



OPINION:
Dipak Gyawali



INTERVIEW:
Dr. Dinesh Chandra Devkota



FACE TO FACE:
Kul Man Ghising

New

SPOTLIGHT

Feb-08-21, 2013

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From The Editor

Nepal has seen many ups and downs in its six decades of politics. However, the rise of communist power in the northern border of the world's largest democracy is the latest matter of interest. Nepal's current reality is that it is influenced by the communist politics. From being just an insignificant political force in the 1950s, the communists have turned out to be the major powers in today's Nepal. Had they stood together, they could easily outmatch the liberal democrats. In the context of the recent convention of UCPN-Maoist, we have decided to look at the rise of communist forces in Nepal and their contradictions within as the cover story for this issue. Nepal's prolonged political crisis has no immediate solution at all. As ruling and opposition political parties are moving towards more confrontation, the idea of formation of a neutral government under the leadership of incumbent or retired judges is also being floated. Although many see this is the best option to settle the current political impasse, it is not a sure way out. In case the chief justice of the Supreme Court is appointed to lead the caretaker government, it will have implications on separations of power. This is another political story we have looked into. Besides these, hygiene has also found a place in it.

Keshab

Keshab Poudel
Editor



Cover Story: POLITICS: All Over Red

7



PERSPECTIVE: Hari Ram Koirala



NEPAL ECONOMY: Free Fall

15

NEWSNOTES

2

BUSINESS BRIEF

3

OPINION: Dipak Gyawali

4

COMMENTARY: Yubaraj Ghimire

6

ARTICLE: Nishesh Dhungana

10

GREAT GAME : Neighboring Concerns

11

INTERVIEW: Dr. Dinesh Chandra Devkota

12

POLITICS: Justice To New Govt?

13

VIEWPOINT: Batu Upadhyay

14

BOOKWORM: Bipin Adhikari

16

DELHI DIARY: Abijit Sharma

18

HAND WASHING: A Life Saver

19

FACE TO FACE: KUL MAN GHISING

20

TOURISM : Danny Garcia

23

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

24

TRENDS: Aditi Aryal/Bidushi Adhikari

26

ENTERTAINMENT

27

HEALTH: Buddha Basnyat, Md

28

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Solidarity Day Marked

The Pakistan Embassy observed a Kashmiri Solidarity Day by organizing a talk program in the Embassy premises. Pakistan's ambassador to Nepal Arshed Saud Khosa said Pakistan wants a long lasting peace in the region. He said that Kashmir dispute remains a stumbling block for peace. He said the right to self determination of Pakistani people should be respected.

In his statement, Ambassador of



Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal Khosa (Right) addressing programme

Book Launched

German Ambassador to Nepal Frank Meyke launched a book on Regional Environmental Issues: Water and Disaster Management. Co-edited by T. Delinic and Nischal Nath Pandey, the book described the regional environmental issues in South Asia. Jointly published by Center for South Asian Studies and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, this is a book which also highlights the importance of regional cooperation to settle the issue.

United Nations Commends Work On Toilets

The United Nations recently congratulated the government of Nepal as it took another step toward putting a toilet in every household and every public school and institution in a ceremony attended by the Prime Minister, top government officials and partners.

The disposal of human waste is a critical issue for Nepal, where in 1980 only 3 per cent of homes had sanitary facilities and the majority of the population, even in urban areas practiced open defecation, considered the "most dangerous form of sanitation" for its deadly effect children, women and the community.

"The power of whole communities is to take a collective decision to regain their pride and dignity by stopping open defecation and cleaning up their immediate living environments," said Hanaa Singer, UNICEF Nepal

Pakistan to Nepal Khosa said that Pakistan is ready to go for all peaceful means and stated that no peace is possible without settlement Kashmir dispute. Since 1990, Pakistan has

been observing February 5 as a Kashmir Solidarity Day.

Representative.

Stone Exchange Symbolizes Ties With Israel

Stones from the region of the highest point on Earth, Mount Everest of Nepal, were sent to Israel on Monday, 28 January 2013. Similar stones from the lowest point on Earth, the Dead Sea in Israel, are expected to arrive in Nepal in a sooner date. These stones will be established as monuments at the Dead Sea and at the Everest Base Camp respectively and will symbolize long and fruitful friendship between Nepal and Israel.

It will also promote these natural heritage sites apart from encouraging more people to visit the regions and to promote internal as well as international tourism, states a press release issued by the Israel Embassy in Nepal.

The stones from the Everest Base Camp were brought to Kathmandu by Bishnu Basnet, the guide from the Swiss Rafting and Trekking Expedition (P) Ltd.

'Health For Life' Launched

The Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) launched "Health for Life," an \$18 million, five-year health systems and maternal, newborn, child health and family planning program. Health for Life builds on accomplishments gained from the MOHP Nepal Health Sector

Programme II and USAID/Nepal's health sector investments to date. The program aims to strengthen the Government of Nepal's capacity to plan, manage and deliver high quality and equitable family planning, maternal, newborn and child health services.

The USAID Deputy Mission Director, Sheila Lutjens, affirmed USAID's shifting focus, across all of its sector programs, to building capacity and effective systems for local governance, particularly at the district level.

Clean Up Campaign

European Union's concern for the environment: Dr. Alexander Spachis, Ambassador, Head of the European Union Delegation to Nepal joins school children from Gongabu in the ongoing public awareness campaign calling on the locals and people at large to stop polluting the rivers. The awareness march took place Saturday, 2nd Feb along the Bishnumati corridor in Gongabu as part of the Bishnumati clean-up campaign being launched jointly by the Rotary International, District 3292, Common Concern Nepal, the police and army.

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Madanjeet Singh Passes Away

Well known author, painter and acclaimed photographer Madanjeet Singh has passed away in his house in Southern France on Jan. 6th. Singh was



UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and Founder of South Asia Foundation (SAF). He was also India's Ambassador to many countries. Author of many bestsellers including the classic "Himalayan Art", Singh was a secular humanist and a Nehruvian who contributed a lot to publicizing the cultural richness not only of India but the entire South Asian sub-continent. Born in Lahore on April 26, 1924, Madanjeet Singh established the SAF which now has various institutions of excellence that provides scholarships to needy students in diverse fields ranging from fine arts to journalism. Several prominent personalities in the region have expressed shock and sadness over Singh's death. ■

"I Was Forced To Do Business With Dhirendra Shah"

BINOD K. CHAUDHARY
President, Chaudhary Group

According to your autobiography, former Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa helped you and the Chaudhary group a lot, right?

The relationship with Surya Bahadur Thapa dates back to my father's time and continues till now. During his political journey, we tried to fulfill all his expectations that he had with us. But in many instances, the closeness with him became our weakness, rather than our strength. After the 2036/37 elections, he was removed from power. The government that was formed afterwards was very much against him and we also had to deal with the repercussions. Our big projects were kept on hold. So we had both good and bad sides of the relationship. But in him, there was no change in attitude towards us.

Reading your book feels like you are an expert in dealing with political changes and opportunities. Like in the Panchayat time, you were close to Dhirendra Shah, later you became close to Surya Bahadur Thapa and, after democracy, you maintained closeness with UML. Right?

You can see this from another angle as well. Time forces people to maintain closeness. I had to do business with Dhirendra due to the need of that time. Rather than making profits from the investment, he gave me protection. Afterwards, the same security brought troubles. I was asked to give my industry to Golcha. One thing that no one should forget is that businessmen have relationship with everyone. So, rather than saying I used them, you have to analyze how time compels people to do things.

The ten year insurgency of Maoists made the whole economy suffer. But it didn't have much impact on the Chaudhary Group. Is that due to your some special relations with Maoists?

You can call this our good luck, or the Maoists' way of handling an industrial house. It's not that we were completely trouble-free as well. CG Gram's Executive Director was kidnapped for 15 days. Still, the fact that they didn't have much negative feelings towards us is true.

In your life story you have stated that, in Apollo Steels, there was partnership with Dhirendra and later Prekshya asked for her shares. In the Wai-Wai Noodles, which was established in 2040 B.S., didn't the Durbar ask for its shares?

It's not that you have to have partnership on everything with the Royals. We hadn't given partnership in all our industries to the Durbar. This was only the case in a few protected and monopoly sectors. So, in the case of Wai-Wai, there was no partnership with the Royals.

King Gyanendra gave you a tag of either a clever businessman or crook?

I think his expressions are mixed. I don't think he has said clever about me in a positive way. And there is no room to call me a crook. As he himself has done business, he understands many of the business games.



Himalayan Bank Goes For NanoSwitch

OMA Emirates, a leading business solution provider in the Middle East, and the Himalayan Bank have joined hands to modernize the financial transactions of the bank.

"As one of the most prominent banks in Nepal, we have an ongoing need to modernize our banking system and lead the way for other financial institutions," said Ashoke SJB Rana, CEO, Himalayan Bank Ltd.



The pioneer of payment solutions of the Middle East has successfully completed the NanoSwitch for Himalayan Bank. NanoSwitch is a fully integrated banking Switch and Card Management System (CMS). This solution is capable of managing ATM and POS devices and acts as the central interface for all payments and banking activities.

"With our in-house team of qualified and creative software developers, we provided a full-fledged, flexible system that takes cognizance of the entire issuance and acquiring requirements of Himalayan Bank," said Niranj Sangal, the group CEO, OMA Emirates.

WB Country Director Makes Farewell Call With PM

The World Bank Country Director for Nepal and Bangladesh, Ellen Goldstein, held a farewell meeting with Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai recently. Goldstein is completing her tenure in South Asia and has recently been appointed as the World Bank's Country Director for South East Europe.

Goldstein also called on Finance Minister Barsha Man Pun and senior Government officials including the Chief Secretary, Secretary, Ministry of Finance; Secretary, PMO; and the Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank. The World Bank Country Manager for Nepal, Tahseen Sayed, was present at the meetings.

Goldstein's successor will take up office in May 2013. Until then, Salman Zaheer, Director for Regional Integration, South Asia Region, World Bank, will act as the Bank's Country Director for Nepal and Bangladesh.

DFID Publishes Strategies To Tackle Graft, Fraud

For the first time, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has published specific strategies on how it will tackle the threat of endemic corruption, fraud or misuse of public funds in the 29 priority countries it works in, including Nepal.

The strategies outline the specific actions Britain will take in Nepal to help combat corruption and help the people of Nepal to develop their economy, hold the Government to account and grow their way out of poverty.

The UK's International Development Secretary Justine Greening said: "When corruption happens in developing countries, it is the very poorest people in our world who foot the bill. Corruption is a deadweight which is holding countries and their people back."

Bridge Built With UK Govt Support

A bridge built with support from the UK Government will safely link thousands of isolated communities in Sankhuwasabha District in Eastern Nepal for the first time. The bridge, completed on 29th January, is set to bring an economic boost to families in one of Nepal's most remote regions, according to a press release issued by the British Embassy.

The 120m steel truss bridge - the longest of its type in Nepal - will connect 280km of roads already built in the area, the region's only airport and a landmark hydro-electric power project. It will ensure the flow of trade and goods to the east of the country bringing business, tourism and jobs so the people living around Tumlingtar can work themselves out of poverty. ■

(Excerpts based on the interview from Nepal News magazine)



Dalits And The Irrelevant Federal Debate

By DIPAK GYAWALI

The half-baked notion of federalism proved fatal to the late Constituent Assembly and is giving all national political parties painful indigestion with no end in sight to their agony. Its impact on the Dalit community, which (depending on how one counts) could be almost one in every five Nepali, has the added misery of hindsight, the realization that federalism could well be a huge political fraud. Dalit voice is still marginal in New Nepal and no milestone event such as the Madhesi Gaur massacre or east and west Nepal closures by other ethnic groups brings home their plight to national attention. When the commission formed to recommend a federal structure fractured and proposed a "virtual" federation for them that would have no geographic ground reality, the federal debate was exposed for its fake inclusiveness.

In recent public discussions at the Social Science Baha and at the International Commission for Dalit Rights, Prof. Steven Folmar of Wake Forest University argued clearly that Dalits cannot organize around any of the current political debating points that characterize federalism: they are ethnically the same as their high caste neighbours, speak the same language and are members of the same religion, unlike Janjatis, Madhesis or Muslims who can organize along those distinct fault lines. Their plight, however, is far worse, more chronic and entrenched, because even Janjatis and Madhesis practice virulent untouchability against Dalits in their vicinity.

For those concerned with social justice, there is one more reason to be worried about it: because of the politics of hate and ethnic confrontation promoted by the federal debate, there is a distinct backsliding with Dalit rights since 2006. Village Dalits report that high castes and Janjatis who had accepted their participation in public functions since the Panchayat reforms of 1962 have begun to withdraw: ecumenism is losing ground to communalism. When pressed to name the most important index of caste freedom that a righteous government of Nepal might implement, Prof. Folmar reluctantly (natural for an anthropologist) cited two: land ownership and hate-related violence against Dalits. While we have seen some improvement in land ownership and professional upward mobility (thanks mainly to unplanned consequences of remittances and urbanization, especially the anonymity and jobs provided by the latter), violent discrimination, especially when it comes to water access, shows a disturbing re-emergence.

It is worth reflecting on this chronic problem and how Nepali society may move towards its eradication. Any South Asian Hindu who visits the Hindu enclave of Bali in Indonesia cannot but be struck by the Hinduism practiced there: there is caste but no untouchability, and the majority have no problem

stating that they are Shudra but will readily recite the Gayatri mantra, something forbidden in South Asia. In South Asia, the great leap backward with *Varna* (meant to be individual psychological tendencies indicating proclivities or affinity for particular actions and hence profession) sliding to *Chhuwachhut* (untouchability) and *Jaat* (birth-determined) accelerated with the violent Gaznavite invasion of the 11th Century and what followed. Tantrik Hinduism and Buddhism, certainly more experimental and egalitarian than their Shivaite or Vaishnavite non-monastic counterparts, took a backseat after the destruction of Nalanda University and the fleeing of its professors to Tibet.

Nepal felt the impact two centuries later with the Muslim conquest of Simraungarh and the takeover of more egalitarian Lichhavi Kathmandu by its fleeing Carnatic mercenaries who set up the Malla dynasty that brought in more caste-ridden features. With Bengali Sultan Shamshuddin's marauding loot of Kathmandu and the desecration of Pashupati temple among

others, the restoration was religiously more inward-looking, conservative and afraid of outside engagement. It is interesting to note that remnants of Tantrik egalitarianism can still be seen in Kathmandu Valley's Ashtamatrika and Dasmahavidya temples whose priests are Dalits.

In more modern times, it was Jung Bahadur's regressive Mulki Ain of 1852 enacted after his

landmark trip to England that introduced legally draconian punishments for infringing caste rules. It proved that either he understood nothing of the challenges wrought by industrial capitalism well on its way to conquering the globe, or that he understood it too well and decided to surrender to it externally while keeping a more regressive grip internally. It also continued the earlier practice of enslaving the conquered, the Mallas having forced the Lichhavis to menial jobs, and the Rana clan then forcing the whole linguistic group of highly diverse and fractured Newars with their own high and low castes onto a lower status. Shukra Raj Shastri, one of our four original martyrs, was hanged by the Ranas, less for his anti-Rana activities and more for being a reformist Arya Samajist. (If one reads what would now be called Sukra Raj's PhD thesis on the Vedanta written in Varanasi, one is struck by his hagiographic praise of Juddha Sumshere in his preface for the reforms and industrialization initiated by the Rana autocrat, who subsequently hanged him a few years later!).

It will sound sacrilegious to say so in these "politically correct" Loktantrick times, but it took the Panchayat and King Mahendra's reform of the Mulki Ain in 1962 to get rid of Jung Bahadur's draconian anti-Dalit laws. And it is also worth recalling that a Hira Lal Bishwakarma enjoyed more de facto powers in the Panchayat than any Dalit leader subsequently



that were often promoted by parties for tokenism. Ironic indeed it is, but the town of Hetauda would not be enjoying its drinking water system today but for this Dalit minister who on-the-spot forced the all-powerful Forest Ministry to de-notify forested land above the town for this purpose. Some three years after Mahendra's Mulki Ain reforms, the Royal Nepal Army formally abolished the position of *bhangche*, a Brahmin cook, and introduced rotational cooking duties by all castes. These reforms have done more in substance to remove the scourge of untouchability than all of the grandstanding verbosity of self-styled radical revolutionaries of Loktantra since then.

Party-beholden intellectuals today like to argue that these Panchayat reforms did not go far enough, that it did not criminalize untouchability. They might like to watch Steven Spielberg's acclaimed movie *Lincoln*, especially a Mahabharatesque moment therein when Thaddeus Stevens, the Republican abolitionist leader of the US Congress leading the fight for the 13th Amendment to the US constitution has to moderate his previous position of absolute racial equality and to argue that the proposed amendment only meant "all men are equal before the law". Had that bit of pragmatic "regression" in a perfectly democratic polity not been done, the US might not have remained united in egalitarianism as we know it today. Pragmatic reforms, indeed, achieve more than romantic revolutionary rhetoric.

To fight untouchability, one must first understand where it comes from. If Bali has *varna* but no *chhuwachhut*, how and where did South Asia go wrong? Vivekananda says it started with fear and shrinking of Hindu society when they invented the word *Mlechchha* to segregate themselves from outsiders instead of engaging with them. Their cooking pot became the deity that replaced internal purity of *chitta* (mind/soul) with the fetishism of external purification rites. While all Yoga schools prescribe bodily and dietary purification rules and exercises as a prelude to mental purification, latter-day Brahminism remained fossilized in mere preliminary rituals and unable to rise to higher spiritual levels. Purity is an obsessive fetish in Hinduism and this writer remembers his grandmother's generation avoiding food touched by him because he had not undergone purification rites. There are *swayampaki* Brahmins who will not eat food cooked or touched by anyone else including their wives! Brahminical untouchability applies not only to Dalits!

What is the way out? Untouchability certainly cannot be removed by the politics of hate preached by the Leninists or the opportunism of the proselytizers, for it will only encourage a digging-in of the heels. Indeed, as experiences in India's Kerala and other states have shown, conversion to other religions may provide some short-term solace to the insulted but does not end untouchability. An American researcher friend is not alone in his experiences he recounts from Kerala where his Christian research assistant would not drink water from the house of another Christian presumably because the latter belonged to a lower caste of Christians! Untouchability will go once Brahmins and the upper castes stop practicing it, not just when Dalits rile and rant against it but engage in untouchability among Dalit groups themselves. For that, what is required is a strengthening of reform movements within Hinduism, and an engagement with such movements by the Dalit activists. ■



SINGLE WOMEN

Light On Their Plight

A two-day international conference on single (widowed) women highlighted their plight

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when a group of activists have been staging demonstrations under the Occupy Baluwatar campaign, raising the issue of growing incidents of domestic violence against women, an international conference on single women discussed the ways to prevent violence committed in Nepalese Society.

Organized by Human Rights for Women and Single Women Group (WHR), the program brought the participation of more than 200 women representing 17 countries of the region. According to the recent census report, there are about 500,000 single women in Nepal and globally there are 245 million widows. According to the Census Report, out of them, 67 percent Nepalese widowed are aged between 20-25.

This showed a majority of single women in Nepal are younger in age. Out of these women, 89 percent are illiterate and only 11 percent literate.

"There is reason behind this. In some communities, many young girls are married before their first menstruation. If her husband dies of some causes, the young girl becomes a widow," said Lily Thapa, chairperson of WHR. "One of the aims of the international conference is to raise the issue of discrimination and provide the legal rights and justice to the single women. The resolution passed by the conference will be sent to the 57th general convention of United Nations."

Like in other parts of the world, a woman is considered worthless and polluted in Nepal once she becomes a widow. Along with shock and trauma of losing husband, widowhood also increases sexual vulnerability and discrimination.

For more than a decade, WHR has been providing a safe place for widows in Nepal and Lily Thapa is raising the voice and protecting the women with much needed legal advice and providing the skills training to earn money.

Holding the international conference, WHR has also shown that it is capable enough to take issue globally.

A Revolutionary's Transformation

By YUBARAJ GHIMIRE



If Pushpa Kamal Dahal is to be trusted in his latest assessment, Nepal is no more the 'semi-colony' post Sugauli treaty that its sovereignty is safe and it conducts its business or the state affairs without outside interference. He wants Nepal to be a rich country now so that it commands respect from all over the world. He says only the rich countries are respected by others. But Prachanda fumbled once again as he spoke to the media in Hetauda. "We all had agreed to make Sushil Koirala the Prime Minister, but it seems external forces got active and we could not implement that agreement." Prachanda knows his comrades still trust in what he tells them. Any lie or truth spoken to outsiders will be taken by them as a 'tactical statement; for the success of the 'revolution'.

But the Party national convention that took place after 21 years—first time in an open democratic atmosphere—has exposed Prachanda to the hilt; His credibility is at its lowest ebb. And Prachanda is fast transforming into an 'agent of hegemonic forces' (Read India) from a 'revolutionary', an image that he built during the decade long conflict at the cost of 16,000 precious human lives. His political document suggesting that Party shed anti-Indianism as its long pursued policy was not only challenged by some stalwarts like Deputy Prime Minister and Vice Chairman Narayan Kaji Shrestha, but also created ideological crisis for its delegates who were indoctrinated to be anti-Indian to be revolutionary and a communist. The issue got shelved for the moment as Prachanda sensed the anger among delegates, but that has given an opportunity to Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists a missile to attack the Prachanda led Party as a pro-India outfit.

Prachanda's suggestion that any border dispute that remains unresolved be addressed through referendum brought him into further controversy. A border dispute involves at least one or more countries, and border or territory is directly linked with nationalism. Which other country had Prachanda in mind when he said such disputes be settled through referendum? The Only country that Nepal's border disputes remain unsettled is India. Prachanda, by S D Muni's revelation had given in writing to India as back as in June 2002 that he would not go against India's major interests. Prachanda's political document presented in the Hetaunda conclave saw that commitment being honored at least from his side, but all that seems to take a heavy toll on the image and credibility of the UCPN-M in general and

Prachanda's in particular.

Will that mean post Hetaunda Maoist Party will lose its clout in national politics? Maoists have become stronger over the years, especially after their joining the peace process in 2006, partly because of its organizational strength, and partly because of total surrender by the major pro democracy parties like the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML). The later two parties have been campaigning in different parts of the country seeking ouster of Baburam Bhattarai as the Prime Minister.

But the duo has not shown the courage to review their political policies and their blindly following the Maoists agenda for the past six years. In other words, these parties own Maoist agenda but have expressed reservation to supporting the Maoist leadership any more. Until and unless they review their own policy and the basis of their support to the Maoists six years ago, people are unlikely to support any movement that also seeks to catapult them to power,

Republic, secularism and federalism were the agenda that the UML and the NC borrowed from Maoists. The people had not been given a chance to be party to this switch as the NC and the UML succumbed to Maoists pressure that they would continue to be seen as regressive forces and supporter of the Monarchy if they did not embrace these radical changes. NC and UML would not regain peoples support until and until they explain where they differ with the Maoists. If they fail, Kamal Thapa's Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal and not the NC and the UML would emerge as the alternative to the Maoists Party in the days to come if the key forces that dominated the 1990 constitution tried to move away from that constitution and its fundamental values. UCPN-M has tried to emerge as the key pro-India force, but failed to don the cap of nationalism and democracy. ■



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POLITICS

All Over Red

Usual or unusual, the rise of radical communist ideology all over Nepal is a visible reality. Although the Nepalese launched several political struggles for instituting a liberal political system since the 1950s, they have given birth to a radical behavior like never before

GESHAB POUDEL

Never before in any political moment of Nepal was the closest border city of Hetauda covered by red flags, with sickles and hammer, so much and slogan of revolution chanted by the followers of radical communists so loud. One of the feathers in the red cap, however, was the declaration by the radical communist leaders to transform their party to a liberal party, giving up the Maoist and Leninist brand of orthodox communism.

The red face of Hetauda, a tiny city 60 miles south of the capital and just twenty miles north of the Indian border across which lied the Maoist infested India's two states Jharkhand and Bihar, looked very unusual.

Nepal's UCPN-Maoist leaders and cadres held their long overdue 7th general convention with such a fanfare, hanging the pictures of Lenin, Stalin and Mao all over the city. It is the first time in 21 years that the ruling Maoist held their general convention, and the first time since they joined the peace process.

Although UCPN-Maoist leaders

declared that the time had come for them to chart a new course by transforming their party from orthodox radical communist to a moderate party, the cadres continued to enjoy chanting the slogan of revolution under the banner of Mao, Lenin and Stalin.

"I don't think any communist brand of politics will emerge here. At a time when even communist China has discarded Maoism, it is impossible for Nepal's ruling Maoist party to carry on with it. Their expression and commitment to liberal democracy is a testimony to the change," said professor Dr. Lok Raj Baral. "Everyone needs to accept the reality of Nepal, where people are actively involved in the agitation, hoping to establish a liberal system, not for any authoritarianism."

During the convention, UCPN-Maoist leaders Prachanda and prime minister Baburam Bhattarai proposed transformation of the party, but an overwhelming number of party cadres, who were trained and raised in the

orthodox ways of communism, resisted them. UCPN-Maoist leader Ram Karki registered a motion against Prachanda and Bhattarai's proposal. Even the current deputy prime minister and foreign minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha tabled a proposal demanding inclusion of the words accusing India as a hegemonic power interfering in Nepal's internal politics.

UCPN-Maoist leader Shrestha and Karki, who come from different schooling, seem to be aware about the voices of majority of party workers. Their efforts are to cash in on the voices of dissension.

Despite Maoist claims for liberalism, they have not found any time to pay tribute to the philosophy propounded by Mahatma Gandhi or liberal democrat Jawaharlal Nehru, Radha Krishnan or Jaya Prakash Narayan. Hetauda echoed with the philosophies and words of Lenin, Stalin and Mao. For a majority of UCPN-Maoist leaders and cadres, the Mantra of Mao, Stalin and Lenin is real



UCPN-Maoist 7th National Congress of Unity

and other democratic ideals are just fake. They don't spare time to speak about Jyoti Basu and Nambudaripad of India.

Along with tens of thousands of Maoist cadres and sympathizers, leaders of Democratic Party of Nepal and India listened to the story of revolution and praise for Maoist party from representatives coming from various communist countries, including Cuba and North Korea.

Leading a coalition government with Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha, UCPN-Maoist used all government resources to make Hetauda completely a red fort.

Street Under Red Flag

At a time when UCPN-Maoist, a major communist outfit having a record of waging a people's war, is running the country in alliance with moderate regional parties of the southern plain and holding its convention, Nepali Congress, the main opposition democratic party, is in alliance with CPN-UML and United People's Front, a radical communist outfit to pull down the government.

"Nobody can accept communism now. Not even our international friends. UCPN-Maoist may have some communist hangover. However, CPN-UML has transformed itself claiming itself as a liberal democratic party like Nepali Congress," said professor Baral. "The communist brand is outmoded now."

Compared to UCPN-Maoist, CPN-UML, which also initially started its base by taking part in violent Naxal moment, has contested several democratic elections to transform itself as a democratic party. However, it is yet to denounce any communist figures and pronounce the democratic ideals. "A few years ago, it was reported in the media that CPN-UML leaders removed the picture of Lenin, Mao and Stalin when US ambassador visited their headquarters. It indicated that CPN-UML wants red flags to cash the votes."

Although CPN-Maoist, a breakaway faction of UCPN-Maoist led by Mohan Vaidya, called a general strike to denounce the transformation of UCPN-Maoist, the party is said to be in negotiations with Nepali Congress to join the opposition front to launch the agitation.

Radicals All Over

Whatever the decision political leaders take at the top level, the present trend shows that Nepal's politics is dominated by radical communist ideology. Although there is a different attitude in the leadership level, an overwhelming number of people at the grass root level are addicted to ideology of Lenin, Stalin and Mao.

"UCPN-Maoist is no more a communist party. They betrayed the idea of Mao's People's war. It is our duty to carry out the revolution through the People's War," said CPN-Maoist leader Mohan Vaidya. Despite contradictions

within, a number of Nepali young people are indoctrinated by the authoritarian ideology of Lenin, Stalin and Mao.

Considering anti-Indian orientation as a basis of Nepal's nationalism and orthodox communist ideology as a base for political liberalization, Nepal's overall politics is tilting to radical thought. If the last election of Constituent Assembly was any indication, it showed that Nepal's communists had over 60 percent votes compared to 30 percent for Nepali Congress.

Common Orientation

Although Nepal's communist parties are ideologically in bitter relations, they have certain common stands and orientations. With closeness in political ideology and anti-Indian orientation, CPN-UML, CPN-Maoist, United People Forum and UCPN-Maoist share certain commonalities. However, CPN-UML and UCPN-Maoist are now in two different fronts.

Despite sharing some common ideologies, CPN-UML tries to maintain differences with the Maoist. "We have to fight against the authoritarianism of UCPN-Maoist," said CPN-UML leader Jhalnath Khanal. "UCPN-Maoist cannot be trusted for their democratic credentials."

UCPN-Maoist leaders also criticized CPN-UML as a rightist party. "We don't want to be a brother of CPN-UML and we must retain our ideology," said Ram Karki, UCPN-Maoist Politburo member. "Transformation does not mean to give



Maoist Leader Prachanda

up everything and we must retain our ideology."

Maoist watchers, however, say that the general convention will bring in neither a new leadership nor a new political line of the party. There is little curiosity about the results of the Maoist general convention. Dahal will again lead the party and his political document will be endorsed as the party line. The same political line will continue, along with the same faces in the party leadership.

It appears that the party will bring some changes in the party organization after the general convention. It will become mass-based, rather than cadre-based. In the words of leftist analyst Mumaram Khanal, the ruling Maoists will convert formally into a parliamentary party after the general convention.

In the words of CPN-Maoist leader Mohan Vaidya Kiran, UCPN-Maoist has turned into another CPN-UML giving up all the earlier political stand. "We are the only nationalist and communist party of the country now," said Vaidya.

Like all other political ideologies, the communist ideology entered Nepal from India. Nepal's communist leaders learnt from the south. The first generation of Nepalese communists was ideologically stronger than the present lot. However, the Nepalese communists, groomed in anti-Indian planks, are cashing in on the patriotic feelings of Nepalese people, than any communist ideology. This is retained by foreign minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha.

Despite their common stand in ideology, radical thoughts and anti-Indian felling, Nepalese communist has

history of split and division more than any other liberal democratic party. The rift in Nepalese communist movement that began after the 1960 fourth convention still continues. Communist parties split several times. There are a dozen communist parties now, along with CPN-UML, UCPN-Maoist and CPN-Maoist.

With radicalization of Nepalese communist movement, the liberal communists were wiped out. Moderate Pushpa Lal group was often beaten by Mohan Bikram school of thought. Even today's radicals Prachanda, Baburam and Vaidya come from Mohan Bikram schooling.

Along with differences in the communist front, there is so much common in interest at the grass root level and professional levels. The difference at the political level doesn't stop them to stand jointly against its arch rival Nepali Congress and other parties.

For instance, all the communist sympathizers and communists stand together at the professional level at elections. The recently held elections of Nepal Bar Association are an example where there is a clear demarcation between communist and democrats. Nepal Teachers Association, University Teachers Association, and Civil Servants Association are other such forums. Similar situation is in the elections of Nepal Medical Association and Nepal Engineering Association, Nepal Federation for Journalists, Federation of Non-governmental organizations.

Is red communism rising in a small corridor north of India, the world's most populous democratic country? If the present political trend in Nepal is any indication, it seems that there is the rise of red communists all over Nepal.

From centuries, all walks of life in Nepal remained highly influenced by the ideas and ideologies dominant in the southern neighbour. As the ideology of communism is spreading all over Nepal, the traces of political liberalism, religious and culture values inherited from the south are now vanishing.



Maoist Cadres

UCPN(Maoists) and Pro-Parliamentary Parties Compatibility or Confrontation?



By NISHESH DHUNGANA

It is natural to see UCPN Maoists' convention, held last week at Hetuada, drawing widest possible attention both inside and outside the country as one organized obviously after an interval of 21 years in an open atmosphere and at a time when Nepal is already a Republic. It was so also because, over the years, beginning from 1996, the party had engaged itself in waging a war against the state with the goal to attain people's democracy through people's army and other revolutionary means, in its words, resulting apparently in huge loss of men and materials for over a decade.

It is where the key to, or the main purpose behind, the excessive attention upon the present Maoist convention lies. In other words it is none other than the national, regional and global concern as well, over the fact whether the UCPN(Maoists), or at the least this wing of the party, has really, mentally and behaviorally as well, prepared itself to adopt peaceful, democratic and constitutional means of political change and social and economic transformation of the country, not in rhetoric alone, as is believed so far, but convincingly in practice indeed in days to come after the convention.

That concern, to be earnest, appears becoming all the more relevant this time looking at how the Maoists have managed to stay in power, leading the government as well, over the last eight months even after the dissolution of the constituent assembly and legislative-parliament, defying apparently even the status of a already "relieved or care taker prime minister" and the President's justified role to derive a consensus government genuinely under the Interim Constitution.

Looking back it is really difficult to assess at this time the ultimate fate of the Maoist war, had there not been really sharp differences between the Royal regime and the Parliamentary parties in 2005 and India's good offices prevailed in the form of popularly known 12-point Understanding between the old Maoist party and the Parliamentary parties in 2006.

In the light of those facts and background, the UCPN Maoist convention, it is observed, has multiple relevance, particularly so in the context of the current two developments. Namely,

one, dissolution of the 601-member Constituent Assembly, where the party through elections had succeeded to secure largest number of seats, and through which it was designing to obtain a Constitution largely based on its revolution-time agenda. Two, the party has already faced the fate of split under the leadership of Mohan Vaidya 'Kiran', who seems bent upon charging the mother party leadership for surrendering the people's army and the arms as well to the state before succeeding to give a Constitution to the peoples on revolutionary lines as promised during the war.

Against the background, it sounds logical when the convention is looked upon highly as really a testing time both for the future course of the party and appeal of the top leadership, looking at it also both from the Mohan Vaidya led party's and Pro-Parliamentary parties' point of view. This is because Vaidya led



party would naturally expect that the majority of convention members would effectively press upon the leadership to realize the blunders made already in the past and create environment to come closer to it in terms of consolidating earlier revolutionary goals, even if not under the same platform and banner for the time being for reason of its own.

In the same vein, it is natural on the part of the pro-parliamentary parties also to expect to see the convention convincingly capable enough to adopt peaceful and constitutional means of social and economic transformation of the state, by credibly shunning the war-time hangovers, tendency to militancy and violence and lip service or strategic commitment to liberal democratic values, only from the utilitarian point view in the changed context.

In the light of above historical facts and analysis, it is encouraging to see, UCPN(Maoists)' thrust, looking at what

they have publicly said and supplied to read so far in connection with the Convention, to begin with, towards realizing the significance of freedom and open society values for Nepal at this time. It is definite such preparedness on their part to mould to liberal faith and conduct alone would help them to increase their acceptance among pro-parliamentary parties in and outside the country as partners of election to Constituent Assembly and Constitution drafting process at the earliest while speaking in the current national context.

On the other hand, it is equally a forgone conclusion in case of present day Nepal that without involving and assuring cooperation from the UCPN(Maoists) neither fair election, constitution making, nor end of present transition will be a practical proposition in real sense of the term.. In other words, this drives home also the point how genuine understanding, based on universal principles of democratic governance among the major political parties, and basically between two major School of Thought in the country, namely, Nepali Congress and UCPN(Maoists) has been so eminent for the overall future of Nepal, provided we are really serious to rescue the nation, what is often called nowadays, from its present journey to a failing or a failed state, largely resulting from criminalization of politics surpassing any time in the past.

To sum up, it is really high time for our entire political parties to earnestly grasp the gravity of the situation in the country at this time in the light of mounting unemployment among youths, their restlessness and frustration arising also out of degree of unaccountability towards the people on the part of even senior political leaders. Nothing will be more dangerous, than underestimating the feelings of the suffering people at large and their right to revolt when state is found excessively negligent to look into their genuine concerns for indefinite period of time in the name of transition or absence of consensus among political parties. Delay any longer on the part of UCPN(Maoists) and pro-parliamentary parties for compatibility will only lead to confrontation among them at the cost of everybody in the nation as a whole. ■

“Plan Holiday Harms Nepal’s Economic Health”

DR. DINESH CHANDRA DEVKOTA

Dr. DINESH CHANDRA DEVKOTA, former vice chairman of National Planning Commission, is not a new name. At a time when the government is preparing the next three-year interim plan, for the year 2013-2016, chairman of CPN-UML affiliated Intellectual Forum, Dr. Devkota spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excerpts:

At a time when a group of people have been floating the idea of a plan holiday, National Planning Commission is now working to prepare the three-year Interim Plan. How do you look at this?

Whatever the political situation may be like, Nepal's economic development process will need to move on. The three-year Interim Plan can help sustain the progress we have made so far. I don't agree that there is a need to have a plan holiday until settling the political issues. I don't care whether it is three years, five years or twenty years plan; political parties need to agree on economic development agenda. In this context, a periodic plan is necessary. I know the country is politically in a very fragile state. But we cannot say to people that you need to wait until we have political stability to have development.

Don't you think there is a need political consensus for such a document?

Of course, there is a need of political consensus on the periodic three-year plan. We have National Development Council, with all the leaders of major political parties as members, which we can use as a forum to find consensus on the development agenda. Every political party has their own ideology and plan but they cannot deny the rights of people to have development. This is the reason the Three-Year Interim Plan is necessary.

Who will work to create the consensus?

The National Planning Commission should work to create the consensus among the major political parties on the three-year plan. The current leaders in the National Planning Commission have to play an important role to bring all

political parties to consensus. Given the current attitude shown by UCPN-Maoist leaders, I don't think they will make any efforts for consensus.

During your tenure, there was controversy too. How did you settle it?

During my tenure as the vice-chairman of the National Planning Commission, we had shown the way to bring consensus in planning. I don't think it is a wise decision to say we will carry out development following the settlement of political agenda. People need development and prosperity all the time. In this context, an interim plan is important. No matter who leads the government and state of political scenario, people need development. There is going to have some solution for this. From coming July, we won't have any plan. If there is no plan, it will affect the whole budget making process. There is no planning, but NPC is distributing selling. If we fail to prepare the three-year periodic plan, the country will face economic crisis along with politics.

Why do we need planning at all?

It is very unfortunate that we have been discussing political agenda for the last 60 years or so, while undermining economic issues. Many countries in Asia which got independence have made big progress in settling their political issues. However, Nepal has been all the time involved in political crisis and economic agenda is rarely a matter of priority. South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand and many other Asian countries had similar economic status in the 1960s to that of Nepal. It is unfortunate that Nepal is now one of poorest countries having nothing to match these countries.

Why should Nepal need to give priority to economic agenda?

If we fail to give priority to economic agenda again, Nepal will go further below the present state. Nepal's two neighbors, China and India, are moving forward at an amazing pace. In Japan, the government has been changing every six months, but their economic progress remains high.



How do you see the implementation side of previous the three year plan?

Along with preparing the plan, there is also the need of building a strong mechanism for implementation. The first three year interim plan prepared following the People's Movement II was unable to make progress. National Planning Commission needs to be apolitical in implementing projects. So many development projects were delayed. Implementation of Sikta River Irrigation project and study of West Seti Hydropower project was not done overnight. It took years to bring these projects to the present shape. They were possible because each of periodic national plan mentioned about them. Other examples are Middle Hill Highway and Kathmandu-Nijgadh Fast Track; these projects were there in all the plans. The only difference is the priority. When we talk about development issues, we must have periodic plans. When we had made efforts to bring the three-year periodic plan, the Maoist party vehemently opposed it.

Why the Interim Plan then?

The planning document is necessary for all times because projection of national growth and country's progress is always necessary. I think even the opposition party needs it. When UCPN-Maoist was in the opposition, they opposed the present three-year interim plan.

For full interview visit
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GREAT GAME

Neighborly Concerns

As activities of Nepal's two neighbors, India and China, intensify, Nepal seems to be entering into a new great game

By A CORRESPONDENT

The security agencies have raised some concerns over the agreement the Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE have entered with Nepal Telecom for installing the next generation network in Nepal. In a note, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) has alerted that "bugged equipment to monitor/intercept any communication carried between India-Nepal and India-Maldives, through this cooperation, cannot be ruled out," writes India's leading news paper, Times of India, quoting sources as saying on its recent issue.

As Indian officialdom is panicking about China's involvement in the telecom sector, Chinese officials ignore Indian activities in Nepal. Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Yang Houlan, who made a farewell call on Nepali Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai, expressed his great appreciation on the strong support from Prime Minister Bhattarai during his tenure. According to Chinese Embassy's website, Yang also said he is full of hope and confidence in the prospects for developing partnership of comprehensive cooperation in the future.

These two statements speak volumes about Nepal's state of relations with India and China. At a time when Deputy Prime Minister Naryan Kazi Shrestha and CPN-Maoist are openly blaming growing Indian meddling in internal political affairs of Nepal and Chinese companies are losing projects one after another, Chinese media and diplomats just ignore this. Yang, who is transferred to another strategically important country, that is, Myanmar, expressed his complete satisfaction with the government.

Chinese Ambassador Yang, who fluently communicates in English and is known for his open diplomacy, will be replaced by new ambassador who can only speak Chinese with a security

background. China seems to be deciding to switch to a closed door diplomacy from Yang's open and transparent one.

During the period of Yang, China was able to boost its diplomatic activities and image in Nepal. However, it has lost some ground in Nepal. Whether in the proposal of Trishuli A augmentation, West Seti Hydropower, Pokhara International Airport or purchasing of Chinese Aircraft, Yang's open diplomacy failed to bring any results. The opposition is so massive that all



Chinese Ambassador Yang Houlan Meeting PM Baburam Bhattarai

Nepalese political forces, irrespective of ideology, joined against these projects.

In Trishuli A Augmentation, the oppositions including Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, CPN-Maoist, RPP, and UCPN-Maoist combined their voices together. Although CPN-Maoist Vaidya faction is reportedly claimed as closer to China, a trade union affiliated with it has been creating troubles in Trishuli A. Interestingly, some senior government officials, who were thrown out for signing the Memorandum of Understanding with Three Georges Company for the construction of West Seti, joined anti-Trishuli A augmentation scheme.

According to Chinese Embassy website, Yang said that he had benefited a lot during his time spent in Nepal. Yang also said he is full of hope and confidence in the prospects for developing partnership of comprehensive cooperation in the future.

Nepal's two neighbors have both competitive and cooperative relations existing in Nepal. Whenever they compete with each other, the trouble for Nepal begins.

"In broader terms, China's core interest is Tibet and recently its commercial interest has also increased," said a former diplomat on condition of anonymity.

India sees Nepal as its exclusive periphery and it has created certain boundary for its own safety. As Nepal government abides by this and China limits its activities, India tolerates it. Once India considers Chinese activities as crossing the limits, it acts accordingly. India allows two Chinese Telecom companies to work in its own country; it sees both the companies as a security threat when they win a project under an international bid in Nepal. Although China is not competing with India in Nepal, China opposes hegemony of India.

As French Journalist and writer Eric S. Margolis writes in his book War at the Top of The world, the country like Nepal has to survive in conflict, competition and cooperation of its two big neighbors. Once they compete, there will be trouble. However, their cooperative nature of relations will bring peace and stability.

"A new Great Game is afoot at the top of the world. The chain of mountain ranges, plateau and valleys that begins in Afghanistan and Kashmir, and then sweeps 2,500 miles (4000 km) across the Indian subcontinent to Burma (now Myanmar), is fast becoming one of the globe's most volatile and dangerous geo-political fault zones."

"Both China and India have been long demonstrating hegemonic behavior toward their smaller neighbors by demanding acceptance of their strategic diktat. As China and India continue to grow stronger militarily and economically, their demands for compliance and cooperation from their smaller neighbors are certain to grow space," said author.

This way or that way, Nepal has been passing through a new great game played by Asia's two major powers. Nepal's position will depend upon how cleverly it protects its interest in establishing the relations of trust with them. ■

POLITICS

Justice To New Govt?

The proposal to form a neutral government under the incumbent chief justice is sparking a new constitutional row

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when the opposition political parties have already rejected a number of proposals forwarded by UCPN-Maoist coalition, another proposal to form a neutral government under the incumbent chief justice, Khil Raj Regmi, is inviting more heated debates.

Following the outright rejection by Nepali Congress and CPN-UML to form a neutral government under a civil society leader, the ruling coalition has moved a proposal to form a government under either a former chief justice or the sitting chief justice. The ruling parties may be mulling handing over the caretaker government to a leader of small parties as the last such option.

Although the appointment of incumbent chief justice is constitutionally controversial, this is emerging as a strong option with the backing of CPN-Maoist and Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum Nepal. If all these parties continue to back this, president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, who has been asking prime minister Baburam Bhattarai to pave the way for a new government, will have to persuade Nepali Congress and CPN-UML.

Since some senior CPN-UML leaders have already made it clear to President Dr. Yadav that they are not rigid on any single option, if the new proposal brings about a political settlement, they will agree on that. Even president Dr. Yadav gave a nod to alternatives to present opposition candidate Sushil Koirala, who has expressed his dissatisfaction with the president.

As UCPN-Maoist led ruling alliance, CPN-Maoist and Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum Nepal stand together on the proposal, it is almost certain that Koirala will be dropped and the option to form a neutral government under the leadership of the incumbent chief justice, former chief justice or leaders of small parties may be possible.

However, the proposition to appoint incumbent chief justice as a caretaker government will badly damage Nepal's three decade long exercise of separation of power.

"I don't understand how a chief justice can lead the government when he has to decide on constitutional issues," said a constitutional lawyer.



NC-UML workers in agitation

However, a powerful section in UCPN-Maoist, including prime minister Baburam Bhattarai, is defending their new proposal.

"We have made enough proposals and Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have to accept our new proposal without any hesitation," said UCPN-Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda.

Although there is a provision in the Bhutanese Constitution to hold the elections by the neutral government led by incumbent chief justice, no democratic country in the region can imagine this. In Bangladesh, there is a provision to form the neutral government under the former judges of supreme court.

As Nepal's state institutions have been in the process of destruction one after another in the last seven years after Maoist joined the mainstream politics, this will finally end the concept of independent judiciary.

Looking at the current political trend,

it indicates that political parties are likely to make consensus on a neutral government under a leadership of former chief justice or incumbent chief justice. UCPN-Maoist and ruling alliance have already made it clear that an agreement for neutral government led by an independent person will be likely. Along with Samyukt Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha, UCPN-Maoist, CPN-Maoist and Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum Nepal also gave a nod for neutral government opposing Nepali Congress and CPN-UML. Although CPN-UML president Jhalnath Khanal and Nepali Congress president Sushil Koirala rejected the call for consensus government under a neutral person, powerful groups within CPN-UML and Nepali Congress are also proposing a government under a neutral person.

Following general convention of UCPN-Maoist, parties are likely to discuss the criteria for the independent person. Role of President

As political confrontation continues, President Ram Baran Yadav is consulting people from different walks of life. At a time when many other parties are suggesting neutral caretaker government under the leadership of former judges, president Yadav is likely to call two opposition leaders to

make a certain consensus on the issue of leadership of prime minister. It is reported that President Yadav is also in favor of neutral independent government and his relations with Nepali Congress president Sushil Koirala is now sour. Having a constitutional authority, the president's role is very important now. If he finds support, the president is likely to appoint the new government.

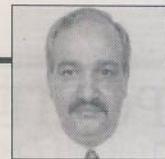
The ruling Sadbhawana Party (SP) has said that the president should approve the election related ordinances, if the major opposition parties —Nepali Congress (NC) and CPN-UML— fail to forge consensus on the formation of a national consensus government.

Political Options

Although a prolonged political crisis is likely to continue, with political parties opposed to one another, a neutral government is an emerging option before president Yadav. Even for other political parties, this seems to be a likely solution.

Avoiding Costly Mistakes

By BATU UPRETY



Unilateral and sectoral approach of development could not meet its everlasting goal, rather it degraded human and environmental quality, along with accelerated soil erosion, landslides and sedimentation. It also challenged the very existence of human beings and life-support systems, particularly from air, water, soil and noise pollution and human-induced disasters. It pushed efforts to design alternative way of development that helps to keep the economic and social benefits up without and/or least damaging the environmental resources.

Realising the need for integrating environment into development, a tool – popularly known as environmental assessment (EA), which may include initial environmental examination (IEE) and environmental impact assessment (EIA) for project level assessment – was developed and used to identify, predict and evaluate the environmental impacts of an activity, and propose preventive, corrective and compensatory measures. Its use was started in the USA in 1970 through legal provision, and was ramified in developed countries in 1970s, in developing countries in 1980, and all countries including LDCs in 1990s. Now this is used in all countries, whether rich or poor, as a universal tool to make the development environment-friendly and sustainable.

Nepal started using this tool in early 1980s (Sixth Plan) through a periodic policy that focused in carrying out EIA of major infrastructure development projects. Nepal carried out EA for over 15 years (1980 – 1996) through policies, National EIA Guidelines in 1993 and separate EIA guidelines for forestry and industry in 1995. After the enactment of the Environment Protection Act, 1996 and Environment Protection Rules, 1997, all prescribed proposals must undergo EA process and the prescribed proposal can only be implemented after the approval of IEE or EIA by the competent authority. As of January 2013, the Ministry of Science, Technology and

Environment has approved EIA reports of about 145 projects of different sectors. The Ministry of Energy has approved IEE reports of over 75 hydro-electricity generation projects totalling to the installed capacity of about 800 MW. If these projects are implemented at the earliest possible, an issue of electricity shortage could be easily resolved. Similarly, the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development have approved over 175 and 350 IEE reports respectively.

Infrastructure projects are either implemented or passed through the forest areas. In the past, use of forest area has also been easier as it is considered a 'Natures' free gift'. Heavy pressure on forest areas from non-forestry sector



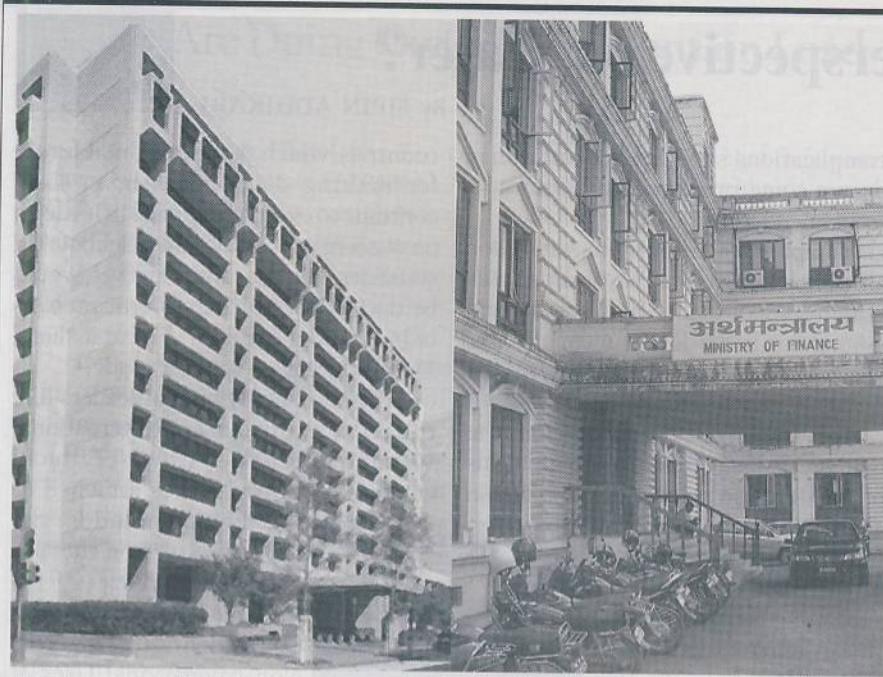
projects, national and international commitment on natural resources and species conservation, including the Biodiversity Convention encouraged the Government to introduce a concept of 'no net loss' approach. As an initial move, any project that fells one tree should plant 25 saplings and manage for 5 years in its own cost. A project might cut even over 50 year old tree which provides ecosystem goods and services of immense value, while 25 samples planted might need several years to provide such goods and services. Recently, the Government has decided to plant twice the number of felled trees till 5000 MW of hydro-electricity is generated. It sounds a positive approach to promote electricity development, but at the cost of ecosystem goods and services provided by forests. It might also be a disastrous if lost forest area is not developed, and 'public properties are

privatised'.

Concept of 1:25 plantation (25 times plantation) is neither costly nor difficult to plant and grow. It is equally environment-friendly. This is a process to value the plant species for which Nepali people depend upon, such as 6f (food, fodder, fuel, fertilizer, fibre and furniture) and oxygen, free of cost. Cutting more trees would mean reducing the source of natural oxygen. As of now, we have not paid for oxygen except in hospitals.

The EA has a well defined beginning and an end. It is a creative process but 'environmentally illiterates' might consider it 'anti-development' and/or unproductive tool. It is a predictive tool and provides dependable information for right decision over the investment from environmental perspective. Usage of this tool has matured in Nepal. As of now, it has not blocked the implementation of any development project. There are several examples that EA tool has contributed to maximize the beneficial impacts and bring down the adverse impacts to acceptable level. I would like to recall the experience shared by the Prime Minister of Nepal in late 1980s that 'if one wants to see the greenery or a tree from the hotel bed room, s/he has to pay more'. It signifies the importance of a 'green tree'.

In a nutshell, EA is a proven tool that makes the development environment-friendly and sustainable. It reduces 'costly mistakes'. If one knows what will happen tomorrow, s/he will be prepared for the avoiding or reducing adverse impacts, and augmenting the beneficial ones. Time has come that Nepal should start implementation of EA recommendations to know what works and what does not preferably by institutionalizing environmental monitoring and auditing works. The choice with us is either to benefit from EA tool or accept to pay the heavy cost of or accept any damage including loss of life and property from environmental degradation. ■



NEPAL ECONOMY

Free Fall

The Government spent only NRs 7.7 billion till mid-January, which is roughly 15 percent of the total capital expenditure

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

After the government failed to bring a full-fledged budget for this fiscal year, many economists had predicted a roller-coaster economic performance for this fiscal year.

Likewise, the economy of the country has been going through many ups and downs. But the sad part is that only the negative economic indicators are going upwards and all the positive indicators are on a free fall.

The government capital expenditure on which the developmental activities of a country vastly depend is very bleak for the first six months of the current fiscal year 2012-13.

In fact the spending of the government has been so low that concerns have been expressed from everywhere, including the donor organizations that are supporting Nepal.

According to the Ministry of Finance, the Government spent only NRs 7.7 billion till mid-January, which is roughly 15 percent of the total capital expenditure.

In such a scenario, if a country has to take strides on developmental fronts, it

has got to be more than a fairytale story.

Kenichi Yokoyama, the country director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Nepal, recently said that the country's failure to bring the full budget has hampered the capital expenditure and the dismal expenditure has hindered the economic progress of the country.

According to media reports, the Ministry of Physical Planning, Works and Transport Management, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Ministry of Irrigation, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Irrigation, and Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment spent 17.12 percent, 13.32 percent, 29.07 percent, 13 percent, 13.03 percent and 66.01 percent of capital expenditure respectively.

Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has himself directed the high level officials to increase the capital expenditure and has accepted that the capital expenditure should be increased if the country wants to see progress in the right direction.

This is not the first time that the

government has failed to spend properly. The capital expenditure has been decreasing every year. In the fiscal year 2010-11, capital expenditure amounted to 7.9 percent of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. Likewise, in the last fiscal year the contribution was significantly reduced to 3.6 percent.

The total expenditure during the first six months of this fiscal year was NRs 95.09 billion, of which majority of the amount was spent under the recurrent expenditure.

Finance Secretary Shanta Raj Subedi has also expressed concerns on the slow capital expenditure and said the capital expenditure suffered due to lack of full-fledged budget.

The progress of national priority projects is also very dismal.

While the miserable capital expenditure has already hindered the country's progress in the developmental fronts, the low production in the country has been increasing the imports to the country.

According to the Finance Ministry, the government collected NRs 134.56 billion in revenues, which is higher than the targeted NRs 131.88 billion for the first half of this fiscal year. On average, the revenue collection has increased by around 21 and half percent.

NRs. 22.87 billion alone in revenue has been collected from the customs in the first five months of the current fiscal year, which highlights the high imports the country has been making. This is around 42 percent higher than the same period last fiscal year.

Likewise, the total revenue from Value Added Tax (VAT) in the first five months of the fiscal year has amounted to 33.12 billion, which is a 16.6 percent increase over the same period last fiscal year. However, the revenue collection from Value Added Tax (VAT) from the internal productions has only increased by 9.6 percent in the same period.

Although, the government was also able to increase the number of VAT payers, the total internal production of the country has been so low that it has significantly affected the economy. ■

Regional Perspective on Water?

By BIPIN ADHIKARI



A watercourse is any flowing body of water. This includes rivers, streams, anabranches and so forth. Nepal is a rich country in terms of its water resources. It has a functioning system of water law as well. The book of Surya Nath Upadhyay, *International Watercourses Law and a Perspective on Nepal-India Cooperation* (Kathmandu: Ekta Books, 2012) has focus on regional perspective. It deals with past efforts in Nepal India cooperation in terms of the rules and principles of international law governing the navigational and non-navigational uses of international watercourses.

In the author's note, which explains the objective behind the work, Upadhyay questions why Nepal India cooperation in the realm of water sector has not been laudable despite the fact that "we are not tired of eluding our close, extensive, traditional, cultural and religious ties" with India. Even though there are immense potentialities for enhancing the economies of both the countries by harnessing available watercourses, the efforts put to this sector are not commendable. "People of our countries rightfully deserve to know the reason and make their judgments in the light of several of our engagements so far in water resources between the two countries. They also should know what law governs our relationship in matters of water resources. This book is an attempt in this direction."

A senior lawyer and former secretary of Nepal government, Upadhyay has divided his book into nine chapters. Beginning with general introduction of the theme, the author has given an outline of international water courses law and law on procedures of cooperation. Based on this outline, he has discussed Nepal's water resources and cooperation efforts with India. Starting with Nepal-India agreement on Kosi project, which set a bad example, he has comprehensively dealt with the Gandak project agreement and the treaty on integrated development of the Mahakali river. All these projects have been criticized in Nepal for unfair deal they made. Based on these deals, and issues that have been generated, Upadhyay analyses the Indian approach to the development of water resources in the region. Here he finds a number of complications. Addressing these

complications straight, the author has drawn some precise conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 8 is the most important for all decision makers. This is a chapter which explains how India maintains domination in the development of water resources in the region. It has been done by analyzing Indian position *vis a vis* regional v. bilateral cooperation, the deliberate disregards of the high ideals of SAARC, the principles of bilateralism as it is applied to Nepal, the unilateral construction of projects and pushing it for approval as being *fait accompli* (for example India's illegal and unilateral construction of the Tanakpur Power Station), the opposition to Nepal initiated projects, the plan of interlinking rivers in India to meet water scarcity and problem of droughts and floods, and the pathetic attitude towards developing any international law on water.

Here the author has shown not only his legal skills, but also the ability to express in clear terms the nature of water politics and how it is being played around.

"First, [India] shall try to continue whatever use it can make within its territory without prior consultation with its neighbours. Second, it shall try scrupulously not to regionalize the subject matter of water resources. Third, it shall continue engaging with Nepal on all possible projects but it shall advance only those projects which primarily serve its interests. Fourth, it shall try to de-link the hydropower use with that of water use and make advances and deal on hydropower cooperation, rather than on water resources. Fifth, as water, power and security are intertwined, it shall try to have maximum control on those resources directly or indirectly. Sixth, it shall continue avoiding any generalization of policy or law, which shall bind itself for the future dealings. It will continue the engagement on a project-wise basis and take its position as its interests dictate. Seventh, it shall try to proactively create internal situations in the neighbouring

countries, which shall be favourable to it for making deals. Eighth, it shall continue to exert its leverage in its deals on water resources with the neighbouring countries. The question, however, would be: does that serve the long term interests of India and the region?" To cut it short, Upadhyay calls a spade a spade.

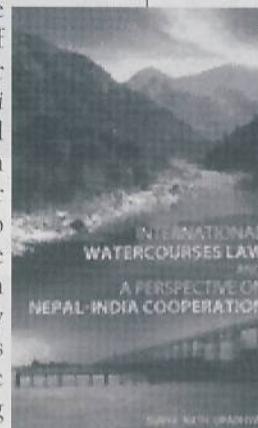
The book helps general readers like this critique to understand international watercourses law with a very lucid analysis. The Appendices attached to

the book includes the Helsinki Rules on the Use of the Waters of International Rivers, the Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses, 1997, and Berlin Rules on Water Resources 2004. The author has tried to incorporate some cases and controversies concerning international watercourses. They provide background against which

he analyses the basic substantive and procedural rights and obligations of states in the field.

Upadhyay admits that it is in the interest of both Nepal and India to cooperate each other to harness available watercourses. Such cooperation is also welcome between Nepal and other countries of South Asia. "What is required is sensitivity to the valid demands and the needs based on the rules of the game. It can happen without anybody losing, but everybody winning. A sincere understanding of water law and the rights or duties of the riparian states could help that process." He does not however deal much with the weaknesses of Nepal's own water machinery and its lack of direction. He also does not deal with how to build strategy on the part of Nepal to deal with a partner who has problematic habits.

This book is recommended to all scholars, students and practitioners working in the area of international watercourses law, the related development agencies, and the policy makers of Nepal. ■



"We Are Doing Our Best To Contain Load-shedding To 12 Hours"

- HARI RAM KOIRALA

At a time when Nepal has been facing a severe power crisis, HARI RAM KOIRALA, who has just completed a year as the Ministry of Energy secretary, spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues regarding the energy scenario. Excerpts:

How do you review your yearlong performance as the Ministry of Energy secretary?

During my one-year tenure as the secretary, I have taken a number of decisions, all directed to minimize the load-shedding hours. Along with this, I also cleared a number of files, which had been pending for years in the ministry. The decision making process picked up speed in my time.

Nepal has been facing long hours of load-shedding. What are your plans to tackle this?

As per the Load-shedding Reduction Work Plan 2012, the decision was made to provide additional support to the projects under construction and those pending projects having signed the PPA. Formulation of the Load-shedding Reduction Plan is one of the major achievements of the year. It was approved by the cabinet. The plan provides clear-cut mandate and vision for long term and short term measures to reduce power cut.

Despite your claim, load shedding hours are long. How do you look at this?

Yes, for a few days, it went up to 14 hours, due to the 30 MW power cut from India. With the initiative of the prime minister, we were able to bring back the time to 12 hours, when the Indian power supply resumed. We are doing our best to not exceed load-shedding from 12 hours. This is the strict direction of the prime minister also.

The recent incidents have shown that Nepal is much vulnerable to power crisis. What is the guarantee that power import may continue as per the Ministry's plan?

India has assured us that they will explore other areas to supply the power in border areas. Nepal is now importing up to 180 MW from India through the existing transmission lines. We are also working to complete proposed Mujafarpur Dhalkebar Transmission

lines and others, so that our power exchange can go smoothly.

You say that you have taken a number of decisions. What prospects do you see for their implementation?

The implementation part is also impressive. What I can say now is things are moving in the positive direction. Whether it is the constitution of committees or appointment of board members, negotiations with bilateral or multilateral donors, we are moving ahead well. I cannot claim everything will be green in a short period of time. What I can say is that the results will come out within the next few years.

There are reports that the Ministry has cancelled a number of licenses without judging the capability of license holders. How do you look at this?

Look, I don't have any personal interest. I have cancelled 23 licenses in one year on the basis of performance. If license holders cannot develop power projects and just hold it for years, there is no reason to renew them.

What about Nepal India cross border transmission line?

The ministry has already proposed for improvement of cross border transmission lines. A letter has already been sent to the Ministry of Finance to arrange necessary funds for the construction of 400 K.V. second Nepal-India Inter-country Transmission Line. The line will link Mulpani, Naubishe and New Hetauda with Gorakhpur of Indian State of Utter Pradesh.

How do you see the construction of Upper Tamakoshi project and Chameliya?

The row in board of directors of the Upper Tamakoshi hydro project was settled. With coordination from the Ministry of Commerce, the arrangements have been made to ensure uninterrupted supply of petroleum products to Chameliya and Upper Tamakoshi projects. Although the Chameliya project has already missed the deadline and cost has escalated, it is now moving with its work on construction of transmission line and tunnel going on. So far as Upper Tamakoshi is concerned, it is moving satisfactorily. Similarly, a



post of armed police is established in Tamakoshi. In the last year, 9 MW power was added in the national grid and another 100,000 population has access to electricity.

As you have been saying that there is the need to promote private sector as well, what proposal have you made to encourage it?

For new domestic promoters, the soft loan of Rs. 20 million per MW has already been provided with new pricing in Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA). Similarly, several steps were taken to promote foreign investors.

Besides hydro power, the ministry is also taking initiatives to harness solar power? What is the state?

A task force has already been set up to fix the tariff for solar and storage projects. For instance, the government has already signed an MOU with a company to install solar PV to supply 5 MW of power in central secretariat Singh Durbar. If things go as planned, the project will be completed by coming August. Similarly, a survey license is issued to survey the construction of 50 MW Solar Power (Photovoltaic) in Manugdanda of Tanhu district. Likewise, a survey license is issued for the construction of 3.5 MW biomass power plants in Okharpauwa Land Fill Site.

How about the augmentation of Trishuli A project?

As the cabinet has already approved the augmentation of Trishuli 3 A from 60 to 90 MW, I don't want to talk about it now. What I can say is that I supported the augmentation on the basis of technical and financial reports presented by experts. As a technician, I can say that it is technically viable. ■

Race To The Racecourse



By ABIJIT SHARMA

Rahul Gandhi and Narendra Modi warm up for the starting line but the two front-runners face identical hurdles before they could even eye the finishing line

RACE-2 is the latest Bollywood flick to hit the bulls' eye. Trade pundits have declared the Abbas-Mastan directed sequel to the 4-year-old action-thriller as the newest member of the coveted 100cr-club. No clear winner is predicted on another turf. It's the battle for the Ultimate of power in the land of the world's largest democracy. The stage is set and the battle is about to begin. Well, almost!

Even as 'prince charming' Rahul Gandhi witnessed an elevation in the party ranks last month, having been promoted to the post of Vice President of the Congress Party, Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi earlier this month echoed his higher aspirations when he landed in Delhi to meet the new Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Chief Rajnath Singh. The two events hinted at the same direction: that both the leaders are now being considered seriously by their parties as their respective Prime Ministerial candidate and might lock horns in the 2014 election.

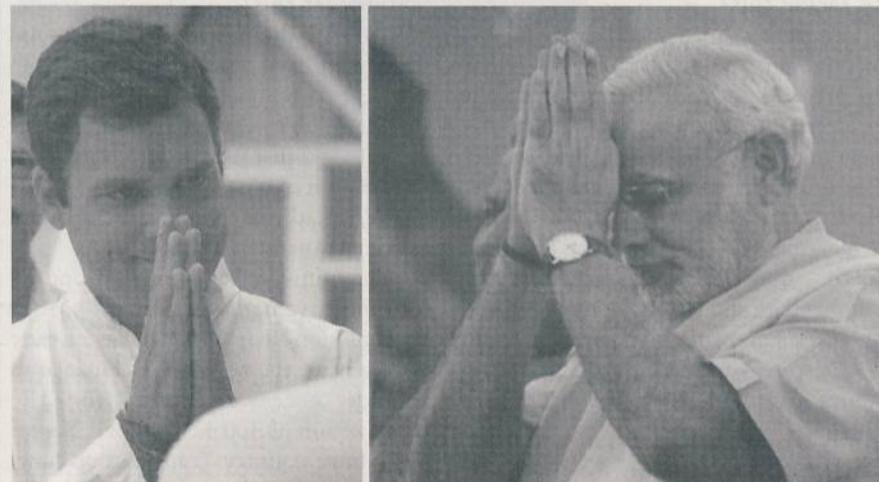
Gandhi and Modi have been tipped as the future Prime Minister for quite some time now. The former, for the sole reason that he inherits a legacy of a family which has led the country since its independence and the latter, for being by far the most legitimate candidate for BJP (thanks to his national and international attention-seeking performance in Gujarat). While nothing has been finalized as yet, the recent shuffle in both the parties hints that speculations might actually come true. Political pundits have already started churning out analyses while verdicts and clamor within both the parties seem to be growing slowly.

Mammoth tasks lie ahead of both the leaders if in case the party decided to take a final call on them to get ready for the battle royale. Ironically, both face similar challenges. Firstly, the two leaders are expected to play the role of a change agent within their parties, both of which are in a shambles. BJP, on its

part, has yet to show its mettle to sway the people on its side. As five of the major states go into election this year, the BJP will have to first pull itself together and perform well particularly in the major state of Karnataka where it is in a mess due to internal problems. If he went to win the prime ministerial race, Modi would have a tough job of managing the already troubled party which would be in government then. The Gujarat Chief Minister would also have to aim to widen the party's support base which till now has typically remained the upper middle class. Congress, on the other hand, has

concerned, the taint caused by the 2012 Gujarat riots still continues to blemish his image. This might act as a big disadvantage. The Muslim population still remains skeptical about voting for the BJP, particularly Modi. The fact that the much celebrated CM was denied visa into the US is a proof that the international community too is also not ready yet to accept him. A highly developed and affluent Gujarat is what Modi considers is his strength which he so highly boasts of. However this will not be enough to ensure that NaMo (as he is referred to by his supporters) will make a strong candidate. He lacks experience and this too might contribute a lot to his weakness.

On the other hand, Gandhi hasn't had a good run in political career till now.



Rahul Gandhi and Narendra Modi

more damage control to do. Thanks to the recent scams, the party's image has taken a huge beating requiring an urgent refurbishing and on this ground, Gandhi has a difficult task at his hand. If he is indeed chosen as the candidate, it would have double trouble of looking after the Congress and focusing on his Prime Ministerial ambition. One problem that has been pointed out with Congress is that it has been unable to produce any substantial regional leaders. Again, Gandhi should look towards building a strong regional leader especially if he expects to win the 2014 battle.

A second challenge facing both is their haunting past. As far as Modi is

His past election campaigns in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Modi-led Gujarat have proved to be a complete failure. In fact, many accuse that his rise in the party has simply taken place due to his mother. His past political stints, like visiting the sites of farmer agitation and Dalit homes, has been slammed for being publicity mere stunts. Like Modi, Rahul also has the inexperience in running the country from Delhi to his disadvantage. Rahul, who considers his youth image as his USP, may not suffice to make up for the experience deficit. Inexperience apart, another common disadvantage the two shares is the daunting challenge of dealing with the coalition partners. ■

HANDWASHING A Life Saver

Studies have shown that hand washing can save many lives of children

By A CORRESPONDENT

Despite progress in access to water and access to toilet, the death toll of children due to diarrhea continues to be high, at over 8,000 annually. Nepal's own experiences have shown that hygiene issue needs to be given importance to bring about any real change in the overall health status.

"Along with access to sanitation and water, there is the need to focus on hygiene issue. Without it, Nepal cannot achieve the MDGs and reduce the infant mortality," said Ashutosh Tiwari, country representative of WaterAid Nepal.

At a time when Nepal has been facing challenges to improve the hygiene status, Val Curtis, renowned researcher of London School of Economics and the person associated with The Hygiene Centre visited Nepal. She argued that social behavior is an important factor to change the hand washing habit. Addressing a talk program recently in Kathmandu, she said hand washing can change the state of health and save hundreds of infants in Nepal.

"Diarrhea can still kill more young people than AIDS, malaria and measles combined," said Curtis. Although infant mortality rate has already declined from 83/1000 in 2000 to 48/1000 in 2010, diarrhea is still the number 2 killer in Nepal," said Curtis.

There is a greater and better impact on health for those who wash hand with soap after use of toilet. "There is a 47 reduction of death by diarrhea in case of washing hand with soap," said Curtis, who is recently came to the capital as a guest of WaterAid Nepal. "Similarly, washing hand by soap also decreases the respiratory problems by 23 percent."

Curtis said, "Hand washing with soap could save 650,000 lives a year and prevent cholera, ARIs, SARS, pandemic flu,

hands with soap water after going to toilet.

Each year over 8,000 children under five die of diarrhea in Nepal. Proper hand washing with soap is the most effective intervention to reduce death. After organizing Global Hand washing Day every year on October 15 since 2008, the state of hand washing has improved.



Val Curtis

neonatal mortality, malnutrition, TE, AIDS infections."

Although hand washing can prevent a number of problems, the people still ignore this. The studies have shown that more than half of the population in Nepal are yet to use soap for hand washing. "There is the need to change the behavior of hand washing. Although the number of people washing hands by soap has increased in Nepal recently, it is yet to cover the whole population.

A survey in six poor communities with more than 5,000 people showed that 99 and 93 percent people washed their hands before eating food and after going to toilet, respectively. It showed that there are still some people who do not wash hands at critical times.

However, another data showed only 12 percent people washed their hands with soap water before eating food; mostly (85 percent) washed hands just with water. According to a report, more than 50 percent people do not wash

WaterAid-Nepal has been playing an important role in the hand washing campaign nationwide while encouraging policy makers and politicians to recognize hand washing as a priority on the development agenda. It has been launching the awareness raising campaign targeting the public, particularly mothers and children, with the aim of making the simple, life-saving practice of washing hands a regular habit.

"There is a lot of progress and improvement in the last five years following the launch of the campaign," said Rabindra Lal Shrestha, senior program manager WaterAid Nepal.

As there is an increase in the number of people realizing the need of hygiene, the Ministry of Health and Population has allocated special funds to the districts to mainstream hand washing activities into all health events and activities. As the understanding about the importance of hand washing is growing in Nepal, even the private sector will join the campaign along with government and civil society sector. ■

Chilime Partnership Unique

KUL MAN GHISING

Promoted by Nepal Electricity Authority with the participation of local community, Chilime Hydro Power Company has established itself as a credible and reliable power company in Nepal. KUL MAN GHISING, Managing Director of Chilime Hydropower Company Ltd, spoke to BIKASH THAPA on various issues. Excerpts:

What is the state of projects implemented by Chilime?

Chilime power plant has been in operation since 2003. We decided to promote four power projects last year. For the construction of the new projects, four companies, including Sanjen and Upper Sanjen, Rasuwa Gadhi and Middle Bhote Kosi, have already been established. Financial matters of all these projects have already been settled and Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA) has been signed.

What is the state of Sanjen?

Construction of 16-kilometer access road for 42 MW Sanjen project is at the final stage. Camp facilities are under construction and land acquisition has been completed. It has obtained the generation license. The tender for the main civil work is also at the last stage and everything will be finalized within a month. By December 2015, the project will be completed. Similarly, the construction of access road has already been completed for 14.8 MW upper Sanjen. As the company has secured generation license, the company is now at the contractor mobilization stage. From this dry session, the work will begin. The construction of both the projects will start at the same time and complete by December 2015. Except Interest during Construction (IDC), the total cost of both the projects is 7.24 billion rupees.

What about 111 MW Rasuwa Gadhi Project?

The financing matters have been completed, along with the generation license. Out of 250 Test Audit Tunnel, 150 meters have been completed. This project is in between the high-way to

Kerung of Tibetan Autonomous Region of China and Nepal. We don't need any access road to this project. This is Engineering Procurement (EPC) project. It includes two packages Civil and Hydro Mechanical and Electro Mechanical. The prequalification for Civil Work is in the final stage and 22 contractors have applied for the work. The contract agreement will be signed within six months. The mobilization will begin from this fiscal year. The total cost of the project is 13.68 billion rupees, except Interest during Construction. The construction of camp facilities has already begun. It will generate electricity by December 2016.

After a long dispute, what is the state of 102 MW Middle Bhote Kosi?

Due to the dispute on the issue related to rafting, it has taken a lot of time for Environment Impact Assessment (EIA). Now EIA is at the final stage and it is now at the Ministry of Science and Technology and Environment. Following approval, we will go for the generation license. It took extra four-five months due to rafting. Despite delay in the early stage, the project will be completed as per the schedule. It will not affect the date for generation. Some even took the case of the construction of 250m Meter Test Audit Tunnel to Supreme Court and the Court issued the decision in our favor. Mobilization of contractors is at the last stage. The total cost of the project is 12.28 billion rupees. This is also an EPC. It will generate power by December 2016.

What will be the total generation capacity after completion of these projects?

After completion of the four projects, our generation capacity will be 270 MW in rainy season and 90 MW in winter. This is low for the project based on Q 40 design.

What is the project development model?

Chilime has been following a unique model of partnership with local community and general public. We

have been following two P Model: People and public partnership.

Upper Bhote Kosi is under Public, Private, People and Community partnership. Our focus is people. There is no private sector in Rasuwagadhi and Sanjen. For instance, Chilime's model is 50 percent loan and 50 percent equity.

What model are you following in Rasuwagadhi?

In Rasuwagadhi Hydropower Company, there is 51 percent share for promoters, 33 percent owned by Chilime and 18 percent by Nepal Electricity Authority. Under 49 percent public share, 15 percent is for general public, 10 percent for project affected local people, 19.5 percent for contributors of EPF, 1 percent for employees of Employee's Provident Fund and 3.5 percent for employees of promoters.

What is the share equity structure in Sanjen Hydropower Company?

In both Sanjen, Chilime Hydropower Company has 38 percent, Nepal Electricity Authority has 10, and Rasuwa DDC and 18 VDCs 3 percent. Out of 49 percent public share, 10 percent is for affected local people, 15 percent general public, 19.5 percent contributors of Employee Provident Fund, 1 percent for employees of Employees Provident Fund and 3.5 percent for employees of promoters.

What about Middle Bhote Kosi?

In Middle Bhote Kosi, Chilime Hydro Power has 38 percent, NEA 10, three private promoter of Sindhupalchowk 3, 15 percent general public, project affected local people 10 percent, employees of EPF 1, and 3.50 percent employees of promoters and 19.5 percent depositors of Employees Provident Fund.

Why is Chilime in a hurry in project construction?

Chilime failed to bring any new projects after it started generation. We have lost a long period without going for any new projects. The company spent its time making lip service for Sanjen. We have 3 billion rupees in reserve. We have to invest about 5.5 billion in three to

four years. This means we have a net annual profit of 950 million rupees and cash flow is 1 billion rupees. We don't have any problem to inject money in four projects. We have cash flow for another 200 MW projects. Chilime can alone manage this money.

Why is the Employees Provident Fund so interested on your project?

There is a very low risk for Provident Development Fund. There is diversification of investment. Even Chilime's annual income is a guarantee for repay.

The pay-back period of all these projects is 5 to 7 years. Chilime' annual cash flow is 1.20 billion rupees. The profit is around 1 billion rupees.

What will the financial status after completion of these projects?

After completion of these four projects, we will have 4-5 billion rupees in annual turnover. This means we will be in a position to construct the project up to 500 MW. It will take another 2 to 2.5 years to start the project over 500 MW. If we start the project after 2015, we don't need cash flow and Chilime alone can invest it.

How about the public response?

Due to credibility of Chilime, we can generate money from the general people. Last year when we issued 270 million rupees worth of share and there were more than 5 billion rupees collected. There is a lot of possibility to lure public equity, including that of Nepalis and foreigners. We can also initiate other projects under our four P model. Citizen Investment Board and Provident Fund have expressed their desire to continue with joint partnership.

How do you see the investment capability of Chilime?

After 2016/17, the repayment money of Upper Bhotekosi will be enough to start the project over 1000 MW. If we have good projects, we don't need to worry for the money. There is money within the country. It is unfortunate that we don't have any new projects.

Do you have any plan to go for storage project?

We are now trying for 300 MW Uttar Ganga storage project in Baglung. Since it lies in protected areas, it is in the

process of clearance. There is another 232 MW project in Langtang. This project also lies within national park. We have already applied for clearance. However, the government has rejected our demand to start Upper Arun.

What does Chilime require now?

Chilime needs more license immediately so that we can work for future. If we wait saying that new projects will follow these projects, our position will be like that of the past. We need to have a plan to mobilize the same manpower, for another four future projects. Our money is idle. We have already transferred four projects to the company. We need more new projects. We are now looking for 536 MW Sunkosi project just close to Dolalghat. We cannot launch any project in future without involvement of the local people.

How do you see the possibility for storage projects?

Although the rate of return is high in storage project, I don't see any possibility of private investment in storage projects due to involvement of cost and risk. Private sector will enjoy run-off the river project. Nepal needs storage projects to reduce the loadshedding. However, the PPA status of storage projects is not so encouraging. Utter Ganga is high head and low cost project, but there is the need to revisit tariff.

Do you mean the storage projects are not profitable?

Storage projects are profitable, but it is impossible in the current state of PPA. We are exporting power from India average of Indian Rs.5.4 at the border point. It will cost Nepali Rs.15.00 to 16.00 per unit when it reaches to the consumer. However, it is a firm energy and it is still cheaper. The tariff for storage project must be fixed up to Rs. 10.00 per unit as par with exported energy. We are public entity and we don't want high return but reasonable return.

There is the need to complete the grid connection with India and it will help Nepal-India free trade. Cross border work is also needed to open the market. If we are unable to open cross border



market, we cannot enhance our capability making hydro electricity cheaper.

How can we end the load shedding?

Focus should be given to cross border transmission line. It should be worked out in two places with priority. The government needs to invest heavily on mega projects, small projects should be given to private sector and medium scale projects for companies like Chilime. We need to act now. There is no sense in saying that there will be spill after 2017. We need to go immediately for Budhi Gandaki. Looking at the current state, I can say that loadsheeding will continue for another decade. Had we designed our projects under Q 40, the generation capacity would have gone much higher. We have just followed Q25 model looking at Nepal Electricity Authority. Arun III and Upper Karnali have increased their capacity choosing Q 40 model.

Nepal's hydropower generation cost is relatively high. How do you look at it?

Our electricity is not competitive for India because we failed to use the monsoon water due to our current model. We have constructed the project looking at the demand of winter, this is the reason the tariff of Nepalese electricity is expensive. We need cross border transmission line for energy management. Our hangover is energy export to India. The situation is that we also exporting over 180 MW of power now just to maintain 12 hour load shedding. Once we have cross border transmission

line, everything will be settled. We can export our surplus electricity to India during rainy season and import power during the dry session. If we supply our energy of wet period, the power will be like produced from storage project. There is a great potential for energy banking.

How do you see the controversy on PPA with Chilime?

Our PPA is not much expensive compared to other two IPPs. Our per unit price is Rs. 6.69. This is not expensive. We are providing 17 percent excessive energy and we get just 50 percent money. Chilime's average price is Rs 5.95 with per unit and 10 percent free. We have been supplying 22 MW firm power even in dry session. Our energy is very valuable for load shedding hour. Out of total profit, 51 percent goes to NEA and 49 percent to Nepalese people. Our money is going to poor people of Nepal not an account of private party. The poor people of Rasuwa are getting the money. We are investing the money to enhance other projects.

Don't you see your energy price is still expensive?

If you look at Khimti, it is about 20 cent (Rs.20) per unit in dry session. Even Bhote Kosi is charging less than 10 cent per unit. If you compare our price, it is still less than half of these two private projects. Khimti has not invested any money for new projects. They have not given even a penny of shares to local people.

Don't you see any project prospects in Rasuwa basin?

Yes there is a good project within Rasuwa. However, Department of Wildlife and National Park has creating hurdle for project development. I don't understand why national parks want to occupy rivers. There is 250 MW project in Ghoda Tabela in Langtang. Our intention is not to destroy fauna, flora and endangered species of Langtang, just to protect them. We have planned to expand cable car, along with hydropower. Our plan is to build the cascade up to Kenjen valley as a reservoir. This water will help to increase capacity of power projects beneath Chilime. It will also increase the level of water in Gandak during winter. ■

Nepali Traffic: An Adventure On Its Own

By HANNEKE VAGENENDE

The roads of Nepal are nearly as famous and notorious as its mountains. The country's traffic directorate confirms a few hundred major and over a thousand small accidents per day. One journalist made the cynical yet accurate comment that Nepali traffic claims almost as much lives as the civil war that ended in 2006. Still, this apparent controlled chaos seems to work for the average Nepali. But how does the average tourist feel about the traffic when he sets foot on Nepali

buses usually tend to be overcrowded and have people crawling on the roof as a result. Sometimes it is just too much for tourists to cope with.

But according to Subhash Gurung, a traffic policeman from Shorakhutte, visitors in Nepal should not worry too much. "Tourists rarely are involved in traffic accidents", he states. He emphasizes that he feels no fear coming from the tourists at all and thinks they are rather positive about Nepali traffic.



land for the very first time?

The cliche wants the typical tourist in Nepal to be brave, adventurous and fearless. But even for the most experienced travelers it is impossible to hide the anxious looks on their faces when entering the narrow streets of Thamel, probably the most popular tourist destination in Kathmandu. Gianni Tamiozzo, an Italian who has been travelling to Nepal many times for the past 32 years, sees a downward evolution in Nepali traffic. "People used to be nice, but now they tend to be more aggressive because everything has to go quickly. What really annoys me is the fact that there is no such thing as systematic driving." Tamiozzo aims at the criticism that there is no awareness of any traffic rules, but that there are only 'suggestions'. There are too many cars, motorbikes and pedestrians going through the same narrow roads. There are no sidewalks nor is there parking space. Dogs, cows and monkeys are crossing roads without giving any warning. Local

But his words are contradicted by Samy Kumar Bomjan. This cab driver from Thamel meets tons of tourists who get stressed out by Nepali traffic. "Tourists don't like too much traffic. But Thamel is always crowded, people come here for business. A lot of them complain to me, that it is too much for them to handle. But then I just say: 'Well sir, this is Nepal'", Gurung bursts out laughing.

This is Nepal indeed. As reported by a United Nations survey on economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, road accidents in Nepal "had increased fourfold in the last decade". This statement confirms what Gianni Tamiozzo already had anticipated on. Maybe he has some advice for future tourists in Nepal? "Yes. I always have my umbrella with me, even if it is not raining. I use it as a security stick. I want at least twenty centimeters between a vehicle and my body. So if a car is coming too close, I just hit it with my umbrella", he laughs out loud.

Vagenende is an intern from Belgium



A Day In The Life

By DANNY GARCIA

There is a surreal majestic feeling to be discovered deep inside Kathmandu. It's a place hidden from smart phone maps, where one can lose themselves completely in the culture and on the streets. Just the idea that someone can wonder aimlessly around and still managed to find some of the greatest spectacles that this lovely city has to offer, shows that everyone can leave all their worries back home and embrace Thamel.

In the morning, you are awakened by the bitter cold slipping under your covers, but as you look out to see the mist resting over Kathmandu, a sense of peace and tranquility falls over you and prepares your mind for the day to come. At this time, the shops are still closed through the barren streets of Thamel, with only a few locations open for breakfast. However, once you walk into one of these restaurants, you are introduced into a paradise hidden from the world. Delima

Garden Café is a prime example of one of these hidden gems. You peak your head through a small door and see a long narrow alleyway that leads all the way down to a mysterious courtyard. When you reach this courtyard, you find yourself in a beautiful garden filled with prayer flags and vibrant flowers. It feels like the kind of place one would go to meditate and enjoy the beauty of nature. With the staff all welcoming and polite, you can't, but to happily sip on your tea and enjoying a nice breakfast, until it's time for you to make your journey onwards.

Once the day progresses, life begins to fill the streets. Rickshaws and taxis make their way around large groups of tourists, trying to get through to the city, while the shop keepers all welcome you

with open arms in hopes that you find something of interest inside. Tourists are confronted with street vendors carrying a variety of things to sell, whether instruments, knives, or the occasional hashish; and if these salesmen don't convince you to give your money away, then you are also approached by the common beggar. Yet, as heart-wrenching as it maybe to see mothers and children asking for money, you must remember that giving them money to get off your back isn't the way to help these people. As Ellen Christian, a fellow volunteer at VIN, mentioned, "You can do more good

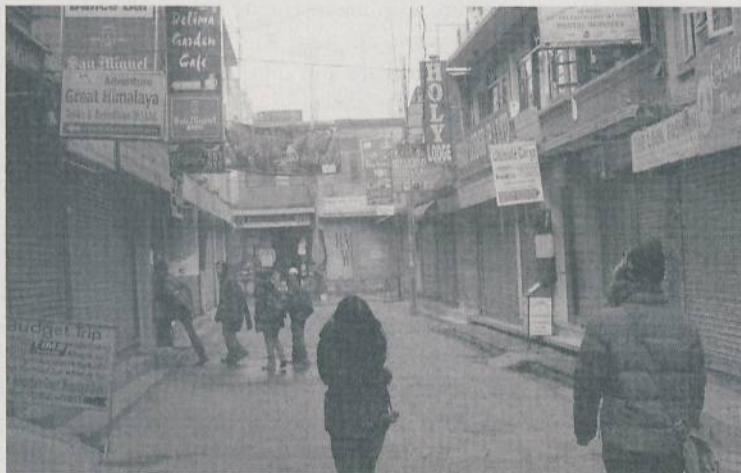
possible. When the sun goes down, the night life sets in and people begin to move from bar to bar to find a place to sit, relax, and reflect on the day. The New Orleans Café is then converted into a folk fusion live music venue, where a groovy laid back atmosphere fills the air. People sit next to smoky barrels of burning wood, while the pan flute band's soothing flute, melodic guitar, and hypnotic bongos guides you through the night. Everyone lounges around, talking to one another as the move with the beat and applaud after every set.

Finally, as the night ends and everyone has had their fun, you can head back to the hotel for a good night's rest. The streets of Thamel at night may seem daunting from the people around fires and rickshaws, who follow you offering an assortment of different drugs. But generally you can still make a safe passage through, back to the hotel. However, if the night is still not yet over and the weather is right, you can try to make your way to the roof of your hotel to see soak in the last of Thamel before bed.

The clear blue night sky shows off all of its constellations and the city seems to stretch out far into the edge of the mountains. With the crisp air filling your lungs, peace falls right back into your mind and deep with in your heart. You can fall in love with this city; feel as if you are in a dream.

There is a lot to discover of Kathmandu, but Thamel, nonetheless is a place for people to stop by to explore its serpentine streets and experience a new way of life different from that in the western word. This being the first impression of Thamel, has made it clear that this city is a loving one, which holds it open arms to all who wish to come and rest under the sweet bosom of the mountains.

Garcia is an intern from USA



Thamel in early morning

for them by sponsoring a child or supporting an orphanage." It's insanity that roams the streets of Thamel, but somehow it manages not to overwhelm the people who pass through.

Nonetheless, even with poverty surrounding you, it doesn't take away from the true wonder and nature of Thamel. With its numerous shops, inns, restaurants, and live music, Thamel offers the most for people from all walks of life. The cafés and bars have managed to emerge themselves with other world cultures, while still holding on to their own Nepali identity. Places like New Orleans Café, offer a variety of dishes from burritos, fish and chips, and burgers to momos, both Tibetan and Nepali style, and so on. All of which are made best they can to taste as close to home as

Bill Related To The Control Of Acts Of Torture Or Inhuman Or Degrading Treatment, 2069

In the context of Nepal, the fact that the 1990 Constitution recognized that torture and inhuman treatment is a violation of individual rights, is an important achievement. Although Nepal has ratified the Convention Against Torture, and other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment and Punishment, 1948 along with some other important international human rights documents, the Compensation for Torture Act was only established in 2053 BS. Current laws of Nepal have not been able to criminalize torture and degrading treatment and neither has it been able to fulfill its international responsibilities as per Article 26 and 27 of the Vienna Convention 1969. There are many cases related to compensation for torture pending in the district courts although some verdicts have been given to provide compensation to many victims also.

The Interim Constitution 2063 criminalized torture and misbehavior but it took five years to bring a bill as per its objectives. Although the Supreme Court issued a directive to make laws to criminalize torture (Rajendra Ghimire Vs Nepal Government) it is likely to take some time before laws that prohibit torture are passed as Acts and implemented.

The current bill was prepared in the background of the ten year armed conflict and cases of human rights abuse, torture and misbehavior by state officials as well as non state actors. Even after the Interim Constitution was promulgated some important reports that have pointed out the cruel torture and misbehavior carried out by state officials have been published. Although there has been a decline in cases of torture and misbehavior from state officials as compared to the period of armed conflict. It is therefore necessary to also look at some of the achievements that countries in Asia and other parts of the world have made with regards to bringing draft bills related to torture and inhuman treatment, keeping in mind the cases of torture and inhuman treatment that took place during the conflict period and Nepal's international commitment.

Notes on the draft bill

The definition of torture and degrading treatment as defined in Article 2(G) and (J) seems to have been influenced by the definition given in the Convention Against Torture, however the definition given in this Article is inadequate. It would have been better if the definition of torture and inhuman treatment were given as mentioned in the Convention Against Torture.

What our experience shows is that except when Article 2 (f) whether it is individuals protesting in the streets or when arrested and detained they are tortured or treated inhumanly. Therefore it is not only arrested or detained persons who suffer torture or inhuman treatment in the hands of state officials. Anyone can fall victim to torture and inhuman treatment in current circumstances. This situation must be addressed in the bill and amended in the proposed preamble.

The terms "government physician" or "in government service" mentioned in Article 2 (K) devalues the concept of "recognized physician" that is developing in the field of investigation. To make the investigation on torture independent the concept of government physician must be replaced with that of recognized physician. This Article and other like it must be amended accordingly.

In Article 2 (G) intention and objective is not necessary for ill treatment.

The jurisdiction mentioned in Article 9 must be replaced by defining it as "regions that fall within Nepal's jurisdiction. Likewise if a Nepali citizen is found to be involved in torture or if a Nepali citizen is a victim of torture, there must be provisions to attract the Acts jurisdiction.

Articles 10 and 11 have recognized international law on torture importantly. It must also prohibit acts of exoneration and general amnesty of perpetrators. Article 37 which states "those who have been indicted by the Court has perpetrators cannot be given amnesty or forgiveness without the consent of the victim." This can create a state of pressure for the victim. And even if the victim

forgives the perpetrator, as torture and inhuman treatment is a crime, there must not be legal provisions to forgive those who torture others.

The provision in Article 12 has given too much authority to the public official and given leverage to use more force than is necessary while detaining or arresting under this article. Force used should only be proportional, and in line with legal and international codes of conduct. Therefore the use of such force must be either prohibited or the article itself removed. If the article is to remain it must be mentioned that the force used must only be proportional to the danger and necessity.

The phrase "good intention" must be removed from Article 35. Torture is never given with good intention nor should it be used for the performance of necessary duties.

The provision of deadline in Article 31 is against the principle of non-derogability and should be removed. Besides this Article 13 mentions a 35 day deadline to register the case, which is a restrictive provision and must be removed. Such a provision could create hurdles for the victim to get justice. The Committee against Torture has already made recommendations to the Nepal government to remove the provision of a deadline for case registration.

Punishment

According to this bill, investigations into allegations of torture will be investigated by the police themselves. As per Article 15 the same police office is responsible for investigating into cases of torture. Such a provision could create a conflict of interest and put the victim as well as witnesses in danger and pressure. In Sri Lanka and the Philippines torture and degrading treatment has been criminalized. However experiences from these two countries show that unless there is a separate independent agency to listen to complaints and investigate them, victims will be unable to get justice.

That there should be a separate independent mechanism to listen to allegations of torture and to investigate

into these complaints was recommended by the Committee against Torture in 2005 and by the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Inhuman Treatment in 2006. It is therefore important that there be a provision in this bill that allows for a separate agency to look into crimes of torture and inhuman treatment. The National Human Rights Commission or the Office of the Attorney General could be given the responsibility of such an agency.

Article 13 mentions that the victim, or family members of the victim, or a lawyer appointed on behalf of the victim may register a case. However the Convention on Torture has given the state the responsibility to itself register complaints if information is received through private or public information mediums. Therefore there must be provisions in the bill that ensure that either the Attorney General or a government prosecutor register the case on their own. Besides, Article 135 of the Interim Constitution has given the Attorney General the responsibility of hearing about the state of the detainee or prisoner.

Under Article 15, if any person is seen to be given torture, the court may order a high level official to investigate into the matter as per Article 13, 14.3 and 15. There are also provisions for the court to order a higher level officer to investigate if the complaint is against the chief of the district police office. It has been found that the police refuse to investigate into allegations of torture and inhuman treatment.

Articles 6, 7.1 and 7.2 have given the burden of proof to the office head. This provision is in favour of the victim. However this is against the principles of Article 14(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that the burden of proof shall lie with the prosecutor. The language and terms used in these articles must not contradict established norms and the provision of burden of proof must be used adequately.

Protection of victims and witness

Article 28 mentions that the witness must be provided protection if under threat. This is an important provision that allows the victim the right and ability to file a complaint against a powerful

agency of the state. This provision must be extended to the victim as well as the family of the victim besides the witness for they could also be endangered.

Article 13 of the Convention Against Torture has included complainants in the group that must be given adequate protection during the time of legal proceedings. The Committee Against Torture had also recommended to the government of Nepal in 2005 to provide protection to individuals who file complaints of torture or inhuman treatment or witnesses or who give information relating to such.

Physical examination

Article 14 mentions that the health of the detainee victim must be checked within three days of the complaint being filed by the victim. Reports have mentioned that many victims were tortured without even being detained or were tortured for a while and released. Therefore there must be provisions allowing for even those who are not currently in detention to be given a physical examination. The court must also be given the authority to order for a physical examination if it has enough reason to suspect that torture was given.

Under this Article only a government physician can conduct the examination although international norms, and the Istanbul Protocol has stressed on an independent physician to ensure that differences in opinion with the police are controlled. Like in many other Asian countries Sri Lanka and Philippines too have criminalized torture however they still have issues with independent physicians and forensic examinations. Therefore there must be provisions enabling a second opinion if the victim and the independent physician are not satisfied. This bill must also have provisions to avail opportunities to physicians to regularly train on health check up and documentation preparation.

Article 23 provides a maximum of Rs 500,000/- as compensation to victims of torture and inhuman treatment. The principle of reparation has four elements – compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and non-repetition. These elements are mentioned as the fundamental principles and guidelines

on compensation rights of victims of torture in Article 14 of the Convention Against Torture and international human rights and humanitarian laws.

Article 14 (2) has provisions to provide physical examinations to the victim as and when necessary. The issue of rehabilitation has not been raised in the bill. The bill should also mention that the services of specialized physicians and psychologists and social services should be sought. The bill should mention that there should be no hindrances or discrimination for the victim to get free service in rehabilitation centres.

Article 24 has provisions for compensation implementation on the basis of the victim's request. The state has the responsibility of providing compensation as per the court's order and it is not necessary to have a separate provision for the victim to claim compensation. As per the language used in the current provision the Chief District Officer may decide to make provisions for immediate compensation to the victim as per the court's order.

Article 34 mentions that those who register false complaints can be fined Rs 10,000. Such provisions discourage victims from filing cases against abuse of public officials. This provision can be misused especially by authoritarian systems. The emphasis must not be based on the idea that the state's public officials can be prosecuted or that there might be too many false accusations. This provision therefore must be removed.

This investigation and recommendation was prepared by Advocate Hari Phunyal along with eight other advocates and inputs from women, Dalit, Madhesi, youth and other related pressure groups for the Nepal Constitution Foundation. The Foundation is grateful towards Shovakar Budathoki, Charan Prasai, Durga Sob, Jiwan Pariyar, Nirupma Yadav, Sambojan Limbu, Bharat Raj Gautam, Biswa Adhikari, Phurpa Tamang, Baburam Giri, Uday Sapkota, O P Sen Thakuri, Bhim Prakash Oli, Abhishek Adhikari, and Dr. Bipin Adhikari.

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All Talk & No Work

By ADITI ARYAL



When Malala Yousafzai was shot in her head by the Taliban, several people protested and demonstrated on the streets in Pakistan opposing the violent act. Even more people protested all over India after the Delhi gang rape incident. Their protests did prioritize the matters and made sure some actions were taken to take care of the happenings. In Nepal, 'Occupy Baluwatar' is the latest development in terms of civilized protests. Though they force the ones in charge to take necessary actions to address the situations immediately, protesting every time is not the solution for everything that happens.

Protests and strikes are nothing new in Nepal. We've seen terrible vandalism and protests leaving so many protesters and police injured. Tear gas, *lathi*, dirty water and everything possible were used to contain the crowd. And recently 'Occupy Baluwatar' has been in every paper for almost every day in the front page demanding justice for the needy. And, one day, the security forces indiscriminately attacked the peaceful protestors, even not sparing the disabled.

A recent revelation in a popular daily brought out how Chhori Maya Maharjan, a woman missing for so many months, is still untraced. Her daughters and relatives have been protesting silently since police stopped looking for her and the home minister kept mum all the time. Despite the daily protests in police stations and other places, Chhori Maya Maharjan has not been found and no justice is given to Sita Rai. Their families blame the police and the government for their lack of initiatives and concern.

Talking of silent protests, we could go back to Mahatma Gandhi and his fight for independence where Indians protested silently to let the British out of their country or to Occupy Wall Street; perhaps what led to Occupy Baluwatar; where silent protesters acted on consensus-based decisions made in general assemblies, which emphasized direct action over petitioning authorities for redress. In these instances, silent protests worked most probably because they involved the first world. In our part of the world, silent protests go unnoticed and taken for granted just like in the case of Chhori Maya Maharjan.

What is the use of protests that do no good to anyone? Malala Yousafzai cannot walk freely in Pakistan ever again because of the *fatwa* on her head. She could be shot again without any repentance. The Delhi victim will never return. Occupy Baluwatar spokespeople do talk about some developments in regards to cases of Sita Rai, however, nothing credible has been talked about. The Indian perpetrators have not heard of a verdict as yet. The Maoists-led government of Nepal took immediate action against Padam Kunwar, who slapped the party chairman and, in return, was not only brutally thrashed but also jailed for a few weeks. However, the government stayed mute when it came to the civilized protests such as 'Occupy Baluwatar'.

Despite the fact that these protests brought limelight into the cases and acted as eye openers to the general public, the government still turns a blind eye and deaf ear to them. The government is all talks and little work! The rulers were prompt to thrashing the journalists and threatening their lives in Dailekh resulting in the displacement of these journalists just to show their muscles, but they seem to be indifferent when it comes to real concerns put up in peaceful ways.

However, the ruling class needs to understand that the movements led by Gandhi or Mandela took time to materialize and bear the results but in the end they were successful to get what the people initially wanted. We live in the 21st century and things are much different than decades back. We live in the world of media and social networking, and sooner than later movements like 'Occupy Baluwatar' will bear the results. The rulers need to be intelligent and pragmatic to pay proper attention to such protests. If not, no matter what rhetoric they present, all will collapse like a deck of cards. ■

Thinking About The Next Generation

By BIDUSHI ADHIKARI



Living and studying outside the country, I lost touch with what was happening in Nepal. All that I had in mind were the busy streets, the noisy traffic, the good-for-nothing government, trash, and the newly-established malls. Therefore, when I came across a book in the school library based on Nepal, I instantly checked it out to find out what it was about.

The book was called Little Princes and it was written by the founder of Next Generation Nepal, a charity foundation, Conor Grennan. It talked about how his reluctant volunteering in an orphanage in Nepal led him on a journey to rescue hundreds of children who had been abandoned by child traffickers in Kathmandu during the Maoist insurgency. While I read the book, I was inspired and awed by his determination and strength to save these children who were strangers to the author.

The book described his journey to Humla, a remote District of Nepal from where the cold never leaves. I learned about families who struggle to survive in the bitter weather. I learned about the heartless Maoists barging in through the homes of these poor people, demanding money and food. I learned about the sadness and pain with which these poor parents gave away their children to men who promised the parents that their children would go to safety from the so called 'People's War.' The men were nothing but demons, asking for a great amount of money from the parents only to abandon their children in the streets of Kathmandu.

After learning of the Next Generation Nepal organization from the book, I decided to pay the website a visit. I found a section where it talked about ways to raise money for the organization to help it in its missions. I quickly went through the list and found something about a documentary on Paper Orphans. After I saw the video, I was frustrated. I was angry at the slow development of the country, the corruption, the ignorance, and the poverty.

So, if I had a great amount of money to give away, I would give it all to organizations like Next Generation Nepal that helped to make a difference in Nepal. I would donate it so that people who are suffering in remote places where the government doesn't reach would get some benefit out of it. I know this is a very ambitious thought for a teenager like me. What I don't know is why the government is not doing something to create an enabling environment for organizations like the Next Generation Nepal in the interest of our poor and deprived children.

Today, I know more about my country than I did yesterday. And tomorrow, I will try my hardest to make a difference in Nepal. But do we have a system that allows a youngster like me to involve in and contribute to various efforts that are being made by our government? ■

MOVIE REVIEW

Vishwaroop

Terrorism is no longer confined to a particular province, district or state. It's a worldwide concern, affecting every nation in some way or the other. Kamal Haasan's VISHWAROOP, therefore, is pertinent. This time around, the legendary actor helms a genre that's very Hollywoodish and — here's good news — he pulls it off quite well.

Attempting a nail-biting thriller can be tough. Scores of films have traversed the path in the past. However, Kamal Haasan shuns the tried and tested, humdrum stuff and comes up with a fare that prides itself of mesmerizing action, stunts and combat scenes and marries form [technique] and content [drama] to the delight of the spectators. The film is not without its share of hiccups — it's way too lengthy and the second half is sketchy — but the effort is laudable, nonetheless.



On the whole, VISHWAROOP is a Kamal Haasan show all the way. It has an interesting premise, superb combat scenes and Kamal Haasan's bravura act as its three aces. But a stretched second hour and far from dramatic finale dilute the impact. Yet, all said and done, those with an appetite for well-made thrillers might relish this effort! *(BollywoodHumgama)*

Russian Ball Dance Show "Karelian fascination"

The ball dance show "Karelian fascination" was organized at the Russian Center of Science and Culture to promote further strengthening of cultural and spiritual friendship between Nepal and Russia. The dance ensemble "Rhythm" from the Republic of Karelia of the Russian Federation performed at the event.



The ensemble was founded in 1993 by a professional choreographer Olga Zaporozhets and ever since has been acknowledged both in Russia and abroad, performing in Germany, France, the USA, Finland, Cuba, etc.

MOVIE PREVIEW

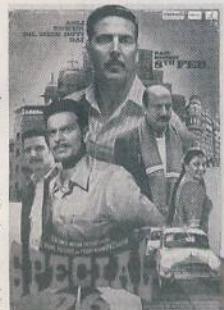
Special Chabbis

Genres: Action, Crime

Producer: ShabbirBoxwala, Kumar MangatPathak

Director: NeerajPandey

Cast :Akshay Kumar, KajalAgarwal, ManojBajpai, AnupamKher, Jimmy Sheirgill



Special Chabbis is a Bollywood heist drama film directed by NeerajPandey of A Wednesday fame. The film stars Akshay Kumar and KajalAggarwal in the lead roles with Jimmy Shergill, ManojBajpai and AnupamKher in supporting roles. The film is based on a real life group of con artists who pulled off many clever robberies during 1980's, and robbed famous businessmen and politicians by pretending to be the CBI or Income tax officers, on the pretext of conducting raids they would take away all the black money hoarded by them, the film also takes its concept from the real-life daring heist dated 19-March-1987 where the same group posing as CBI officers executed a daylight income tax raid on the Opera House branch of TribhovandasBhimiZaveri in Mumbai, and disappeared with jewellery worth lakhs. The movie is set in the early 1980's.

Release Date: 08-Feb-2013

Beautiful Creatures

Genres: Drama, Fantasy

Producer:

Director: Richard LaGrovencse

Cast : Alice Englert, Viola Davis, Emma Thompson



A hauntingly intense, supernatural love story set in the South, the film follows two star-crossed teenage lovers: Ethan (Alden Ehrenreich), a local boy, and a mysterious new girl, Lena (Alice Englert), who uncover dark secrets about their respective families, their history and their town.

Release Date: 15-Feb-2013

Badhshala

Genres: Drama

Producer: Mohan Dotel

Director: ManojPandit

Cast :AnupBaral, SaugatMalla, DayahangRai, Khagendra Lamichhane, ArpanThapa, Samuna KC



Badhshala is an upcoming feature film produced by SMASHING APPLE, Directed by ManojPandit, starring AnupBaral, SaugatMalla, DayahangRai, Khagendra Lamichhane, ArpanThapa, SaritaGiri, SamunaKC in the lead roles.

Release Date: 08-Mar-2013

Guinness Addict

By BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD



The way we highlight Guinness world records in Nepal, it seems we are obsessed by these records. We are always trying to figure who has the Guinness record for the shortest man, for the tallest man, for the person with the longest hair, for the person with the longest nail and so forth. It seems, fortunately for our insatiable appetite in these matters, there seems to be no limit to these world records.

And here is one to add to our list. Fifty-seven year old Keith Furman holds the world record for the most number of inclusions in the Guinness world record book. This man is certainly a person that would be one of the most fascinating people given our appetite for these world records. He has a total of 131 records to his name. Many are just stunning feats in being able to bear pain and persevere. In London he walked thirty-three feet in the world's heaviest shoes which weighed 323 pounds.

One of his most memorable record is for somersaults. He did 8,341 somersaults over 12 miles which took him ten hours and thirty minutes. He had cramps, vertigo, and vomiting throughout most of the distance, but he kept going. Endurance clearly is his forte. He has clapped for fifty hours non-stop. Each clap had to be audible at a hundred yards. Contrary to what we may think, you can't just go out and do something arduous and call up the Guinness people. To own a record you have to break one that exists, undertake one that Guinness has created, or propose one to Guinness and seek their approval.



Guess what, most proposals are rejected.

Furman also attempted to climb a mountain near Machu Pichu in South America on stilts. Perhaps we can entice him to come here and try out his stilts on Sagarmatha. Or perhaps climb an 8000 m peak walking backwards if he fails the stilts, what with the slippery slopes on the mountains.

In all likelihood just like world-famous mountain climbers who have been tested for physical strength and ability and found to have nothing physiologically extraordinary, Furman (five feet ten inches in height) too probably does not have any measurable fitness quantity that sets him apart. So what's helping him break records even at the ripe age of fifty seven?

For sure his threshold for pain is very high. And he is extraordinarily motivated. Clearly these two qualities make a great combination

for breaking Guinnessport (as it is called) records. But Furman also uses something else: the teachings of an Indian Guru, Sri Chinmoy, who changed Furman's first name Keith to Ashrita (protected by God).

Sri Chinmoy, who settled in the US, believed that extreme physical pursuit offered the means of transcending the self. Furman took this to message to heart-literally. When he is totally exhausted, he says he meditates on a flame within his heart. Clearly many things in medical science are inexplicable, perhaps ineffable. ■

PRITHIVI MALLA

Emerging Star

After successfully defending his title, Prithvi Malla, 15, has shown that he has the talent and capability to be a Golf star of Nepal in the future. In Hyundai Open Golf Tournament, Malla thrashed out his competitor to defend his title. Altogether 75 golfers took part in the tournament held at Tribhuwan Army Officers' Golf Course.

Playing in the senior category with 14 handicap, Prithvi accumulated 41 remarkable stableford points to be declared the winner.

"Prithvi is a determined, dedicated junior golf star, who is confident with his game," said a golfer. Prithvi has won many other golf tournaments and he has been nominated in 10 best golf juniors in 'Nick Faldo Golf Chain', organized by Royal Nepal Golf Club, as well.



Lt. General Nepal Bhusan Chand Handing Shield to Malla

Chief of Army Staff General Gaurav Shamsher Rana, other army Generals and club members participated in the game.

President of the club Lt. General Nepal Bhusan Chand awarded the winners. ■

SPOTLIGHT

Wednesday, February 06, 2013

Home Politics National International News Economy Opinion Interview Tourism Health Review Trends Issue



Unity In Hostility

At a time when Nepal's two major political parties, Nepali Congress and CPN-UML, which ordered Nepal Army to come out against the Maoist insurgency, are launching an agit...



Columns

Dr. Bipin Adhikari



Abijit Sharma



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न्यूनतम वार्षिक ब्याजदर

१०.८०%*

पहिलो ३ वर्ष ब्याजदर परिवर्तन नहने सुनिश्चितता

हिमालयन बैंक आवास कर्जा

• घर खरिद • घर निर्माण • घर पुनर्निर्माण



प्रमुख आकर्षणहरू

- कर्जा सीमा रु. ५ लाख देखि रु १ करोड सम्म
- कर्जा अवधि २० वर्ष सम्म
- अनिश्चित ब्याजदरको जोखिमबाट मुक्त
- तेश्रो वर्षपछि मात्र ब्याजदर floating हुने
- कर्जा भुत्तानी समान मासिक किस्ताको आधारमा (EMI basis)
- कर्जा सेवा शुल्कमा २५% को विशेष छुट

यो योजना ३
महिनाको लागि
मात्र



हिमालयन बैंक लिमिटेड
Himalayan Bank Limited
THE POWER TO LEAD