka (at least until 2005) did not have a single magnetic resonance scanner in the public sector, symbolizing their emphasis on primary and secondary care.

to open even more medical colleges.

Be that as it may, what is impressive to me is the emphasis in Nepali culture for academic excellence. You could argue trying to be a doctor is in a sense the manifestation of this deep seated desire. You can build medical schools to your heart's content, but if you don't have students, what is the use

but it won't help solve the health needs of the Nepali especially the ones living outside the valley. Furthermore, medical colleges are probably not the most cost effective way of solving the health problems in a developing world. We can confidently say that the purpose of the exercise of opening more medical colleges is not primarily going



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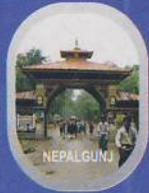
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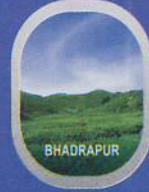
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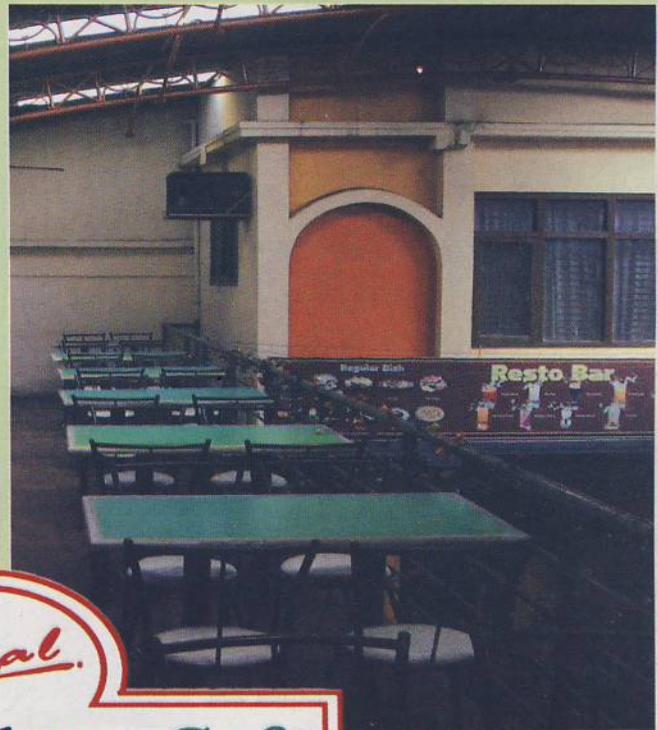
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