



Opinion:
Dipak Gyawali

Politics: Peace In Pieces?

Buddha Air's Crash: Human error?



Viewpoint
Dr. Shambhuram Simkhada

SPOTLIGHT

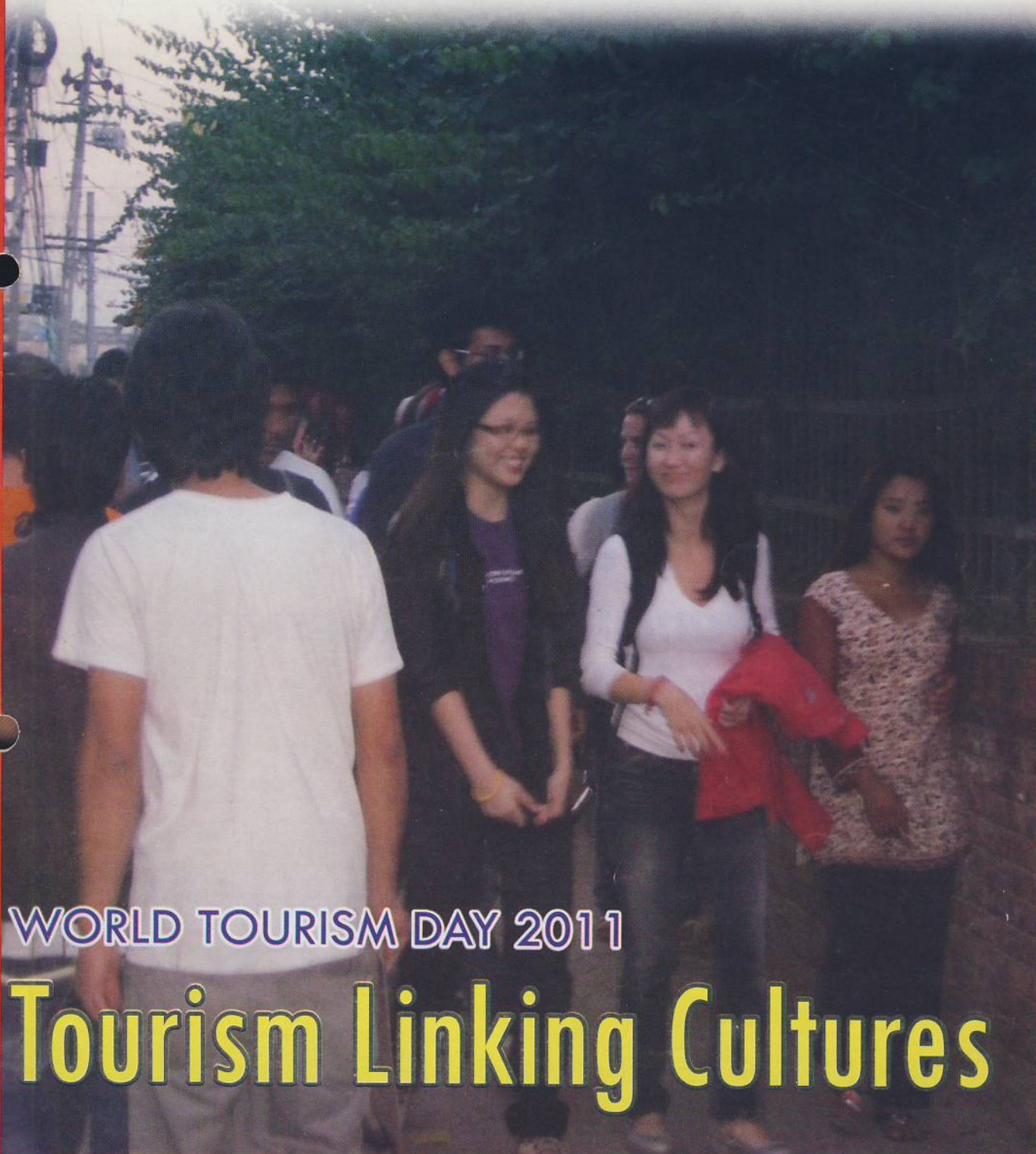
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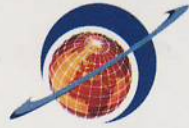
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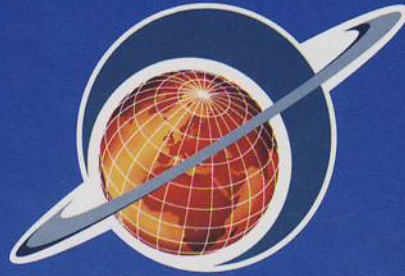
WORLD TOURISM DAY 2011

Tourism Linking Cultures



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From The Editor

Several political quakes aside, Nepal faced a major physical earthquake recently. Although the jolt measured 6.9 in the Richter at its epicentre, very nominal damage was caused in terms of casualty across the country. Even after a week, the people living in remote parts of Nepal are yet to get the relief. Despite increasing capability to handle disasters like quake, Nepal needs to enhance its capability further. This is what the message of the quake .

In a course of prolonged economic difficulties, Nepalese are celebrating their great festival Dashain and Dipawali. The rising market prices and scarcity of essential items have already created troubles among many. Along with this, people are facing difficulty to go home due to lack of commuters. At a time when the country has been passing through unstable political situation, nobody seems to have time to look at the people. Although Prime Minister Dr. Babu Ram Bhattarai repeatedly claimed that he will conclude the peace process and constitution writing within three months, there is no sign for early conclusion of the peace process.

With the announcement of Nepal Tourism Year 2011, Nepal started aggressive marketing globally, the wrok resulting in the drastic increase in the arrival of the tourists. From diversity of culture to nature, Nepal has many thins to boast. Although Nepal remained isolated till 1950, tourism helped to link's Nepalese unique cultures with the rest of the world. One of the important aspects of this year's slogan of World Tourism Day Tourism Linking Cultures is very much appropriate for Nepal. As tourism is a back bone of Nepal's economy which provides employment for larger portion of population, any changes in the state of tourism can make a lot of differences. As Nepal celebrated World Tourism Day, we also decided to look at different aspects of tourism in Nepal as a cover story. As Nepalese are celebrating Dashain festival, we would like to wish all our readers, patrons and well wisher Happy Dashain.

Keshab
Keshab Poudel
Editor

NEW SPOTLIGHT FORTNIGHTLY

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British Council Organised A Workshop

British Council Global School Partnership (GSP) Program organized a "Student Workshop" on the Global Themes of Sustainable Development and Peace & Conflict Resolution on September 19. Fifty five students from 18 schools participated in the program. The students included 12 from Kathmandu, 4 from Pokhara, one each from Butwal and Biratnagar.

Along with presentations on the Global Themes, the workshop included a demonstration on briquette making from recycled waste by Sanu Kaji Shrestha, Chairman of Foundation of Sustainable Technologies (FoST) and British Council International Climate



Champion Kritii Shrestha and a forum theatre on conflict resolution by Climate Champion Babu Ram Regmi.

Vaishali Pradhan, County Manager, GSP said, "In order to bring a global dimension into our teaching and learning, it is important to make students understand subjects through practical means. This workshop was an invaluable opportunity for students aged 13-15 years to understand the concepts of Sustainable Development and Conflict Resolution through practical demonstrations and forum theatre."

Some Women Find Wife Beating Ok In Some Instances: NMICS

Forty-eight percent of Nepalese women between 15 and 49 believe that wife beating by husband is justified in at least one of the circumstances like she goes out without telling him, neglects the children, argues with him, refuses sex with him and burns the food.

Similarly, 62 percent of Nepalese women thought verbal abuse and threat to the daughter-in-law was okay in the circumstances like she goes out without telling her, neglects the children, argues with or disobeys her, does not bring dowry and does not finish work in time.



This is what Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (NMICS, 2010) Preliminary Report has showed. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) is an international household survey program developed by UNICEF. It provides up-to-date information on the situation of children and women, and measures key indicators that allow countries to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

and other internationally agreed-upon commitments.

"The NMICS 2010 covers topics related to nutrition, child health, environment, reproductive health, education, child protection, and HIV/AIDS.

Women's Participation In Peace, Security Stressed

Nepalese women from different walks of life met with senior officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defense and the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Nepal. The meeting was held under the banner of "Global Open Day for Women, Peace and Security: Gender Responsive Security Sector" at the Centre for Constitutional Dialogue.

In his remark, the UN Resident Coordinator Robert Piper remarked "Experiences show that women's participation in peace-building processes, especially at decision making levels is key to create a gender just society. It is up to us to seize this opportunity and build on the existing capacity and experience. Together we can engage women more in peace-building in Nepal."

Embassy Regrets Deaths In Wall Collapse

The British Embassy has deeply regretted the deaths of three Nepali citizens and injuries to others as a result of the collapse of part of the Embassy compound perimeter wall on Sunday 18 September.

US, Nepal Armies In Disaster Response Exercise

The Armies of Nepal and the United States were co-hosting the Nepal Disaster Response Exercise and Exchange (DREE) September 18-21 at the Nepal Army Club. The DREE is a comprehensive effort focusing on building multilateral interoperability in disaster response between the United States and Nepal and identifying areas to increase preparation and risk mitigation.

The DREE is part of Pacific Resilience, the United States Army Pacific Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Initiative. The overarching theme of Pacific Resilience is to bring the disaster response stakeholders from all echelons of government, military, and civilian agencies together in one venue to build working relationships for future relief endeavors. Dialogue and practical application form the nucleus of the training methodology of this wide-ranging humanitarian assistance and disaster relief event.

Partnership Focuses Maize Sector Improvement

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Department of Agriculture, USAID, and a US-based company, Monsanto, have partnered to promote the use of hybrid maize seeds and provide training to farmers in Nepal.

India Funds Morang School Buildings

Ambassador Jayant Prasad visited Morang on 14 September 2011 to lay the foundation of a school building for Shree Adarsha Higher Secondary School, Biratnagar, and inaugurate the school building for Shree Saraswati Higher Secondary School, Itahara, built with India's assistance under Nepal - India Economic Cooperation Programme.

The Indian Ambassador first laid the foundation stone for the construction of a school building for Shree Adarsha Higher Secondary School at Biratnagar. One of the oldest schools in Nepal, this was established by Krishna Prasad Koirala in 1929. ■



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंक लि.
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NIBL gives 25 percent cash dividend and 25 percent bonus share

Board of Directors of Nepal Investment Bank Ltd. in its meeting held on September 22, 2011 has proposed 25% Cash dividend & 25% bonus share on Bank's paid up Capital from the Profit of fiscal year 2067/068 subject to the approval of Nepal Rastra Bank, and forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

After releasing 25 % bonus share, NIBL will be the only private commercial bank in Nepal to have paid up capital over 3 billion. While Nepal Rastra Bank requires commercial banks to maintain the paid up capital of 2 billion, this significant surge in capital will further reinstate the stability of NIBL. At the end of FY 2010/11 NIBL, has achieved the total profit of 1.17 billion.

Nepal Investment Bank Limited, which has completed the 25 years of banking operations in Nepal, has at present 41 branches, one open counter at Kathmandu University and 67 ATM outlets, covering as many district as Kailai, Jumla in west to Solukhumbu and Jhapa in east.

South Asia needs one million new Jobs each month to Sustain Growth: World Bank Report

South Asia has seen an accelerated job growth and a substantial decrease in poverty over the past three decades, second only to East Asia. The region will be the largest contributor to the global workforce over the next two decades. More and better jobs are needed to sustain growth and reduce poverty, says a World Bank report released today.

According to the report, More and Better Jobs in South Asia, the region—defined by the World Bank as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka,—will need to add between 1 and 1.2 million additional jobs every month for the next twenty years, equivalent to about 40% of the increase in the global labor force. Reforms will have to be accelerated if the region is going to meet the challenge of providing better jobs for them.

"The key asset to South Asia is its people. South Asia has a young population and the second lowest female participation rate in the labor force. The demographic transition will result in more than 350 million people to enter the working age population over the next two decades," said Isabel Guerrero, World Bank South Asia Vice President. "Creating jobs for them will contribute to growth, equity, and peace in the region."

According to the World Bank Press release, South Asia created nearly 800,000 jobs per month between 2000 and 2010. However, despite growth, the region is still home to the largest number of the world's poor—a half billion people. Since labor is the primary asset of the poor, having more and better jobs is the key employment challenge facing the region.

WB's Goldstein Visits To Learn Govt Priorities

Ellen Goldstein, the World Bank Country Director for Nepal

and Bangladesh, visited Kathmandu to consult with the new government, political party leaders, and senior government officials on the World Bank's country strategy for Nepal for the period FY12-FY13.

During her visit, Goldstein met with Finance Minister Barsha Man Pun and discussed the economic and development priorities of the new government. She also met with President of the Nepali Congress Sushil Koirala, Chairman of the CPN-UML and former Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal, as well as Constituent Assembly members and the economic advisors to the main political parties.

ADB Helps Nepal Boost Water Supply to Poor Households in Kathmandu Valley

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is extending an \$80 million loan to Nepal for water distribution improvements which will benefit more than 2.72 million people in the densely populated Kathmandu Valley.

The ADB Board of Directors has approved the Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Improvement Project which will expand piped water access to many more households. Residents of Kathmandu Valley will get better quality water for more hours and at higher pressure. The project will reduce water losses in the distribution system and also raise the financial and asset management capabilities of agencies overseeing the sector.

The project will complement other ongoing water services work being carried out by ADB and its development partners, including the construction of the Melamchi tunnel which, when completed, will more than double the current available supply of water in the valley.

"The project will prioritize underserved areas and poor sections of the population in Kathmandu Valley," said Manoj Sharma, Urban Development Specialist in ADB's South Asia Department. "Piped water through individual connection will relieve women of the drudgery of collecting water, giving them more time for social and economically productive activities."

Kathmandu Valley's population has been growing at over 6% a year, but a lack of sustainable water sources and underinvestment has left many households with inadequate, low quality supplies which pose health risks, especially for the poor and for women. ■

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Indian Maoist Influences

After the keys of the cantonments were handed over to the special committee, Mohan Baidya faction has reacted to the decision by coming out on the streets. Prachanda faction is suspecting whether the Baidya faction is doing this in the influence of R.I.M. and COMPOSA. Although COMPOSA has not yet given the official reaction about the new coalition government, the 'brother' organization of Indian Maoists, Naxalites and Maoist communist center Manipur have taken the side of the Mohan Baidya and strongly criticized Prachanda through an email over the decision of handing the keys to the special committee.



Mohan Baidya

In the email, they have also asked Prachanda to make details about his recent secret India visit public. (Jana Aastha)

'RAW' Accusation

From the support of party chairman Puspha Kamal Dahal Prachanda and vice-chairman Mohan Baidya-Kiran, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai was appointed the Prime Minister. But now the Baidya faction has accused PM Bhattarai of betraying them and taking decisions at the behest of India's foreign intelligence agency - the Research and Analysis Wing [RAW]. Now it's only left to declare Baburam and Prachanda as traitors, said the leaders from the Baidya faction. They have even requested government officials to provide them with the

information about activities of the Prime Minister and the party chairman. Leaders from Baidya faction, Dev Gurung and Hitman Shakya requested government officials last Friday in the capital at a meeting of the party cadres.

Last Sunday on Jundo party palace, Kalimati, all the government officials, employees of various organizations and bankers of the valley met. Likewise, other officials held a meeting last Saturday at Lumanti. At the meeting, people were trained by Gurung and Shakya. "Are the people who meet with 'RAW' revolutionary?" questioned the politburo member, Shakya, at the meeting, "It's only left to declare them as traitors." Although we made Baburam Prime Minister, he betrayed us, he said and he requested the participants at the meeting: "Give us the report about what they (Baburam and Prachanda) do." (Jana Aastha)

About 300 Firms Counterfeited VAT Bills...

In the investigation of fake VAT (value added tax) bill scam, around 294 firms— including the big business houses— have been found to be engaged in producing forged VAT bills and they have evaded taxes worth 3.2 billion. Out of 518 suspected tax payers, who were brought into investigation by Inland Revenue Department, it was found that 294 businessmen have evaded taxes worth 3.20 billion.

Out of 3.2 billion determined by the department, 1.5 billion has been counterfeited in the VAT, 1.38 billion in income tax and 0.29 billion in others bills. Businessmen have already paid 0.81 billion fines slapped on them by the department. Twenty-eight businessmen who have not been satisfied by the fine determined as by the tax officer have approached the department and submitted their application. Under the existing law, firms can approach the director of the department if they are not convinced with the decision of tax officer.

The department has not yet finished investigation on the VAT bills although it has started the investigation from the previous year. Finance Minister Barsha Man Pun said the investigation on the 518 business men will be concluded till Ashoj and will be kept as top priority. "Against those who have forged the VAT bills and evaded taxes, stringent action will be taken by the end of Ashoj," said the Finance Minister during a press conference at the finance ministry, "I have been working to make environment on which tax evaders won't be able flee to at any cost." (Naya Patrika) ■

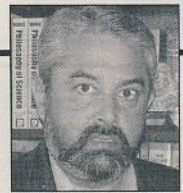
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नेपालको पुरानो बैंक

संस्थापक: १९३५, १९७५, १९९०, १९९५, १९९८, १९९९, २०००, २००१, २००२, २००३, २००४, २००५, २००६, २००७, २००८, २००९, २०१०, २०११, २०१२, २०१३, २०१४, २०१५, २०१६, २०१७, २०१८, २०१९, २०२०, २०२१, २०२२, २०२३, २०२४, २०२५, २०२६, २०२७, २०२८, २०२९, २०३०, २०३१, २०३२, २०३३, २०३४, २०३५, २०३६, २०३७, २०३८, २०३९, २०४०, २०४१, २०४२, २०४३, २०४४, २०४५, २०४६, २०४७, २०४८, २०४९, २०५०, २०५१, २०५२, २०५३, २०५४, २०५५, २०५६, २०५७, २०५८, २०५९, २०६०, २०६१, २०६२, २०६३, २०६४, २०६५, २०६६, २०६७, २०६८, २०६९, २०७०, २०७१, २०७२, २०७३, २०७४, २०७५, २०७६, २०७७, २०७८, २०७९, २०८०, २०८१, २०८२, २०८३, २०८४, २०८५, २०८६, २०८७, २०८८, २०८९, २०९०, २०९१, २०९२, २०९३, २०९४, २०९५, २०९६, २०९७, २०९८, २०९९, २१००, २१०१, २१०२, २१०३, २१०४, २१०५, २१०६, २१०७, २१०८, २१०९, २११०, २१११, २११२, २११३, २११४, २११५, २११६, २११७, २११८, २११९, २१२०, २१२१, २१२२, २१२३, २१२४, २१२५, २१२६, २१२७, २१२८, २१२९, २१३०, २१३१, २१३२, २१३३, २१३४, २१३५, २१३६, २१३७, २१३८, २१३९, २१४०, २१४१, २१४२, २१४३, २१४४, २१४५, २१४६, २१४७, २१४८, २१४९, २१५०, २१५१, २१५२, २१५३, २१५४, २१५५, २१५६, २१५७, २१५८, 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Unravelling Of A Revolution

– By DIPAK GYAWALI



Dussain, when the entire country shuts down for two weeks of family reunion and gastronomic orgy, is also when the incubation of new political ideas takes place. It sets the agenda for the coming 'political year' with the pressure rising after Tihar and peaking around Chaite Dussain in March. Those working in the capital and cities abroad return to the villages to describe what is happening in Kathmandu, and in turn pick up the mood and feelings in the village hinterlands. What might be the stories they will exchange this Dussain that will impact on events in November?

At the top undoubtedly will be the Vaidya faction of the Maoists denouncing Prachanda and Baburam as "Indian stooges out to 'Sikkimify' Nepal". In Leninism's fatherland, one or the other set of comrades would long have seen the Gulag or even the hereafter for much milder charges. In a feat similar to Delhi bringing the Seven Parties together with the Maoists for the 12-point Delhi deal in November 2005, the "uncooked spooks" have brought together the highly fractious and essentially anti-Maoist Madhesi parties under Baburam's even more fractious, politically incomplete cabinet packed with many holding criminal charges. Their godfathered 4-point midnight deal has riled up not just the Vaidya faction but also the Kangress and EhMaLey. To ease the signing of the earlier 12-point deal, Mohan Vaidya and CP Gajurel had to be kept under detention in Siliguri and Chennai: this time they and their followers are on Nepali soil, still smarting from that experience, and angry at the duplicity of their own leaders.

There is rift within the Kangress too between the Deuba and the Koirala-Sitaula factions. However, unlike the Vaidya revolt which has a nationalist colour, the Kangress infighting is purely personal, bereft of political content, and hence more toxic for long-term democratic evolution. The question that will be asked by every villager is: in the wake of the mandate-expired and hence illegitimate CA being finally certified dead, what next after November? What bothers normal Kangress voters is the path hewed by the 12-point Delhi deal in 2005, the primary features of which have been accurately summarized by law professor Ganesh Datta Bhatta in Kantipur on 29th August as follows: it legitimized and rewarded political violence, divorced Kangress from friendly traditional forces, and put external powers (a.k.a. Mughlani Sahu and European proselytisers) in the driving seat of Nepali politics. No one aspiring for liberal democratic leadership has explained how we can get out of this mess without going back to the 1990 constitution.

A headline story in Kantipur on 18th September by its editor

proves the point. It describes with breathless excitement how China's deputy minister talked with Bihar's chief minister Nitish Kumar (without Nepal's involvement!) during the latter's visit to China about developing Nepal's hydropower. The reason the ever pragmatic Chinese did something so unthinkable (they or the Indians would never allow another country to do so regarding their resource development) is because they have seen how the new Loktantrick politicians of Nepal surrendered the driving seat to their southern benefactors who assured them a seat in the cabinet bus! Despite Nepal's calamitous power deficit, all licenses for important hydro development sites have been given to Indian companies or their proxies for export to meet India's demand.

The looming electrical winter of discontent, with power cuts of fourteen or more hours per day, will no doubt also be the subject of heated Dussain discussions. What will come under scrutiny along with this will be the politics of populism, both of Baburam Bhattarai's "Mustang limo" and of erstwhile energy minister Gokarna Bista's "energetic ministership", especially when both raised hopes but subsequently failed to deliver substantive policy changes. Populism is an essential element of mass politics and those dedicated



Maoist Leader Prachanda (Centre) Ram Chandra Paudel (Left) and Subash Nebang

to it must constantly re-invent themselves along those lines. Both Baburam and Bista must be commended for effectively pointing this out to their political class who in their time in office failed to connect with the masses and only enriched themselves and their coterie. History, however, will be cruel in its assessment and not as adulatory as fickle mass opinion. Had Baburam managed to actually implement the long-awaited pollution tax on diesel and petrol and used that to fund the development of renewable energy, Nepal would be well on her way to a more sustainable and prosperous future. Had Gokarna Bista spent some of his remarkable oomph getting the long-pending electricity bill passed, together with its regulatory commission, might it have averted NEA's impending bankruptcy? Both comrades failed to bring forth any such substantive changes.

The list of Dussain discussions is long – the federalism impasse; its impractical unit boundaries if it ever came to that; anger over the categorization of largest ethnic groups such as Chhetris and Bahuns as "others"; the attack on their cultural symbols including the national dress; the growing sense of insult felt by the majority Hindus with the imposition of secularism; its implied condemnation of their religion as inherently un-reformable and hence worthy of expurgation through aggressive proselytising; the marginalizing of heroes, martyrs and leaders of Nepali history with Baburam's first

official act paying obeisance only to the founder of the communist party; the censorship by media barons of news about alternative politics; and of course the perennial skyrocketing political corruption. One issue that needs pointing out as it will be discussed only in limited intellectual circles, but one which goes to the heart of a rapidly failing revolution, is that of the "three-pillar economic development policy" and the caving in of the revolutionary comrades on this front.

The insightful political economist Karl Polanyi made a distinction between societies that use markets as a valuable tool as opposed to those that place everything on the auction block. It is only the former that prosper, while the latter are condemned to colonialism. Societies built only around the idea of competition forget that cooperation is a natural, and ethically healthy, human trait. The three pillar policy, while recognizing the need for growth-inducing market exchange and the redistributing fairness of a regulatory state, inadvertently accepts the Polanyi argument that a third leg is needed – the reciprocity of cooperatives – if the dualism of "public-private" partnership is not to degenerate into fascism in its absence. This economic pluralism has been opposed by Nepal's trading class who would prefer to see the hinterlands as their passive consumers; and in this they have the support of US Ambassador DeLisi. Not surprising, since his predecessors in the 1990s spent all their energies promoting Enronism in Nepal against local hydro developers. What is surprising, however, is Baburam's finance minister Barshaman Pun caving in at the parliament's public finance committee and promising to relegate cooperatives to a subsidiary role. Goodbye, economic justice and self-reliance: welcome, neo-colonial growth.

Yes, this year's Dussain *paploo* parties will be on nihilistic themes when hopes have been dashed with new messiahs nowhere in sight. There will be plenty of diagnosis in every village *bhatti* why *Loktantra* failed and who is to blame for it. And all this will be examined with anger against the *de facto* primary enterprise of the current political dispensation, which is to create the highly beneficial to them "times of transition" and to nurture and maintain that as long as they can. ■

Nepal-Russia

Searching Opportunities

The diplomatic relationship between Nepal and the Soviet Union was established back on July 20, 1956. From then, Russia has given continuous support to Nepal. The support came mainly in the fields of economy, tourism, infrastructure and education. However, in the current times there has been a gap in the relationship between the two nations.

At an interaction program organized by Nepal-Russia Press Club (NRPC) and Russian Centre of Science and Culture (RCSC) to mark the 'International Day of Solidarity of Journalists' at RCSC building, Ambassador of Russian federation in Nepal, Dr. Sergey V. Velichkin agreed that there has been a gap in the Russian relationship with Nepal and said that Russia has already started to take measures to improve the relationships. "We have started to improve the diplomatic relationship with Nepal which was drifted in the past," he said.

He said he met with Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai and stated that Russia was ready to help Nepal to achieve peace and economic prosperity.

Dr. Sergey V. Velichkin also pointed out the importance of journalists and value of journalism



Russian Ambassador Dr. Sergey V. Velichkin

to society and said Russian diplomacy has paid uttermost respect to journalists.

At the event, Shiva Gaunle, chairperson of Federation of Nepalese Journalists of Nepal shared his experience of his Russia visit and said, "We can learn lots of things from the experience of Russian journalists from their vast exposure to Europe and technology."

He explained the importance of Nepal-Russia Press Club (NRPC) and said, "Around 800 journalists will be involved in this club in some form and this club will also help improve Nepal-Russia relationship." ■

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Nepal's PM Dr. Bhattarai and Indian PM Dr. Singh

POLITICS

Peace In Pieces?

Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai may have been different from his predecessors in style, but not in substance

By SAROJ DAHAL

Fresh from the first foreign tour that included a handshake with President Obama and face-to-face meeting with Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh, Baburam Bhattarai faces the same old challenge: completing the peace process and preparing a draft of the new constitution.

There has been no substantive progress on either front since he left for New York a week ago. Nor was there any expectation.

As he gets down to the business on return from New York, the challenge has only got stiffer.

The so-called hardliner faction of the party led by senior vice chairman, Mohan Vaidya 'Kiran' has openly declared a war against the Bhattarai government over the

alleged attempt at 'Sikkimisation' of Nepal.

Bhattarai may have hoped to bolster his position by direct meetings with Obama and Man Mohan Singh on the sidelines of the UN general assembly.

But his detractors inside the party would see the same as adding up to his liability.

Chairman Prachanda, currently seen to be aligned with Bhattarai, has vowed to carry the peace process forward even unilaterally if other parties did not cooperate. Said a pro-Prachanda party secretary and a senior minister, Post Bahadur Bogati, "the peace process will not stop due to the Maoists."

This will please the opposition Nepali Congress and the UML. But antagonise the opposition within the

party – the Vaidya faction.

With Prachanda only tactically backing Bhattarai in the PM's chair and a major faction opening a battle front of its own, the prime minister finds himself in a tight spot.

As the peace process and the constitution are increasingly looking unlikely before the extended deadline of November 30, the prime minister may want to look beyond.

He may be popular at home and abroad. But that alone is not sufficient to enable him to deliver the goods. He is not too strong within the party and relies heavily on chairman Prachanda for organisational support.

Until and unless Prachanda makes it sure that the party is firmly and genuinely committed to the universally accepted form of democracy and peace process, Bhattarai's solo commitment will not melt much ice.

The Nepali Congress and the UML are not ready now to trust the Maoists on borrowed commitment.

The Maoist leaders do realise this. They said that informal talks with the two big opposition parties will be intensified during the Dasain festival holidays to win their trust and build a credible base for completing the peace process and preparing a draft of the new constitution.

Said the Prime Minister Bhattarai's principal political advisor, Devendra Poudel, "A lot of things will move forward after the prime minister returns from New York."

But this is just a hope. There is no guarantee that the hopes will not dashed, given the deep mutual mistrust among the parties.

Prime Minister Bhattarai and chairman Prachanda are said to be mulling alternatives too.

According to sources, "they want to put pressure on the Nepali Congress and the UML by portraying the two opposition parties to the international community as the villain of the piece, in case they did not on board of the Maoists' roadmap of peace." ■



Integration And Rehabilitation Discourse

Transformation from violent conflict to peaceful competition for power

By DR. SHAMBHU RAM SIMKHADA

Among the many problems facing Nepal today, taking the peace process to a meaningful conclusion is the most important one. Management of rebel combatants is always a difficult side of any post-conflict peace building. Integration and Rehabilitation (I & R) of the Maoist Army Combatants (MACs) is at the root of the problem in Nepal too. At what stage is the I & R debate in Nepal? What are the real issues and difficulties? What is the way forward?

The I & R Discourse: Initially the I & R discourse centered around Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of the MACs stressed by the non-Maoists and Security Sector Reform (SSR) linking it with "Democratization of the Nepal Army" (NA) by the Maoists. Both are envisaged in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The DDR/SSR *mantras* developed in the context of conflicts in Africa and changes in Eastern Europe do not fully address the dilemmas of the unique Nepali peace process. So, numbers, norms, modalities and ranks emerged as the four core issues of integration. Prioritization and sequencing of along with resources and their prudent use were also identified as the key issues for leaders to come to an understanding and move the peace process forward. (Presented many times in many places these ideas were later published-see **Integration and rehabilitation**, Shambhu Ram Simkhada, the Kathmandu Post, 19 May, 2010).

Integration: Since then discussions on integration have revolved around these core issues of:

Numbers: 19602 MACs were verified by the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and registered in the seven main cantonments and 21 satellite camps. There is no agreement on how many are to be integrated into which security forces but the numbers issue could be settled within the 4 to 6,000 range.

Norms: Clause 4.1.3 of the Agreement on Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies

(AMMAA) of 8 December, 2006, complimentary to the CPA signed on 21 November, both parts of the Interim Constitution, stipulates "Only those Maoist Army Combatants who have been properly registered at cantonment sites will be eligible for possible integration into the security forces fulfilling the standard norms". Disagreement on norms revolves around the UCPNM demand of new integration norms while the others insist on the established standard norms of recruitment. Consensus around flexibility on education, age and marital status is slowly emerging.

Modality: The debate on modality



Maoist Combatants

has been dominated by insistence on individual qualification by the non-Maoists and unit (group) integration demand of the Maoists. Individual qualification based on agreed norms, training and deployment in units could bridge the difference.

Rank: Rank determination or harmonization is always complex. This is made even more so by the high officer-soldier ratio of the MACs compared to the NA which follows the standard international practice. The UCPNM decision to withdraw members of the politburo and central committee from I & R could make this little easier.

Bridging Training: Many unresolved issues could be cleared during the bridging course through a dual process of training and evaluation. But such decisions will need political understanding.

NA Directorate: Towards the fag

end of Madhav Kumar Nepal's Prime Ministership a proposal for integration of an agreed number of MACs in a separate Directorate of the NA became public. The directorate would be composed of 35% from the NA, 35% from the MACs and 15% each from the Armed Police Force (APF) and the Nepal Police (NP). It would be headed by a Major General of the NA. Its role focuses on disaster relief, development work, forest and industrial security.

This proposal credited to the NA, highlights its readiness to assist the political leadership in taking the peace process forward dispelling any confusion that NA is opposed to the integration of the MACs. Acceptance of UNMIN record of date of entry could also facilitate rank determination. While these are positive sides, some people argue that such a proposal should have come from the Special Committee (SC), the body with both political and constitutional mandate and it's Technical Committee (TC), now Secretariat rather than the NA. Others see the separate directorate contrary to the CPA saying such an arrangement allows the MACs retain their separate identity within the NA, a view UCPNM leaders insist openly and others oppose vehemently.

On the core issues of numbers, norms, modality and ranks there are continuing disagreements with no clarity on leadership, functions and composition. How will the existing disaster relief and forest security units of the NA relate to the new directorate? Is there a need for the APF and NP also to be included in the model? So, many issues remain unclear. If there is political agreement on 5,000 for example 3,500 could be integrated into the NA and the remaining in the APF and NP.

Voluntary Exit: Some MACs are expected to leave the camps voluntarily. Agreement on the terms at the SC and exit of a number of MACs could send a good signal, reduce the time and resources needed for eventual I & R.

Rehabilitation: The following rehabilitation options could be offered: Formal and non-formal Education Vocational training and skills

enhancement for employment

Entrepreneurship development

Foreign employment

Special packages for pregnant women, lactating mothers, disabled and wounded MACs

Many rehabilitation packages are under discussion. But pre-occupation with integration has overshadowed focus on rehabilitation with no agreement on amounts and methods of disbursement.

Institutional Arrangement: In the present scheme of things, MACs opting for integration go to the respective security forces. Rehabilitation will be taken care of by the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MOPR). But, who will oversee the bridging training and evaluation? With the fiasco of the verified minors and late recruits discharged from the cantonments, experts feel the need of better institutional arrangement for effective implementation of the rehab of the MACs. In this context three options are suggested: strengthen the concerned division of the MOPR, establish an independent Rehabilitation Board or create a task force within the SC Secretariat. Whichever option is chosen, it should be inclusive with ability to resolve problems at the political level and outreach to implement programs and monitor progress in the field.

Resources: Management, I & R is complex and costly. The state already spends a lot. Without agreement more scarce resources will have to be spent as the prospect of renewed conflict is even more painful. Nepal is fortunate that the international community is willing to help. An ambassador of a friendly country recently complained "I have ...million...I can spend on I & R but you do not seem to be able to use it". If we can agree on a viable plan resources are available. However we should be prepared to implement parts of the plan ourselves and meet some donor concerns if we want their help.

I & R plans should be consistent with the prevailing country situation. To reorient the MACs from using bullets to reading books and earning bread rehabilitation packages should be more attractive than cash grants for voluntary exit. Packages should be fair to the MACs but reasonable for others to be able to defend. Most important, packages should not provide incentives for the MACs to return to violence or others to take up arms. Based on these principles, agreement in the SC on

voluntary exit and rehab packages can move the process forward.

Supervision and Monitoring: Until I & R is complete the cantonments need to be managed. The CPA, AMMAA and the Interim Constitution clearly assign the role of the management, integration and rehabilitation of the MACs to the SC. As there was no progress, "the understanding between the political parties to facilitate Constitution Amendment and Peace Process" of June 25, 2008 clarified:

In clause 2.2.4 "The combatants of the Maoist Army and any weapons within or outside the cantonments shall be under the supervision, control and direction of the SC until the task of I & R is completed"

The composition of the SC was changed to make it inclusive of "representatives of the major political parties having representation in the CA".

The provision of the TC was added A new urgency was added by declaring "The state shall not bear any responsibility for the verified combatants who have not been integrated and rehabilitated after six months".

Five years on, the state spends a lot while the MACs suffer the indignities of life in temporary camps and uncertain future. Handover of cantonments and keys of the weapons containers make headlines but there is no clarity on the command and reporting. Thank God nothing untoward has happened after UNMIN left and SC-Secretariat started the monitoring work. But the SC-S has been unable to fulfill its core TOR, ascertain the number of MACs now in the camps, verify the records left by UNMIN and prepare profiles for I & R. Discussion on weapons has not even started. Politicians expect input from security experts to move the process

forward while the secretariat leadership, happy with its new realm, waits for instructions. Any wonder, deadlock on the core issues identified so long ago continues.

Conclusions: Management, I & R of the MACs is the indicator of conflict transformation from violent to peaceful competition for power, foundation of all agreements and the goal of the peace process. That is what makes the resolution of this problem so crucial. There is no definite pattern of sequencing; which comes first, numbers or norms, which is more important I or R? These concepts can be used to move the process forward with flexibility or block progress with rigid positions.

Should integration take place into the security forces or in the much talked about NA directorate? There is no agreement on the core issues. Rehabilitation is in the back burner. Meanwhile the UCPNM leadership wants to go ahead with regrouping amidst objections in their own party and doubts from others on how re-grouping can start without agreement in the SC on some fundamentals of I & R.

Why is there so much confusion? Wars may be fought by and among armies but war and peace are essentially political decisions. For sustainable peace in war-torn societies, mindsets need to change first from war to peace, bullets to books and bread, rebellion to reconciliation/reconstruction/rehabilitation. Without this mental transformation, debate on I & R can be murky, discussions on numbers, norms, modality and rank confusing. It takes leadership of wisdom and courage to lead society out of the quagmire of confusion, chaos and conflict.

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विजया दशमी तथा

शुभ दिपावली-२०६८

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BUDDHA AIR CRASH

Dangerous Sky

Buddha Air's plane crash has again raised the question of aviation safety in Nepal

By KESHAB POUDEL

The reason behind Buddha Air plane crash is yet to be known for sure. The controlled flight into terrain (CFIT), according to preliminary estimates, seems to be the reason

behind the accident as the plane hit a mountain in the process of landing.

Budha Air's beach craft, which was returning after completing mountain flights, crashed in a hill south of Kathmandu Airport early on Sunday, killing all 19 on board, including three crew members. Some locals said the plane flew lower than its usual course before it crashed on a foggy morning.

The cause of the crash is believed to be the adverse weather condition. The aircraft, which lost its communication at 7:30 with the control room at Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu, crashed while returning from a mountain flight.

Meteorological Forecasting Division on Sunday said that bad weather could have been a major cause of the plane crash. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) also said that it had not registered the weather forecast for that fateful day.

"We always notify about the weather forecast, but today the forecast was not

recorded at all," said senior official of CAA Rajendra Shrestha. According to Shrestha, the visibility at the crash site was minimum because of heavy fog and rain. He said that the crash could have been averted if a proper reading was taken on time.

CFIT shows an accident in which an airworthy aircraft, under pilot control, is unintentionally flown into the ground, a mountain, water, or an obstacle. The term was coined by engineers at Boeing in the late 1970s. The pilots are generally unaware of the danger until it is too late.

"The nature of the accident showed that it is the result of pilots' failure to maintain height due to bad weather," said an aviation expert on condition of anonymity. "Since the plane conditions were reportedly good and it was returning after completing the hour-long flight, there may be no other reason than CFIT."

Buddha Air crash was the first in the year 2011 but the third in the last 13 months. In August last year Agni Air's flight crashed near Makawanpur while it was returning from Lukla to Kathmandu.

Rescue operation

Buddha Air accident site, Kotdanda, lies between Lamatar and Bisankhunarayan VDCs in Lalitpur,

around 15 kilometers south of the Tribhuvan International Airport. Eighteen dead bodies were recovered from the site and one died in the hospital while undergoing treatment, according to SP Bhog Bahadur Thapa, who is overseeing rescue operations.

In all, there were 19 people—ten Indian, two American, a Japanese, three Nepalese and three not identified—on board the Buddha Air beach craft, Buddha Air confirmed. The ill-fated aircraft was approaching Kathmandu airport in a cloudy weather after completing its mountain flight.

The identities of the Indians killed are Pankaj Mehta, Chhya Mehta, S. Nagraj, I. Nagraj, L. Nagraj, HD Nagraj, D. Talosubrisum, DP Talosubrisum, P. Talosubrisum and Nagaraja Talosubrisum. All of them hailed from India's southern state of Tamil Nadu.

The names of the other foreigners are Jegina Toshinoru of Japan, and Andre Wade and Natalie Neinan of US.

The Nepali casualties included Niranjana Karmacharya, Sarada Karmacharya and Jagajan Karmacharya, all of whom are believed to be from Jawalakhel, Lalitpur and from the same family. Thirty-six-year-old Niranjana was rescued alive but succumbed to his injuries while being rushed to B & B Hospital, Gwarko, for treatment. Captain JB Tamrakar, Captain Padma Adhikari and Air Hostess Asmita Shrestha were the crew members.

Chronology of accident

Last year, in a crash involving ill-fated Agni Air's Dornier aircraft, 14 people on board were killed, including six foreigners—four Americans, one Briton and one Japanese. Last year, all 22, including three crew members, were killed in a Tara Air Twin Otter that crashed in Lamidanda in December. Nepal Airlines DHC-6 Twin Otter 300 met an accident in April 19 at Kangle Danda, but there was no casualty.

A helicopter owned by Fishtail Air has crashed on Ama Dablam while rescuing two Japanese climbers above 16,000, according to multiple Asian news reports.

The Nepali skies saw 65 air mishaps in the last two decades, 65 percent of them involving fixed-wing aircraft. This was revealed by the Tourism Ministry's High Level Taskforce on Compliance Status of Safety Recommendation. ■

Four-point Deal Is Anti-National

By CP. GAJUREL



Our party waged the People's War against the process of Bhutanisation and Sikkimisation and tens of thousands of people sacrificed their lives for the cause of Nepal's independence and sovereignty. The recent agreement signed by United Democratic Madheshi Front (UMDF) and two Maoist leaders Prachanda and prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, however, has put our party on an anti-national plank. This is the reason our leader and ideologue Mohan Baidyaji, along with several other top leaders, including Ram Bahadur Thapa Badal, raised their voices against the anti-national deal. I agree with leader Baidyaji that the agreement paved the way for the process of Sikkimisation and Bhutanisation. We will oppose all such kinds of move. If our two leaders Prachandaji and prime minister Dr. Bhattarai fail to respond to us, they will have to face severe consequences. No patriotic person can tolerate this kind of agreement any more.

There is no doubt that the four-point deal between UCPN-Maoist and United Democratic Madheshi Front (UDMF) is against the national interest and contravenes the party's ideology. I would like to warn the leadership that they will be punished by the people if they fail to correct their mistakes. There is nobody above the country and our party leader Prachandaji and Dr. Baburamji are not exception. Party leadership and the prime minister have committed mistakes by signing the 'erroneous' deal.

I don't think it is possible to induct 10,000 Madheshis en masse in Nepal Army. By pushing this agenda, Madhesh based parties have made an attempt to infiltrate in the army and divide the institution. We oppose the exclusion of entry of any community in the army in bulk. If so, what about the youths from Limbu, Tharu or other communities. The army should be democratized to make it an inclusive institution. It does not mean that Nepal Army should be made an army of regional and ethnic groups. Nepal Army must

bear national characters with composition of various ethnic groups of Nepal. The inclusion of People's Army in the national army is a different matter as our People's Army sacrificed their lives to bring the changes and transform Nepal into a federal, democratic republic. Our People's Army is inclusive in nature. The decision to form a separate Madheshi unit with the strength of 10,000 personnel in the national army would be counterproductive. This kind of commitment would instigate other ethnic groups to demand similar share in the Nepal Army.

I would like to stress that the provisions in the agreement that commit to inclusive, democratic and republican constitution, return of the seized properties, resolution of outstanding

provision states there will be no infringement, in any form, on the property legally owned by any individual. "Such a provision is unacceptable even to the Nepali Congress, let alone to a communist party like ours."

On the return of property seized by the Maoists, Gajurel said the properties can be returned only after the government provides an alternative to those who are using it. All the moves of this government are anti-national and anti-party. We objected to the government decision to hand over the keys of the arms containers to the Special Committee without first settling thorny issues of integration. One thing is certain that we are not anti-peace.

In whatever ways the political leadership tried to defend it, what I can say is that the deal was against the national interest. Although almost all clauses are

Nepal is an independent and sovereign country of the world. Our aim is not to oppose any group. We are raising the genuine issues of Nepal. What I can say is that the four-point deal can turn Nepal's status as Bhutan and Sikkim.

issues with two neighbours and the creation of a separate unit for Madheshis in Nepal Army were against the policy of the Maoist party.

One of the most objectionable points in the agreement is settling the proposed and pending issues with neighboring countries. I would like to ask Baburamji: What are those proposed issues yet to be resolved? Nepal and India are yet to sign the treaties on extradition and on allowing Indian air marshals. If Nepal signs these two treaties, the status of Nepal will not even be on par with Bhutan. In the name of resolving the outstanding issues with neighbouring countries, Nepal should not sign extradition treaty and allow air marshals in Indian flights. Such decisions will not benefit Nepal but would reduce the country's sovereign status as in Bhutan.

I am also opposed to the wordings "inclusive democratic republic" used in the deal. It is not in line with our party's policy which advocates people's federal republic. Therefore it is not acceptable to us. The provision on the right to property was also unacceptable. The

objectionable, most objectionable clauses are 4.2, 4.5 and 4.6. Under the clause 4.6, the present government seems to be heading to sign an extradition treaty and Air Marshal agreement with India, which has been demanding this kind of treaty for long. If this government will sign these agreements, Nepal's sovereign rights will be curtailed. This is the reason Maoist leaders are opposing this. Although our leadership put forward it in the meeting, both Bhattarai and party chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal had not taken us into confidence before signing the pact.

We are not against anybody and any country. However, it is unacceptable for us to sign any treaty which will curtail our sovereign rights. Nepal is an independent and sovereign country of the world. Our aim is not to oppose any group. We are raising the genuine issues of Nepal. What I can say is that the four-point deal can turn Nepal's status as Bhutan and Sikkim.

(CP Gajurel, Maoist leader close to Baidya, is a CA member. This article is based on his talk with New Spotlight)



Opposing 4-Point Deal Is Against Wishes Of Madheshis

By JAYA PRAKASH GUPTA

It is very unfortunate that UCPN-Maoist leader Mohan Baidhya and some of his party associates are making provocative remarks regarding the four-point agreement between the UCPN-Maoist and Samyukta Madheshi Loktantrik Front (SMLF). It was signed in the presence of Mohan 'Baidyaji'. I don't understand why he backed out from the agreement, which initially originated from his party. There is nothing wrong about it. The four-point agreement is basically related to establishing the rights of the people of Madhesh. One of the objections raised by Maoist dissidents is on the recruitment of 10,000 Madheshis in Nepal Army en masse. Everyone knows that, compared to the current population, the proportion of Madheshis in Nepal Army is very negligible. If Baidyaji sees it justified to include over 10,000 ideologically indoctrinated Maoists in Nepal Army, what is wrong to include Madheshis in the Army? Unlike Baidyaji, we have not demanded that our party cadres should be recruited in the army.

I don't understand their objection to the compensation for those who attained martyrdom and were injured during the great Madhesh Andolan. If the injured and killed of various other agitations were compensated by the state as a just thing to do, what is wrong with this? It is the mindset of some sections of the people, who always question the loyalty of Madheshi people towards Nepal, that is at work here. Whether it concerned their dress, language or inclusion in security forces, Madheshi's loyalty was questioned. There is no ground to say that the agreement is anti-national. This kind of charge will hurt the sentiments of the Madheshi people. I would like to warn that these statements will turn the country into another conflict, dividing the nation further. Madheshis cannot tolerate oppression and anti-national charges. We are more patriotic than anybody else.

I challenge the dissenting leaders to hold a public meeting and prove how the four-point pact was anti-national and posed the threat of "Sikkimisation." Instead, the act of marginalizing the Madhesh that is home to half the population of Nepalis would do no good to nationality.

NC and UML had also supported the four-point pact prior to the formation of

the new government. The parties threw up venomous labels such as "Sikkimisation" and "anti-national" out of desperation for having to stay out of the government. The four-point pact was endorsed by the Maoist Standing Committee meeting and was signed in the presence of Baidya. Maoist General Secretary Ram Bahadur Thapa, who is considered close to Baidya, echoed him on the issue. Serious charges have been leveled against the four-point agreement due to the failure on the Maoists' part to settle their internal differences.

The NC and the UML had agreed

point pact signed between Samyukta Loktantrik Madheshi Morcha (SLMM) and UCPN (Maoist) before the formation of the new government is the destiny and it will be basic for any new deal in the future. I am confident that this agreement will give justice and equality to all Madheshis.

Maoist leaders who are opposed to the deal are hypocrites. When they signed the agreement on army integration and compensation, that was regarded as nationalist. When we signed a similar deal, they term this as a threat of Sikkimisation. These kinds of

I want to challenge vice chairman Mohan Baidya camp of the UCPN (Maoist) to prove that the four-point agreement was anti-national. The four-point pact signed between Samyukta Loktantrik Madheshi Morcha (SLMM) and UCPN (Maoist) before the formation of the new government is the destiny and it will be basic for any new deal in the future.

on the four-point pact but we signed it with the Maoists because the peace process could not be completed in the leadership of the former two. The dissenting faction of the Maoists had also supported the agreement while the pact was inked.

The allegations against the four-point pact were against political discipline. This is nothing other than a politically orchestrated propaganda against us.

We are neither discouraged nor harassed by such irrational comments of various political forces. We were expecting this kind of reaction from power hungry political parties. I am happy to say that the allegations have further strengthened the Samyukta Loktantrik Madheshi Morcha. Our five party alliance of Madhesh-based parties will fight tooth and nail for the avowed cause. Don't miscalculate that this is just an agreement of leaders of Madheshi political parties. I would like to say that Madheshi people have also supported this and people are behind Morcha and the agreement.

Madheshis have been completely suppressed by Nepali Congress (NC), CPN-UML and other hill based parties for hundreds of years. When Madheshis and Maoists signed the four-point agreement, it has created a panic among them. I want to challenge vice chairman Mohan Baidya camp of the UCPN (Maoist) to prove that the four-point agreement was anti-national. The four-

statements will create further mistrust and distrust. I would like to question: will Nepal unite without bringing Madheshis in the mainstream? The act of marginalizing the Madhesh, which is home to half the population, is not going to serve Nepal's national interest and nationality. Although the agreement was supported and backed by Maoist Standing Committee meeting, the failure on the Maoists' part to settle their internal differences resulted in this posture.

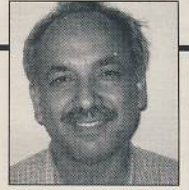
I expected that some Maoist leaders will question the agreement but I never realized that the leaders like UCPN (Maoist) Mohan Baidya and Ram Bahadur Thapa Badal would term the four-point agreement as against the 'national sovereignty'. I like to challenge Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and Baidya faction to prove the pact as against national sovereignty. The objection on the part of Nepali Congress and UML is understandable as they reacted because they were not included in the cabinet.

But the recent statement from the leaders like Baidya and Thapa is just an outcome of intra-party rift flaring up within Maoists. I would like to warn leaders of so-called mainstream political parties that such comments will bring dire consequences. If the nation ignored the Madheshi people and their issues, they will revolt.

(Gupta, Minister for Information and Communications, is the chairman of Madheshi Janaadhikar Forum - Gantantrik. Excerpts of his recent statement compiled by New Spotlight)

I, Me And My

By YUBARAJ GHIMIRE



Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has the distinction of being the first Ph.D to hold the office of the Prime Minister in Nepal. He may have many other qualities and qualification as well. Yet, he has proved that he utterly lacks team spirit, suffers from megalomaniac arrogance, believes in one-up-manship, and has utter contempt for the rest. He may have proved he is different, but not a good leader with vision and ability to implement that.

All these qualities appeared starkly when he stood at the podium of the United Nations General Assembly hall, and made his maiden address. To the world community, and especially the big and rich powers, his message was “we kill, and you heal.” He reeled out from the books and reports that expose the disparity between the amount spent on defense and arms by the rich countries and the amount spent on poverty alleviation. But in the next breath, he literally said “we have killed, and now you must heal.” He asked for generous help in the reconstruction in the post conflict Nepal with a warning that ‘lip service alone will not do’.

But nowhere did he express any remorse for the death, destruction and devastation that the politics and policies he authored and implemented during the years of insurgency during his address. The U S assistant Secretary of State for Asia and Pacific Robert O Blake gave a clear message to Bhattarai that under the current situation, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (UCPN-M) continued to remain in the terrorist list of the U S government. That leaves Bhattarai with no option than prove by his action and conduct that he believes in and adheres to democracy.

To the world body, he assured that ‘my government’ will be completing the unique peace process in Nepal. When he said that, he had already consumed two third of the 45 days deadline he had set for the purpose. While he sought the support and generous assistance from the international community, he made no commitment that he would be implementing the comprehensive peace agreement and its provisions. He simply sought that the world community must recognize the insurgency as the ‘people’s war’, and that his real agenda was the implementation of the 4-point agenda that Prachanda signed with heads of five Madhesh groups on August 28.

What the Prime Minister said naturally amounts to convey to the world community that ‘it is me, and my agenda, and not what the CPA might have said’ will be the course that Bhattarai government will follow. Only saving grace for him was the assurance from India’s beleaguered Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh who not only promised all help for completion of the peace process and constitution writing, but also hoped that the twin task will be completed under the leadership of Bhattarai.

India perhaps may have to say that for several reasons, and the loss of image it has suffered in Nepal, especially during the past five years. Not only because it mediated and substantially influenced Nepal’s political course from the day 12-point agreement was signed until now, but it also has to discover the last ‘Nepali actor’ on whose shoulder the entire responsibility for the inevitable failure could be fixed. India is being held responsible in the esteem of average and ordinary apolitical Nepali—even those who would never think ill of the South—for the mess and uncertainty that Nepal has been pushed into since the 2006 change.



A weak Bhattarai who does not command support even in his own party will not be able to institutionalize the changes that political parties, mainly the Maoists, Communist Party of Nepal- Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) and the Nepali Congress announced at a time when they were pursuing the policy of competitive radicalism. Bhattarai knows it, and therefore, has now resorted to the politics of populism that has discredited him more than any other leader in the

contemporary politics. People’s anger and lack of trust on him is soaring fast. He will have only to options to address that: one by using force against them, and the other by succumbing to their will and accepting failure. Will his lust for power and being a superior human allow him to take the second course?

He had the taste of the anger of the Nepalis in New York who waved black flag at him. Bhattarai’s deliberate disregard for Nepali dress, his disrespect for a section of the Nepali populace—Brahman, Dalits, Chhetris, Newars and a large section of ethnic groups —by denying any space to the first three in deciding federal province, and all of them by discarding what they consider their national or formal dress, and by challenging the unification of Nepal under the leadership of Prithvinarayan Shah, and of late not being sensitive towards the earthquake victims, and by promoting his family —has all gone against him> He is no more a leader perceived as the man who could retrieve the country at the time of crisis. Instead, he is a suspect in the eyes of the people as a man with a hidden agenda.

He is back from New York, but that means nothing for the country, mainly because he did not have the country’s interest uppermost in his mind. If posing for a photograph with Obama means anything for him, he must consider himself lucky. ■

WORLD TOURISM DAY 2011

Near Goal Post

The World Tourism Day 2011 carries a special meaning at a time when Nepal is celebrating the Nepal Tourism Year with an aim of bringing a million tourists. Thanks to the efforts of Nepal Tourism Board and Nepal Tourism Year Committee, more tourists are pouring in Nepal this year than in the past. So the World Tourism Day 2011 celebrations will be an occasion to express this high hope with the slogan Tourism Linking Cultures

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

If the last nine months of tourist arrivals by air are any indication, they show that Nepal's tourism is in the stage of a high growth. After a lull over decades of constraints in tourist infrastructure, the hotel industry has also found a time to put the money into expanding and improving infrastructure.

As the number of tourist arriving in Nepal increases, the hotel rates have also gone up. More international airlines are connecting Nepal with different capitals of the world. Had Nepal got its own airlines and aircraft; the arrival would certainly have increased further.

Despite the lack of aircraft with Nepal Airlines, the country's national flag carrier, more than ninety percent of hotels have already been booked for September and October. According to Hotel Association of Nepal, tourist arrivals increased drastically.

As tourists increase, the room rates at hotels around the country have gone

up. Local hoteliers in Pokhara have raised the rate of Hotel rooms by 40 percent for this season.

"Our rooms are still cheaper than that of other countries around the world," said Bharat Raj Parajuli, vice president of Western Regional Hotel Association and a hotel owner.

Be it due to the effects of sustained peace in the country or the Nepal Tourism Year campaign, tourism is on a rising trend.

"This is the dividend of peace. If political parties support fully in helping maintain law and order and peace, Nepal's arrivals will increase by many folds," said Pasiddha Bahadur Pandey, chairman of Hotel Association of Nepal.

"Nepal has enough prospects to bring more tourists. Compared to the last few years, the hotel business is in a better shape this time."

Only about 4.4 million tourists visited Nepal during the Maoist insurgency from 1996 to 2006.

Nepal witnessed an encouraging rise in tourism after the civil war came to an end and effects were felt immediately. Some 526,705 tourists visited Nepal on 2007, 37.2 percent more than the previous year 2006.

However, in 2008, the total number of tourists that arrived in Nepal fell by 5 percent. Some 500,000 visited that year. Now, that decreasing trend looks like a distant history.

From 2009 the number of tourists visiting Nepal has proliferated. In 2009, the number increased slightly to 509,956 with annual growth rate of 1.9 percent.

In 2010, figures reached new heights and exceeded 6 lakhs for the first time in the history of Nepal: 602,867 arrived that year with annual growth rate of 18.2 percent.

Against the backdrop of such promising and encouraging figures, Nepal entered Nepal Tourism Year (NTY) 2011 with a target to bring about 1 million tourists—700,000 tourists via air



Tourist At Trekking

and 300,000 tourists via land routes. Given the rise in tourism after the civil war, the goal all but looked achievable. But, there were uncertainties and doubts looming as the target looked a bit implausible considering the limited number of flights that used to fly into the country at that time, the limited accommodation capacity of hotels, lack of infrastructure to attract tourists and the deficiency of needed promotional activities in the international market before the tourism year.

Tourism Industrialists have worked hard from the outset in order to achieve such an ambitious target. Total numbers of flights into the country were increased. Infrastructures to carry tourists from land were improved. Hotels — from five star to roadside lodges — have worked hard and expanded their accommodation capacity by spending loads of money. Promotional campaigns were amplified in the international market at the latter months of this year. Meanwhile, peace is

sustained in the country despite political uncertainties. So, due to the all-round effort, Nepal is close to achieving its goal, which at one time looked unachievable.

Despite political instability with frequent changes in the government, tourist arrivals continue to increase.

“As long as there is peace in the country, political instability is not an issue for tourism. Tourists are least concerned about the political situation if it is not a violent one. They don’t want their tour itinerary to be disturbed by banda, chakkajam and other violent activities,” said Aditya Baral, Director of Public Relations and Publicity Department. “We are nature based destinations. We cannot change the topography of our country. Hence, the tourism here does not connote changing the products, it is more about changing the perception through proper presentation supplementing it with more value addition.”

Current Scenario

As of September 2011, the total number of tourists that have arrived in Nepal has exceeded seven lakhs and with three more months remaining, Nepal is on the course to touch the magical 7 digit number as the major Tourist Season is just about to begin.

According to the data released by tourism organizations, Nepal is about to welcome an overwhelming number of tourists as around 90% of hotels in and around Kathmandu valley and in the major tourist destinations have already been booked for the upcoming tourist season. Although the tourist season starts early October and ends late November, hotels are fully booked. This has raised hopes and tourism businessmen are very optimistic about Nepal achieving its 1 million tourist goal for the year.

“Thanks to the last one year’s efforts, the number of tourist arrivals has increased. Nepal still needs to do a lot

“We Can Make Nepal A Major Tourism Spot”

Dr. GANESH RAJ JOSHI

Dr. GANESH RAJ JOSHI, secretary at the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation and Culture, is a well known agriculture economist. Dr. Joshi, a Ph. D in agro-economy, also served as a secretary at the Ministry of Environment. As Nepal is celebrating the World Tourism Day on September 27, Dr. Joshi spoke to New Spotlight on various issues regarding the effects of climate change in the tourism sector.

As Nepal is celebrating the World Tourism Day on September 27 by organizing various programs, what do you say about the prospects of Nepal's tourism?

Nepal is rich in natural, cultural and historical resources, which are considered to be the foundation for a sustainable tourism development. This year's slogan “Tourism - Linking Culture” is very appropriate for us given our enormous cultural diversity. We can make Nepal an important tourist destination within 10-15 years by consolidating the efforts of all the stakeholders concerned.

As Nepal has been celebrating Nepal Tourism Year 2011 with an aim to bring a million tourists in the country, what promise does the present trend hold for this?

Nepal Tourism Year 2011 is a campaign and the Government of Nepal in its policy and program has announced to give it a continuity. This has created awareness about tourism potential in Nepal and abroad and has also created a solid base for tourism promotion in the future. The tourist arrival in Nepal is encouraging. There has been a growth of about 25% in tourist arrival in the first 8 months of 2011 compared to the last year.

Nepal's tourism is based on mountains. But the receding of glaciers

and snow melting due to rise of temperature are going to affect our Himalayas. How is the government responding to this?

Tourism is one of the major livelihood opportunities of the people in the mountains of Nepal. The studies and researches undertaken in the Himalayas (in Nepal and elsewhere) have shown the rise in temperature in the mountains compared to other ecological regions. This will lead to rapid rate of snow melting, receding of glaciers and related events. Nepal has already prepared the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) for climate change, which has identified priorities and immediate actions for intervention. The efforts should be geared towards its implementation through garnering technical and financial support. Adaptation is the survival strategy for the mountain people.

Don't you think Nepal's tourism will be hit by the temperature rise?

Yes, climate change (due to rise in temperature) will impact many important sectors including tourism. This is evident from the findings of the studies and research (although in limited scale) undertaken in Nepal.

What options do you suggest for tourism to cope with climate change? How do you make sure there is balance between climate change and tourism response?

We should orient our policy and programs to make the mountain ecosystem resilient. However, to cope with the impact of climate change, adaptation is the option left before us. We should make every effort to emit low carbon from tourism related activities so that we can regard it as a responsible and sustainable tourism.]

of work to bring a million tourists. The recent trend of arrival shows that the target to bring a million tourists is possible,” said Yogendra Shakya, coordinator of Nepal Tourism Year 2011. “If we are able to maintain the present

level of peace in the country, we don't need to worry about the number of tourists.

Budget Effects

Lack in promotional activities about the Nepal Tourism Year in international



Has your ministry ever done any study on the effect of climate change in tourism sector?

The Ministry, and the institutions affiliated with it, have not carried out any studies related to the impact of climate change in the tourism sector. It has been grossly missed in NAPA given its importance to livelihood and contribution to national economy. We have proposed a few studies in the FY 2068/69 which will be administered by Nepal Tourism Board.

What is your impression about the role of Nepal Tourism Board to sell Nepal abroad?

Nepal Tourism Board has representation from both public and private sector. It has been given a mandate of promoting Nepal's tourism through different activities abroad. It has been able to translate its mandate into action to some extent in this regard. However, additional efforts are needed in a coordinated way (with relevant stakeholders) so as to make Nepal known abroad in real sense.

arena during previous years and even early months of this year affected the total tourist arrivals which could have gone up further by at least a few percent. The promotional campaign kicked off quite late due to delay in promulgation

of budget.

At the same time, the government has increased the budget in this sector by 25 percent for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011-12 compared to FY 2010-11.

Promotional Activities

Although promotional activities were stalled during the early months of the year, after the budget was promulgated, the campaign took off at a rapid pace.

A few months back, Nepal Tourism Board stated that NRs 130 million out of NRs 230 million (for tourism) announced in this year's budget will be used for promotional activities. NRs 30 million was planned to be spent on promotional activities in China, NRs 60 million in India and the remaining NRs 40 million in other countries, which included advertising in CNN and BBC.

Officials of Nepal Tourism Year (NTY) 2011 Implementation Committee said that over three dozen promotional activities were successfully completed in international markets over the first six months of 2011. Since the outset of NTY 2011, Nepal has taken part in 25 international tourism fairs—seven in Europe, two in America, six in India and ten in Asia.

Promotional programs were also organized in Melbourne, London, Munich, Bonn, Paris and other cities in coordination with Nepali diplomatic missions and Non-resident Nepalis Association.

International TV channels will start broadcasting Nepali promotional ads after mid-September. Likewise, Nepal Tourism Board has also placed promotional posters of NTY 2011 in metro buses in DC metro, USA.

Revenue woes

Average income has been recorded as high as \$79.1 per tourist per day in 2003. However, from 2003, revenue generation is all downhill. In 2004, it declined to \$45.1. Despite a little rise, the decreasing trend continued in the succeeding years at \$58.5 and \$55.

The average income from each tourist was \$45 and \$73 in 2007 and 2008 respectively. On an average, a tourist spent \$65.3 in 2009. In 2010, it dropped to \$43.2.

Nepal earned nearly NRs 29 billion through tourism in 2009 which was



Patan Durbar Square

reduced to NRs 23.43 billion in 2010.

Tourism entrepreneurs complain that the problem has continued even this year, as the total earning from tourism has declined by 12.5 percent during this period. The average length of stay of tourists in Nepal has increased but the revenue has been on the weaker side. Although there has been a rise in the number of tourists this year, the majority of them are Chinese and Indian tourists. The number of high-profile European and American tourists coming to the country has decreased. This is one of the reasons for the decrease in revenues, despite increase in the number of tourists.

Growth in International Tourism

International tourism also saw a rise in the first half of 2011, as tourism grew by almost 5 percent, totaling a new record of 440 million arrivals, which is 19 million more than in the same period of 2010.

Growth in advanced economies (+4.3 percent) has maintained strength and is closing the gap with emerging economies (+4.8 percent), which have been driving international tourism growth in recent years. This trend reflects the decreases registered in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as a slight slowdown in the growth of some Asian destinations following a very strong 2010.

“The sustained growth registered in tourism demand in such challenging times clearly makes the case for the

sector and reinforces our call to consider tourism as a priority in national policies. Tourism can play a key role in terms of economic growth and development, particularly at a moment when many economies, for the most part in Europe and North America, struggle for recovery and job creation,” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

With a growth +6 percent, the Americas were slightly above the world average, with remarkably strong results for South America (+15 percent). Asia and the Pacific grew at a comparatively slower pace of 5%, but this more than consolidates its 13% bumper growth of 2010.

Conclusion

Amidst skepticisms about the goal of NTY 2011 being achievable, tourism year is quietly reaching towards its goal. In the upcoming months—in which the tourist arrival is maximum—Nepal is expected to land more than 3 lakhs tourists, which is enough to surpass the tourism year goal. But, still loads of hard work are needed to turn the expectation into reality. If Nepal could reach the 1 million mark, it would be the moment for celebration and could mark a new beginning in the Nepalese Tourism history.

Industrialists should follow the determination that they have shown in this year and carry this momentum to the upcoming years and establish tourism as the backbone of the economy of the nation. ■



SURYA NEPAL GARMENT CLOSURE

Cost Of Militant Unionism?

As Surya Nepal's garment unit becomes the latest victim of militant trade unionism, serious questions have been raised on Nepal's FDI attracting prospects

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Neetu Thapa Magar wore a despondent look when she went to the office of Morang Industry association to receive the final payment from Surya Nepal Garment Factory that formally shut down in the third week of September.

"It was true we had carried out agitation. But we did not intend to see the factory close down. I am really sad," said Magar, one of the almost 600 women workers who lost their jobs due to the protracted struggle between workers and the management.

Gita Regmi, another worker, said they had found dependable employment in the factory. "It was good for the ladies compared to other factories," she said.

Magar and Regmi along with other women workers are sad that they lost job on the eve of Dashain festival.

It had been four months since the trouble flared up in one of the country's largest garment factory.

A spat between management and workers had worsened after a group of workers locked up managers and administrative staffs leading to intervention by police.

Subsequently, Surya Nepal garment, which is a subsidiary of ITC Limited of India, located in eastern Nepalese city of Biratnagar, announced in August that it would shut down its operations citing

cancellation of its export orders due to labour unrest.

The factory had remained closed since previous two months after the workers there agitated demanding pay during strike period.

"In the subsequent period we had tried to hold dialogue and settle the issue amicably but in vain. Our importers then cancelled their orders. We were left with no option than to shut down our entire operations," said Rabi KC, vice president of Surya Nepal.

A trade union leader affiliated to the Maoists, Tej Lal Karna, denied that the company shut down due to their agitation. "The company only wanted a pretext to close down," he said.

The garment factory established with the investment of around Indian Rs 40 crore used to export 90 percent of its production to India and Europe. Ninety-

five percent of its nearly 600 workers were women.

Earlier, Dabur Nepal and Unilever Nepal had also faced labour problem. The GMR group that is working in the Upper Karnali hydropower project, too, faced troubles with workers and local people.

Huge Cost

Many say, the latest episode of Surya Nepal shows how the continued labour unrest is eating into the vitals of Nepalese industrial sector.

"Labour unrest is becoming a huge problem. In the last three years, we have seen almost 80 percent of manufacturing plants shut down, mainly due to this problem," said Bhaskar Raj Rajkarnicar, senior vice president of Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) – the umbrella body of Nepalese private sector.

Economists have said that these episodes will deter even domestic, let alone Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country.

"Our labour policies are rather rigid. And our labour productivity, too, is very low," said Dr. Chiranjibi Nepal, an economist.

But trade union leaders differ.

They say that while in some specific cases they cannot deny that workers might have 'crossed their limit,' in most cases the management is to blame.

"Just look at how the industrialists have moved the Supreme Court and obtained a stay order against the rise in the minimum wage," said Ramesh Badal, a leader of Nepal Trade Union Federation –GEFONT – a sister wing of ruling CPN-UML party.

Apart from labour unrest, the energy crisis and political instability have also worked to derail the economy, say experts.

Consequently, as job opportunities vanish within the country, over 1000 Nepalese youths are forced to leave their homeland everyday in search of jobs overseas. ■

Global Coverage



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'Wild Weed Threatening Rhino Habitat'

- CHANDA RANA

CHANDA RANA, Chairperson of the Save the Environment Foundation (SEF), has already taken a number of steps against the deadly plant Mikania Micrantha which is posing a serious threat to the Chitwan National Park. She has been raising the issue since 2008. Rana released a video documentary in 2009 highlighting the state of the wild plant that infested a large swathe of grassland. Her documentary drew national and international concern over the issue as it threatened the habitat of the one-horned rhinos, other wild plants and trees of the Chitwan National Park. Environmental activist Rana participated in a program to mark the World Rhino Day on

issue?

I have been initiating a campaign to raise awareness at the national level. I have already produced a documentary called "Mile a Minute, a serious threat to CNP". This documentary was launched by the Minister for Forest Deepak Bohara two years ago. Later, I also held a conservation meeting at CNP along with a weeding program in the presence of then prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, ministers and other international conservation organizations.

Is the plant threatening the rhinos?

During my filming, I found out that besides poaching, another possible threat to

the rhino population is due to loss of its habitat from the infestation of the wild weed. It has engulfed more than a third of the prime rhino habitat in the CNP.

How do you claim that the habitat areas have already decreased?

In my

documentary, I have clearly highlighted the survey carried out by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and NTNC where about 50 percent of the rhino range is already affected by Mikania. At the primary rhino habitat, approximately 75 percent of the rhinos were found to be affected.

What is your next step?

Realizing the severity of the infestation, I have been carrying out my lone efforts to safeguard the CNP and the rhino habitat. As a follow up after my documentary I have been taking up this issue at the international level to mobilize collective support to tackle this serious problem.

When will your program start?

Tentatively from the second week of

November. I am organizing a national workshop of all the stakeholders on the Mikania infestation in the CNP. It will be a week long program with Village Development Committees, Community Forest Users Groups, Biodiversity Conservationists, Representatives from the Buffer Zone, National Park Wardens, Nepal Army, Representatives from the Hotel Association of Sauraha, and the Nature Guide Association, Representatives from the Ministry of Forests and Ministry of Environment and the Department of Forests and Agriculture, Representatives from NTNC, WWF and IUCN and NARC.

What would be the next step?

Gleaning from the three-day workshop, we will form a Chitwan Mikania Control Task Force Committee based in Chitwan, which will contribute towards controlling the spread of the wild weed. The role of the CMCTC will be to review the infestation, and formulate an awareness program at the community level. It will document the information on the infestation and its impact on the eco-system and habitat of the rhino and other animals. A pilot project at severely infested areas will be chosen to ascertain whether a manually controlled option is feasible. This project will be implemented involving the community forest user groups and CNP representatives and other concerned local bodies.

How do you generate resources?

The needed funds would be sought from the concerned ministries and line agencies to tackle this problem. The Task Force will also be the liaison between the government and other donors for funds and solutions aimed at controlling and containing the wild weed.

Do you have any plan to organize other meetings?

I am planning to organize a high level conservation meeting inside the CNP on the last day of the workshop. The Prime Minister will be invited as the Chief Guest along with the concerned Ministers. The PM will be informed about the severity of the problem and the need to take action both at the government and the local levels.

The PM will also be taken to the sites in CNP where the infestation is the most severe. The PM will also be informed about the formation of the Task Force Committee and its role and a request will be made to support the Task Force and its efforts. This is a tentative program that I have planned. ■



Chanda Rana Inspecting mikania at Beesh hazari taal along with CDO and representatives of District Forest Office in 2008

behalf of the Save the Environment Foundation (SEF). Rana spoke about the importance of her participation in the program. Excerpts:

Why did you participate in the program?

I participated in the program as part of my initiative for safeguarding the biodiversity of the Chitwan National Park (CNP) from the invasion of the wild climber, Mikania Micrantha. The plant is posing a serious threat to the rhino habitat. I consider the potential threat to the rhino habitat in CNP by the rampant colonization of the wild weed as serious as poaching and the illegal trade in endangered species.

How have you been raising the

Great Himalayan Quake

Wake Up Call

Along with awareness and preparedness level, the timing of the recent quake reduced the casualty this time.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Sajan Shrestha, his daughter Anisha and Bir Bahadur Majhi were killed when the dilapidated wall on the southern premises of the British Embassy fell on them. They were among the nine killed in Nepal by the earthquake of September 18, 2011.

Although there was a huge loss of infrastructure like school buildings and individual houses, the human casualties were nominal. When the quake hit the valley, many feared that it devastated the country. Their anticipation was proved wrong. This time, the loss was far less than that during the quake of 1988.

An earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale rocked the Himalayan region with its epicenter bordering north India and Nepal at 6:25 pm Nepali time on that Sunday. The epicenter was located 64 km north-west of Gangtok, capital of Sikkim, 133km from Namche Bazar in Nepal, and 40 km from Yadong county in Tibet, China. Aftershocks measuring 6.1 and 5.3 on the Richter scale were also felt around Sikkim 20 minutes after the earthquake.

The Trauma

Hem Nath Poudel, a resident of Dokhu-2 in Taplejung, and his family members spent nights in the open after the earthquake destroyed their house. Poudel, a disabled, set up a 'kitchen' near a boulder close by his quake-ravaged house.

"I was unable to go to the district headquarters all by myself, thanks to the disability," he said.

He said neither rescuers nor government employees reached the village to inquire about the situation and provide relief materials.

There are scores of other people in Dokhu, its adjoining VDCs and various eastern districts close to the epicenter in the northern Indian state of Sikkim, who received relief five days after quake.

Chief District Officer Devraj Dhakal said, "We sent a relief team to the remote VDC (where Poudel lives) within

a couple of days despite the rain."

Current reports from Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) district chapters reveal that there were nine people dead and 89 injured and over 12,000 people affected across 17 districts. Structural damage to nearly 2,000 houses left over 1,213 families displaced (more than 7,278 people). They are frightened to return to their damaged homes. It is expected that the true scale of damage and number of displaced will increase in the coming days as more isolated areas are reached. Exacerbating the situation, monsoon rains and landslides in the region are affecting access.

The Government of Nepal's National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) has been activated and the District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRC) are convening meetings in affected district headquarters to ensure effective and coordinated response activities. The NRCS district chapters are represented in the DDRCs and will feed back information they have gathered as well as identify areas where there may be gaps in assistance needed.

The death toll from the earthquake in India has reached 83, leaving 200 people injured. Besides the loss to human lives, over 15,000 houses were razed to the ground and more than 100,000 were partially damaged.

Similarly, the earthquake affected 13 counties in Shigatse city of Tibet, China. Seven people were killed and 37 were injured. A total of 1,000 houses are reported to have collapsed during the earthquake. According to a report from the Bhutan Department of Disaster Management, the earthquake has caused one death, injured 16, and damaged about 4,000 houses.

"I cannot say right now about the exact damage as the ministry is collecting the data," Minister of Home Affairs Bijaya Kumar Gachchhadar told New Spotlight.

"What I can say now is that the



A demolished house

destruction was nominal because of our preparedness and level of awareness," he said.

As Nepal lies in seismically active zone, it is natural to experience one or other quake from time to time. An earthquake occurred in 1988 near the Indian border, affecting much of northern Bihar. The magnitude 6.8 earthquake shook the region on August 21, 1988, killing about 1004 persons in India and 722 in Nepal and injuring more than 16,000.

"This is a wake-up call for many, for all those people who are indifferent to earthquakes," said Amod Mani Dixit, executive director of Nepal's National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal (NSET). "I am happy that the earthquake took place, though I am sorry for the loss of lives. I feel earthquakes are being forgotten. Now they are saying, 'don't forget quakes!'"

The main affected districts included Sankhuwasabha, Taplejung, Ilam, Dhankuta, Panchthar, Sunsari, and Okhaldhunga in the eastern region, and Bhaktapur in the central region, Nepal's National Emergency Operation Centre within the Ministry of Home Affairs reported.

"This generation has never experienced an earthquake like this before," said Umesh Prasad Dhakal, executive director of the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRC), while calling for increased earthquake preparedness and awareness.

Over 16 major earthquakes have struck Nepal since 1223, the last occurring in 1988, according to the 2009 Nepal Disaster Report by the government of Nepal and the Disaster Preparedness Network-Nepal.

Tall building threat

Valley's apartment buildings that did not follow the building codes are the most vulnerable. In case of another quake, no tall building will survive. Experts argue that all the tall buildings constructed in the valley are unsafe to live.

"There are regulations but they are not followed," says Suresh Prakash Acharya, a high-ranking official, at the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, in charge of urban development.

Kathmandu, which sprawls over the soft sediment of an ancient lakebed and is surrounded by mountains, is more vulnerable generally. This deadly combination of vulnerable buildings and geology can magnify seismic hazards by ten times, says Brian Tucker, president of GeoHazards International. A 2001 study by the California-based NGO ranked Kathmandu the most vulnerable to damage by a major earthquake among twenty high-risk cities it assessed (Tehran, Istanbul and parts of Indonesia also sit atop many seismologists' watch-lists).

Despite an unprecedented building boom in the latest times, the safety aspect has always remained ignored. Officials of Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC) accept that they fail to make construction guidelines stricter.

"There is no mandatory provision or regulation. We are only allowed to check the buildings after approval of the municipality," said DUDBC spokesman Shivahari Sharma.

More than 50 apartments and housing companies registered at DUDBC claim their apartments and housings are safer than the other public structures as they have to pass the department's monitoring process.

"We have safest structures in the capital," claimed Min Man Shrestha, general secretary of Nepal Land and Housing Developers' Association.

For Nepal, disasters are an inevitable part. So, the best thing to do was prepared. UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Robert Piper said that disaster risk reduction systems are getting better but they are still very badly equipped.

As the recent quake is just a wake up call, it is wise to take this question urgently: How prepared are we for another major jolt? ■

MDGs

Pride & Progress

As Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment for Nepal 2010 revealed that Nepal achieved some goals, development partners have hailed the progress

By A CORRESPONDENT

As there are gaps in the resources in certain sectors to meet MDGs by 2015, the recent statements by Nepal's development partners lauding the country's progress in reproductive and maternal health at UN forum are a welcome boost to Nepal's efforts.

"The total resource gap is US\$ 19.7 billion. Given Nepal's progress, Nepal's development partners will support us to meet the resources gap," said Dr. Dinesh Chandra Devkota, former vice chairman of the National Planning Commission. "It is good that our efforts are hailed in international forum by Nepal's development partners."

The heads of the US and UK governments' aid programs have recognized that efforts to reduce maternal mortality in Nepal offer potentially "game changing" lessons in the fight against international poverty.

At a high-profile event on September 21 during the UN General Assembly in New York, Dr. Rajiv Shah, Administrator of USAID, and Andrew Mitchell, UK Secretary of State for International Development, highlighted the innovative policies and programs to improve reproductive and maternal health in Nepal as bringing about a significant step toward achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The event – MDG Countdown: Successes and Innovations – examined the successes and the potential for expansion in other countries.

Dr. Sudha Sharma, Secretary of Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), presented Nepal's case at the MDG Countdown event.

UK Secretary of State for International Development, Mitchell, said, "These efforts are making a real difference toward reducing poverty. We want to hold it up to the world, so others can learn



from these successes. It demonstrates that development buys results – it shows that through innovations we can deliver inspirational change to people's lives."

USAID Administrator Dr. Shah remarked, "To meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, we must work more effectively and efficiently to deliver meaningful results for the people we serve. By working directly with country governments and local partners, we can increase transparency and support more innovative policies and interventions with the potential to transform development."

The MDGs consist of internationally agreed targets to reduce global poverty by 2015. As the international community counts down to 2015, the US and UK have said they remain committed to inspire action by celebrating successes and innovations across the MDGs. As the first of the MDG Countdown series, the event highlighted programs, policies and partnerships from Nepal, Brazil, Ethiopia, Gambia, Peru, Vietnam, and Zambia.

"As we saw from the MDG progress report last year, Nepal has made significant progress on a number of the Millennium Development Goals over the past years. Nepal is on the track to achieve many of the targets, except those related to full and sustained employment, hunger, education and environment," said Robert Piper, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.

"It is good news to hear from Nepal's development partners about Nepal's progress. Nepal is on the right track now," said Dipendra Chettri, vice chairperson of National Planning Commission. ■

DR. ANJANI KUMAR SHARMA

'Way To Go'

Known for his perfect hands to perform a surgery, Dr. Anjani Kumar Sharma holds the vision that everybody should get the medical facility

By SHRADHA GYAWALI

On those days when there were a few surgeons in the country, almost everyone aspired to get an appointment from Dr. Anjani Kumar Sharma. They waited for quite a long time to see him. Many people still believe this surgeon's hands had a precision others rarely had.

Till a decade or two ago, there were no medical facilities like today to diagnose the disease. Surgeons and

physicians were responsible to find out the cause of pain or disease.

Dr. Sharma, therefore, is not a new name in Nepal's health sector. He is among a few surgeons to lead the surgery department of Bir Hospital.

Sharma wanted to be a doctor ever since his mother died in the absence of doctors.

"My mother did not get any medical

help and ended up losing her life. I don't think anyone should die in the absence of medical help," said Sharma.

Health care problems are varied and enormous in Nepal. The health care facilities are considerably poor. The majority of people here live in mass poverty while the nation's small wealth is concentrated in the hands of the few. Poor nutrition and sanitation, inadequate housing for most families and the general absence of modern medical care and other services, especially in the rural areas, have been the major issues of the health sector.

In those days, polio and typhoid were also common. And most importantly, a large number of people relied on "Jhakri", a traditional spirit healer.

Dr. Anjani Kumar Sharma shares with Shradha Gyawali how he saw Nepal's health system evolve over time. Experts:

How do you describe your first surgery?

My first surgery was a big challenge for me. I still remember my first patient was a VVIP, who was paralyzed. I was asked to help her out and I tried. The surgery was successful and she started walking again. This success gave me a lot of satisfaction. I was then appointed as the 'Royal Surgeon'.

How do you view the advancement of medical facilities in Nepal?

It is improving but there is a long way to go in order to meet the international standards. I know a time when we only had a few people, but today, we have a lot of people working in this field. Things are surely improving and the day isn't far when we will meet up to the international level.

You have been an activist in cancer awareness in Nepal. How do you describe that role?

As a surgeon, I came across a lot of cancer patients. I felt a need of developing a cancer center in the country. Ten years back, all the cancer patients had to be sent to Mumbai. But now things are different. Prime Minister late G.P. Koirala said we should have a cancer hospital in Bharatpur. Then the Bharatpur hospital was made. We have all the facilities, but few people are using it well. All the doctors are using the hospital as a stepping stone to come to Kathmandu.

Then I approached the locals in Bhaktapur to develop a cancer hospital. In the beginning, we had nine beds there. Now we have sixty and we are aiming to take it up to hundred in the near future. We have all the necessary facilities available. If cancer is detected early, it's curable. I have also published a book (Cancer Chetana) to make people aware of this deadly disease.

Do you think the health system in the country has improved?

Not really. I am sure there are a lot of people like me who want to develop and improve the health system here, but a man can do only so much alone. We rarely get help (monetary help) from the government. The Bharatpur hospital is a gift from China and the best highway in the country is the gift from the government of Japan.

You have also been involved with the Lion's Club. What is it that motivates you at this age of 78?

In 1972, I felt the need of improving the society. Social uplift was an issue. There are a lot of people who can afford a decent education but the number of people who cannot afford education is much higher in our country. Lion's club wanted to improve the quality of life. We



try to help people with physical disabilities so that they can compete with the rest. I have also established a school in my village. I feel great pride when I see students from the school helping the village as a health assistant.

What do you think has been your greatest achievement?

The fact that the health services in the country have somehow improved gives me immense pleasure. I am also proud of the fact that Nepali doctors are now representing their country in International forums. This doesn't mean we stop here. There is a long way to go in order to improve the health system in the country. Only if we have diligent doctors, I am sure we will soon be competing in the international level. ■

'Americans Stress Institutions, Nepalese Individuals'

KRISHNAMAN PRADHAN

KRISHNA MAN PRADHAN, executive director of Nepal Law Society, has been working for reform in politics, judiciary and electoral system in Nepal for the last two and a half decades. Pradhan recently made an observation tour of the United States, visiting various states and institutions, and exchanging views and knowledge about Nepal's situation with the people of the highly developed democracy. Pradhan shared his experience with **NEW SPOTLIGHT**. Excerpts:

Tell us about your recent observation tour of the United States of America?

I was nominated by the US government for a program tour of study of the American Institute. One of the major highlights of that program was to learn about American politics and political thought as well as functioning of the institutions at the grassroots level. I visited a number of states and places in the United States to interact with various persons, including academicians, elected representatives and officials.

What did you learn?

The focus of my program was politics and political parties. I visited a number of institutions and got the opportunity to see the development of various sectors. For three weeks, I attended a course at the Massachusetts University, where I learned how political evolution and institutionalization took place in America. We interacted with various university professors during the program. We learned the evolutionary process of American politics and constitutional development and functioning of federal structure since 1789 in the context of the contribution of war of independence, constitution writing process and civil war. We were taught the principles of government, origins of American government, the division of power in federal structures, the role of Supreme Court in protecting the constitution as well as civil rights and liberties of the people, role of political parties and interest groups and their influence.

How are they relevant to us?

We learned about the election process, decision making process and relations between America's three main state organs executive, judiciary and legislature. We also learned the functioning of structures of states including federal, states and local elected bodies like city councils and counties. An orientation was also given on the presidential system, legislative system and judiciary as well as federal systems, the role of the president, Congress and political parties in America. These were quite relevant as Nepal is involved in the debate to formulate a new constitution with federal and democratic outlook.

What is your impression?

I have been working in the constitution making process for the last 25 years. Comparing the situation between Nepal and USA, I have drawn the conclusion that it is the institution which is fundamental to strengthen democracy. It is not a constitution but commitments of individuals towards the institutions. The United States has one of the shortest constitutions, which has been functioning well for over 200 years. However, we have already changed the sixth constitution in just over five decades. Instead of strengthening the institution, Nepalese leaders always tried to change the constitution whenever there is a fault in their behavior. I am not certain that even the new constitution will work for another hundred years.

What impressed you the most about American system?

When I was visiting different places, I was reminded of the experiences shared by Alexis de Tocqueville in his famous book *Democracy in America*. America has gone through a history of turbulence such as during civil war. However, American democratic institutions coped well with all the situations. There were many ups and downs in American history over 200 years. As American people continue to express their faith in the constitution and political system, they

don't have to face political instability. This helps American people to concentrate their efforts in economic development. One of the important parts of American constitution is that it strongly follows the separation of power among three different structures of the states: executive, judiciary and legislature. The Supreme Court has been given power to interpret the constitution. In early days, American court played a very important role by protecting the constitutional process. Interestingly, at the time the Constitution was written, parties simply did not exist in American politics, although they were already a part of the political system in Britain. Major parties were reshaped primarily by the events and emotions of the Civil War period and the Great Depression of the 1930s.

How do you view American Judiciary?

Functioning of American judiciary shows that appointment process cannot make any difference in imparting justice. The judges of Supreme Court are appointed by the president and governors appoint the judges in states. Similarly, the local judges are appointed by chiefs of local bodies. In some places, judges are elected. The judges are appointed on the basis of party's line and the appointed judges are trusted persons of the government at the time. I heard a lot of negative things about the judiciary including political biasness. However, I find the situation is different. Once the judges are appointed, they deliver impartial justice and nobody questions the neutrality of judgment. When it comes to performing its duty, American judiciary is able to protect the individual freedom and increase the public trust in judiciary and state's institution. It was very strange for me to see that there were no fixed tenure for the judges and they are appointed for life. One of the judges even announced his retirement at the age of 88. But, they perform their duty as per the constitution and law. In the context of Nepal, our judges retire at the age of

65 and judges are appointed by Judicial Council and chief justice is appointed by Constitutional Council. Even so, the people often question the neutrality of judgment. As the judges retire at the age of 65, they always aspire for another appointment even after their retirement. These tendencies may affect their judgments.

What were your other experiences?

I travelled to Boston, New York, Washington DC, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. What I found was that the long struggle of American people gave the present shape to America. There were racial, and ideological conflicts in the American history. The history of African American is the history of hope and frustration. Before the civil war, many African Americans were held in slavery. The civil war put an end to slavery and postwar laws brought high hopes. The issue of slavery threatened to divide the nation. The constitution was amended and new laws were drafted to protect the rights of the people. My experience is that the economic development and democracy need to go together, side by side. Democracy flourishes with the prosperity and high economic growth. Economic development is necessary to provide a congenial environment for the democratization process. As Nepal's economy is still based on agriculture and the economic growth is too slow, democracy will take more time to flourish in Nepal.

What is the role of American citizenry?

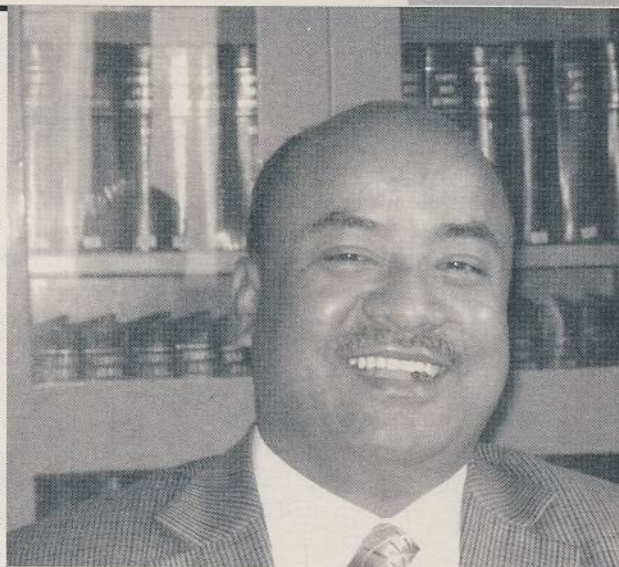
The beauty of American democracy is that citizens are always concerned about their duties, along with their rights. American citizens are concerned about caring for the public property than individual property. The situation in Nepal is that everybody is concerned about the personal property and state property is nobody's agenda. This is the reason people create obstruction to roads and services. I don't think it is possible to change Kathmandu even in 200 years in the current pace of development and with the current social attitude. Nepalese are concerned about individual interests rather than the community and public, whereas American people are

concerned about public property and community interest. American society and system are guided by rule of law, but Nepal does not have any working rule of law at all. Nepalese enjoy much more rights but they don't feel their responsibility towards the state. Democracy and development need to go together. Democracy cannot be sustained without development. I learned the lesson that democracy needs development. Development is not possible without a responsible citizenry and democracy needs a citizenry that can abide by the rule of law. Nepal lacks both. State is not in a position to compensate for the gap.

What did you think of the functioning of local bodies?

There are different types of executive, judiciary and legislature at center, state and local levels. All of them are independent to function. There is no interference by constitution and law in the functioning of state organs and check and balance is working perfectly well. There are more than 7300 local bodies in America and all of them have different structures or the structures of local bodies are based on local needs. The structure of local government institutions are based on local community. This is the reason local bodies are capable to solve the problems. In Nepal's context, the structures of all 3913 VDCs are the same as all of them are divided in nine wards with 45 plus representatives. Even more interesting is that Nepal's VDCs receive similar amount of annual budget from the government. Nepal's local bodies have same rights, same budgets and similar structures. This is the reason local bodies are unable to manage the conflict. Although all the VDCs have different needs and different demands in terms of composition of population and area, they have similar budget and structure. I think there should be need based budgets and structures on the basis of local surroundings. Democracy is not possible without economic development.

What is the state of American political parties?



I found it quite strange to know that American political parties do not have full time workers. Political parties do not intervene in the day to day affairs of the government. The role of political parties is limited only to the elections. Once elections are completed, the role of political parties diminishes. Similarly, there are no permanent party workers. Elected representatives do not need to be accountable to the party. Elected representatives are accountable to the people. Party workers are mobilized during the elections only. Political parties in America are not member based. In Nepal, every political party issues membership and claims that they have one million or two million members. Candidates hire the workers. After the elections, they leave the candidates. One of the reasons behind the rampant corruption in Nepal is that there are full time political workers who need to be paid on monthly basis. Political parties often interfere in the day to day affairs of the government and elected representatives need to serve the party workers all the time. To pay full time party workers, an elected representative has to collect the money by any means. Party workers will be there before elections, during elections after elections. Nepalese parties need to learn from America.

How did you find the participation of women in the USA?

In terms of participation of women in politics, Nepal is far ahead than America. Nepalese women face a number of discrimination in Nepal but they are

ahead in politics in terms of participation. In terms of inclusion, Nepalese political system is more inclusive than the American. When I visited a Haliao city council of Boston, I was told that only one woman was elected as a mayor of the city and that also from white community. In its two hundred years of history, no African American or Hispanic has been elected as a mayor there. When I asked the mayor about the inclusion issue, she said it will still take a lot of time to change the participation of women in politics. Similarly, the process of inclusion is also too slow. Women still face a lot of hurdles. A woman is yet to be the president of America. For the first time in American history, there is a president who is not white.

Do you mean Americans are more concerned about quality, efficiency and competitiveness rather than inclusion?

Americans have waged several struggles to make the political system inclusive. Even the civil war of 1863 was fought to establish the rights of slaves. During the civil war, Abraham Lincoln was elected as the president.

In our country, we are more concerned about individuals, rather than institutions. From judiciary to executive and legislature, we choose individuals against institution. What is the situation in the USA?

In the early period between 1779 to 1850, individuals dominated the process rather than institution. When constitution started functioning normally with amendments, the institutions got gradually stronger. Whether in the civil society or at the government level, institutions matter much more than an individual. An individual may come and go but it is an institution which prevails. There are views that the people should be governed by institutions rather than individuals. The teams within the institutions are strong. This is one of the reasons American democracy is different from all other democracies. Contradictory to Nepal's situation, people in America protect public property against individual property. This sense of strong ownership in public property makes America what it is. They respect rule of law. Every one respects the government order, and laws. ■

15 YEARS OF AIN

As Development Platform

For the last 15 years, the Association of INGOs in Nepal (AIN) has been supporting Nepal's development efforts as an important platform to bring the development partners together

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although International NGOs started work in Nepal 60 years back, their visible and organized representation began only with the formation of the Association of International NGOs fifteen years ago.

Early INGOs were scattered and had to deal with the government and concerned authorities regarding their projects and policy matters individually. Despite offering a variety of working experiences, they didn't have a common platform to share. The situation prompted leaders of the INGOs to conceive a common platform in 1996.

"AIN is a fantastic platform where we can share, learn and make a position to safeguard the commitment of INGOs to bring about positive changes in the poor people's lives," said Achyut Luitel, chairperson of AIN.

AIN has been working in almost all areas of development, from sanitation to livelihood improvement and from health to education.

"If the total contribution of INGOs working in Nepal is calculated, it will be big," said Luitel, country representative of Practical Action. "AIN's contribution of 10 billion rupees annually (based on survey conducted in 2010, in which about 60 organizations responded) works out to 6% of the development budget, 12% of foreign aid, 15% of foreign grants, 45% of foreign loans, and 18% of deficit budget for the fiscal year 2066/67," said Luitel.

AIN promotes mutual understanding, and exchange of

information, experience and learning in the development work in Nepal.

"AIN is a group of like-minded people working in development of Nepal—an oasis of sorts of those who need it," said Brian J. Hunter, country director of Save the Children and treasurer of the AIN.

With the historical turn in Nepal's politics after Janandolan II, the country has been passing through a critical phase of political, social and economic transformation. AIN has been a partner in the process for a just, democratic and socially inclusive development in Nepal.

"By supporting Janandolan II in 2006, AIN has shown solidarity to the cause of democracy, human rights and inclusion. This was the turning point in history. The civil society has recognized us for our role," said Dr. Shibehs C. Regmi,



AIN Chairperson Achyut Luitel Distributing award

regional associate and vice president of the World Neighbors.

"AIN is a platform for INGOs to bring about meaningful changes in the lives of poor, marginalized and excluded people of Nepal," Regmi, a former chairperson of AIN, added.

New Scenario

As the young population grows up in a new political, social and economic environment, AIN has to take stock of the changing scenario to make its work more relevant. Former chairperson Dale Davis said the present scenario is different from that of 15 years ago. With increasing number of young and educated Nepalese in an inclusive society, new working environment, with greater transparency and accountability, is imperative.



AIN's 15 year celebration

Out of 200 INGOs registered in Nepal, 97 INGOs have secured the membership of AIN and many more members are joining it. "AIN, a unique organization in many ways, is a symbol of solidarity among almost 100 INGOs working towards the common goal of poverty reduction, sustainable development, protection and promotion of human rights and good governance in Nepal," said Chij K. Shrestha, former chairperson of AIN, and vice president and country director of the World Education.

Currently, AIN is working on a wide range of issues and sectors that include education, health, drinking water, hygiene and sanitation, natural resources management, governance, human rights and rural infrastructure to contribute to community development in Nepal.

"As a member secretary of the Social Welfare Council, I am very happy that the presence of AIN helps us a lot whenever we need to disseminate information," said Chhewang Lama Sherpa, adding, the two were like development partners.

"I feel that the experience sharing has been building my capacity as well as the organization's empowering people, in advocacy, and for institutional development and strengthening in Nepal," said Chanda Rai, CCS Italy's country director.

Some of the key initiatives of AIN were policy research studies in areas related to the PRSP, MDGs and conflict, policy discourses with stakeholders, including the government, for advocacy on various issues, and support to government agencies such as the Social Welfare Council in matters relating to the development of INGOs in the country.

"It is heartening for me to see AIN

grow from a very small, a handful of INGOs, to its present size with such significant capacity for advocacy and service provision to its members. It may continue to grow in the quality and strength of its services which will enable members to contribute even more to Nepal," said Scott Falla, country representative of Oxfam.

"Congratulations AIN on 15 years of cooperation for the betterment of Nepal," said Michael Frank country director World Vision International Nepal.

INGO's In Nepal

Founded in 1954, the United Mission to Nepal, an international interdenominational Christian Mission, is the first INGO to come to Nepal. For a long period after that, only a few international non-governmental organizations were allowed to work. Swiss INGO Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Nepal was another long time INGO in Nepal.

Helvetas came to Nepal in 1956 and now it cooperates with many technical and social organizations in all the 75 districts across the country. Helvetas Nepal works within four main sectors like Water and Infrastructure, Governance and Peace, Education and Skill Development, Environment and Climate and Rural Economy.

Leprosy Mission International came in 1957, opening the Anandaban Leprosy Hospital in Lalitpur. Anandaban is the largest Leprosy Hospital in Nepal, with 100 beds for leprosy patients and a further 25 for general admissions.

After the promulgation of the new federal constitution, Nepal will enter into a new era. "There is the need to change the pattern of working as we need to reach out to all stakeholders. Realizing the need of the changed atmosphere, we have developed a communications strategy to reach to the people through the media," said Phanindra Adhikari, former chairperson of AIN.

Over the years, INGOs have played a crucial role as key stakeholders and partners in the development of Nepal. "We would like to continue to engage with the government, donors, various other sectors of the civil society, NGOs and poor and excluded people on development issues." ■

World Development Report 2012 Shows Advances

The World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development details big advances in narrowing gender gaps but shows that inequalities still persist in many areas. The report notes that development has closed gender gaps mainly in educational enrollment, life expectancy and labor force participation.

According to the report, gender gap in primary school has been closed in all the countries. Girls now outnumber boys in secondary schools in 45 countries. Similarly, since 1980, women are living longer than men in all parts of the world. And, in low-income countries, women now live 20 years longer on average than they did in 1960. Likewise, over half a billion women have joined the world's labor force over the last 30 years as women's participation in paid work has risen in most of the developing world.

"We need to achieve gender equality," said World Bank Group President Robert B. Zoellick. "

"Blocking women and girls from getting the skills and earnings to succeed in a globalized world is not only wrong, but also economically harmful," said Justin Yifu Lin, World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President, Development Economics. "Sharing the fruits of growth and globalization equally between men and women is essential to meeting key development goals."

"Focused domestic public policies remain the key to bringing about gender equality," said Ana Revenga, WDR Co-Director. "And to be effective, these policies will need to address the root causes of gender gaps. For some problems, as with high maternal mortality, this will require strengthening the institutions that deliver services."

"Development partners can support domestic policies in many ways — more funding, greater innovation and better partnerships," said Sudhir Shetty, WDR Co-Director. "Additional financing for clean water and sanitation and maternal services, for instance, will help the poorest countries." ■

Ukraine. 20 Years of Independence.

H.E. Mr. Viktor Yanukovich

President of Ukraine

On August 24, 1991 Ukraine emerged on the world map as an independent nation, followed by swift international recognition from more than 170 countries. Within the next 5-10 years Ukraine established diplomatic relations with 115 countries and opened 119 diplomatic missions abroad. At the same time, 102 foreign diplomatic missions were established in Ukraine.

Since then the country has undergone complex transformation asserting itself as a democracy. 21 priority economic and social reforms are underway or being launched, with focus on improving administrative, judicial, military, pension, education, financial, health

Communist terror, repressions and artificial famines aimed to suppress national aspirations. In the heroic pursuit to defeat fascism during World War II, Ukrainians paid a toll of 7 millions of lives, striving to defeat fascism.

But the history was not blind to the sufferings of the nation and in 1991 it peacefully embraced its historic chance for independence. Ukraine began a new life, having strong growth potential inherited from the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The young country experienced internal transformation and subsequent integration into the global economy, bounding its development to

a key priority of Ukraine's foreign economic strategy. The DCFTA would enable Ukraine's economic integration into the Common European Market, providing mutual market access based on the free movement of goods, services, labor and capital.

Relations with the Russian Federation are also among the strategic priorities of Ukraine. Both countries possess significant potential for deepening mutually beneficial cooperation in transport, aerospace industry, energy and many other economic sectors, as well for strengthening their cultural ties. Relations between Ukraine and the USA are aimed at promoting democracy, reforms and investments. Political dialogue with the USA on security issues, fighting against terrorism, conflict resolution is also very important.

Ukraine is a member of the World Trade Organization and is committed to deepening international economic partnership and cooperation, with BRICS countries being among the most important.

The chairmanship of the OSCE in 2013 is yet another opportunity for the country to promote stability at the continent. Kyiv is also looking forward to the UN Security Council membership in 2016-2017 (Ukraine was a UNSC member in 2000-2001, Ukrainian representative chaired at 52nd session of the UN General Assembly). Ukraine's position as an important contributor to international security is world renowned. The country made a unique decision to dismantle its nuclear weapon arsenal, which was world 3rd biggest, while remaining committed to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. UN peacekeeping operations are another realm of sustained Ukrainian participation.

Next year Ukraine together with Poland will host the European Football Championship 2012.

Trough many centuries its strategic geographic location allowed Ukraine to play an important role in Eurasian migrations and trade. In this regard ancient Trypillya and Scythian cultures should be mentioned as well as empire of Kyivan Rus.

care and the law enforcement systems.

Despite the fact that today's Ukraine may be considered as a young state, its history is rooted in ancient and glorious past. Trough many centuries its strategic geographic location allowed Ukraine to play an important role in Eurasian migrations and trade. In this regard ancient Trypillya and Scythian cultures should be mentioned as well as empire of Kyivan Rus. During the Rus times Kyiv monarchs established strong dynastic ties with European royal houses, with famous Anna of Kyiv, daughter of Yaroslav the Wise, known as the Queen of France.

From the 15th century AD the Cossacks' Sich republic became legendary around Europe for its military heroism, brotherhood and adherence to freedom and self-reliance. In 1918-1920 Ukrainians liberated themselves from subordination to Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, but fell victim to the Communist regime. Millions in Ukraine were killed during the years of

the European identity.

Today, Ukraine is in the group of countries with a high index of human development. The strategic plans of the country include securing a place among the world's most developed nations (G20).

In its foreign policy, Ukraine upholds the policy of European integration, while opinion polls show that most Ukrainians want to have close ties with the EU leading to full EU membership. Ukraine has already been presented with a Visa Liberalisation Action Plan in order to create necessary preconditions for the introduction of the visa free regime for short-term travel of Ukrainian citizens to EU countries. Ukraine and the European Union have reached the final stage of negotiations on the Association Agreement and intend to finalize them in the nearest future.

Creating the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the EU (DCFTA) is an integral part of the future Association Agreement as well as

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Message of H.E. Mr. Oleksandr Shevchenko Ambassador Designated of Ukraine to the Republic of Nepal

Ukraine is a non-aligned country with no membership in any military-political alliance. However, the country supports efforts to develop a European system of collective security and continues intensive dialogue with NATO.

Its favorable geographic location, abundant natural resources, and qualified workforce are the most promising factors for Ukraine's economy.

The abundance of mineral resources and fertile soil provides a strong impetus to the development of metallurgy, the agriculture and chemical industry – Ukraine's three core export branches. The country has developed aero-space and shipbuilding industries. It is the homeland to the world's largest aircraft, the AN-225 "Mriya" and the popular transport aircraft, the AN-124 "Ruslan".

Ukraine also possesses 60% of the world's black soil, the best soil for agriculture. Thus, being historically a "bread-basket" of Europe, the country has outmost significance for future global food security. Ukrainians pin great hopes on a full-fledged land market, expected to be developed in the near future.

Ukraine is also on par with Western

European countries with respect to the share of people with a higher education. Together with 46 other countries, Ukraine is implementing the Bologna reforms, making a transition to a three-cycle system of higher education and integrating into the global academic scene.

Over the years of independence, foreign investors brought more than US \$40 billion into Ukraine. Globally recognized transnational companies now operate in every branch of Ukraine's economy, among them, Indian Mittal Steel in metallurgy.

The tourism business holds great potential. As Ukraine is one of Europe's largest territories, tourists can find activities and leisure to match their tastes – beaches of Black and Azov seas, Crimean and Carpathian mountains, preservation areas, including Europe's only desert, Oleshkivski Sands, gothic spikes of the catholic cathedrals in Lviv and the golden domes of the Eastern Orthodox churches in Kyiv. The beauty of nature is harmonically complemented with heritage palaces, parks and country

estates, old towns and modern architecture.

Jazz Koktebel, "Kraina Mriy" and many others. Ukraine has a rich

and original culture with unique ethnic roots and cultural life. The country regularly hosts the Vladimir Horowitz Piano Competition, Serge Lifar International Ballet Competition, the world music festivals

Ukrainians are a nation of friendly and tolerant people. Ukraine is home to more than 130 ethnicities with different cultural and religious backgrounds living together in harmony. The stability of interethnic relations without confrontation on a national basis is a remarkable phenomenon, especially in the light of its painful history and current global tensions.

An estimate of 10 to 15 millions of Ukrainians live outside national boundaries, with foreign diaspora comprising ¼ of the nation. The majority of Ukrainians live in Russia, Kazakhstan, USA and Canada, being respected for

have experiences in many areas, the Government and people of Ukraine are ready to extend their hands of cooperation for the development of Nepal.

Undoubtedly, the cooperation between our countries must be based on firm legal foundation. Therefore, there is a clear need to work out and expand our legal and treaty base. Interparliamentary links should also make an important contribution to further development of bilateral relations.

We are looking forward to maintain regular contacts between the Foreign offices of Ukraine and Nepal as well as to start political dialog at the highest level.

In the context of promotion of Ukrainian-Nepali relations, I would like to appreciate the personal contribution of Mr. Kiran Vaidya, Honorary Consul of Ukraine in Nepal, to the development of beneficial ties between our countries and peoples.



Ukrainian-Nepali Relations

Mr. Kiran Vaidya, Honorary Consul of Ukraine to Republic of Nepal

Nepal has recognized the Independence of Ukraine on the 3rd of January, 1992.

The diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Nepal were established on the 15th of January 1993, when the Permanent Representatives of two countries to the United Nations signed the Protocol on the Establishment of the Diplomatic Relations.

Since then we have witnessed continuous development of friendly relations between our countries and peoples based on the principles of the UN and international law, mutual trust and respect.

Although the current Ukrainian-Nepali trade turnover reached 1,355 million US in 2010, it does not reflect potential of the two countries. Therefore, regular exchange of business delegations between our two states is one of the most important element in promotion of bilateral cooperation.

I think that Ukraine and Nepal have

a huge potential, which lies in political, trade and economic, cultural, education, tourism spheres etc. The new era of Ukraine-Nepali relations should be opened in the nearest future following the active dialogue on various levels.

Education and tourism turns into one of the significant spheres of human activity in XXI century. That is why we should work closely to promote cooperation in the field of education, expand the number of students exchanges, learn more about the culture and history of Ukraine and Nepal.

People to people contacts should also serve to a better knowing of each other. It will bring Ukrainian and Nepali people closer and provide new opportunities for collaboration.

I am confident in stable growth of Ukrainian-Nepali cooperation in all spheres of mutual interest. As Ukrainians



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Diabetic Complications

-By BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD



In South Asia diabetes is becoming the new scourge. The incidence of diabetes is indeed increasing worldwide, but it will have a greater impact in this region because of a lack of facilities and health insurance that is generally prevalent in South Asia. Diabetes is not a stand-alone disease because it affects all the other organs in the body. With infectious diseases, you can take effective drugs for usually a finite period of time and you may be cured of the disease. For example from typhoid to tuberculosis (both very common diseases in South Asia), antibiotics if taken for a certain period of time will do the job. Unfortunately with metabolic diseases like diabetes, the problems linger on and treatment with close monitoring needs to continue for the rest of one's life.

Diabetes Mellitus manifests as increased blood sugar in the patient, and it is so rampant in Nepal that even "nuances" in the treatment have become important. Some years ago a robust trial (United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study, UKPDS) in over 5000 diabetic patients revealed that with "tight" blood glucose control, eye problems, kidney problems and nerve problems were significantly decreased. The study population was Type 2 diabetics just like the vast majority of diabetics seen in Nepal, who are affected by the disease (not early but later in their lives).

As we are increasingly starting to find out in Nepal, uncontrolled diabetes more commonly requires dialysis due to kidney failure, eye surgery for retinal hemorrhages, and even amputations for nerve and vasculature related problems. In other words conscientiously controlling blood sugar leads to fewer complications of the kidneys, eyes and nerves. In medical

parlance these are called "microvascular" complications. Unfortunately in medicine what may seem to be an obvious cause (high blood sugar) and effect (complications) does not always pan out.

Indeed, as revealed in the same

strokes and heart attacks independent of their blood glucose control.

The "take home message" for diabetics is that it is important to keep both the blood pressure and blood glucose under proper control so that the important organs (including the

Hypertension or high blood pressure usually goes hand in hand with diabetes. Hypertension is an important risk factor for both heart attacks and strokes.

UKPDS trial what the tighter control of blood sugar did not do was decrease "macrovascular" complications in other important organs that diabetes has a serious impact on, namely the heart and the brain. So, despite a good control of blood sugar, the rates of heart attacks and strokes in these patients did not improve, although there was a decrease in kidney and eye problems. However, there was a silver lining in the study.

Hypertension or high blood pressure usually goes hand in hand with diabetes. Hypertension is an important risk factor for both heart attacks and strokes. So, those diabetics in the study who had proper control of blood pressure clearly had fewer

heart, brain, eyes, kidneys) that diabetes affects are protected. Furthermore, unlike high blood sugar in a patient which usually manifests with excessive urination, thirst, and hunger, high blood pressure may essentially have no symptoms to start with until there is that catastrophic stroke or heart attack. The prevention of both diabetes and hypertension with "way of life" changes also needs to be emphasized.

Finally also important for the diabetic are periodic eye exams to make sure that vision is not compromised as diabetes causes haemorrhages (bleeding) and other problems in the eye. ■

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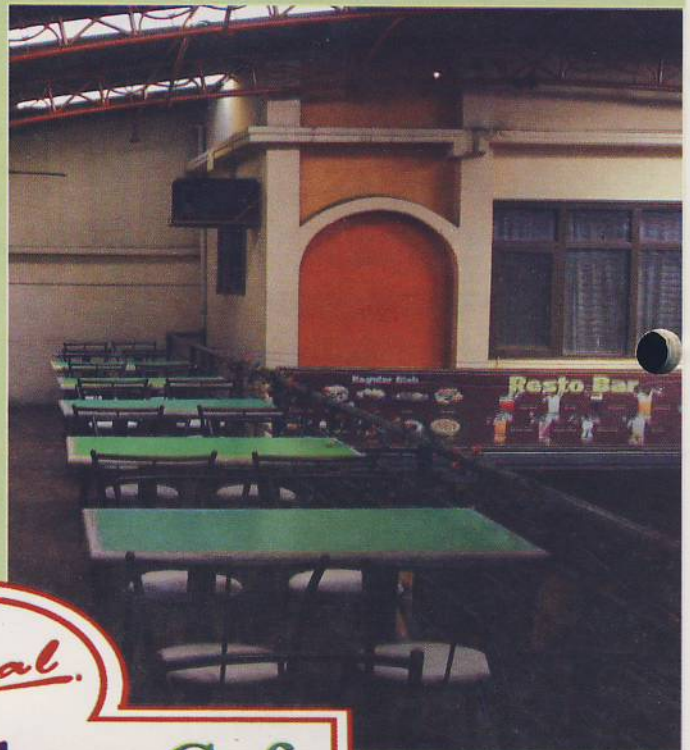


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