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Opinion:
Dipak Gyawali

Special Report: **International Women's Day
Indian Economic Growth: Opportunities Ahead**

Viewpoint:
Dr. Tilak Rawal

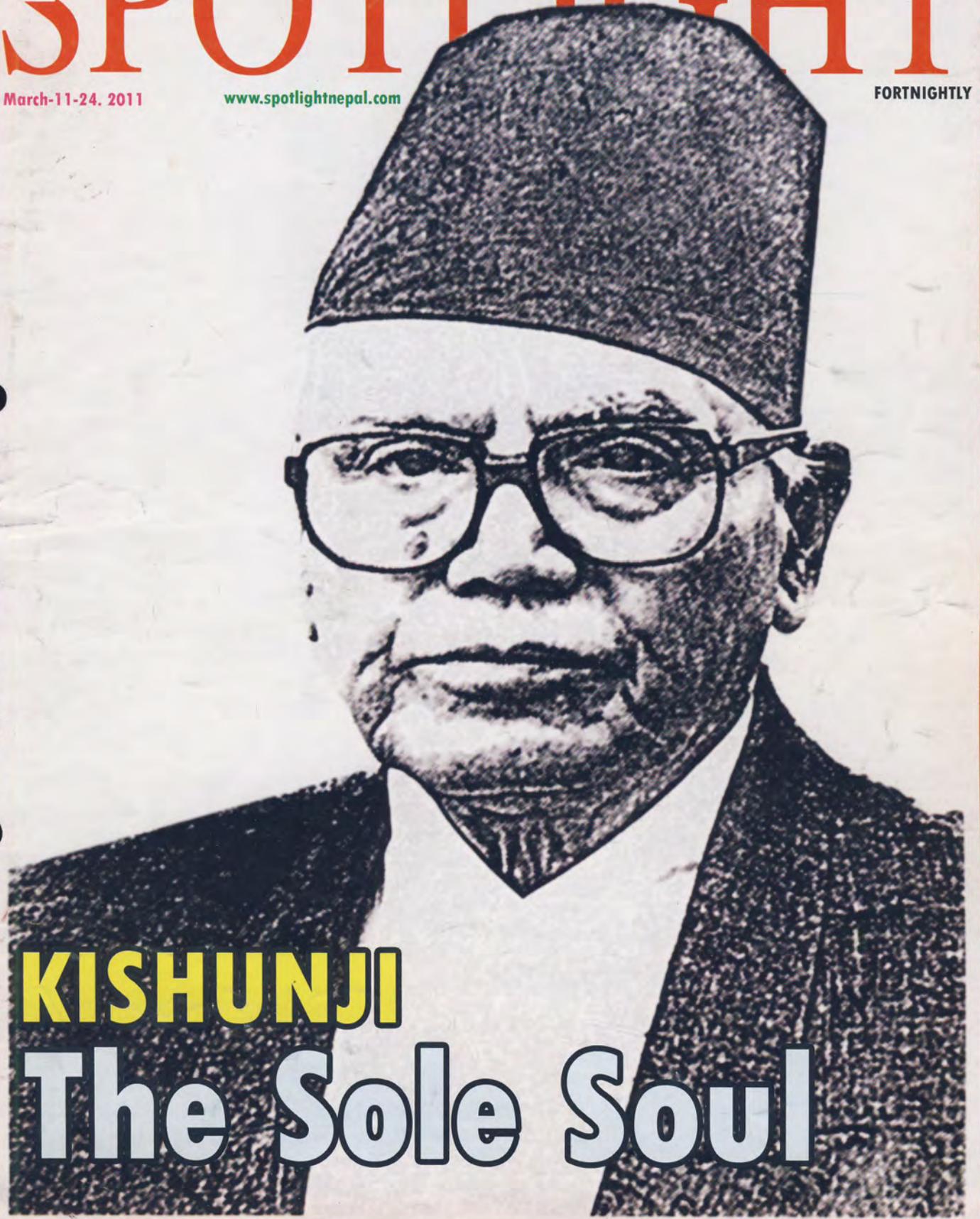


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From The Editor

Less than a year after Girija Prasad Koirala departed for good, another stalwart of the oldest and the biggest democratic party, the Nepali Congress, bade adieu. Thousands had poured out on the streets to pay their last homage to Koirala. Krishna Prasad Bhattarai received an equally tearful farewell. For someone who, unlike the late Koirala, had dared to stand against the tide of the times and risk isolation Bhattarai would have been pleasantly surprised to see the waves that stood up to appreciate what he stood for – a principled stand and ethical values no matter what. He was certainly not a saint leader. He was an average ordinary man not free from, in his own words, “lacunas and deficiencies.” But he was a leader with extraordinary courage and quality and a rare sense of humour. He made an unparalleled contribution to Nepal and the Nepali politics. The vacuum he left in the ethical and value-based politics will be difficult to fill in. But he could have made it much easier had he refrained from some big blunders as we have mentioned in our cover story.

Keshab

Keshab Poudel
Editor

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British Minister Duncan In Nepal

Visiting UK Minister of State for International Development Alan Duncan met president Dr. Ram Varan Yadav, prime minister and other political party leaders. He was in Nepal for a 4-day visit. This was his second visit to Nepal since he became Minister of State in May 2010.

During his visit, he launched DFID's Operational Plan for Nepal.

'Politically, these are important times for Nepal. You have a new Prime Minister, and a fresh opportunity for political progress. But movement on the peace process is slow and the extended tenure of the Constituent Assembly is fast running out. Meanwhile, development takes a back seat. At this juncture, I will be taking the opportunity of my visit to encourage political leaders to finalise a Government and move swiftly



to tackle the major challenges in the peace process and development,' said Minister. During his visit, he went to Jumla and walked to the narrow city to show solidarity to the cause of disaster.

DFID Nepal Head of Office Sarah Sanyahumbi said, 'Minister of State for International Development Alan Duncan's second visit to Nepal, in less than a year, reflects our close ties with Nepal and the importance we attach to its development.'

building for the Corporation under Nepal-India Economic Cooperation Programme.

This is the sixteenth development project in the Kathmandu District being undertaken with the assistance of Govt. of India under Small Development Projects.



Nepal Food Corporation (NFC) is a Govt. of Nepal undertaking established about 34 years ago for procurement and supply of food in the country. The Corporation procures food grains and other agricultural products from farmers and supplies it to the remote districts of Nepal. The Corporation also procures food grains imported from other countries.

Carter Center Criticises the Role of Youth Groups

The Carter Center observers found that overall clashes between political party youth wings appear to have decreased since the first half of 2010. However, many activities of the Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) and, to a lesser extent, the CPN-UML Youth Forces remain targeted toward financial gain, and youth wing activity continues to have a negative impact on security in many districts.

'Political party youth wings have the potential to play a positive role in Nepal,' said Dr. David Pottie, Associate Director of the Carter Center's Democracy Program, in a statement. 'However, we have found the YCL and the CPN-UML Youth Force engaged in interference with tender processes, taxation, and other activities that undermine political space, development, and public security.'

The Carter Center's report also covers Maoist compliance with the June 2008 agreement to terminate the YCL's 'paramilitary functioning.'

Nepal's Fiscal Regime Discussed

The Forum of Federations organized a roundtable discussion on 'Key Elements of a New Fiscal Regime in Federal Nepal' with Dr. Dinesh K. Srivastava, Director of the Madras School of Economics (MSE), and Chennai, India.

Nepal is undergoing a major transition toward introducing a system of democratic and federal governance. Fiscal aspects of federalism are keys to an effective transition process, if handled properly.

The transition toward fiscal federalism will have two interlinked phases: Phase 1 will consist of structural changes dealing with reorganization of the country into provinces, assignment of resources and responsibilities to the different tiers of government, and institutional arrangements for dealing with the emerging vertical and horizontal imbalances. In Phase 2, the design of fiscal transfers, administrative restructuring, issues of cooperation and coordination among provinces and between the centre and the provinces, and capacity building will need to be put in place.

These findings were presented in an Analytical report entitled 'Key Elements of a New Fiscal Regime in Federal Nepal,' written by Dr. Srivastava following his assessment mission to Nepal in August 2010 and subsequent work.

KOICA Volunteers In Town

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has dispatched seven new KOICA Volunteers to work in Nepal for two years. They arrived in Katmandu on February 28, 2011.

These new KOICA Volunteers will be assigned in different government offices within and outside the Valley and will share Korea's knowledge in Health, Education, Social welfare and Environment with the Nepalese people. Out of these seven, six will be stationed out of the valley and one will be stationed in the valley.



Indian Grant For Food Lab

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on March 1, 2011 by the Embassy of India, Kathmandu, District Development Committee, Kathmandu and Nepal Food Corporation for providing Govt. of India grant assistance of NRs. 4.98 crores for construction of Modern Food Laboratory

EU's Support To SAARC

The European Union (EUR 20 million) and FAO (EUR 4 million) are providing EUR 24 million to set up three diagnostic laboratories, over a period of four years (2009-2013).

The overall objective of the program is to contribute to the strengthening and empowerment of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in its ability to prevent, control and eradicate Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases (HPED), through improved veterinary and public health services and intersectoral collaboration on a regional basis.

The SAARC secretariat along with the veterinary and public health sectors of countries in the region will be immediate beneficiaries of the project.

"The European Union has set out to assist the endeavours of FAO and SAARC to establish the diagnostic laboratories to help them fulfil their potentials and thereby set up appropriate corporate structures to stem animal diseases posing a threat across the borders," Gerard Van Driessche, head of the finance and contract section at the Delegation of the European Union office in Kathmandu said.

Van Driessche was addressing the concluding session of the three day consultative workshop on Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases (HPED) in South Asia organised in the capital from the 2nd of March to the 4th of March.

He said since the EU contribution will come to an end in 2013, the major challenge that confronts the SAARC member states is to ensure long-term sustainability of the project.

The programme targets three HPEDs: Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR). "The network of diagnostic laboratories will contribute significantly to control the three diseases found in livestock and boost economic growth in the SAARC region," M. Riaz Hamidullah, director at the SAARC secretariat said.

Nathu Prasad Chaudhary, Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Government of Nepal, along with other senior officials participated in

the opening session of the consultative workshop.

Japan Helps Hospital In Butwal

The Government of Japan has decided to extend financial assistance



of USD938,298 (Nine Hundred and Thirty-Eight Thousand, Two Hundred and Ninety-Eight US Dollars); equivalent to approximately NRs 67,867,094 (Sixty-Seven Million, Eight Hundred and Sixty-Seven Thousand and Ninety-Four Nepalese Rupees) to AMDA Multi sectoral and Integrated Development Services (AMDA-MINDS) under the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects Scheme of the Government of Japan in Japan's FY 2010. AMDA-MINDS will implement the Project to enhance the quality of prenatal care in Siddhartha Children and Women Hospital in coordination with Butwal Municipality, and Butwal Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

A grant contract to this effect was signed and exchanged today between Tadashi Fujiwara, Charge d' Affaires a.i. of Japan to Nepal and Ms. Maiko KOBAYASHI, Project Manager, in charge of the Nepal office of AMDA- MINDS Japan.

Under the project, the Grant will be utilized exclusively for the construction of a two-story, 46 rooms - with 36 beds - hospital building, the installment of medical equipment, a workshop for the hospital management committee, the training of medical staff and project operating costs. These will all enhance the quality of prenatal care at Siddhartha Children and Women Hospital at Butwal Municipality in Rupandehi.

Japanese Aid For Grassroots Projects

The Government of Japan has decided to extend financial assistance totaling US\$267,084, equivalent to

approximately NRS19,202,180, to three NGOs to support their projects, respectively for upgrading medical equipment at Siddhi Memorial Foundation, constructing a vocational center for disabled people for the

Spinal Cord Injury Association-Nepal, and constructing a primary school building for Shree Janata Higher Secondary School. This financial assistance is extended under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) scheme of the Government of Japan in Japan's FY 2010.

Grant Contracts were signed and exchanged between Tadashi Fujiwara, Chargé d' Affaires of Japan to Nepal, and the representatives of the above NGOs.

The Spinal Cord Injury Association-Nepal has been energetically working on various activities to promote the rights and improve the quality of life for disabled people.

Shree Janata Higher Secondary School was established in 1961 in Hadiya VDC, Udayapur District as a primary school and upgraded to plus two level in 2008. Constructed by the local community, the buildings are now in a dilapidated condition and suffering from a shortage of classrooms. To serve the community's need and to improve the learning environment the construction of a two-storey school building with eight rooms, suitable for 816 students, will take place. The Project is expected to contribute to reduce the educational gap between urban and rural areas. To meet the request, the Government of Japan decided to extend USD 98,545 (equivalent to approximately NRs 6,954,359) to the school. ■

Reform Failed: Governor Dr. Khatiwada

Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank Yubaraj Khatiwada on Friday said the Financial Sector Reform Program (FSRP) initiated a decade ago was not a failure, although it failed to achieve the goals. "It is a mixed-case scenario in terms of success," Khatiwada told a seminar on FRSP organized by Nepal Economic Association.



Finance Secretary Khanal (Left) and Governor Dr. Khatiwada

The main target of the FRSP was to turn the two largest banks—Rastriya Banijya Bank and Nepal Bank Limited—into healthy banks from their Rs 35 billion negative net worth status and reengineering of the Nepal Rastra Bank to strengthen its supervisory capacity.

It had also been planned that the RBB and the NBL would be privatized after their recovery. The privatization plan has, however, taken a back seat as of now. Both the RBB and the NBL are yet to recover their negative net worth with the former's net worth still remaining negative by Rs 9.45 billion and the latter's negative net worth at Rs 4.5 billion.

However, these banks were saved from being liquidated. The banks were computerized and the over-staffing problem solved with the introduction of the voluntary retirement and compulsory retirement schemes.

The non-performing loans (NPL) of the RBB and the NBL have come down to 11.9 percent and 4.87 percent as of mid-July 2010 from the 60.15 percent and 60.47 in mid-July 2003 respectively.

Khatiwada said the reason behind the mixed success was "half-hearted inception of the program with no confidence on the part of many NRB and government officials." "The FRSP has been a success against the pessimism at the time of inception," said Khatiwada.

Finance Secretary Rameshwar Khanal said the FRSP moved ahead slowly, although it did not achieve significant progress. "We can allow the NBL to trade its shares in the secondary market after its full recovery," he said.

Presenting a paper on FRSP, Chief Executive Officer of Lumbini Bank Sobhan Dev Pant said the program failing to achieve its goals fully made this project a failure in the end.

He said the biggest setback to the project was the inability

of the central bank to enhance its supervisory capacity. "After the then governor and executive director were charged of corruption, the whole process stalled," said Pant, who played a key role in reviving the Lumbini Bank.

Students' Exodus Halted

The number of students leaving overseas for studies this year came down by three-fold compared to previous year. According to the Ministry of Education, in seven months of previous fiscal year, 23,185 students had sought permission (No Objection Letter) to go overseas. The number during the same period this year has come down to 7471. Previous year, the number of students had shot up after the UK government eased student visa process. This year none of the foreign governments have announced such easy schemes. The data at the Ministry show that Nepali students go to as many as 45 different countries for studies.

Transporters Reject Govt Order On Syndication

The transporters have refused to obey government instructions to do away with the syndicate system they practice. In response to the circular by the Home Ministry in this regard, the president of transporters' association, Dinesh Bhandari said "You can just throw away that circular." Addressing a convention of tempo transport entrepreneurs in Hetauda, Bhandari warned that transporters would agitate against any move to end syndicate system. "We must rise against conspiracies to bring down transporters in the name of ending syndicate system," he said. The government had vowed to end syndicate system in transport after consumer rights activists complained that the system was encouraging monopolies and malpractices leading to high cost of transport.

India's Economy Will Be Of 5 Trillion Dollar

The total worth of Indian economy will rise to 5 trillion dollar between 2022 and 2025, according to leading Indian industrialist Mukesh Ambani. The chairman of ICICI Bank, K V Kamath, said India will touch that figure in 2022 itself. Currently, the total GDP of India stands at 1.2 trillion dollars. India has been growing at a handsome rate hover near double digit figure for last couple of years. After China, it is the fastest growing big economy in Asia.

Corporate Houses In Cement Race

Even as the country is reeling under acute power shortage, leading corporate houses of the country are investing billions of rupees in cement production. Big three corporate houses – Chaudhary, Golchha and KL Dugar are preparing to set up big cement factories. Chaudhary group is planning to invest in two separate cement factories in Palpa and Nawalparasi in a joint investment with foreign company. It is said that these two factories will attract Rs 8 billion investment. Golchha organization is investing Rs 3.15 billion in a cement factory in Mirchahiya, Siraha. Likewise, the KL Dugar group is planning to set up cement factory in Dhading and Lalitpur with the investment of Rs 3.28 billion. ■



'China Brokered Seven-Point Secret Pact'

Cornered to the hilt by the pro-democracy leaders of the UML prime minister Jhannath Khanal has positioned himself well to expand the cabinet after he committed to move ahead in accordance with the Maoist wishes. The UML had earlier been reluctant to implement the China-brokered secret pact between Prachanda and Khanal fearing that it would jeopardise democracy. Caught between the UML's pro-democracy



PM Khanal

stand and the pact with the Maoists, Khanal has assured own party that he would stand by the party's decision even as he assured the Maoists that he would abide by their wishes. (Ghatna ra Bichar, March 2)

Revolt: Result Of Capitalist Crisis

The uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa have uprooted the rulers in some countries while shaking many others. Bahrain and Libya have been hit hard affecting the migrant workers including from Nepal. Forty thousand Nepalese workers have been working in Bahrain and another three thousand in Libya. The Arab uprisings threaten to inspire similar revolts in a number of countries including Iran, Thailand and China. China has accused the United States of inciting a revolt in the people's republic. People have taken to the streets in the Middle East and the North Africa in protest at the long-ruling dictatorships there. But it's likely that in many places foreign imperialist forces are encouraging the movement for their own interest. No matter how the movement is being run, it is a manifestation of the capitalist crisis. Such revolts will continue as long as there is capitalist exploitation. (Hank, Feb 23)

Free Tibet Games

Taking advantage of the political confusion in Nepal, the Tibetan refugees have intensified their activities in Kathmandu in recent weeks. They have been preparing to step up the free-Tibet campaign at the behest of some foreign organisations.

Some five hundred of them living in the Bouddha Khampa camps recently held elections to elect their leader. The police foiled the move that triggered tension between the refugees and the police. Few refugees had been detained. Tibet refugees have been living in Nepal in three groups – Dhoto, Dhoomi and Vehenteg. The Dhoto group had attempted to hold the elections in Boudha. The police said that all the five hundred voters present there were involved in the free-Tibet activities. Although Nepal has followed a one-China policy, it has not been able to control the free-Tibet activities. The visiting US deputy assistant secretary of state in recent tour of Nepal had met the refugee leaders in Kathmandu which, according to the sources, invited the displeasure of China. The western nations have been supporting the Tibetan refugees living in Boudha, Kapan and Pokhara. (Drishti, March 1)

NC Condemns Maoist Black Flag To Indian Ambassador

The main Nepali Congress has condemned the latest Maoist showing of black flag to the Indian ambassador Rakesh Sood. The incident took place in the eastern hill district Bhojpur where the envoy was due to lay the foundation stone of a hospital. The Nepali Congress said that the Maoist act was a gross violation of diplomatic norms. It pointed out that such acts had been repeated in recent past which, it said, were against the



Indian Ambassador Sood

diplomatic norms and political cultures. Ambassador Sood, who is due to leave for home shortly at the end of his four-year tenure, had faced black flags earlier this year also. The Maoists even hurled shoes at him in the eastern hill district, Solukhumbu. (Annapura Post, March 3)

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Desperate Means For Distressing Times

By *DIPAK GYAWALI*



A friend recently described running into former US Ambassador Moriarty at a transit lounge somewhere in Asia. What shocked him was how ole Jim – in charge here while the US outsourced its Nepal policy to Delhi – seemed so very embarrassed to meet a Nepali, would not ask anything about Nepal, and was simply anxious to slink away into anonymity. Wuz it dem bad, nasty ghosts from Wikileaks?! Hardly. It is because the current Nepali quagmire has become the pricking of a bad conscience to the architects of the Loktantrick regime change, and not just the Americans. Those going to Delhi describe an even greater reticence among the cheerleaders of the 2006 street protests to mention Nepal. If the practice of Loktantra can morph swaggering superpower viceroys into tail-tucked puppies, imagine what it is doing to the domestic votaries themselves! Where are the Civil Society leaders of Janandolan-2 hiding today?

Just in the last few weeks, enough examples of political desperation have surfaced. Topping the list is the Supreme Court's decision that the Constituent Assembly's mandate will not end until the new constitution is made, whenever that be. Earlier, the court had decided that the

CA can change anything in the interim constitution but republicanism, secularism and federalism. Why, one may ask, and for what divine reason? By propping up that which is collapsing from its own incompetent weight (and taking the Supreme Court's prestige with it), has the court thus not granted the CA infinite life while rewarding gross ineptitude and dereliction of duty?

The main reason why the CA will not be able to make a new constitution is because these ill-digested ideologies ("imported ideologies" said former PM KP Bhattarai) are in dissonance with Nepal's ground realities. Writing a breaking story in Kathmandu Post last week, Mulmi and Kharel describe the rise – in secular Nepal, something impossible when the country was Hindu – of a Nepali version of India's RSS, a militant Hindu organization. The root cause they identified was the sense of insult and insecurity experienced by the majority Hindus in the way secularism was dumped on them. Embedded in this action was the accusation that a Hindu state could not be just, even when the missionaries who bankrolled it happen

to come from crusading Christian or jihadist Islamic monarchies. A telling point that the two authors bring out is that this group of cultural militants took an active part in the street protests of 2005/6 to remove the king "because he did nothing for the Hindus" and now want the highest office of the land to go to only Hindus! If Janandolan-2 was basically a consensus Muglani project of both the Congress(I) and the BJP, no points for guessing which end of the geopolitical spectrum this militancy draws its roots from.

Highlighting the problems with federalism, Gagan Thapa, one of the younger MPs and a member of the Kangress central committee, admitted in a TV interview that he, as a member of Nepal's largest ethnic group, would be unable to put his signature on an ethnicity-based federal constitution that would

make him and others like him second class citizens in a motherland they call their own. Wonder why he and his party never thought of it when they served as cheerleaders of the Maoist agenda and passed it, with nary a thought of the consequences? Is leadership not about being able to see just a few steps and days ahead of the rest of us in the followership mode?

Such short-sightedness is not limited to the

parliamentary parties alone: the Maoists enjoy more than a fair share of it as well. Comrade Hisila Yami recently led a delegation of Newa Rajya activists to the NEA demanding that Newa Rajya, aka Kathmandu Valley, be freed of loadshedding, a demand as impractical as ridiculous, especially coming from a politician with a technical background. She seems to have met her match in the wizened veterans of the NEA: they reminded her that it was her own party's agenda that water, land and forests belonged to the local federal units, and poor Newa Rajya has no hydropower station to meet the demands of some 10% of Nepal's total population that reside here, the majority of them, incidentally, not Newars. A gaggle of Newar MPs from several political parties demanded on TV a week back that Sugat Ratna Kansakar (of the alleged Airbus scam fame) be released from jail. They argued that he was being locked up only because he was a Newar. Indeed, why is nothing being done to those who have looted the NEA as well as the Nepal Police in Darfur or been deep up to their gills in passport and telecom scams?



Former US Ambassador Moriarty

An answer was unwittingly provided by Gagan Thapa in the above-mentioned TV interview when he acknowledged that political parties in Nepal were anything but parties as normally defined in the political sciences. They were basically “federation of cliques” and the basic interest of the top ten leaders of every party was not any aspect of national development such as ending loadshedding or making the constitution. Their laser-like focus was only in enhancing their clique’s powers and finances. In essence, the top political parties – the Kangress, the EhMaley and the Maobadees – are, as described in a signed guest editorial by former finance and foreign minister Prakash Lohani, “rent-seeking neo-feudals”. It is a sign of the depths to which the vanguards of the 2006 movement have sunk when a former Pancha accuses them of being “neo-feudals” – and the socialist and communist parties are unable to counter back!

The reaction of the political parties, their shedding of crocodile tears, at the death of KP Bhattarai was a vivid demonstration of the disjuncture between their political philosophies and the desperate, parasitic search for any sustaining legitimacy. The last politicians who practiced value politics were those like KP Bhattarai and Sailaja Acharya, who stood for constitutional monarchy and the need for a democratic Nepal to keep the position of head of state and army out of competitive party politics for the very survival of the country. That position was rejected, and both were hounded out of everyday politics, by the very people who today have the gall to drape their dead bodies with party and national flags!

If one were to step back and indulge in a bit of philosophical reflections, the puzzle is to understand why political leaders behave the way they do. When PM Khanal could not sell his 7-point agreement with the Maobadees to his own party, normal ethics would say that he gracefully resign. However, in the war-

lordism of enclave politics, there is a different ethics at work: what enhances clique interest is ethical, and what does not is not. So Khanal or Nepal or Koirala or Dahal will hang in there at all costs as long as their enclave brethren approve. This leads one to agree with the philosopher Karl Popper that we Nepalis

have been asking the wrong question this last decade: it is not Loktantra that we should be aiming for but rather the building of a political system with checks and balances that would prevent misrule. Unfortunately, that is one task the current CA is genetically incapable of addressing. ■

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His Bold And Stainless Life

By DR. TILAK RAWAL

Former prime minister and the only remaining founding leader of Nepali Congress (NC) Krishana Prasad Bhattarai, passed away on Friday night (March 4, 2011) at the age of 87 Norvic International Hospital where he was receiving treatment. I was fortunate enough to see him the same day at 11.45 am when he was still breathing. His last rites were performed on Sunday with full state honour at Pashupati Aryaghat. One-month-old Nepal government led by J.N. Khanal and NC paid tribute to the saint leader in a befitting manner. In addition to thousands of NC leaders and cadres, political leaders and workers belonging to other parties and commoners thronged Dasrath Stadium and the cremation site at Pashupati to have a last glimpse and pay tribute to the leader who lived a stainless life. Breaching established protocol norms, president Ram Baran Yadav went to the stadium to pay his tribute to Kishunji who was also the speaker of the first elected parliament in Nepal.

Listening to Kishunji's observations and going through his recently published book, one can gather that he immensely respected late B.P. Koirala and Ganesh Man Singh as his true leaders. These two legends in turn it seems, had too much confidence in Kishunji's sincerity, integrity, wisdom and love for the party and the nation.

B.P.'s selection of him as the officiating president of NC is a clear manifestation of the immense confidence the legend had in K.P. Bhattarai. In very trying and difficult

circumstances during autocratic panchayat system, he kept the party active and alive. Struggling from within the country, he carried out with full sincerity and honesty the responsibility that he was charged with by his leader late B.P. Koirala. It was during his tenure of 25 years as officiating president of NC, partyless panchayat was abolished and multi-party system was rehabilitated in Nepal. B.P. was no more with us to see the historic day but another leader Ganesh Man Singh, who had captained the 1990 movement against the autocratic system, was still up and around. The politics of sacrifice and non-violence that K.P. Bhattarai adhered to strictly emerged victorious at the end. That Ganesh Man Ji declined the post of prime ministership offered to him by then king Birendra and requested the monarch to appoint Bhattarai as prime minister is one more glaring example of faith and trust that the leader had in Kishunji's ability, honesty, sincerity and skill. To the immense satisfaction of his leader and Nepalese at large, he completed the twin task of preparing a democratic constitution and holding fair and free parliamentary elections. Notwithstanding his own electoral debacle, he measured up to the expectation of his leaders and the people. He did not fail his two beloved leaders, B.P. and G.M. Singh, and the nation.

Kishun Ji was made prime minister one more time in 1999/2000 for a brief period of 10 months. Election that time was fought and won in his name in that no other than G.P. Koirala himself had stated in several electoral gatherings that the next prime minister would be K.P. Bhattarai. He got the post but could not pay attention to the serious problems of the nation as a strong section of his party was hell bent on dislodging his government at the earliest possible moment. It was about 2/3 days before he resigned, I went to his official residence in

Baluwatar wondering if I could get to see him as I was expecting him to be busy seeing MPs and chalking out ways and means to save the government. Contrary to my expectation and utter surprise, I could not see one MP in the premises of Baluwatar. When I expressed my feeling about the wide gap between my expectation and realization to Kishunji in such a turbulent period, he smiled and waved his right and thrice in the air, clearly suggesting he had no intention of sticking to power taking resort to unfair means. I was treated to a nice snack of bara and pickle before I left the place. When I expressed my astonishment to his personally and politically close people the next day, they told me that he had declined the offer of some notable ministers in his cabinet to save the government at any cost. This piece of information was one more addition to my list of surprises emanating from Kishunji's action/inaction that time. He made a brief but historic speech in the parliament before proceeding to then Royal Palace to submit his resignation. Expectedly, G. P. Koirala took over as the next prime minister. The great leader had no lust for power and did not believe in politics of money and muscle.

Despite having suffered a lot during the Panchayat regime

Notwithstanding his own electoral debacle, he measured up to the expectation of his leaders and the people. He did not fail his two beloved leaders, B.P. and G.M. Singh, and the nation.

when then Royal Palace was running the show, he never had any ill feeling towards the institution of monarchy. He wanted to empower the people which he knew could be effected

only through shedding of power by the King. His observations and actions were always in that direction, which many times were misconstrued by then royalties as something meant to abolish the institution of monarchy. Not understanding that only constitutional monarchy could survive in the long run, those in favour of a powerful palace always blamed him for taking away power from the palace to the people through the much adored constitution of 1992. He never wanted monarchy to be abolished, which was perfectly in line with the ideal and established principle of NC that had B.P. and Ganesh Man as its mentor at different periods of time. He had the moral authority to speak in favour of monarchy when the entire nation, it seemed, was rising against the institution. His own party NC opted for the republican system of governance but Bhattarai wanted some form of monarchy to remain. Behind this softness for monarchy was his dream to see a peaceful, stable and prosperous Nepal, which could be possible only if all major forces in the country joined hands to do so. He was not a monarchist in the conventional sense of it. Leaders have been very generous in paying tribute to late K.P. Bhattarai, but let it not remain a ritual this time because there is a severe drought of value-based politics in Nepal today. Looking at the astounding material well being of dozens of politicians belonging to different parties in the last couple of years, many of us are tempted to conclude that politics is the vehicle that can reach one to the peak of prosperity in the shortest period of time. Shall we therefore begin to search our soul and try to walk the path of integrity, austerity, nationality and forgiveness created by Kishunji? A mere determination to do so would be the true tribute to the great leader who practiced value-based politics while alive.

KRISHNA PRASAD BHATTARAI

The Good

The Bad

And The Bubbly

He lived a lonely life towards the fag-end of life — personal and political. On his own terms. At his death he was not lonely in what he believed in. Thousands ventured out to pay their last homage. On his own terms, again. As the veteran democrat of rare virtues breathed his last, the debate over the fast vanishing values and norms in Nepali politics got a new life. But the happy-go-lucky octogenarian could himself have helped check the erosion of value-based politics had he acted on own terms and avoided some political blunders in crucial moments. Post-1990.

By SUSHIL SHARMA

"My life is guided and its duration is decided not by me but God Almighty himself. Only all the lacunas and deficiencies are mine." — Krishna Prasad Bhattarai

True to what Krishna Prasad Bhattarai said in his 87th birthday souvenir cup and the book "Merò Ma" he defied medical

science. Lived long enough than he had expected. But he could not defy the Almighty and complete a century that he had wished.

He led the country's largest democratic party for nearly twenty difficult years. And twice led the

government in no less difficult times. Despite organisational 'lacunas' and deficiencies.

At the most critical period of the party and the country, however, he was not in a position to lead the party and the country to what he thought was the right direction.

**Late Bhattarai**

Probably that was what his Almighty had decided.

The party he founded changed its course and the country embarked on a republican journey.

Bhattarai refused to join the bandwagon, choosing to walk alone.

He distanced himself from the “unethical politics” and the “deviating” party. He found few buyers of what he did. Taking a principled stand. Against all odds. Against the current. Against the “tide” of the times.

Times have changed. So has what the people thought of him. As the high hopes and the big dreams over the republican began to take a beating, the entire nation stood up and took notice of what he stood for.

In his death early this month the nation mourned the loss of “a great leader”.

He has been hailed as a leader who did all the right things. A leader who did not do a single wrong.

But as Bhattarai did himself admit he was not free from mistakes. “Only all the lacunas and deficiencies are mine”.

Destiny saw the man taking many good decisions and making some fatally bad moves.

Bhattarai rose to an unprecedented high when he opted to stay behind the royal regime’s bars. Refusing to join his illustrious senior jail compatriots of eight years into a foreign exile for an armed resurrection against the king’s direct rule.

He was proved right eight years later. B.P.Koirala and Ganesh Man Singh returned from for national unity and reconciliation.

The move proved a turning point in the gradual liberalisation of the restricted politics and eventual demise of the king’s direct rule.

Perhaps the politics could have taken a positively different course much earlier had Bhattarai been successful in prevailing upon B.P. and Ganesh Man.

But the fate had other things in store for Nepal.

Twenty-five years after a very high during the difficult times in the royal regime, Bhattarai stooped to an inexplicable low in the easy times in the democratic set up.

Struggling to overcome the shock defeat instead what should have been a cake-walk victory in the first general elections he failed to read a nasty design that not only did him in, but the party and eventually the national politics as well.

Failing to resist the temptations to enter the parliament through a by-poll, he ended up a loser.

The move, prompted by the then Indian ambassador as he would admit later, sowed the seeds of deep division in the Nepali Congress, led to the dissolution of parliament and mid-term polls, hung parliament, dirty power politics and eventually to the bloody communist insurgency.



Bhattarai At Funeral Pire

Had the otherwise a staunch nationalist Bhattarai resisted the temptation prompted by a foreign envoy, for the first time in Nepal's history, a government would have completed its full term. And the history would have taken a new course.

But that was not to be. Destiny had the spiritual Gandhian leader make arguably the biggest political blunder of his life.

None other than he himself seemed to concur, when he just smiled after going through such a newspaper comment by this scribe few weeks before he died.

Refraining from backing the dissident group of 36 during the first elected government of Girija Prasad Koirala despite deep differences and anger with Koirala could have been another feather in his cap in reshaping the politics of the country.

One of the biggest feathers in Bhattarai's political cap was the way he managed the critical political transition

after a pro-democracy movement clipped the wings of the powerful king.

The marvellous management of the situation under the interim government that he headed made the constitution of 1990 possible on time.

Hailed as the best statute at the time it soon became an 'unwanted' document, thanks to the machinations of which Bhattarai went on to become a party.

President of a traditionally democratic party, Bhattarai accompanied the communist opposition leader to knock the doors of a king whose powers he had effectively clipped. To seek the nullification of the dissolution of the parliament which the prime minister of his party's majority government had recommended in accordance with the universally accepted parliamentary norms and practices.

But he was soon back at his best in swallowing all humiliations and abuses from own party men to prevent a vertical split of the Nepali Congress at the behest of the rival and the incumbent

prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala.

Few leaders are endowed with such courage and guts to stand up to the adversity. Destiny had endowed it in Bhattarai. Few years later, he showed it again the second time when Koirala, as the party president, orchestrated a humiliating ouster of the prime minister Bhattarai.

Bhattarai stood up to Koirala again and fought against the tides. Post the movement against the illegal take over of power by misadventurous king Gyanendra.

He never backed the royal takeover nor did he condone the unpardonable move of the over ambitious king, but he did not compromise his conscience. And stood firmly behind what he and the party he had helped found believed in all these years. 'A republic is not the way to go about'.

Isolated at the time, he had a sea of humanity behind him as he departed four years later.

Probably he was destined to be right. ■

The Day When Kishunji Was Asked To Resign "

By TEJSRI THAPA

With tears in his eyes, voice shaking, hands trembling yet firm and promising idealism for the party and his dedication to value based politics, full of patriotic essence Kishunji was reading his resignation from PM on 2056, Chaitra 7 to the people of Nepal.

His touching words were "mero aakha ma sundar Nepal ko tashbir sajiako cha. Mero sapanasundar santha ra samridha Neplal ho. Thiyo Nepal ko nirman abanaya pustha le pura garne cha." This statement symbolized his hope for Nepal.

Even after performing the successful promulgation of the 1990 constitution and holding general elections in one year, acts which in themselves should have been a proud moment for the Nepali Congress party and be written in golden letters in the history of Nepal, he was compelled to resign with great humiliation by his own party colleague.

His achievements should be an example to be followed for our so-called veteran leaders who have failed to draft the constitution within the stipulated timeframe.

Leaders should also learn from Kishunji another lesson, his strong belief in nationalism. He never sought external support to stay in power. His early struggles to restore democracy included being imprisoned on his own soil when others chose exile and his bold nationalistic statements during his premiership. His belief that Nepal must be a unitary state and not be separated along federal lines highlights the

difference in his vision of nationalism from other leaders.

History will regard Kishunji as one of the few non-corrupt leaders who discouraged the politics of money while in power. His only possessions, a tin trunk, a water pitcher and an umbrella were a symbol of his frugal lifestyle. Instead of following his example most of the lead-



Late Bhattarai

ers who entered Baluwatar regarded corruption as a hallmark of leadership.

He was never willing to compromise with his party's ideology. He emphasized that the party should be as a family and that the personal family of powerful leaders should not take undesired central roles within the party. He maintained that if this were to happen a party would be an uncontrollable, undisciplined, visionless, directionless mob. Unfortunately the Congress ignored his wisdom. As a result today Congress has

lost its path and the convictions it stood for.

It is indeed a shame that the Nepali Congress could not give space to such a dedicated leader. In completely ignoring and discarding him it cannot be denied that the party meted out injustices to Bhattarai.

On his demise tributes flowed freely from the people of Nepal and a special condolence from the US government read "the demise of Nepal's former premier statesman is a loss not only for the country he so faithfully served but also for all democrats everywhere. His example serves as a reminder of what can be achieved when no one puts country before self".

I personally regard this statement from the US government as credit well deserved for his selfless service to the country. It resembles the remark expressed by J F Kennedy "Ask not what your country can do for you. But what you can do for your country".

These tributes made by the US government and the public shows how valued Kishunji's contributions to Nepal were. They must have embarrassed his party colleagues who had neglected and humiliated him, some shamelessly went as far as to call him outdated and irrelevant and compared him to a date expired cetamol.

It is important for our leaders to learn lessons from the inspirational seven decades of politics served by Kishunji. In preparing and perceiving a future path for the country it would be better if our Prime Minister were to look through this great leader's eyes then feigning sight of an alternative through covered binoculars.

Thapa is based in Maharajgunj



BRITISH GURKHAS

Losing Ground

As Britain faces mounting economic challenges, Gurkha veterans find that life here may not be easy for them

By BHAGIRATH YOGI in London

Only a couple of years ago, the cause of the Gurkhas was attracting support from almost all sections of the British society. Have things changed now? It may be very difficult to say, but there are few indications.

Gerald Howarth, a Conservative MP from Aldershot area, wrote to Prime Minister David Cameron, Gerald Howarth, MP for Aldershot, last month asking for more funds to deal with an issue he said was of 'grave concern' in the area, 'following an influx of thousands of former soldiers and their families.'

According to media reports, Howarth, who is also a junior minister in the coalition, wrote to the Prime Minister saying that around 10 per cent of the borough of Rushmoor's population of approximately 90,000 is Nepalese. 'This has had a very significant impact over a very short period of time,' he said.

In May 2009, after a high profile campaign led by actress Joanna Lumley, the British government decided to provide settlement rights to Gurkha veterans who had served in the British Army at least for four years.

Thousands of Gurkha veterans and their families have arrived in the UK over the last two years. Most of them are living in areas including Aldershot, Farnborough, Folkestone etc where there already was significant presence of the Gurkha community.

Local Councils in the UK are responsible for providing housing and other benefits to people who have got residency rights in their areas. But the arrival of Gurkhas coincided with the downturn in the British economy following the global financial crisis. The new Conservative-led government has already announced massive cuts in the government spending affecting almost all areas of public services including grants to local Councils.

The Rushmoor Borough Council has said it is facing cuts in the government funding of around 2.4 million pounds.

Gurkha community leaders were disappointed to learn about the letter sent by Gerald Howarth. They, however, said it won't be right to brush off all his concerns.

'Gerald Howarth has a point in that more Gurkhas have moved to the UK since

2009, and that many of this group have needed housing, healthcare and other support that has added to the already growing demands on local services,' said Major (Retd.) Tikendra Dal Dewan, chairman of the British Gurkha Welfare Society (BGWS). 'I would, however, disagree with the idea that this is a situation unique to Rushmoor. There are areas in Kent, Berkshire, and Surrey, to name a few, that have substantial Gurkha populations.'

Major Dewan, who has recently been elected as the chairman of the Greater Rushmoor Nepalese Community, insists that the vast majority of Gurkhas want to work, rather than surviving on benefits and that there are veterans who make a great contribution to the local economy running their own business such as restaurants, shops, taxi and cleaning services.

'However, many of the Gurkha older generation do face very real difficulties in finding work - and poor English and a lack of formal skills and qualifications seem to be the main stumbling blocks,' he added.

Some Gurkha organisations even claimed that comments by MP Howarth were 'racist.' Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen's Organisation (GAESO) led by Padam Bahadur Gurung lodged a complaint at the Equality and Human Rights Commission against the MP's remarks.

Dr Chandra Laksamba, a Gurkha veteran who has been residing in Aldershot area for the past several years, thinks that Howarth's statement could be politically motivated. 'Howarth's letter has come ahead of the local elections in the UK in which far-right parties like British National Party (BNP) are trying to make inroads,' he added.

A local newsportal, www.hamshire.co.uk, reported that Prime Minister Cameron has assured to form a 'Cross Government Task Force' in order to help settle Gurkhas in different parts of the country. MP Howarth, on his part, warned that for older Gurkhas who can't speak English, life in the UK was going to be very difficult. 'We don't have a situation here that could meet the expectations of the Gurkhas,' he added.

For veterans in their twilight years, the 'British dream' looks more difficult to be realised now. ■

REAL ESTATE

Hot Potato

A year after the central bank tightened screw to cool down the real estate bubble, it decides to ease restrictions on housing - amid scares of mass default on bank loans

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Governor Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada started his mid-term review speech on monetary policy last week with reassurances that he was not in a mood for any policy shift.

The bankers sitting around the table at the central bank hall exchanged anxious glances at his remarks.

But towards the end his words brought smiles to most of the bankers.

The governor had made a small but significant policy departure.

"The housing sector will be considered as productive sector. Housing is also a basic human need. Therefore, new guidelines will be prepared to ease credit flow to housing," he said.

The governor announced that the central bank will soon prepare the new guideline for the purpose.

Although he did not ease any restriction on real estate sector on the whole, the housing policy was also a remarkable pressure-releaser for the bankers.

Huge Concentration

The data of the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) show that as much as Rs 135 billion have been invested by the banks and the financial institutions on real estate and housing sector.

The earlier NRB policy imposing cap on the credit to real estate - 30 percent in this fiscal year and 25 percent in the next year - had cooled the overheated sector.

But in recent times, the danger was building on chances of mass default of bank loans.

The real estate operators had warned

that their transactions had come down by almost 90 percent in recent months.

The loan they took promising handsome interest rate to the banks and financial institutions at the time when there was a great real estate rush, were now becoming a real risk for the banks.

The bankers had already started murmuring that they needed some kind of leeway.

After last week's announcement, it seems, they are a bit relaxed.

"The policy on home loans announced by the governor is positive. We only hope that they would be implemented within this quarter," said Ashok Rana, president of Nepal Bankers' Association.

Merge, Merge, Merge

One of the recurring themes of governor Khatiwada's policy speech was his focus on the need to initiate merger among the banks and financial institutions.

As the credit interest skyrockets

Monetary & Economic Outlook

- GDP growth estimated to be 4.7 percent
- Agro-sector to grow by 4.2 percent
Non-agro sector to grow by 5.1 percent
- Inflation rate revised to grow by 9 percent
- BoP Loss of Rs 4 billion to be corrected to Profit of Rs 9 billion by end of fiscal
- Forex reserve to reach Rs 280 billion



Governor Dr. Khatiwada

propelled by increasing rates of interest on deposits, banks are worried about the cost of fund.

The governor presented merger as its answer.

"The banks must go for operational efficiency at this moment. Mergers can be a good answer. It will bring down the costs of operations - one CEO will be enough instead of two or more; one management unit will be enough and so on. Therefore, I have been urging you to go for merger," he said.

He said that merger-induced efficiency could help banks reduce the gap between credit and deposit interest rates.

The mid-term review continued the freeze on new applications for opening new commercial banks and extended it to cover other kinds of banks. ■



ULFA President Arabinda Rajkhowa

NORTHEAST

Sigh Of Relief

Nepalese living in north east India heave a sigh of relief following talks between Indian government and rebels

By UMA KANTA KHANAL in Jhapa

The Indian Gorkhas, who reside in north eastern states of India, are now hoping to live peacefully after two armed rebel groups of north east India agreed to sit in peace talks with the government.

The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and the peace talks support group of National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) have agreed to maintain peace in north east India. The president of ULFA was released by the government to develop the environment for the talks with ULFA.

The Nepali speaking people of north east India have expressed that peace talks will yield positive results. They are

optimistic that they will not have to spend their days in fear like before. Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh are principal states where Indian Gorkhas live. Their population in Assam is more than 15 lakhs. The Nepali speaking people of Assam have been mostly affected by the activities of rebel groups. Last year, more than a dozen Gorkhas were killed in the rebel attacks.

The Nepali speaking people of Assam, however, are not so hopeful as to get any political security as a result of peace talks with the armed rebel groups. They say it will be enough if they get a chance to live in peace. A businessman in Tejpur, Khadga Bahadur Kaushik, said, 'We only hope that our people will get to live in peace and it is sure that we will not

get any political benefit from this.'

The Gorkhas residing in Assam have been facing problems when they want to sell their lands to anyone. In places where the state government has given autonomy to the locals, it is compulsory for everyone wanting to sell land that they can sell it to the locals only. The president of recently established Gorkha Development Council of Assam, Loknath Upadhyaya, said, 'If there is peace in north east India, every Nepali speaking people will see better prospects for work in every field.'

The central government has initiated the peace talks with ULFA after a meeting that was held in the capital, Delhi on February 10. The president of ULFA, Arabinda Rajkhowa, told reporters after the meeting that his organisation was very hopeful about the success of the talks.

'If terrorism ends in north east India, it is not only beneficial for Gorkhas but also beneficial for all people,' a Nepali journalist in Guwahati, Assam, Rohit Gautam, said, 'We are closely watching the talks which have recently been started.'

Earlier on the day of the meeting, Rajkhowa and the other rebels had met the chief minister of Assam Tarun Gogoi at his official residence to iron out some rough edges in the peace process. Later the senior government officials of Assam had taken them to the central capital for the talks.

The ULFA was formed in April 1979 prior to the launch of the six-year Assam Agitation to rid the state of illegal settlers. It carried out extortion, abduction and killing before a split in 1992 saw more than half the outfit surrendering. The outfit regrouped to become a terror again before New Delhi's coordination with Bhutan and Bangladesh weakened it and led to the capture of most of its leaders since December 2003.

Another group of ULFA, led by Paresh Barua, is still in the armed rebellion and he is believed to be holed out in northern Myanmar with some 150 fighters. He has rejected the peace process being pursued by his former colleagues and vowed to carry on his battle to liberate Assam from 'colonial India'.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Economic Key

Economic empowerment is the key to bringing about meaningful changes in the lives of women

By MANISH GAUTAM

For a March evening, at 6:30, this one was a bit cold and dark. People were rushing to catch tempos and minibuses in front of the Kathmandu Mall. Headlights from a stream of vehicles running on the road lighted up the station here irrespective of the city's 14-hour daily power outage.

A lady Safa Tempo driver was preparing for her last trip. As she waited for passengers to fill the seats of her tempo, she looked worried.

"I'm getting late for home," Namita said, moving her hands on the steering. "My son is back from school and is waiting for me."

That was her routine. It was different until a few years back. Her husband drank and regularly beat her. When it was too much, she abandoned him. Her friend took her to an institute where she learnt to drive the tempo.



Woman Tempo Driver

She now earns Rs. 8,500 per month, plus some extra cash daily, after paying the rental to sahuji, which was Rs. 290 for each trip. She makes eight trips daily.

"I earn for myself and is proud for that," she said.

Many women in Nepal faced similar difficulties, but only a few were as lucky as Namita to become self-reliant. A study showed many women had work overloads, and suffered harassment in and outside the working place.

The UNIFEM/NIDS study on women migrant workers found one third of the respondents saying that they had to go abroad for work due to family problems. The harassment meted out against the migrant women workers was often intolerable and their payment was low.

Sunita Shrestha of Satungal went abroad as a domestic help, lured by the promise of a handsome salary. On receiving her first month's remuneration, she realized she was cheated. "Whatever I got was finished for my food and lodging," she said, "so I returned home."

She said she now had a tailoring shop and earned a good sum. POURAKHI, a non-government organization operated by women migrant workers, helped her.

The Ministry of Labour and Transport estimated approximately 3 million documented and undocumented Nepalese were working in various labour destinations. Women comprised 10 to 15 percent of the total. And, out of the total remittance received from the migrant workers in 2010, women's share was 11 percent.

The more interesting fact of the study done by UNIFEM/NIDS is the use of remittance by women. Most of the women invested in their children's education and in buying daily necessities. This data explains a wise and a fruitful use of the



A Medical Student

money.

The number of women in non-agricultural work force has increased from 20.2 per cent in 1991 to 34 per cent in 2001 (CBS, 2001). Still, women are concentrated in low income and low capital intensive jobs.

Moreover, many women in the rural areas work for non-paid jobs, such as household chores and farm works. Neither do they have their say in the sale and purchase of the cattle they take care of. Though the Census of 2058 has termed household chores as "extended



A Traffic Police

economic activities', there are still many things needing to be done for the cause of women.

The fact that only 5.5% of the households reported ownership of the house in women's name, 7.6% of the livestock and 10.8% land were owned by women (Population and Housing census 2001) is a testimony to this. This data further shows men's domination over women.

Law has provided that sons and daughters shall have equal rights to ancestral property (Art. 20.4). But the right is less often claimed by the daughters. Even if they did, they had to go through a lengthy court procedure.

The government has allocated various quotas for women in most of the working fields. The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 has a better provision for woman's right. According to Article 21, women have the right to participate in the state institutions on the basis of the principle of proportional inclusion. Likewise, the article 35 Clause, 8 reads that 'the state shall pursue a policy to encourage maximum participation of women in national development by making provisions for their education, health and employment'. Moreover, women can be candidates for government jobs up to 40 years of age (35 years for men) and 6

months of probation period in the government jobs for women (1 yrs for men)

Education plays a vital role for uplifting the economic standard of women. Nepal's literacy rate has increased in recent years, but the percentage of literate women is far behind that of men. The overall literacy rate of Nepal is 52.74 percent but the female literacy rate is only 42.49 percent (CBS, 2001). So, with fewer literate women, the quota government has allocated to them sometimes has to be given to poorly qualified candidates as well. This worsens the overall system in the long run. Thus, priority should be accorded to educating and empowering the women.

Member of National Women's Commission Dhan Kumari Sunar stresses empowerment of women to improve the overall conditions of Nepalese women.

With a slogan of 'Equal access to

education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women,' the International Women's Day was marked worldwide. 'Decent work' is still farfetched idea in our context. The decade-long Maoists insurgency worsened the overall economic system of the country. And now it is on the verge of recuperation.

It may sound trite, but the budget allocated for women's empowerment needs to be spent properly. A number of NGO's and INGO's working for the wellbeing of the women have to decentralize their work to achieve women's empowerment in practical terms. If the International Women's Day has any meaning other than being a ritual celebration, something concrete should be done so that all women will get an opportunity to enjoy the fruits equally. ■

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The Man In A Mess

By **ABIJIT SHARMA**



Rekha accompanied her husband to Delhi nine years back in search of job. Like many other Indians, the poor domestic worker from Bihar is not interested in politics, nor does she understand its nittygrities. During a casual conversation she said, "these days, all I hear about on radio and television is corruption, scam and fraud." She recalled the name of former minister A.Raja. "I had heard that the 'Sardarji' running our country was a good man, but he has turned out to be the same old kind of politician" she adds. She says she had lots of hope from this 'Sardarji' known for his 'honesty', with an image quite unlike typical Indian politicians. "We hoped that the situation of people like us would improve. We thought we wouldn't have to bribe government officials for getting our work done". But nothing has changed, she complains.

This is by and large the public perception towards the man who was hailed a 'hero' when he won the office for the second time, being the only one after Jawaharlal Nehru to accomplish the achievement. Man Mohan Singh, the longest serving Prime Minister of the independent India, was always credited for the economic reforms he introduced as finance minister and later for the good governance after he first stepped in the prime minister's shoe, in 2004. His economic reforms paved the way for the unprecedented flow of foreign investments in India and the country gained a nearly two digit economic growth. What garnered more appreciation was his squeaky clean image, his honesty and 'softness' which many people doubted could work in politics then.

Seven years down the line, the doubts of those few people have turned into a reality. Singh has come under big criticism for incompetence and inability to handle issues. It all started last year when one by one, corruption cases against ministers in his cabinet and government officials started to surface. It all started with the failure to take any actions against A.Raja in the 2G spectrum case. It was reported that he was aware of the shady deals but still did not take any steps to stop them. Soon, an avalanche of scams followed; Common Wealth Games, Adarsh and Radiagate to name a few. From government officials and ministers to even court justices, many were found to be involved in one scam or the other. What made the PM a culprit in the eyes of many was his decision to appoint PJ Thomas, an official facing corruption case, as the Central Vigilance

Commissioner. Many also blamed him for failing to tackle the escalating Maoist problem.

Last month, the Prime Minister decided to break his silence and speaking to a select journalists over live television at his residence 7, Race Course Road, blamed 'coalition politics' for the country's current mess. He said that he personally condemned corruption but he was "helpless" in many matters. He assured that the government would bring the wrongdoers to book.

Few were satisfied with his TV live show. Many who had expected the PM to announce new plans and actions to tackle the country's growing problems were disappointed. As a matter of fact, the conference turned out to be an act of self-defence. Since then, people have further started doubting whether Singh

is really the right man to hold the top post. What is the use of his honesty and softness if it doesn't lead to good governance, is the question people are asking now. Political observers feel that projecting himself as an utterly helpless politician does not behove the office he holds. The fact that Singh hardly interacts with media and has not done a single extensive interview in seven years has been his big disadvantage. The TV press show came too late to control the damage to his image. Senior BJP leader L.K Adjani



Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh

has often referred to Singh as the most incompetent Prime Minister of all time. The Supreme Court' censuring of some of Singh's decisions including his failure to probe the 2G scam has added salt to the wounds. It had ordered that the PM-appointed Central Vigilance Commissioner PJ Thomas should quit.

Defenders of Singh argue that he just been a victim of politics of conspiracy and that he deserves chance to clean up the mess. Quipped a blogger, "if every politician starts resigning after every scandal, the country will be leaderless". Another adds, "Singh is indeed the cleanest politician around and the opposition cannot put up a better replacement."

The lonely man at the top' as he is being famously referred to these days, has indeed a lot to prove in the coming days. His clean image, modesty and softness are not enough to guide India to the road of a super power to the right direction. He definitely needs to be more ruthless and commanding than what he is today. That is the only way to winning the hearts and the minds of the one billion people. ■



NEPAL INVESTMENT BANK LIMITED

Looking Forward

By PRITHVI BAHADUR PANDE

NIBL has been on a journey over the past 25 years, a journey in building itself up to becoming one of the largest banks in Nepal. It now is looking forward to embarking on a bigger, more challenging journey of serving our clients, stakeholders and nation with better products and services in the future. On the 25th anniversary, NIBL pledges to envisage and plan an even brighter future for the bank.

Nepal Indosuez Bank Limited was established in 1986 as a joint venture between the Indosuez Bank Group, Rastriya Banijya Bank, Rastriya Beema Sansthan and public stakeholders. The French party had a 50% stake within the bank and led management and operations from 1986 to 2002, when the French banking giant Credit Agricole took over the Indosuez group resulting in a new entity called Credit Agricole Indosuez which today again is known as Credit Agricole. When Credit Agricole decided to divest from its non core areas of operations which included Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Cambodia, the French party sold its stake to a group of prominent Nepali bankers, businessmen, professionals and industrialists, who took over operations under the current management and subsequently rebranded the bank as Nepal Investment Bank Limited.

Since then, NIBL has come a long way from being the first bank to be entirely funded by Nepali investors to being one of the leading commercial.

On the anniversary of 25 years of operations, NIBL is ranked as the number one taxpayer among all Nepali banks, contributing 790 million rupees to the Government last year alone, making it the 5th largest tax payer in Nepal. Over the course of these 25 years, NIBL has paid around 2.8 billion rupees in taxes to the Government, of which 2.4 billion was paid since the acquisition by Nepali investors in 2002.

In 2002, when the French handed over management operations, NIBL had a capital base of 170 million rupees, 6 branches and 25,000 customers. Today, NIBL has a capital base of 2.4 billion

rupees, 41 branches and is serving more than 400,000 customers, the highest customer base of any bank in Nepal.

Since 2002, NIBL has achieved notable growth in several other areas as well. NIBL's deposit base has grown from 4 billion rupees to 48 billion rupees making NIBL the largest private sector bank with respect to deposits.

Last year, NIBL recorded the highest net profit among all commercial banks at 1.26 billion rupees, a massive increase from 57 million rupees in 2002. NIBL is also the highest loan provider in Nepal at 40.95 billion rupees, compared to 2002 levels at 2.7 billion rupees.

On the anniversary of 25 years of operations, NIBL is ranked as the number one taxpayer among all Nepali banks, contributing 790 million rupees to the Government last year alone, making it the 5th largest tax payer in Nepal.

Similarly, the Tier 1 capital is the largest of any bank in Nepal at 4.55 billion rupees, up from 523 million in 2002. NIBL's assets grew to 57.3 billion rupees, representing the highest volume growth as well as the highest level in Nepal.

NIBL has maintained a consistent rating from Indian Credit Rating Agency, ICRA, an affiliate of Moody's Investor Group, receiving a rating of Nepal [A]. This has reflected NIBL's strong creditworthiness and our position as the first and only bank in Nepal to have a credit rating, thereby adding additional transparency for our shareholders and regulators.

Nepal Investment Bank Limited has always been an innovative and trend setting bank, often the first bank to launch products such as Visa debit cards, online utility bill payments, telephone bill payments and a no frills savings account at Re. 1 only.

NIBL have strategic ties with Metlife to offer life insurance products through NIBL's bancassurance program. NIBL is also a partner in the Global Trade Finance Program offered by the

International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). NIBL has also entered into an arrangement with China Development Bank (CDB) to promote project relationships in infrastructure finance in terms of project cooperation, financial consultancy, credit grants and currency swaps.

NIBL has always been committed to building and maintaining a strong relationship with the community at large. Since its inception, Nepal Investment Bank Limited has given top priority to corporate social responsibility, or CSR.

As a part of its CSR, NIBL has been regularly assisting Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust with their renovation projects. NIBL donated 1.5 million rupees for the restoration of the legendary Kaal Bhairav statue at Hanuman Dhoka premises. In 2007, NIBL also raised 2.5 million rupees from its first corporate marathon to aid the restoration of Sundari Chowk, a World Heritage Site Monument within the Patan Durbar Square complex.

NIBL Heritage Marathon 2009 raised over 7 million rupees for the restoration of Bhaideval Temple and Bhashmeshwor at Pashupati Nath Temple.

NIBL also gave away twenty-five lakh rupees for the Extreme Everest Expedition, the first all Nepali cleanup campaign that cleared out 1800 kilos of garbage and recovered two dead bodies from above 8,000 meters on Mount Everest.

NIBL would like to acknowledge the skills, knowledge, attitude and diligence that have been vital to its success over the past 25 years. NIBL's total workforce today is at 877 compared to 766 in the previous year. Of the total staff, 41% are female.

NIBL would also like to thank the valuable patronage of all our clients over the past 25 years. NIBL is on a journey to develop Nepal and in the process uplift all its citizens. NIBL pledges to continue to strengthen our services and commitment to all our valued clientele in the future.

(Excerpts of the statement delivered by Chairman and Chief Executive Director Pande at a press conference.)



Wind Turbines In Kanya Kumaari

INDIA'S GROWTH MIRACLE

Time To Act

India's improved road infrastructure will contribute to Nepal's overall economic growth in the future. The sooner Nepalese leaders realise this, the better

By KESHAB POUDEL
in Banglore, India

As a world class highway network expands all over India, Nepal is getting connected to it through border points, like the busiest Raxaul of Bihar or Sunauli of Uttar Pradesh. India's highways are smooth and fast, at 80 km an hour.

The upgrading and expansion of the highway networks have sped up development activities in the Indian states. The cost of transportation is coming down. It could mean enormous opportunities even for the Nepalese goods in India, although there remain several other challenges.

India's economy growing by over 9

per cent annually will have global implications. As a close neighbor, Nepal can tap any opportunity opened up by this robust growth. Nepalese economists argue that Nepal can make economic gains from the growth of the southern neighbor, with which Nepal has cultural, religious and other similarities.

This scribe had a chance to see the changes occurring fast, far and wide when he travelled 15 states of north and south India, including Nepal's neighboring states. Economic changes are visible in production, agriculture and infrastructure sectors. With the expansion of irrigation system, the agriculture sector has also made a major progress, transforming its traditional, rural economy into a modern one.

The railways and freight services in

major ports have also improved a lot.

"The size of Indian economy means that what happens in India over the coming decades has important implications for global growth, inequality and poverty," said Mark Rosenzweig, Professor of International Economics, at Yale University, commenting on a book *Sustaining India's Growth Miracle*.

Arvind Panagariya, Professor of Indian political economy in the Department of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, argues that India's high economic growth will make a dramatic change in the world.

Edited by Jagadish N. Bhagawati, professor at Columbia University and Charles W. Calomiris, Professor of financial institutions at Columbia University, the newly published book *Sustaining India's Growth Miracle* revealed how India's high economic growth will affect the global economy.

As a close neighbor sharing many things, including the topography with south facing lands, Nepal will be the first country to feel the heat in the region. However, Nepal's political leadership is yet to develop a vision in view of the changes happening in the south. Instead of coming up with ways to boost trade, Nepalese leaders are stuck up in useless debates with India. Worse, Nepal has been passing through a lingering political instability.

"The time has come for Nepal's political leadership to realize the importance of Nepal's connectivity with India and chalk the way to get benefits," said an economist.

Led by Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist and Leninist) chairman Jhala Nath Khanal, the present coalition with UCPN-Maoist has yet to produce any concrete plan to benefit from this growth. Instead, UCPN-Maoist party leaders are harping on anti-Indian statements- which will certainly have long-term implications



Improved Highways

for Nepal.

From boulders to sand and other agriculture products like vegetables, and fish, Nepal can increase its supply. Similarly, Nepal can also benefit from increasing export of hydro power. Similarly, Nepal can attract a large number of Indian tourists from road as well as air.

Despite such huge potentials in tapping into India's growth, Nepal's political parties are yet to make any strategy in the changing circumstances.

"It is unfortunate that Nepalese political leaders have no vision at all to get benefits from India's progress. Instead of making any strategy, political parties are harping on anti-Indian slogans in the street. This is neither in the interest of people nor in the interest of country," an observer said.

With load shedding of up to 14 hours a day; Nepal's overall economic scenario is going from bad to worse. The crisis of Nepal's hydro-electricity can be lessened by the southern neighbor.

Impacts of Indian Economy

Whether the political leadership takes it or not, India's economic

progress is gradually integrating Nepal's economy. Even the Indian budget is having effects on Nepal's economy.

Indian Finance Minister Mukherjee began his Budget speech for 2011-12, stating that the average inflation will be down next year and that Indian economy is expected to grow at 9% annually. The agriculture sector has recorded a growth of 5.4% while industry has grown by 8.1% in 2010-11. He added that the current account deficit poses a major concern. The major highlights of the budget, inter alia, are: encouraging trends in development of external sector; taxes, tariff procedures will be simplified; to reconcile environment concerns, growth needs; current account deficit poses a concern; 13th Finance Commission has worked out fiscal consolidation roadmap; agriculture growth at 5.4%, industry at 8.1% in 2010-11; self-sufficiency in pulses, Rs 300 crore allocated for 60,000 pulses villages to increase production and productivity; self-help group fund to empower women; task force working on oil subsidy plans; Rs 600 crore to public sector banks to maintain mandatory CRR;



Agriculture Modernization

liberalization of FDI policy; FII allowed to invest in MF schemes; 15 more mega food parks to be promoted. This is what Shanker Man Singh writes in his article.

"The latest Indian budget has uncovered Nepal to challenges and opportunities, something which has left the government reeling under the pressure of high inflation and historic high balance of payments deficit. Moreover, the Indian budget has risen public spending, subsidized on petroleum products that are acknowledged to decrease inflation in India - signaling a strong impact in Nepal as well. Since the Nepali financial authorities are already facing hard times to contain the double-digit inflation, the possible repercussions of the Indian budget might be a woe for the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB)," said economist Shanker Man Singh. "The Indian budget will raise the price of gold, silver, air fare, cigarettes, and fridge. With the increase in the prices of gold in India, smuggling may be curtailed in trade with Nepal. This will also have an effect on Nepal's import

tariff regime and the control of unauthorized trade."

Bilateral Activities

With a functional democracy, India has proved that the development and high growth are possible in a democratic society. "Today what we have done is proven that democracy and development, federal democracy and development, with devolution, are inseparable," said Ronen Sen, Indian ambassador to the United States.

Addressing the inaugural function of a seminar on 'India-Nepal Relations' organized in Benaras by the Ministry of External Affairs, the governor of Uttar Pradesh said that India and Nepal share a unique and special relationship rooted in shared history, geography, culture, language and civilization.

"India would construct 19 roads exceeding 600 km in the Terai region of Nepal; establish two integrated check-posts and two cross-border railway links over the next two-three years in the first phase. In the second phase, India would construct additional 800 km roads, three cross-border railway links and two integrated check-

posts. Six of the roads in phase-I, two of the integrated check-posts in phase-II and two of the rail links in phase-II would be built along the India-Nepal border in Uttar Pradesh," added the governor.

The first round of Nepal-India Inter Governmental Sub Committee (IGSC) meeting took place in New Delhi. Joint secretaries of the two countries held a meeting last week, said Kailash Bajimaya, under secretary at the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies (MoCS).

MoCS has been preparing for the meeting since early January and held discussions with the private sector

In the new trade treaty, India has agreed to open new trade routes for Nepal including new air routes, opening up of Vishakhapatnam port as an additional transit port for Nepal along with allowing the use of Rohanpur-Singhabad rail route for Nepal-Bangladesh trade.

As India's economy is growing fast, the time has come for Nepalese leaders to work on how to gain from it. Instead of politicization of relations, a realistic trade approach would go a long way towards taking those benefits.

Like it or not, Nepal's overall economic development will depend on how quickly it integrates its economy with that of India. ■

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BOOK

In Memory Of Jagannath Acharya

Senior Nepali Congress leader late Jagannath Acharya sacrificed all his life in the struggle to restore democracy, now a book remembers him

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepal's democratic history is rich in struggles and sacrifices. Many individuals devoted their lives to the cause of democracy. Late Jagannath Acharya is one of them.

Born in Kaushaltar of Bhaktapur district, late Acharya, a Nepali Congress leader, played an important role in the democratic movement of 2007 and the first People's Movement of 1990.

Leaders B.P. Koirala, Ganesh Man Singh, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Subarna Sumsher Rana lauded late Acharya for his role in the democratic movement of Nepal. Senior politician Acharya was imprisoned by Ranas during the revolution of 2007. His struggle continued after the overthrow of democracy in 1960 by King Mahendra.

Daring and courageous, Acharya sacrificed his personal interests to the cause of democratic values and principles. He died more than seven six years ago. But he is remembered in his birthplace by democratic activists who published a book dedicated to him.

Published by Jagannath Acharya Memorial Trust, the book is the first by the trust, and is a collection of articles

and his views regarding his commitment to democracy. There are also several pieces which are related to the life of Acharya. Late leaders B.P. Koirala, Ganesh Man Singh and Kishunji praised the courageous role played by senior leader Acharya.

"Our colleague Acharya is a daring personality and leader of poor farmers and without his insistence the land reform could not have taken place," writes B.P. Koirala in his observation on Acharya.

Similarly, Nepali Congress leader Ganesh Man Singh also hailed the personality of Acharya. In his observation, Singh found him a courageous leader with full commitment to democratic ideals.

Along with the memorable articles written by party colleagues like Daman Nath Duhngana, Bhim Bahadur Tamang, Nara Hari Acharya, Pradip Giri, Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat, Arjun Narsingh KC, Hom Nath Dahal, politicians like former prime minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand, CPN-UML leaders Keshab Badal, Radha Krishna Mainali, and Maoist leader Lila Mani Pokharel have also written about his personality.

One of the important parts of Acharya's life was that he always pursued

जगन्नाथ आचार्य
स्मृति ग्रन्थ



प्रकाशक : जगन्नाथ आचार्य स्मृति प्रतिष्ठान

the cause of land reforms and held the view that the rights of the tiller need to be protected. This is the crux of the land reform program after 1990. Despite opposition from several quarters, he was able to pursue the program.

This is an important book to know about late Acharya's firm commitments to democracy, human rights and rule of law. His views on revolutionary land reform program are another important aspect that needs to be considered alongside attempts to bring about changes in the Nepali society. By publishing the book, the Academy has made a major contribution, especially because it highlights the role of an important personality overshadowed by the humdrum politics that the common Nepalese people are made to see on a daily basis.

On International Relations

Having spent a long time in the foreign ministry, Hira Bahadur Thapa has become a knower of many ins and outs of Nepal's foreign policy, which is evident in his recent book

By A CORRESPONDENT

As global politics and international relations are getting more complicated, the days ahead for smaller countries like Nepal could be very difficult and complicated as they set out to formulate their foreign policies. To deal with the present complexity of the world, persons with knowledge about the changing international politics are necessary.

This is what the recent book by Hira Bahadur Thapa establishes. A seasoned Nepalese diplomat who served in various

Nepalese missions in different capacities, and in his later career, also served as a foreign relations advisor to the prime minister, has written a book with important insights.

From conducting foreign relations to importance of disarmament, Thapa's work gives sheds light on the present global trends and geo-political situations. Although Thapa has not written anything about his experiences, his book gives theoretical aspects of international rela-

tions as well as the current international trends.

His views incorporated in the books are thoughtful and based on the current trends. For those who

are interested in global politics, this book is helpful and interesting to read. A book written by someone like Thapa is worth a place in the bookshelf. ■



'Home Managers, Not Housewives'

-SHARU SHRESTHA JOSHI

SHARU JOSHI SHRESTHA worked for a long time with UNIFEM in empowering women. Joshi in present is the program manager for migration at UN Women. She spoke to MANISH GAUTAM on women's issues. Excerpts:

Why was the need of UN Women felt when there were UNIFEM and others, already?

Despite many efforts globally, there is still a gap in terms of gender equality. Many evidences, data, research, budget allocations, women's participation, women's access to resources and employment, and prevalence of gender-based violence suggest slack progress. Therefore, UN Member States realized that there is a great need of strong gender architecture to assist member states to work with stronger mandates and resources. So, the four UN agencies working on gender equality and women's empowerment were merged to create UN Women, a UN Entity for gender equality and Women's empowerment. Hence, on 2nd July 2010, UN Women was announced by the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, which became operational on 1st January 2011.

What are the key priorities of UN Women?

The five key areas identified are: Violence against women, Women, Peace and security, Leadership and Participation, Economic Empowerment, National planning and budget processes.

Does the creation of UN Women mean for other offices and funds in the UN system working on gender and women's empowerment to stop doing it?

Absolutely not! UN Women will enhance, not replace, efforts by other parts of the UN system. Other UN agencies will be continuing their work for mainstreaming gender into their programmes. But, UN Women will be in the driving seat and leading others on gender equality and women's empowerment issues.

Focusing on Economic Empowerment of women, what hindrances do you find in achieving this?

I see one hindrance at the conceptual level. The entire concept of the women's

work has to be revisited. The contributions of women's work at household are not counted. Most of women's time is being used for the household chores. But, those activities are not considered as economic activities; hence, their contributions are not visible. As one can see women are fully cooperating for the sustenance of the family, many as 'house wives' which I would like it to be termed as 'home managers'. Take a glance at all the household chores a woman does where she spends time cooking, cleaning and caring. One simple, maybe a very crude, example, that I want to cite here, is when you go to a restaurant you pay for the service for the cook and waiters, you pay money to the dhobi or dry cleaners. If similar works that a woman does in the public sphere they are monetized and considered economic works. Then why not the women who do the same work in every house are not even considered as economic actors? Women also face glass ceiling in the corporate sector resulting out of time, out from work to give birth and raise children.

Are you saying that I should pay my mother for what she does everyday?

I was expecting the question. I'm afraid it's not what I mean. I think my previous answer has tried to explain what I mean. Rather, I mean to say that women should not be victimized despite their critical contribution just because the system so designed cannot recognize and calculate such contribution. Also defining "productive" and "unproductive" work needs to be looked at again. Thanks to Census 2058, this has started counting some of the household work as 'extended economic activities'. However there are still challenges in valuating these works which needs further debates and methodologies designed.

Please share with us some activities done by UN Women for the economic empowerment of women?

Apart from supporting government to implement Foreign Employment Act and Regulation, we have piloted reintegration programmes for returnee women migrant workers. Through our reintegration programme, 600 returnee women migrant workers and members of



their families have found development alternatives, in Nepal. Among them 94% have said that now they want to stay back with children and family. It has reduced risk of forced remigration and trafficking at least to those 600 families. Also we have shown how remittance can be better used for their livelihood. We are also working with Central Bureau of Statistics, and trying to get information on women's poverty, women's property and women's work through Population and Housing Census 2011.

What are the future plans of UN Women?

We are still working on developing our global strategy and country strategy, which will more concretely define our future plans. We expect there will be shift in programme focus from engendering policies to more intensive support to build capacities of our development partners at all levels for effective implementation of policies and programmes, especially targeting the excluded groups of women. We will be supporting the duty bearers to strengthen their accountability while ensuring monitoring and tracking mechanisms to maximize the impact to bring tangible changes in the lives of women and children. Earlier experiences showed that the funds allocated so far, especially at the local level earmarked for women, children and marginalized groups through the decentralized policies for local development has been spent for infrastructure development and rather than on women's empowerment or related tasks. ■



ARMED POLICE FORCE

Help At Hand

The Armed Police Force is leading the show by training personnel to develop their disaster response capabilities

By A CORRESPONDENT

The meandering Trishuli River was in a rage due to flooding. A crowd gathered around its vicinity. People fixed their eyes on those who were fighting with the current of the river and pleading for help. Everybody shuddered at the sight.

As each looked at the other with expectant eyes to help them out, a group of boys came on a boat and actually rescued them.

Immediately after that, the nearby hut kindled. Again, there were voices calling for help. And, once more, the sufferers were rescued, successfully.

This was a rescue drill performed for media persons and other guests at Kurintar, Chitwan.

The rescuers were no other than the Armed Police Force boys, who had completed an 11-week training on disaster management. The basic training

for the 56 boys included physical fitness, knowledge on disaster and types, rafting, swimming, rock climbing, river crossing, MFR (Medical First Response), fire fighting, dead body management, search in crumbled site and so forth.

It has been six months since their training ended. But the boys have made the country proud through their valor they have shown in some major rescue operations ever since.

As Nepal lies in a disaster prone zone, preparedness and rescue skills are a prerequisite to minimize the risks. In that regard, APF's training center is the first organized response to filling the gap.

Sanat Kumar Basnet, IGP of the Armed Police Force and the visionary man behind the concept of training the APF boys and preparing them for disasters in the upcoming days, indeed, surely deserves accolades for his long-term thought.

According to the APF Headquarters Information Section, the trained boys have successfully used their new skills during some of the rescue operations.

A French citizen James David Wallance was rescued from Gharikhola of Macchapuchre. Wallance went out of contact while he was flying in a paramotor.

Likewise, a Dutch Ben U Bachs was rescued from the Narayani River, who happened to fall in the river while paragliding.

"The concept that police personnel are only for wars and for thrashing the criminals is slowly changing," the information officials said, "instead, a large mass of police personnel have devoted themselves to many social activities. Though maintaining peace and security is our first concern, we have alerted the trained boys for prompt response in any kind of disasters as well."

The Information Section further elaborated that the trained personnel are ready for any sort of disasters in each of the unit throughout the country.

Trained A.P.F. personnel deserve kudos in finding Sita Tamang, 24. Tamang was lost in the Trishuli River. Despite the efforts of the local people, police and armies, her body was not found. It had been 9 days and all efforts in finding the lost body had gone in vain, when A.P.F. Headquarters got a call from the lost girl's relatives. Promptly, a task force was ordered to be in the site and in less than 24 hrs of the call, A.P.F. personnel were successful in finding the dead body.

In an earlier experience, fourteen armies, who were inexperienced in disaster management, were charred to death in a rescue operation during a wildfire at Ramechhap.

Reports warn Nepal could suffer a massive earthquake, and it could pancake Kathmandu Valley. Amidst such reports, trained personnel raise chances of lesser damage.

"In any disaster, please call us at our toll free no. 1114 without any hesitation," said a source from the Information Section, "and we are always ready to give a prompt response, for we are here to serve the general public, wholeheartedly." ■

Bridges Of Peace In Nepal

By DEVRAJ DAHAL



Building bridges of peace between individuals and groups of the society is keys to national reconciliation. In Nepal, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed by the Maoist rebels and the government define the normative, institutional, and operational framework of peace and aspires to transcend the partial interests of the signing parties and include all affected by the absence of peace. The democratic peace postulated by the CPA was meant to cease conflict, eradicate structural injustice of society, bring social transformation, and post-conflict peacebuilding process to eliminate the future sources of conflict. A government based on citizens' consent can gradually humanize the operation of political power. In Nepal, however, one

for each other's legitimate interests and bridge the ends and means of peace for a liberating condition for all Nepalese citizens.

There is a truth in what Nietzsche says: "The degree of suffering is determined by the position in hierarchy." Nepalese citizens crave for a release from their suffering as they are invisible in the corridors of power and unarticulated in public policy. In a situation of utter neglect of the powerless, peacebuilding requires reducing transaction costs imposed by the ruling hierarchy by activating multi-tracks of dialogue, offering peace dividends, curtailing the risks of violence, and democratizing the pyramids of undemocratic structures. This means Nepalese leaders must

increasing statelessness. It is possible to overcome this situation if intermediary institutions nurture cross-cutting social capital across various empirical divides of the nation and train their leadership on the virtues of peace as a common good and make national economy agile and competitive enabling the citizens to enjoy their constitutional and human rights and duties.

The challenge of the day thus is to build bridges across the gaps between the state and society, system and life-world, center and periphery, and groups and individuals through healing and reconciliation with spiritual, social, economic, and political resources of the nation. This, however, requires a self-reflective learning of leadership about the wisdom of ordinary folk, public opinion, and the spiritual and cultural heritage of this nation's tolerance of diversity nurtured assiduously by sages, citizens, and statespersons. But, for this purpose, the national identity of Nepalese formulated on the common environment condition, socialization, and shared expectation of a collective future must be reinforced by shoring up the national spirit and spirit of international cooperation.

Dahal is Head, FES Nepal

The democratic peace postulated by the CPA was meant to cease conflict, eradicate structural injustice of society, bring social transformation, and post-conflict peacebuilding process to eliminate the future sources of conflict. A government based on citizens' consent can gradually humanize the operation of political power.

can see a discrepancy between growing public expectations of post-conflict peace dividends and the leaders' utilitarian instincts.

The deviation of leadership from the course of peacebuilding and efforts of aggrandizement of exclusive power reflected deviation from the spirit of peace accord. Worse still, the ruling parties have taken over almost all independent institutions of the state spoiling many positive opportunities available to citizen. It demonstrates the gap between commitment and accountability and the denouement is: continuous deadlock over various constitutional issues. It has delayed the process of drafting constitution in time and transforming negative peace into positive peace as neither the Maoists nor the ruling parties are willing to work for the common good. Dialogue among the leaders of the major parties has failed to open up a common ground, provide room

become accountable to politics as a public responsibility and link the society to the public sphere for articulation and public action. This is possible only by fostering an active citizenship aligned with the public spirited institutions, networks, and movements in a genuinely constitutional tradition of politics.

Building a productive relationship with the cultural industries such as media, civil society, public intellectuals, and intermediary institutions and movements can awaken the leaders to their accountability of drafting a social contract, structural reforms, and sustainable peace through a broad rational consensus. Improved relation with the disciplinary bodies helps to weaken the confidence of the spoilers of peace. A rational consensus based on CPA shuns the concept of winner and loser and makes leaders responsible for the benefit they frantically enjoyed from democratic deficit and the condition of

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'Horizontal Mobility' Staves Off Revolt In India

By GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN

Now that President Hosni Mubarak has finally relinquished power in Egypt and the military has taken control, the question in India is whether such a people's revolt can possibly happen there.

The issue has gained enormous significance in the light of how the Egyptian revolution has provoked others in the region, notably Iran, Bahrain, Libya and Morocco, to try to get rid of their own dictatorial regimes. Their aim is democracy — to transfer power to the people. What is a more pertinent point there is corruption. The people are tired of seeing dictators plunder their countries of their wealth.

Corruption is also an extremely pressing problem in today's India. It has been in recent years a virtual anarchy in its administration that has even spilled over to its media. The country had two terrible scams recently. During the Commonwealth Games, millions of dollars were taken in kickbacks by corrupt bureaucrats and ministers. Earlier, the allocation of the "2G spectrum" to telecom players also saw huge losses to the state exchequer.

Both financial scandals have shaken the average citizen's trust in the federal government, which is run by a coalition headed by the Congress party, which once boasted of highly virtuous and upright leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhai Patel.

India has a history of financial scams, but it is only now that the media have begun to expose the corrupt, often taking a very bold stand. So, the question then arises, how has India, despite such bad and terribly corrupt governance, been able to keep an Egyptian-style uprising at bay? Here are some facts to ponder.

Although India's growth (close to 7 percent) has been greater than Egypt's, Egypt's per capita monthly income is around \$130, about twice that of India.

Yet, Indians may never see a revolution. The military may never rebel. India's billion-plus people may never take to the streets to topple the government. An important reason for this is the country's unflinching democracy that has weathered many violent storms and wars.

The democratic institutions, including the judiciary and the police force, have remained intact for all of the 60-odd years of India's independence. These institutions may be ineffective — or may have been at different times — but they have been extremely tolerant of criticism and opposing voices.

What's more, India's political elite come from different classes, castes and religious groups. We have a Muslim heading Kashmir as the chief minister. We have a low-caste Hindu leading Uttar Pradesh, the most populous Indian state and the second-largest state economy in India (after the western Indian state of Maharashtra whose capital is Mumbai, the nation's financial center). Uttar Pradesh contributes nearly 9 percent of India's total GDP and, by

There are other vital differences between India and Egypt. India's impressive growth rate even in the starkest period of the global economic recession did not admittedly bring about considerable development or significant rise in individual financial status.

virtue of its population, sends more representatives to the federal parliament, thus enjoying the power to have a decisive say in the making and unmaking of a government.

As one economist wrote: "This contrasts with a banana republic where the ruling coterie hang together. Every group member knows that together they are like a bunch of bananas; if you break free, you get skinned. By contrast, India is probably a banana-peel republic: its rulers are all over the place, slipping and sliding, from post to post, promise to promise."

There are other vital differences between India and Egypt. India's impressive growth rate even in the starkest period of the global economic recession did not admittedly bring about considerable development or significant rise in individual financial status. About 50 percent of Indians still live below the poverty level, going hungry every night.

Yet, there has been remarkable

horizontal mobility. Far, far more Indians than Egyptians are looking out and on the move for jobs, and are perfectly willing to travel and set up home hundreds of miles away from where they grew up, places where their parents would never have dreamed of migrating. There may not have been any important vertical mobility, but horizontal movement, indeed a lot.

In fact, India is gigantic pot of migration. Its men and women are always on the move. More than 5 million train tickets are sold every year. Men and women travel to work or go home from work or visit parents in their ancestral villages or towns or cities.

With such horizontal mobility — from a village/town to a city or from a farm to a factory — dreams are fulfilled, ambitions realized. Such mobility reduces frustration so that times do not look as bad they really are.

On the other hand, Egypt is a society where not much horizontal movement has taken place. The country's rural population has remained a constant 56 percent for many decades, while India's has diminished from about 80 percent in the 1960s to about 70 percent today.

Millions have left their villages and agriculture and gone to cities and to a relatively more comfortable existence. India's informal sector absorbs most of those who come from the countryside. Egypt's informal sector is way behind in this; 31 percent of its workforce is employed in the now stagnating public sector, one cause for the rising joblessness.

India has also afforded wonderful opportunities for self-employment, and some of the poorest regions have seen this happen, thanks to bank loans. Women in particular have benefited from this: They have set up small shops or tailoring units catering to the needs of their own small communities. A steady source of income is ensured. This is missing in Egypt.

Finally, Indians are an enormously tolerant race. They are willing to wait and watch. But a point could come when the thread snaps.

Gautaman Bhaskaran is a Chennai, India-based author and journalist. The Japan Times Online

Human Rabies

-By BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD



Human rabies which is seen frequently in Nepal in comparison to Western countries is a fatal illness. Eighty percent of the world human rabies (annually about 30,000 cases) is found in our part of the world, South Asia. Rabies is caused by a virus and is transmitted in the saliva by the bite of rabid animals. In Nepal the most commonly infected animal that transmits rabies to humans are dogs. Cats come in a distant second in this transmission process basically because we don't have so many cats around. Whoever said our capital should be renamed Dogmandu instead of Kathmandu had the right idea, in terms of rabies anyway.

People hypothesize that monkeys also transmit rabies, but in reality the **However the reason why the virus has not been detected from a monkey may be because we do not look for this virus carefully enough in a proper, scientific manner as monkeys are certainly suitable hosts for the virus.**

rabies virus has not been detected from a monkey in our part of the world. However the reason why the virus has not been detected from a monkey may be because we do not look for this virus carefully enough in a proper, scientific manner as monkeys are certainly suitable hosts for the virus. Another theory is that the monkeys are so smart that they do not let a rabid dog bite them as they are too quick for the dog.

Children are especially vulnerable to rabies simply because they may be bitten or nicked by a rabid dog and not mention this to anyone. This may be fatal because after a usual incubation period of about a week to 2 months, the child may come down with rabies. It is clear that rabies is under diagnosed in the developing world because the history amazingly, may be unclear or even forgotten. And not all rabies illness presents with the full manifestations of hydrophobia (fear of water) and terror stricken behaviour that is depicted in movies. Add to that the

fact that ours (including the medical community) is a non documenting society!

So what can be done? Of course, prevention. Taking care of stray dogs would be a great idea, but increasingly this undertaking seems to lack political will. So the second best thing is to consider being properly vaccinated with human rabies vaccines which are available (at a price) especially around Teku Hospital area in Kathmandu. In the case of a bite regardless of prior (pre exposure) vaccination, the wound needs to be properly cleaned daily with liquid iodine or soap and water as the virus hangs

around the site of bite for a long time. A "top off" shot or two to boost the immunity will be required even if prior vaccinations have been taken. If prior vaccinations have not been taken and especially if the bite is severe, then immunoglobulin (a kind of "prompt response" medicine) needs to be administered. Again in the Teku Hospital area and in some clinics, this immunoglobulin may be available; but the supply is erratic. Hence "pre exposure" vaccination is best. Luckily after a bite by a potentially rabid animal, the Nepali government does usually administer rabies vaccination for free at Teku Hospital. ■



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