



Spend Save Earn

A Credit Card For Everyone and Anyone.

NIBL presents a credit card savings account easily available to everyone and anyone.
For more details contact your nearest NIBL branches.

www.nibl.com.np

* Conditions Apply



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंक लि.
NEPAL INVESTMENT BANK LTD.
Truly a Nepali Bank

Editorial

Not just the political process, Nepal's economy is also passing through difficulties. High inflation, declining development expenditure, growing public expenditure, declining export and growing import are some of the problems faced by Nepal's economy at present. As the global economy continues to be shaking due to recession in Europe and the sluggish growth of even the Chinese and Indian economies, a country like Nepal cannot have an easy time either. However, Nepal is in a very uncertain situation in presenting its annual budget. Industrialists have been pressing major political parties to make some sort of a consensus possible on the economic agenda. It seems that consensus remains to be an elusive mirage. This shows Nepal's challenges in the way to maintaining growth. With the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, there is a widespread controversy over whether the present interim government can bring a full-fledged budget or not. In its decision, the Supreme Court has made it clear that the caretaker government cannot bring a full-fledged budget. It directed the authorities to work under the interim constitution. Although Nepal's political situation is still in a mess, we have decided to take a look at the overall economic performance of Nepal. Along with this, we have covered political and other relevant issues in this issue.



Cover Story: Critical Path

9



INTERVIEW: Jean-Charles DEMARQUIS 12



POLITICS: Whose Consensus?

8

NEWSNOTES	2
BUSINESS BRIEF	3
VIEWPOINT : Dr. Tilak Rawal	4
AI PING'S VISIT: Mandarin Mission	5
FACE TO FACE : Rajendra Mahato / Gopal Man Shrestha	6
COMMENTARY : Yubaraj Ghimire	7
OPINION : Batu Krishna Uprety	14
BOOKWORM : Bipin Adhikari	15
NATIONAL: World Vision International Nepal	16
ARTICLE : Jeeva Raj Budhathoki	17
ARTICLE : Abhishekh Adhikari	18
FORUM : Pratima Pande	19
KATHMANDU DIARY : Abijit Sharma	20
PERSPECTIVE : Dinesh Chandra Devkota, PhD	21
ARTICLE : Jose Assalino	22
TRENDS: Aditi Aryal / Shradha Gyawali	24
ENTERTAINMENT	24
HEALTH: Buddha Basnyat, MD	28

Editor and Publisher : Keshab Poudel, Senior Editor: Alok Tumbahangphey, Senior Correspondent: Saroj Dahal, Correspondent: Uma Kanta Khanal, (Jhapa) Abijit Sharma (New Delhi),

Reporter: Debesh Adhikari, Niraj Aryal

Marketing Manager : Madan Raj Poudel, Tel: 9841320517, Nabin Kumar Maharjan Tel: 9841291404, Photographer : Sandesh Manandhar

Cover Design/Layout : Hari Krishna Bastakoti, 9841456791

Editorial Office : Tel: 977-1-4430250 E-mail: spotlightnepal@gmail.com, P.O.Box: 7256

Office : Kathmandu, Nepal

Printers : Pioneer Offset Printers (P.) Ltd., Dhapasi, Kathmandu. Ph: 4363624

Kathmandu DAO Regd. No. 148/11/063/64, Postal Regd. No. 36/068/069

US Library of Congress Catalogue No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711 (Print), ISSN: 2091-0754 (Online)

Chinese Ambassador Meets SAARC Secy General

Chinese ambassador to Nepal and Chinese permanent representative to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Yang Houlan met with Ahmed Saleem, Secretary-General of SAARC recently. According to the Chinese Embassy website, they exchanged views on China-SAARC relations, etc.

Saleem welcomed Yang as assuming the post of Chinese Permanent Representative to SAARC and thought it showed China put great importance on SAARC and its cooperation with SAARC. Saleem highly valued China's relations with SAARC as an Observer, and China's relations with the Members of SAARC. He said that he will promote more close China-SAARC cooperation.



Yang highly appreciated Saleem's support to China-SAARC cooperation and said that the Chinese government attaches great importance to developing friendly relations with SAARC and its Members. As Chinese Permanent Representative to SAARC, he said he will try his best to push forward the development of China-SAARC friendly relations.

They also discussed the situations of South Asia and Nepal.

Pakistan's Support To KIST Medical College

Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal Ashif Memon handed over about Rs. 1.5 million to Kist Medical College and Hospital. The money will be used to buy medical equipment for the Hospital. According to Hospital, the money will be used to buy Pulmonary Test Machine and Color Portable Doppler Ultrasound.

On behalf of government of Pakistan, Ambassador Memon handed over money for the treatment of common people and medical student studying at the college. Ambassador Memon handed over the check to principle of college Dr. T.P. Thapa at a function organized at Kist Medical College.

"It is a just a token but it will help to buy the equipment. This help symbolizes goodwill of people and government of Pakistan towards Nepal and Nepalese people and will help to strengthen bilateral relations exist between the two countries," said ambassador Memon. "The equipment will provide service to general public and help students to enhance their capability. These kinds of help will continue in future."

Bodde Confirmed US Ambassador To Nepal

US senate confirmed President Obama nominee Peter Bodde to be the ambassador to Nepal. Bodde will be Ambassador DeLisi's successor in Nepal, pending confirmation by the United

States Senate, as required by the U.S. Constitution.

KOICA support to the Red Cross Society

The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) provided equipments to improve quality of blood to Red Cross Society Blood Transfusion Center (RCSBTC), Pokhara. This project worth US\$ 22,000,000 (approx. Nrs. 1980000.00) was implemented by KOICA Volunteer Eunyeong Jang (Major in Clinical Pathology), under the KOICA Volunteer Project Aid Program. Jang has been working with RCSBTC, Pokhara since April 2010. Through this project KOICA provided Generator, Hematology analyzer, Tube Sealer and Plasma Separator.

Six new Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Volunteers arrived in Nepal. They will stay in Nepal for two years.

Delegation of the European Union to Nepal takes charge of the local EU representation

The Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Nepal will assume full Lisbon duties Started from 1st of July, 2012 as called for by the Lisbon Treaty signed and endorsed by all the EU Member States in 2010. It may be recounted that the Lisbon treaty paved way for the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) with the objective of putting into place a more

coherent, timely and coordinated common foreign and security policy for the European Union.

In November, 2009, Catherine Ashton was appointed as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission. As part of the changes brought about, the political and diplomatic wings in the Delegations of the European Union all around the world were brought under the single umbrella of the EEAS alongside the wings looking after development cooperation that have continued to function under the European Commission.

Israel embassy activities to continue

The Embassy of Israel in Kathmandu has been conducting many programs every year in the fields of health, culture, education, technology, agriculture and social responsibility among others.

The Embassy is giving continuity to some of the programs from the previous year like volunteering at the children's home, bringing experts from Israel for sharing experiences and conduct trainings for the health professionals at the Dhulikhel Hospital et cetera while many new projects have also been introduced to encourage and prove the ability of the people or towards protection of nature or for the betterment of the society.

According to Israeli ambassador to Nepal Hanan Goder, the projects are aimed at strengthening friendly bonds

between Israel and Nepal and also to share technical knowhow.

The Embassy has themed this year as the year for the "people with special needs" and most projects are focused on the same.

There are many meaningful activities on the pipeline for the next few months on the embassy's activities list.

Meanwhile, the Israel embassy will also launch common stamp of Nepal and Israel which have the highest and lowest points of the world - Mt. Everest and The Dead Sea. ■



60 M WB Credit For Nepal's Bridges

The World Bank has approved a US\$60 million credit to help Nepal maintain and construct bridges on its Strategic Roads Network. The strategic roads network refers to roughly 10,800 kilometers of national highways, feeder roads and other roads of national importance.

Supporting the vision behind Nepal's Bridge Policy and Strategy of 2004 to provide "safe, reliable and cost effective" bridges, the Bridges Improvement and Maintenance Program will maintain 89 bridges, many over 35 years old, complete major and minor maintenance on over 300 bridges, and construct 121 new bridges.

"Through this new Program-for-Results instrument, the World Bank support will contribute towards improving access for the population of Nepal, especially those living in remote areas," says Tahseen Sayed, World Bank Country Manager for Nepal. "We hope it will also create greater economic opportunities for men and women," she said.

£17 M UK Support For Quake Preparedness

The UK Department for International Development has announced vital funding support for earthquake preparedness in Nepal.

The UK's new disaster preparedness programme will strengthen Government of Nepal's disaster risk management policy and support improved building code compliance. It will scale up community-based activities to build the resilience of 4 million people to earthquakes and other disasters. It will reconstruct at least 162 schools damaged in the Sikkim earthquake in September 2011, and develop a national plan to improve the seismic safety of hospitals. DFID support will also improve preparedness for a national and international emergency response and train 4,000 volunteers across Nepal in search and rescue and first aid. DFID will provide up to £17m (equivalent to Rs 2 billion) over four years.

According to British Embassy, Alan Duncan, MP, UK Minister of State for International Development visited Kathmandu and met with the Home Minister and visited National Emergency Operation Centre. He also met with the representatives from partner organisations who are working to increase disaster preparedness in Nepal.

Minister Duncan, who has been closely involved throughout the development of the new programme, said, "I have been extremely focused on the earthquake risk in Nepal since my first visit to Nepal as a UK Minister. An earthquake in Kathmandu has all the components of a cataclysmic tragedy. This is a risk that the UK cannot ignore."

"I am very pleased to announce this package of UK funding to improve national disaster management and emergency response capacity and reduce the vulnerability of 4 million people to disasters. This is part of an increased focus on disasters as a new and vital part of DFID's work. In Nepal and internationally, we should be asking ourselves now what we can do to help Nepal to reduce the risk."

Nepal's vulnerable population gets World Bank's support

The World Bank is scaling up its efforts in Nepal at helping authorities and communities improve the nutritional status of the country's most vulnerable populations. This is one of the first World Bank assisted multi sector nutrition project in the South Asia region

which will engage a wide range of actors across government and civil society in the areas of health, poverty reduction, social protection, water and sanitation, agriculture, local development and education in the planning and implementation.

The Sunaula Hazar Din project – translated from Nepali to English to mean the "golden 1,000 days project" – will target risk factors that affect the nutritional status of children in the first two years of their lives. The World Bank Board of Executive Directors approved US\$ 40 million in grant and credit for this new project today to complement Nepal's ongoing programs in nutrition.

Billions To Benefit From Rio+20 Commitment

The \$175 billion pledge made by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and seven other multilateral development banks (MDBs) was one of the largest financial commitment coming out of Rio+20 in Brazil, it was announced at the UN Secretary General's closing press conference.

"These sustainable transport improvements will benefit billions of people, especially the poor, and support environmental sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said Bindu Lohani, ADB's Vice President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development at the press conference to showcase voluntary commitments made at Rio+20, on behalf of the eight MDBs.

According to the press release of Asian Development Bank, the MDBs had earlier announced their plan to invest more than \$175 billion over the next decade to help improve transport in developing countries. The new funds will be used to promote all forms of sustainable transport, including public transport; bicycle and walking infrastructure; energy-efficient vehicles and fuels; railways; inland waterways; and road safety. ADB's share of the commitment is \$30 billion.

Bank of Asia Nepal and NIC bank to merge

Bank of Asia Nepal (BoAN) and Nepal Industrial and Commercial (NIC) Bank have agreed to merge with each other by mid-January 2013.

The merger announcement is one of biggest merger deals in the country's banking history.

Officials from both the banks said this merger would create a history in the domestic financial market as it would be the first merger between two commercial banks 'that are performing well and are not in stress'.

Both the institution have also already formed a seven-member merger committee, informed CEO of NIC Bank Sashin Joshi. "We have already formed a merger committee. If things moved ahead smoothly, we will complete all the necessary formalities by mid-January 2013," he said.

After the merger, the institution will be one of the largest commercial banks with paid up capital of Rs 3.31 billion and reserves and surplus at above Rs 1.21 billion while deposits will add up to Rs 33.91 and loans and advances at Rs 27.80 billion, said Joshi. ■



Scenario Post C A Dissolution

Dr. TILAK RAWAL



Notwithstanding Prachand's success in retaining a large number of central level members and CA members, the splinter party, headed by Baidya and with Badal, C P Gajural and Biplab sitting on key functional positions, does not appear weak in its clashes with the mother party. Clashes are ensuing between the two parties over the possession and use of facilities so far possessed by UCPN Maoist. Of the numerous clashes, the one that took place in Chitawan district was a violent one, which involved use of fire arms and ended up injuring scores of workers from both sides. Property issue does not seem to be easily resolvable in the rich party with its own buildings in over thirty six districts. Frequent occurrence of these kinds of clashes could nullify the acts of leaders like Mahara who have initiated efforts to bring Prachanda and Kiran together. There is no dearth, however, of people who think that the Ending months of intra-party wrangling and speculations about the future of the largest political party in the country, Mohan Baidya Kiran Finally split the party, taking away about forty five central

committee members and around seventy members of the dissolved CA. The new party is named UCPN Maoist. two parties may merge before the elections but what they are not sure about is whether current

caretaker Prime Minister, Bhattari, will continue to be with them in the event of Prachand and Kiran shaking hands to come together. In the number game, heads of ex CA members are still counted to determine the strength of various parties, despite the fact that the political mess that the country is in today is blamed on them, very unjustifiably. Prachanda must be happy that his is the largest party today and will remain so even if the dead CA is resurrected. It may be mentioned that demand for resurrection of CA is on the rise within major parties such as NC and UML and top leaders of almost all the parties, including an initially hesitant Baburam, have expressed their willingness in favour of reinstatement. However, consensus will have to be reached on disputed issues prior to the resurrection so that much time is not wasted in dispute settlement in the CA that is desired to have a short life span. Another event that attracted the attention of the nation post CA demise was the formation of a new party by Senior Leader of Forum Democratic, Sharat Singh Bhandari, who was expelled from the Gachhadar-led party couple of weeks after Bhandari's withdrawal as defense minister from the current dispensation. The creation of National Madhesi Socialist Party with Bhandari as its chairman has failed to deliver meaningful blows to Gachhadar and his party as of now as stalwarts of the party succeeded in arresting the erosion that would otherwise take a heavy toll on the party. One thing shared amongst leaders of Forum is that Gachhadar should bring about changes in his style of operating the party if it has to be saved from being a party of a particular community in the country. Current events also suggest that Forum Republic is all set for a vertical split. In keeping with their tradition, it is believed that these parties will continue to split because it has done them well, despite erosion in the image of leaders, as far as bagging lucrative ministerial positions in different governments is concerned. Some more parties are likely to be registered in the Election Commission, which sees no possibility of holding election in November as desired by Prime Minister Bhattari.

Political consensus is a must not only to resolve the political stalemate but also to make public the budget for the next fiscal year that has only couple of days left to begun. Nobody, Supreme Court and President included, wants the country to come to a grinding halt in the absence of a budget but the fact that worries most of us is lack of concerted efforts to bring the fiscal budget through consensus. Opposition leaders have made it clear umpteen times that any attempt at bringing the full-fledged budget will be strongly protested. A seemingly worried President has recently urged Prachanda to take special initiative to clear the impasse so that the budget for the fiscal year 2012\13 could be brought on time and a consensus government could be installed without much delay. Nobody is expecting the budget to provide panacea to the burning problems of the economy such as huge trade deficit, rising prices and scarcity of items ranging from fertilizer to drinking water and electricity but the problem that lack of a budget will create in case of low-salaried government employees

The duo (Bhattari and Pune) must understand that people expect them to talk about growth, employment generation, etc and not much about windfalls such as positivity in balance of payment position (bop) and rise in foreign exchange reserves, which are outside the purview of the Ministry of Finance. Further, one may wish to ask the concerned authorities to state which particular policy formulated and implemented by them resulted in a massive influx into the country of remittances, the major contributor to bop and foreign exchange reserves.

cannot be ignored by anyone. The dwindling export, about 4 percent of gdp, and swollen imports, petroleum import alone constituting around 6 percent of gdp, amply demonstrate the pitiable state of our external sector. No

better is the condition of the manufacturing sector accounting for 5 percent of gdp. The duo (Bhattari and Pune) must understand that people expect them to talk about growth, employment generation, etc and not much about windfalls such as positivity in balance of payment position (bop) and rise in foreign exchange reserves, which are outside the purview of the Ministry of Finance. Further, one may wish to ask the concerned authorities to state which particular policy formulated and implemented by them resulted in a massive influx into the country of remittances, the major contributor to bop and foreign exchange reserves. Those sitting to forge consensus on budget for the coming fiscal year may wish to ask the duo to put before public targets and achievements of the current budget implemented by them. More specifically, they need to be grilled on progress related to programme and policies. Current and would be finance ministers have to be made more accountable and they should now realize that people cannot be fooled into accepting their buffoonery promises made at the time of budget presentation.

Prime Minister Bhattari must realize that political parties have no alternative to reaching consensus on the issues of constitution, government, election and budget and wind is blowing gently in favor of Nepali Congress to lead the next government. People, therefore, expect him to be cooperative and avoid making incongruous statements, defaming opposition leaders, such as the one he made at the airport on arrival from Brazil where he attended the fruitless summit on environment, Rio+20. Being at odds on major political issues with his own Chairman and other leaders will definitely not do him good. In the present confusing scenario, one wonders what would President Yadav do if he is confronted by more than 300 hundred ex CA members with a written note asking him to facilitate formation of the next government. Honourable President may kindly remember that their heads are still scouted and they are not totally weightless.

Dr. Rawal is a former governor of NRB and former CA member.

AI PING'S VISIT

Mandarin Mission

A month after the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the visit of Chinese leader Ai Ping drew a great media attention

By A CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Leader Ai Ping came to Kathmandu and left after issuing his official statements. However, Nepal's media were full of speculations, news and views. Although Chinese leader Ai Ping met the top political leaders of Nepal's major political parties, media circles and analysts are busy speculating the reasons behind his departure without meeting Nepal's president and prime minister.

Since Nepal was unified by Prithivi Narayan Shah, any visit from the north has always got the attention in Nepal. The first British resident representative to Nepal Brian Hudson mentioned this. The situation remains the same today.

Recently, a Norwegian Minister visited Nepal. Then a UK Minister came. Both of them met the president and the prime minister. However, the visit of Chinese delegation led by Ai Ping received wider coverage on just the speculations on why he did not hold similar meetings.

At a time when the Nepalese media are full of Ai Ping's meeting with various political leaders, Chinese Embassy's website, which always covers all formal activities including minor events of the Chinese government, did not mention anything about the visit.

Chinese ambassador to Nepal Yang Houlan went to Airport to welcome Ai Ping in an unofficial dress. This indicates that this is just a visit of a leader of Chinese Communist Party. "Mandarin in Beijing placed it like a visit of a leader of communist party," said an analyst.

"Ai Ping came to Nepal to gauge the overall state of political parties following the demise of the CA and it has nothing to do with Chinese official position," said a Chinese Embassy official on condition of anonymity. "Take this visit as a visit like that of political leaders of India."

Whatever one says, the visit of a high level Chinese delegation led by Ai Ping, vice minister for Asian Affairs in the International Department of the

Community Party of China, and his intensive discussion with the leaders of major political parties do have the meaning.

During his meeting with senior leaders Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, Sushil Koirala, Jhala Nath Khanal, leader of Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (Democratic) Bijaya Kumar Gachchhadar and Mohan Baidya, Ai Ping inquired about the formation of the national consensus government, holding elections, reason behind the demise of the CA and issue of state restructuring. Ai Ping asked the reasons behind the creation of more than half a dozen single identity based provinces bordering with Tibet Autonomous region and just two provinces in Southern Nepal.

Besides, Ai also queried with leaders about the status of the peace and constitution-writing process. Ai said he was hopeful that the political parties would be able to forge consensus and resolve outstanding issues.

"Ai is much concerned about the number of provinces in northern parts of Nepal. He asked economic viability of such provinces. Finally, he said China does not have anything to say on the number of provinces. However, his suggestion for Nepal is greater decentralization," said Milan Tuladhar, CPN-UML leader Jhala Nath Khanal's foreign policy advisor.

This has nothing to do with China's likes and dislikes about the prime minister. "China's policy towards Nepal remains the same as they always maintain good relations with the person or party in power. Skipping the meeting with president and prime minister is neither displeasure of China towards prime minister nor it is intentional," said a China expert on condition of anonymity. "Finally, prime minister Baburam Bhattarai took a decision to let the CA to die. If China opposes identity based federalism, China must please prime minister Bhattarai."



Ai Ping (Left) Chinese ambassador Yang Houlan

"The delegation made queries on unfolding political events of the country and reasons behind the party split," said CPN-Maoist leader C.P. Gajurel. "The delegation also formally invited Chairman Baidya to travel to China. He expressed deep concern over the protracted political impasse and urged us to reach a consensus as soon as possible."

Ai, who arrived in Kathmandu on Friday evening, is accompanied by senior Chinese officials from the Foreign Ministry, including the Director General of South Asia, the Nepal Desk chief and South Asian researchers.

Before leaving to the country, Ai Ping commented, "the visit was successful in enhancing cooperation between Communist Party of China and Nepal's political parties. Nepal should learn lessons from the development in the neighborhood."

Many see the recent Nepal visit by Ai Ping, vice minister for Asian Affairs in the International Department of the Communist Party of China as significant. However, Ai Ping, who met all the leaders of major political parties including Nepali Congress, skipped meeting with president prime minister Baburam Bhattarai. It is too early to draw the conclusion that it is an expression of displeasure towards prime minister. ■

CA Revival Not A Political Solution

By RAJENDRA MAHATO



National political consensus is the only way out of the present impasse. Be it the question of the new government or the constitution, there is no alternative to finding the consensus first. The country's problems are not just about making a government. Governments were made in the past and it can be made even now. The country cannot be without government. We have now a caretaker government and this will be there until the formation of the new government. Even the president has made it clear that this is just a caretaker government. There is no need to demand the resignation from a caretaker government. This government will be removed once a new government is formed. Demands for the resignation of the PM, therefore, are irrelevant and unnecessary. We have to sincerely work to make a national government. There are only two ways to change the government, either through national consensus or through the elected parliament. Nobody else can make the government. I don't think any street agitation will topple the government. National political consensus does not mean the consensus between Nepali Congress and CPN-UML, because there are many other political forces. This is a legitimate government. It is also wrong for prime minister to claim that this government will last till the holding of the new elections. Such statement will widen political differences.

The consensus should not be sought only for making the government. If we make consensus for formation of a government by ignoring broader issues, including the new constitution, it will only open the game for changing the government.

Revival of the Constituent Assembly is not a political solution. I don't think even the elections for CA is a political solution. Our past experiences have already shown that the number alone cannot make the new constitution. Had it been so, the new constitution would have been promulgated more than two years ago. We failed to promulgate the new constitution even if 417 or more than two thirds of CA members were in favor of promulgating the new Federal, Republican Constitution of Nepal. There were 417 CA members in favor of 10 or 14 provinces. Even with such a majority, we were unable to make the new constitution because our inability to find a new consensus. If we are unable to have political consensus, we cannot not make constitution even if we hold the elections for another fifty times. There is the need of a political consensus for Constitution of federal democratic republic Nepal. Our federalism must be based on single ethnicity and single identity. There must be the right to self determination.

I don't think revived CA can promulgate any constitution because it got dissolved after failing to bring a constitution. We have still more than 118 differences including the core issue like restructuring of state. Once CA revive, all these differences will appear again. I don't think revival of house can solve any problems without political understanding. If there is political understanding, we can even go for fresh elections or to seek fresh mandate.

I am elected member from my constituency and I prefer to seek fresh mandate. I don't understand the rationale behind democrats drumming up against elections. It exposes Nepali Congress credentials as an oldest democratic party and CPN-UML. Had they agreed on the single identity based federalism, the constitution would have been promulgated a long time back. However, Nepali Congress and CPN-UML took a stand against identity based federalism and this is the reason behind the expiry of tenure of CA. There is no reason to revive the CA just to fill perks and purse of NC and UML leaders and members without their consent on identity based federalism.

*Mahato is President of Nepal Sadbhawana Party, Minister of Health and Population.
(As told to New Spotlight)*



Revival Of CA Is The Best Solution

By GOPAL MAN SHRESTHA

Nepal has been passing through a phase of political uncertainty. In the absence of CA or elected representative body, there is a possibility of more political anarchy. In this regard, revival of the CA is the best and least harmful way to settle the present political stalemate. Even if we want to hold the elections, there is the need of amendment to certain provisions of the Interim Constitution. For the amendment of the Interim Constitution, there is the need to revive the CA. Nobody has the right to amend the constitution. The Election Commission has already made it clear that it cannot hold the elections without amendment of certain electoral laws. In this context, we are demanding the revival of CA for a brief period to make necessary arrangements.

We have already started consultations with CA members representing various political parties. Overwhelming majority of members of dissolved CA hold the view that the revived CA can promulgate the new constitution. At a time when the country has been passing through very critical political crisis and no political party wants to go to elections, revival of CA is a very viable option. Since we have completed almost 95 percent of jobs in writing the constitution, it will take just a brief time to complete a few remaining agenda like restructuring of state. There will be 'give and take' among various stake holders, including on the agenda of identity based or geography based provinces.

One of the prerequisites in the present political stalemate is the resignation of prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. This is a caretaker government and the president has to constitute an all-party national government in place of the present government. After the resignation of prime minister Bhattarai, political consensus will automatically begin. The prime minister's resignation will also pave the way for the revival for CA and making the new constitution.

The president can play a very important role in the present political crisis. We have already requested the president to dismiss the present caretaker government and invite the leaders of major political parties to form the national consensus government. As CPN-UML and Maoists have already formed the government, Nepali Congress should be given a chance to lead the next government. Only Nepali Congress can bring the new constitution now.

I don't think the court will intervene in case, there is a political consensus to revive the Constituent Assembly. This is also an easy political solution which is less harmful than other options. This is the reason we are pursuing the cause for the revival of dissolved CA.

*Shrestha is a NC Central Committee Member
(As told to New Spotlight)*



Politics Of Puppet And Strings

By YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

Around 78 former Constituent Assembly members belonging to the Nepali Congress have petitioned to their Party President Sushil Koirala to have the House revived. No one knows who is the key actor in the group, but the members have clearly been string-pulled by forces outside for this. This also suits the line of Maoist Chief Prachanda who knows that total collapse or erosion in the authority of the institutions of the state will pave the way for complete take-over of the state power.

Prachanda's status and strength have suffered a nose dive with the split in the party. His credibility, in the past five years, have suffered irreversibly as someone with huge gap between what he says and does. Yet, his ambition border-lining megalomania, has not receded. The only other rival who marshals in the art of nurturing authoritarian ambition currently is the Care-taker Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai.

Yet, lack of vision, courage and character on the part of other parties leaders and short-term power centric politics pursued by them at the cost of democratic values puts Bhattarai and Prachanda—despite their internal rivalry—in a much advantageous position tactically. After all, going by their track records, they are neither nationalists nor have transformed into 'democrats' despite their

promises post 12-point agreement politics. Therefore, during each crisis, they will want to have 'problems' sorted out by a small group of leaders who are power-hungry and willing to sacrifice national interest and basic democratic values. That also explains why they are not keen to take any of the major issues before the Nepali people.

There is almost a wave of anger and frustration directed against the major four parties and their top leaders sweeping across the country. The outcome of the poll if held in a free and fair poll can be predicted easily. The big four and their top leaders will be the biggest losers. That is why Bhattarai is recommended an election (to the CA) in a conspiratorial manner knowing full well that it cannot be held. There is no provision in the interim constitution to hold a fresh election to CA or even for parliament. But Bhattarai acted unconstitutionally, arbitrarily and conspiratorially under calculation that he will continue to be in power as a care-taker indefinitely. His statement on June 25 soon upon his return from Rio that he will hand over power only to someone elected through general elections was manifestation of that megalomania.

Given the manner Bhattarai ensured the demise of the House in failure, keeping all the members in the dark about his going for fresh poll, President Ram Baran Yadav has seen

through the motive behind. But how far a President go to tame a Prime Minister so megalomaniac? And what can a President when members of the main opposition and the biggest 'democratic force' in the country work to suit Maoist interest poised to win both ways.

If the House is revived, it will be a victory for Prachanda. He will still be the most powerful leader because CA poll outcome will be taken as a barometer for that notwithstanding the vertical split in the party recently. A failure to have the House revived will keep the parties divided, and ensure continuation of Bhattarai as the care-taker Prime Minister. Mahanth Thakur-Bijay Gachedar-Rajendra Mahato group of the Madhesh front will continue to be in alliance with Maoists.

Who are the signatories to the petition submitted to Sushil Koirala? They mainly belonging to Women and other Caucus

groups as well as those who have been working with Western donors whose activities in fuelling caste and ethnic tensions are now getting increasingly exposed in the Media. Their investment and interest will go in vain if the House is not restored. Some unconvincing clarifications have been issued from some western countries that their financial support to ethnic and other groups is to promote policy of



PM Bhattarai (Right) and Prachanda

inclusion. But the question arises: why is France or Germany or Finland, despite their involvement in Nepal's development not being criticized?

China has for the first time given enough hint in words and deeds that it is not too happy with the way Nepali actors have conducted themselves in the past six years. From warning that ethnic federalism in particular and federalism in general may not be the most suited 'state restructuring', it has also for the first time said that any instability in Nepal will be directly related to the security of China.

These are serious issues which cannot be addressed with the lack of seriousness and honesty that leaders demonstrated in the past four years. Nor can it be sorted out by leaders of the Four parties. The four parties at most could form a 'block or alliance' to plead their case, collectively tell the people that they had the best of intentions even when they failed to complete the peace process and the constitution making process. But they cannot have the sole monopoly over power, political process and constitution making process any more. President Yadav must take this into account when he takes the next step, but revival of the House and entrusting leadership to the gang of four or any one of them, will be the biggest sin he will be committing against the nation and democracy. ■



Opposition Political Leaders

POLITICS

Whose Consensus?

From restoration of the dissolved Constituent Assembly to resignation of prime minister Bhattarai, Nepal's political course is passing through a confusing phase

By A CORRESPONDENT

After nearly a month of lull in the political scenario, the political temperature of the country has suddenly risen as a group of Nepali Congress CA members of dissolved Constituent Assembly submitted their memorandum to their party president Sushil Koirala.

Receiving the memorandum presented by 86 former CA members, Koirala said that he is not against the revival of CA. Backed by two Congress stalwarts Sher Bahadur Deuba and Ram Chandra Poudel as well as former chair of Constituent Assembly Subas Chandra Nembang, the agenda of revival got another turn after the Janajati Caucus joined them.

However, the revival agenda backfired and did not get a headline for less than two days. The first opposition voices come from Nepali Congress leader Dr. Shekhar Koirala, who was also an elected member of dissolved Constituent Assembly. "It will be unfortunate to revive the dissolved CA. The country will plunge into a civil war if the CA is revived," thundered Dr. Shekhar Koirala. Revival of the failed CA

is against the wishes of the people. When I recently visited my constituency, I found an overwhelming majority of the people feel relieved after the dissolution of CA," said Dr. Koirala.

With a strong backing within his party, Dr. Koirala's prescription to the present crisis is the resignation of prime minister Baburam Bhattarai and formation of an all party national consensus government by the president. However, prime minister Bhattarai and his ally SLMM oppose this argument saying that president has no constitutional power to dismiss the government.

"President cannot do anything to this government. This government is replaced by only through the new CA," said prime minister Bhattarai. However, president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav has not said anything about the present stalemate but his statement indicated that he is willing to play the soft ball provided political consensus.

Even president Dr. Yadav asked minister of finance to bring the budget

as per the mandate given by the interim constitution. In his regular meeting with various political parties, president Dr. Yadav has been urging them to forge a political consensus.

As the possibility of revival of dissolved CA has gone and holding fresh election for CA is impossible in the present context, Nepal's political leaders have very few options left. Prime minister Baburam Bhattarai has already made it clear that he will remain as a care taker till holding the fresh elections challenging other parties.

As prime minister's resignation is gradually fading, two main opposition parties Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have called president to exercise his executive power to dismiss the present government and install the new all party government. This will be costly too. It is unlikely that present care taker government led by Baburam will be ousted from power until November.

After the split of UCPN-Maoist and Madheshi Janaadhikar Forum (Democratic) and Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (Republic), the strength of present coalition has already changed. In another three months, the situation might compel the prime minister to resign paving the way for another national government.

Despite efforts of political leaders to find the political solution, they are yet to reach a consensus for change. The war between consensus of prime minister and two main oppositions will continue. ■

NEW SPOTLIGHT

Available at the following stands

1. Bhatbhateni Supermarket: Bhatbhateni
2. Bhatbhateni Store: Maharajgunj
3. Mandala Book Point: Kantipath, Ph: 4227711
4. Vajra Book Store, Jyatha Ph.:4220562
6. Book Paradise, Jamal
7. Namaste Supermarket, Narayani Complex Pulchowk
8. Namaste Supermarket, Maharajgunj (Opposite to American Embassy)
9. Himalayan Book, Bagbazar.
10. Bhaktapur Stationery, Nyatapaul
11. Utsav Books and Stationers, Putalisada Telephone:4220882

ECONOMY

Critical Path

High inflation, declining industrial production, high import and lower export are some of the indicators which show a dismal performance of Nepal's economy. Surviving in remittances and the strengthening dollars, Nepal's Balance of Payment is in a good shape too. Nepal's banking sector has enormous volume of deposit, but there is no demand for loans. Yet, with the prolonged political instability and indefinite power cuts, Nepalese economy has been passing through a very critical juncture

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

With the demand to keep the national economy out of politics, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), led by its president Suraj Vaidhya, has been constantly raising voices against intolerable political influence on the economic growth.

Likewise, the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI), under its president Binod Kumar Chaudhari, has also been expressing similar concerns, urging the government to come up with a full-fledged budget stating that incomplete fiscal policy would destabilize the entire economy.

CNI- the umbrella body of the private sector- has, however, stressed the need for striking a consensus among leading political parties prior to announcing the budget.

These statements from the private sector come at a time when leading parties such as the Nepali Congress and the CPN (UML) are opposing the caretaker government's preparations to come up with a full-fledged budget.

"To attract investment, the country must ensure economic independence of

the government, regardless of the party leading it. There is the need to forge a consensus on economic policies and development modalities and strategies among mainstream political parties," said CNI senior vice President Narendra Kumar Basnet, at an interaction held at the finance ministry.

"The policies of the past and of the incumbent government were focused on distributing funds rather than on economic growth," Basnet said. "The government is set to raise development budget and enhance the pace of development spending."

He said one of the biggest hurdles to promoting industrialization and attracting investment was the power shortage.

Political uncertainty has been Nepal's only certainty for many years. Along with political uncertainties, political parties and politicians have been openly putting the economy at bay by using tools like bandhas, strikes, closures and budget issues as bargaining options.

In addition to various other issues like power shortages, labor issues have left both private and foreign investors fuming

and have made serious dent on the overall national economy.

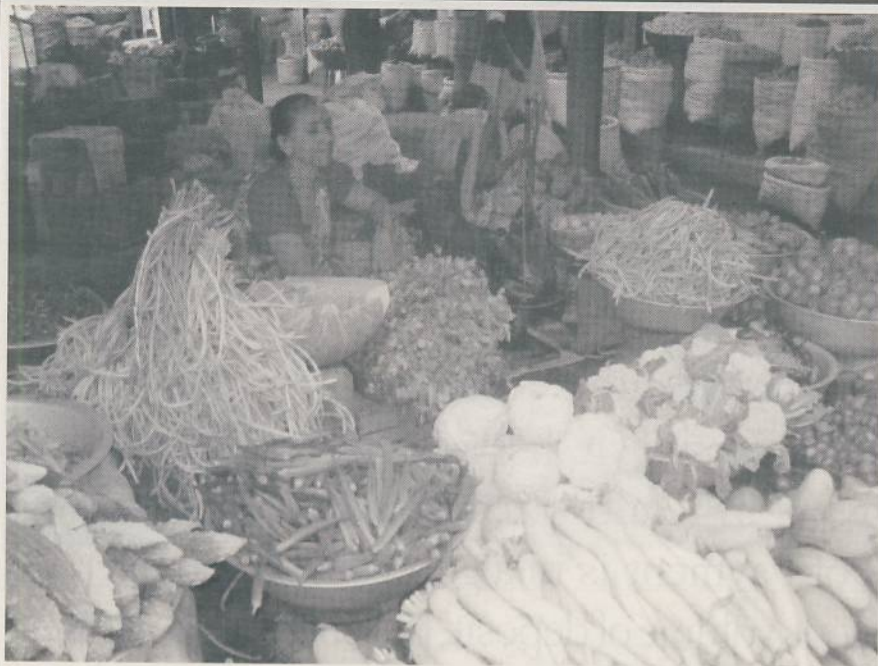
Amidst widening political distrust after the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the government is preparing to bring the budget for the fiscal year 2069/70 through ordinance, but lack of political consensus is hindering the process.

"To prevent the nation from further economic damage, there should be common consensus on the package of minimum economic agenda put forward by the private sector," said Suraj Vaidhya.

FNCCI has requested the government to bring the annual budget on time and to pay heed to the economic situation. "The government will come up with a full-sized budget of around Rs 429 billion — the ceiling set by the National Planning Commission," said Finance minister Barsha Man Pun.

Current Scenario

Although the government has been trying to bring a full budget, there might be obstructions. But, Nepal at this point of time, needs a full-fledged budget to push the economy forward.



Vegetable price on rise

After three years of partial budget, the full budget released and approved on time was for the fiscal year 2068/69 last year. But sadly, even till the dying stages, the government expenditure was vastly limited in providing salaries to public employees and in making other routine expenses.

Development works could not proceed as expected this financial year, as the government was able to spend only Rs 40.35 billion of the total budget allocated for capital expenditure in the first 11 months through mid-June.

According to the finance ministry, the amount spent by the government in the review period is only 56 percent of the total budget of Rs 72.61 billion allocated for the purpose. However, the government is expecting that its capital expenditure will beat the mid-term review target of Rs 65 billion by the end of fiscal year which ends in mid-July.

"Spending in the final month of the financial year usually goes up as payments for the work conducted in the



FNCCI President Vaidya

previous months are released during this time," said Finance Secretary Krishna Hari Banskota.

This trend was seen in previous fiscal years as well. In the last fiscal year, Rs 65.43 billion was used in the period between mid-June and mid-July, while in the financial year before that Rs 62.17 billion was spent in the final month.

This financial year, the government had earmarked a budget of Rs 384.9 billion, of which Rs 275.56 billion, or 71.5 percent, was consumed in the first 11 months. Of the total allocated budget, Rs 266.61 billion was allotted for recurrent expenditure and Rs 45.68 billion was earmarked for financing.

The government is holding ideal money and has not been able to fund the planned projects. Aid received by the government from foreign sector has not also been spent extensively. The major reason for the lack of development expenditure has been much criticized for the multifaceted contract-awarding process.

Investment in Crisis

Plans for the Investment Year have also got into a limbo after the dissolution of the CA. The prospects of huge foreign investment coming into the country now are bleak.

"Who will put money in a country that does not have a complete constitution and when political uncertainties loom large," said Binod Chaudhary, president

of Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI), after the dissolution of CA.

US \$1 billion foreign



Finance Minister Pun

investment target in the first six months of the investment year set by Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai is also going into the long list of PM's unfulfilled promises.

Other reason for lack of investment apart from politics has been labor problems and, more importantly, power shortages.

Looking at the current situation, power shortages are not coming to a halt any



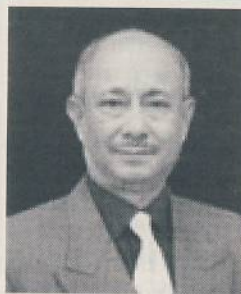
CNI President Chaudhary

time soon as there has been no major investment in the hydropower sector.

"If the current situation prolongs, under construction projects will not be able to end even after load shedding of 10 years. After importing petroleum products worth some NRs. 100 billion, only 9 percent of the power demand has been fulfilled by it, the rest, we are fulfilling by our own sources," said Gyanendra Lal Pradhan, chairperson of Energy Committee.

Meanwhile, the tourism sector was showing signs of recovery after the Visit Nepal Year 2011, but setbacks have already started as tourists are cancelling their bookings for their visit in the midst of concerns and uncertainties.

Tourism people on the other hand have stressed the need to live with reality. "We consider tourism as an opportunity in



CNI Vice-president
Basnyat

crisis. We never lagged behind in receiving tourists even during the height of insurgency marked by strikes and political chaos," said Aditya

Baral, director and spokesperson of Nepal Tourism Board.

Inflation Woes

To add more problems, inflation is also slowly walking up the ladder. According to the latest macro-economic report released by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) based on the Ten Months' Data of FY 2011/12, year-on-year inflation as measured by the consumer price index increased by 8.7 percent in mid-May 2012.

Although for a developing nation the current inflation rate might not be alarming, but inflation problem is expected rise as general price is further expected to go up in the near future.

Along with the lack of other national outputs, not so favorable weather for the agricultural sector to thrive is expected to add more agony for the common people.

"Monsoon started quite late this year and there has been fertilizer shortage as well, this will have a negative impact on food production, and that will make food items further expensive," said economist Bishwamber Pyakurel.

Liquidity surplus

From liquidity crisis, to liquidity surplus, banks are facing opposite



Industrialist Thapaliya

scenario than in the recent past. Due to excess liquidity, banks are reducing interest rates on loans and are requesting Nepal Rastra

Bank (NRB) to bring favorable policies. Banks have not been able to invest more than 50 percent of deposits due to lack of productive sectors and favorable environment.

Only NRs. 79 billion has been invested by banks in this fiscal year, while they have collected some NRs. 155 billion as deposits.

"Looking at the situation, it doesn't look like this year or even next year will be good for the banking sector," said Anil Shah, CEO of Mega Bank. **BOP Surplus**

On the flip side, overall Balance of Payment registered its highest ever surplus of NRs. 100.10 billion during the ten months of the FY 2011/12 compared to a deficit of NRs. 12.32 billion during the corresponding period of the previous year, according to NRB.

But, this surplus is not the result of increase of exports, and it has been possible only on grounds of high remittance earned by Nepalese, aided by devaluation of Nepalese Currency.

"The substantial rise in the growth of remittances coupled with the improvement in the service account was the responsible factors for the substantial surplus in the current account," states a NRB report.

"If present situation continues Nepal will have to face power shortage for long time to come", said industrialist Rohini Thapliya.

Major export of Nepal has been human resource for some years now as more than 3 lakhs productive people are leaving the nation in search of better



FNCCI Vice-president
Rajkarnikar

prospects every year due to lack of opportunities at home.

Due to the efforts from foreign workers, the Nepalese economy is surviving. If remittances are taken off from calculations then it is expected that it will be difficult to maintain even BOP surplus as other exports of the country are very negligible, say analysts.

Nepal has also benefited from growth of the southern neighbor as the pegged exchange rate system with India has been providing outside cover for the economy.

But, till how long will the nation ride only on the back of remittances earned by Nepalese foreign workers and crawl

behind success of the neighbor? And how long will Nepal be able to send the most productive workforce out of the country? Till when will the



Industrialist Khetan

power crisis grip the whole nation?

When everything is heading towards gloom, a report published by the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) — a Kathmandu-based think tank — shows some positive indication. "There need to have political consensus on economic agenda. As long as there is political dispute over economy, it is difficult to make Nepal as prosperous nation said industrialist Rajendra Khetan."

Looking at the history, it is very dismal. Some 2 centuries down the time line, Nepal and Singapore had similar economic status. In fact, according to various reports, Nepal had better GDP (PPP) in 1820.

Today differences have so widened that Singapore has become one of the developed countries while Nepal has been deeply rooted in the Least Developed Countries list. The main reason for such differences clearly lies in the political inconsistencies. Despite certain progress in health infrastructure, education and health, Nepal remains among the poorest countries of the world as it was fifty-years ago. ■

“Our Bilateral Relations Are Nourished By The Aid And Cooperation”

JEAN-CHARLES DEMARQUIS

Nepal and France has established their bilateral relations long time back and France has been supporting Nepal in various sectors. In the change French ambassador to Nepal JEAN-CHARLES DEMARQUIS spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on ranges of issue in his written interview. Excepts:

Nepal and France has a long history of bilateral relations, how do you see the present state of bilateral relations?

It is true that the bilateral relations between our two countries goes back a long way. France was the third country to establish diplomatic relations with Nepal on the 20th of April 1949 and opened its Embassy here in 1967.

The French, however, were present in Nepal long before then - the National Museum of Nepal, situated in an ancient armory in Kathmandu was built at the beginning of the 19th century with the help of French engineers and French soldiers were associated with the development of Nepalese artillery right up to the 1790s. The visit to France of Prime Minister Jang Bahadur Rana in 1850 who met Napoleon III is another example of this. Going beyond the military and diplomatic relations it is a known fact that Nepal has forever attracted French travellers and one of the best guides of monuments in the valley of Kathmandu “Voyage au Nepal” written by Gustave Le Bon was published in Paris in 1886.

How would you describe status of our relations?

The word that best describes the status of our actual bilateral relations is “commitment”. Commitment to Nepal with our European Union partners particularly at a time when the country is traversing challenging political times. This engagement is based upon the full respect of the sovereignty of the Nepalese people and stresses the necessity of dialogue. Our bilateral relations are also nourished by the aid and cooperation that France brings to Nepal via the European Union and its programmes. In this regard I will state a recent example: The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) which was recently held in Rio was a key date for France and the EU given that the EU is a primary financial benefactor in favour of LDCS and France is the 4th financial supporter. This support is both an historical reality and an active commitment to back the most vulnerable countries.

In what way France has been supporting to Nepal?

As a member state of the European Union, France contributes, through the EU budget, to the activities that the EU supports in the country. Those described in the 2007-2013 Country Strategy for Nepal represent an overall budget of 120 million euros and focus on the areas of Education, Stability and Peace building/Governance, Trade and Economic capacity building. France also contributes to the bilateral Country Strategy thematic interventions concentrating on areas such as democracy and human rights, good governance, food security, nutrition and agricultural development, renewable energy, environment and climatic change as well as migration. France also plays a part in the Nepal Climate Change Support Programme which seeks to enable Nepal's poorest and most vulnerable communities to adapt to the

effects of climate change. Finally, France also contributes to the activities supported by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations system through its bilateral contributions to these organisations.

Along with renovation of historical sites in Panauti, the French Government has been providing support to Nepal in various stages, what is the state of bilateral cooperation now?

I am glad that you mention Panauti and the fact that France in the 90s funded and enabled the complete renovation of monuments and historical buildings there. This is, in effect, a remarkable example of Franco-Nepalese cooperation.

Today, our bilateral collaboration is in force and functioning in very different sectors: in the domain of seismology going back to over 30 years (1978) and ever more active with the CEA and the Nepalese Department of Mines and Geology. This has enabled Nepal to install the totality of its detection network in seismic material and train its specialised staff making France a privileged partner in the studies of seismology. In the field of mountaineering, France has an enduring and valuable cooperation with the city of Chamonix in the training of mountain guides.

In the University sector we have a relatively recent cooperation between the University of Lille in France and the Tribhuvan University with student exchanges involving Nepalese students going to France every year to pursue their higher level studies.

How do you see the role of Alliance Française?

Interest in learning to speak the French language continues to attract students of all ages to our Alliance Française cultural centres worldwide. These centres aim to teach the language and promote its cultural diversity. The Alliance Française in Kathmandu welcomes around 2500 students every year and this number keeps growing annually.

It also organises several cultural events with Nepalese artists : singers, poets, writers painters, dancers, musicians etc. In November 2010 the Alliance Française Kathmandu in close collaboration with the French Embassy organised the Planet Nepal Festival which was dedicated to environmental awareness and attended by over 30,000 people. A second edition of this Festival will take place in November this year.

Air France supported the process of modernisation of Nepal Airlines in the 1980s and improvements in the navigation system in Tribhuvan International Airport. Will this kind of support continued to be given to Nepal?

Air France and other French enterprises were historically implicated in the workings of the Tribhuvan International Airport. I do not doubt that if tenders are launched for additional works on the airport, French enterprises, would not hesitate to participate.

What is the level of bilateral trade between the two countries?

It must be remembered that Nepal benefits from a preferential access to the European Union market by virtue of the system of generalised preferences. France is the principle importer within the EU of ready-made Nepalese garments,

90% of our imports from Nepal being composed of textiles.

An increase in French exports could be stimulated with the return to stability of the political situation in Nepal. The announcement of the Year of International Investment in Nepal could offer new perspectives to investment in sectors such as hydroelectricity and water management to name a few. With this perspective I count on the support and expertise of the Franco-Nepalese Chamber of Commerce among others.

French aircraft ATR has gained high popularity in Nepal. How do you look at this?

ATR is a Franco-Italian aircraft manufacturer formed in 1981 by Aerospatiale of France (now EADS) and Aeritalia of Italy (now Alenai Aeronautica). This aircraft is turbo propelled and can fast climb from 1500 ft to 17000 ft in less than 10 minutes.

It has excellent short-field performance and steep approach capability. These characteristics explain its success worldwide including in Nepal. ATR today has a wide range of planes - ATR 42-320 and ATR 72-500 - known to be the best turbo propelled aircrafts. It is therefore a success story in the field of aviation but also in that of the environment. The ATR 72, to be precise, emits about 50% less carbon dioxide per passenger/km than new generation jets and up to three times less carbon dioxide than older ones. In these times when the environmental question is a real challenge for the world ATR has shown that in the field of aeronautics it is possible to ally progress and care for the environment. The Nepali passengers will undoubtedly appreciate this as one of its renowned local companies, Buddha Air, which has a diverse fleet of ATR aircraft transported over 690 000 passengers last year.

Following the dissolution of Constituent Assembly, Nepal has been passing through a very crucial political situation. What is your impression?

As indicated in the Statement published on the May 31st 2012 by the EU missions in Kathmandu along with Norway and Switzerland, following the dissolution of Nepal's Constituent Assembly, we expressed our disappointment over the failure of the political parties to agree on a new Constitution, which resulted in the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on 27 May 2012. This statement also expressed our concern with the prolonged political uncertainty and the effect this could have on Nepal's socio-economic development. Therefore, we urge all the political parties to build consensus on the way forward, preserve the achievements of the past four years and find a solution to the legal problems at hand which is acceptable to all and in the best interest of the country.

This same message has been delivered to all the political leaders and also to the President of the Republic whom we had the honour to meet since the CA dissolution. There is much work to be done by the political leaders to rapidly reach an agreement, find ways to build the necessary trust to conclude the peace agreement reached in 2006 and to deliver a democratic and inclusive constitution. It is my sincere hope that this message will be taken into consideration by all the leaders and stakeholders.

Last year, a Nepalese woman was given a Human Rights award by the French Foreign Ministry. How do you see the state of human rights in Nepal?

Nepali women's rights activist Shyam Kumari Sah of Siraha is the first person to receive this Human rights award established by the French government to encourage rights

activists. Ms Sah, 30, has worked tirelessly at the grassroots level in the Terai at personal risk to herself, in order to provide justice to the victims of domestic violence, rape, dowry and witchcraft accusations. The protection and promotion of human rights is the top priority of the



French government which believes that this award will encourage other defenders of Human rights in Nepal to work with stronger commitment under international protection.

What is your views on Protection of human rights in Nepal?

The situation of human rights in Nepal is a very preoccupying one. The issue of Transitional Justice has been blocked because of the dissolution of the parliament without any agreement being reached on its content and the modalities of reconciliation. The search for reconciliation should not be undertaken at the cost of justice sought by the victims and their families. It is a longstanding issue which needs to be resolved rapidly as should the situation of the Human Rights Commission whose effectiveness should not be undermined by continuous internal problems. The remarkable work done at ground level by the network of human rights defenders needs more support and protection. These dedicated and courageous

Individuals and organisations must be given the opportunity to voice their concerns notably on the issues of social inclusion.

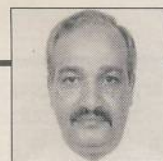
What Nepal needs to do to lure more French tourists in Nepal?

On an average 30,000 French tourists come to Nepal annually with the particularity, that once seduced by the quality of the welcome and the beauty of the sites, a large number of them keep returning. Though Nepal lures a huge number of backpackers, adventure travellers and trekkers, in order engage in luxury tourism not only with France but with Europe in general, it is essential for the Nepalese national carrier, which already has acquired landing rights, to rapidly establish direct flights from Nepal to European capitals. Improving the existing infrastructures such as roads, water, electricity and communication would also help boost this industry.

It may also be a good idea to put agents from the Tourism Board within certain Nepalese Embassies in countries with high tourist potential, who would promote Nepal abroad. In certain targeted countries it might be possible to consider setting up organizations which would showcase Nepal and its tourism potential such as the very active "Maison de France" organisations which France has established in numerous countries to promote its tourism abroad. ■

Nepal In Climate Negotiations

By BATU KRISHNA UPRETY



Nepal has been the elected chair of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Coordination Group for UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process for two years between 2013 and 2014. This group participates in negotiations on UNFCCC process on behalf of 48 LDCs, and always advocates for the poor and climate vulnerable people.

The science of climate change is clear. Climate change will continue to happen. The present concern is accelerated change in climate system due to anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) after industrial revolution. Increased events of climate-induced disasters have claimed many lives and properties. If unchecked, they will continue to threaten the very survival of human beings and their life support system. This challenge has to be addressed in a timely and efficient manner.

In 1992, governments agreed to work together to stabilise the global anthropogenic emissions of GHGs by adopting the UNFCCC. To achieve the Convention's objectives, Kyoto Protocol (KP), adopted in 1997, set targets for GHGs emissions reduction by at least 5 per cent below 1990 levels by 2012.

Twenty years have passed in making concrete decisions to reduce GHGs emissions and promote climate adaptation including finance, technology and capacity building. During this period, unseasonal and unusual climate-induced disasters have claimed additional lives and properties at accelerated rates.

The institutional and financial architectures of the Convention provide hopes to address the impacts of climate change to a certain extent. The Parties to the Convention and the KP met 17 and 7 times respectively at the political level including at the level of the Heads of State or Government in Copenhagen in 2009 to make decisions and take actions to address climate change impacts.

As climate change is happening at an accelerated rate, climate negotiation is becoming more complex in the recent years due to increased economic and political interests. There are two major groups recognised by the Convention for climate negotiation - Annex I Parties (industrialised countries having higher per capita GHGs emissions) and non-Annex I Parties (developing countries). In fact, each issue is finally negotiated between these two groups. In UN practice, there are regional groups, which represent the conventional bodies. Besides, politically negotiating groups, which are formed on the basis of their common interests, actively participate in decision-making. The Convention also recognises the LDCs. These groups meet informally during sessions, exchange information and views, develop and agree on common positions, and negotiate with other groups for the effective implementation of the Convention, i.e., to stabilise GHGs concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

In climate negotiations, major groups are: (i) Group of 77 and China; (ii) European Union; (iii) Umbrella Group; and (iv) Environmental Integrity Group. Many LDCs are also the members of the G77 and China. Negotiations start with the adoption of the agenda. Decision is made after intense

discussion in the issue-based informal groups. Each negotiating group may meet, as necessary, to agree on group positions before participating in the contact or informal groups or 'informal informal'. For example, 'LDCs meet as required by organising internal coordination meetings, agree on group positions, and provide views orally and in writing. In practice, each issue or thematic area is coordinated by a LDC delegate. The designated coordinator speaks on behalf of the LDCs. Parties also may put their views and ideas.

For UNFCCC, LDC Coordination Group was established in 2001 as COP7 made packages of decisions for LDCs (LDC Work Programme, NAPA preparation guidelines, LDC Fund, and LDC Expert Group). Out of 48 LDCs Parties to the Convention, 32 are from Africa and 10 from Asia and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Hence the coordination is done twice from African LDCs and one each from LDC of Asia and SIDS. Mali, Tanzania, Bangladesh, the Maldives and Lesotho have coordinated this group. Gambia is serving as the Chair for 2011 and 2012.

As climate change is happening at an accelerated rate, climate negotiation is becoming more complex in the recent years due to increased economic and political interests.

Asian LDCs have entrusted Nepal to function as the Chair of the LDCs Coordination Group for 2013-14. They have been looking at our activities closely for the last 4 years. Nepal prepared NAPA within a short time period, accessed about US\$ 40 million for its implementation including from LDC Fund, and also accessed over US\$ 125 million from the Climate Investment Fund to implement programmes related to climate resilient programmes and scaling up of renewable energies. In addition, Climate Change Policy and National Framework on Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA) were approved by the government. Similarly Nepal is engaged in preparing the second national communication, assessing the climate technology needs, conducting economic impact assessment of climate change in key sectors (agriculture, water and disaster) and supporting participation in UNFCCC meeting. Furthermore, Nepal organised international and regional conferences and meetings annually from 2009 to April 2012 including the International Conference of Mountain Countries on Climate Change in April 2012 which agreed on the Kathmandu Call for Action. Nepal's participation in the climate negotiation has been effective in recent years.

The roles and responsibilities of the Chair are increasing rapidly. The Gambia has initiated a number of activities. Nepal should build on what the Gambia has accomplished. It needs a strong group having knowledge on procedure, substance and language. Nepal has 6 months to learn, prepare and take the very prestigious seat of the Chair. The Chair will lead, participate and speak on behalf of 48 countries. Hence, it is of utmost importance to have a balanced representation. It will provide opportunities to position Nepal in the UNFCCC process. It is high time to start homework and establish ground rule to make this coordination effective, efficient and transparent and also strengthen the LDC group as a major negotiating block on UNFCCC process.

(Uprety Vice-Chair, LEG (LDC Expert Group) to UN Framework Convention on Climate Change)



The Growth Of The Nepalese Nation

By BIPIN ADHIKARI

Ludwig F. Stiller, S. J. is not a new name in Nepal. He was a famous American Nepalese historian who produced a couple of distinguished books on Nepal's history. The theme of the present work, *Nepal: Growth of a Nation*, published in 1993, is broad and challenging. It talks about the land and people of Nepal, the vision of the country and its leadership, the politics for profit, control and centralization, and the new awakening. The author covers these themes through the last two hundred years of Nepalese history.

In the opening paragraph of the book, the author states that "the Nepalese nation was born against improbable odds. In the most difficult terrain imaginable, the Nepalese achieved unity and then withstood the British threat to rule South Asia. Today, landlocked and hedged in by great powers, the Nepalese still proudly assert their independence in the family of nations. At home, their chief concern is development. Internationally, though Nepalese troops are everywhere respected, the Nepalese stand for nonalignment and peace. In fact, few have attained the peace the Nepalese enjoy." Here, the author is speaking his mind about the country as it was in 1993.

The book has fourteen small chapters. Chapter I deals with the land of Nepal and its people. It is based mainly on chapters 1, 2 and 3 of the author's 1973 book, entitled *The Rise of the House of Gorkha*. Chapter II deals with the Founder of modern Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who unified the smaller principalities in Nepal to form a strong country. The unifier, Stiller mentions, "respected and worked with the regional cultural social and fiscal administrations he found, no matter how disparate they seemed." Forty years later, after the unifier's death in 1775, Stiller points out, Nepal suffered its greatest single military set back at Almora in Kumaon in Anglo-Nepal War (1814-16). This is the background with which Chapter III deals with the spoils of the war.

Chapter IV is a narrative of the country's painful growth. When King Rana Bahadur dismissed Bahadur Shah, the regent of Nepal from 1785 to 1794, and began to rule the country directly, he was only nineteen years of age. As the court was deeply divided by factions, the situation demanded an experienced leader to govern the country. However, King Rana Bahadur was still young and

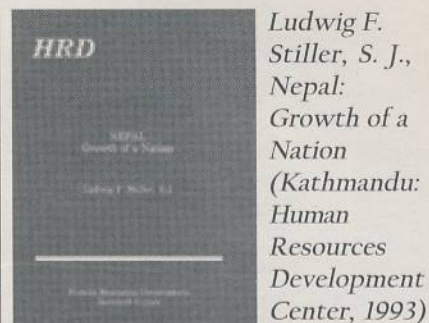
inexperienced. The reforms Bahadur Shah, his uncle, proposed in 1793 suggested that he had finally come to grips with the financial problems that the newly-unified country faced, but those reforms were never implemented. Here, Stiller notes that "nothing more was heard of them once the new king took control of the state."

Chapter V is about the Anglo-Nepal War, as noted above, and its handling by Prime Minister Bhimsen Thapa. Unlike the other great leaders in Nepal, Stiller states Bhimsen Thapa was "neither a man of vision nor gifted with a sense of history." Chapter VI analyzes postwar stagnation in the country while Chapter VII explains the power politics in the new context. Stiller makes it clear at this point that by ordering the death of Prime Minister Mathbar Singh Thapa, Rajendra Bikram Shah, the King at the time, "destroyed the last vestige of trust the people placed in him."

Chapter VIII is the account of the Mutiny and the rise of Jung Bahadur – the founder of Ranarchy or the system of hereditary prime ministers in Nepal. The next chapter covers Jung Bahadur's last few years. Despite Jung's autocratic rule, Stiller makes a point that "his reforms did indeed strengthen the nation." Chapter X deals with Ranoddip and Bir Shamsheer, the next Rana rulers. Chapter XI and XII are about Prime Minister Chandra Shamsheer, who in Stiller's opinion, greatly stabilized Nepal during his time. Similarly, despite several problems, Chandra bequeathed to succeeding Prime Ministers a growing Nepalese nationalist movement. Chapter XIII covers the subsequent political awakening in the country. Building on this, Chapter XIV, entitled "In the End is the Beginning," deals with the author's last few remarks.

Written in a very lucid manner, Stiller's book highlights Nepal's growth after its unification by King Prithvi Narayan Shah until the dawn of democracy in 1950-51. Many of his themes, as listed in the beginning, build on what the author has already worked on; *The Silent Cry: the People of Nepal 1816-1839* (1976), *Planning for People: A Study of Nepal's Planning Experience* (1979) (co-authored with Ram Prakash Yadav), *Letters from Kathmandu: the Kot Massacre* (1981) and *The Rise of the House of Gorkha* (1995).

In his Epilogue, Stiller notes that the end of the Rana rule in 1950 was incidental in a way. "The real challenge



to the Nepalese people was the democratic era." On this, Stiller explains that the post 1950 political developments have been frustrating for the growth of the nation. "King Mahendra indicated his intense dissatisfaction with the direction the political debate had taken by his intervention of December, 1969. In his constitution of 1962, King Mahendra introduced Panchayat democracy in a serious effort to strengthen the voice of the people. Three major amendments to that constitution underlined the difficulty of opening the political debate to the people in a country with such poor communications." The state bureaucracy during the Panchayat system, notes Stiller, was also reluctance to yield power to the people. The good thing, however, was "the large turnover of elected officials in later Panchayat elections suggest[ing] that the people had begun to take their future into their own hands."

Stiller further adds: "The popular movement of 1989 that led to a complete change of government and the restoration of parliamentary democracy was a clear sign that the will of the people was not heeded by those then in power. Whether or not the government swept into power by that popular movement will function according to the will of the people remains to be seen. It seems certain, however, that the people, under the guidance of their King, will prevail over the hesitancy of the elite to accept the constraints of a democratic system."

Reading again, after 18 years of its publication, the book *Nepal: Growth of a Nation* is still a concise but a very thoughtful analysis of Nepal's experience with its nation-building challenges. Stiller has both the heart and mind to explain the vicissitudes Nepal had to face over the two hundred years of its unstable history. No doubt, the book is an outstanding piece of work. ■



WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL NEPAL

Child Health Focus

World Vision International launches Child Health Now Campaign to reduce child mortality in disadvantaged areas

By A CORRESPONDENT

Despite making progress in child health, large numbers of Nepalese children living in the far-western region are yet to find a real respite. Although the child mortality rate has declined drastically in Nepal, disparity is growing by region and ethnicity. At a time when there is the need of some sort of intervention to end the gap, World Vision International Nepal has come to fulfill the gap through the Campaign for Child Health.

World Vision International Nepal has launched a four-year nationwide Child Health Now Campaign that aims to contribute to reduce child mortality in disadvantaged areas of Nepal in line with Millennium Development Goal 4.

Within Child Health Now Campaign, World Vision International Nepal will work at the national level and district levels focusing in Doti and Kailali districts. The outcomes of the program will be improved Maternal Child Health systems and practices of government, improved mobilization and influence of civil society with significant actors for policy influence to reach the most disadvantaged children in Nepal and Improved community Maternal Child Health practices.

According to World Vision International, child Health Now is World Vision's first global campaign focused on a single issue which is to reduce the preventable deaths of

children under five. Every three second one child dies in the world as a result of diarrhea, pneumonia, childbirth complications and malaria which are all preventable.

"Child health in Nepal has made some significant progress, and is on the positive track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Less than five mortality is a very sensitive indicator which has reduced in Nepal from 118 to 54 per 1000 live births in the past 20 years," said Michael Frank, country director World Vision International Nepal.

"However, disparities by gender, caste/ethnicity and geographic locations prevail. Dalits had under five mortality rate of 90 deaths per 1,000 live births compared with an all-Nepal level of 68 (MOHP 2007, NFHP 2010). Fewer than five mortality rates range from 87 in the mountains to 58 per 1,000 live births in the hills. Infant mortality is highest in the Far western region with 65 deaths and lowest in the Eastern region with 47 deaths per 1,000 live births. In Nepal, 63 percent of births still take place at home, with 11 and 40 percent of women being assisted by traditional birth attendants and relatives respectively (NDHS 2011). Institutional deliveries range from a low of 29 percent in the Far western and mid western regions to a high of 40 percent in the Eastern region. Only one-third (36 percent) of births take place with the assistance of a skilled birth attendant

(SBA)," said Frank, country director World Vision International Nepal.

In such a scenario, Nepal has a long way to go to ensure equitable access to quality health care. Thus, reach of essential health services among people of different caste and ethnic groups, geographic regions, gender, economic status must be on the top priority of the government and non-government sectors.

"The campaign will focus on Far-West community level initiatives to establish evidence based advocacy efforts, to pressurize local and national government bodies. The campaign will assist communities to raise their voices to right to quality health care, and drive government meet their responsibilities towards children, mothers, families and communities of the disadvantaged area," said Michael Frank, country director World Vision International Nepal.

Along with two ministers, leaders of three major political parties mainly UCPN-Maoist, Nepali Congress and CPN-UML also expressed their commitment to work together with INGOs and NGOs to end the disparities.

It was officially launched by Minister for Health and Population Rajendra Mahato. Minister for Women Children and Social Welfare Badri Prasad Neupane also attended the launch. They raised the hands for children and committed to end disparities by gender, caste, ethnicity and geographic locations in terms of child health.

Along with the ministers, concerned stakeholders, political party members, civil society and development community members were also present in the program.

Addressing the program minister Mahato said, "the Government of Nepal cannot alone achieve the MDG goals; so support from non-government organizations is very important, and we would like to see the government making health a priority by increasing the budget in the health sector from 7 to 10%." He also added. "The health ministry has also planned to add 150 birthing centers every year in different remote VDCs of the country for safer deliveries. We are also planning to revise the health policy which is twenty years old and this will also address problems like lack of human resources in this field," said Mahato.

"The ministry is ready to work with INGOs and NGOs in the areas like in child health. Nepal needs this kind of programs to reduce the disparities existed in the regions and communities", said Minister Neupane.



CA's Demise & Deficient Dream

By JEEVA RAJ BUDHATHOKI

The Constituent Assembly (CA), elected for the first time in Nepal, has collapsed without accomplishing its primary task of writing the constitution. Its dissolution was certainly beyond any consolation for the Nepalese people, whose dream to get the constitution was dashed for the moment. The donor countries and organizations, which contributed a large amount of economic and technical support for constitution writing and peace process in Nepal were also worried about the situation.

During the 4 years, the CA, with 601 members in it, spent Nine Hundred Millions of Nepalese Rupees, holding 122 meetings, except the thematic committees' meetings. Among the 11 thematic committees; Committee on Division of Natural Resources, Financial Power and Revenue and Committee for Protection of Fundamental Rights of

Minority and Marginalized had no any debate as they submitted their reports with unanimous decisions. Leaving these two committees, others had to decide by absolute majority votes after failing to find consensus. The Committee on Determination of Form of Governance had submitted its report without passing.

Similarly, the Committee for the Protection of National Interests had submitted its report earlier and the Committee for Restructuring of the State and Distributing of State Powers had taken more time to submit its reports than others. With a view to the number of convened meetings; 127 meetings as the largest number were convened by the Committee for Restructuring of the State and Distributing of State Powers and as a least number; 32 meetings were convened by the Committee for Protection of Fundamental Rights of Minority and Marginalized.

The Committee for Restructuring of the State and Distributing of State Powers and Committee on Determination of Form of Governance of the State were more debatable. At the beginning there were about 300 debates to search for consensus and, of them, 117 were still there at the eleventh hour of the 27th May. Of them, the more challenging issue was about federalism with ethnic identities. Finally, this issue proved to

be the fatal weapon to slay the CA.

There are 42 countries in the world writing the constitution through the CA. If we study them, in places where the political leaders were unanimous in core national interests and committed to them, there were written constitutions being written in a timely manner and without futile debates. But, where vested interests, and power cravings were in the forefront, the CA was used as a means of fulfilling them; either it took an unusually long time there or the constitution was never written. For example, in Pakistan, it took about nine years and in Kenya 20 years to write the constitution. Likewise, Indonesia and Israel could not write the constitution even though the CAs were formed there for the purpose. Now, Nepal has also

followed the path of the countries that failed to write a timely constitution.

Now, let us have a

look at the causes of the CA's failure.

The CA was unnecessarily bigger in size here than in other countries of the world with the history of the CA. For example, there were 490 CA members in South Africa, 229 in India, in Pakistan 66 for the first time and 80 the second time, in Ecuador 130, and in Bolivia 255 etc. Even though the size of Nepal's CA was big, there were more laymen and fewer experts. Laymen, who did not know their role, hampered meetings, raising unusual demands from time to time.

Likewise, the CA's 'Thematic Committees' are also responsible for not taking factual decisions that would help the CA in taking swift final decisions. For example, the recommendations for 14 provinces, 10 Constitutional Commissions and not reaching decisions about Governance and Election System were more debatable.

Whatever the practice in other countries; we should have separately split the 601 members into the CA and the Parliament. Had we done so, the CA would not have been entangled in power seeking dirty games and its time could be used properly. In Bolivia, this technique was applied. We followed the South African path without caring about

the infrastructure developed there. In South Africa, before forming the CA, the providences' boundaries and their names were determined in the Interim Constitution. Similarly, the 34 basic principles of the constitution were fixed and a Constitutional Court was also constituted to scrutinize whether these principles were being followed or not. The main problems for us were provoking the Ethnic Groups by some leaders and ignoring them by others. When the issue reached a climax, leaders remained as the silent spectators till the CA died. Another problem was the informal caucus of ethnic members of the CA. They all were united in favor of ethnic provinces although they were affiliated with different political parties. They were out of their party's whips and parties were also unable to keep them under their control.

Although, the CA is no longer there now, its demand has not ended yet. For the last 60 years, the Nepalese people have wanted a constitution written by themselves so that such a Constitution would guarantee human rights, rule of law and political, socio-cultural and economic rights of all people from different castes and classes.

After the end of Rana régime in 1950, the then King Tribhuvan had declared forming a CA to write the constitution. After a few years, he died and his successor King Mahendra denied CA. In 30 years after that, the agitation of 1989 took place and the Multiparty Governance System was revived. Then, the demand for the CA came again from the 'Nepal Communist Party Masal' led by Mohan Bikram Singh to represent the people's will. The demand was ignored again and a few people wrote 'The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990'. This Constitution also could not get the ownership of all the people. Then again the popular agitation occurred in 2005 and it swept the King out of his regime and the Country got the Republic. Then the CA was formed.

Now to conceive of another CA election in the future, there are so many doubts, suspicions, uncertainties and constitutional crises that might create a series of debates starting all over again. ■

Although, the CA is no longer there now, its demand has not ended yet.

A Voter's Perspective On CA's Death

By ABHISHEKH ADHIKARI



The political developments in the country have everyone thinking about the importance of the constitution, periodical election, federalism and everything that the country did not get due to the expiry of the Constituent Assembly (CA). It is interesting how Nepalese have shown their patience in this time of political crisis. The CA has expired and there will be an election in the next few months and every Nepali is excited to cast the vote again. The dilemma is the leaders are not capable of shouldering the responsibility of the votes that every Nepali casts during the election. It is sad and unfortunate that the aspirations of the Nepalese cannot be shouldered by the present leaders. It is embarrassing to the people who cast their votes to see that those who they thought would deliver fail to deliver.

The sustenance of democracy in Nepal is not because there are political parties and leaders but because of the faith people have in democracy. Nepalese have seen their future, their dreams being realized through democracy and not through the leaders. It is quite a challenge for every Nepali to vote in the election knowing there is no leader who has the ability to make his dream come true.

The political squabbling does not give us development, or the infrastructure to develop further. The fight over intricate legal provisions has no meaning for most of the Nepalese who are struggling for the basics in life. Life is becoming harder with every passing day.

Constitutional provisions have their meaning only when they can have positive impact on the lives of the people. The first thing Nepal needs is a constitution and then it has to be implemented to bring any change in the lives of the people. The Constituent Assembly failed to deliver the constitution and now there is a silence which is worrying everyone. The silence means that no one had thought that there would be no constitution through the Constituent Assembly. Slowly people are realizing that their dreams have been shattered. They have wasted their money, energy and resources on the incompetent leaders who had come before them asking for votes promising delivery of the new constitution which would reflect their aspirations. It is so important first of all to see that one can deliver what he has undertaken to do. Then others who are giving responsibilities must see it. In our case both failed—the leaders who claimed they could deliver and the people who entrusted them with the duty to deliver. This is an embarrassing situation.

It is definitely true the work undertaken by the Constituent Assembly members was ambitious. Copying what others have done without realizing the ground reality in all probability meets what Nepal has met through the failure of the CA.

Whatever might have happened to the Constituent Assembly, democracy gives opportunities to new leaders. Democracy empowers leaders. It brings out the leaders from nook and corner of the country. Some leaders fail and some rise. There is always hope. It is interesting that demands of the people have outdone the capability of leaders. It is a sign that new leadership with better vision is the necessity of the day to fulfill the aspirations of people in Nepal.

It is a challenge for experts to show that they are better than the leaders of political parties. They could

use the resources generated by the Constituent Assembly members and produce a beautiful or at the least a frame of constitution to fill the vacuum that the expiry of the CA has left. The money, resources and energy spent for four years will have some meaning if done so. The only problem in it is who has the authority to give the experts to exploit the resources that the CA members so meticulously collected. Never had been such an intense debate and discussions carried out in Nepal in the past. The new constitution thus drafted could be presented before the people through referendum for its approval by the people. The constitution will still have the legitimacy and approval of the people. This is what we asked for through the CA. The problem could be political, for our leaders will look bad if the work is accomplished by the experts.

Everyone is in pain looking at the resources spent by the CA without any result. Experts' constitution approved through people's referendum will do justice to resources and energy spent for the new constitution. It could be a face saving option for all and sundry.

Going to election is definitely a desirable thing and everyone is definitely excited about it. But first the expenses made in the drafting of the new constitution have to be accounted for. The money spent during the last four years was the taxpayers' money, both from the Nepalese and their foreign friends alike. As long as the money and resources spent are accounted for, the Nepalese will not mind going for periodical election any number of times to exercise democratic values. In fact the Nepalese are looking forward to give leaders opportunities by giving them responsibilities to lead the country in the 21st century. ■

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



नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग



Queen Elizabeth II Keeping Promises

By PRATIMA PANDE

When Queen Elizabeth II ascended the throne on June 2nd 1953, she made solemn promises that she would serve her nation and the Commonwealth. After 60 years, the whole world celebrates her joyous Diamond Jubilee. She has selflessly worked very hard to be true to herself in words and deeds and gained immense respect and admiration from the people of all walks of life, age groups and different nationalities.

The TV, documentaries, and photographs are proof of the work that she has carried out and no one can deny that although she comes from a very privileged background, her work values and ethics have won her tremendous admiration, love and respect in this planet that we live in making her one of the World's most enduring and successful monarchs in history.

The Nepal Britain Society and its members and friends also gathered to celebrate this special Diamond Jubilee as each one of us have studied, lived, worked or visited the U.K. and feel close as Nepalese to Britain, and because Her Majesty is a very well known and loved public figure, we almost think that we know everything about her!

The Nepal Britain Society was established in 1964 and is one of the oldest friendship societies in the country and is working continuously to foster relationship between the peoples of Nepal and Great Britain.

We have already launched various programs in the past year and in 2012. In April last year, we handed a cheque of Rs. 50,000.00 to Wendy Marston for adult burn victims in Bir Hospital. This was possible because of the play put on by Nepal Britain Society's very own 'New Shakespeare Wallahs' directed by Greta Rana. 'The Winter Revue' hosted in November 2011 at the British School and jointly produced by the children of the British School and their teachers and the New Shakespeare Wallahs for three nights and a matinee was able to raise funds of over two lakhs. We are jointly going to present a cheque for the Burn Violence children at Kanti Hospital which the British school has been visiting from time to time for their social work and to see firsthand the suffering of young innocent victims. This is a grim reality for all us.

On the 23rd March 2012, the Nepal Britain Society was also a sponsor and supporter in bringing and exhibiting art works from the Royal Botanical Gardens, in Edinburg, Scotland to the Sidhartha Art Gallery in Kathmandu. The exhibition was to celebrate 200 years of Bio-diversity

Research in Nepal by Francis Buchanan and his pioneering Natural history Drawings 1802-1803. This was the first time that 30 valuable drawings of plants and animals were brought out of the UK and was produced by the Linnean Society of London and Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh.

Two centuries of historical research continue with British and Nepalese scientists teaming up with Nepalese, Japanese and other international botanical experts working on the Flora of Nepal, British ambassador to Nepal John Tucknott also organized a lecture by Dr. Mark Watson, a famous British researcher and botanist at the Sterling Club, in the British Embassy, which was very interesting and informative with a slide presentation which was a success in bringing members of the society together.

On the occasion of Diamond Jubilee, let us all be inspired by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II who has set an example of leadership skills and the qualities and set very high values in public service. Before I conclude, I would like to thank



Queen Elizabeth II

ambassador John Tucknott, trustee and the members of the executive committee especially Greta Rana, Sanjib Pandey, Jana Thapa and Sandj Wilderspin of the British School with whom we celebrated the Street Party on 3rd of June at the British School and we all had a marvelous time! Tonight all of us assembled here would like to congratulate Sandj Wilderspin for receiving an MBE from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for her sterling work in the education sector. I want to thank all our sponsors who have actively supported us during our theater productions and other philanthropic works; they are the Nepal Investment Bank, Himalayan Bank, Surya Nepal and Ace Development Bank. I would like to thank Annapurna Hotel's Srijana Rana and CEO Upaul Mazumdar and his team for all their hard work to make this program successful.

(Pande is president of Nepal Britain Society. Excerpts of her statement delivered on June 23 to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee Celebration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the II of Great Britain.)

Global Coverage



"THE GLOBE IS IN OUR HAND"



Air Express/Courier Service

Air/Sea Cargo

Commercial Shipment

APEX
WORLDWIDE EXPRESS

1469, Ramshahpath (Infront of Laxmi Plaza)
Putalisadak, Kathmandu, Nepal.
Tel : 997-01-4212122 / 977-01-4263155
E-mail : info@awecourier.com
Website : www.awecourier.com

AWE
COURIER & CARGO

Saturday Morning Hiker

By **ABIJIT SHARMA**



'It's just an hour walk from here' came the reply when we asked one of the locals on how long it would take us to reach from the spot to the Changunarayan temple.

It was a lovely pleasant morning at Gokarna. A big relief from the excruciating heat, the temperature that morning was relatively low with gentle wind and a bit of chill in the air. The sun was not up in the sky yet and it was a perfect weather for a hike. We had started our walk to one of the most beautiful temples and a world heritage site.

Hiking is one of my new found hobbies. I love the prospect of getting to see new places. And with very little hiking experience I have already found out that Kathmandu valley itself has quite a number of beautiful spots to see around. Interacting with the locals and knowing more about them is one of the other reasons why I've grown fond of this new hobby. Listening to the people, hearing their grievances, getting a first-hand account of their experiences gives you such an interesting and a delightful insight into their lives that you want to do it again and again.



Our walk was relatively easier one this time. I say this time because my last hike to Champadevi had one of the toughest trails and no source of water around. Gokarna to Changunarayan, I had heard, is one of the beginners' trail. Passing by mud houses and thatched roofs, we started our walk enjoying the beautiful scenery around us.

'There has been no plantation even though today is Asadh 15' complained one of the locals when we quizzed him on why the fields looked barren. While we were expecting to see beautiful scenes of rice planting on our way, we were quite surprised to find no such buzz. He blamed it all on the lack of rainfall. 'If the same way continues, I do not know how we are going to survive' he added with desperation on his face.

We reached the temple after about two hours of walk. The arly morning ambience amidst the resounding of bells was refreshing. As people were busy offering their prayers, a group of old heads was busy discussing politics sipping tea while children were busy playing around. The first rays of sun had just begun to touch the temple. We walked around it appreciating its beautiful art work. Renovation was being carried out at one corner. Unlike other world heritage sites, it was good to see Changunarayan receiving much deserved attention.

Our way back was a one hour journey. By then, the temperature had already

started to climb up. We decided not to go the road further which would lead us to another lovely place Telkot and then to Nagarkot.

A little tiring but a rejuvenating walk. A Saturday morning well spent in the greenery of the Kathmandu outskirts! No less a great experience than tuning in to the evergreen BeeGees numbers from the Saturday Night Fever. ■

ARMED POLICE

Disaster Management training

Armed Police has shown that it has capability to deal with disaster

By **DEBESH ADHIKARI**

At least 10 people were killed when landslides triggered by heavy rains hit western Nepal recently. Hundreds of people lose life annually in Nepal due to disasters.

As rainy season is about to gain pace, various kind of natural disasters are very much on the cards in the near future. Expressing his commitment to strengthen disaster operation, Armed Police chief Kos Raj Onta recently visited the Disaster Management and Training Center.

Asian Development Bank's report few months back stated that Nepal is the fourth vulnerable nation to climate change and is also a frequent recipient

of natural disasters.

Armed Police Force (APF) is the main organization that is at the helm for disaster management. APF established a "disaster management training center" at Kurintar, Chitwan on March 2012 with the aim of providing disaster management training to its force and like.

Including four higher police officials, 48 others were successfully trained at the training center recently.

They were given training on physical fitness, swimming, rafting, first aid, and also on prompt rescue. They were given knowledge about disaster management and its process.



Inspector General of APF Kosh Raj Onta gave encouragement speech on the completion of the training.

Onta said training will hold high significance in the real disaster management process and said trainees should transform the knowledge learned on training back on to the work field.

He also stressed that APF will give full support in the disaster management as disasters might strike any time in a disaster vulnerable country like Nepal.



Nepal Needs Long Term Vision

By DINESH CHANDRA DEVKOTA, PHD

Politically, Nepal has seen a lot of changes in the last five years. The country has already turned into a federal, democratic republic by abolishing the monarchy since 2008. However, the country's economic agenda remains the old one. In the context of growing economic aspirations of the people, Nepal needs to formulate a long term vision for the country. Nepal has many priorities and many challenges ahead. Our experiences have already shown that we cannot bring any tangible change without making the country economically prosperous.

In this context, I had proposed Nepal Development Vision 2030. Every political party and leader wants to see the country as economically strong and prosperous. This is the reason there is the need to develop some sort of consensus among the country's major political parties over the development modalities.

Nepal has many areas to explore and exploit for the overall development of the country. From tourism to water resources and currently the remittances, Nepal has many advantages.

Given the opportunity of utilization natural, financial and human resources, including technology and prospects of enhancing development results mainly through structural and policy reforms, good governance, restoration of peace and security, and political stability, Nepal can easily graduate from LDCs to a middle income country by 2017. During my tenure as a vice chairman of National Planning Commission, I asked experts groups to prepare the Nepal Vision Document 2030. Before my resignation from the post of vice chair, I released it to the public. My whole argument is based on that document.

Despite Nepal's efforts of nearly six decades of planned development, the country is still under the category of the least developed countries (LDCs) in the world with per capita income of USD 642 and human development index (0.418). Due to the low level of development, productive forces and inadequate capacity of plan implementation, coupled with weak monitoring system, almost all the development plan targets remained unmet. Given the population growth rate of above 2 percent and the average economic growth rate of the last decade (2001-2011) is just 3.8 percent.

Major problems facing the country are high rate of poverty, high underemployment rate, social exclusion, gender disparity, income inequality and low quality of life. Several factors like subsistence agriculture, deteriorating industrial environment, power shortage, political instability, policy gaps, weak public service delivery mechanism have led to low level of economic growth and development.

Of course, remittances have been contributing to accelerate

the economic growth. According to a recent report, the contribution of remittances to GDP is over 22 percent. The studies have shown that it has become the major source of cash income for more than 50 percent of the households, and has also contributed to preserve foreign reserve at a comfortable situation. The experiences have shown that the worker's remittances are highly influenced by the policy of destination country and should not be considered as a perennial source of income.

Although Nepal has already executed many five years and three years development plans, it is unable to achieve the economic growth. Given the current political instability, Nepal cannot even now write its plan for five years and the country will depend upon the interim plans for many years to come. Looking at all these experiences, I had worked out Nepal Development Vision 2030 with an aim to build a prosperous, peaceful and just Nepal during my tenure as a vice chairman of National Planning Commission. This vision has its



importance in the present context when the country is in the process of historical transformation. This transformation will ultimately have impacts on social, cultural and economic areas of the country. Thus, I have proposed a visionary planning approach. It is necessary for Nepal. All of us know that the development vision is an articulation of aspirations of the people for steering the country to desired goals.

Nepal is not a first country to develop the vision goal. There are many countries, particularly like ours, that have developed such documents. Although Japan is a highly developed country, in its vision document, Japan has underscored realization of a society built upon equal-partnership as one of the key issues to achieve national goal as the country. Nepal has also introduced the concept of long-term development in Ninth Plan (1997-2002) in which the long term development objective was set so as to create a society that is cultured, modern development oriented and endowed with skills through alleviating widespread poverty for two decades. The tenth plan incorporated the vision and targets of ninth plan. It is unfortunate that subsequent plans did not win the vision. The first three year interim plan (2007-2010) was formulated after the People's Movement II with a vision to building a prosperous, modern and just Nepal. It was modified to prosperous, peaceful and just Nepal in the current three Year Plan (2011-2013)

No country can move ahead without a long term vision and Nepal is no exception. This is what you can find in Nepal Development Vision 2030.

(Devkota is a former vice chairman of National Planning Commission. As told to New Spotlight)

Eliminating Child Labour In Nepal!

By JOSE ASSALINO



The understanding of child labour in Nepal is as diverse and complex as in the other parts of the globe. The National legislation defines child as a person below the age 16 years. There are different opinions from various quarters and sectors regarding "What child labour is and, what is not child labour?." But above all the definitions the most crucial thing to remember is "What work is appropriate for children? and, "What kind of work should be categorized as inappropriate for children?"

The ILO defines child labour as the work that deprives children of their childhood, education, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development. While the Governments have raised increased commitments to find new solutions to end exploitative work for children, the priority remains with the worst forms of child labour such as slavery, trafficking of children, debt bondage, forced or compulsory labour, use of children in armed conflict, for prostitution, for pornographic performances or for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs. The Member States in the recent years have come under increased pressure also to eliminate the hazardous child labour, the work that jeopardises the physical, mental or moral well being of a child, either because of its nature or because of the conditions in which it is carried out.

Child labour has been widespread in Nepal for many centuries, mostly in rural areas as it is considered to be a part of the normal process of socialization. Children in the earlier days have worked as long as families have needed their support in the farms and in the fields. In the countryside children have always worked long hours alongside their parents in the fields and at home which at many instances deprived them of their education, right to grow in a conducive environment and have fun (especially because fun is considered equally crucial for his/her growth and mental and

often physical development).

With the passage of time, along with the emergence of modernisation and globalisation, child labour remains to be equally concerned especially among the urban cities, less in formal but massive in the informal sectors. This has changed the overall perception of child labour in Nepal from rural to urban, from agriculture bonded child labour to children involved in labour work in hotels, industries, urban transportation, brick kilns, jari (embroidered fabrics) in legal and illegal occupations from night clubs, dance bars, restaurants to pornography and child prostitution. Now



this brings us to the question: What kind of child labour are we talking about?

The international community has set a target of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016. A Global Conference on Child Labour held in the Hague in 2010 established a Roadmap for action to eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016 and the progress towards the goal will be reviewed at a Global Conference to be held in Brazil in 2013. With this in mind it is timely for all the actors involved in the international and national level to reflect upon the actions and pave ways of tackling the worst forms of child labour in Nepal.

According to the Nepal Child Labour Report 2010 (based on the National Labour Force Survey 2008), launched recently on the occasion of the World Day Against Child Labour on 12 June 2012, there is a decline in 5-14 year-old children engaged in economic activities in Nepal - from 2 million (48%) in 1998 to nearly 1.5 million (41%) in 2008. The decrease of child labour in sectors related to carpet making, beedi making, stone quarries, bonded child labour, portering has provided a positive message that the end of child labour is in sight! Concrete efforts are being made by the

Government of Nepal, trade unions, employers' organisations and the civil society to address child labour issues, and the progress achieved in this area in recent years is simply undeniable.

The Government of Nepal has clearly demonstrated its commitment to the elimination of child labour. The ratification of two ILO core Conventions on Child Labour No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Employment and No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour was followed by the establishment of a number of legislative and legal frameworks including the National Master Plan on the Elimination of Child Labour (2004-2014). From 1990 onwards

and in line with the spirit of the two core Conventions, the Government is in pursuit of strategies and plans effective for child labour abolition. It is with this view that the 2004-2014 Plan was further improved and updated in 2010 with the elaboration of a revamped National Master Plan (NMP, 2011-2020) on Child Labour which is awaiting Government's endorsement. The NMP aims at re-energizing Government action towards **the target of elimination of all worst forms of child labour by 2016 and all child labour by 2020.**

The current NMP addresses a "parallel track" approach: prevent children from child labour and rehabilitate children (and their families) caught in child labour. The current NMP recognizes that poverty among others is the contributing factors to child labour and that many children from the poor families are sent to work to generate income. It highlights the various deficiencies (relating to policy, legislation and enforcement, knowledge, education, child protection, institutional and implementing capacity and awareness) that are impeding on efforts to eliminate child labour and its worst forms in particular.

The same NMP crystallizes that child labour must be addressed through multi-sectoral preventive and rehabilitation work and Ministerial coordination. Addressing poverty and the deficiencies in education and social protection policies are key for the abolishment of child labour. The NMP stipulates that technical and financial income generating activities, and improved decent employment generating (vocational) education are needed for the families to bridge the gap between poverty and child labour for survival.

Another concrete and fundamental step was the creation of the Child Labour Elimination Section (CLES) under the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Today, the CLES is the key national entity for coordinating, monitoring and reporting on child labour interventions in the country. The CLES is the main counterpart agency of the ILO technical cooperation programme to support the implementation of the Nepal National

Master Plan on the prevention and elimination of Child Labour.

The CLES, the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the ILO are also working directly with workers' and employers' organisations (social partners) on a number of programmes within the framework of the National Master Plan. This tripartite partnership entails consultations over the development of the National Child Labour Policy, amendments to national legislative and regulatory framework, the determination of hazardous child labour, strengthening the capacity of relevant stakeholders and advocacy and awareness activities for child labour elimination. The social partners in Nepal have undertaken important initiatives on child labour prevention,

A key challenge relates to the developing status of the institutional and human resource capacity, to coordination, monitoring, and reporting on child labour elimination efforts. The capacity issue is affected by, and in turn exacerbates by a knowledge base that is not sufficiently updated and utilized to facilitate child labour policy development and the promotion of mainstreaming child labour issues and **concerns in relevant development programmes and budgets.** These challenges have underlined ILO support to the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the CLES, particularly in the development and implementation of the National Master Plan (2011-2020).

Nepal is one of the few countries in South Asia that has not developed a

The international community has set a target of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016. A Global Conference on Child Labour held in the Hague in 2010 established a Roadmap for action to eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016 and the progress towards the goal will be reviewed at a Global Conference to be held in Brazil in 2013.

but for greater impact, these efforts need to be taken to scale and for sustainability they need to be integrated in their policies, plans and budgets.

More recently, the Ministry of Local Development and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare have also committed to join efforts with the Ministry of Labour and Employment aiming at joint action to reach out to a wider target base through decentralised agencies of the Government of Nepal, including District Development Committees, Village Development Committees and Municipalities. However, despite the Government's commitment and its efforts supported by the social partners and civil society, challenges remain and these impede efforts to ensure the rights for the youngest citizens of the nation and to achieve the national goal to end child labour.

policy on child labour, nor a workable determination of hazardous child labour. Presently, this is one of the top priorities of the Government together with the social partners and civil society to extend the scope of their programs. Ending child labour needs actions on many levels: development and enforcement of legislation, better education, integrated and comprehensive approaches including market measures to promote accelerated economic development and employment creation, effective social protection measures, vocational training, improved labour inspection awareness at an individual and community level thus creating a society with "zero tolerance" to child labour and benefiting from a reality that Nepal is free from child labour.

Assalino is Director ILO Country Office for Nepal

Literature Then & Now

By ADITI ARYAL



Then ...

Keeping in mind the Elizabethan period, we can talk about an era which took the world to the greatest heights of literary accomplishment. This era saw the rise of greatly gifted writers like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and John Donne, among others. Worth pondering is the fact that as exemplary figures, these gifted writers consisted more of men. This statement in itself does not foster the claim of women being meek or submissive. The only reason to fit in the puzzle could be lack of encouragement from family or society, which held back their dreams of being successful writers.

The attitudes of men towards their women counterparts can merely be explained through statements given at that time period. Thomas Bacon held the view that women and horses needed to be well governed. This stereotypical narrow-mindedness never encouraged women to go to colleges, learn Latin and the elements of grammar and logic. Instead they were ordered around to stew soup and mend stockings. Even if women could muster enough courage to write a few paragraphs, they had to be careful enough to hide them or set them on fire.

People have confidently claimed that even with talents like Shakespeare, any woman could not have been as flourishing as he was and write plays like he did in that time period. Such claims can be confirmed by write-ups like 'A room of one's own' by Virginia Woolf. She wrote up a fictional character, Judith Shakespeare, as sister of William Shakespeare. Then she portrayed her own personal situation into the life of Judith. Like, how she was asked to stay at home while her brothers got smarter in college and how her parents got angry the instant they saw her with a book. Her further elaborations express how Judith was forced into marriage and she unhappily took her life. For Woolf, her hypothesis stuck to the fact that William enjoyed his success while equally talented Judith had to see her dreams shatter before her very eyes and was unable to fare the glory she was capable of.

Now ...

All through these literary masterpieces today we have arrived at an era where writers like Agatha Christie, J.K. Rowling and Stephanie Meyer stand in equal terms with Sidney Sheldon and Salman Rushdie. We have evolved into an era where women are as much liked by the public as are men. Every list places men and women alphabetically without any discrimination. Women are allowed and encouraged to attend colleges and choose subjects of their wish. Moreover, people even argue women as being better equipped in writing than most men. In the field of writing, by no means, can women be undermined.

Taking into consideration the past which metamorphosed into this day today, this is a great accomplishment indeed. Today, the stories of struggle are equally prevalent for men as much as for women.

A new concern these days is that the youth choose more of pop culture and reject the literary masterpieces. Choosing of Harry Potter and Twilight exceeds the opting of 'The Diary of a Young Girl'. All these books have a staple place on shelves in libraries. But what the elders are concerned about is that books like latter collect piles of dust on them while the former get so much attention and demand. Their questions of the youth forgetting the earlier struggle of girls like Anne Frank without any respect of history start the blame game. However, no one is to blame. The matter plainly is that along with time, the choices of books have changed too. What people like to read is different from the historical days of struggle. What we get from these books is a simple dictionary-free language and a connection with our lives, one way or the other. This way, pop culture is definitely what people choose over what elders want us to. ■



Rough Roads Of Kathmandu

By SHRADHA GYAWALI

Blind curves, gravels, crumbling edges, puddles, smoke, traffic and honking at every curve which is barely necessary - welcome to the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu. The roads are bumpy and not traffic worthy at all.

The government's current project of widening the roads has actually ruined the road system around the capital even more. The authorities have been demolishing the existing roads but haven't really started the construction of new and wider roads yet. This has not only been increasing the traffic but has also increased the number of road accidents around Kathmandu. Walking around the city is now a nightmare and you will barely notice people walking without a mask.

The government authority and the people are often accused of having no civic sense and both drivers and pedestrians don't really seem to care and follow the traffic rules.

Why hasn't the government started construction at an equally fast rate as it has been demolishing the roads? Shouldn't the construction take place simultaneously? Is the government ever going to complete the road construction?

The road system of a country is one of the basic infrastructure. The development and expansion of roads is a basic requirement for the development of a country. The roads generally have two or more lanes but not the ones in Nepal. The longest highway in Nepal, the Mahendra Highway is also mostly one lane in each direction and barely qualifies as a highway according to the international standards. The highways in Nepal do not meet up to the western standards leave alone the roads in the city. The highways also have a million potholes. Once a road is constructed no one really cares about the maintenance and repair of the roads.

Being able to drive in the city takes real skill and challenge. Let's leave alone the condition of roads in the city, the other most annoying habit of the drivers apart from driving recklessly is honking. Honking both where it's necessary and where it isn't is like a culture deep rooted in our society which is extremely difficult and almost impossible to change. If you are on a long drive or would want to go for one, you will barely get an opportunity to sit back, relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery along the way when the horns are constantly blowing. But once you have spent a few days in the country you eventually get used to the honking and tend to ignore it.

I choose to ignore both the infrastructure issues and the honking issue, and most of them do the same because there is nothing we can do to change the things that are so deep-rooted in our culture and of course we have no influence over the government's decision. ■

M O V I E R E V I E W

The Amazing Spider-Man

Dir: Marc Webb; Starring: Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone, Rhys Ifans



Five years in Hollywood is an age at the best of times, but if your studio is sitting on one of the world's most popular comic-book franchises while lesser superheroes break box-office records like so many henchmen's heads, it must feel like forever.

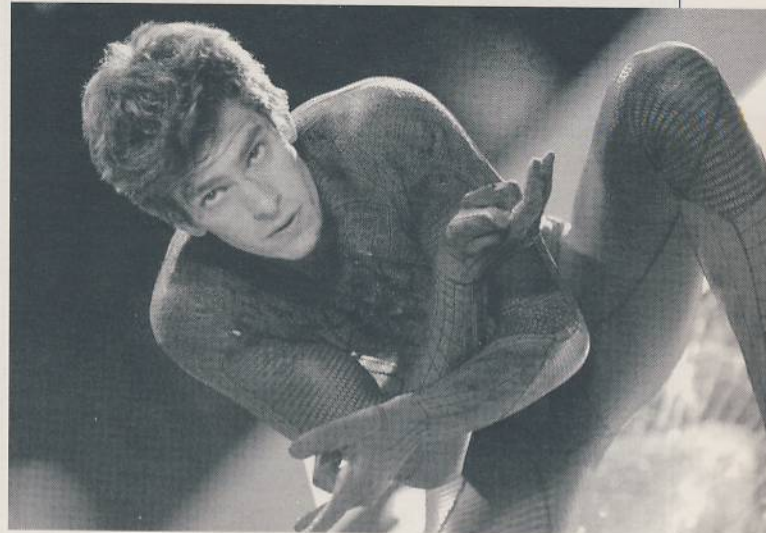
Sony Pictures released the third of Sam Raimi's Spider-Man films in 2007, and in January 2010 it announced it was rebooting the series with a new star and director. Since then, Avengers Assemble has taken \$1.5 billion worldwide, making it the highest-grossing comic-book movie in history: it's odd to think that the last time Peter Parker suited up in cinemas, Iron Man and The Dark Knight were more than a year away.

So for Spider-Man to register in today's superhero-saturated market, he has to do something more than pull on a candy-wrapper costume, swing from the same skyscrapers and pander to the geeks in the cheap seats. Fortunately, Sony and director Marc Webb have come up with a very creditable, very marketable alternative, and it owes more to the recent success of Twilight than anyone in a costume and cape.

Simply put, The Amazing Spider-Man is the first superhero movie aimed primarily at women. The new Peter Parker (Andrew Garfield) is no goofy teenage geek in the Tobey Maguire mould; he's a bright, introverted young man with a furrowed brow, a Tintinquiff and a pasty Home Counties complexion. Garfield seems to be playing him as a half-gangly, half-graceful riff on Eduardo Saverin, his character from David Fincher's Facebook chronicle, The Social Network.

Then there's his needle-sharp young girlfriend, Gwen Stacy (Emma Stone), who wants to get under Parker's skin even more than that radioactive arachnid did and find out what it is that makes his Spidey-senses tingle.

Gwen's father is a police captain who is out to stop both



Spider-Man and his arch-fœe, the Lizard (Rhys Ifans), a scientist whose genes get spliced with reptilian DNA. For this costumed crimefighter, the girlfriend's dad is as much of a threat as the supervillain.

In fact, if Webb's film has a weak suit, it's the supervillainy: Ifans's character is underdeveloped, and his putative tragic fall is more of a gloomy tumble. Some comic-book fans have also criticised the "unconvincing" special effects employed to bring Ifans's scaly alter ego to life, although I can't say I'm entirely clear what a convincing rendering of a giant angry lizard in torn purple trousers and a lab coat might look like.

But that's not to say The Amazing Spider-Man is short on blockbuster testosterone, and the film's second half offers more than enough bungee-swinging through Manhattan's concrete canyons, immaculately rendered in vertiginous, silky-smooth 3D, to satisfy thrill-seekers of either sex.

What's refreshing is the way Webb makes those action sequences count – with a plot that rests almost entirely on the plausibly tingly romance between his two leads.

Courtesy: telegraph.co.uk

M O V I E P R E V I E W S

To the Wonder

A romantic drama centered on a man who reconnects with a woman from his hometown after his marriage to a European woman falls apart.

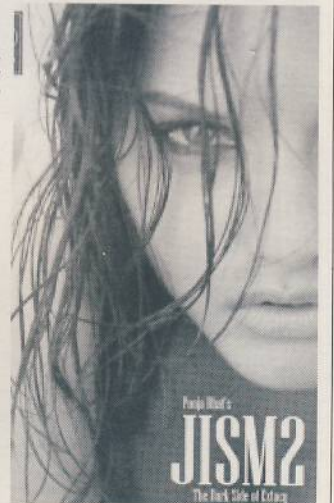
Director: Terrence Malick
 Writer: Terrence Malick
 Stars: Rachel McAdams, Rachel Weisz and Jessica Chastain



Jism 2 (2012)

Jism 2 is an upcoming Bollywood erotic Adult thriller film and a sequel to the 2003 adult thriller, Jism. The film is to be directed by Pooja Bhatt, and written by Mahesh Bhatt. It includes Sunny Leone in the main role, It is currently under-production, and is expected to release during late 2012.

Directed By: Pooja Bhatt
 Produced By: Pooja Bhatt, Dino Morea



Brand Band

By BIDUSHI ADHIKARI

Even though the political upheaval in the country has taken a strong stance, entertainment in the form of music is not off the minds of many Nepali people. Music is an escape, a break, and a pause in the complications of our busy lives. It would be wrong to say that Western music does not hold a spot in the hearts of many; it is not uncommon to be greeted by a blast of air-conditioned breeze and the familiar voice of Rihanna when one enters a shop these days. However, the rise of Western music does not dictate the fall of Nepalese culture or music. As Nepalese artists experiment with different genres of music, like rock, pop, and jazz, they manage to gain popularity and win the hearts of many listeners.

One such band that has gained immense popularity and support is 1974 AD. The band was formed in 1994, covering a wide range of genres, including Nepali folk, rock and roll, rock, blues, and some jazz as well. The talented bunch who make up the band are Adrian Pradhan on vocal and drums, Nirakar Yakthumba on bass and as a backing vocal, Manoj Kumar KC on guitar, keyboards, and as a backing vocal, Sanjay Shrestha on percussion and as a backing vocal, and Manose Singh on flute. With the leave of vocalist and guitarist Phiroj Shyangden in 2009, the band and its fans suffered a great loss. However, the thirst to make music did not die there, and the band managed to blow away its audience with the August,



2010 album, "Aath Athara (8/18)." One listen to their songs will tell you that the band speaks for love, patriotism, unity, and nationalism. Some of their more famous songs include "Parelina," "Nepali," "Pahilo Junima," "Sambodhan," "Timi Bina," and "Mayalule." Naturally, the band has claimed quite a few awards with its captivating songs, including Kantipur FM Annual Award from 2001 to 2004, Image Award 2004 and 2005, and Hits FM Music Award 2000, 2002, and 2004.

1974 AD has weaved its way into the musical history of our country. Its songs and tunes will always reside in the hearts of all its fans. Other bands, such as Albatross, Nepathya, and Kutumba, have also made such an impact in the musical industry of Nepal.

Sources: <http://www.1974ad.com.np>

Euros is the absence of easy fixtures - there is no bedding in, no chance to make slips and still have plenty of time to make up for them.

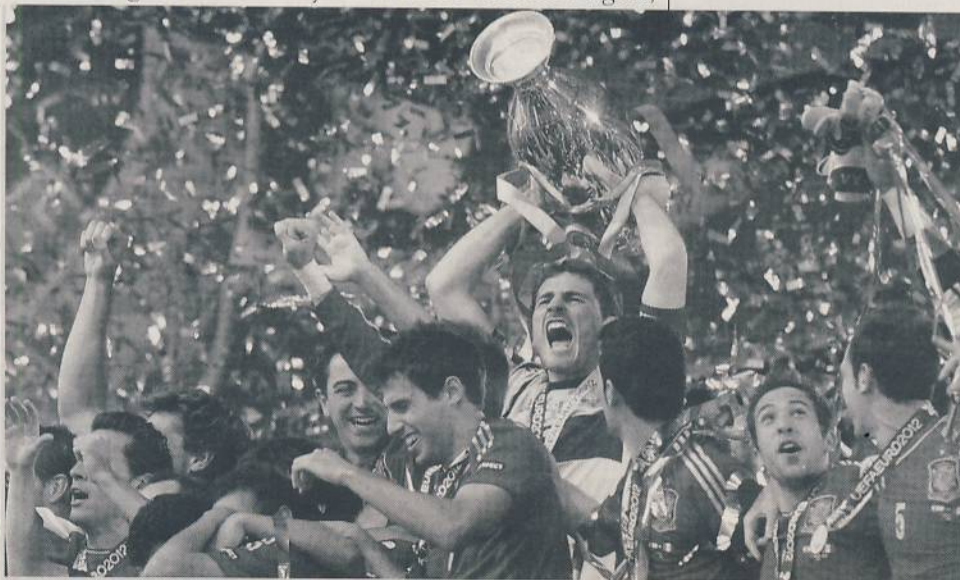
Spain were the right winners while Italy's renaissance under coach Cesare Prandelli offered the promise of one of the old powers returning. Germany looked formidable only to slip in the semi-final, while the Netherlands' dismal failure to advance from the group stage was a major surprise.

Of course, players make tournaments and Euro 2012 will be remembered for stellar performances from the likes of Italy keeper Gigi Buffon and Spain's Jordi Alba, who showed in every game why Barcelona were so keen to bring the graduate of their famous La Masia youth academy back from Valencia.

And then we had the wonder of the elder statesman of Italy, Andrea Pirlo, controlling against England then delivering a performance of such majesty in the semi-final win over Germany that man-of-the-match adjudicator Peter Schmeichel handed over the award with the words: "Tonight we have seen a piece of art."

Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo threatened to make this his tournament only for it to end in the bitterness of seeing the penalty shoot-out lost against Spain without him even able to take a kick. This was one of the great miscalculations of Euro 2012 and could haunt player and country for years to come.

(Courtesy: bbc.co.uk)



Euro 2012 Proves A Treat, On And Off The Pitch

The conclusion of Euro 2012 was marked by Spain's magnificent victory against Italy and a noisy party that was still in full swing as dawn broke behind the vast bowl of Kiev's Olympic Stadium.

And after a tournament that started amid fears of hooliganism and racism, both Ukraine and Poland had every right to celebrate an event that did both countries great credit.

The quality of football produced by the 16 teams made a nonsense of the planned extension to 24 countries in 2016. The beauty of the

Modified Traveler information

Nepal is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of biodiversity due to its unique geographical position and altitudinal variation. The elevation of the country ranges from 60 m above sea level to the highest point on earth, Mt. Everest at 8,848 m, all within a distance of 150 km resulting into climatic conditions from sub-tropical to Arctic.

Nepal occupying only 0.1% of the total landmass of the earth is home to:

- 2% of all the flowering plants in the world
- 8% of the world's population of birds (more than 848 species)
- 4% of mammals on earth
- 11 of the world's 15 families of butterflies (more than 500 species)
- 600 indigenous plant families
- 319 species of exotic orchids

Area	: 147,181 sq. km
Location	: Situated between China in the north and India in the south, east and west
Capital	: Kathmandu
Population	: 25.8 million
People	: Nepal has more than 101 ethnic groups and 92 spoken languages.
Language	: Nepali is the national language; travel-trade people understand and speak English as well.
Religion	: Nepal is a secular state with a pre-dominance of Hindu and Buddhist population.
Currency	: Nepali Rupee (approximately US\$ 1 equals Rs. 78.90 as of December 2008)
Political System	: Federal Democratic Republic
Climate	: Nepal has four major seasons (1) Winter: December-February, (2) Spring: March-May, (3) Summer: June-August, (4) Autumn: September-November. Monsoons are from June till mid September. Nepal can be visited the whole year round.
What to Wear	: Light weight clothing is recommended from May through October. Warm garments are required in October-March. An umbrella or a raincoat is a must for the rainy season.

ENTRY PROCEDURES

a. Tourist Visa

Visa Facility	Duration	Fee
Multiple entry	15 days	US\$ 25 or equivalent convertible currency
Multiple entry	30 days	US\$ 40 or equivalent convertible currency
Multiple entry	90 days	US\$ 100 or equivalent convertible currency

b. Gratis (Free) Visa

- Gratis visa for 30 days available only for nationals of SAARC countries.
- Indian nationals do not require visa to enter into Nepal.

(For further information, please, contact Department of Immigration, Kalikasthan, Kathmandu, Tel: 00977-1-4429659, Web: www.immi.gov.np)

WORLD HERITAGE SITES

There are four UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Nepal. Two are in cultural category and two are in natural category. World Cultural Heritage Sites of Nepal are: Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha, and seven monuments of Kathmandu valley within a radius of 20 km (together counted as one Heritage Site). The World Natural Heritage Sites are Chitwan and Sagarmatha National Parks. Kathmandu valley World Heritage Site comprises of three historical palaces - Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur Durbar Squares; two Buddhist stupas - Swayambhunath and Baudhanath; and two Hindu temples - Pashupatinath

and Changu Narayan. Nepal offers incomparable scope to connoisseurs of art and culture to see and study different aspects of fine arts in its paintings, sculpture, wood carving and architecture.

Nepal's Unique Treasures

Mt. Everest - Highest Point on Earth

Kumari - The Living Goddess

Lumbini - Birth Place of Lord Buddha

Outdoor Attractions & Activities

Few destinations in the world can match Nepal in the variety of world-class experience - be it mountaineering, trekking, mountain biking, nature tours, culture tours, pilgrim tours, white-water-rafting, canyoning (cascading), kayaking, canoeing, mountain flights, pony trekking, jungle safaris, bird watching, fishing/angling, paragliding, ultra-light aircraft ride, bungy jumping; we have it all. Special interest tours like orchid tours, culture trek, honey hunting, village tours, fossil hunting, meditation courses, Shamanism-Panimism tour, cave tours, snow leopard and blue sheep trek and other kinds of tours are carried out for select groups throughout the year. For organizing your tours, please contact: Nepal Association of Travel and Tour Agents (Tel: 4418661, 4419409, Web site: www.natta.org.np) or Nepal Association of Tour Operators (Tel: 4418999, Web site: www.nepaltouroperators.org).

Trekking

Nepal is the ultimate destination for the trekking enthusiast - offering a myriad of possibilities from the short and easy to the demanding challenges of the snowy peaks. Easy, moderate or rigorous - there is something for every one. Nepal has aptly been called "A Trekkers' Paradise" as her terrain - mountains, hills and the Terai - offer some of the most spectacular trekking routes in the world. The immense contrasts in altitudes and climates found here support an equally spectacular mix of lifestyles, vegetation and wildlife. Trekking in Nepal is as much a cultural experience as a Himalayan adventure. In the shadows and foothills of the icy pinnacles of the Himalayas, one passes picturesque charming villages inhabited by diverse ethnic groups. Treks vary from expeditions, high altitude treks to simple easy paced walks. For more information about trekking, please contact Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (Tel: 4427473, 4440920, Web site: www.taan.org.np).

Mountaineering

With eight of the highest peaks in the world, including Mt. Everest, it is hardly surprising that Nepal has been the stage for some of the most outstanding achievements in the world of mountaineering. The dauntless icy peaks have since decades challenged the bodies and spirits of the daring ones. All inquiries and arrangements for expeditions have to be made well in advance at the Ministry of Tourism & Civil Aviation, Mountaineering Section, Bhrikutimandap (Tel: 4256231/2, Fax: 4227281, Web site: www.tourism.gov.np) where the guidelines have been laid down.

Rafting/Kayaking/Canyoning

Few rafting rivers in the world can match the thundering course of the rivers of Nepal originating from the snow meltdown of the Himalayan terrain. The rivers gush through the twisted canyons, winding through calm valleys where small settlements are perched on the banks, taming out only as they spill out into the Indian plains to merge with the Ganges. A river-trip is one of the best ways to explore the typical cross-section of the country's natural as well as the ethno-cultural heritage with massive doses of adrenaline buzz on our world-class white-water thrills. An extreme sport popular in Europe, canyoning is now available in Nepal. It involves abseiling, jumping, sliding, climbing along waterfalls and steep cliffs to deep pools, giving the canyoneer the freedom to explore beautiful under-water landscape.

Village Tours

Village tours allow visitors to experience a stay in a typical Nepali village. This gives visitors an opportunity to observe the rich Nepali cultural tradition from the closest quarter and intermingle with the locals. Besides, any expenses made at that level directly contribute to the welfare of the local community, hence giving the visitor a sense of satisfaction. Village tours are conducted in Sirubari, Briddim, Ghalegaun, Ilam and other places.

For More Information:

Nepal Tourism Board

Tourist Service Center, Post Box: 11018
Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-4256909 Fax: +977-1-4256910
E-mail: info@ntb.org.np
Web site: www.welcomenepal.com

Tourist Information Counter
Tribhuvan International Airport (Arrival)
Tel: +977-1-2061011
Pokhara Tourist Service Center
Pardi, Pokhara, Tel: +977-61-465292, 463029,
E-mail: pntb@wlink.com.np

Tourist Information Center - Kakkarbhitia
Tel: +977-23-562252, E-mail: infontbktb@ntc.net.np
Tourist Information Center - Belhiya, Bhairahawa
Tel: +977-71-520197, E-mail: infontbbhw@ntc.net.np
Tourist Information Center - Gaddachowki, Mahendranagar
Tel: +977-99-523773, E-mail: infontbmhn@ntc.net.np



Gosainkunda Festival: The Ritual And The Risks

By **BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD**

Mountains are perceived to be the abode of the gods, and people have sought to obtain religious merit points (*punyam* Sanskrit, *sonamin* Tibetan) by ascending mountains to pray. Moses, Mohamed, Shiva, all have important association with mountains. Mountain worship in the Andes is also well known. Pilgrims since time immemorial have climbed up the mountain to worship their deity.

Unfortunately, many pilgrims ascending mountains suffer from mountain sickness and characteristically die quietly. If a trekker or a climber dies at high altitude, the incident is usually reported widely; furthermore, high altitude pilgrimage sites usually do not have the same allure as Mount Everest. Yet many thousands of pilgrims travel to high altitude regions in the Himalayas to pray. During Janai Purnima in many parts of Nepal, mostly high altitude areas, there will be celebration of Lord Shiva. Since many Nepali pilgrims will be going to Gosainkunda at that time it is relevant here to examine the magnificent spiritual myth that is associated with this pilgrimage.

On Aug 1, 2012, the eve of Janai Purnima, Gosainkunda lake (4300m) will be the venue for the climactic enactment of the greatest Vedic tradition. Before we discuss the health issues of ascending to Gosainkunda for a sacred dip in the lake, a word about the origin of this magnificent ritual.

In their quest for amrit (the elixir for spiritual immortality), the titans and the gods collaborated in churning the ocean. Mount Mandara was selected as the churning stick, Vasuki the king of serpents, would be the churning rope, and Vishnu himself in the form of a tortoise dove into the ocean to support with his back the base of the mountain. After Vasuki had been wrapped around the mountain, the titans laid hold of one end of the rope and the gods the other. They churned for a thousand years.

Unfortunately from the murky depths of the ocean, the first thing to rise was Kalakut, a deadly poison. The operation could not proceed further until someone

drank this concoction. Lord Shiva who was aloof and sitting at a distance was approached. He shook himself from his deep meditation and like Clint Eastwood surveyed the scene. Then he swallowed the poison in one gulp and his throat promptly turned blue (Nilakhanta, Blue Throat, is another name for Shiva). He needed to cool off the immense heat generated by Kalakut; so he dove into Gosainkunda Lake. In the memory of this selfless act by Lord Shiva, pilgrims annually take a holy dip in the lake and wash away their sins. But just like for the great Shiva, this pilgrimage is not risk-free.

Starting from Dunche in Rasuwa district, it is best to take 4 to 5 nights to reach the lake so that you are properly

acclimatized. You need to listen to your body and not push ahead relentlessly disregarding symptoms of acute mountain sickness (AMS) which are chiefly headache and nausea. Taking diamox, if you don't have sulphur allergy, will help to prevent and treat AMS. Drinking 2 litres of clean water (boiled or treated with chlorine/iodine tablets) per day will help avoid dehydration. Proper rain gear and carrying some table salt to deal with leech bites will come in handy. The lake area is completely packed during Janai Purnima so being psychologically prepared for some of the hardship will help. But you will be amply rewarded for your efforts. ■

CG

**असली स्वाद,
ताजा स्वाद!**

**Now with
Extra Glucose**

Rio
Goodness of Fruit n' Energy

**विटामिन Q
मनेको
QUALITY.**

Join Fastest Growing Food Chain



● Have a taste of Opportunity!



Royal.

Alina's Bakery Cafe

Jawalakhel

Tel.: 5520544

P.O.Box: 8975 EPC: 494

New Baneshwor

Tel.: 4782946

New Road

Tel.: 4253023

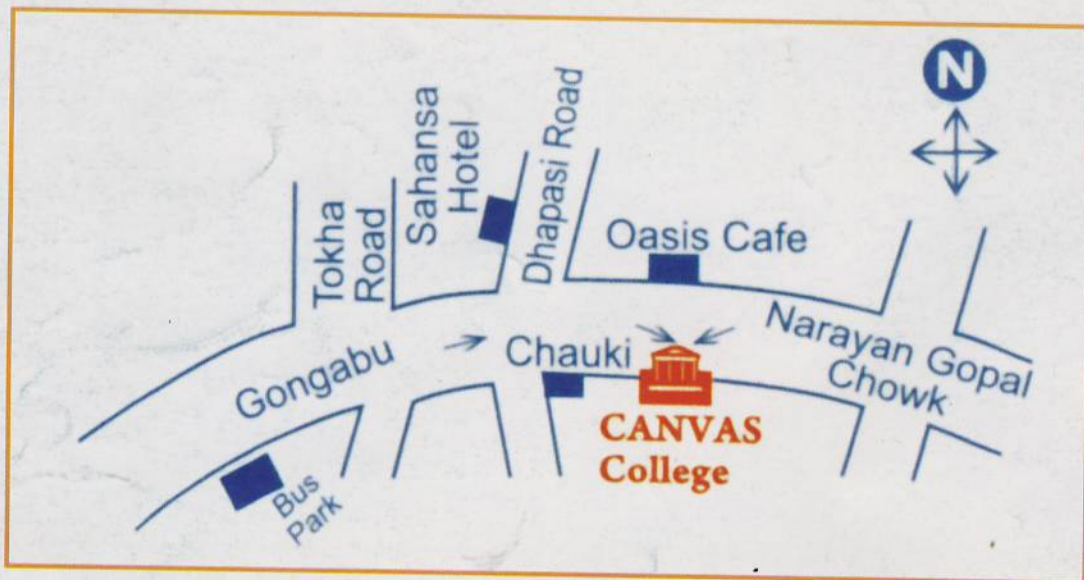
Integrated efforts for academic excellence

TU Program

- BA
- BBS

+2 Program

- Science
- Management
- Humanities



CANVAS
INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

Basundhara, Maharajgunj, Kathmandu

Ph.: 01-4380304, 4354280