



Viewpoint:
Dr. Tilak Rawal

WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL NEPAL : For A Just Change

POLITICS: Countdown Is On

Face to Face:

Chakra Prasad Bastola



NEW SPOTLIGHT

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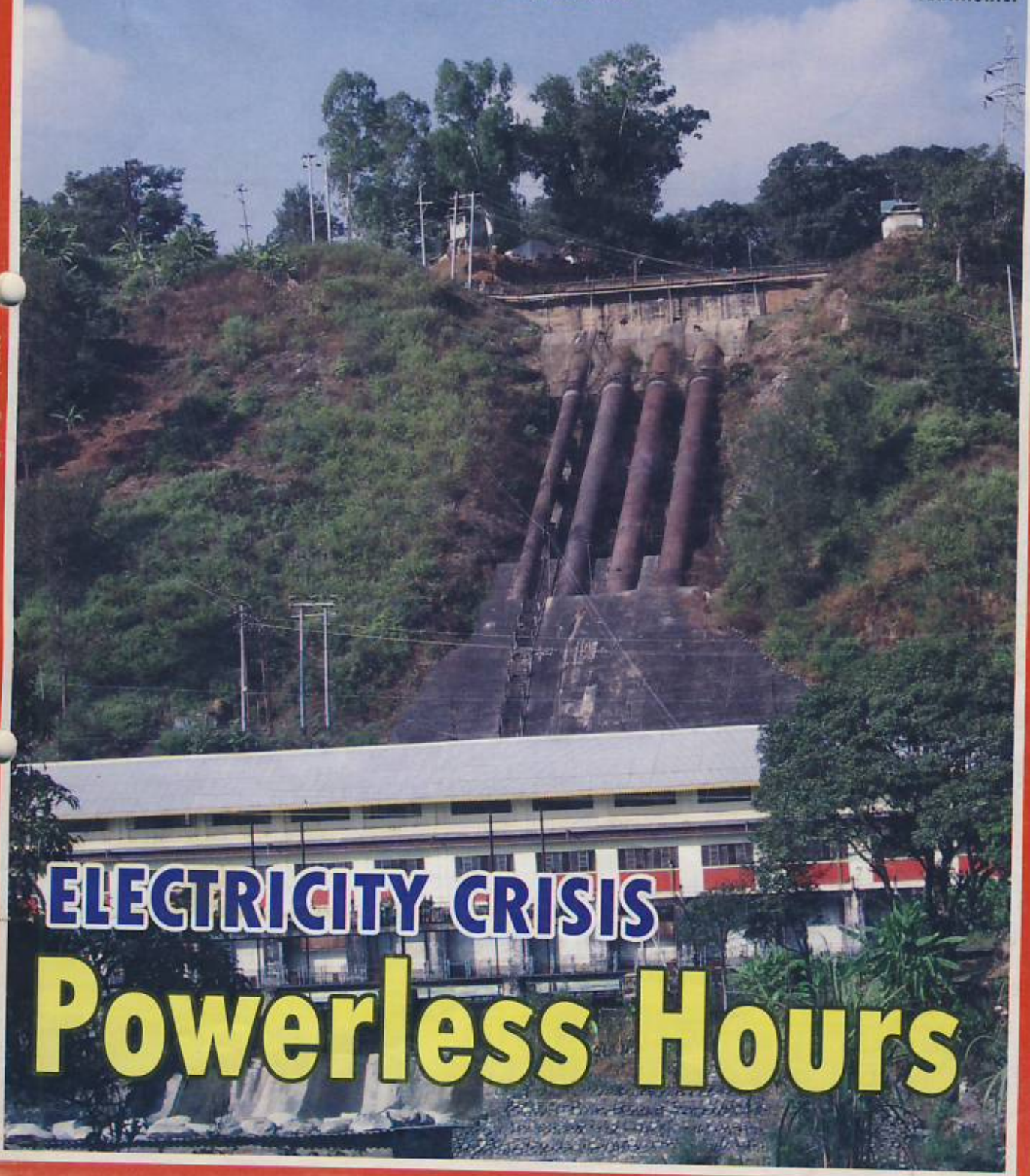
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ELECTRICITY CRISIS Powerless Hours



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From The Editor

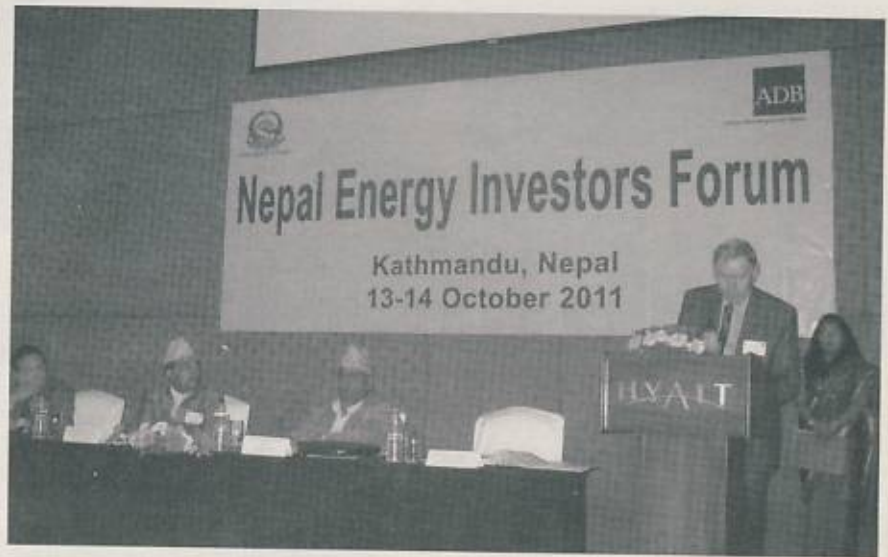
Nepal has been witnessing severe power crisis around winter and dry season every year. The pattern over the years shows that there is no easy and quick way to solve the perennial problem of power outage. Putting the political rhetoric and official preaching aside, Nepali people will do well to brace for power cuts of up to 16 hours a day as the winter deepens. This situation will continue at least for another five years, given the pace of work needed to complete projects like Upper Tamakosi. The annual demand of electricity is increasing by 7-9 percent or 100 MW yearly. Yet the people don't see an immediate prospect for a respite from the power cuts at odd and long hours. The only solution will be to construct a few big projects by securing huge investments. Since Nepal's private sector does not have resources, the government needs to mobilize development partners as well as the multilateral sector. In this context, the recently concluded, two-day Nepal Energy Investors Forum provided a venue for all stakeholders to come together and discuss the issue and find out ways to avert Nepal's prolonged energy crisis. Asian Development Bank has played a very crucial role following the debacle of Arun III and rescued Nepal's power sector from facing a more severe crisis. By agreeing to invest in Kaligandaki A Hydropower project, Asian Development Bank helped to avert a major crisis. As Nepal has been making efforts to reduce the severe power cuts, we expect that Nepal Energy Investors Forum provided opportunities to deal with the crisis. This issue of the New Spotlight chose to highlight Nepal's power crisis in its cover story.

As Nepalese are celebrating Tihar and Chhat. We would like to wish all our readers, patrons and well wisher Happy Dipawali

Keshab
Keshab Poudel
Editor

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India Pledges Rs 24.56 M For Sanskrit School Building

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Embassy of India, Kathmandu, Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC), Division Office, Palpa and Sanskrit Secondary School, Ridi in Gulmi District for providing the grant assistance.

In addition to this school, two projects in Gulmi District have already been completed with India's assistance of Rs 17 million, while work is underway for two



projects at a cost of Rs 28.88 million.

Earlier Indian government provided assistance of NRs. 3 crores for Rupandehi District.

World Food Day: Between Hunger And Hope

The World Food Programme (WFP) marked the World Food Day by highlighting the vital role that food assistance plays during humanitarian crises, supporting recovery in the immediate aftermath of disasters, and building the resilience that is necessary to ensure food security.

"Across the world, we are the bridge between hunger and hope for millions of people," said WFP Executive Director, Josette Sheeran. "WFP is providing life-saving food assistance in the midst of crises like the drought in the Horn of Africa. In countries like Libya, we are supporting communities that are striving to recover from crisis, and in places like Haiti, we continue to work with governments and civil society to build resilience so that the vulnerable are better able to cope when the next disaster strikes."

"In Nepal, over 3.5 million people are currently considered to be food insecure, and 41 percent of the population is estimated to be undernourished," said WFP Nepal Country Director, Nicole Menage. "With its extensive field presence, WFP in Nepal provides food and cash assistance to more than one million people through food/cash for assets, support to refugees, micronutrient supplementation, school meals and maternal and child health care projects, particularly in the isolated regions of the Mid and Far Western Hills and Mountains."

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. Each year, on average, WFP feeds more than 90 million people in more than 70 countries.

Eighty Percent Nepalis Use No Soap To Wash Hands

Most of the communicable diseases are caused due to dirt in the hands, but many people have been losing life untimely for lack of knowledge that hands should be kept clean.

In Nepal, more than 80 percent of people have been washing hands without

the use of soap; the reason is— illiteracy and lack of access to soap because of poverty. As diarrhea and respiratory diseases are caused if we do not wash hands, it should be taught to children from their early age right from the school.

The World Hand Washing Day- 2011 was observed with the slogan 'Let's wash hands and protect ourselves from diseases'.

An awareness program was organized in Jawalakhel by the Ministry of Health, and Population, National Information and Communications Centre and the UNICEF, jointly.

On the occasion, Minister for Health and Population Rajendra Mahato said the message that we should wash hands should be reached to the masses.

Thai Support To Police Hospital

Maris Sangiampongsa, Thai Ambassador to Nepal representing the Royal Thai Government, offered financial aids in the amount of NPR 250,000 to Dr. Kashi Ram Kunwar, Additional Inspector General of Police (AIGP), at Nepal Police Hospital, to buy medical equipments for the hospital on 13 September 2011.

In addition, Ambassador Maris also handed over a mobile medical equipment worth around 80,000 baht which was donated by the Mt. Everest Expedition Team from Thailand sponsored by Thai Beverage Public Company Limited after the completion of their mission in May 2011. On this occasion, they also discussed the possibility of seeking cooperation between Thailand and Nepal such as technical assistance on medical science in terms of short training courses.

Changu Sattal Gets US Ambassador's Fund

The U.S. Embassy has announced that the Living Traditions Museum is this year's recipient of funding from the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP). With a grant totaling \$95,800 USD, (around Nepali Rupees 71 Lakhs) this project will support restoration of the deteriorating

historic buildings that surround the ancient Changu Narayan temple complex in Bhaktapur district, one of seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Kathmandu Valley.

Over the past nine years, the U.S. Government has committed \$1,434,851 dollars (approximately 10 Crore 76 Lakh Nepali rupees) to restore and preserve eleven cultural sites throughout Nepal. Projects previously supported by the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation include the restoration of Kal Bhairav and Kageshwar Temples in Kathmandu's Durbar Square, restoration of Nag Bahal Hiti in Lalitpur, renovating ancient Buddhist chhortens in upper Mustang, and continuing the restoration of Patan Durbar Square in Lalitpur and ancient monastery in Pangboche, Solukhumbu.

British Gurkha Killed In Afghanistan

The British Embassy has announced the death of a Gurkha soldier, serving with the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, during operations on Saturday, 15 October 2011 in the Nahr-e Saraj region of Helmand province Afghanistan.

Event Marks Adoption Of Legislation

The U.S. Embassy to Nepal, the United Nations Human Rights Office in Nepal (OHCHR), and a coalition of Dalit organizations organized a special event to raise awareness on the recently enacted Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability Act of 2011.

Geoffrey Pyatt, U.S. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs, Jyoti Sanghera, OHCHR Chief, the National Dalit Commission, and the Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization addressed the event.

U.S. Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner Visits Nepal

U.S. Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner arrived in Kathmandu today for a two-day visit. During his visit, he will meet with senior government officials, parliamentarians, and Tibetan civil society leaders to discuss a range of issues, including U.S.-Nepal relations and the protection of Tibetan refugees in Nepal.

Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner has represented the Fifth Congressional District of Wisconsin since 1978, after serving ten years in the Wisconsin State Legislature.

The Congressman currently serves as the Vice Chairman of the Committee on Science and Technology and as Chairman of the Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary. Congressman Sensenbrenner earned his law degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1968. ■

Chandra Dhakal Re-elected President

Chandra Prasad Dhakal is re-elected as the chairman of Global Bank. Meetings of Board of Directors of Global Bank choose him as new chairman. Chandra Prasad Dhakal, Sandip Agrawal, Suraj Kumar Shrestha and Surendranath Panta elected as a board



director unopposed by the fifth General Assembly of Bank, which was concluded on Tuesday.

The General Assembly also endorsed the proposal of Bank's board of directors to distribute 12.02 percentage profits to share holders. According to the bank, the profit will be distributed as 6.67 percent bonus and 5.35 percent cash.

The bank is serving more than 100,000 its customers through its 30 branches. During the period, the bank collected 16.32 billion rupees deposit and invested 13.44 billion rupees as a loan.

Motor Vehicles Sales Down By 50 Percent

Businessmen brought various offers targeting the festive season but the automobile market remained unresponsive and dull. Bhadra and Ashoj are considered the best for the sale of automobiles. However, in comparison with the sales of the previous year for this period, sales dropped by half this season. In Dashain, sales of automobile generally increases, but this year there has been a steep decline in sales, say industrialists.

In comparison to the previous fiscal year (067/68), Bhadra of this year has seen the sales of motorcycles decrease by 46 percent whereas sales of four wheelers have decreased by 50 percent, according to the Department of Transport Management. The effect of Auto show-2011, which was organized by Nepal Automobile Dealers' Association (NADA) in Bhadra — targeting the upcoming festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Chhat — is also null.

Shekhar Golehha, Executive Director of Golehha Organization, accepted that sales have remained indifferent despite the hard work done by the businessmen. He accused the government policy for the dip in sales of automobiles. (Karoobar)

IFC Trains Poultry Farmers

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, is providing training that can help small-scale poultry entrepreneurs and farmers in Nepal increase their revenues and gain better access to markets.

In partnership with two Nepalese poultry firms, Probiotech Industries and Avinash Hatchery, IFC conducted a Training of Trainers workshop for 20 local veterinarians in Kathmandu.

The three-day workshop included sessions on how to strengthen management capacity by improving financial literacy, business acumen, and developing technical skills that improve productivity. It also included technical sessions on poultry housing and brooding management, vaccination, bio-security, and broiler diseases.

A half-day field visit to Banepa in the Kavre district to work on brooding management was also part of the course. Training for farmers will commence from October 2011.

Syakar takes the wraps off Honda Brio

The wraps are off the much-awaited small car from Honda. Syakar Trading Company, sole authorised distributor of Honda for Nepal, rolled out the Honda Brio here on Thursday.

With this, Honda has entered the fiercely competitive entry-level small car segment where companies like Hyundai and Maruti-Suzuki have a strong presence.

According to Syakar Company, the car is a perfect package for new era and it embodies the best of Honda's technologies to deliver fun and agile driving, fuel efficiency, spaciousness and safety. The car delivers a mileage of 18.4 kmpl and has a turning radius of 4.5m, making it a perfect machine for congested traffic. "With this car, we aim to cater to the demand of medium class people," said Syakar Company Chairman Padma Jyoti during the launch, adding that the company was glad to present the car that was launched in the global market just 15 days ago. "Brio will help Nepalis realise their dream of having a Honda car."

On the occasion, Honda SIEL Cars India Director-Sales and Marketing Seki Inaba said the car was specifically designed for the Asian market. "Our commitment to the Nepali and Asian markets is visible as the car has been launched here shortly after its global launch and the machine has been designed as per the requirement of this region," Inaba said.

The Brio is equipped with a four cylinder 1.2 litre i-VTEC engine which delivers a maximum power of 88 PS at 6000 RPM and maximum torque of 109 Nm at 4600 RPM. The five-speed manual transmission with optimized gear ratios offers excellent low RPM acceleration and smooth high RPM performance, delivering excellent fuel efficiency and nimble performance, said the company.



While still being a compact car, the Brio offers spacious interior. "The car is small, but it has a very good interior space. Honda has squeezed each and every minute component to make the car a comfort machine," said Syakar Director Saurav Jyoti. The 'Double Triangle Form' further advances its appeal. ■

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Bhattarai As New PM

By DR. TILAKRAWAL



UCPN Maoist leader Baburam Bhattarai finally succeeded in becoming the Prime Minister of this country by defeating Ramchandra Poudyal, Nepali Congress candidate, to lead the majority government, with the support of Madhesh-based parties that signed a four-point deal prior to the government's formation with the Maoists. Baburam's wish to lead a national unity government could not materialize as senior leader Deuba, NC's choice to head the consensus government, did not budge an inch from the position taken.

With both NC and Maoist refusing to abandon their respective stances and UML indecisive as in the past, unity government could not be formed in the 10 days period (7+3) given by the president. Confusion still abounds in the country and intra and inter-party wrangling has utterly frustrated hard-hit commoners that had pinned great hopes on Bhattarai as far as work on peace and constitution and relief to them is concerned. Prime Minister Bhattarai has also backtracked on his promises to have substantial task on peace and constitution which he declared to accomplish within 45 days of assumption of power and not to transfer any senior government official before 30 days. Prabhu Sah, who was accused of complicity in a murder case, and defense minister Sharat Singh Bhandari for his alleged secessionist remarks, are the two ministers whose dismissal is demanded by people and parties protesting in nook and corner of the country as well as in the parliament.

Opposition parties have continued to block business even after Sah's resignation. Bhattarai

must have realized by now that it does not take long for a politician to slide down the ladder of popularity. Parties have demanded dismissal of both the ministers as well as scrapping/review of the four-point deal on the strength of which the Bhattarai's government was created.

A strong section of UCPN Maoist led by influential leader Kiran has left behind UML party in organizing protest programmes that included burning of effigy of defense minister Bhandari at several points in the country. Is Bhattarai going to be no different from his predecessors who did anything and everything to ascend to power and continued to make lots of compromises thereafter to continue in power? This is the question Nepalese commoners are asking themselves these days. The Prime Minister must be aware that very powerful nations and financial institutions have been downgraded by global credit rating agency in terms of their credit worthiness and watchful sovereign people do the rating of leaders at the appropriate occasion without wasting time. It is high time that prime minister gave serious thought to this aspect especially in view of the fact that he is working hand in glove with people that have tarnished images and doubtful credentials.

Well educated Dr. Baburam must be aware that China has already replaced Japan as the second largest economy and Indian prime minister Dr. Singh recently spoke of the likelihood of India replacing Japan as the third largest economy by 2025. With a stagnating economy and natural calamities inflicting serious injury time and again on the nation, Japan could be replaced by India much earlier than what Singh has predicted. India and China are engaged in tough rivalry to attain higher level of economic prosperity for their respective nations and the peoples. Some growth watchers predict that India's growth will exceed that of China by 2013/14. Hope our Prime Minister

succeeds in convincing his Indian counterpart during his visit that they need to be very generous and magnanimous in helping Nepal solve its economic and political problems. Inflation in recent times is giving headache to Chinese authorities and they tend to be slowly doing away with its heavy dependence for growth on exports. Notwithstanding these problems, China has acquired so much strength and stability on the economic front that discussions on prospects of RMB, Chinese currency, emerging as the global reserve currency are gaining momentum these days. Talking of growth in these two countries people often talk of miraculous achievements of some provinces/states, the credit for which goes to political leadership at the state level. It is said Gujarat province could play the role of industrial locomotive for India as Guangdong province did for China in the 1990s. The unparalleled achievements on the economic front in Gujarat stop even political critics of Mr. Modi, chief minister of the state since 2001, from hurling serious accusations at him. Envious record on the economy has been created also in Bihar, the most backward state in India, where a remarkable growth of 11 percent has been achieved in recent times. Law and order situation has also improved a lot in Bihar, famous until recently for notorious acts of gangsters and dacoits. Investors, look for less cumbersome labour laws, pliable roads, reliable electricity and a functioning bureaucracy. These are prerequisites to

investment inflow. Small wonder Nepal is among the 5 countries that receive the lowest quantum of foreign direct investment in the world

today. What has been achieved in Bihar could be achieved in Madhesh of Nepal because the two areas of these two countries have many things in common that includes geography and culture. The only thing our part lacks is selfless, dedicated leaders. Nobody is expecting our current prime minister to do what has been done in some parts of India because it is neither his priority nor has he time for such things that require dedicated efforts over a reasonable period of time. The worry is Bhattarai, contrary to expectations, looks no different from his predecessors who could not provide even an iota of relief to people. During Dashain people had to pay more for rice, mutton and transportation this time also. Toxic gas emanating from mounds of garbage lying uncollected for days on either side of roads at major city points was another notable feature of Dashain. Low income pedestrians had no choice but to inhale the foul gas made available in abundance for free. What can be really expected of a government that failed to provide relief to people during Dashain and could not even organize collection of garbage during that period? Even minor positive actions on the part of government during that period could have made the difference. No positive symptoms are visible on the peace and constitution writing front, too as serious misunderstandings within and between parties continue to persist. Senior leader of NC Deuba is likely to organize a meeting of district presidents of NC to discuss injustice meted out to him and his followers. With political uncertainty and confusion likely to continue, Bhattarai may soon come under intense pressure from opposition and his own party to step down and will have no option but to resign little before or after 3 months in office, admitting failure, like ex-pm Khanal, to expedite peace and constitution writing process. ■

Dr. Rawal is CA Member and Former Governor of NRB

With political uncertainty and confusion likely to continue, Bhattarai may soon come under intense pressure from opposition and his own party to step down and will have no option but to resign little before or after 3 months in office, admitting failure, like ex-pm Khanal, to expedite peace and constitution writing process.



Flip Flop PM

By YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

Baburam Bhattarai's election as the Prime Minister was seen and projected as the last bet for peace and constitution making process to conclude. The international community, especially India and the United States, were more convinced than others that Bhattarai was the most competent among the leaders in the country, and that the twin objectives of the post-2006 politics would be achieved under him. But Bhattarai has proved to be the biggest flop, and perhaps the weakest Prime Minister the country has seen in the recent past. However, Bhattarai is not to blame solely for this.

Defense Minister Sharat Singh Bhandari refused to quit, despite the Prime Minister's insistence that he do so, following Bhandari's statement that no law could prevent the secession of the country if 22 districts along the plains bordering India ever so decided. Bhandari has neither retracted the statement, nor apologised for it. His party leadership has firmly stood by Bhandari. Prime Minister Bhattarai is too weak to take action

against Bhandari as for him sticking to the chair appears more important than acting. Action against Bhandari will risk the chair. Coalition of conflicting interests, no doubt, will make a Prime Minister prone to blackmail if he has the lust for power upper-most in mind. Bhattarai has proved he is no different from his predecessors.

Matrika Yadav, as a cabinet rank minister from the Maoist party, yelled at then Prime Minister G P Koirala that he was the 'bhrastra sardar' (chief of the corrupts) in the cabinet soon after the Maoists joined the government in 2007, and could get away with it. Koirala did not take any action against Matrika as that would have possibly triggered a Maoist walk-out from the government, leaving the peace and constitution making process shaky. It was G P Koirala who also presided over the authority of the Prime Minister. Each coalition constituent after 2006 April has nominated its leader in the cabinet, and each Minister would be more answerable to the leader of the party he or she belonged to than the Prime Minister. Each minister since then has acted freely and used or misused the fund of the ministry concerned without any transparency or accountability. Normlessness and corruption have been the essential ingredients of the Nepali politics with absolutely no accountability during the past five years of change. Politics and political leaders—with few exceptions—were never so discredited and corrupt ever before in Nepal. But leaders,

especially the Maoists, continue to orchestrate like the Goebbels that the country is poised for political stability, economic progress and permanent peace.

Prime Minister Bhattarai obviously will have no courage to act against Bhandari. By not acting, he is also giving a message that so long as he can continue in the post, he will tolerate any kind of conduct and speeches by any minister even if that means promoting politics that advocates secession. Opinion polls clearly indicate that people have realised that the post 2006 political actors have tried to fragment the country and create a social setup divided by mismanaged politics of

identity at the cost of Nepali nationalism. A recent nationwide poll conducted by Inter-disciplinary analysts has shown that nearly 70 per cent of the people want to be identified as a 'Nepali' and not by their ethnic origin or territorial base. Neither Bhattarai, nor Bhandari seems to have realised this.

And a weak Prime Minister goes to Delhi, Nepal's important neighbor,



PM Dr. Bhattarai

with no clarity on the agenda he will be taking up. How will a country that exerts so much influence in Nepal's internal affairs treat him? His own party, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (UCPN-M), has asked him not to enter into any treaty agreement with India, and not even discuss controversial issues during the four day visit. India has been wanting to offer any help to accomplish the peace and constitution making process, but what will that mean without clarity and consensus in Nepal. Political parties that India supported and trusted have miserably failed the Nepalese people. The radical course that the India-mediated 12-point initiative had charted out has failed too.

Bhattarai was the last experiment in pursuit of that course and the destination, and with the deadline of 45 days that Bhattarai himself had set, a new search and review of the euphoria driven follies post-2006 movement should begin earnestly.

All actors at home and friends of Nepal abroad must realise that Maoists launched the rebellion against the state and the parliamentary democracy when the 1990 constitution was just five years old. This interim arrangement that has completed five years, cannot and should not continue indefinitely when five Prime Ministers in as many years have only proved that neither Nepali's unity, nationalism, nor democracy and political stability are safe in their hands. ■

PM Will Not Sign Any Controversial Agreement

By DEVENDRA PAUDEL



As close neighbors, Nepal and India have many commonalities as well as differences. This is natural for two close neighbors to have such kinds of relations. Nepal's relations with India are always important. This is the reason the prime minister is making all his efforts to ensure the success of the visit. As prime minister, he is also consulting with different political parties in Nepal about his present visit, seeking national consensus on all major issues. There are many unsettled political and other problems with India. However, the prime minister will not raise these kinds of issues, which will create irritants in our relationships. Whenever Nepal's prime ministers visit India, there is always a kind of suspicion in Nepal. Prime minister Dr. Bhattarai will not sign any controversial agreement with long term implications in his visit.

Since this is a friendly visit, prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai wants to make it more like that: a friendly visit. Although there are many issues, the prime minister will focus this visit to woo Indian investment in Nepal. During his four-day visit, the prime minister will attend a dozen of meetings in New Delhi with politicians as well as business leaders. He will also meet with his Indian counterpart Dr. Manmohan Singh and other senior leaders of various political parties. Prime minister Dr. Bhattarai has been repeatedly saying that his vision is to eradicate poverty in Nepal. Thus, he seeks support from India for his endeavour. As a former student, the prime minister will also attend a program in Jawaharlal Nehru University. Given the fluid political transition in Nepal, his thrust of the visit will be to get support from India to conclude the peace process.

The visit has many significant aspects for UCPN-Maoist also. It will help our party to establish the political level relations with India. The prime minister will also meet various political leaders and try to establish party to party relations with various political parties in India. As a capable leader of the party, prime minister Bhattarai will be able to do so. India is our friendly neighbor and Indian people and government always support Nepal's process of democratization. In this context, the prime minister will focus to get the support and cooperation from India in constitution writing process and conclusion of peace process.

The prime minister has already made it clear that there is no plan to sign any agreement with long term implications. As India is a key stakeholder of the present peace process, we cannot settle the current political impasse without the support and cooperation from India. In this context, the prime minister

will seek a formal Indian role in concluding the peace process and constitution writing. It is a well known fact that Nepal's present process cannot move without support and cooperation from Indian leadership. The PM will ask the Indian leadership to play some role to conclude the peace process.

Since India is Nepal's a largest trade partner and the trade deficit with India is growing faster, the prime minister will also discuss with Indian leadership to bridge this gap and he will seek Indian assistance in addressing the issue. Nepal has immense possibilities for foreign investment and there are so many areas where Indian investors can benefit, particularly in the water resources sector. The prime minister will request Indian investors to come to invest in Nepal in various sectors. Being a close neighbor of India, Nepal is yet to tap its economic growth. One of the main agenda of prime minister will be to lure Indian investment in Nepal. The objective is also to strengthen existing cordial bilateral ties. Another important

issue that will surface is also to transform Nepal into a bridge between India and China.

Nepal has been facing a huge energy shortfall living up to 16 hours of load shedding. As there is no possibility to meet this shortfall immediately, Nepal needs Indian support to avoid power crisis. On the issue of energy shortfall in Nepal, the prime minister will seek to import electricity from India. He will also take this matter with Indian leadership. India has been supporting Nepal in education

sector for a long time. At a time when the country does not have an institution for technology, the PM could also request Indian help in setting up a world class institute, like the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), in Nepal.

The prime minister will try to assure safety of Indian investment in Nepal. Though there are certain uncertainties and unrest in industrial sector, the investment climate in Nepal is still conducive. The prime minister will convey this message to all the levels in India.

I can say that prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai's India visit will be historic in the sense that he will project Nepal's interests and Nepal's needs for development. As a person having friendly relationship with a large number of academicians in India, prime minister Dr. Bhattarai will project Nepal's case and Nepal's interest broadly. At the same time, the prime minister will also work to strengthen Maoist party's relations with India. Prime minister Dr. Bhattarai's visit will increase trust between Nepal and India in all sectors. (Based on his interaction with journalists). Paudel is political advisor to PM Dr. Bhattarai



Nepali PM Dr. Bhattarai (Left) and Indian PM Dr. Singh

“It Is Not Bhattarai To Decide What Agreements He Needs to Sign”

CHAKRA PRASAD BASTOLA

Former foreign minister CHAKRA PRASAD BASTOLA has been a highly influential Nepali Congress leader. Known for his close association with Koiralas, Bastola had lived in exile in India with B.P. Koirala. As a former Nepalese ambassador to India, Bastola spoke to KESHAB POUDEL from his residence in Jhapa. Excerpts of the telephone interview:

As a former foreign minister and former Nepalese ambassador to India, how do you look at prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai's forthcoming visit to India?

Well, this is a regular visit. Every Nepali prime minister pays a visit to India as soon as they assume the post. However, one of the significant parts of the forthcoming visit will be to pave the way for minimizing the differences between Maoist and India.

Do you mean the visit is not as crucial as the media have projected it?

One thing is almost certain that the visit will change the Maoist's status of relations in India. Till now Maoists don't have any relations at the political level. Their friendship is at the official level only. Maoist leadership, including Baburamji, maintains relations at the official level only. This visit will help them to establish their connection at all the spectrum of political level. India's efforts will be to engage Maoists. Indians tried to engage Maoists in the past also, but the relations between them deteriorated following Prachanda's step to remove then army chief Rukmangad Katawal, as well as Prachanda's choice to visit China. Prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai may try to create an environment to forgive and forget. India's priority will be how to engage Maoists and preventing them from tilting to China and Baburamji's efforts will be to show he and his party are friendly to India.

You mean the prime minister wants to change the present state of Nepal's relations with neighbors?

Nepal has two neighbors, India and China. I want to refer his term that his government wants "political" relations with India and "economic" relations with China. This statement speaks volumes in the present context. Although Maoists have been saying that they want to maintain equi-distant relations with India and China, the question is how to maintain it.

Is it possible for leader Bhattarai to do so, when a Maoist group under the leadership of Baidya is opposing this?

Frankly speaking, Baidyaji is also not an anti-Indian group in the party. But, Baburamji seems to be the first choice of Indians. For this, India will do everything possible to strengthen Baburam's leadership. By strengthening Baburam's leadership, Indians believe, that they can neutralize Maoist party against China. At a time when Maoists have been talking about the need to improve the relations with India, I would not be surprised in case of Indian announcement of a major relief package during this visit.

What will be personal benefits to Dr. Bhattarai?

If Dr. Bhattarai will able to create some sort of a conducive environment to restore the relations with India, it will have a psychological boost for him in his party. This will help him to gain in the internal fighting in the party.

As Maoists are leading the government with support from Madheshi parties, will this have any meaning for this visit?

Formation of the Maoist-Madheshi alliance was designed just after the conclusion of the election of Constituent Assembly. However, it did not materialize then. Finally, this alliance was made with tacit support of India. This alliance will continue to lead the government for some time to come. In this context, it has a meaning.

Prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has declared that he will not sign any treaty with long term implications. Why did he make such statements?

It is not Bhattarai to decide what agreements he needs to sign or not to sign. In this crucial juncture, India will not impose any agreement upon him since India knows this is a government which does not have any mandate to ink a major treaty. India still faces criticism on the treaty of 1950 which was signed by last Rana prime minister Mohan Sumsher.

In the past, India used to push agreements during the visit of such interim prime ministers. Don't you think it will repeat the same again?

The situation is different now. This is a government with limited mandate: to bring the peace process to a logical end and promulgate the constitution. India will not take the risk to be criticized.

That means Dr. Bhattarai will not have to sign extradition treaty, security related treaties and many others?

Every country has its own national interest and India is not an exception. For any country, national interest is of prime importance and India's interest in Nepal is its own security. Since this a favorable coalition to its national interest, India may seek some sort of concessions on its security interest. Instead of asking Bhattarai to sign any agreement, India can seek verbal assurance in one to one talk. In diplomacy, the verbal assurance has also a very strong meaning. I am certain that India may deal with petty issues but it will not force Baburamji to sign any controversial treaties. Of course, India might have many agendas with Nepal but it will not table the proposal from freeze.



If that is the scenario, why are Indian media, academicians and officials so enthusiastic about the visit?

Most of the Indians think the government led by Baburamji will look into India's interests, including security interests, more closely than his predecessors, including Nepali Congress leadership in the past and leaders of other parties. It is natural for them to be enthusiastic with a person of JNU academic background, living in India for such a long time with several Indian contacts. Thus, Indians are very much enthusiastic about Baburamji. I don't know how Baburamji will tread with India but Indian officials are expecting many things from Maoist-Madheshi coalition.

What does India want in Nepal?

My gut feeling is that India and China both want to see political stability in Nepal. They have realized that prolonged political instability is counterproductive to them. Given Nepal's open border with India, Indians are more concerned about growing anarchy and instability in Nepal. Indians view that Nepal's instability will have a long-term implication in bordering Indian states.

What can Nepal benefit from India?

It may help to solve Nepal's internal problems, particularly in settling the political issues. In the context of Nepal's inability to write the new process, India's support is crucial and important. It is a well-known fact that Nepal cannot maintain political stability without promulgating the new constitution. If prime minister Bhattarai is able to cash this, Nepal will gain a lot. As Baburam well knows India and Nepal, he can make a difference. I am expecting that this visit will yield positive results.

Will it make any difference in relations with other parties?

One may have different opinions about the level of relations between India and Girija Prasad Koirala and India's likes and dislikes about Koirala's policy. What I can certainly say is that Sushil Koirala cannot replace Girija Prasad. Sushil Koirala is elected president of Nepali Congress but not an established leader in the country. He is no more than the president of Nepali Congress. ■

NRN Conference Put Words To Work

The 5th global conference of Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) recently concluded in Kathmandu where Non-Resident Nepalis from 57 countries participated. Jiba Lamichhane was unanimously elected as the new president of the global body of the Nepali Diaspora after Devman Hirachan withdrew his candidacy at the dying hours after his gloomy tenure.

Like all other preceding presidents of the NRNA, newly elected president Jiba Lamichhane reiterated the same rhetoric— to bring collective foreign investment in Nepal. But, he faces a more difficult challenge than his predecessors.

Jiba is elected president at a time when the citizens of the country have given up hopes that NRNs (Non Residential Nepali) will do anything significant for the country. NRNs identity is in peril and they have become a subject of mockery and criticism for the common Nepalis.

The criticisms faced by the NRNs are not all unjust. NRNA is in its ninth year but it is difficult to point out any substantial contribution made by it for Nepal, let alone the talks of bringing big investments. Rather than bringing investments into the country, they have shockingly asked and received money (30 lakhs) from the government for their conference.

The Non Resident Indians (NRIs) have made significant contributions for the economic growth of India but the same cannot be said about the NRNs.

Even the finance minister, Barsha Man Pun, was quick to criticize them. "NRNs regularly promised they will make a collective investment in the country, but this has not happened. We haven't seen any of the significant investment projects from NRNs," he said.

The only thing NRNs have done till now is come to Nepal every two years to take part in a global conference, talk the need of dual citizenship, talk big things and hibernate till the next conference.



NRN President Jiba Lamichhane

Prime minister, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, dismissed the chance of giving NRNs dual citizenship. "We are issuing special ID cards to NRNs and have helped in all possible ways to welcome their investment here. NRNs should not set dual citizenship as their precondition for investing in Nepal," said the Prime Minister.

It's still unclear why they need the dual citizenship to invest in Nepal as the government has given them full assurances to support them in any needed way and they are also provided with an identity card to prove their identity.

NRNs need to do something spectacular very soon if they want to regain the support and confidence of the Nepali citizens.

The finance minister has made the task easy for the NRNs to invest in Nepal as he stated NRNs won't need to show any income source if they invested in five areas: hydropower, roads, bridges, tunnels and airports and can team up with fellow NRNs or even foreigners.

The government has backed NRNs time and again and has again showed faith in them despite their futile words and promises, now is the time for Non-Residential Nepalis to show their commitment towards their native land and win hearts of people back.

By *Debesh Adhikari*

POLITICS

Countdown Is On

With the forced euphoria over his elevation to the top office going away in no time, the Baburam bubble is set to burst anytime now

By A CORRESPONDENT

As of writing this, the embattled prime minister, Baburam Bhattarai, was busy making last-minute preparations for his first bilateral foreign visit – to India, understandably.

But less than 24 hours before he would take off for Delhi, he was not sure of a safe-landing in the turbulent Kathmandu power games.

His party refused to give him a go-ahead to sign major deals with the most sensitive neighbor against which the party had once prepared itself for “a tunnel war”.

The two big opposition parties, the Nepali Congress and the UML, refused to join the entourage.

On top of that, even as the leader of the parliament, i.e. the prime minister, was busy in preparation for an all important foreign visit, the parliament remained stalled.

Can a prime minister negotiate from a position of strength to safeguard, leave alone promote, the national interest with a foreign country when he has the weakest backing at home?

The answer is a clear NO. What is also clear is that he will have to sign on the dotted lines or risk alienating the power that, according to his critics and supporters alike, helped cobble the present ruling coalition which he leads.

In either case, prime minister Bhattarai finds himself in a no-win situation.

Failing to live up to the expectations of the most influential foreign country will amount to the end of his utility. Falling in line would amount to allegations of a sell out.

As the euphoria over his “image” dying in no time, the popular support he hopes to bank in times of crisis is unlikely to come about.

If the controversy over ministers Prabhu Sah and Sharat Singh Bhandari badly dented his image, the series of

populist measures that he undertook with glee began to backfire after initially positive sparks.

The bubble is about to burst. Most probably after his much talked about India visit.

The countdown has begun. Now the questions doing rounds in the political circles is not whether Bhattarai’s days are numbered. But what after him?

With just a little over a month remaining for the extended CA’s deadline to expire, both the peace process and the constitution-making are in a limbo.

What will happen to the two tasks



PM Dr. Bhattarai

that the successive prime ministers failed to accomplish in more than three years of the CA elections is not certain yet.

The only thing that is certain in the coming days is: chaos and confusion. Even “the last hope” Baburam Bhattarai’s fate has become immaterial now. ■

DANGER AHEAD

The spectre of Nepal becoming a battle-ground of international forces has not but increased

By A CORRESPONDENT

The new Chinese ambassador Yang Houlan did not mince words. A rare thing from a Chinese diplomat. Speaking from the podium of the Reporters’ Club at Putali Sadak, he blamed “international forces” for fomenting anti-Chinese activities from the Nepalese territory.

He gave a clean chit to the host country, while lambasting the outside forces for contributing to the upsurge in the activities of the Tibetans in recent times.

Coincidentally, an American Congressman came avisting Nepal and discussed with the Nepalese authorities, among others, the “issues” of the Tibetan refugees. Just before the diplomat’s remarks.

Another Congressman came, after the remarks. He met, among others, “the members of the Tibetan civil society” based in Kathmandu.

This may be a mere coincidence, but the Chinese consternation over the growing western interest – and the perceived involvement – in the Tibetan

cause has continued to rise in recent years. Especially after the political instability and confusion that followed the *Jana Aandolan-2*.



Chinese ambassador Yang Houlan

Having apparently failed to find a credible and reliable political force to bank on, to take care of its interests, the Chinese seem to have decided to jump into the action in what is described diplomatic parlance as “self defence”.

The outburst of the Chinese ambassador and the circumstances that led him to make such remarks certainly do not bode well for the future of Nepal at a time when it is going through a fragile political transition. ■

Current Politics And Forgotten History Of Nepal

By MRS. LAXMI THAPA



At present Nepal is passing through quite an uneasy period of abrupt transition from one political system to another. Discussions are going on about complete restructuring of the state. Unfortunately, even the most crucial decisions having far reaching consequences for the entire country are now being taken simply based on the consensus of few selected leaders of political parties totally disregarding the right of the people to approve or disapprove such decision by direct referendum, as in all truly democratic countries. This has led to piling up of all sorts of unfulfilled ever increasing demands for changes, which might be genuinely in the interest of our people, or intended purely to deceive the country. It is one of the main causes of frequent unrests spreading even in remote corners in a quiet country like ours.

Restructuring under a federal setup has become at present the buzzword in high echelon of our country's political circle. This matter is extremely serious and requires very careful study. Unfortunately we are taking it very lightly. We don't have to go too far to realize the gravity of this highly sensitive problem.

India on the Brink of Civil War

Even in a vast country like India the restructuring or partition of merely one province -original Punjab - into two provinces one for the Sikhs and another for non Sikhs and the sharing of the ownership of Chandigarh city had triggered a virtual civil war that began with the bloody confrontation at Amritsar Golden Temple. The way the province was partitioned had infuriated the Sikhs.

Many top Sikh leaders and non Sikh leaders complacent to the partition were killed. Then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was murdered. Indian Sikh army revolted, and as a result they had to be disarmed. Armed unrest spread all across the north-west India. Innumerable innocent people were killed in course of the conflict that continued over a period of several years. There was indiscriminate massacre of Sikhs in Delhi. Air India plane bound for India even from a far flung destination like Canada was hijacked.

Indian people had to endure the terrible pain of partition of the state even

though they had already once gone through similar dreadful ordeal on a far bigger scale immediately after gaining the independence from the Great Britain.

Separate Homeland for Muslims

The British India was partitioned to provide a separate homeland for the Muslims. The partition was followed by massacres of tens of thousands of Muslims and non Muslims alike. Millions were dispossessed of ancestral homes and their entire other properties after being driven away for good from the places where their families were living since the time immemorial. The murder of Mahatma Gandhi is also linked to the partition.

The chilling memories of the horrifying massacres will ever remain fresh in the mind of those and their descendants who had suffered as a result of the partition. The Kashmir problem still remains as a deep wound of the partition that is not expected to heal up any time soon in future.

Despite the partition, separate homeland for the vast majority of Indian Muslims still remains as an illusion. At present there are more Muslims living in India than in Pakistan.

Strong Unity in Diversity

Nepal is home for people from more than hundred different ethnic groups. People from several such ethnic groups have always been living side by side almost in every village in perfect harmony and close friendship since the ancient time. This has helped to build strong national unity. Many historians are of the view that the national unity (*Hami Gorkhali Hom*) had turned Nepal into the most formidable Himalayan power that deterred the Great Britain from converting our country into their colony.

Nepali in India

Historians write that leadership and the character were the hallmarks of the success of Gorkhas. Unfortunately, our present day leaders are not able to reach to the same level of high leadership standard of the past in unifying all communities. In contrast to it the people of Nepali origin living in India are drawing the inspiration from

the past glories not to let the Gorkhali spirit to die.

In Darjeeling areas Tamang, Gurung, Limbu, Rai are taking the lead role in uniting all other communities including those inhabiting in the plains of Siliguri region also by reviving the historic Gorkhali spirit. They have succeeded to get recognition of the Nepali as the sole official language. All political parties are strongly advocating the use of *daura, suruwal with topee* for the male and *saree and cholo* for the female on all important occasions. **Initially, Nepal Emerged Victorious**

After the 1757 Plassey Battle British gained a strong foothold in Bengal and Bihar. Nepal became the next target for British occupation where the national unification champion was slowly gaining momentum. British Governor General Robert Clive infamous in the history for his brutality dispatched in 1767 a big British force under Kinock to

Then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was murdered. Indian Sikh army revolted, and as a result they had to be disarmed. Armed unrest spread all across the north-west India. Innumerable innocent people were killed in course of the conflict that continued over a period of several years.

capture Nepal. In the ensuing battle Nepal had scored a decisive victory. After this humiliating defeat British never dared to launch another attack for a long time.

For Freedom of South Asia

Several years later in early 1810s Britain had already taken a firm grip on big parts of North India. British had then started to realize that Nepal was already posing a serious threat to further expansion of British rule in India. Thus they decided to go to all out war against Nepal.

British launched in 1814 a preemptive attack even before declaring the war to capture the entire Nepal within a very short period of only about one month. As explained in the book "*Rediscovered History of the Gurkhas*" the total British strength involved in the war exceeded 2,00,000 (two lacks). In initial months of the war to the great dismay of the British our country had successfully repulsed the attack.

The British-Nepal War had a great significance for the Asia. Historian C. P. Khanduri looks it from the angle that had the Maratha or Sikhs supported Nepal the history of colonialism in Asia would have had a full stop. ■

ENERGY CRISIS

Powerless Hours

With the advent of winter, a prolonged power cut is inevitable in Nepal. At a time when no big project is nearing completion, foreign investors are only looking for avenues to make investment, leadership lack quality and capability to deliver, the recently concluded Nepal Energy Investment Forum generated some hope against all these odds. But given the present confusion and contradiction in policies, Nepal's power sector will continue to see the grim scenario at least for another decade. Despite political rhetoric to reduce the power cut, urban Nepalese see little reason to believe in it

By KESHAB POUDEL

The Nepal Electricity Authority has announced an amended version of load shedding schedule with an average of 14 hours of power cut in a week for now. A series of similar announcements can be expected to follow until the load shedding hours will stabilize around 14 daily. As the water level in all the rivers has already begun to decline, the NEA will announce frequent power outage routines after the Tihar festival.

According to energy sector experts, as many as 16 hours a day of load-shedding will be there by the end of February. This is the reality now. Till another five years, no big projects are in the pipeline for completion and addition of few MWs of power in the grid will not bring any substantial respite to the consumers.

"Don't be surprised if the NEA announce up to 16 hours of load shedding," said a former managing director of Nepal Electricity Authority.

"Even the dream to end load shedding by bringing the 465 MW Upper Tamakoshi into operation will remain a dream as it is facing several problems related to management and others."

Although the project created many positive expectations in the country and the region, the poor quality of leadership to deliver the results was hampering its progress, he said.

"It is unfortunate that highly paid, newly appointed MD of NEA has yet to hold a single meeting with contractors and consultants. This shows a gross negligence of the NEA's management towards the project."

The hydro generation capacity is about 650 MW. Projects with capacity of 750 MW are under construction. In paper, everything is alright as the government has long term projects for internal consumption and export.

"Recently, construction of 4.6 MW Mai Khola Hydropower project has been

completed. In this fiscal year (2011/2012) 9 projects are going to be completed, adding 40 MW to the system and we are hopeful that another 14 projects totaling 42.24 MW will be completing. Likewise, in the coming Fiscal Year 2012-013, 289 MW is expected to be added in the grid from 28 projects," said Minister of Energy Post Bahadur Bogati. We are also considering building storage projects like Buddhi Gandaki, West-Seti, Upper Seti (Damaulit) and Narsing. We also have projects like Upper Karnali, Arun III and Upper Seti."

According to the official data, ready to go hydro projects for domestic use is 1500 MW and ready to go hydro projects for export is 4000 MW.

Many see there is a contradiction in the policy regarding the priority of the electricity production. At a time when the country is failing to produce energy for domestic use, nobody understands the government's horridness to go for



Concluding Session

export projects.

"This is ridiculous. The priority must be in meeting internal demands. Only after this, we can talk about the export of electricity," said former Managing Director of NEA on condition of anonymity. Instead of concentrating construction of big hydro projects back home, our officials are talking about the need to build Dhalkebar- Mujaffarpur Transmission line to import the electricity from India."

"The demand for energy and the gap in supply and demand is increasing every year all over the world. If we take the example of our next door neighbor, India, which is to reach its goal of providing electricity to every citizen, the country needs to remove bottlenecks on development of all fuels used to generate electricity. Indians witnessed substantial energy and peak shortage of 9 percent and 10 percent respectively in the year 2010/2011. This may be accomplished by accelerating domestic hydropower development and importing power from any source available giving primary attention to hydropower from Nepal and Bhutan."

Nepal Energy Investors Forum

In 1995, following the World Bank's withdrawal from Arun III project, Nepal

was option-less and faced severe consequences. Asian Development Bank came to rescue Nepal's energy sector financing 114 MW Kali Gandaki Project. Though there are controversies regarding PPA signed with Independent Power Producers (IPPs), they too contributed over 100 MW in national grid preventing the crisis. The German government came up with the construction of 74 MW upper Marsyangdi project. Though the project was delayed due to prolonged political instability and violent conflict, it is now generating the electricity at the crucial moment.

"I would like to confirm that ADB remains a committed partner in the development of the government's energy sector. Over the years, ADB has supported numerous investments in the sector and we plan to continue that support for the foreseeable future," said Barry J. Hitchcock, country director of Asian Development Bank's Nepal Resident Mission. ADB will continue its policy dialogue with the government to improve overall governance in the power sector, such as setting up a Nepal Electricity Regulatory Commission for carrying tariff reforms, promulgation of the Nepal Electricity Act and speedy

financial restructuring of the Nepal Electricity Authority."

ADB firmly believes them to be the essential ingredients for creating a conducive environment for private sector financing as well as co-financing from other development partners in hydropower development, and ensuing financial sustainability of the Nepal power sector.

Organized by Asian Development Bank and Ministry of Energy, the recently concluded Nepal Energy Investors Forum, October 13-14, as many see it, was an effort to bring bilateral, multilateral, government and private sector together to discuss ways to find our solution to the energy crisis.

This forum was meaningful in the sense that after the closure of Middle Marsyangdi, except construction of smaller hydropower projects with a capacity of 2-3 MW, Nepal's development partners have yet to finance a major project in Nepal. Although Nepal government is backing Upper Tamakoshi Hydro Power project, which is under construction through local investments, expecting it to complete by 2016, the current pace of project construction shows that it is going to be an impossible task.

"This is a good beginning as the forum helped us to listen to each other and find a way for future investment in hydropower sector," said Matthias Goulnik, vice-president German DEG Bank. "Given the conducive environment, the fund is no problem."

Crisis of Power

Nepal needs to quickly construct at least a couple of big projects. If the project is not built to meet the present rate of growth, there will be a huge shortfall in demand and supply. Currently Nepal's installed capacity is 705.4 MW and 700.9 MW in grid. This includes 647.5 MW hydro and 53.4 MW thermal. Out of the total capacity, run of the river projects contribute 555.5 MW and storage capacity 92 MW. The contribution of IPP is 174.5 MW and Nepal Electricity power contribution is 361 MW.

"The government of Nepal has taken energy development as a major thrust which is also reflected in the budget of the current fiscal year 2011/2012. The government of Nepal has embarked on an ambitious plan for developing 10,000 MW of hydropower in 10 years (between 2010 and 2020) and 25000 MW in 20 years (2010-2030). We do realize that energy development in Nepal cannot be accomplished by our internal resources alone. So the external resource is a must for this," said secretary Poudel.

The government claims that there are projects of 750 MW capacity under construction and ready to go hydro projects for domestic consumptions are of 1500 MW capacity and ready to go hydro projects for export is 4000 MW and other 10,000 MW at various stages of development.

Energy experts argue that there is a huge gap of energy supply in the period of dry and wet seasons. "Annual peak demands for 2011 were 946.10 MW. Dry season generation is merely 450 MW and there is a deficit of 500 MW. Annual total energy demand is 4,833.35 GWh and generated energy from available sources is 3,850.87 GWh. There is 982.48 GWh energy gap."

One of the problems in Nepal is that there is no direct financing between government, Bank, private developers and government. At a time when the banks

"We Want To Assure Investors"

POST BAHADUR BOGATI

Why this conference at this time?

Investors were wary about the transitional political situation. We wanted to assure them about security for their projects.

Such conferences were held also in the past but in vain....

We have to start somewhere. Anyway, we want to go into implementation this time. We have also decided about prioritizing projects and acting accordingly.

Your party cadres themselves are engaged in vandalizing some foreign-invested hydro projects such as Upper Karnali. How can you assure investors?

We should look at the projects also from local angle. If there is dialogue and if their concerns are addressed, that will work best. But the government will definitely act when it becomes law and order issue.

Your party officials have, at times, stated that hydro power agreements with India are anti-nationalist. How can you attract Indian investment in such situation?

Mostly, such things are localized issues. But we must remember that we have to ensure that each agreement or project is in the interest of people and the nation. Having said that I will again add that dialogue is key and we can resolve all issues by talking.

How much investment is the government seeking?

have limitation of policy and limitation of funds and private investment is not sufficient to meet the crisis, the government must enter in the construction of projects, said Surya Nath Upadhyaya, water resources expert.

Financial Crunch

Despite the claims of some of the commercial banks, they virtually lack the money for the long term investment in hydropower sector. Nepal's bankers argue that there is risk and they need to wait for long period for return and that argument does not help Nepal's



Well, it runs into hundreds of billions. We have not specified any number, though. At present, we have prioritized the storage type projects like Budhi Gandaki (600 MW), West Seti (750 MW), Tanahu (127 MW) and Nausyalgad.

The government is said to be preparing to sign a Power Trade Pact with India during PM's visit. Can you elaborate?

Well we are in preliminary preparations phase. But we want to have some sort of understanding on the construction of second cross-border transmission line from Gorakhpur (India) to Hetauda or Bhairahawa. That apart, we also want to do power trade agreement with the government. Till now we only have such agreements with private company or states. Agreement with the government will be more reliable and long term.

commercial banks put huge money in the sector.

Per MW cost of hydropower is 150 million. Nepal requires an increase of 100 MW of power annually. That means Nepal needs a huge investment. Private commercial banks can provide up to 15 billion rupees, so there is a huge gap. The need of the hour is pooling resources from government, private equity and foreign investment.

"Energy development cannot be accomplished by our internal resources alone, so the external resource is a must

for this. In this respect, we have recently set up a Hydropower Development and Investment Limited as a public company to generate and mobilize funds for developing medium and large sized hydro electric projects," said secretary Poudel.

Sriranjan Lacoul, joint secretary of Ministry of Energy, holds the view that Nepal's licensing procedure for hydropower developers is more liberal. There is no hindrance for private investors to repatriate their investments in foreign currency.

Asian Development Bank has been helping Nepal for quite a long time in energy sector. "ADB has been assisting in generation, transmission, distribution and rural electrification. In 2011, ADB provided loan to strengthening Butwal Mahendranagar 132 kV line, construction of Tamakoshi (Khimti) - Kathmandu 220/400 KV line. It also supported distribution system strengthening and rural electrification, rehabilitation of two small hydropower plants and implementation support for Tanahu 127 MW project technical design and investment support," said Priyantha Wijayatunga, senior energy specialist, Asian Development Bank.

Presenting a paper on experiences and lessons, Hydropower Investment of SINOHYDRO holds the view that Nepal has immense potential for the hydropower development. With sufficient local skilled and unskilled staffs, the SINOHYDRO is now building 50 MW power project along with a Nepalese private company.

It has already completed construction of Modi Hydro, Ilam Hydroelectric project, Kulekhani Hydroelectric Project civil works and Upper Tamakoshi Hydroelectric Project, civil works. "We are ready to invest in Nepal given the removal of some hindrances particularly convenience on custom clearance, work visa and license. There is also the need to have tax reduction on raw material, construction equipment, vehicles and incomes (rate reduction or exemption)," said the local representative.

Dr. Sandip Shah, vice president and country director, SN Power holds the view that the main challenge before the hydropower sector is its sustainability.



Transmission Line

Similarly, Gyanendra Lal Pradhan, chairperson of Energy Committee of FNCCI argued that Nepal needs to remove the barriers in financing and licensing.

Nepal has a great potential for foreign investment and there are great attractions for Nepal's power sector because extensively largely untapped resources, critical domestic power demand, electricity hungry neighbors and strong donor interest support hydro development.

According to D.N. Sharma, managing director of Nepal Electricity Authority, Nepal's energy supply situation is mired by huge supply demand gap. "We have severe capacity and energy deficit. There will be 14 hours per day load shedding during dry session. We require 350 MW firm capacities for dry season deficit. "This needs 2 billion dollars investment to meet today's requirement. Nepal is expected to have higher demands of electricity in coming years. NEA is the sole body in Nepal for generation, distribution and transmission. It has obligation to sign PPA with all even paying foreign currency for return and provide transmission network within the

country. NEA has been playing a role of single buyer and seller

Although the two-day Energy Investment Forum meet discussed the wide range of issues related to hydro power development, including the role of private sector, public sector and Nepal's capacity as well as fund requirement to upgrade the present infrastructure like transmission line and construction of new projects, the confusion still persists as to what is Nepal's priority for investment: export oriented power projects or projects for domestic consumption.

Until Nepal's policy makers improve their capability in delivery, any policy will have very little impact in reducing the current power crisis. For instance, upper Tamakoshi began with all the rhetoric but the pace of the project shows that it will be very difficult to complete it as it was projected.

As Nepal is facing huge shortfall of power, Nepal's priority now must be to ensure they can complete the projects as scheduled. In the present context of political instability and chaos, how ADB's initiative, which is positive, can prevent Nepal's power crisis remains to be seen. ■



ENERGY INVESTMENT FORUM

Hydro Hymn

The Energy Investors' Conference ends up being a periodic talking shop. The government is as clueless now about the ways of financing mega projects as before

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The latest figures presented by the managing director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Dipendra Nath Sharma show that the country needs the investment to the tune of US \$ 2 billion just to ensure that there will be no load shedding. This is at current state and current price.

The figure will likely soar with the time. The investment required is quite huge and beyond the capacity of the government alone.

This provided a logical reason for the government to join hands with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in holding the two-day Energy Investors' Conference that ended in Kathmandu on October 14.

There ended the logic. The composition of participants did not show encouraging signs, according to many.

"They should have invited new and prospective foreign investors from abroad. But the faces I see here are not new. I suppose they are listing the Khimti project wallahs as Norwegian, Bhotekoshi wallahs as Americans and Upper Karnali wallahs as Indians. But they are already here even without this conference," noted a water resource journalist.

Another irony was the invitation and the red carpet welcome accorded – at least in voice – by the senior ministers who also happen to be senior Maoist leaders.

"The very fact that the party that leads the government – the UCPN (Maoist) – is still unable to explain why its cadres run amok through the hydro project sites and why its officials oftentimes raise the wagon of nationalism whenever there is a whiff of deal with India, is a big deterring point. I don't think one conference is enough to instil confidence in investors," said a water resource analyst.

The government assured stakeholders that it would take all necessary steps to address the gaps and inconsistencies in the policies and would take immediate steps to make Hydropower Investment and Development Company Limited effective, and undertake restructuring of related institutions.

A list of available projects for private sector investment in the energy sector in Nepal was also showcased. "At present, we have prioritized the storage type projects like Budhi Gandaki (600 MW), West Seti (750 MW), Tanahu (127 MW) and Nausyalgad," said Energy Minister Post Bahadur Bogati.

But such assurances are not new. In fact, there were a few domestic investors at the conference who were murmuring about the bad treatment they have been meted out.

"We did not want to create a scene. Had we opened our mouths, there would be no investment forthcoming," said a developer.

According to him, although a couple of developers have been developing hydro projects under the energy emergency plan, they are now unsure about the return to their investment. As per the plan, the developers were assured two things – that the government will ensure there will be transmission line to evacuate the power once they start generating them and that the NEA will sign PPA with them.

"But now that our projects are underway and will start generating two years from now, we see no signs of development of transmission lines. The NEA points to queue of developers wanting to sign PPA," said the exasperated developer. "On top of that the government has already pocketed millions of rupees as non-refundable charges."

Government Encouraged

Having reiterated their firm commitment to minimize current power shortages and create a conducive environment for private investment in the energy sector, the government felt encouraged with the conference.

The Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai himself gave strong commitment to end any security or other apprehensions.

"You should not have even an iota of fear regarding the security or whether you will be able to repatriate your return from investment," he said.

On the issue of frequent disruptions of hydro power projects by the Maoist cadres – on the backdrop of similar disruption of Upper Karnali being surveyed by GMR group of India – the Prime Minister was not elaborate in his explanations.

He simply brushed them aside as localized law and order problems.

"There were a few incidents that were not pleasant to any. Those incidents which were sheer violation of laws of the land are not consistent with policies of any political party, let alone the government. The government is resolute in the matter of maintaining law and order everywhere in the country. Sufficient security arrangements will be made in power projects sites wherever necessary," said PM Bhattarai.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) highlighted ongoing development assistance to the power sector in Nepal and how its increased focus on private sector-led investment could benefit the hydropower sector. ■



Nepal Tourism Year No Number Game

A million tourists, will Nepal surpass the tourism year goal or will it fall short? This has been the buzz around the nation since the outset of Nepal Tourism Year (NTY) 2011

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

To begin with, the goal to land a million tourists looked a bit far-fetched in the context of the poor performance history of Nepalese tourism.

However, NTY has entered the 10th month of the year, and as the countdown to the end has begun, the goal is looming closer and closer but due to lack of time, the goal might just slip away.

In this year, the total number of tourist arrival by airways has increased by 23 percent compared to the previous year. Some 368,844 visited Nepal in the first 9 months this year via air. Industrialists have said Nepal is guaranteed to welcome around 6 lakh tourists through air ways and around 2 lakhs tourists through land ways. Yet, the figures are well short than the expectation of Nepal Tourism Board which was expecting to welcome around 7 lakhs tourists via airways and 3 lakhs tourists over land.

Now everybody's eyes are fixated on the numbers.

"It is very difficult to reach the 1 million tourist goal now, but we can

hopefully reach close to it," said Kashi Raj Bhandari, director of the Research, Planning and Monitoring Department at Nepal Tourism Board.

The main reason for the lack of expected number of tourists has been the lack of promotion about the NTY 2011 in the international market by the tourism board. The budget allocated for the promotional activities were not spent fully and properly. Blame could be hurled on the government as well because there are clear evidences that the government has not played the role that was expected from it in the tourism year.

Lack of international aircraft also added to the plight. Flights that fly into the nation were increased but they were not enough to bring 7 lakhs tourists into the country. Nepal's sole international airline, Nepal airlines, also has a single aircraft which barely takes off from the runway. Add to that, Nepal doesn't even have hospitality capacity for 1 million tourists in a year despite increase in accommodation capacity by hoteliers.

So, the goal set by tourism board was insurmountable in the first place.

Despite such a target, tourism industrialists worked hard. Their efforts have been positive and encouraging. Something to look forward

On the other side, NTY has shown the rhetoric about Nepal having a vast potential in tourism due to its natural beauty is actually true. This year has given us new hopes, raised new expectations in the minds of people regarding tourism.

But, the main concern surrounding tourism is that revenue generation from tourism has decreased despite increase in number of tourists. According to experts, revenue generation has been affected due to high number of regional tourists and lack of high profile European and American tourists. But, rather than being discouraged by the decrease in revenue generation, what should be noted is that if the Indian and Chinese tourists are served well and if they return home safe and satisfied, then high profile tourists will eventually follow. After all, who wouldn't want to experience the mountains and vast natural beauty of Nepal?

If Nepal reaches its 1 million tourists goal- which is highly unlikely, it would be a job well done. Tourism industrialists should not get carried away but continue the same hard work and determination in the future years and set new positive tourist records every year.

On the flip side, even if the target is missed by a whisker, it should be appreciated. The failure to reach the goal won't mean anything as at the end of the day 1 million is nothing but just a number. The thing that should be noted is the unceasing efforts and hard works put in by the tourism industrialists to make Nepal a better tourist destination. Because of their efforts Nepal tourism year will prove to be a success irrespective of its outcome.

Nepal still needs lots of hard work to make it an attractive tourist destination. But, in the midst of all concerns and worries, nobody can deny the fact that due to the effects of Nepal Tourism Year, Nepal has become a far better tourist destination now, than it was in the past. ■



Sikkim was rapidly going up in tourism.

HIMALAYAN EARTHQUAKE

Sikkim Tourism Hurt

The recent earthquake badly hurt tourism in the Indian state of Sikkim

By UMA KANTA KHANAL
in Jhapa

The tourism of Sikkim, a Himalayan state of India, is in a critical stage after the earthquake of last September 18.

Tourists from other Indian states have been canceling their bookings to visit Sikkim in the peak season of tourism, the months of October and November.

At a visit to Sikkim three days before the earthquake of 6.9 magnitude hit the state, tourists from Himachal Pradesh were enjoying the scenic beauty of Mahatma Gandhi Road of the capital, Gangtok.

Telak Ray Sharma from Himachal Pradesh said, "I came alone this time, but I will visit Sikkim again with my family."

But Sharma's dream does not seem likely to be fulfilled in a short period of time. The places of North and East Sikkim he visited collapsed under the earthquake. The infrastructure has been destroyed. Even the secretariat of the

state government collapsed. The roads to the tourism spots are still blocked.

Just before the earthquake, chief minister of Sikkim Pawan Kumar Chamling was addressing and persuading the locals of Ribdi, West Sikkim, to get involved in domestic tourism as the state government had given emphasis to it.

But Sikkim being the worst effected, anxious queries are being made by the tourists who had already planned their holidays in this region. The effect of the quake has haunted the Himalayan travelers and it is expected to cast a long shadow on the tourism sector this season.

The marketing manager of Hotel Delamere in Gangtok, Vikram Thapa said, "We are not fully grown up in tourism sector and the earthquake has hampered the growth severely. This year tourism would be in its worst condition," he added.

"The hotels are lying vacant. Forty percent bookings of the tourists have already been cancelled," a travel agent from Pelling, West Sikkim, Bhim Bhandari said. But they hope the situation of the tourism sector will be restored soon.

The death toll in the state crossed 6 dozen and sources say that a number of people workers have been missing from various sites.

The Prime Minister of India, Man Mohan Singh visited Sikkim after the quake and announced the relief fund of a thousand crore rupees. Singh gave top priority to restoration of the road network in Sikkim. He directed the Border Roads Organization (BRO) to clear the strategic North Sikkim highway leading to Chungthang—the centre point of the earthquake by mid October. The road also links to Lachen and Lachung, the major tourism destinations.

The state government had been giving emphasis in building the infrastructure to reach the tourism spots and the people were trying to get involved themselves in the tourism sector. ■

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Dashain Aayo, Dashain Gayo

By ABIJIT SHARMA



As I checked my Facebook account on coming home from Delhi earlier this month for the great festival, I bumped into a status of a close friend. It read: *Dashain aayo, khaunla piunla* ssComments flooded in soon, many wishing her a joyous Dashain while others remarked on how the famous saying had lost much of its charm.

'Dashain has become more of obligatory rather than celebratory these days', many say as the festival approaches every year. This time too, it was no different. One of my friends said to me, 'The charisma and sheen of Dashain is drowning down with every passing year. I simply don't experience the same kind of excitement when we were kids'. Strolling through

some Nepali blogs, I find bloggers expressing similar views. They opine that the real essence of the festival has been long lost and today, it has become materialistic and only a medium to show off!

I beg to differ. Yes, it might be true that the celebrations have changed to some extent, compared to the Dashains of our

forefathers' time. But the festival still holds the same religious and cultural values today as it used to. A few examples would help to illustrate the fact. A large number of people heading back to their villages during the festival is one. Crowded public vehicles with passengers dangling on to the doors and sitting on the hoods are a common sight around Dashain time. Had the cultural values of Dashain eroded such zeal and eagerness to get back home simply to receive the auspicious tika and re-unite with their loved ones would most likely not have been seen. The huge crowd and the long queues in Bhagwati temples are proof of the still existing religious quintessence. And although I detest the practice of animal sacrifice to the maximum, the fact that they still remain an important part of the religious

offering during Dashain is another proof that the festival still has religious values.

Apart from tika and jamara, gambling and boozing has always been a part of the festivity. It would be completely wrong to conclude that Dashain these days is all about drinking and gambling only. Of course there have always been people who have taken undue advantage of the event. Nevertheless since the earlier times, playing cards, kauda, langur burja and drinking and feasting on sweets and festival foods have remained an inextricable part of the festival. And the festival becoming materialistic bereft of cultural and sentimental values? Hasn't the Dashain excitement always been about buying new clothes,

showing them off, getting all keyed up about the total D a k s h i n a ?

Talking about Dashain celebrations, one activity that has definitely seen a decline in recent years is kite-flying. The bright blue sky which used to be adorned with colourful kites was almost absent this time around. But with

the surging popularity of computer, television and video games, you can't blame the kids. Neither would it be justifiable to say that this has decreased the cultural value of the festival. With tempting technology, it is quite natural for kids to pay less heed to activities like kite-flying. But with 'kite-flying events' trying to restore this culture, we can be hope that in the future it would be able to draw the attention of children and that colourful kites would charm the sky once again.

Most importantly for each and every Nepali, Dashain has remained that one time of the year when all the sorrows, grief and hardships are forgotten and togetherness and happiness is celebrated. This foremost essence of Dashain has never changed and will perhaps never change in the future. ■



आफ्नो अधिकार प्रयोग गर्दा अरुको अधिकारप्रति
सजग र सचेत हुनु असल नागरिकको कर्तव्य हो ।



नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग



Lifestyle Choices Leading To NCDs

By RAJASEE SHARMA

As a medical student working at a hospital ward, I go around taking the history of the patients, learning about their diseases and symptoms, and trying to see links with any other past diseases or medical history in the family. I search for any information that would be important for proper diagnosis and treatment.

"I have been suffering from high blood pressure for the last 5 years," one patient reports. "My father had cancer and he died of it last year," says another. "I have two siblings and they have both been taking medication for diabetes."

Such complaints come from patients, sometimes, as young as 30. Curiously, rural people report this kind of medical history more frequently than those living in urban centers.

Had this been a scenario 10 years ago, medical personnel taking the history would have been surprised. Not long ago, we used to hear horror stories about how an entire village was affected by cholera and hundreds of people died of it. People dying of diseases like malaria, diarrhea, etc. were a common phenomenon. Fortunately, these kinds of epidemic of communicable, infectious diseases have been controlled to some extent due to the improvement in the public health measures. But now a new era of disease has begun and that is of the non-communicable diseases. Broadly speaking, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) include cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases as well as mental diseases. These diseases have definitely caused havoc in the health system by adding burden to the already existing problem of communicable diseases.

Talking about the risk factors of such diseases, these are usually linked with lifestyle related choices, food habits, environmental as well as genetic factors. Although Nepal has always been categorized as a developing country, people's lifestyle seems to be equally fast-paced and hectic as those in

Western countries. Up till recently NCDs were thought to be the disease of the Western world and the people in the eastern region remained somewhat unaffected by it. But now, things are rapidly changing. We are getting adapted to the unhealthy lifestyle that is causing these various health hazards. Not only the urban areas, but also the rural areas are very quickly entering into the circle of NCDs. As I talk with my patients, about 50% of whom live outside the valley, they seem to be well informed about such diseases as they give a very clear history of the diseases for themselves or for people in their family.

chronic respiratory diseases (12%) and diabetes (3%).

Looking at this, we can definitely observe that the pattern of diseases in Nepal is changing fast. Immediate action is needed to give people ideas on how to have a healthy life style. A major aspect for a healthy life style is our diet. Someone had very correctly said "You are what you eat". A healthy lifestyle not only involves proper diet but also physical exercises. It seems that new generation are opting to a sedentary lifestyle, as they are too busy with their study and computer as recreation, and this had also been one of the major



KMC Medical Ward

NCDs are becoming a major health issue now mainly due to changing lifestyle of people. That includes rapid urbanization, industrialization, changing food habits and so on. Alcohol and smoking has been identified as one of the major causes as more and more youth are smoking and drinking. Increased life expectancy has led to the increased incidence of NCDs as people get older cardiovascular diseases are bound to accompany the old age. According to the statistics, NCDs are the top cause of death worldwide, killing more than 36 million in 2008. Cardiovascular diseases were responsible for 48% of these deaths, cancers (21%),

contributor for obesity, especially in children. Due to all this, by the age of 30, they start suffering from backache, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

When we talk about a healthy lifestyle, an equally important part is played by a person's mental health too. Due to the changing lifestyle, mental health problems are also coming up as a challenge and by 2020 it will be one of the most frequently occurring diseases that will impact the population of the world and obviously Nepal will also have to face the consequences too.

Sharma is a fourth year medical student of Kathmandu Medical College

The South China Sea Disputes: Why Conflict Is Not Inevitable? – Analysis

By RUKMANIGUPTA

The South China Sea issue and China's position on it have become subjects of much deliberation, especially since the ASEAN Regional Forum Meeting at Hanoi last July. It is generally believed that the South China Sea will emerge as the hot-spot of conflict in the coming years. Evidence of this is found in the heated rhetoric exchanged between parties to the dispute – most notably, China, Vietnam and the Philippines. A declaration by the United States that it has a “national interest” in the region was seen as its commitment to taking an active part in the issue, much to Chinese chagrin. In recent weeks, statements by Chinese officials reasserting China's “indisputable sovereignty” over the South China Sea and warnings to India against investment in the region are seen as signs of Chinese aggressiveness that would inevitably precipitate conflict.

Suggestions for greater Indian involvement in the South China Sea disputes are made on the grounds that India must be forceful in its dealings with China. The continuation of ONGC Videsh Limited's (OVL) investments in Vietnamese energy fields is certainly advisable. In fact, there is nothing to indicate that the Indian government is thinking otherwise. OVL's presence in Vietnam is not a recent phenomenon. Its first joint-venture for offshore oil and natural gas exploration in Vietnam's Lan Tay field along with Petro Vietnam and BP became functional in 2003. Deals for the investments now in the headlines were signed in May 2006; this is a project that will not be halted because of oblique Chinese statements. India simply need not take heed of Chinese views on Indian economic ventures.

What is worrisome however is the suggestion that Indian involvement should extend to taking an active part in the territorial disputes themselves, and that India should actively extend its naval presence – either to protect OVL's investments (to be now deemed strategic and thereby meriting the backing of the Indian armed forces) or to protect the SLOCs. A closer bilateral relationship with Vietnam, Vietnamese rhetoric on the South China Sea disputes and its history of standing up to big powers are

provided as rationale for India to engage and arm Vietnam to win a war in the South China Sea.

These suggestions to recalibrate Indian policy towards the South China Sea and its relationship with Vietnam as a linchpin in the process, are premature at best. Despite the rhetoric, conflict in the South China Sea may not be inevitable. If the history of dialogue between the parties is any indication then current tensions are likely to result in forward movement. In the aftermath of statements by the US and skirmishes over fishing vessels, ASEAN and China agreed upon The Guidelines on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea at the Bali Summit in July 2010. Recent tensions may well prod the parties towards a more binding code of

UNCLOS, which provides that “Coastal States have sovereign rights in a 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) with respect to natural resources and certain economic activities, and exercise jurisdiction over marine science research and environmental protection”; but that “All other States have freedom of navigation and overflight in the EEZ, as well as freedom to lay submarine cables and pipelines.” The prospect of threats to SLOCs thus seems somewhat exaggerated.

It will also be pertinent to remember that the states involved deem the dispute as only one part of larger bilateral relationships. The South China Sea is by no means the only calculus through which smaller countries view their relationship with China. Earlier in the month, Philippine President Aquino

stated that the dispute in the South China Sea is but one aspect of the relationship with China. The country would continue to seek greater Chinese investment particularly in the fields of tourism and energy, among others. Vietnam too has not let its relationship with China be stymied by the disputes over the South China Sea. The General Secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party, Nguyen Phu Trong, visited Beijing last week and the joint statement issued stated that the two sides would “actively

boost co-operation” in offshore oil and gas exploration and exploitation. It was also agreed that negotiations towards a peaceful settlement of the territorial disputes in the South China Sea would be speeded up, military cooperation between China and Vietnam would be strengthened, a hotline between defence ministers established and contacts between high-level officials would be increased. As of July 2011, China, ranking 14th among Vietnam's foreign investors, had 805 operational projects in Vietnam with a capitalized value of USD 4.2 billion. Furthermore, China has been Vietnam's largest trading partner since 2004. Bilateral trade between the two was valued at USD 27 billion in 2010; for the first half of 2011, the



Vietnam's President (Left) and Indian PM Dr. Manmohan Singh

conduct. This is not to suggest that territorial claims and sovereignty issues will be resolved, but certainly can become more manageable to prevent military conflict.

There is a common interest in making the disputes more manageable, essentially because, nationalistic rhetoric notwithstanding, the parties to the dispute recognize that there are real material benefits at stake. A disruption of maritime trade through the South China Sea would entail economic losses, and not only for the littoral states. No party to the dispute, including China, has thus far challenged the principle of freedom of navigation for global trade through the South China Sea. The states of the region are signatories to the

corresponding value was USD 16 billion. In the event of military hostilities, the first casualty would be the economic relationship, an outcome both countries are keen to avoid.

Despite what opinion pieces in the *Global Times* may say, there is reason to suspect that China does not want to escalate conflict in the region. Although commentary from the US has suggested that China considers the South China Sea a "core interest", no official Chinese writing can be found to corroborate this. The designation of an issue as a "core interest" by China would imply the will to safeguard that interest with military means. Chinese scholars are wary about such a development. The caution advocated over the inclusion of the South China Sea into the pantheon of "core interests" is a clear indication that China is not prepared to engage in direct military confrontation over the issue. This caution can also be seen as a reflection on Chinese military capability, which is not yet assessed as being strong enough to win a war over the South China Sea. The *China National Defense News* published by the Chinese PLA's General Political Department has likened the use of force by China in the South China Sea to shooting one's own foot. Not only would the use of force bring ASEAN together on the issue, it could conceivably involve the US and Japan; derail China's plans for continued economic growth and undo China's diplomacy based on peaceful development and harmonious world conceptions. Chinese declarations on the South China Sea can be seen as attempts to exaggerate claims so as to obtain a better negotiating stance. The area is obviously disputed and Chinese claims to "indisputable sovereignty" do not make it any less so.

For India to revise its policy on the South China Sea in such conditions would be foolhardy. It is unclear how far Vietnam would be a willing partner in escalation of conflict with China. Given that escalation is not in China's interests either, it remains unlikely that China will use military force to disrupt OVL's operations (others such as ExxonMobil have continued to operate in areas China claims). In any case, India's military relations with Vietnam should deter any such occurrence. There is no need for India to take positions on territorial disputes in which it is not involved. Perhaps India could take a page out of the US book on this matter. Despite claiming a "national interest" on the issue, the US has categorically stated that it will not take sides on the territorial disputes. A revision of Indian policy on the issue should be based on a clear understanding of what India stands to gain and how Indian national interest is strengthened. India's relationships with South East Asian countries are not uni-dimensional. They are not geared only towards checking the Chinese imprint in the region but are reflective of India's multifarious interests globally. As regards military support for OVL's operations, the issue should be reflected upon seriously. It is one thing to build capabilities in order to deter misadventure, quite another to back investment with military might. This is a matter that will affect Indian ventures globally. Is India prepared – both in terms of military capability and policy implications – to send military backing for all such ventures? This is an issue that is larger than India's relationship with Vietnam or China – it is a question of Indian values and vision in the long term.^{sis/}

<http://www.curasiareview.com/17102011-the-south-china-sea-disputes-why-conflict-is-not-inevitable-analysis/>

India-Vietnam Joint Work Must Be Halted

India and Vietnam inked an agreement for joint oil exploration in the South China Sea on Wednesday. Both countries clearly know what this means for China. China may consider taking actions to show its stance and prevent more reckless attempts in confronting China in the area.

Just one day after signing an agreement on ground rules to resolve maritime disputes in Beijing, Hanoi reached an agreement with New Delhi for joint exploration. It is hard to tell if this shows a double-dealing mentality from Hanoi, or a disagreement among Vietnam's top decision-makers.

By inking pacts with Vietnam, India probably has deeper considerations in its regional strategy than simply getting barrels of oil and gas.

India is willing to fish in the troubled waters of the South China Sea so as to accumulate bargaining chips on other issues with China.

There is strong political motivation behind the exploration projects. China's vocal objections may not be heeded. China must take practical actions including those to make these projects fall through.

China should denounce this agreement as illegal. Once India and Vietnam initiate their exploration, China can send non-military forces to disturb their work, and cause dispute or friction to halt the two countries' exploration.

In other words, China should let them know that economic profits via such cooperation can hardly match the risk.

To upgrade the current dispute into a serious conflict

will represent risks for every country involved. China obviously does not want to see that happen. By preventing the India-Vietnam exploration, China clearly exposes the risks and lets every country involved share them. If China takes no action, the nation will bear them alone.

Some countries are taking risks in the South China Sea, and they believe China will step back to avoid conflict. As a result, China faces increasing provocations in the region. The effect of China's diplomatic protest is dwindling. In a bid to cool down the compulsion to take risks in this region, China has to dish out one or two patient and firm retaliatory measures.

India has its ambitions in the South China Sea. However, its national strength cannot provide solid support for such ambitions yet. Furthermore, this is not India's urgent task in building itself into a great power. Even in respect of its own interests, India is just poking its nose where it does not belong. Indian society is unprepared for a fierce conflict with China on the South China Sea issue.

Hanoi often hesitates on whether to confront with China on the South China Sea. It appears tough on China. But in fact, it has complicated national goals, just as China does. Territorial claims are just one of these.

Chinese society can not tolerate such repetitive provocations in the South China Sea. A rising China inevitably needs to have some degree of tolerance, and it is risky to take tough actions against provocations. However, an even greater risk is to let the Chinese public bear the grievances that only strategists can bear.

(Global Times China)

Bill Made To Manage The Works, Responsibilities, Authority, And Methodology Of The Proposed Human Rights Commission, 2067

Background:

Upon acceptance of human rights as a universal value, a state cannot do whatsoever it pleases in terms of human rights using internal sovereign rights as an excuse. Human right is an issue of concern of the state as well as the global community. Realizing the need to form national organizations to effectively protect and promote human rights in every country, and declare visionary policies on the systematic aspects and tasks of such institutions, a seminar of national institutions related to human rights was held in Paris between 7-9 October 1991. The decisions reached by the seminar was made into a code by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1992 and declared it as UN Resolution 45/134 in 1993. These are known as the Paris Principles. It is on the basis of these principles, that national human rights organizations are currently evaluated, their performances judged to see how the institutions are being managed, whether their work of protecting and promoting human rights are being conducted effectively and whether the institutions are capable of performing their given tasks.

National Human Rights Commission – Establishment and Identity: Taking into consideration that National Human Rights Institutions have been formed and put into operation in many countries around the world, there is also a growing awareness in Nepal for the same. As a result of which a demand was made for the need to establish a national human rights institution in the National Assembly here in 1992 (2049BS). In 1994 the Commission for Law Reform drafted a Human Rights Commission Bill. However in 2052 the draft was presented as a Bill for Non Government Organizations in the Parliament and passed accordingly due to which the Human Rights Commission Act, 2053 came into existence. Even after a long time since the promulgation of the Act, the government did not take any steps towards creating the Commission. This caused various human rights organizations and civil society intellectuals to demonstrate and protest to put pressure on the government. The Protection Front also filed a writ in the Supreme Court asking for its intervention to order the government to form the Commission. On the basis of this writ the Supreme Court issued an order to the government to form the Commission on 13 July 1999. However it took another year before the Supreme Court order was implemented and the Commission formed. Contrary to

expectations even the then democratic government did not seem too keen on forming the Human Rights Commission. As per the Human Rights Commission Act 2053, the National Human Rights Commission is an independent and autonomous institution. It was formed on 2 May 2000. Almost seven years after the formation of the Commission, the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063 has placed it as a Constitutional body.

Provisions related to the Commission on the basis of Paris Principles:

The Paris Principles are the basic guidelines for the formation of national human rights institutions however each country will have adapted the principles according to their own local conditions. The core value of the Paris Principles is that the national human rights institutions must be independent and autonomous. Until and unless such institutions are independent and autonomous their effectiveness will always be questioned. The Paris Principles have been summarized in the following points below:

- 3.1 Provisions on Majority: This recommends that the variety (multiplicity) within the country should be reflected within the national institution as well. The Commissioners/officials and staff should represent the multiple ethnicities of the country. The sectors that should be represented in it could be non-government organizations working in the human rights sector, organizations working to end caste based discrimination, trade unions, social and professional associations eg legal professionals, medical doctors, journalists, university professors, religious and philosophers.
- 3.2 Appointment Process: The Principles have not outlined who will make the appointments and how it will be made. What it does say is that the majority should be guaranteed and that the appointed persons should have made special contributions in their fields. As the Commission should be autonomous from the Executive, this must be taken into consideration during the appointment process which can be done either through an election or through other processes.
- 3.3 Administrative and Financial Autonomy: In order to ensure that its works are conducted in a fully independent and autonomous manner the human rights institutions must be free of any administrative and financial control of the executive. This will ensure that the institution does not have to rely on the

executive for the appointment of necessary staff and the operation of its activities or have any undesired influence on its works. Regarding this the Paris Principles clearly state “The national institution must have the necessary funds and infrastructure to operate its activities. The objective of providing such funds is to ensure that the institution is able to self appoint necessary staff and arrange for the buildings which will make it free of the government and also guarantee its independence and freedom from financial control.”

- 3.4 The task of the Commission: The main task of the national institution for human rights is to protect and promote human rights. As a semi-judicial constitutional agency the human rights institution will have the right to: work to solve problems through reconciliation, make recommendations to another able agency based on its own findings, inform the victim of appropriate measures to resolve the issue, and recommend for corrections if it sees certain legal loopholes or administrative flaws while studying any complaints.
4. Positive provisions on Bill Made to Manage the Works, Responsibilities, Authority, and Methodology of the Proposed Human Rights Commission:
 - It's main objective is to honor, protect and promote human rights and effectively implement it. (proposal)
 - Definition: As per the 2053 Act, “human rights” must be understood as rights guaranteed by the constitution and other relevant laws related to an individuals life, freedom, honor and dignity. The phrase/ word also defines the international treaties related to human rights to which Nepal is a signatory to. (Article 2)
 - Works, Responsibility and Authority of the Commission (Article 4):
 - (Self) Monitor or have monitored the Nepal Government, any of its agencies, public organizations or any other place,
 - Monitor the state of implementation of prevalent laws related to human rights and recommend to the Nepal Government for its effective implementation
 - Research and investigate the protection, promotion and implementation of human rights
 - Conduct educational awareness and promotional activities for the promotion of human rights
 - Conduct other activities considered

appropriate or necessary for the protection, management and promotion of human rights

The Nepal Government must ask the Commission for recommendation before sending reports to international treaties that Nepal is a party to. (Article 6)

The names of individuals and agencies that do not knowingly respect or implement the recommendations, orders and directives related to human rights violations will be publicized as human rights violators. When any individual whose name has thus been made public, is recommended for a public post, the concerned agency may use the documentation kept by the Commission for a background check. (article 7)

Provisions have been provided for interim relief and rescue (Article 9)

Complaints must be filed within 6 months of the violation or within the same period after being freed from captivity or made public. (article 10)

It will conduct investigations, take the service of experts, and hold public hearings. (Article 12)

Complains without facts or outside its jurisdictions will be terminated or kept in record. (Article 13)

Provisions for reconciliation have been provided. However there cannot be reconciliation on issues of gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws, and those that oppose prevalent domestic laws. (Article 14)

Provision for compensation. (Article 16)

The Commission has to send in writing to the concerned official, agency or individual for the implementation of its recommendation, decision or order. (Article 17)

Any international non-government organization working on human rights must first take permission from the Commission to work [in the country] (Article 20)

The Commission may make necessary laws, guidelines, and directives. (Article 32)

5. Notes and suggestions on the Bill Made to Manage the Works, Responsibilities, Authority, and Methodology of the Proposed Human Rights Commission

In the proposal "It is imperative that there be legal provisions as per international norms be made on the works, responsibilities, and authority of the human rights commission for the honor, protection and promotion and effective implementation of human rights" be added because the 2053 Act has been constricted which has earned the Bill much negative criticism from the National Human Rights Commission as well as

the international community working on human rights.

- Article 2 must be corrected eg. The matters in "H" should be placed in "B"

- In Article 2, "the Commission's Commissioners establishment, appointment, qualification etc should be added

- In Article 3(4) where it says the presence of majority of the members of the Commission will fulfill the quorum for a meeting, the number must be specified.

- In Article 4 (b) by provisioning that in relation to cases registered in the court and awaiting hearing, the Commission may only conduct further investigations after obtaining permission from the court, limits the independence of the Commission's work, therefore the phrase "with permission from the concerned court" must be removed

- In Article 4, when monitoring the prisons, without pre-information, must be added

- Article 7 (1) "consciously not implementing or accepting" must be removed because to be informed of human rights issues and the recommendations and directions of the Commission is everybody's responsibility

- In Article 7 (5) the word Official level staff must be added as well as, the Commission must be asked about the concerned individual before being promoted

- In Article 9, rehabilitation and compensation fund must be arranged, should be added

- In Article 13 (1), "if the complainers demand is fulfilled the complain can be ended" should be added

- In Article 14, reconciliation process should be added

- Based on Annex 1 and 2

- In Article 16 (3) there should be a provision stating, "orders can be issued to provide fixed amounts as per the condition". It should also state that compensation packages will be as per the fixed amount

- The provision that states that the Attorney General will inform the Commission whether the case can be filed as per Article 17 (10) and Article 132 (2) (C) of the Constitution which states that if the Commission is to file a case it must recommend, and Article 135 (2) which states that unless otherwise written in this Constitution, the provisions are likely to contradict each other and must therefore be reviewed.

- When providing compensation as per Article 17 the state of the victim and the perpetrator must be reviewed.

- In Article 27 in the heading regarding

the organization of the Commission and its tenure, the provisions regarding the Commission's staff must be added in which (1) A separate Human Rights Service shall be formed by the Commission to conduct its works and the staff of the Commission shall be formed from the same service. (2) As per Article 126 (5) of the Constitution, while appointing or promoting in human rights service the principles of the Civil Service Commission will be consulted. (3) The services, conditions, and benefits for the human rights service staff will be as per the regulations of the Commission, must be added.

- A provision making it mandatory for the annual report publication detailing the financial statements must be added

6. Conclusion

The Paris Principles outline the universal values of human rights and envisions an independent and autonomous national institution. While some countries have it as a law and some as a constitutional body, this makes no difference in its status. The main challenge is in implementing human rights, and it is necessary to make the Commission more powerful. The implementation of the Commission's recommendations is a major challenge. To end impunity, it is important that human rights violators are punished. While the Attorney General is the last Constitutional authority to file cases against criminal complaints the National Human Rights Commission is a separate constitutional agency. These two agencies have been in conflict before with regards to jurisdiction. It is important that lawmakers and the legislative body define the laws to end this debate.

Advocate Durga Khadka has finalized this investigation and recommendation report submitted to the Nepal Constitution Foundation on the basis of inputs from women, Janajati, Madhesi, youth and pressure groups from other communities like, Bijaya Singh, Nirupa Yadav, Milan Shrestha, Dhanmaya Rana, Shyam Kumar Biswakarma, Dina Shrestha, Shanta Sedai, Dinesh Tripathi, Sabita Sharma, Radheshyam Adhikari, Ganesh Dutta Bhatta, Furpa Tamang, Abhishek Adhikari, and Dr. Bipin Adhikari.

Excerpts of the study which was conducted by legal experts for the Nepal Constitution Foundation. This research has been supported by The Asia Foundation. Views and opinion expressed in this report are of the authors and don't necessarily reflect of the Asia Foundation. ■

WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL NEPAL

For A Just Change

Nepal saw several ups and downs in the last decade when humanitarian emergencies affected children, families and communities. But World Vision International Nepal (WVIN) continued to respond in emergencies. Now WVIN has positioned itself as a child-focused community-based organization. The WVIN "Area Development Program" (ADP) has already brought about drastic changes in the lives of the poor, marginalized and vulnerable population, particularly children with 14 ADPs in all five development regions of Nepal.

By A CORRESPONDENT

A water tap has changed the life of a girl in Sudal VDC of Bhaktapur. Sunita, 12, no longer needs to go on a long walk to fetch a bucket of water. She uses the time saved to study and play. Clean water from the tap also promises better health for her family members.

The drinking water project, constructed with support from the World Vision International Nepal's (WVIN) Bhaktapur Area Development Program caters to 532 households in Sudal Village Development Committee, 13 kilometers east of Nepal's capital city.

Far away to the west, women of Chetanshil Mothers' Group at Talchaur of the Chandanpur Village Development Committee in Jumla district, have a reason to rejoice over the change in their livelihoods brought about by off-season vegetables. By selling vegetables, women in the village, which is 500 kilometers in the northwest of Kathmandu, are generating money to support their children's education. In a food deficit district of the mid-western hills, these women grow and sell off-season vegetables to buy stuff like rice and cooking oil. Better availability of food has promised to make their children healthier.

Asmita Sardar and her family, in Madesha Village Development Committee of Sunsari district of the

terai, are proud about having a toilet in their home. The 8-year old girl feels her dignity and prestige were enhanced by the toilet, which indirectly reduces the annual health bill for the family as well. Diarrhea, typhoid and other water-borne diseases, attributed earlier to the open defecation practice, are now things of the past for the backward and poverty-stricken Madesha villagers as they all have access to toilets at home.

WVIN's Sunsari Area Development Program has supported construction of 304 water hand pumps and 4,793 household toilets. Under the program, it conducted arsenic test on 2,126 tube wells, established five compost chambers for making fertilizers, sought to raise awareness about proper sanitation and the importance of tree planting through social mobilization of women, among other cleaning campaigns. ADP program also helped declare 13 villages in seven VDC's as Open Defecation Free Zones.

From poverty-stricken, remote, hilly village of Jumla to the Madheshi community in the plains, WVIN's program has helped uplift the life of poor *dalits*.

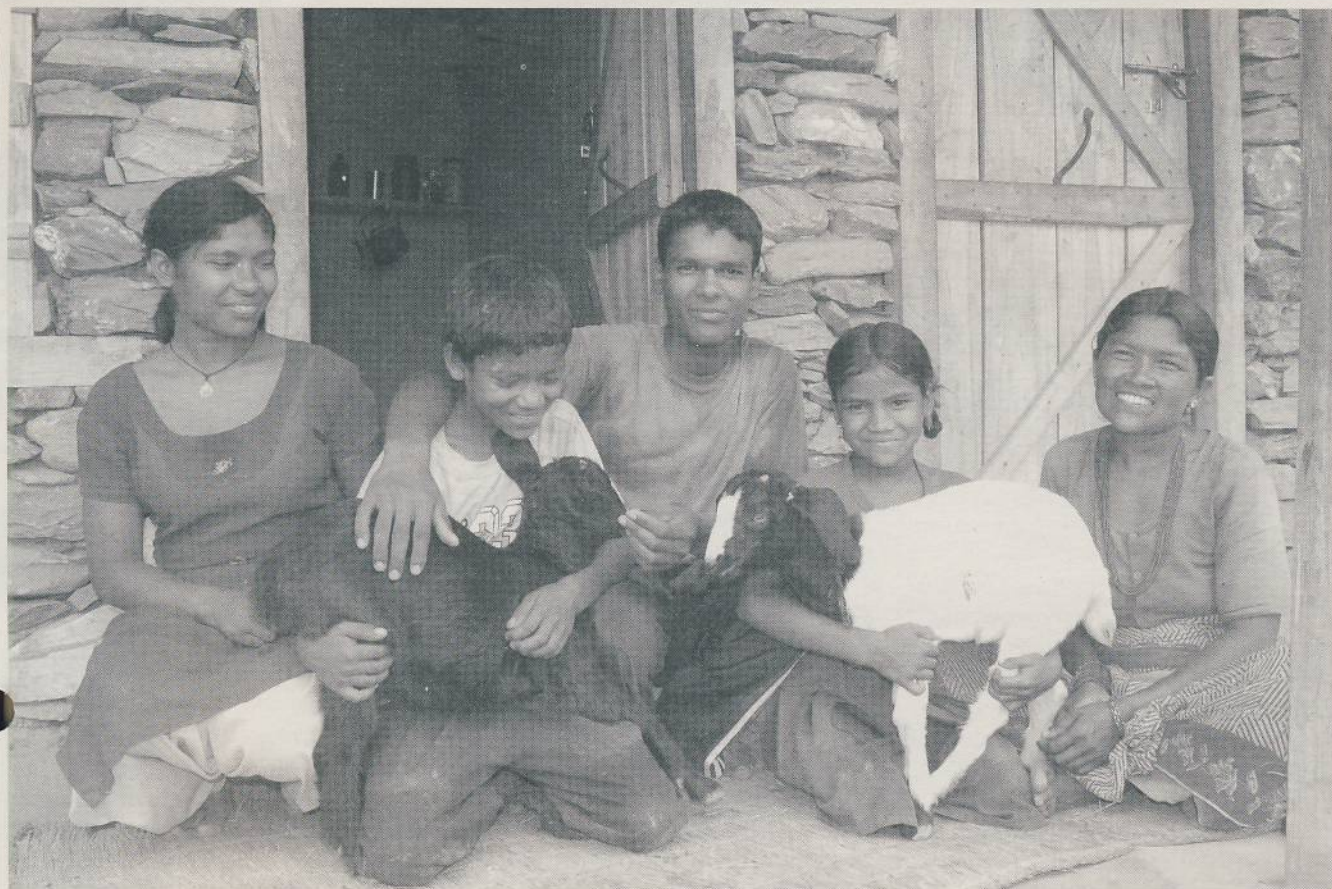
The story of Chisa B.K, mother of four, goes to show how the program works. Five years ago, Chisa's husband abandoned her and their four children for another woman. Her life became hard.

However, the women's saving and credit group of her village, run under WVIN's Lamjung Area Development Program's micro finance activities, made several things possible in her life. After she joined the group, she got a loan to buy a buffalo. She sold milk and changed her fortune. Depositing just a hundred rupees in membership fees, Chilsa maximized the utility of the loan she received from the group. With income multiplying, she now owns a small piece of land she bought at Sundar Bazar VDC of Lamjung where she built a two-room house for her children and herself.

When 5-year old Paro and 3-year old Parbati were admitted to Early Childhood Development (ECD) center at Lakhantari VDC of Morang district, 600 kilometers southeast of the capital, they were suffering from malnutrition. By eating the food provided by the center over time, they came back on their good health.

"As children of the Mushhar community, without regular income and land, they did not have enough food to eat and were weak," said Fulsariya Majhi, facilitator of the center. In 2010, WVIN's Morang Area Development Program supported many young children like Paro and Prabin in 17 ECDs in the district.

WVIN has been supporting various



Chisa BK and her children in front of their newly built home

development programs in Nepal from Morang in the east to Jumla in the mid-west to Kailali in the far west, helping the poor, marginalized and vulnerable communities.

The programs are aimed at addressing the most worrying indicators, malnutrition and sanitation, among the communities. Every second child under five (49%) in Nepal is stunted or has a low height for age; a result of chronic undernourishment. Over half of Nepal's children between the ages 0-17 years have no access to a toilet of any kind.

Investing in children's well-being is not only a social and moral imperative, it is an economically sound investment strategy for the future. Poverty is more than insufficient income for meeting consumption needs. Whether a child lives in poverty depends on access to public goods and services such as safe water, health care, education and protection from risks associated with physical work and abuse.

Diseases caused by unclean water and bad sanitation are responsible for 70 deaths per day of children under five:

According to WHO it is estimated that diarrheal disease and Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) account for 18% of deaths among children under five years. Recent calculations by WHO estimate about 13,000 children under five years die each year in Nepal from diarrheal diseases and a further 13,000 from ARI.

Despite improved enrolment rates, 723,000 children (9.5%), predominantly from marginalized groups, still lack access to education. Social exclusion barriers due to caste, ethnicity and language play a major role in spreading the rewards of education equitably.

In its decade long presence in Nepal, WVIN launched many projects to uplift the marginalized and poor people of Nepal. Along with these cases of five districts, at present WVIN is operational in 12 districts of Nepal focusing on improving children's well-being through child-focused programs. It has been supporting programs for development, disaster management and the promotion of social justice.

"Children are the most vulnerable to the effects of poverty. World Vision

works with each partner community to ensure that children enjoy improved nutrition, health and education," writes Trihadi Saptoadi, Regional Leader World Vision South Asia and Pacific in his message for the tenth year celebration of World Vision in Nepal. "World Vision carries a hope for the children of Nepal with a vision 'for every child life in all its fullness, for every heart, the will to make it so'. Together with our community partners, I am glad to share that we have witnessed modest success in realizing this vision for many children in Nepal. Many have gone back to school. Many have access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Many are immunized and well-nourished. Many are well cared for by families with increased incomes. Many are empowered with a voice. There are many success stories and the communities are testimony to the transformational development work that is bringing hope to the lives of children in many village development committee across Nepal," adds Saptoadi in his message.

World Vision started its

“The INGO Community Can Only Play A Supporting Role”

MICHAEL FRANK

MICHAEL FRANK, country director of World Vision International Nepal (WVIN) has been in Nepal for more than two years. Michael, who is also SC member of Association of International Non-governmental Organization, has travelled Nepal widely. Michael spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues regarding the role of WVIN in Nepal's development process. Excerpts:

How do you evaluate the activities launched by World Vision International Nepal in the last one decade?

Over the past ten years there have been a number of formal and informal methods to judge progress towards project development objectives. Each of our program areas (Area Development Programs or ADP) have an annual plan of activities which is based on our long-term strategic objectives. Regular reports are submitted by the ADP management on progress towards achieving the annual plan. A formal evaluation is conducted once a year which is led by Social Welfare Council and includes involvement of concerned line ministries and other stakeholders. There are also sector specific evaluations that are organized by donor agencies.

As there are many NGOs and INGOs working in empowering women and children, what are the focused areas (working districts) of World Vision International Nepal?

World Vision consults and coordinates closely with other INGOs that focus on mothers and children to

development initiatives in Nepal in 1982 by donating funds to local groups for building hospitals and providing health care. In response to the 1988 earthquake, World Vision helped local non-governmental organizations in providing assistance to the people affected. Similarly, in 1993, World Vision helped people affected by the floods through local partners.

According to World Vision's Annual Review of 2010, World Vision International Nepal, a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to working with the children,

ensure there is no overlap. In selecting geographic locations for project activities World Vision does an intensive assessment with the involvement of the local governments (District and VDC) and communities in order to select the most needy areas and the areas that are not currently being reached by other INGOs.

What is your observation in Nepal regarding the status of children?

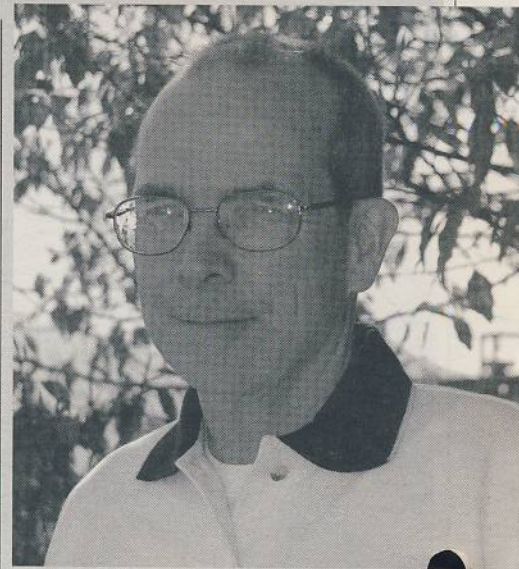
Much progress has been achieved over the past ten years in improving the health of mothers and children. The government deserves a lot of credit. However, there is still much to be done to build on the achievements. We cannot rest until every mother and child enjoy the benefits of good health and with ready access to all their health needs.

As Nepal has made a tremendous progress in the child health and the country is likely to meet Millennium Development Goals, how do you see the role of INGOs?

The INGO community can only play a supporting role to the government and the community. Sustained achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) can only happen through government programs and policy. INGOs can effectively support the government programs especially in remote areas that suffer from lack of adequate infrastructure and access to services but long term sustainability of MDG will only be achieved by concerted efforts of the community and government.

families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice, formally started its long term development work in Nepal after signing both general and project agreements with the Social Welfare Council in 2001.

WVIN has also introduced the Integrated Programming Model in its working ADPs, a model that equips World Vision local-level staff to work effectively with partners toward the sustained well-being of children within families and communities- especially the most vulnerable. This has helped it to reach out to large numbers of poor and



What is observation about Nepal?

Before arriving in Nepal two years ago, I had the typical perception held by most foreigners - Nepal is a beautiful, Shangra La - esque country with wondrous mountain landscape and very friendly and hospitable people. This is definitely true but Nepal is much more complex when one considers the history, the ethnic diversity, and the political dynamics. I have high hopes that Nepal will achieve peace and a new constitution and then make rapid progress in economic and social development. More than any other country where I have lived, there is a wealth of good will towards Nepal and the Nepali people by other countries. The world is with Nepal and truly supports the efforts for a more healthy, prosperous and peaceful Nepal.

marginalized population and children in different parts of Nepal.

In 2010, WVIN served 239,782 people through its community development, relief and advocacy program. WVIN's country strategy (2010-2013) has a goal to empower vulnerable children, their families, and communities in Nepal to improve their quality of life in dignity and peace. The strategy has identified three key sectors where it might serve, namely Maternal Child Health and Nutrition, Education, and Livelihood, two contextual sectors, namely water and sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and

HIV and AIDS with child protection as a major cross cutting thing.

Introduced in 2007, advocacy is another important area of the WVIN's work which aims to improve the lives of children by influencing government policies and the allocation of resources for social and economic activities that benefit the poor. Under this, it supported networks and coalitions ensuring child rights in the new constitution of Nepal, established links with government units and developed a framework for Child Friendly Local Governance in collaboration with UNICEF. Working with coalitions such as Children as Zone of Peace and Child Protection (CZOPP) and the Consortium of Organizations Working for Children's Participation, other NGOs, and UN agencies, the organization aimed to give children a voice and encouraged their participation in the drafting of the new constitution in Nepal. In addition this, WVIN worked closely with above mentioned bodies in protecting and promoting child rights in Nepal.

WVIN's work in the area of Humanitarian Emergency Affairs has significantly contributed to disaster risk-reduction and preparedness activities in all of its ADPs and timely responses to major disasters in Nepal. In 2007, WVIN responded to the monsoon floods in Saptari helping thousands of displaced population in 12 VDCs. In August 2008, WVIN was amongst the first to respond with food and non-food items when Saptakoshi river, one of the largest river, broke its embankment and started flowing directly to villages and destroying crops and displacing thousands of people. The organization continued with recovery and rehabilitation for a period of more than two years in the months that followed focusing on three flood affected VDCs namely Haripur, Sripur and Paschim Kushaha.

"Getting the opportunity to observe the 10 years work in Nepal gives me immense pleasure as well as hope. I hope that WVIN in future will have increased opportunities to work for the betterment of vulnerable communities focusing on children. WVIN has revised its strategy and now we have put systems and



Paro, right having her meal in an ECD center in Lakantari VDC

structures in place to forward the development, advocacy and relief work in Nepal. "shares Michael Frank, National Director-World Vision International Nepal in WVIN's Annual Review 2010.

Appreciating the role of INGOs like World Vision International Nepal, Social Welfare Council(SWC) in its evaluation report (for FY 2006-2010) has observed that the overall impact of WVIN's project in the community was found to be effective. "Stakeholders have appreciated WVIN's activities in education, child clubs, livelihood, health, sanitation, nutrition and ECCD," writes SWC in its report.

"World Vision International Nepal has made a great contribution to Nepal's development programs carrying out various programs. WVIN's Area Development Program is a successful model for Nepal," says Chhewang Lama Sherpa, member secretary of Social Welfare Council.

Children are assets

Nepal's most valuable resource is its young people. According to the state of children in Nepal (2011), prepared by the CCWB on the basis of preliminary

data provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics, the under-14 population in the country is 9,968,489—4,837,083 females and 5,131,406 males.

"Political instability, inadequate budget and geographical barriers are the main causes of the lack of guarantee of child rights in the country. So the government should introduce programs that can meet these challenges. We also need the support from civil society organization like INGOs," Dharma Raj Shrestha, executive director of the Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB). The 2011 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (2011 NDHS) revealed that Nepal needs to take many steps to improve the living conditions of children. It will remain so for the next 20-25 years.

Although WVIN's programs are small, what they have shown is the children of today are the foundation of tomorrow, they must be equipped to reach their full potential. One of the key focus of WVIN's work is placing children at the forefront of national development. ■

Have A Healthy Diwali

-By BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD



Tihar is synonymous with sweets. All the sweet shops in Nepal will do brisk business in Tihar. But this may, all too sadly, also be the time to reflect on dangers of eating "mithais" to our hearts' content. These "mithais" are the equivalent of chocolates in the Western world. When we are in a celebratory mood, we buy a box of "mithais" just like Westerners buy a box of chocolates and share this with our relatives and friends. Binging on "mithais" (just like eating too much chocolate) or eating them on a regular basis may predispose us to diabetes. In present day South Asia, in the list of diseases, diabetes is sure grabbing headlines.

This is because South Asia holds the dubious distinction of the largest collection of diabetics in the world. The amazing thing is that in the Western world the diabetic is usually a fat person, but unfortunately for us in South Asia the thin slender person too has a good chance of suffering from diabetes. In other words we seem to be acquiring this disease even without some of the major risk factors (like obesity) as in the West. This may mean we need to be more

careful. For example, the cut-off for the waist size for a Western male that can tip him into having metabolic problems (like diabetes) is 40". But for South Asian male, the cut-off may be just 37" or 38". Life does not seem fair.

And clearly this rampant disease (diabetes) is the king of cardiovascular problems; that means a greater likelihood of strokes, heart attacks, kidney failures, and blindness to name some of the important complications of diabetes. At least with our widespread, infectious illnesses like TB, malaria, and typhoid, there are antibiotics that will cure the problem. Unfortunately with cardiovascular illnesses, often it is control of the disease rather than cure which is realistic. Furthermore in a poor country like Nepal the financial consequences of the treatment of cardiovascular illnesses are all too daunting.

As though this were not enough, there may also be a genetic component that predisposes people from South Asia to heart disease. When studies were carried out in South Asians living in the UK, it was found that the South Asian population had a higher risk of heart

disease than the local UK population for the same gender and age group. Similar studies have also come out of the USA among South Asians. In fact, a well established cardiac gene defect (MYBPC3) has been shown to afflict 4% of the South Asian population predisposing them to cardiovascular illness. Four percent in South Asia translates to millions of people. Indeed even the WHO says that South Asia will soon be the hub for cardiovascular illness.

So why bring up this "doom and gloom" news during this magnificent festival of lights? There may be genetic predispositions to illnesses for which we are incapable of doing anything. But there are good health habits within our control that Diwali lights can remind us of: Eating less sweets and oil soaked kebabs, going for morning walks to get out of that sedentary lifestyle, keeping our blood pressure under good control with medicines if necessary, checking our cholesterol level, and finally stopping smoking. Unquestionably the health risk of smoking in Kathmandu valley with its rampant pollution is a true double whammy. ■

Malla Bags Golf Junior Winner Title

Prithvi Malla won the junior golf tournament held at Royal Nepal Golf Course (RNGC) on Saturday-15 August 2011 jointly organized by Nepal Golf Association (NGA) and Himalayan Youth Golf Association (HYGA) U.S.A. This tournament was held after three-

month training under the Youth Golf Development Program.

Junior's selection was organized to promote junior golfers, which is first of its kind.



Total of 66 juniors under 18 participated for the tournament and training session.

Prithvi Malla aged 13 scored 23 points in the nine-hole tournament with 1 Birdie, 5 Par whose handicap was 18.

Malla Recently won LG Junior open tournament. He has already received 10 other trophies.

NTB adopts '3rd Planet' Tech

As part of Nepal's tourism promotion drive, the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) has adopted the world's pioneering technology in the tourism industry named '3rd Planet', an interactive three-dimensional tourism platform, in collaboration with Singapore-based 3rd Planet Pte Ltd.

Developer of this platform, 3rd Planet Pte Ltd, has collaborated with NTB in its inaugural project 'Journey to Everest' to showcase Nepal and its myriad of potential destinations in ways done never before. NTB is the first official tourism board to use this

cutting-edge technology.

NTB said 3rd Planet creates interactive 3-dimensional replicas of major global tourism locations with sounds and special effects showcasing a realistic environment which users can interact with before they make visit. "The major objective to be associated with the latest technology is to showcase realistic picture of Nepal to the world," said NTB Spokesperson Aditya Baral.

"The selection of 3rd Planet Pte Ltd as a global online media partner was an important decision for us. The beauty of Nepal cannot

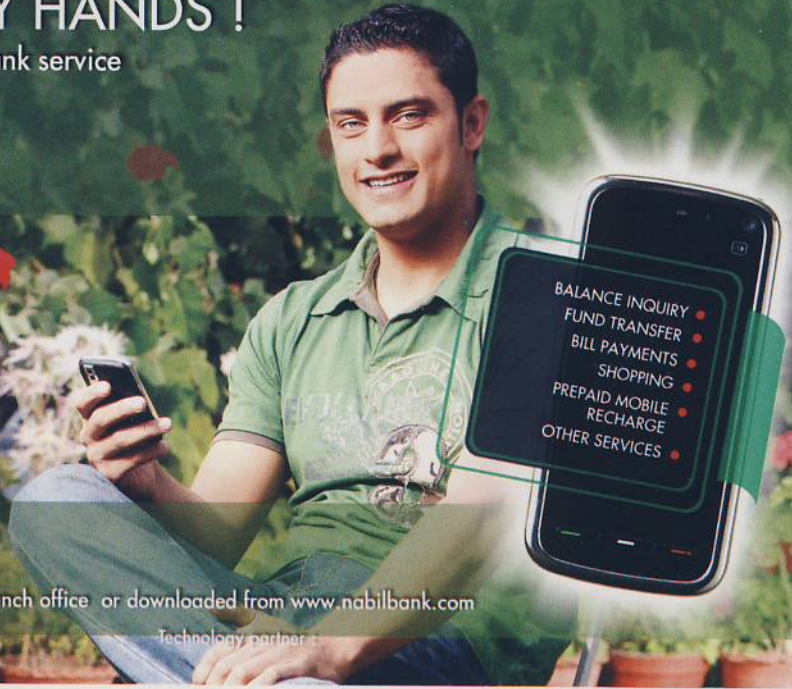
just be described in pictures and words, and 3rd Planet has an amazing technology that enables us to showcase our country in a totally new dimension," said NTB CEO Prachanda Man Shrestha.

Pawan Tuladhar, chairman of Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)'s Nepal Chapter, said users can experience sights and sounds of several tourism locations online in 'Journey to Everest', and find that Nepal has a lot more to offer to the global audience than Mount Everest. "The software is web-based and is supported across all major browsers through a small client download and is free for consumers to use.

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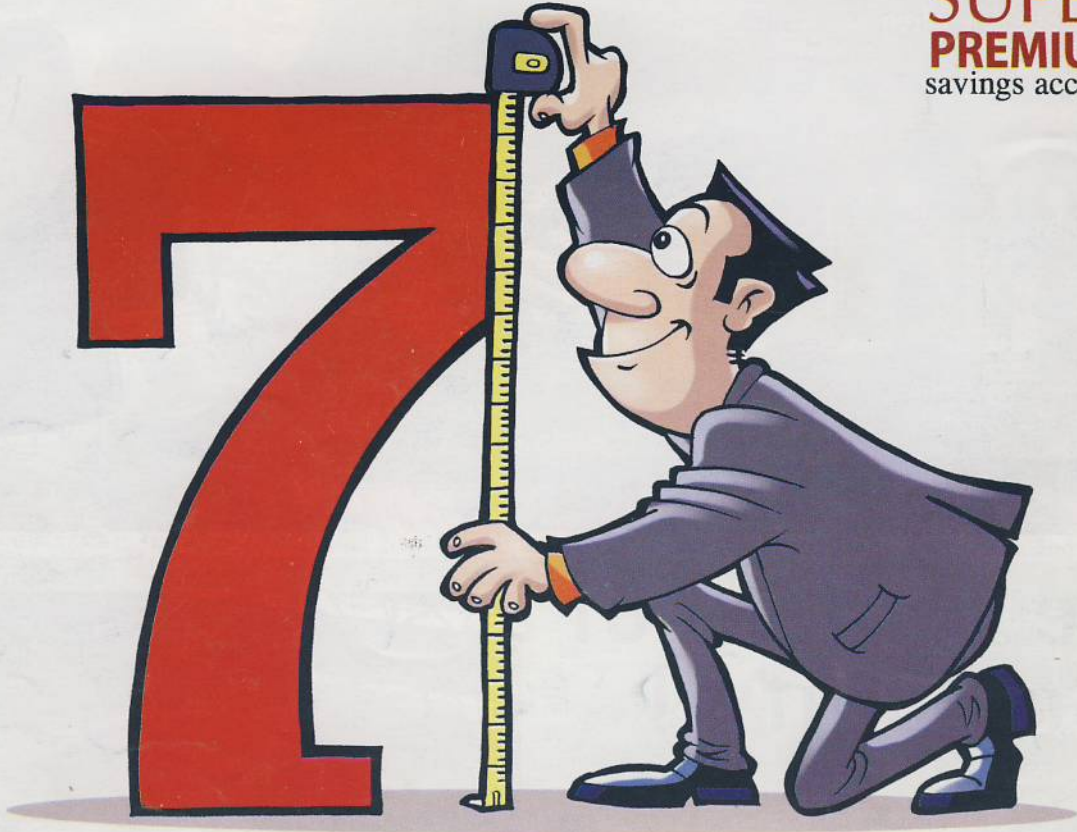
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