

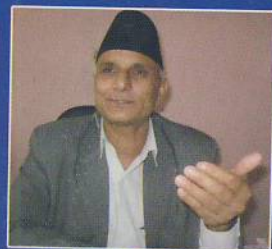
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NEW SPOTLIGHT

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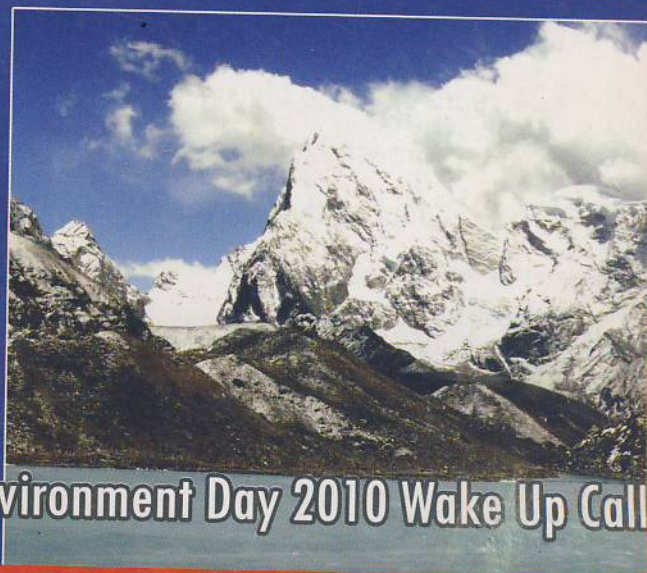
Face to Face:
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National Politics

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Special Report: World Environment Day 2010 Wake Up Call

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From the Editor

It has been a year since *New Spotlight* fortnightly was launched. We launched the magazine with a view to give an objective analysis of national events which we believe many readers are denied despite the mushroom growth of media in recent years. The first year has been very rewarding for us. We have received very positive response from our valued readers. It gives us a great pleasure to share with you that within a very short span we have been able to win the hearts of many. We have sought to introduce some changes in the magazine which we believe would go down well with your tastes. We expect your valuable feedback so that we could make further improvements.

Keshab

Keshab Poudel
Editor



New SPOTLIGHT : The First Issue

NEW SPOTLIGHT FORTNIGHTLY

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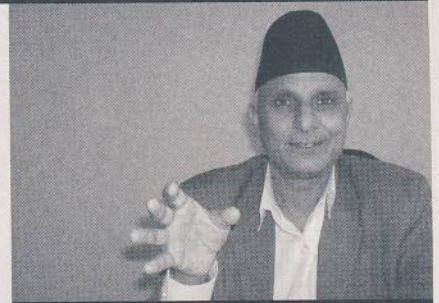
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First Bangladeshi Climbs Everest

By ABIJIT SHARMA

After 13-year-old U.S mountaineer Jordan Romero became the youngest man ever to scale Mt. Everest, a Bangladeshi youth set another record for his country: Musa Ibrahim became the first Bangladeshi to summit the world's tallest peak.

"I think this is a great achievement for someone who is from a non-mountainous country like Bangladesh," said Ibrahim.

Bangladesh is mostly made up of

lowlands. Chittagong Hills in the southeast, the Low Hills of Sylhet in the northeast and highlands in the north and northwest are the only high points in the country.

The Embassy of Bangladesh organized a reception to welcome and honor Ibrahim on 29th May, also known as the International Everest Day.

The reception was attended by Bangladeshi dignitaries and their families. on the occasion, Ambassador Dr. Neem Chandra Bhowmik congratulated Ibrahim on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh.

"This is indeed a matter of pride for our country," he said.

Yeti Airlines Green Farwest Campaign

Yeti Airlines has started Green Farwest Project Under its corporate social responsibility program in participation with their General Sales Agent in Dhangadi- Raakia Travels. The airlines will be contributing Rs.20 from its one way ticket and Rs.40 from its two-way ticket of the Kathmandu-Dhangadhi-Kathmandu route to the community forests of Dhangadhi, Rajpur, Doti and Kanchanpur. The airlines has targeted to plant 1000 trees in one year.

Missions Welcome CA Term Extension

The United States welcomed the extension of the Constituent Assembly while lauding the willingness of political leaders to put the national interest ahead of partisan politics.

"We applaud that commitment. For the Constituent Assembly now to complete the important work of drafting a new constitution, the political leadership of all parties must continue

the dialogue to ensure the final implementation of critical issues related to the peace process, including the integration and rehabilitation of former Maoist combatants," it stated.

"Given the vigorous political debate of recent days it would be easy to forget the tremendous progress made over the past four years in Nepal. Now, with the goal of constitutional democracy in sight, we urge leaders to intensify negotiations on concluding the peace process and drafting the constitution. We join the people of Nepal in hoping that their leaders will continue to demonstrate the statesmanship that is critical at this important time in the nation's history."

Similarly, the Embassy of Japan in Kathmandu extended heartfelt congratulations on behalf of the government of Japan to the government and the people of Nepal on the auspicious occasion of the Republic Day.

"Two years ago today, the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly was held

and newly elected members of the Assembly adopted the resolution that declared Nepal as a Federal Democratic Republic. Japan believes that Republic Day is the best day to renew the commitment that the Constituent Assembly has promised to the people of Nepal," a statement by the Embassy said.

The Embassy said Japan was firmly committed and will continue to support Nepal's efforts in this endeavor, and also confident that our friendly and cooperative relations will be further strengthened in the days ahead.

Likewise, Representative of the UN Secretary-General Karin Landgren welcomed the extension of the Constituent Assembly, which secured the continuation of the peace process and was made possible through intensive dialogue and readiness to compromise.

Trade Off: Climate Change & Poverty

At a time when governments and many other actors and agencies are reorienting their work towards how climate change adaptation and mitigation measures can be integrated into overall development and different sectoral policies, a group of 25 experts of 8 countries of Europe, South-east Asia and South Asia has reinforced the critical urgency of identifying and strengthening the strategies to combat poverty in the context of climate change and rapid globalization.

Participating in a two-day International Dialogue on Trade, Poverty and Climate Change in Kathmandu, they said, though difficult, it was critical "to focus on and assess the nature of impacts of trade and climate change on the poor, especially living not only in small and vulnerable economies, small-island developing states and least-developed countries, but also in emerging economies".

Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, Executive Chairman, SAWTEE, said that while there is consensus that the impact of climate change is not uniform and the poor are being and will be affected more severely, a key challenge lies in enhancing the coping capacity of the poor. He emphasized the need to explore ways to create synergy between the trade regime and the climate regime and to



Memoranda Signed

Two separate Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were signed by the Embassy of India, Kathmandu with concerned executing agencies of Government of Nepal and the beneficiary organizations for providing the grant assistance:

The understandings include NRs. 3.74 crores to Himalaya Campus, Khandwari, Sankhuwasabha for construction of triple storied campus building, boundary wall and provision of furniture.

Similarly, an agreement was signed to provide NRs. 4.45 crores for construction of cold storage building with boundary wall and provision of machinery and equipment in Bhadrapur Municipality in Jhapa. Due to lack of proper cold storage facility, farmers of Jhapa district have to sell their products at low prices soon after harvesting, while having to pay higher price for seeds and their own consumption during off season.

EP Delegation Shares Hopes, Concerns

A 10-member delegation of the European Parliament led by Ms Jean Lambert completed its visit to Nepal. The delegation met ministers, high level officials, civil society members, media persons and business leaders. They also met with the leading businessmen and industrialists affiliated with the European Economic Chamber of Trade, Commerce and Industry (EEC) - Nepal.

During the meeting with the EEC-Nepal, members of the European Parliament delegation showed their concerns about increased socio-economic difficulties and political crisis in Nepal.

Team leader Ms. Jean Lambert, a British, showed concerns about the

political situation, constituent assembly, climate change and development in a changed socio-economic environment globally. President of EEC-Nepal Dibya Mani Rajbhandhari spoke about Nepal's situation in the private sector.

Nonimmigrant US Visa Application Fees Increase

Starting June 4, 2010, new visa fees will come into effect for different nonimmigrant visa categories. The U.S. Department of State is increasing fees to ensure sufficient resources to cover the rising cost of processing nonimmigrant visas. This increase applies both to nonimmigrant visas placed in passports and to border crossing cards issued to certain applicants in Mexico.

"The State Department is required to recover, as far as possible, the cost of processing nonimmigrant visas through the collection of the application fees. For a number of reasons, including new security enhancements, the \$131 fee set on January 1, 2008 no longer covers the current, actual cost of processing nonimmigrant visas," the release said.

Under the new schedule of fees, applicants for all non-petition-based visas, including BI/B2 tourist and business visitor visas and all student and exchange visitor (F, M and J) visas, will pay a fee of \$140. Applicants for petition-based visas, such as skilled worker, performers and religious workers (H, P and R), will pay a fee of \$150.

KOICA Dispatches Medical Doctors

Korea International Cooperation

Agency (KOICA) has dispatched three Korean Medical Doctors (Physician, Surgeon and Anesthetist) to work in Nepal for two and half years. They arrived in Katmandu on May 25, 2010 and were welcomed by the Resident Representative, Ms. Youngah Doh and other officials of KOICA Nepal Office at the Tribhuvan International Airport.

These new Doctors will be assigned in Korea Nepal Friendship Hospital, Thimi and Bhaktapur Hospital and will share Korea's experience and knowledge with Nepalese people.

KOICA doctors and volunteers are receiving positive feedback from the recipient organization as well as the local people and have been serving to support the friendship and cultural ties between Nepal and Republic of Korea. KOICA is responding to requests from many Nepalese organizations in various fields by increasing the number of KOICA volunteers to Nepal.

NHRC Expresses Concern

NHRC Nepal has expressed its deep concerns over the whereabouts of Dr. Bhakta Man Shrestha, Executive Director of BPKMC Hospital in Bharatpur, Chitawan; he has gone missing since Tuesday night. NHRC Urges the Government of Nepal to find out the status of Dr. Shrestha as soon as possible. Similarly, NHRC Nepal also expresses its concerns over the closure of hospital nationwide on Sunday as summoned by Nepal Medical Association. This act will further deprive the use of health rights of the service-recipients. ■



The UK Minister for International Development Alan Duncan with DFID Nepal Chief Sarah Sanyahumbi (Left) at Tribhuvan International Airport.



NEPALI PRESS

to issue such directive because there were no one to take part even in funerals. On May 18, an elderly person had passed away in Manang VDC. Due to lack of people to take part in his funeral, the VDC had to resort to issue the directive calling back those who had gone to pluck the herb. Karma Gurung, a hotelier, said that the VDCs have decided to impose Rs 50,000 as fine for those who left their homes despite the directive. Locals say that of the 13 VDCs of the district, the herb can be found in 10. The Yarsha gumba – the herb is used in traditional Chinese medicine and is thought to have strong aphrodisiacal qualities fetches high price in the market – are found in high altitude. They are abundant in places like Yakkharka, Yaphur, Tarke, Chyanglephu, Basecamp, Sangkhol and Upallo lake that are above 4000 meter altitude, according to a local youth Pemba Dorje Gurung. He had to return to village after his grand father died. He said he had collected 58 pieces of the herb and would again return to the mountains after the funeral of grand father. Of the Yarsha gumba found in Nepal, those found in Manang and Dolpa districts are said to be of highest quality. One piece of the herb fetches Rs 250 in Manang, according to locals. After the Nar killings of last year – when locals were accused of killing people who came from outside the village for collecting the herb – the non-Mananges have been prohibited from collecting the herb from the district. A police post has been set up to monitor the situation. According to Santosh Sherchan of Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), the people from Manang VDC and Tanki Manang VDC have to pay Rs 7000 each to get permission to collect the herb while those from other VDCs of the district have to pay Rs 10,000. Binod Gurung, a local, said that outsiders who have lived in the district for more than six months can also get such permission. Because of handsome earning, people of Manang have left all other works to concentrate on collecting Yarsha. Nepal Samacharpatra daily, May 30, 2010 ■

India obstacle in peace process: UK

The United Kingdom has concluded that India's political intervention is the obstacle in the ongoing peace process of Nepal. Immediately upon arriving at the Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) on Wednesday (May 26), the visiting UK minister for international development, Alan Duncan was secretly briefed by UK ambassador Andrew Hall who told him that India was the obstacle in the peace process. 'India is obstructing the peace process of Nepal,' the ambassador told Duncan, adding, 'We westerners are looking at it seriously.' Sources have said that during his meeting with Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, Duncan indirectly suggested him to resign. But, PM Nepal said he was not willing to entertain any preconditions and that the term of CA must be extended. Duncan returned home on Friday (May 28). High-level government sources have revealed that India has been piqued after the ambassadors of European Union called for the formation of national unity government and extension of CA to carry forward the peace process. "India wants to be singularly dominant on Nepal's affairs. But the present activism by the Europeans and Americans is not to their liking," a high level government official who did not want to be named told Naya Patrika daily. The 10-member delegation of European parliamentarians who met PM Nepal last Thursday also requested him to clear the way by stepping down. "But the PM was angry at the European parliamentarians," an official said. The delegation then met Foreign Minister

Sujata Koirala and again made the request to create an atmosphere of consensus. The United States, Switzerland, Norway and European countries including UK, France, Denmark, Germany and EU's Kathmandu-based ambassadors have met with the PM, Foreign Minister and leaders of Maoists, Nepali Congress and Unified Marxist Leninist to request for the extension of CA's term, and formation of national unity government. Following the suggestion of resignation by European ambassadors, PM Nepal gave an interview to UK daily 'Financial Times' where he asked the western diplomats to 'mind their business.' Embassy sources have said they were dissatisfied with the PM for making such remarks. **Naya Patrika daily, May 28, 2010**

Villagers march in horde to pluck Yarsha

The villages in Manang district sport deserted looks these days. The villagers are in a great rush to collect the wild herb Yarsha gumba. The entire youth folk of the villages of this mountainous district have marched to surrounding fields to pick the herb. The time between mid-March to mid-May is a prime season for collecting Yarsha gumba. Since the workers, too, have left to collect the herb, the hotels in Manang remain shut. Hundreds of these people have camped in the foothills of the mountains that are replete with the herb. Things have come to such a pass that the Manang VDC and Tanki Manang VDC of the district had to issue a public directive asking people not to leave their homes for three days. They were forced

About CA Extension

Dr. Tilak Rawal



Ending weeks of speculation and confusion, the three major parties, holding a two-thirds majority in the Constituent Assembly, inked a three-point deal little before the expiry time of the current tenure of the CA i.e. midnight of 28th May. The deal that consisted of a) extension of CA by one year, b) commitment to consensus and cooperation to take the peace process to a logical end, and c) resignation of pm as soon as possible to facilitate formation of a unity government, paved way for the approval of the government bill that sought extension of the CA tenure by one more year through constitutional amendment. The approval was preceded by withdrawal of two protest notes, one by the Maoist, registered earlier opposing the allegedly one sided amendment proposal. UCPN Maoist had made it clear that they would not support the process of extending the CA's tenure if consensus was not reached. Maoists were against this government right from the beginning and took resort to different ways and means to dislodge it, the most notable ones being the huge gathering of Maoist supporters in Kathmandu on the first of May and the indefinite nationwide general strike thereafter. Thousands of supporters of the party thronged the streets of Kathmandu and other notable places in Nepal, bringing the nation to a grinding halt. The Maoists were blamed for the sufferings of people during band and the government for remaining a silent spectator showing ample signs of helplessness. Wisdom prevailed on the Maoist leadership that they withdrew the strike on the sixth day following intense internal urging (pressure) and requests of external friends. Some set back suffered by the party notwithstanding, Maoists were not a total loser in that they made use of the May Day celebration and the period thereafter to show to the world one more time that they are the largest political force in Nepal and can abide by the rule of the game in a democratic fashion. Nobody emerged victorious but the loser (national economy) and the sufferers (the poor) were there.

Seemingly impressed by the conduct of the protest programs, some diplomats suggested that the Maoists had offered a window of opportunity by withdrawing strike and urged the government to be flexible while negotiating with them. In an interaction programme with intellectuals, industrialist, business community and members of the civil society, Maoist supreme Prachanda admitted

that the general strike was a mistake and went on to assure the gathering that they would dismantle YCL barracks in five days and categorize their combatants by mid-June. Unfortunately, the political environment has not improved since then, contrary to the expectation, and YCL and Maoists combatants remain unshaken in their respective locations despite Prachand's assurances. On the whole, flexibility shown by the former rebels has earned them some dividends in the form of sympathy even from the irritated, during the strike period, urban people.

The deal struck and approved by little less than six hundred CA members on Friday night is less likely to clear the impasse because the three parties involved in the negotiation have begun to define the deal in their own ways. While the Maoists want Mr. Nepal's resignation before anything else, the remaining two parties in the deal (NC and UML) want fulfillment of the promises made by the former rebels, which would pave way for reaching the peace process to a logical end. People are confused whether resignation would be followed by consensus building or there has to be consensus on major issues prior to PM's resignation. It looks like the nation was impregnated on Friday night by top leaders with new stalemate. Looks like there was a tacit understanding amongst negotiating leaders to avert the constitutional crisis and then revert to their divergent positions. In the face of the unexpected stalemate, people, including a large number of CA members, are also wondering whether it will be possible to draft the new constitution in the extended time period. Let us not forget that people, who accused CA members of squandering public funds without contributing in a meaningful way to constitution drafting, appeared at the last minute in favor of an extension because they did not want the nation to be pushed into a dark tunnel. Looking at the slogan chanting female members of the CA and initiation of a signature campaign by members belonging to a major party to pressurize the leadership, it seems the members belonging to different parties can go to any extent to ensure preparation of the new constitution in the extended time period. If the new deal-related stalemate continues for long, existing inter-party differences could lead to intra-party polarization because CA members are increasingly becoming conscious that they are accountable to the watchful people, in addition to their parties..

Thrash out your differences soon, Trio, lest you are neglected by your own followers.

Maoists have to fully believe that they can afford to remain the largest political party in the country through ballots and do not have to take resort to bullets as was the case more or less in the CA election held two years ago. People, therefore, do not understand why the party leadership should not immediately take up measures to resolve issues related to combatants in different cantonments and YCL's paramilitary structure. Further, the confiscated property should be returned without delay because no official document of the Maoist, including the budget last year, talks of taking property away without proper compensation. Likewise, PM Nepal and the parties supporting him, mainly NC, should not forget that the Maoists embarked upon the protest program of May with a single agenda seeking Madhav Nepal's resignation and they withdrew the strike without accomplishing the goal. Further, the Maoists also signed the deal on the 28th of May in the hope that Mr. Nepal would resign in couple of days, which does not seem to be in the offing. If it is difficult for PM to resign, as a conciliatory gesture he could step aside as head of the government, without dissolving the cabinet, and declare himself a full time negotiator to break the stalemate. Mention here should be made of the policy statement made by then PM G.P. Koirala in the newly elected CA, stating he would resign, went a long way in calming down the furious Maoists who were getting skeptical about smooth transfer of power to them. Although it did take time to form a new government that statement did indeed assuage doubts brewing in the Maoist camp. If intentions are good, both sides should have no problems in finding a workable solution. Leaders, please keep at the back of your head that ordinary CA members are getting increasingly embarrassed for their current failure and circumstances could force them into taking a course of action independent of their parties.

CA Extension The Days After

The extension of the constituent assembly has deferred – not resolved — an impending political crisis which could return with even larger dimension before the CA runs out of the artificial oxygen it got at midnight on May 28.

By SUSHIL SHARMA

As predicted in these columns a week before the climax of a *kalabihin natak*, the constituent assembly has been given artificial oxygen.

The move also lived up to the *New Spotlight's* headline: Extension of Confusion.

Even as many heaved a sigh of relief over the extension, the day after the midnight deal saw the nation thrown into an utter confusion.

Was the prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal supposed to step down “within a few days” as claimed by the Maoists? Or the Maoist converting into

“a civilian outfit” was supposed to precede the resignation, as argued by the Nepali Congress and the UML?

The signatories were back at their old habits: making contradictory claims. Predictably enough, given the deep deficit of mutual trust.

The NC and the UML have pointed



Political Leaders at CA: Supporting Extension

to the “letters” of the three-point deal which in no way requires the PM to step down instantly.

The Maoists have been singing the “spirits” song, referring to what say was a gentleman’s agreement to vacate the PM’s chair within five days.

As the supposed deadline drew to a close, the embattled prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal suddenly looked emboldened: “I have no knowledge of any “unwritten agreement.”

There was no hint of the prime minister’s resignation even as the supposed deadline expired on Tuesday.

The Maoists have on their part hinted at a fresh agitation.

“We will be forced to hit the streets,” blasted senior leader C.P.Gajurel.

Street agitation just before the monsoon and the farming season in the predominantly agricultural Nepal is normally ruled out.

What is not ruled out is the further deepening of confusion to make the future even more ominous than it was feared on the eve of the CA extension.

Irrespective of what exactly transpired at midnight on May 28, the government’s

fate now hangs in balance.

It could collapse any time. It could also last a few more months or even the entire period of the extended life of CA, depending on the nature and the extent of the wrangling within the major parties.

Post-CA extension, the parties stand more divided than before.

The so called soft-line Baburam Bhattarai camp has upstaged the hard-line Mohan Vaidya camp in the Maoist party, with the ever-vacillitating chairman Prachanda caught in the middle. For now.

Feeling vanquished, the Vaidya camp will spare no chance to get at the victorious Bhattarai.

No wonder, none of them, even Prachanda, did share the dais with Bhattarai at the Republic Day function at Khulla Mancha where the Maoist draft constitution was made public.

As organizationally-weak Bhattarai makes yet another covert attempt at Baluwatar following the triumph over the rivals in the party, he will not be surprised to find hurdles from within.

The extended life of the CA could

well see the death of the Maoist party as a unified party, according to knowledgeable sources.

The UML faces even more serious internal crisis.

Emerging from the edge of a vertical split amidst the call for the PM’s resignation ahead of the CA extension, the UML now braces for yet another turf war between chairman Jhlnath Khanal and K.P.Oli who dashed off to Delhi immediately after he finalised the deal with Prachanda for the extended CA tenure.

As Oli eyes the country’s chief executive office with the tacit backing of the influential neighbouring countries, Khanal understandably will feel the heat.

Having been sidelined by a loser Madhav Kumar Nepal (in the CA elections) before, Khanal will find it simply indigestible if another loser pipped him to the top post.

Also warming up for the top post is the Nepali Congress.

Surprisingly united amidst the present crisis, the party goes to its general convention later this year for the first time

without the formidable Girija Prasad Koirala.

With Sushil Koirala more interested in the party job vacated by the late leader, it's a tussle between Sher Bahadur Deuba and Ram Chandra Poudel.

Irrespective of who does emerge as the front-runner (as of now Deuba is said to have edge over Poudel), the cracks within the largest "democratic" party will not help stabilise the national politics.

Given the internal problems of all

major parties external re-alignment is inevitable.

The shape of such realignment is not clear yet, but the attempts at weakening the ultra leftists and strengthening the ultra rightists do appear clear on the cards.

In the extended year of the CA, the three major parties may not be the lone internal players.

They will in all likelihood witness a fourth player emerging as a formidable force. The ousted king is on a dramatic

comeback trail, riding on the Hindu bandwagon. He is now said to have the backing of the forces that led to his ouster four years ago.

Said an insider, "the move is aimed at taming the Maoist tiger after the mainstream parties failed to do the job."

With big parties remaining ever fragmented and political re-alignments in the making, the constitution-making will be the first casualty.

That may open up the proverbial Pandora's Box. Before May 28, 2011.

Powers Play

On the day Nepal averted what many feared could have been a major political disaster, two South Asian neighbours witnessed devastating terrorist attacks.

Even as the three major parties inked a midnight deal to extend the tenure of the constituent assembly in Nepal, a deadly explosion cut short the life of scores of innocent people on board a train in eastern India.

A little farther, in Pakistan, scores of others were killed in a deadly attack on a mosque.

Its most sensitive zone, Tibet, witnessed the worst violence last year.

After the Khampa rebellion early in the early Seventies, China has never been as cautious on its Tibet front as in recent years.

With the neighbours in turmoil Nepal can hardly hope to remain free from its impact.

The political instability in the present fragile transition has witnessed an unprecedented international presence in the Himalayan nation

behind the Madhav Kumar Nepal government throughout the crisis, China kept a safe distance even while keeping a close watch on the fast unfolding events.

But like its rival, India, China was not feeling comfortable at the activism of the European Union countries in its neighborhood.

The visiting British minister, Alan Duncan, reportedly went on to dub India as "obstacle to peace process".

The EU countries appeared to have a clear tilt towards the Maoists. They even suggested that the prime minister stepped down to clear way for a Maoist-led government.

This prompted the prime minister to ask them "to mind their business."

Clearly, Nepal has become a playground for international players.

Such a game prompted the late B.P.Koirala to ring alarm for Nepal's survival, in the mid-Seventies.

The cold war is over. But the game international players play has become deadlier, especially in South Asia to which Nepal belongs.

Unless the national actors put their acts together international players are bound to raise the level of game.

This will certainly have a profound impact on the future political course of Nepal.

As things stand now, Nepal is in for a prolonged instability. Constitution or no constitution within the extended deadline will make little difference.

By **SUSHIL SHARMA** with
ABIJIT SHARMA



Foreign Diplomats with PM Nepal: The game they play

There has been no news of major trouble in the northern neighbor, China, in the recent past.

But the dragon land is no longer immune to the menace of terrorism.

sandwiched between the two mighty rival neighbours.

This has been evident in the crisis preceding the CA extension.

If India silently threw its weight

MIDNIGHT DRAMA

The Inside Story

By SAROJ DAHAL

Throughout the day, on May 28, the entire country was caught in a gripping suspense over the fate of the constituent assembly.

But, to Prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal and the top leaders of the UML and the Nepali Congress, the suspense had ended the previous day.

Although they too had moments of hiccups on the D-Day, they had little doubt about the eventual outcome.

The reason? The consent given by the Maoist supremo Prachanda to the CA extension the previous night. In three-hour marathon private meeting at his Naya Bazar residence with NC leaders Krishna Sitaula and Amaresh Kumar Singh.

The duo had relayed the message to the prime minister and the top UML leaders the same night.

Aware of the Maoist design to let the CA dissolve but keep the peace process going, Sitaula warned Prachanda that the peace process would in way survive in the absence of the CA. And that the former rebels would have to face the national army head-on.

The one-time Maoist confidant's warning did the trick. Prachanda became amenable to the CA extension.

Not fully assured, Sitaula also briefed "pro-Maoist civil society" leaders, Devendra Raj Pandey and Khagendra Sangraula about the dire consequences for the Maoists.

After listening to Pandey and Sangraula, Prachanda made up his mind on the extension.

But he kept the cards close to his chest for a better bargain with the ruling parties. At the meeting of the three top leaders at the CA building on May 28 mornings, Prachanda stood his grounds on the PM's resignation ahead of the CA extension.

Sitaula reminded him of the promise he made the previous night.

Prachanda countered, "I did not make a promise, I only promised to consider it (unconditional CA extension)."

According to a Maoist standing committee member, "Prachanda went to the meeting with a clear plan of standing firm on the call for the PM's resignation till the last minute and an unconditional support to the extension if the

THE DEAL

1. We are firmly committed to consensus and cooperation to take the peace process to a logical conclusion and to immediately complete the remaining tasks of the peace process and accomplish the historic responsibility of writing a new constitution.
2. Though significant progress has been made toward constitution drafting process, all the works have not been completed yet. So we have agreed to extend the term of the Constituent Assembly by on year.
3. We are ready to move ahead on the basis of consensus to accomplish the above-mentioned responsibilities and works as soon as possible by forming a national consensus government. We would like to make it clear that the prime minister of the present coalition government is ready to resign without delay.

resignation did not come till then."

He however privately assured Sitaula of keeping his promise.

Sitaula had subsequently assured some of the CA members of his party about the eventual extension.

That Prachanda had already made up his mind became clear from his consultation with senior lawyer Daman Nat Dhungana.

He had asked Dhungana how late the CA session can start to allow for the extension.

Dhungana replied that even if the CA started just one minute before it was due to expire at 12 am, the extension process could go ahead.

"So, Prachanda went on to wait and bargain until almost the last minute" according to a Maoist standing committee member.

Ten minutes before the deadline, he gave the consent but received in return a pledge from the deciding negotiator K.P.Oli for a resignation of the prime minister "without delay."

Earlier, a three-member team consisting of Krishna Bahadur Mahara from the Maoist party, Bhim Rawal from the UML and Sitaula from the Nepali Congress had had reached closer to a deal.

They were stuck over differences in the phrasing of the deal. Mahara wanted "(PM's) resignation" mentioned, while the other two insisted on "(PM) clearing the way"

In between, the Maoist party, through the UML chairman Jhalnath Khanal and the dissident vice chairman Bamdev Gautam, had succeeded in getting the two-thirds of the UML CA members sign for the PM's resignation.

The move was clearly aimed at intensifying the pressure on the PM who seemed to lose confidence despite assurance of CA extension only the previous night.

Nervous, prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal threatened to resort to the extreme move and subsequently rushed to the President Ram Baran Yadav while K.P. Oli went to the CA building to hold further negotiations with Prachanda.

The PM did discuss nothing more than the political developments, but speculations of an emergency had already hit the political market.

This had intended effect. The Maoists also started to become jittery over their stance, with the CA's expiry fast approaching.

As the clock continued ticking, Prachanda and Oli went into a recluse, causing some consternation among the NC leaders.

The two leaders emerged from the closed-door meeting with a three-point deal that sealed all speculations doing the rounds throughout the week.

Curtains were down. The Constituent Assembly was extended. ■

China, India and Nepal: Intrigue on Top of the World

Charu Lata Hogg

Nestling in a valley on top of the world, wedged between two emerging global powers, the small and seemingly neutral former Hindu kingdom of Nepal has not always figured on the antenna of international intelligence agencies. In recent months however, a strategic impasse resulting from a political logjam between Maoists and rival parties, has created a situation where the young republic has become a playground for competing intelligence agencies vying for a foothold in the politics of the fledgling democracy. Sharpened by India's political rivalry with neighbouring China and Pakistan, and of critical importance to Washington in its complex relationship with Beijing, Nepal has suddenly acquired what some describe as a permissive security environment.

Nepal's strategic importance stems from the fact that it virtually forms a buffer between rivals India and China. Although traditionally, Nepal has been under New Delhi's shadow - all its fuel, most of its military equipment and almost all cultural influence comes from India - this is slowly shifting in favour of China.

India and China's goals in Nepal are shared. Both fear destabilization from Nepal and feel the need to influence it. Both want Nepal's political situation to stabilize and are worried about security.

India's concerns stem from the fact that any agitation on the Nepalese side of their shared border inevitably spills over to India and the possibility that Pakistan-trained militants could move through Nepal.

China sees Nepal as crucial to the security of Tibet as Nepal has traditionally been a crossing point for Tibetan refugees. It seeks support from the Nepali government in controlling the twenty thousand Tibetan exiles based there, who often protest against Chinese policies in their homeland.

Treaty too far

Chinese influence remains near the top of Delhi's concerns over Nepal. An unprecedented 38 Chinese delegations have visited Nepal since last year, so India took a dim view of the proposed return visit to China by Maoist chief and former Prime Minister Prachanda to sign a treaty that mimics the 1950 Treaty of Friendship between Nepal and India, a document unique to the relationship between the two countries.

India's concern reflects a genuine fear that any international presence in Nepal will inevitably reduce its almost vice-like grip on the country. This would seriously challenge its position in the neighbourhood and restrict its scope for intervention.

Even though India upholds the 'One China' principle on Tibet, and pledges to prevent the Dalai Lama and his followers from engaging in 'anti-China political activities in India', simmering Tibetan unrest could upset its bigger neighbour.

India is said to use its operatives to gather information on the activities of the United Nations and the Chinese, Pakistani and American presence in Nepal. Under a 2006 deal that ended a decade-long civil war between the government and the Maoists, the United Nations Mission to Nepal (UNMIN) supervised the former combatants' compliance with an agreement on their arms and armies. India is charged with stoking the controversy over alleged UNMIN humanitarian contacts with Madhesi armed groups in its own state of Bihar even while ironically, it is said to have directly supported

Nestling in a valley on top of the world, wedged between two emerging global powers, the small and seemingly neutral former Hindu kingdom of Nepal has not always figured on the antenna of international intelligence agencies.

the same insurgents.

Despite agreeing to the presence of a UN human rights monitoring body in Nepal, India is categorical that it does not want extended UN Security Council attention in its backyard given its sensitivities on Kashmir. India has also vociferously denied UNMIN the opportunity to do much more towards the process of army integration than house the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) in cantonments, and store its weapons.

The Terai plains of southeast Nepal bordering India are said to be the focus of India's greatest covert involvement. The political complexity in this region and profusion of small, violent groups have continued to increase, primarily posing a challenge to the Maoists and other centrist parties.

India is charged with funding the establishment of the Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP) and the Madhesi Janadikhar Forum (MJF, generally called the Forum). The Indian media has also alleged that Pakistani intelligence agents are using the porous border to transfer counterfeit Indian currency from Nepal to India.

Tibet Test

If it once regarded Nepal with sporadic interest, China is now making its influence more keenly felt, partly because of its overriding concern that Nepal could become an epicentre of Tibetan agitation, particularly in a post-Dalai Lama era, and partly as another area where its traditional rivalry with India could play out.

Beijing sees Nepal's Tibet policy as a litmus test of their friendship. China insists that the potential for instability in Tibet stems more from the internationalisation of the Free Tibet campaign than from any perceived or real deficiencies in its policies. Chinese officials have been candid in partly attributing the scale of the 2008 protests in Nepal to international involvement in Nepal's peace

process. Nepali governments of all political hues have had little choice but to kowtow to their powerful neighbour's primary demand. Earlier this year, Chinese state media reported that the two countries had agreed to cooperate on border security, while Nepal repeated its commitment to prevent any 'anti-China' events on its territory.

While details of the deal have not yet emerged, it is rumoured that the two countries are to finalise a programme under which China would provide money, training and logistical support to help Nepal expand police checkpoints in isolated northern border regions. Tibetan campaigners say tightened border security and closer ties have already sharply slowed movement. Until 2008, roughly two-and-a-half to three thousand Tibetans slipped across the border annually, but by last year the number dropped to about six hundred.

Stability at stake

This tiny, exotic nation has become yet another theatre of rivalry between India and China just when its own political stability is at stake. Nepal should have laid a solid foundation for peace by restructuring the state and writing a new constitution by the May 28 deadline. But progress has been halting since a special assembly was elected in April 2008 and the Maoists left government in a dispute over firing the country's Army chief. They have since paralysed the administration with strikes and blockades.

The Maoist vote is indispensable to pass a new constitution, which needs a two-thirds majority. And without Maoist cooperation, the future of some nineteen thousand fighters corralled in UN-monitored camps cannot be settled.

For now, the main non-Maoist parties have a strong incentive to delay constitution-writing as its completion will bring fresh elections for which they are not prepared. Despite their waning popularity in Nepal and beyond, the Maoists remain the largest single dominant force and the older parties are vulnerable.

Even though the Maoists are crucial to future peace in Nepal, the international community is still wary of them. The US, while keeping clear of the political imbroglio and supporting the UN process, is undoubtedly not pleased at the prospect that the Maoists - still on the State Department's terror list - may again become the decisive force there. It views a heavy presence in Nepal as essential to its long term policies on China and Tibet. The continuing political flux and fragile security make Nepal an ideal playing field for international actors.

(Charu Lata Hogg, Associate Fellow, Asia Programme, Chatham House. This article appeared in The World Today, Volume 66, Number 6, June 2010)

MEGHALAYA NEPALIS

Search For Safety

As a wave of attacks targeted Nepalese speaking people in Meghalaya, many fled the place and were returning to Nepal

By **UMA KANTA KHANAL** in Jhapa

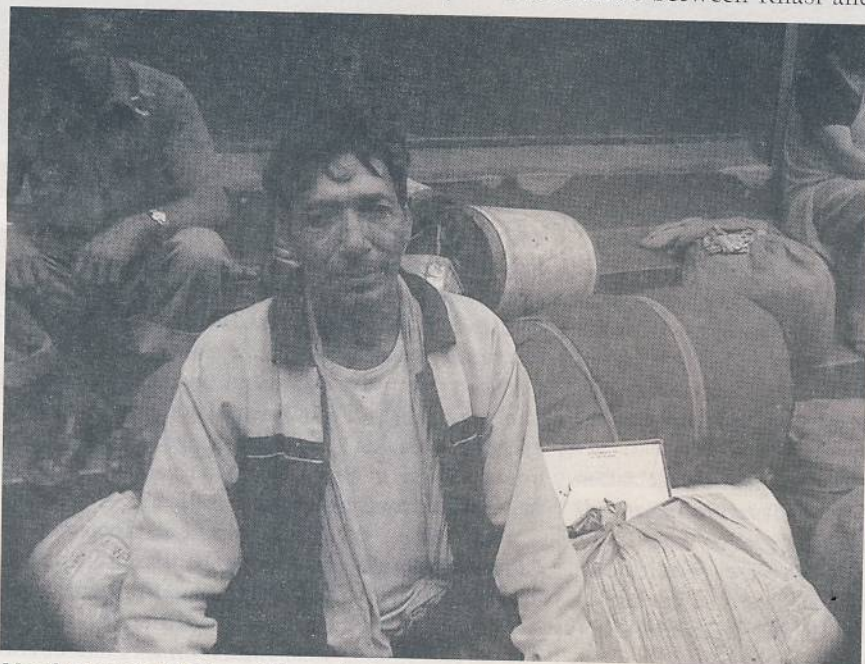
Netra Bahadur B. K. went to Meghalaya from Butwal at the age of 14. He spent more than 40 years working in the coal mines in the north eastern Indian state of Meghalaya.

A few days ago, as he was loading coal in the truck, he was attacked by some Khasi people. He was hospitalized for some days.

between Khasi and Nepali speaking people in Langpih. At the time Assam police opened fire and four Khasi people were killed.

Netra Bahadur, who returned from Meghalaya through Kakarvitta, says he is still unwell as some Khasi people attacked him. He says, "Now I won't go there again because I didn't get anything except harassment."

The conflict between Khasi and



Meghalaya's Victim : Where is Justice ?

Many Nepalis, who have been working in the coal mines of Meghalaya's Lathrumbai and Jayantia Hills, are returning to Nepal daily through Nepal's eastern border point, Kakarvitta.

The Nepali people have been displaced from Meghalaya as a result of disputes between Assam and Meghalaya. Each of these states claims that Langpih lies in it.

On May 14, there had been clashes

Nepali speaking people not only harassed Nepali speaking people of Indian origin but also affected the workers from Nepal in the coal mines of Meghalaya. As a result, they are compelled to leave the place permanently.

Netra said, "Many workers from Nepal are now on the roads as they are searching the way to their homeland."

More than 50 thousand of Nepalis

are estimated to be working in the coal mines of Lathrumbai and Khasi Hills of Meghalaya.

The Nepalis who escaped from Meghalaya said that they even didn't get a chance to collect their home utensils.

T. R. Joshi, a member of Meghalaya Gorkha Welfare Centre, said that many Nepali speaking people have been killed.

"Nepalis working in the coal mines have been buried as they were taking shelter there," he said.

According to media reports from Meghalaya, Lok Nath Bastola from Badapani was burnt to death by Khasis.

The different organizations of Khasis had given 24 hour ultimatum to the Nepali speaking people to leave Meghalaya. But later, the state government pressurized the organizations to take back the ultimatum and the conflict was over this time.

The Nepali speaking people in Meghalaya are not living there with free mind. Joshi said, "We still feel insecure and there is no guarantee that the situation will not repeat in the future."

More than 2 lakhs of Nepali speaking people live in Meghalaya.

Many displaced Nepali speaking people had entered the neighbouring state of Assam. The Gorkhali organizations managed their lodging and food to them when they remained in Assam.

The Gorkhali organizations in the north eastern states claim that in Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, more than 21 lakhs Nepali speaking people live.

Diwakar Poudel, from the worst affected place, said, "Now the situation came to normal but the terror in the minds of Nepali is still there." ■

CORRECTION

The article titled 'Pay Respect For Creation' published on May 21-June 03 issue of our publication was written on the basis of interview to taken with Santosh Sharma, we regret that the article wrongly carries his name as the writer.

Editor

“Nepal Police Doing Fine, Can Do Better”

- Ramesh Chand Thakuri

Thanks to the Home Ministry's leadership and clear-cut instruction, and coordination among the security agencies, we were able to enhance our performance. Police force maintained optimum level of restraints during the strike in maintaining law and order.

RAMESH CHAND THAKURI, 53, was born in Darchula of the far western region. Thakuri joined Nepal Police in 1981. He took up the helm of the organization only last year. Yet, as the chief of Nepal Police, Thakuri has brought about some significant changes in the police force. Police chief Thakuri spoke to KESHAB POUDEL at his office in Nepal Police Headquarters. Excerpts:

The performance of Nepal Police was criticized from various sections as inefficient and incapable. But during the recent weeklong demonstrations by UCPN-Maoist, police personnel did a wonderful job? Why was that possible?

Actually, it was like a major test for us. Frankly speaking, police personnel were able to avert a major crisis by maintaining restraints during all seven days of the general strike. No untoward incident took place for somebody to find our faults.

In the past, police personnel were often accused of violating human rights and excessive use of force during any agitation. How was it possible to show such a high level of performance with virtually no incident of human rights violations?

There were several factors behind the success. Thanks to the Home Ministry's leadership and clear-cut instruction, and coordination among the security agencies, we were able to enhance our performance. Police force maintained optimum level of restraints during the strike in maintaining law and order. The financial incentive given to the police personnel also boosted their morale. In the past as well, police used to come out with different ways. We were appreciated a lot. We have done a hard work. We have trained our manpower well. We mobilize our manpower with caution.

It is said that there is a rampant politicization of the police force. Has the situation improved?

Nepal Police is a large organization with 56,000 people working in it. Our job is closely associated with the people and the community. We have to directly interact with the common people. We have to closely work in the community in matters of security and law and order. In this context, it is natural to hear this kind of criticism. So far as the police organization is concerned, it has its own institutional or organizational mechanism to administer it. Police is guided by law, regulations and its own criteria. We have to produce the results, in the best of our own institutional and organizational capability.

Do you mean you can resist the pressure?

It depends upon the leadership how much pressure to resist or how much to accept. One of the positive sides of present political leadership is that it always encourages us to make a system and work under it. I have not seen any interference from the leadership. We are getting a clear-cut direction from the leadership.

How can you say that your organization is apolitical and professional?

After the establishment of our organization in 1955, Nepal Police has faced many political upheavals and political changes. Despite all political upheavals, Nepal Police survived as an organization to guarantee the security to the people. We worked under several political systems but survived all the time as apolitical organization. This is a testimony to show that Nepal Police is a professional organization. We have seen many political leaders leading our organization but we always follow the rule of law and work under the law and regulations.

What is your priority as a chief of Nepal Police?

My priority now is how to turn this organization from a traditional to a modern institution. We need to amend the old laws and regulations to make it a more professional organization. We need to build new laws and rules to run this organization. We are demanding the Police Service Commission to make the recruitment more professional and independent. Once we have police service commission, we will get a lot of change and people can feel it as a neutral body. The present need is to make the police neutral. We are now under the Ministry of Home. There is always accusation against us that we are biased towards a party.

How do you see state of law and order now?

It is the people who have to feel it. The situation has changed a lot. One can feel different in travelling the highway, living in terai districts and perceiving the state of organized crime of the valley. There are fluctuations in the rate of crime rates but we have made certain progress. The special security program introduced by the Home Ministry has helped a lot to bring normalcy in eastern hill, terai and valley. Nepal Police has got a lot of support from the Home Ministry. This is the reason one can see the improvement in law and order situation.

How about the kidnapping of a doctor from Chitwan? Don't you think that it indicates a deteriorating law and order situation?

So far as this issue of law and order is concerned, it has several dimensions. Kidnapping is one of the vulnerable sides of organized crime. Organized crime is a serious crime. Whatever efforts we make, sometimes such incidents do take place. In the past, incidents like the killing of Jamim Shah also occurred. We have conducted investigations and reached up to the culprits. One cannot flatly say that the law and order situation has deteriorated.

If that kind of situation is there, how do you claim that the law and order situation is normal?

Our effort is there to completely check this kind of crime. We need more preparations to combat the organized crime. For this police need to be equipped with all modern equipment, trained manpower and technological support. We need to go for pro-active policing. For this we need



more sophisticated equipments which we don't have. Despite lacking such equipment, we have been able to do something. Nepal Police is capable to nab the criminals in all the crimes though we don't have adequate equipment and funds. I cannot deny that there is no crime at all. However, we are able to nab the criminals as soon as possible. If we have more technological support, our function will be more effective.

For a change, it is predicted that Kathmandu valley will have a major quake at any time. What is the capability of police force in rescue and rehabilitation during such disasters?

Rescue and rehabilitation is also one of the important jobs of police. Police coordinate the training for disaster preparedness. We also give training to our police personnel. Although we have trained manpower, what we are lacking are resources and equipment. We don't have equipment to conduct the rescue operation and immediate clean up.

Do you mean you don't have equipments?

Frankly speaking, our equipment are not adequate to start basic operations. For instance, we don't have a crane to toe the car or clean the building. Despite the construction of sky scrapers, when you are talking about the major earth quake, it is unfortunate that we don't have even a saw to cut the trees. This is a reality. It is unfortunate that we don't have a single water boat in terai to launch the rescue operation. Similarly, we don't have fire brigades to control the fire but we are controlling the fire. You can see we don't have any equipment to tow the care from accident site. We need basic equipment.

If there is a quake magnitude of 8 Richter scale, how many hours will it take to rescue the people? What is the existing system?

We have been taking up all kinds of rescue operation. We can be present in a spur of the moment in all the sites but our presence is not alone enough. What is required is the equipment. How can we cut the iron when people are trapped. Manually, we are alright but we are weak in equipment. How can we fight the fire in a ten-floor building by carrying water in buckets? We have allowed building the multi-storied building without adequate equipments. In case of major disasters, only god saves the people. We need to address all these things at the policy level. We need to have storage of equipments at different levels.

Don't you get any equipment from Nepal's development partners?

We are getting a lot of training but it is not alone enough. We need support for equipment. That will be more helpful at the time of rescue and rehabilitation. Along with training, we also need support in equipment. DFID is now supporting us in the areas of training.

What else do the police need for more effective presence?

We need more manpower as you know the present manpower is very low. Our lowest unit is a police post, which has just 10 policemen. They have to look after 10 to 15 villages. It needs four to five days to go from one place to another. There is the need to upgrade the police post to increase coverage. Even the valley's police structure needs revamp. Along with manpower, we also need equipments and technologies, like cameras, CCTVs and satellites. For this the government is also positive. ■

We are getting a lot of training but it is not alone enough. We need support for equipment. That will be more helpful at the time of rescue and rehabilitation.



DESPATCHES FROM UK

Big Govt vs Big Society

The new British coalition government says it wants to hand over power back to people. But will it work?

By BHAGIRATH YOGI in London

If you are a British citizen, you can now apply to open a school in your locality or if you are an employee with the National Health Service (NHS), you can apply to contract out part of the services to your community. And, the list goes on.

Welcome to the new British government which proposes an open and efficient government and calls upon the citizens to be more active in managing their local communities.

On May 18, days after assuming office, Prime Minister David Cameron announced that his government would create a climate that would empower local people and communities and build a big society that will take power away from politicians and give back to people.

"That's because we know instinctively that the state is often too inhuman,

monolithic and clumsy to tackle our deepest social problems. We know that the best ideas come from the ground up, not the top down. We know that when you give people and communities more power over their lives, more power to come together and work together to make life better – great things happen," said Cameron.

Under the banner of "Building Big Society," the new coalition has proposed to promote the radical devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local governments and community groups, support co-operatives, mutuals, charities and social enterprises and publish government data, among others.

"I want this vision of a "Big Society" of community work and social enterprise to be one of the "great legacies" of this government," Mr Cameron said.

Critics, however, seem less than

convinced. At a time when the government is finding it tough to deal with the huge budget deficit, they say the new coalition is only trying to give false impression to the public.

Douglas Alexander, Labour party's election coordinator, said that the proposal—championed by the Conservative party—was just an attempt to disguise the fact that they would cut schools budgets and politicise police. "When they talk about NHS cooperatives, it's a fig leaf for removing the tough targets that ensure people are treated in good time," he said.

Former British Prime Minister and veteran Conservative leader, Margaret Thatcher, too advocated for a small government when she took office in 1979. Her government is known for aggressively pushing privatisation and drastically cutting down social services.

"The Big Society proposal put forward by Prime Minister David Cameron is the continuation of Thatcherism and Reganomics in UK," said Dr Keshab Raj Bhattarai, who teaches economics at the University of Hull, UK. "The essence of this proposal is that it aims to promote individual freedom and efficient use of resources at the cost of policy of redistribution."

During their 13-year-long tenure, successive Labour governments emphasised on fairer society and took upon themselves to help the poor and marginalised by pouring in state resources. Conservatives, however, blame the Labour of taking the welfare system to extreme thereby making it unsustainable over the period of time.

Nepal too could learn a thing or two out of the on-going debate. "As the country is emerging out of the shadow of the armed conflict, there is the need to strengthen the government and make it responsive to people's needs. The challenge is to bridge the trust deficit among the political parties and encourage people to mobilise local resources instead of waiting for grants from the central government," said Dr Bhattarai.

Perhaps working towards a fair and democratic society based on the rule of law is a more urgent task for Nepal compared to other things.

"There is a high level of expertise in Nepal"

-Laurie A. Vasily

Recently Fulbright Commission and USEF organized a workshop on climate change. LAURIE A. VASILY, Ph.D, Executive Director Fulbright Commission/USEF Nepal spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT about the outcome of the conference. Excerpts

As USEF has recently organized a workshop on climate change, what impression do you get from the workshop regarding the climate change in Nepal?

There are two aspects to this question. One is to do with climate change in Nepal. The second concerns the responses to climate change in Nepal. The first question is a technical one and I'm not really qualified to talk about it since I come from a social science background. So I will restrict myself to the second question. There has over the past five years or so been a perceptible increase in the number of people working on climate change in Nepal and this is quite evident from the response to and quality of deliberations at the Fulbright one-day symposium on climate change. And this is despite the fact that at least the English language academic literature has underreported these scholarly pursuits. What happens at the policy level is not always available to the general public, but given the response to the COP-15 Summit in Copenhagen, it is clear that both government and non-government organizations are giving more attention to climate change. And among the younger generation there is quite a visible increase in awareness about climate change.

Every one is talking about climate change, how USEF's workshop is different?

The Fulbright Symposium was intended to bring together Fulbright Nepali and American senior scholars and students, as well as other scholars and professionals working on climate change with younger students who are in some way involved in climate change research. So you could regard it as a stock-taking exercise, to pause and consider the current state of the art in Nepal in this field.

Do you think the workshop has made certain contributions?

It is always difficult to assess the broader impact of a one-off symposium or discussion event of this nature. Considering that this was more or less a closed-door program, it clearly does not have a wider public impact. However, I am confident that we did achieve something on a more limited but important scale, which was to bring together scholars working in this area to compare the results of their work and to communicate their views to a younger generation of serious scholars. Such exercises eventually amplify scholarly work among the wider public.



How aware our experts and stake holders about the climate change?

Clearly, there is a high level of expertise in Nepal both on the general global aspects of climate change as well as its Nepal-specific dimensions. There is also a high level of awareness on the state of global multi-lateral mechanisms to address climate change and the limitations of the present macro-paradigm. There are also several scholars and organizations looking into the implementation of global mechanisms in Nepal.

How vulnerable Nepal in the context of rising temperature?

The Himalayas straddle and there are many socio-ecological niches of varying altitudes supporting... very specialized forms of human and non-human life. So nay change in climatic conditions outside the bearable range of these niches will have serious consequences. Moreover, the extreme high altitude zone, though remote in

many ways, is closely connected to the lower elevations and the plains in terms of both wind and water. So both human and non-human life could be seriously disrupted not just in Nepal but in all of northern South Asia given the given the glacial and riparian link between the high mountains and the sea.

As Nepal's glaciers are melting fast due to rising temperature, how do you view the implications?

Well, this is a technical question and one that is current the cause of a dispute. Because of the sheer volume, numbers and inaccessibility of

Himalayan glaciers, there is controversy over whether or not glacial melting is taking place, the rate at which this melting is occurring and the scale on which this is happening. Whatever the eventual scientific consensus on this issue, if global warming is taking place, and if the polar ice caps are any indication, the implications of Himalayan glacial melting is potentially catastrophic since we are talking about a land mass that has possibly the highest population density in the world.

What should be Nepal's priority: adaptation or mitigation?

I am not really an expert on this issue and so I cannot pretend to speak with any authority on the matter. However, I do feel that in any serious crisis at it is best to adopt policies which, provided they do not conflict, simultaneously employ every feasible measure to assist in both adaptation and mitigation.

"We Made Some Gains On Climate Change"

Thakur Prasad Sharma

Following his appointment as the Minister for Environment, **THAKUR PRASAD SHARMA** brought about some major changes in the field of environment and climate change by announcing various new policies and initiating a number of programmes. From Copenhagen Climate Change Summit till now, the Ministry of Environment has made a breakthrough in developing capabilities to cope with the challenges posed by climate change. One of the major achievements in the recent days is the process towards a Mountain Alliance. As Nepal is celebrating the World Environment Day on June 5, Minister Sharma spoke to **KESHAB POUDEL** on various issues. Excerpts:

As Nepal is celebrating the World Environment Day, what are the achievements that your ministry wants to showcase?

A number of achievements have been made during the last 10 months. It is a matter of pride for all of us that the Government of Nepal is taking a leading role for the formation of a Mountain Alliance (MA) to address the impacts of climate change faced by the mountainous countries. I consider that this is one of the major initiatives that will bring all mountainous countries to a common platform to raise voices on mountain issues. About 30 to 40 countries are expected to be a part of the alliance. We have already started work to form an alliance. In principle, several mountain countries have accepted Nepal's proposal to form the MA. None of the countries have opposed our proposal so far. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is already engaged to mobilize its missions in New York and Geneva on this matter. We have also planned to hold the International Conference of mountainous countries to expedite the MA formation process. The agenda of Mountain Alliance is now on hype and this is going to pay. This is a major program and I believe that the World Environment Day (WED) will further help in enhancing public awareness in this matter.

How will you celebrate the WED?

During the celebration of the WED, we will review what has been done in the last year including the preparation and our participation in Copenhagen

Climate Change Conference, and response measures to address the environmental impacts. We have also planned to announce future initiatives for the period between now and till 5 June 2011. For example, the Government is planning to establish the Department of Environment as a technical arm of the Ministry of Environment.

What about NAPA?

The preparation of the NAPA will complete soon. We will organize consultations for about two months on draft NAPA with the multiple objectives of informing the stakeholders and people at large about the adaptation projects, collecting public inputs, inform the donors and development partners including the GEF Implementing Agencies, and refining projects as prioritized in the draft NAPA report. We want to seek people's inputs before NAPA is finalized and approved. The consultations, I believe, will also provide opportunities in future for effective and timely implementation of the NAPA projects. With the support from people, we can do a lot of things. The NAPA preparation process has also developed technical expertise in Nepal. Many people know about NAPA and climate change. We are trying our best to have more technical officers in the Ministry that will provide us opportunities to deal with the technical issues in a more professional manner.

Nepal has been celebrating the World Environment Day for the many years by organizing various programs as a ritual. Is this year's celebration going to be different?

You might know that WED has been celebrated since 1973 after the decision of the UN General Assembly in 1972. For the last several years, our focus was to increase public awareness on the environment. Unlike in the past, WED celebration will not be confined to Kathmandu and several programmes have been planned to organize throughout the country to observe this Day. Along with the main program in Kathmandu, all 75 districts will organize public awareness programmes. Rallies and mass meetings will be organized in a massive scale in the major cities like Mahendranagar, Nepalgunj, Pokhara and Biratnagar. As climate change is gradually affecting

our parts of the country, we want to use the WED as a time to disseminate the message to the local communities about the impacts and implications of the climate change. We will widely distribute pamphlets and posters prepared by the Ministry. We believe that such program will yield good results. We are also planning to make some historic announcement during the period of World Environment day.

How do you evaluate the performance of your Ministry in the last one year?

I don't want to comment on what we have done but the experts, environmentalists and other have to give remarks about our nearly one year's performance. As you asked this question, let me share some information. Our hard work yielded some good results. We were able to institutionalize many things. Frankly speaking, the Ministry of Environment was an island but it is now working as a focal ministry in the areas of environment protection. Of course, our responsibility has gone up and we are developing bases to discharge our functions responsibly. We have now the Country Status Paper on climate change for international negotiations, Climate Change Council chaired by Prime Minister, and Climate Change Management Division in the ministry. The Government has already endorsed the concept of holding the meeting of Mountain Alliance. This concept was forwarded by us.

How about climate Change?

Regarding the climate change, the Ministry is engaged, *inter alia*, in preparing NAPA, developing most urgent and immediate adaptation actions under the PPCR, designing and piloting local level adaptation needs and building human resources to manage the climate change and the environment. The Ministry is also engaged in preparing the Second National Communication and conducting Technology Needs Assessment related to climate change. Once the NAPA is in place, we will access USD 6 million from the LDC Fund for the implementation of most urgent and immediate adaptation actions. Recently, we have already approached the Adaptation Fund Board for accreditation as the Government has

designated the Ministry of Environment as the National Implementing Entity (NIE) for Adaptation Fund. After accreditation, we will process for accessing USD 10 million from Adaptation Fund for adaptation actions. Similarly, the Government has sent its Expression of Interest to get funding from the World Bank administered Climate Investment Fund for programmes related to scaling up of renewable energy programmes. The MoE has already made a mechanism to promote multi-stakeholder climate change initiative coordination committee.

How will you celebrate?

We have also taken the decision to remove about 75 metric tons of toxic pesticide lying in different parts of Nepal and which has been waiting for safe disposal for the last 30 years. Under an agreement with German Technical Assessment GTZ, the pesticide will be safely disposed. In the areas of alternative energy, we have made some major decisions to install a micro-hydro at each of more than 2000 VDCs.

Even the Parliamentarian Committee on Natural Resources invited me to report on the activities of the Ministry. After my briefings, the members were fully satisfied with our initiatives. The Ministry does not have any department. After the establishment of the department, the Ministry will have opportunities to start nationwide implementation of field level programmes. After counting the progress, what I can say is we are moving ahead.

Are you going to announce certain policy level decisions this year?

The Ministry of Environment plans to develop a national policy on environment and finalise the Climate Change policy. It will be finalized soon. As Nepal's Himalayas and Glacier Lakes are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change we need to concentrate our efforts to perform research and study. Last month, we have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ICIMOD to expedite Mountain Alliance activities. This MoU also opens avenues to perform study on the impacts of climate change in the Nepal Himalaya and Glacier Lakes. Similarly, the MoU has been signed with the DFID to design and piloting phase to formulate country framework and strategies on adaptation and climate resilience. The urban areas like Kathmandu and other cities are also

facing the impacts of climate change. I do hope that our initiatives will contribute to address the climate change impacts in different areas.

Do you mean you want to celebrate WED with focus on the climate change meaningfully?

Frankly speaking, the WED has a great significance. This is the reason the Ministry is making efforts to celebrate the WED with certain concrete commitments. I don't want celebration for the sake of celebration. We want result oriented celebrations.

How do you look at the year's World Environment Day slogan?

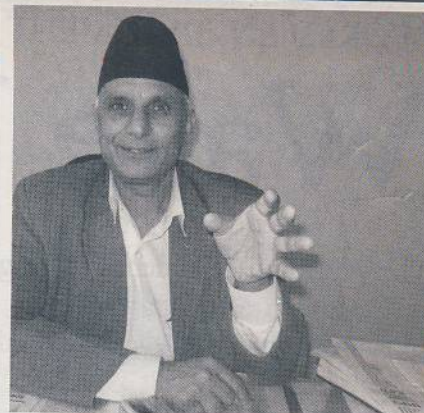
The slogan (Many Species. One Planet. One Future. of the World Environment Day is very meaningful and important for countries like Nepal. It highlights the importance of various species living in one planet. Our survival depends upon how we understand the importance of 'many species', urgent need for their conservation and sustainable use, and their role in maintaining the planet and our future. In the spirit of the slogan provided by UNEP, we have developed a national slogan which will help to carry out national environment campaign.

How do you view the response of Nepal's development partners?

Nepal's development partners have been very supportive to our program. I would like to thank them for their generous support. They take us positively. Whenever I met them, they always wanted to support us. I don't have any individual interest to promote. My country's interest and needs are my interests. This is why I don't have any hesitation to tell donors and development partners. I think without their sincere support and cooperation, it is not possible to take the issue of Mountain Alliance to the present shape. There is solidarity amongst us.

Although the World Environment Day program focuses on the capital of Kathmandu, the valley's air pollution and other environmental situation are worsening day by day. How do you look at this?

First of all, I would like to share with you that the Ministry has already identified the problem areas, magnitude, extent and duration of impacts. What we are doing now is to take actions on adaptation and mitigation. We have already developed a plan to tackle the issues like garbage management, river cleaning and air pollution of the valley. The Ministry is already in the tendering process to address air quality



in Kathmandu. There is the need of a strong support from experts and local communities to implement the plan. The government will come out with certain programs to deal with air pollution of the valley. There is a high level committee under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister to look at the Bagmati river pollution.

Do you have adequate resources?

We have resources to carry out the plans and programs. If we start the good work, technical and financial resource is not a problem. Nepal's development partners are eager to continue and scale up their supports. What is required is a strong commitment and dedication.

There are also lapses in coordination among the various ministries. As a focal ministry, how do you assess the coordination part?

The situation is definitely better now. As you know, environment involves so many different sectors and ministries and we cannot do the work without the support from all the line ministries and stakeholders like private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society. Every ministry is now supporting us. From Nepal's development partners to all different ministries, all are supporting us. All sectors are taking our work positively. We do not see any problem in coordination and we want to address the "common problem" through collaborative efforts.

What message do you want to give to the people on this occasion?

Like all political rights, environment is also a fundamental right. Even our constitution has accepted it. The CA has already proposed to include an article on climate change. There is a need to have and/or refine curriculum about environment taking into consideration the ongoing and emerging challenges on the environment including the climate change. Environment and climate change are much more than politics. Let us address environmental challenges through common efforts.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY SPECIAL

Wake Up Call

The World Environment Day slogan of *Many Species, One Planet and One Future* rents the air in Nepal on June 5. The country began to celebrate the day annually from 1973. As the Himalayas come under increasing threat of global warming, the life of the entire region is in jeopardy. Nepal's proposal for a Mountain Alliance Initiative for Climate Change is a response to this danger. The alliance seeks to create solidarity and raise the issue strongly

By KESHAB POUDEL

Renowned mountaineer Appa Sherpa recently broke his own record by climbing the top of the world for the 20th time. But instead of sounding a happy note, he made some gloomy pronouncement: Where he used to see glittering white snow he saw pieces of

black stones.

"When I first scaled Mt. Everest two decades ago, the mountain was covered by white snow. It is unfortunate that snow cap on the top of world was on the verge of disappearing now," Sherpa told NEW SPOTLIGHT. "The snow is fast receding,

If the situation goes like this, Nepal's entire white mountains will turn black and brown."

Policy makers and common people alike realize how seriously environmental degradation is threatening the planet, the species, and the future. "The future

"We Need Collaboration"

PURUSHOTAM GHIMIRE

The country is celebrating the World Environment Day at a time it has been facing a number of environment related problems.

PURUSHOTAM GHIMIRE, Chief of Environment Division and focal person of UNFCCC/ Rapportuer of SBSTA and National Project Director of NAPA of the Ministry of Environment, spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excerpts:

Nepal has been celebrating the World Environment Day as an annual ritual. How is this year going to be different?

Of course, it is an annual program celebrated since 1973 to raise awareness and to express firm commitment to the environment. This year too we are celebrating the day but with a different theme 'Many Species. One Planet. One future'. This topic is very relevant to our context as a Himalayan and mountainous country. Nepal has many species and unique natural resources within the range of 200 km up from sea level to the top of Mount Everest. Our rich bio-diversity exists from top to bottom in the country. In order to save all these things, we need more action than the slogans and our focus will be to implement the programs and plans.

Are you planning to make any major announcements?

One of the major announcements for this year's celebration is that we are producing

the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) document in coming August. We have already implemented PPCR, up to 60 Million dollar project, to support the NAPA. Moreover, we are also in the process of international negotiations this year from Copenhagen to Mexico. We are going to organize a meeting of mountain alliance in the near future. So, that way, we have an opportunity to raise the issue of mountains at regional as well as global forums. These are the important messages Nepal wants to give to its citizens within the environment and climate change framework.

What are the challenges the country considers most important to deal with?

The environment of the country is degrading day by day and the Ministry of Environment is really worried about this situation. You see the problems of environment are as many as you think. Our Planet and its species are themselves under threat from environment degradation and Nepal is no exception. In the last few decades, Nepal has seen a number of challenges like drought, excessive rain, floods and fire etc. The change in the rain pattern is creating a lot of problems to the farmers and food security is going to be a major problem in the coming decades. Forest degradation and encroachment are reported daily. New health problems are seen in different areas of the country. Solid waste management, decreasing

water level, air quality and noise, all are worsening. The other problems will be disappearance of wild forests and extinction of wildlife and plants.

When will the NAPA document be finalized?

The draft of the NAPA was to be in place at the end of May. We will finalize the NAPA after the national level consultation and final documents of NAPA will be produced at the end of August this year.

Why is NAPA delayed in Nepal?

As of now 44 LDCs have already submitted NAPA. Angola, Nepal, Myanmar and Timor-Leste have yet to submit their NAPA. Nepal's is delayed not because of government but because of GEF Implementing Agency - the UNDP. After signing the agreement with UNDP on 14th of Nov 2008, it was supposed to complete within 18 months. But the implementing agency did not support this from the very beginning. For about six months NAPA could not start due to lack of manpower to set up of the NAPA office. Later climate change specialists were hired just before one month. However, NAPA country team is working so hard that draft NAPA is now prepared with alternative arrangement for inputs from international consultants.

What differences is NAPA going to make?

After completion of NAPA, we will have basic documents to acquire budgets for many adoption projects in different sectors like agriculture, forest, health, irrigation, water and energy, disaster, infrastructure and other sectors. Only after the preparation of

of mountain, people and other species are unpredictable. We cannot say what will happen to us the next day. Will our mountains and our livelihood remain the same?" asked Sherpa.

Coming before the World Environment Day on June 5, mountaineer Sherpa's statement rings

the alarm bell louder. "Every year, I see something different in the mountain areas," said Sherpa.

Sherpa's remarks are in line with this year's theme for World Environment Day as they reflect everyone's individual responsibility to protect the planet, as well as the urgency for nations to agree

on a new climate strategy.

World Environment Day Celebration With an aim to generate awareness at the grass root level, the Ministry of Environment has already announced a number of programs targeting the local community. Unlike past years, the world environment day programs this year will

NAPA, we will have knowledge of where the country needs adaptation projects and programs. Under NAPA, we will have more projects but we want to implement at least one project of each area at a time.

Do you have funds now for NAPA?

We have already secured some funds to implement the NAPA. Under the PPCR fast track fund, we have already hired consultants who have started their work. This project will cost around 30 to 60 million dollars. DFID also provided us with 10 million sterling pounds. We are also looking for other funds like Adaptation Fund Board amount of \$ 10 Million, LDCF fund of \$ 6 Million, Climate Investment Fund, European Fund and other resources. Once we have NAPA document in our hand, we will have the opportunity to collect funds from different sources.

So, you will have enough funds to implement the NAPA?

The funds are not sufficient, but yes, we do have funds from various sources such as PPCR, LDCF, EU, Adaptation funds and others. In the course of implementation of NAPA, I don't think there will be any constraint of funds. Now at this point of time, we have lack of proposals for demanding funds. When the NAPA is prepared, it will be implemented immediately identifying the projects of urgent and immediate needs.

Nepal has been facing several environmental challenges and problems. As a head of the environment division, what message do you want to give to the people?

The Ministry of Environment is really worried about these problems and we are trying our best to solve them. But MOE alone is not enough to address these issues. We need joint and collaborative efforts such as of government and people with their hands to work together. As we all know, we have many challenges in environment sectors like forest degradation to water depletion, solid waste, drinking water, health and Glacier Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF). The problem is that the ministry does not have adequate institutional capability. We have inadequate manpower to address these issues. We don't have any institutional linkage at grass root levels.

Where is your focus now?

We are concentrating now on policy making, infrastructure setup and also capacity building for manpower as well as institution. Our focus will be to make clean and green environment. As long as we cannot

go for implementation, nothing will change. The present challenge is implementation.

There is also accusation that the Ministry of Environment is putting a lot of obstruction in the development process. How do you defend this?

We are not against development but we are in favor of sustainable development. We want environmental matters to be taken as key factors for our development. We are now in the process of establishing the Department of Environment. We have environment laws, standards and regulations but the problem is to monitor them. The Ministry of Environment is the only ministry which has been taking care of environmental issues.

How do you evaluate the significance of COP15 for Nepal now?

We achieved something for us and least developed countries but it is not enough. For instance, Nepal was able to raise its concern on mountainous and Himalayan issues. We organized a regional conference in Kathmandu in last Aug-Sept to develop common understating among the SAARC. Also our stand to keep temperature below 1.5 C emerged after COP15. Our proposal for mountain alliance has received widespread support. This is a great achievement. We can make a lot of change till the COP16 in Mexico.

How are you preparing for COP 16?

We learnt a lot in COP15 and we are now concentrating on how to make COP16 a great success. If there is need, there is going to be another high level meeting before COP16. Among the 194 countries under the UNFCCC, it is difficult to find consensus on



all issues. Now MOE has separate Climate Change Management Division headed by Joint Secretary and this division's main responsibility is to focus on COP16 preparation.

You mean there are still a lot of differences among the UNFCCC parties?

There are still a lot of differences between Annex 1 and Non-Annex 1 countries. Within Non Annex 1 countries are Group of 77 and China. The concern and issue of least developed countries are different, so we want to have strong voices in coming meetings. Since COP 15 has brought a little difference to the least developed countries like Nepal, all the least developed countries are now concentrating on how to make COP 16 a success. In this scenario, there will be chances for high level meetings again.

Why is Nepal promoting the idea of mountain alliance?

Nepal Mountains are not only the water sources of Nepal; they are the water sources of 1.5 billion people of South Asia. For more than 6000 small rivers and major 10 rivers in South Asia, water sources are our Himalayas. Imagine there is no snow in the Himalayas, what will happen? Can we survive in this situation? So, one of the reasons behind promoting the mountain alliance is to raise our own concern more strongly. As mountains are most vulnerable in the context of climate change, the issue of mountainous countries needs special attention. If we have a mountain alliance, we will be able to raise our voice in the areas like Himalayas and mountains. ■

be held at the regional and village levels. As World Environment Day becomes truly a People's Day, it will be chance for everyone, young and old, with their community or with close friends, to show that they care for the planet.

To meet Nepal's challenge, Nepal also needs resources and support. For this, there is the need to have a National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA). **Program in the Rural Areas**

For the first time, Nepal is celebrating the WED by organizing various programs at the rural level. In the past, the program was confined to urban Kathmandu but the Ministry of Environment is organizing the program even in the rural parts of Nepal up to the remote village.

The World Environment Day is an opportunity for all to get involved in something which is critical for the shared future and work in a co-ordinated manner to empower all to play an active role in protecting the environment,

authorities say.

"WED is an opportunity for us all to get involved in something which is critical for our shared future and work in a co-ordinated manner to empower us all to play an active role in protecting our environment," said Ganesh Raj Joshi, secretary at the Ministry of Environment.



Future," an idea which brings to attention the urgency required to protect the planet's dwindling diversity.

Nepal has initiated numerous eco-friendly policies, such as clean-up

campaigns, restorations of rainforests, implementation of renewable energy sources programs and so on. Despite all these, many challenges remain.

World Environment Day is all about a program to make people environmentally conscious with a concept that small changes make a big impact. As in the past, World Environmental Day may simply pass like so many others. However, the fact is that WED is aimed to educate and encourage daily environmentally friendly activities.

Whether in the Himalayas or other parts, WED reminds all that it is the responsibility to take action for the planet, should we choose to accept this huge mission. In a world that only seems to be growing, and people becoming more isolated due to technological advances, it is good to know that there are celebrations created to connect people to one another, and to the rest of the planet.

NAPA Project Highlight

NAPA Nepal Milestones

Government of Nepal Ministry of Environment National Adaptation Program of Action Project on Climate Change

Project Signed: November 2008

Inception workshop: May 2009

TWG Formation: September 2009

Induction Workshop: October 2009

Transect appraisal Exercise: November 2009

Writeshop: December 2009

Synthesis Workshop: February 2010

Multistakeholder Climate Change Initiatives Coordination Committee (MCCICC)

Objectives

- Assess and prioritize climate change vulnerabilities and identify adaptation measures
- Develop proposals for priority activities; and
- Prepare, review and finalize NAPA document
- Develop and maintain knowledge management and learning platform; and
- Develop multi-stakeholder framework of action on climate change.

Project goal

Enable Nepal to respond strategically to the challenges and opportunities posed by climate change

Preparation of the NAPA

Development and maintenance of a Climate Change knowledge management and learning platform

Development of a multi-stakeholder framework of action for CC in Nepal

Thematic Areas

1. Forests and biodiversity (Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation)
2. Agriculture and food security (Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives)
3. Climate induced disaster (Ministry of Home Affairs)
4. Water Resources and Energy (Ministry of Energy)
5. Public health (Ministry of Health and Population)
6. Urban Settlement and Infrastructures (DoUDBC)

Achievements

- Synthesis report and TWG reports
- Inception report, project updates, and ToRs
- NAPA drafting
- Consultation meetings with stakeholders (involved around 2000 individuals and organisations)
- Conceptualization of NAPA+ development
- Conceptualization of NAPA exercise
- Initiation of Multistakeholder partnership framework through Multistakeholder Climate Change

Initiatives Coordination Committee (MCCICC)

- Supporting ministry as a resource centre of climate change
 - Donors' coordination
 - PA as a learning process
 - Flexibility in programs and plans
 - Understanding coordinating partners
- Balance among diversified interests and expertise**

- Situation handling
- Screening of information
- Climate change at the centre of concern

Opportunities

- Learning from other NAPAs
- Mainstream Climate change into national development
- Synergy with ongoing development initiatives
- People's participation
- Donors' interest and contribution
- National capacity strengthening

TWG: Climate Induced Disaster

- Rehabilitation of the vulnerable community
- Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction with climate change dimension
- Flood Management
- Research and Development
- Continue vulnerability assessment
- Regional and national consultations on draft NAPA
- Adaptation project profile development and costing
- LAPA exercise

On the occasion of the World Environment Day

On Climate Change Initiatives

Batu Uprety

The World Environment Day (WED) is observed on 5 June as per the decision of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) because the UN Stockholm Conference on *Human Environment* was started on this Day in 1972. The conference adopted the Stockholm Declaration and UNGA decided to establish the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - the UN organisation mandated to expedite environmental activities globally. The WED has been observed regularly since 1973.

In general, the annual slogan is selected taking into consideration the major global environmental issue of that year. The slogan is transmitted, in advance, to the UN member States by UNEP, and this has been practiced for the last 38 years.

This year, WED will be celebrated with the slogan '*Many species. One planet. One future*' all over the world. Nepal is also observing this day with several activities.

My recall goes back to 1974 when Nepal started WED celebration. At the beginning, the Man and Biosphere (MAB) - a UNESCO Programme - was involved in coordinating the WED activities till the reinstatement of democracy in Nepal in 1990. Although the Government of Nepal was involved in observing WED intermittently till 1992, the year 1993 was remarkable in that it attracted many people and stakeholders in observing it. This might be due to direct involvement of the Environment Protection Council, chaired by the Prime Minister. From the last 15 years, the environment ministry is taking the lead role in observing this day.

In 1998, the then Ministry of Population and Environment officially released the State of the Environment (SoE) report, for the first time, on this Day. This Day was instrumental in creating public awareness on the environment in Nepal. The publication of SoE report and Journal of the Environment continued till 2004 and 2006 respectively.

Large quantities of water have flown from the Bagmati River since we started the celebration of the WED. The Government of Nepal, Ministry of Environment, has continued to appreciate and award individual(s) and institution(s) for their commendable works. Journalists, women and industries or industrialists are awarded on this occasion as the government's recognition for their works.

For over three decades, WED has been seen in Nepal as an opportunity and as one of the vehicles to share information and enhance people's understanding about the environment, conservation needs and possible benefits from environmental conservation. Besides the government organisations, several NGOs are involved in creating public awareness and observing this day.

Environmental challenges are changing over time. In 1960s, people and countries underscored Nature's absorbing capacities and adopted the approach that *dilution is the solution of pollution*. The decade of 1970s focussed on end-of-the-pipe solutions, i.e., discharge the effluents only after treatment. This decade continued to raise issues related to the impacts of acid rain, deforestation, land degradation and environmental pollution. The 1980s witnessed alarming effects of environmental problems identified in 1970s. In most of the countries,

regulatory measures were adopted for pollution control and *ex ante* consideration of the environment through environmental impact assessment (EIA).

In 1990s, international community focussed on the urgency of conserving biodiversity, addressing the land degradation and desertification, and impacts of climate change. The Conventions on desertification, biodiversity and climate change as international legally binding instruments were developed, adopted, ratified and implemented. Climate change has been the major issue for 2000s.

The international community, including Nepal, devoted 2009 as the year of climate change to address its adverse impacts. It got greater importance at the end of 2009 as Heads of the State or the Government of about 120 countries attended the Copenhagen Climate Conference.

The WED 2009 was celebrated with the slogan *your planet needs you: unite to combat climate change*. Nepal put the climate change as the national agenda of high priority in 2009. The year 2009 was remarkable for Nepal to mainstream climate change activities into the development planning. In 2009, Nepal, *inter alia*: (i) started the preparation of the GEF/UNDP, DFID and DANIDA-supported National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) by organising the inception workshop in May; (ii) made agreement with the GEF/UNEP to initiate the preparation of the Second National Communication; (iii) initiated the implementation of the ADB-funded project on strengthening capacity for managing climate change and the environment; (iv) initiated works related to WB and ADB-supported Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR); (v) constituted the Climate Change Council under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister as a high-level policy coordinating body; (vi) organised South Asian Regional Climate Change Conference (from Kathmandu to Copenhagen) and developed MoU with 14 donors and development partners wishing to support Nepal on climate change activities; (vii) prepared a status paper on shared vision, adaptation, technology, financing, and CDM/ REDD aspects and refined with inputs from national and regional consultations; (viii) organised summiters summit to save the Himalayas in Copenhagen; (ix) highlighted urgency of mountain alliance through the statement of the Prime Minister during the 15th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), popularly known as Copenhagen Climate Conference; and (x) organised inception workshop on GEF/UNEP-supported technology needs assessment. In this context, 2009 is considered as the ice-breaking year on climate change regime in Nepal.

After the establishment of the Climate Change Management Division in MoE, late April to mid-May 2010, was also instrumental in bringing new initiatives in the forefront for the effective implementation of the climate change regime. To name some of the initiatives, the Government of Nepal decided to take the lead role to form Alliance of Mountain Countries and the Ministry of Environment signed a 3-year long Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) to work jointly to make the Mountain Alliance happened. This

Alliance is expected to work as a platform to raise mountain issues during the negotiations of the Multilateral Environment Agreements in general and UNFCCC in particular, and make every effort to benefit from legal instruments. The Government of Nepal has designated the Ministry of Environment to function as the National Implementing Entity (NIE) to the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB) established under the authority and guidance of the COP to the UNFCCC. Once the NIE is accredited from AFB, Nepal could directly access fund for the implementation of the adaptation actions. As of now, AFB has allocated USD 10 million to each eligible developing country for adaptation programs and projects. There exists possibility to implement NAPA identified adaptation projects from AFB finances. The Government of Nepal has also registered its Expression of Interest (EoI) to be considered as a Pilot Country under the Programme for Scaling Up Renewable Energy in Low Income Countries (SREP) of the Climate Investment Funds administered by the World Bank. A total of USD 292 million has been allocated for SREP and it could be provided initially to 6 identified countries. If Nepal is selected, a significant amount of finance will be available to promote renewable energy initiatives. The MoE has also signed a MoU with the DFID to get, *inter alia*, technical support from its new programme on climate change for the design and piloting phase to formulate country framework and strategies on adaptation and climate resilience through, *inter alia*, carrying out multi-location studies and piloting Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA). The MoE has formed Multi-stakeholder Climate Change Initiative Coordination Committee (MCCICC) to promote functional level coordination amongst the stakeholders and streamline climate change activities in Nepal. Nepal's MoE is greatly committed to speed-up activities in order to address the adverse impacts of climate change.

The WED theme for 2010 focuses on many species, meaning diversity at species level, which attempts to accommodate the urgency of conserving biodiversity in line with the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. The biodiversity, which often includes diversity at genetic, species and ecosystem levels, is the basic need not only for human beings but also to maintain all life and non-life supporting systems. The climate change is greatly affecting the biodiversity functioning and it is expected that the 2010 WED will create public awareness, enhance understanding, knowledge and skills, and provide opportunities to address the impacts of climate change on biodiversity.

The WED is a day to review one's own activities and to make additional commitment to continue working to improve the environmental quality for the benefit of all of us. Let us work together, we can bring a change.

Note: Mr. Uprety is the Joint-Secretary (Tech.) and Chief in the Climate Change Management Division of the Ministry of Environment. Mr. Uprety is also the Member of the LDC Expert Group (LEG) to UNFCCC, representing Asia region. The views expressed in this article are personal and do not reflect the official opinion. This article only covers the activities undertaken by the Ministry of Environment on climate change.

NEPAL LAW SOCIETY

Model Support

As soon as the tenure of the Constituent Assembly was extended by a year, Nepal Law Society got down to writing a model constitution based on CA's thematic committee reports

By A CORRESPONDENT

Soon after the tenure of the Constituent Assembly (CA) was extended by a year on May 28, a noted organization of jurists and lawyers has begun work to develop a model constitution.

Backed by a pool of constitutional experts with long experience in constitution making, Nepal Law Society (NLS) is taking the initiative to provide support to the CA.

Sorting out contradictions in the reports presented by CA's thematic committees is no easy task. But the experience of an

organization like NLS may come handy to fill the gaps to develop a consensus document.

"We have to work with CA and CA members to promulgate the new constitution within a year. For this, CA members and CA require our technical and other expert support," said Krishna Man Pradhan, NLS Executive Director. "With the logistic and technical support from an organization like ours, we can help CA a lot in promulgating the new constitution."

In the first two years of constitution making until May 28, NLS was involved in almost all activities of CA and CA members.

NLS helped conduct training, workshop and discussion on the thematic papers, among several other activities. The organization played a key role even during the constitution making of 1990. Headed by eminent constitutional lawyer Kusum Shrestha, NLS has a strong pool of experts.

As the second phase of constitution making began with the extended tenure, NLS hopes to make its experience and expertise more helpful.

NLS has been participating in the all-important process of constitution making while working together with International IDEA and CA Secretariat. Its participation has especially contributed in enhancing the capability of CA and CA members.

Pradhan's confidence to be of help is based on some valid reasons: NLS has already completed the task of developing commentary notes on the concept papers on preliminary drafts of the thematic committees of the CA.

It has made a lot of efforts to find out similarities and differences in the draft papers. With reviews by experts, the commentary notes on the concept papers and preliminary drafts of the thematic committees

"Nepal Law Society Will Make CA Job Easier"

Executive Director of Nepal Law Society **KRISHNA MAN PRADHAN** has a long experience in the legal sector. Pradhan worked with the Constituent Assembly in several aspects of constitution making over the last two years. He spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on how the Law Society's expertise can be used in completing the constitution writing process within a year after CA term was extended on May 28. Excerpts:

What should the CA be doing now?

After the extension of the CA tenure by one year, it should now discuss how to finish writing the constitution in the stipulated period. It should sort out what has already been and what remains to be done. Following this, it will have to prepare the calendar of operation.

What are the remaining tasks before the CA?

The remaining work of CA is to work on a committee set up under the chairmanship of CA member Agni Kharel to study the concept papers and preliminary drafts of the thematic committees. After the tabling of the committee's report by Agni Kharel at the CA, the report will then be sent to the Constitutional Committee. Looking at the suggestions and recommendations of the CA and suggestion committee, the CC will prepare the first draft. Following the preparation of the first draft by the CC, the

draft will be discussed in various stages. When the draft is sent for discussion in the public, there is the need to organize a series of interactions with various stakeholders like political parties and CA members.

How does it go next?

On the basis of directives of the CA, CA's Report Study Committee's recommendation, commentary notes on the concept papers and preliminary drafts of the thematic committees, Constitutional Committee will prepare the first draft. This draft will be sent to members of various committees of CA and leaders of political parties for formal discussions.

What do you say of the thematic committee reports?

Among 11 thematic committee reports, there are wide differences on the report on forms of government, report on restructuring of state and distribution of state powers and report by the committee on judicial system. I don't think CA members can sort out the differences. Only through negotiations at the top political leadership, these issues will be settled.

What role is Nepal Law Society playing in all this?

Nepal Law Society has already been working to prepare model constitution on the basis of reports submitted by various thematic committees to the CA. We are organizing interactions with leaders of various political parties, CA members and thematic committee

members. This will help the Constitutional Committee a lot to prepare the first draft. Once the Constitutional Committee receives our model constitution, it will make the CC work easier. In the areas where there is consensus among political parties, the CC will not have to face many problems. Whenever there is a difference among political parties, the model constitution of Nepal Law Society will help it to ease the difficulties since we prepare the model after the consultations with political parties.

How will your work help it?

In the process of writing the draft constitution within three months by CC, our model constitution will help them a lot. According to the schedule, the constitutional committee will present its first draft within three months and send it to the CA. After publication of the first draft for public discussion through the announcement of a Gazette, the second round of constitution making will begin.

How long a discussion do we require?

As a civil society member, we need at least two months for the discussion of the draft. In the first phase, the opinion was collected through direct interactions with the people. In the stage of discussion at the draft, there is the need to do more discussion on language and many other complicated issues. It will take certain time since this draft is

of CA have already been published.

In the process of reviewing the concept papers, NLS experts analyzed the concept notes, their features and weaknesses. Although there are several political differences on concept papers, no attempt had been made to find any solution to the political questions so far.

Although a number of model constitutions were promulgated in the last two years, most of them were written to serve the personal or partisan interest.

However, NLS chose a different path. It based its model constitution making efforts

on the concept papers and preliminary drafts of the thematic committees.

Moreover, in the last two years, the Society learnt a good deal when it got involved in capacity building of CA Secretariat and CA members, providing support to opinion collection, drafting, training, holding workshops and interactions involving intellectuals and experts of national and international reputes. In this sense, NLS contribution and involvement in the first phase of constitution making was immense.

Enlisting support from International Idea, an inter-governmental organization,

NLS is actively involved in all aspects of constitution building process. International IDEA supports democracy building process through sharing of knowledge and experience gained in different contexts across the world.

With the announcement to draft a new model constitution, NLS has already shown how it can support CA and CA members.

“Our aim is not to support CC in formulating draft of the constitution. We will provide them necessary expert support and venue to interact with different stakeholders, in case they require it,” said Pradhan.

going to be the constitution of Nepal. More the draft is sent for discussion more the people will have feeling of sense of ownership on it.

Why do you need more time?

If adequate time is not given for discussion at this stage, people will not develop a sense of ownership of the draft. This is the reason Nepal Law Society, with the support from various development partners, proposed two months for public opinion collection campaign. Under this proposed program, we will launch nationwide opinion collection campaign on the draft prepared by the CC.

How will this help the CC?

As we are planning to organize nationwide interaction, we will also present the report to CC. Such suggestions will be helpful to CC to update its report. CC's report will be discussed by all 601 CA members at the House. In accordance with the provision of interim constitution, CA members will be given a chance to table amendments. Nepal Law Society has already started to support CA members at the time of placing amendments on the draft constitution. In accordance with the wishes and needs of CA members, our experts will provide all necessary support to prepare the final draft. Through our programs, women members and members of small parties will benefit a lot since they will receive all kinds of support from us.

In which specific areas will NLS involve itself?

We will continue to get involved in all phases of constitution making process, including the preparation of drafts, collections of opinion on the draft and its amendment process. We have proposed many programs under which CA will benefit.

How do you show different than others?

Our proposed programs are different than they were in the first phase. We are now focusing on giving technical inputs to the Constitutional Committee and CA members. We have set up various committees with the participation of CA



members and other experts having national and international experiences. We will also invite international personalities. The model draft prepared by Nepal Law Society will help a lot in the making of the new constitution.

How do you assess the last two years of CA?

I cannot blame that CA has done nothing in the last two years. It has already prepared all thematic committee reports and preliminary drafts. This is itself a major achievement. Of course, it was unable to produce the new constitution in time. So far as other countries' experiences are concerned, no country in the world produced the constitution in such a short period of time. In some countries, it took even a decade. Writing constitution through a Constituent Assembly is itself a complicated issue fraught with disputable matters. Although the work completed by CA is far below the expectation of the people, one cannot say that it has done nothing.

Do you believe the constitution will be formulated this time?

As almost all preliminary works have already been completed, the CA will produce the new constitutions in its extended tenure. From writing draft to preparing the concept papers and preliminary drafts of the thematic

committees, the CA has completed complicated and difficult jobs. Now the only work is to sort out differences and prepare the preliminary draft. Once the preliminary draft is finalized, the process of promulgation of new constitution will begin.

What are other reasons behind this hope?

The commitment expressed by various political parties has also generated the hope that the new constitution will be promulgated within the stipulated time of one year. There will be public pressure on the parties to accomplish the task this time.

Nepal Law Society is writing the draft of the constitution. How will it be different than those drafted by others?

A number of model constitutions have already been published in the market. These model constitutions are not prepared to support the CA but to boast individual work. Our model constitution is not made for us or to serve our personal interest. It is written to support the Constituent Assembly and on the basis of concept papers and preliminary drafts of the thematic committees. We are just limited to national and international expertise. Our model constitution is written on the basis of CA

Fr. Martin P. Coyne, S.J

Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Determination

by SHRADHA GYAWALI

“I It is in the best interest of a man to become Karma – Yogi and work to the best of his abilities and without bothering about the results.”

The kingdom of Nepal, formerly the “Forbidden Kingdom”, invited the “Society of Jesus” to open a school at Godavari in the year 1950 and this school began its operations in 1951. Until 1951 there were no foreigners in Nepal and foreigners, if they were “professional Christians”, were suspects. Education in itself was a treacherous innovation, thus only about 100 students in the whole of Nepal finished high school in the year 1951.

Fr. Martin P. Coyne was born to an upper middle class family on 30th July 1934, in Chicago, Illinois, USA. His father worked for city public services, and his mother, like most other mothers was a housekeeper to their happy family. His initial schooling was at the parish primary school. During his high school the young as well as the old Jesuits made an impression on him. Education for him got severe after he was entrusted to the Jesuits for four years of high school at St. Ignatius. The 15 miles travel in the morning and evening, to and from St. Ignatius provided him with the basic lessons in endurance, sitting and waiting, which he has come to value in later life.

When he left high school in 1952, his aim was to become an aeronautical engineer. However, things changed after his father’s death, which was due to heart attack during his first year of pre-engineering studies.

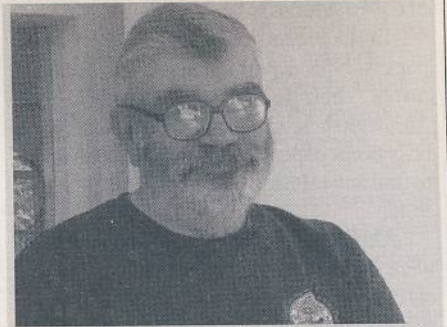
He traveled alone from Chicago to New York, New York to England, London to Rome and from Rome to Bombay.

Bombay Jesuits put him on a train from Patna, where in the spring of 1961 he met a compatible travel companion, Patsy, a boxer dog, who was later killed by a leopard at the Godavari school.

He flew into Kathmandu in April of 1961, and went to work right away to Godavari to help the school prepare for its Tenth anniversary. In 1963, he found another travel companion, Fr. Leo Cachat. They both were ordained as priests together in Kurseong on 20th March 1966. They returned to Kathmandu in 1968 and were appointed to St. Xaviers Godavari School. Fr. Coyne often says, “1968 was a year of considerable change. Every single thing got moved from Godavari high school to Jawalakhel except for two dogs, Fr. Saubolle, the paint on the wall and me.” During the mid 70s he got the major responsibilities as the treasurer of the school, head matron over all the hostels and keeper of the dogs. After Fr. Cap Miller left Godavari, he was asked to be the principal of the school.

In January 1981, Fr. Coyne moved to Jawalakhel School. In the March of the same year, he had a black out during breakfast and immediately went to Chicago for treatment.

Many of the challenges in Fr. Coyne’s life occurred during his work in the schools. His primary aim was to allow the students to develop in almost all aspects and to help them understand themselves. So he seriously challenged the students and also at times their parents to show up to the level of goal set before them. What is consoling for him, now is the old boys come and greet him, and to see the true values of life that they learnt from their primary education at St. Xaviers still operating in them.



Fr. Martin P. Coyne, S.J. also shares his view with Shrada Gyawali.

Did you fulfill your objective of coming to Nepal?

On a personal basis yes, religious aspirations have been open ended and I have tried keeping them that way. If I wouldn’t keep interest in the school then I would have been spiritual. I am an experienced counselor and when students come, I can help them and they can help me understand them. We were actually aiming at inculcating basic values so I think my aspirations are fulfilled.

Are you happy with your life?

A. Yes, I am “fabulously happy” with my life. It is a joy to see the older boys do so well in life and promoting the values we taught to them in school. These days I greet the students on their arrival to school and they return the happiness and joy.

Your students talk very highly of you, how do you think you have contributed to their lives?

If I have been able to do anything to them then it is to help them to realize their responsibilities. I was strict but fair. The school days are for making mistakes and learning from them. I pointed out their mistakes but at the same time encouraged them. I focus on welcoming, encouraging, helping and being kind.

What suggestions would you have for the educationists of this country?

I think education should be more widely spread in Nepal. Education will bring all the positive changes leading to development of the country. The level of poverty and lack of facilities can be supplemented by investing more on education. There should be more planning and the budget made in Katmandu should reach to the people in all parts of the country and education should be a priority. ■

Economic Targets Achievable

By Surendra Pandey

When we drafted the three-year interim plan in 2007-08, there were reasonable expectations from the people that the new five-year plan would be introduced following the promulgation of the new constitution by the first deadline of May 28, 2010. But then, we missed the deadline.

The experiences of China and India have shown us that the political system and all major achievements will be at risk of crumbling down in the absence of economic development. As we are bracing for a new government and another year to produce the new constitution for our federal republic, we are again compelled to write another three-year interim plan.

As a finance minister, I must analyze the achievements of the first interim plan and forecast the outcomes for the coming plan. I want to clarify that I am the third finance minister and the present vice chair of the National Planning Commission is the fifth vice chair the nation's planning body in the last three years. This shows how unstable our system has been. It is easy to glean that we need to have a stable political situation to be able to implement a good economic plan.

Although we had forecast 5.5 GDP growth for the three years of the interim period, we achieved just 4.4 percent growth. Due to unfavorable weather patterns, agriculture sector's performance was not satisfactory and the growth of non-agriculture sector was also very poor. This affected our overall growth target. Along with these factors, political instability, loadshedding, excessive public holidays and deteriorating labor relations were also responsible in failing us to achieve the growth target. The trend shows that if we are able to minimize the non-agricultural effects, we can easily achieve the growth targets of 6-7 percent and 7-8 percent with some efforts. High level of consumption and low domestic savings have already put pressure on import. Some of the major challenges like deficit in BOP, swelling current account, and cash crunch in formal

banking transaction, high interest rate and high inflations are other major problems needing to be settled in the Nepalese economy.

Now we will be embarking on a new interim plan with political system that leaves much to be desired. The interim plan proposed earlier projected 5.5 percent GDP and it stresses on bringing inflation to 7.0. The plan also proposed to increase agriculture production from 3.6 to 3.9. The target of non-agriculture sector is reduced from 6.5 percent 6.4 percent. The inflation rate has increased from the current proposed projection of 5.6 percent to 7.0 percent. I think these targets are modest and achievable.

To achieve the proposed GDP growth, the three-year plan expected to invest 25.8 percent of total national growth. So far as the mobilization of internal resources is concerned, the revenue share will be 17.3 percent and internal loan will be 2.2 percent and the foreign aid will be 6.6. The fixed capital ratio will be 26.7 percent but it will be less than 5.4 percent of the target. If we are unable to rapidly increase export, we need to control import to minimise the Balance of Payment deficit. If our capability to mobilize foreign aid does not improve, we cannot achieve the target. Thus, a stable capital investment requires our capability to maintain BOP and mobilization of foreign aid.

If we are able to meet the target of GDP, stable inflation, increase in export and import management, positive interests rate, efficient currency policy and capital management, we can reduce the BOP and the problems related to cash crunch will be settled.

Having more than three decades of experience of active politics, experiences in parliamentary politics and one year as the finance minister, I can draw the conclusion now that if all political parties are united and determined to do something, we can change the face of the country within 7-10 years turning it from least developed to a developing country.

There is the need to give priority to

increase the employment opportunity and increase economic growth through the construction of infrastructures. We need to classify the land on the basis of its use, bring about positive changes in the agriculture productivity, prepare a plan to commercialise use of forest, start a micro-hydro campaign and show determination to construct a four-lane mid-hill high way. Through these programs, we can achieve our high growth target.



Nepal has been facing long hours of loadshedding for the last many years due to our failure to construct big hydropower projects. Even if we start the construction of big projects, it will take decades to complete. The government has already started the construction of Tamakoshi, and Trishuli A and is making efforts to invite private sector's involvement. However, we are unable to attract foreign investors and private sector in the power sector. If this situation continues, Nepal will face more severe power crisis. In this context, the government is planning to provide the resources to build micro-hydro projects with a capacity of 50 to 100 Kilowatt in each VDC. We can reduce the crisis in power sector through these kinds of projects.

It is not impossible in Nepal to achieve the economic goals we have set, but what is lacking is the political will and commitment to materialize them. Nepal has the potentiality as well as the possibility to become a prosperous federal, democratic and republican nation. What we need now is a culture of working together with vision and determination.

(Translated version of the excerpts of the statement given by Finance Minister Pandey at the meeting of National Development Council)

The Deadly Hepatitis E: What Happened To The Vaccine Developed In Nepal?

Buddha Basnyat, MD.

Hepatitis E is probably the commonest cause of adult jaundice in Nepal. Our infectious disease hospital in Kathmandu (Teku Hospital) will soon witness the annual rise in hepatitis E patients as mid summer sets in. This viral disease is transmitted through the fecal oral route; what this means in crude terminology is that it is transmitted by "eating shit". In Kathmandu this act is not difficult to envision. Vegetables washed in the Bishnumati river are brought to wedding parties and restaurants and served up as fresh green salad. If they were properly cooked or soaked in adequately iodinated water for at least 20 minutes, there would be less of a problem; but uncooked, these vegetables pose a threat of acquiring hepatitis E and other interesting organisms. Most people that suffer from this disease eventually recover, but if you are pregnant and acquire hepatitis E, things could easily be sinister and life threatening. Twenty to 30 % of pregnant women with hepatitis E die due to complications of the viral disease

Twenty one year old Gyanu Thapa, an affluent housewife in Kathmandu always drank boiled water at home. But when she was pregnant she had this constant urge to eat momo and chowla in a nearby restaurant where they served tap water. She thought it was OK to drink tap water occasionally outside your home. She came down with jaundice which was eventually diagnosed as hepatitis E. Within weeks she died of fulminant liver failure despite the best efforts of her treating physicians. Nineteen year old Sumitra Rai ran away from home (Khotang District) with her boyfriend and lived in a rented house in Kathmandu. She became pregnant, suffered from hepatitis E and met the

same fate as Gyanu. These stories that cut across our societal hierarchy are all too common in the hospitals in Nepal especially during the summer months. This is sad because a vaccine was developed in Nepal to help protect these people.

The hepatitis E vaccine was developed in Nepal with the collaboration of the Nepal army with Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK, a well known drug company) and the US Army. At first, permission was sought from the Nepal Health Research Council, then the study participants were recruited from the army and given either placebo or the vaccine. This was a randomized controlled trial (RCT) that followed the existing rules for carrying out an international collaborative trial of this nature. There was a separate data safety monitoring board which included looking after the rights of the participants enrolled in the trial, and I was a part of that group. The trial went off without any mishap. The results of the trial were published on March 1, 2007 in The New England Medical Journal, the most prestigious clinical journal. The results showed the vaccine to be an astounding 96 % effective in the prevention of this illness.

Sadly five years have passed since the positive findings have been known, and it is over three years post publication, but nothing has happened to help make this vaccine available to the needy people in countries like Nepal.

Recently I brought the matter up with the relevant section of the US Army (Walter Reed). Basically I asked them at what stage were they in trying to make this vaccine available? They were kind enough to reply to my letter. They said that their partner GSK holds the

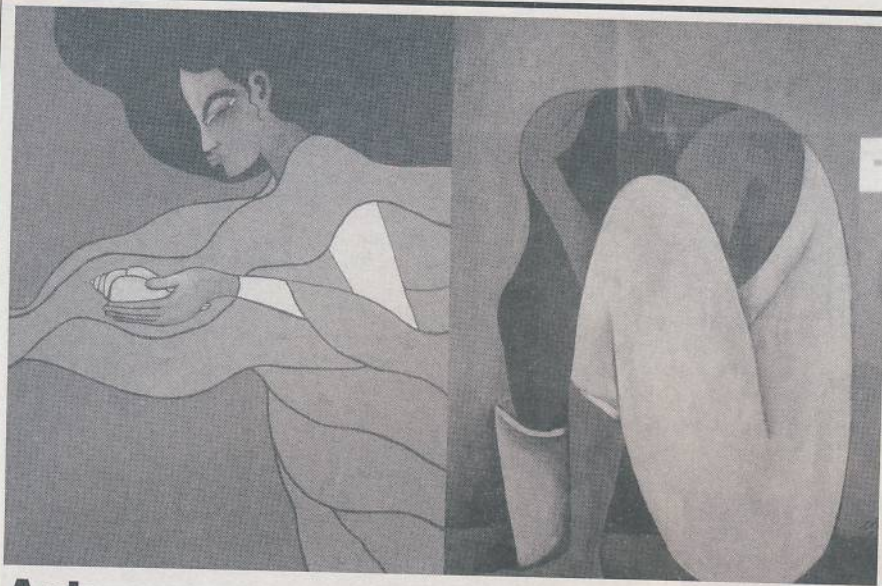


intellectual property rights and GSK would need to take the lead on deciding what to do next. GSK apparently has a bunch of 'to do good' projects at this time, and hepatitis E was not on that priority list. For GSK, a commercial drug company, clearly this is not a money making venture, and I even wonder why in the first place they got involved with Walter Reed.

If they do not have the time, GSK should perhaps try to sell their intellectual property rights to institutions like the Gates Foundation or The Wellcome Trust who are involved in neglected illnesses like hepatitis E in developing countries. This may be one way of taking advantage of this effective vaccine so that many other pregnant women like Gyanu and Sumitra may not die needlessly. Otherwise what was the purpose of the whole exercise of developing the vaccine??

Of course, providing clean drinking water to the denizens of Nepal would probably help solve the problem of hepatitis E and many other infectious diseases. But with our politicians bedevilled by our current political crisis, we can be sure that providing safe drinking water is not on their priority list, let alone internationally lobbying for the further development of this efficacious and potentially life saving vaccine.

Buddha Basnyat is a Consultant physician at Patan Hospital.



Art

Figurative Masterpieces

Chirag Bangdel's paintings express reality like a poetry

By PRADIPTIBHATTA

When Chirag paints, he is a poet; when he writes poetry, he is a painter." This is what Manjul said about Chirag Bangdel, a poet, a painter, a writer and a media personality. It couldn't be truer. His latest exhibition, "Figurative Translations" shows around a hundred paintings which seem like poetry in its most beautiful form.

The show was inaugurated by Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba on 22nd May at Nepal Art Council.

The paintings include his works from 2000 to 2010 including some from his last exhibit, "Geet Govinda: Love in Colors". It also includes one of his best works, a series of paintings inspired from Muna Madan. Among his latest works, the paintings he has made inspired by nature, 'Prakriti', are beyond explanation.


Paintings always have a story of their own to tell; in Chirag's case they tell poetry. Most of his paintings reflect love and happiness. His use of bright colors bring the paintings to life and make this world seem like a place full of nothing but love. A painter who believes that the world is a 'she', most of his figurative characters in his paintings are also females.


The simplicity in his paintings is what makes them more beautiful and because of this reason even those who are not into art can easily fall in love with his works. This exhibition clearly shows the artist's excellence in figurative painting. It is a must see to all the art lovers in the valley. ■

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CSR

Khetan Group of Industry has made a enormous contribution to Nepalese society under its Corporate Social Responsibility. From education to support and all other sector, the contribution was enormous.

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Education and Sports

The group has constructed a science wing at Kathmandu University, Dhulikhel. Science students in the university are being benefited by the Wing.

It also has constructed Hari Khetan Multi Purpose Campus at Birganj in 2038 B.S... Campus is running up to Master level courses of Tribhuvan University. There are more than 3,000 students studying in various faculties in the different shifts.

It has assisted in building Nuwakot Campus, Panchthar Campus, and People's Collage

Paknajok, Kathmandu. Thousands of student of various disciplines are studying in these campuses

Rupak Smriti Kosh has been established in B.S. 2062 at White House Collage Kathmandu which conduct Inter High School Quiz Contest, A fund of Rs.50,000/- has been created. Student across of the nation participates in the contest.

Group has donated Rs.9,00,000 (0.9 milli NPR) for Vehicle to Nirmal Bal Bikash Vidyalaya Baneshwor in BS.2060. It serves to the physically disabled and oppressed students of the school

A fund of Rs 1,000,000 (1 milli Npr) has been created at various Schools across Nepal to sponsor various programs like fete, annual days, publications souvenir etc. This program is helping young students to develop academic capabilities and leadership skills.

Management Internship Program for University Students has been given from Head Office of HSNPL since its inception. There are Summer Internship Program of Rs. 10,000/-, Rs. 15,000/- as stipend per group for the students of various Universities

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Universities has been created at Factory of HSNPL, Banepa since its inception. Internship Program is of Rs. 10,000, Rs. 15000/- as stipend to students of various Universities.

Group sponsored Three Star Club, Lalitpur, since the year BS 2060-61 amounting to Rs 800,000/- till the date, the project is being helpful to develop football talent for the club and country as a whole

Group has been assisting All Nepal Basketball Association, Lalitpur, since the year BS 2060-61 to sponsor Interschool Basketball Tournament amounting to Rs. 40,000/-

It has helped to develop school level basketball talents

Tuna gram International Academy, Bansbari, has helped in the year BS 2060-61, for sponsoring AFC President Cup in Nepal amounting to Rs. 400,000/- .

Gorkha Brewery is providing money equal to salary of one Higher Secondary School teacher to Shree Ratna Rajya Secondary School Bhedari, Mukundapur, and Nawalparasi since B.S.2050

GB is giving Rs. 1,20,000 per annum to Shree Durga Primary school Pitauju, Mukundapur, Nawalparasi since B.S. 2050.

Group is providing money, medal and certificate to those students who secure top ten position in SLC Board since (To board first student Rs. 50,000, To board second Rs.30,000, To board third Rs. 20,000 and from board fourth to tenth Rs. 10,000 cash) since 2049 to 2061, (in 2051 S.L.C board topper was not declared).

Since 2057, provide admission and monthly fee to one intelligent student of mechanical engineer of K.U once in every four year. Further more help has been provided to KU for other physical infrastructure needs of the university.

Khetan Group also provided its specialized staff to train and take free of cost classes at different schools as and when requested basis.

Biharilal Khetan Scholarship to the students of TU.

Health

Bihari Lal Khetan OPD & Eye Hospital was established in 2041 at Birganj. The hospital is providing services to OPD and eye patients of the region being within Narayani Regional Hospital.

Group assisted Banepa Health Post in BS 2061-62. The Project was Health Post Building Erection and Operation Cost amounting Rs. 500,000/- and Monthly running cost Rs. 1,500/- is being given to the HP. Inhabitants of Banepa are benefited by the project.

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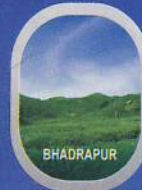
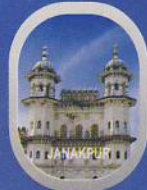


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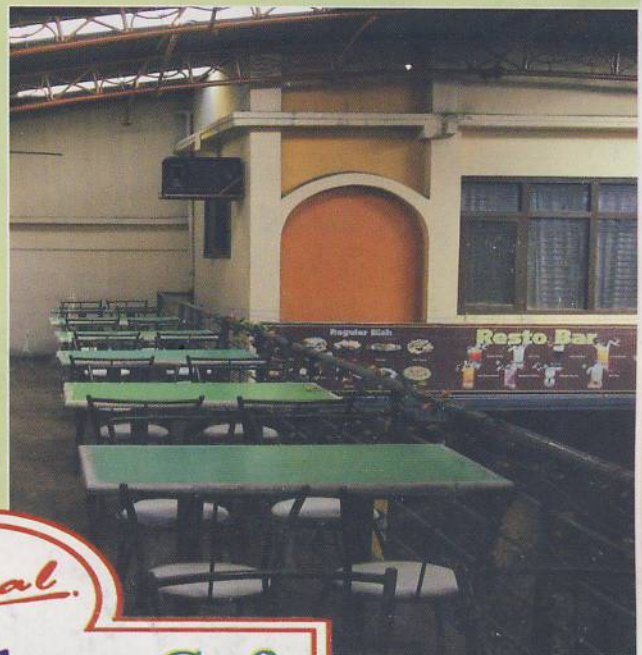
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