



OPINION:
Dipak Gyawali



INTERVIEW :
Aditya Baral



FACE TO FACE :
Som Lal Subedi

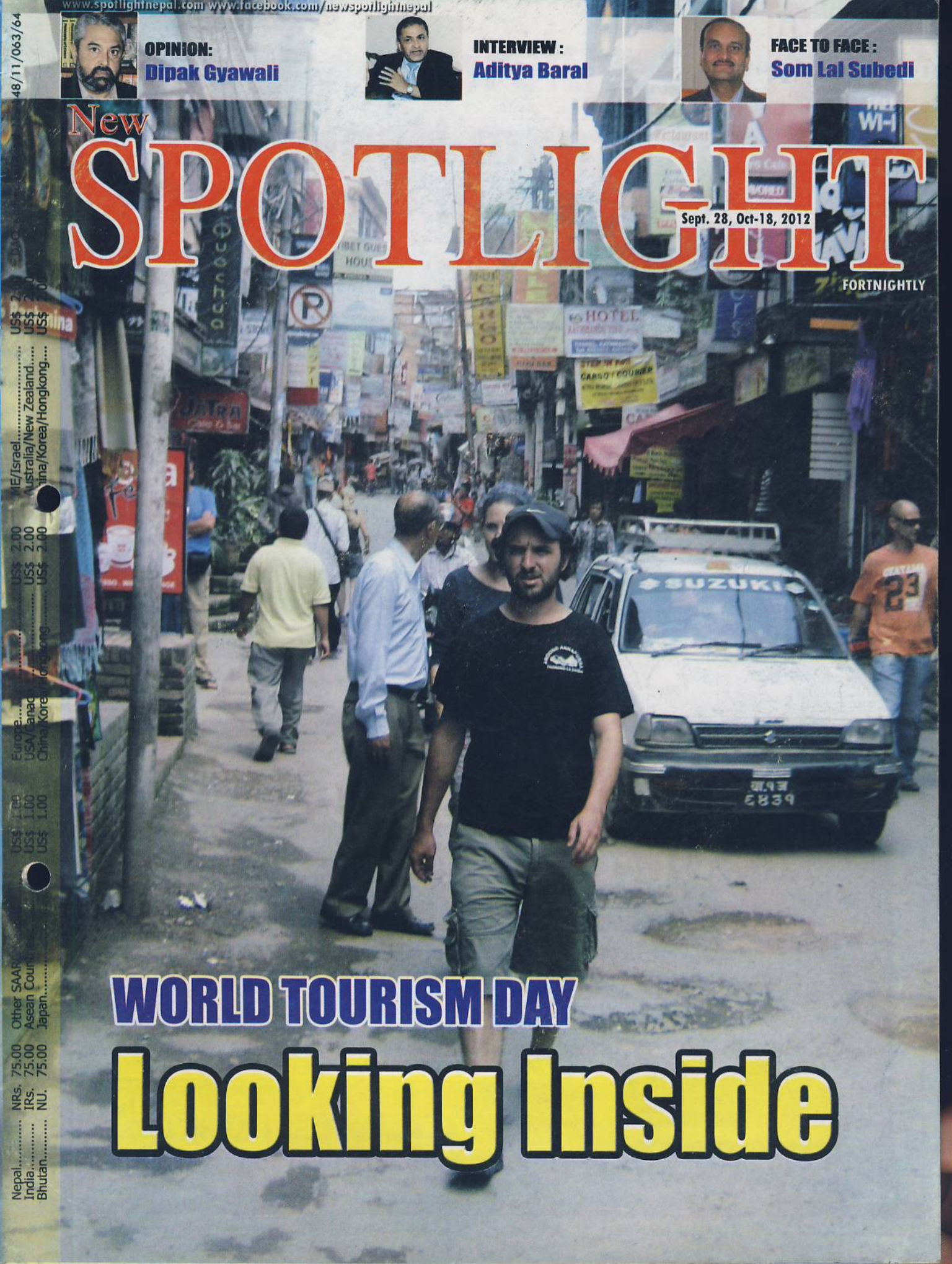
New

SPOTLIGHT

Sept. 28, Oct-18, 2012

FORTNIGHTLY

- Nepal..... NRS. 75.00
- India..... IRS. 75.00
- Bhutan..... NU. 75.00
- Other SAAR..... US\$ 1.00
- Asean Countries..... US\$ 1.00
- Japan..... US\$ 1.00
- Europe..... US\$ 2.00
- USA/Canada..... US\$ 2.00
- China/Korea/Hongkong..... US\$ 2.00
- Middle East/Israel..... US\$ 2.00
- Australia/New Zealand..... US\$ 2.00
- Japan/Korea/Hongkong..... US\$ 2.00



WORLD TOURISM DAY

Looking Inside

Your **Dream Home**, Not a Dream **Anymore**



NIBL HOME LOAN

@ 10.5%* Interest p.a.

*condition apply

SMS | home to 7755 or Contact your nearest NIBL Branch

For more information:

Retail Bank: 4228229, 4242530, EXT 304/324

www.nibl.com.np



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



Editorial

Despite several efforts of four major political parties, the country has yet to find any political settlement. Following long discussions, the question of revival of the Constituent Assembly is now over as the leaders of the major political parties agreed to hold the elections for a new Constituent Assembly. The main dispute, however, remains: who will lead the coming national consensus government to hold the elections tentatively planned for April 2013? Although Nepali Congress has been demanding that it should be given the chance to lead the next all-party election government, UCPN-Maoist has rejected this outright. No major breakthrough is likely before Dashain and Tihar. In the present context, it is almost certain that Nepal will have to pass through a prolonged political instability in the coming days. At a time when the country's debate is revolving around the political scenario, we have decided to carry tourism as our cover story for this week. Like other countries around the world, Nepal celebrated the World Tourism Day and our reporter has explored the importance of domestic sector to sustain tourism. Along with this, there are regular columns on various issues.



Cover Story: **WORLD TOURISM DAY** : Looking Inside

18



POLITICS: Accountability Question 7



INTERVIEW: Dr. Alexander Spachis 12

NEWSNOTES	2
BUSINESS BRIEF	3
OPINION: Dipak Gyawali	4
DIPLMACY: Nationalist Slogan, Opposite Action	5
DOCUMENT: Yang Houlan	6
SECURITY: The Right Man	8
ARTICLE: Madhu Raman Acharya	9
VIEW POINT: Dr. AB Thapa	10
DEVELOPMENT : Focus On Development	11
NEPAL POLICE: Towards Normalcy	13
FACE TO FACE: Som Lal Subedi	14
REVIEW: DhruvaHari Adhikari	15
PERSPECTIVE: Batu Krishna Uprety	16
FORUM: Dhan Prasad Pandit	17
ENVIRONMENT: Preserving Rhino	18
TRENDS: Aditi Aryal	21
INTERVIEW: Aditya Baral	22
ENTERTAINMENT	25
TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE	27
HEALTH: Buddha Basnyat, Md	28
NCELL LITERATURE FESTIVAL	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, Central Region Postal Regd. No. 36/067/068
 US Library of Congress Catalogue No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711 (Print), ISSN: 2091-0754 (Online)

Israeli Embassy clean Bajrabarahi

Spreading the message of clean environment for better health, the Embassy of Israel on 20 September 2012 organized a forest cleaning camp around Bajrabarahi Temple. The program was jointly organized with school children from Jyotidaya School, a local School at Bajrabarahi.

Embassy Staff and Shalom Club members joined students in cleaning the forest. The Embassy also installed locally made bins (Doko) to collect garbage and metal signs were placed at places giving message about clean forest.

Taking pride in contributing to the society for clean environment, H.E. Mr. Hanan Goder, Ambassador of Israel to Nepal said, "Nepal is a country which is

India pledges Rs 23.6 million for school in Nepal

India has granted Rs 23.60 million assistance to construct a school building in western Nepal.

A MoU was signed yesterday between Indian Embassy here and Nepalese authorities for granting the amount to Shri Mahendra Higher Secondary School in Achham district under Indian-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme.

The proposed building will provide better educational opportunity to over 1,300 students, about half of whom are girls, the Indian Embassy said in a statement on Thursday.

Besides, India has gifted two ambulances to health care facilities in the district.

Chinese Embassy hosted a reception

Chinese Embassy hosted a reception to celebrated 63rd Anniversary of Founding of the People's Republic of China. Deputy prime minister and minister of Home Affairs Bijaya Kumar Gachchhdar was a chief guest. "In this beautiful golden autumn, we ushered in the 63rd Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China. On behalf of the Chinese Embassy in Nepal, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the distinguished guests, and to all those who support the development of China and China-Nepal friendly relations," said Chinese Ambassador to Nepal.

"This year is also the 57th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Nepal. During the past 57 years, regardless of



the great changes both in international and domestic situations, the two countries have always maintained equal and mutual beneficial bilateral relations, and have always adhered to the principle of mutual understanding and mutual support in international affairs, which has set an example for the equal friendly relations between countries, no matter big or small. China will continue to promote the traditional friendship and share development opportunities with Nepal, and to push forward our comprehensive partnership of cooperation to a new height," said Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Yong Houlan.

the great changes both in international and domestic situations, the two countries have always maintained equal and mutual beneficial bilateral relations, and have always adhered to the principle of mutual understanding and mutual support in international affairs, which has set an example for the equal friendly relations between countries, no matter big or small. China will continue to promote the traditional friendship and share development opportunities with Nepal, and to push forward our comprehensive partnership of cooperation to a new height," said Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Yong Houlan.

Pakistan's Embassy Celebrated Defense Day

Embassy of Islamic Republic Pakistan celebrated Defense Day by hosting a reception. The chief guest of the program was Chief of Nepal Army general Gaurav SJB. Hosted by Military attaché of Pakistan Embassy, the reception was attended by Kathmandu based diplomats, military attachés, former ministers and high ranking officers of Nepal Army Police and government employees. The 6th of September is celebrated as a Defense of Pakistan Day.

Pacific Angel Nepal helps over 4,000 Nepalis

Despite the downpour of rain, over 300 Nepal Army, U.S. military and local community residents attended

the closing ceremony of Operation Pacific Angel at Machhapuchhre Higher Secondary School in Kaski District, Pokhara yesterday.

According to a press release of US Embassy, officiating over the ceremony was Nepal Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Nepal Bhusan Chand, Western Division Commander Major General Victor, and on behalf of the Commander of the U.S. Pacific Air Forces, Major General Russell J. Handy, Director of Operations, Plans, Requirements and Programs, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.



From September 10-15, over 4,195 local area villagers were given free medical assistance in pediatrics, optometry, physiotherapy, public health infection control, food safety, women's health and pre-post partum nutrition care. Two babies were born – one at the medical site and one taken to a hospital in Pokhara due to complications.

Book released

SAARC Secretary General Ahmed Saleem launched two books on SAARC co-edited by Dr. Nishchal N. Pandey and Tomislav Delinic on Sep. 6th. The program was addressed by Prof. C. Raja Mohan from India, Prof. Delwar Hossain from Bangladesh



and Prof. M.P. Lohani from Nepal. The program was organized by Centre for South Asian Studies and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. ■

"No New Licenses Should Be Given For Internal Airlines"

Rameshwar Thapa

President, Airlines Operators Association of Nepal (AOAN)

How is the current situation of the airlines in Nepal?

The time is not that good. At a time when the whole country is crippled by political instability, airlines have not been able to remain away from the mess. Although there has been no major implication of the global financial crisis, the airlines sector has not been able to stay away from the internal financial crisis. There are no major achievements in this field in the present situation.

It has been heard that it is difficult for the airlines companies even to cover their operational costs. Is that true?

Airlines business is far more challenging than other businesses. Like I have already said, when the whole country is going through crisis, airlines companies have not been able to remain away from it. Although right now, the time is difficult, for those who walk ahead properly, it won't be that difficult to sustain business. Due to the current overall gloomy condition, it is normal to have bad effects in this sector as well. No new licenses should be given for internal airlines for the betterment of this sector. There are enough airlines companies operating in Nepal and Nepal's market is small.

Isn't it time to search alternatives for the one and only international airport — Tribhuvan International Airport?

The country should have already built another international airport by now, if we analyze the travelers and airlines records, but this has not happened. Right now there is no space to park in the airport. There is traffic jam even in the air and it's very risky to work in such conditions.

Although there are various issues regarding the construction of second international airport in Pokhara, is it possible to construct international airport there?

As a pilot myself, I think it is possible to construct an international airport in Pokhara. There are no major issues in air routes and air spaces as well.

NADA Expo 2012 Concludes

NADA expo 2012 recently concluded as the biggest auto expo of the year after receiving a very encouraging response. According to organizers, this year's event broke all the previous records in terms of volume of transaction and number of visitors.

The Nepal Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) and Global Exposition and Management jointly organized the 8th NADA Auto Show 2012 at Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall from September 1.

"We saw the highest-ever transaction in the auto show," said Deepak Thapa, expo coordinator.

The show had a total of 100 stalls of 55 different companies. Some 50,000 people visited the expo and the total transaction at the expo amounted to some Rs. 700 million, according to media reports.

The expo was organized with the slogan—"Road Safety and Clean and Green City".

National College Marks Anniversary

The National College marked the 14th DevS Day and 17th college Anniversary on September 13, 2012 at the college premise, Baluwatar, Kathmandu. The event was organized with the theme of "Youth in Green Entrepreneurship."

Various activities like dance, music, fashion show, cultural program, and drama were performed by the students on the occasion.



Himalayan Bank and UnionPay Ink Agreement

Himalayan Bank and UnionPay, a Chinese bankcard association, entered into a partnership in Kathmandu, which allows UnionPay card holders to use automated tellers or swipe machines of Himalayan Bank to settle payments or withdraw cash.

Himalayan Bank currently has 900 swipe machines and 72 ATMs. Besides, 950 additional swipe machines of the bank's partner, Alpine Cards, and 1,100 ATMs of its partner network, SCT, will also accept UnionPay cards.

During the agreement signing ceremony, Chinese ambassador Yang Houlan said that two countries have witnessed growing interactions in economy, trade and tourism, and people's demand for high quality electronic payment services is growing.

"Being chosen as a partner of UnionPay in Nepal is a great honor for the bank," Ashoke SJB Rana, CEO of Himalayan Bank, said at the agreement signing ceremony. "We now can benefit from this partnership as the card has Asian focus and ownership."

NIBL Provides Rs.1.5 M to Friends Club

Friends Club has signed a sponsorship deal with Nepal Investment Bank Limited (NIBL). According to Friends Club officials, the deal is worth Rs 1.5 million and NIBL will be the title sponsor for a year. The club will also be named NIBL Friends Club during the contract period.

The Nepal Investment Bank Limited assured employment to a player of Friends' Club in the bank every year as per the recommendation of the club. The bank made the announcement during its signing ceremony with Friends' Club.

According to the deal signed by the CEO of the bank Jyoti Pandey and the club president Ratna Sumsher Rana, the bank will provide Rs 1.5 million annually to the A division outfit. Friends' had been without a sponsor after Investment left them in 2007.

Nepal Govt & UN Approve US\$ 700 M Program

The National Planning Commission and the United Nations Country Team in Nepal published the approved United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2013-2017 on 11 September 2012.

The UNDAF lays out a common development strategy for the UN Country Team in Nepal for the next five years. The US\$ 685 million package involving 24 individual UN agencies spans interventions aimed at assisting vulnerable groups better access development progress, activities aimed at protecting Nepal's development gains to date, and support aimed at facilitating Nepal's international cooperation. The strategy has been under preparation for over one year, in the process, involving hundreds of local and international subject-experts and officials.

Courier Services Hold 18th AGM

The 18th annual general meeting (AGM) of Courier Services Association of Nepal was recently held at Grand Norling Resort, Gokarna.

On the occasion, the AGM elected Khem Raj Panta and Durga Prasad Subedi as President and General Secretary respectively for the next three years



Yes, Fresh Mandate; But How?

—By DIPAK GYAWALI



So the neo-feudal party oligarchs from the four main parties (now splintered into many factions) were finally forced to admit the obvious: there is no legitimacy without a fresh mandate from the people. A Constituent Assembly elected for two years, and given two more as grace period, failed from its own contradictions and political incompetence to deliver a new secular, federal republic. The oligarchs and their rubber-stamp acolytes who populated the CA no longer represent the people of Nepal after their mandate expired; and Baburam Bhattarai is not really a prime minister: he is only a squatter, an illegitimate occupant with no moral authority to issue any decree whatsoever, and good only for the inauguration of seminars. Yes, fresh elections have to be held but for what? CA or a normal full-fledged parliament? Under which provisions? In how many constituencies? Decided by whom? When, November or April? And who rules the roost in the meanwhile? All these questions are now up in the air, and there is not one Loktantrick politician in sight in any of the main erstwhile big parties with any leadership veneer to elicit a respectful following among the Nepali people.

Earlier this week, a gathering was organized by a sister wing of RPP-N at Tripureshwar's Hotel Orchid to discuss these burning questions. It was interesting for the freshness of the debate compared to such gatherings organized by the big four Loktantricksters. Incisive presentations were made by the President of Nepal Bar Association as well as by the constitution expert Bhimarjun Acharya. The discussions that followed were marked by a boldness in laying out issues that is generally absent otherwise, since contradictions in the Loktantrick experiment are coyly swept under the carpet for fear of embarrassment.

There is much hair-splitting and impasse about amending the interim constitution to allow for elections, and whether this or only a 'consensus' government can do so with or without a parliament, or if the president has any authority to exercise his independent discretion. In this confusion, it was refreshing to hear a near unanimous consensus that an election to derive a fresh mandate derives from popular sovereignty of the people that overrides finicky legalisms. After all, it was recalled, the interim constitution itself was no constitution but merely a document of political consensus among agitating parties which allowed for CA elections in 2008, but which started tattering when that consensus evaporated in the election aftermath. With the collapse of the CA without delivering a new constitution, the interim constitution too lay dead; and a question mark now hangs over every institution created under it. Neither it nor the CA can be resurrected by any political Tantrik, simply because there is no one of Jamuna Gubhaju's stature around.

Those clamouring for a CA resurrection, however, do have a point: if it was possible to revive a dead parliament well into *rigor mortis* beyond its mandated five years in 2006, why should it not be possible now? The simple answer is that it was wrong then, wrong now and wrong ever into the future; and its consequences for sane governance are all too obvious by now. The gathered experts were quite emphatic that

constitutionalism was murdered in Nepal the day that the parliamentary parties insisted on the resurrection of the date-expired, third parliament of 1999 (dissolved because of Nepali Kangress infighting in 2002, lest we forget) by applying spiteful foreign pressure on a Nepali head-of-state. That the Seven Parties and Maoists with their bevy of civil society "useful idiots" (to use Lenin's memorable phrase) were mere pawns in the game is now too nakedly admitted by Baburam, his guru Muni as well as former Indian foreign secretary Shyam Sharan and the then finance minister Pranab Mukherjee. Moreover, it was the traditional authority of the King which allowed for that Jamuna Gubhaju feat to be exercised; but with the monarchy backstabbed subsequently, none of the political dwarfs on the stage currently have the legitimacy to exercise such an option.

The more complicated explanations from the legal experts was that, of the scores of global cases of CA, only two have ever delivered a constitution and they happened only because of some fortuitous local conditions. The odds of Nepal being an exception were impossibly high and so it proved to be. If this CA could not deliver a constitution even by doubling its shelf-life, the chances of it doing so – either through resurrection of the deceased one or even by fresh elections for a new one – with un-chastised and thus unreformed parties and their failed leaders at the helm is still next to zero. (And lest we forget, these very party leaders failed both the 1990 and 2006 democratic exercises! What 'hope-against-hope' prompts some to believe they will reform and deliver?)

Furthermore, it is not as if Nepal never had a constitution or democracy

for that matter. It was interesting to note that the Panchayat constitution was made very locally in one month and lasted thirty years (despite distortions in 1975 by hardliners). The 1990 constitution was made in six months with limited foreign inquisitiveness and lasted fifteen years (it died purely because its creators stabbed it in the back even while calling it "the world's most perfect"). With four years and some seventy billion rupees of foreign funding, the one for the federal secular republic could not even get properly scribbled on the drawing board! For anyone willing to appreciate this inverse relationship, the smell of Nepali earth itself gives the answer.

How did this CA nightmare even come about, and to what purpose? It started in 1951 with King Tribhuban reading off a mis-translated from Hindi, "Delhi" agreement that promised both republicanism (*'ganatantra'*, the term then for democracy) and CA. It took the understanding of both King Mahendra and BP Koirala to give them a decent burial in 1957; but the Left, whose philosophy was essentially one of destabilization and anti-reform (to create the chaotic conditions that Leninism needs for total state capture), kept it on life-support till the statecraft immaturity of Baburam and Prachanda, and the opportunism of Kangress and UML, assured its revival in 2006, to disastrous consequences that we all see today. The gathering felt that Kangress and the UML have a lot of explaining to do before Nepali history why they felt CA was irrelevant in 1990 and why they thought is relevant enough to dump their "world's best 1990 constitution" in 2006. They will



Leaders of All Party

hardly be able to dominate the political mainstream without a satisfactory soul-searching, which promises to be far from flattering.

Coming after the Muni revelations, the Orchid Hotel gathering saw this phase of CA adventurism as a clear attempt at fragmenting Nepal for geopolitical ends. How otherwise can one explain a neighbour taking the position of "unitary Tarai and fragmented Hills" when the Tarai is as ethnically and linguistically diverse as the Hills? It took strong grassroots reaction in Nepal rejecting such federalism as well as another neighbour's displeasure, passed through Vaidya, which put an end to that meddlesome phase of "nation restructuring". Indeed, as the scorecard currently stands, the Mughlanis have been the net losers in the geopolitical Great Game. If under a monarchy all of Nepal was a buffer zone, their "unitary Tarai and fragmented Hills" policy has alienated much of the Hill ethnicities and effectively pushed the northern "emotional border" further south to the Churey-Bhabar zone and beyond.

What next? Some agreement has to be reached on how free and fair elections can be held soon. However, given the inedible omelette that has been made of statecraft in the last six years compounded with the deep distrust that exists between and within the main big political parties, any consensus on the thorny questions outlined in the first paragraph above is well-nigh impossible. The Mughlanis, the self-styled "international community" of the Euro-Americans who effectively outsourced their foreign policy to Delhi in 2005 as well as the Chinese would love to play referee here. But then the credibility of the first two after the collapse of the CA is questionable and the effectiveness of the latter doubtful, especially given the contradictory geopolitics between the two sets. Given that the country is politically back to the situation it was in ten years ago, one must begin corrective measures from the wrong turns taken then. According to the legal Doctrine of Eclipse, it is still there, the 1990 constitution: only the six-year eclipse of CA adventurism has ended. Legitimate elections can be held under it; and what one does not like under it can be resolved by a referendum. Does the current crop of big party leaders have the moral courage to admit mistakes and to opt for this least damaging logical alternative? Now that is what is really doubtful. ■

FOREIGN MINISTER SHRESTHA

Nationalist Slogan, Opposite Action

Foreign Minister Naryankazi Shrestha's mission seems to damage Nepal's core national interests by changing posture with Nepal's traditional friends

By A CORRESPONDENT

Like all radical communists, deputy prime minister Naryankazi Shrestha has heavily criticized BIPPA and other bilateral agreements with India to prove himself as a nationalist. However, his recent activities and agenda taken to the UN general assembly are likely to produce anti-national results.

By hurting Kathmandu-based western diplomats based in Kathmandu, who are more concerned with Nepal's development and well being of people rather than the security interests, Shrestha has shown where he will ultimately be taking Nepal's core interests.

Foreign ministry's recent directions to Kathmandu-based western diplomatic missions not to call on the president and ask the ministry's role INGOs registration, foreign minister Shrestha has shown how he wants to behave with western development partners. Due to his dealing with the United Nations Human Rights Commission and UN officials, Nepal's Peace Keeping Mission in the United Nations is under threat.

Irritating the world's super power by seeking an 'explanation' for a meeting between US assistant minister and Tibetan Refugees, foreign minister Shrestha is now taking another step to embarrass Bhutan. When Bhutan is contesting the elections for United Nations Security Council with support from China, deputy prime minister and foreign minister Shrestha has already said that he is going to raise Bhutanese refugees issue. This is going to embarrass both Bhutan and China. Given the current political situation, Shrestha is also going to request SAARC foreign ministers to postpone the SAARC summit.

At a time when Nepal's over 70 percent development budget is coming from the western countries, including INGOs, foreign minister Shrestha's actions will have far reaching consequences in Nepal's long term development. His mission is to prepare a code of conduct to limit the role of diplomats based in



DPM Naryankazi Shrestha

Kathmandu. This will be similar to one which was developed by Uprendra Yadav.

"Shrestha cannot control or restrict activities of diplomats of Nepal's southern neighbor. However, his ministry's code of conduct will somehow restrict Chinese diplomats, but it will largely affect western diplomats and other development partners who have genuine concerns for Nepal's development," said a retired Nepalese foreign ministry official. "At a time when even the countries like North Korea and Cuba cannot go for international isolation, nobody knows how foreign minister Shrestha can imagine it."

"I will raise the refugee issue with Bhutan," Shrestha told the media, before leaving for the United Nations General Assembly. "I will also discuss matter related to 18th SAARC summit with ministers of SAARC," he added.

"I will request the international donor community to assist us as per our national priority programs. Nepal will also convey to the world community to take into account our national sensitivities while dealing with the issue of Tibetan refugees," minister Shrestha said.

Shrestha left for New York by leading a dozen delegates, including Foreign Secretary Durga Prasad Bhattarai and UN Division Chief at MoFA Dipak Dhital. Although deputy prime minister Shrestha harps on nationalist slogans, the results of his actions are producing the opposite. ■

Nepal And India Are China's Good Neighbors

By YANG HOULAN



Firstly, China and India have enough space to cooperate and what we face is a golden period to grow China-India relations. In the mid 1950s, China and India in response to the call of the time, jointly initiated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence which are still shining with strong vitality. The world is undergoing drastic and profound changes, China and India, both ancient civilizations and major developing countries whose combined population accounts for nearly two-fifths of the world's total, once again responded to the call of our time. Our two countries have seized the historic opportunity of economic globalization and achieved the rapid development. We are now the two largest emerging countries in the world and play increasingly important roles in regional and international affairs.

I am happy to note that since the beginning of the new century, the China-India Strategic Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity has continued to grow rapidly and our friendly cooperation has yielded fruitful results. The trade volume between our two countries has grown from \$ 2.9 billion in 2000 to \$ 73.918 billion last year, which increased more than 20 times in ten years.

While working hard to develop itself, China is fully committed to develop a long-term friendship and cooperation with India, promotes the growth of China-India relations with the concept of peaceful development in a positive light and good neighbor. China always views India's development in a positive light and we regard each other as major partners and friends, not rivals. Premier Wen Jiabao once said that the world has enough space for China and India to cooperate and develop jointly. I think, if the 2.5 billion people of the two countries join hands to promote common development, it will not only benefit the two countries and the two peoples, but also the countries in this region, and will promote the revitalization of Asia. If China and India strengthen collaboration, it will greatly enhance the strength and confidence of the developing countries and promote the development of the international order towards a more just and reasonable direction.

Secondly, China-Nepal relations have been developed comprehensively, and what we face is the huge potential to promote cooperation.

For many years, China and Nepal have treated each other as equals and given each other mutual understanding and respect. China firmly pursues the principle of non-interference in internal affairs of other countries. We respect the rights of the Nepalese people to choose their own social system and model of development. We support Nepal's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity and are happy to see an early conclusion of the peace and constitutional process in Nepal and the emergence of a stable, united and prosperous Nepal. The Government of Nepal has consistently adhered to the One China Policy and firmly supports China on issues involving China's core interests. No matter how the international and domestic situation changes, the friendly relations between China and Nepal have been growing in a consistent, steady and healthy manner on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Both

Nepal and India are China's good neighbors. China is glad to see Nepal develops friendly cooperative relations with India on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. China always supports Nepal to develop itself by seizing the opportunity and using its unique geographic position, and to play active role in the regional affairs.

I'm glad to see that in recent years, the pragmatic and mutual beneficial cooperation between the two countries has gained a strong momentum. More and more Chinese companies want to seek investment opportunities in Nepal. During Premier Wen Jiabao's visit early this year, he encouraged more competent companies to invest in Nepal and realize common progress. China will continue to encourage and support such trend, strengthen the pragmatic cooperation, enhance people-to-people exchanges, share development opportunities, tackle the challenges and benefit the two countries and the two peoples. We also hope that the political forces of Nepal could reach consensus through negotiations and dialogues, completing the peace and Constitution-drafting process at the earliest to realize lasting stability and create better atmosphere for economic cooperation.

At present, the international situation is changing rapidly. But generally it's conducive to the development of the Asian countries. China and Nepal need to maintain stability to achieve the development. We once missed the opportunity of industrialization, but now we must seize the opportunities brought by globalization, accelerate the economic development and achieve the prosperity.

Thirdly, the good trilateral relations and cooperation among China, Nepal and India are in the interest of all parties and the region.

Nepal's two neighbors—China and India has realized rapid development, which brought a good opportunity for Nepal. The leaders of Nepal said many times that they hoped to be the dynamic bridge between China and India as well as between China and South Asia. China agrees with this point. At present, the China-India, China-Nepal and Nepal-India relations all keep an active development, which lay the foundation for good interaction for the three countries. I think, strengthening the interaction and exchanges among our three countries and realizing the win-win benefit is our common interests, and is also conducive to the stable development in the region.

China will stick to the policy of "building friendship and partnership with neighboring countries" with neighboring countries and South Asian countries. China is also willing to work with India to jointly support Nepal to realize stability and prosperity, and promotes mutual beneficial cooperation among our three countries.

Yang Houlan is Chinese Ambassador to Nepal. Excerpts of the statement delivered at a talk program on "India, Nepal and China: An Emerging Trilateral Relations in the 21st Century."

If China and India strengthen collaboration, it will greatly enhance the strength and confidence of the developing countries and promote the development of the international order towards a more just and reasonable direction.

BHATTARAI GOVERNMENT

Accountability Question

In the absence of proper accountability, the present caretaker government is making decisions with constitutional consequences

By KESHAB POUDEL

Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai-led government issued a direction to the heads of diplomatic mission based in the capital not to call on president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav. The government argued that diplomats cannot meet the president without its approval.

Prime Minister Bhattarai has already forwarded nine ordinances, including those on the amendment of the article of the Interim Constitution, and the Commissions on Disappearance, and Truth and Reconciliation. Similarly, the government has been defying the court order by giving pardon to its party workers convicted by the court in various criminal cases.

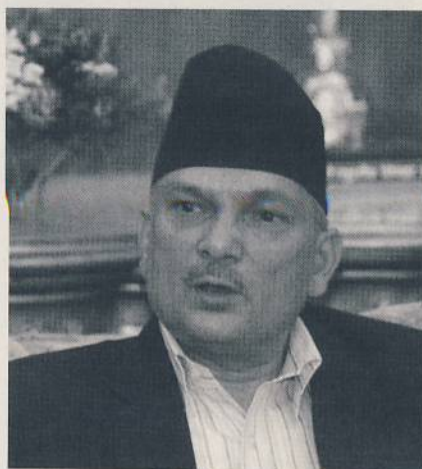
Four months after the natural death of the Constituent Assembly, in the midst of the growing uncertainty over the forthcoming elections, some of the decisions taken by the care taker government have sparked new rounds of controversy.

According to constitutional lawyers, Nepal has experimented with all different kinds of government in the last six decades of its democratic pursuit. But this is the first government in the history which is exercising sweeping powers without any accountability to anywhere and violating the constitutional order one after another.

The modern governments are accountable to various state organs, including president, elected legislature, judiciary, and political parties and legitimized by international recognitions and civil society.

However, this government is now defying all these forces. In his statement to the Press Council, the prime minister even urged the media to use 'respected words.' The prime minister also asked the rights groups, who are opposing the Disappearance and Truth and Reconciliation bills, to be mindful.

"Nepal has been under a unique situation with the government becoming accountable to nowhere. However, it is locking horns with every organization within the country and outside. The



PM Bhattarai

government has already demonstrated that it is not accountable to the President, Court, Opposition, Civil Society, and International forces," said a senior advocate and former attorney general on condition not to be named. "By defying the order of the court, the government seeks pardon for its members who were convicted under the existing laws. It is defying the opposition forces because they are not in a position to replace him through an elected body. As it denies the right of the people to vote by postponing the election date for an indefinite period, it is not accountable to the people either. As the government is instructing diplomats not to call on the head of state of Nepal, it shows that it is not accountable to international community," said a senior advocate and former attorney general on condition of anonymity. "Looking at its actions, one can draw the conclusion that this is the worst kind of dictatorial government in the present day Nepal."

However, others disagree. "Till the elections of the new Constituent Assembly to produce the new government, this is the only legitimate government and it can exercise full executive power to issue pardon, ordinance and directions to heads of foreign mission in Nepal," said advocate Khim Lal Devkota, who is close to UCPN-Maoist.

As there is no elected body, the government has already recommended a number of ordinances before the president. Opposition parties see this move as directed to rule the country under a decree.

"According to its performance, this is the most dictatorial government. The president should not endorse ordinances presented by the government," said Prem Bahadur Khadka, president of Nepal Bar Association. Only a full fledged government can issue ordinances, not a caretaker government."

Other lawyers hold different views. "The opposition call to the president to reject the ordinances recommended by the cabinet is a political move. As per the constitution, the executive power lies with the cabinet. But because the cabinet is presently a caretaker one, it has to recommend only those ordinances which are absolutely necessary for taking care of the country and its governance. If the ordinance is necessary for that purpose, then the president has no authority to say no. In short, the president should not take any steps which would create problems for the present government to take care of the country," said constitutional lawyer Purna Man Shakya in his Interview to *The Kathmandu Post*.

Who can issue ordinance?

Some lawyers argue that only a few governments, especially those constitutionally competent, can issue ordinances. That can be a full-fledged government having a parliament but when the existing parliament is not in session. Or, a government voted out in the parliament, waiting for the next government to be formed by the parliament.

However, the constitutional status of the present government is different. With no parliament or Constituent Assembly to form the next government and no legislature for the immediate future, everything including the date of elections and institutions to hold the elections are at stake. More importantly, there is no possibility of forming the next government. This government cannot issue ordinance because this is not a constitutionally competent government

Given the present political state, it seems unlikely that the present set of government will change in the near future and the debate on the supremacy of law and constitution is just for public consumption. ■



Army Chief Rana (Centre)

COAS GAURAV SUMSHER JBR

The Right Man

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gaurav Sumsher Rana starts his job with modesty

By KESHAB POUDEL

At a time when the country's institutions are crumbling one after another, the people and the media have shown a high level of optimism with the appointment of general Gaurav Sumsher Rana as the Chief of Army Staff of the Nepalese Army.

Given the state of political instability, it is natural for people to feel some relieved with the appointment of capable and elegant personality like general Gaurav to lead the oldest security institution.

"The right is to work only, never to its fruits: let not the fruits-of-action be thy motive, nor let thy attachment be inaction," COAS Gaurav Sumsher Rana wrote in his face book wall.

"I am grateful to all of you for your support and best wishes on my promotion and assumption of office of the Chief of Army Staff. I appreciate the time you took to go through my page. I am overwhelmed by all your invaluable comments and suggestions. They have added to my resolve to work even harder to achieve the high expectations that have been placed before me. I hope for

your continued support in my efforts to curb graft, deliver justice and pursue modernization. The Nepalese Army is an institution that is raised from and supported by the people of Nepal. It is a collection of ordinary citizens of Nepal, trained to collectively achieve the uncommon. Your rational and critical observations are necessary to lead us to our goals."

Along with the newspaper headlines, congratulatory words and comments from various walks of life welcomed the newly-appointed Chief of Army Staffs (CoAS). However, his job is challenging.

"The history of the Nepalese Army is largely the history of modern Nepal. This gallant institution has stood firm to serve the interests of Nepal and the Nepalese people, be it against external threats, internal threats or in times of disaster. Today, I feel privileged to lead this proud institution and assure that I shall leave no

stone unturned to maintain its apolitical nature and to abide by national policies to maintain a professional and efficient Nepalese Army," said COAS Rana.

Known for his clean image and professionalism, Rana, however, faces various challenges to improve the professional military organization of 93,000 strength. The most important challenge before General Rana is to bring about structural changes in the organization by winning the confidence of the government, said Shiva Ram Pradhan, a retired major general. "Many generals are compelled to retire young due to the stalled restructuring process. With his clean image and clear vision along with strong leadership quality, Rana can expedite the stalled restructuring process of the NA," Pradhan said, adding,

"It will be the prime duty of Rana to maintain professionalism of the NA intact and strengthen ability of the army to safeguard democracy in the face of current critical political situation," said Chitra Bahadur Gurung, retired lieutenant general.

Born in 1955, General Gaurav Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana is the son of late major general Aditya SJB Rana. A direct descendent of Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher, Rana followed his father's footsteps by training in the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, United Kingdom, and was commissioned into the Purano Gorakh Battalion in 1974. Rana is an alumnus of the US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, USA and the National Defense University, Pakistan. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in History from Tribhuvan University and Masters Degree in Defense and Strategic Studies from Quaid-E-Azam University of Pakistan. ■

Global Coverage

Air Express/Courier Service

Air/Sea Cargo

Commercial Shipment

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

APEX
WORLDWIDE EXPRESS

"THE GLOBE IS IN OUR HAND"

AWE
COURIER COMPANY



Nepal's Climate Diplomacy Politics And Diplomacy Of Climate Negotiations

By MADHU RAMAN ACHARYA

"Climate diplomacy" is back. Climate negotiations have entered serious level, as the stage is set for launching a new round of ambitious negotiations starting the upcoming Doha climate conference in November-December this year. As Nepal has been elected chair of the climate negotiating group of the least developed countries (LDCs) for next two years, there is a lot to prepare nationally as well as in Nepal's capacity of chairing the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries. It would be worthwhile to understand the politics and diplomacy around climate negotiations, and imperatives of climate diplomacy for Nepal.

Under the framework of the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention (UNFCCC), climate negotiators are meeting regularly since 2009 under what is called as Conference of Parties (COP) to develop a future discourse on climate, including long-term international

on Climate Change (IPCC), which has already produced its four reports, fifth due by September 2014. There is a broad consensus that the rise of global temperatures should be limited to 2 degrees Celsius at 1990 levels, despite some groups demanding even more ambitious limits as low as 1 degree Celsius. The UNFCCC speaks of limiting "dangerous levels anthropogenic interference", leaving the question as to what is "dangerous" and how much of that is "anthropogenic" (human-induced) making it open for scientific and political interpretations.

One of the fundamental bases of new climate negotiations is that it allows both developed and developing to set their own national emission targets and mitigation policy actions. Despite its several flaws like lack of binding nature of commitments, the so called *bottom-up approach*, is participatory and has already resulted into announcement of national

The industrialized countries wanted to proceed with negotiations on a single track, which was rejected by developing countries as that would leave a huge gap of period without a treaty, probably a decade or more.

emission cut target by several countries including China,

policy and commitments under a binding treaty regime. As agreed in the Copenhagen Accord (2009), negotiators are supposed to focus on two tracks. First is the negotiation for a "second commitment period" after the expiry this year of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on climate change, which is only available instrument which binds the industrialized countries to take obligatory actions on climate change. Second is the negotiation for long-term enhanced action for creating a legally binding outcome for a future climate discourse. The industrialized countries wanted to proceed with negotiations on a single track, which was rejected by developing countries as that would leave a huge gap of period without a treaty, probably a decade or more. It is worth remembering that the Kyoto Protocol signed in 1997 took eight years to come into effect in 2005 due to long ratification process associated with the process.

It is good that the debate on climate change has now moved from science, as there is convergence of view and widespread support of the scientific findings of the Inter-governmental Panel

United States, European Union, and the like. In climate conference in Cancun (2010), 39 non-annex countries pledged their national commitments in this regard, apart from the Annex-I countries which have binding obligations to national commitments on account of their being party to the Kyoto Protocol.

For countries like Nepal, the test of climate policy and action is how the communities will see change in their adaptation to the adverse effects climate change which they are already experiencing. Of crucial importance to Nepal is also the issue of protection of the Himalayan ecosystem against the adverse effect climate change, including through the melting of glaciers. Comprehensive framework for adaptation will also need to address the needs for disaster risk reduction. The indispensability and vulnerability of mountain ecosystem in addressing sustainability found a reference in the Rio+20 declaration, thanks to Nepal's diplomacy as chair of the LDCs. This needs to be further pursued. The continuation of Adaptation Fund created from 2% from CDM under the Kyoto Protocol is also equally

important for us.

Given the diverse political interests of various negotiating groups, including the industrialized courtiers (represented by an *Umbrella Group*), the developing countries (represented by Group of 77 and China), and alliance of small island nations, the LDCs have a special responsibility and role to play, as the largest recognized negotiating bloc in climate negotiations. Besides, the diversity interests in each of these groups, including the LDCs itself, which comprises of small islands and Sub-Saharan countries as well, will also be a challenging aspect to handle.

Climate negotiation has to face several roadblocks ahead, including divergent seemingly irreconcilable positions leading to polarization of countries on each of the issues, procedural wrangling (even the terms of reference of the ad hoc working group created in Durban remains to be agreed), and lack of an agreed roadmap to negotiations, which working group will have to develop itself. Besides, the decision-making practice by consensus in UNFCCC negotiations, as is true with most such international negotiations, will nearly allow all major powers and groups a virtual veto power leading to the possibility of agreement on only the lowest common denominator, which is not what is required in a new ambitious climate change regime.

As negotiating chair on behalf of LDCs, Nepal has a special responsibility and role to play. Nepal's typical problems during bilateral as well as multilateral negotiations is lack of adequate preparations, lack of institutional memory, absence of continuity of personnel, weak mandating, poor sectoral coordination, and weak involvement of stakeholders. Given the cross-cutting nature of climate negotiations, it is welcome that the Government of Nepal has constituted a committee of experts to continue working on the issue and possibly to take part in the negotiations. Yet, there is a need to evolve a negotiating strategy, and to equip our negotiators with all the necessary facts expertise, and resources.

Excerpts of paper presented at recently held meeting Acharya is former foreign secretary and Nepal's permanent resident representative to UN. ■



Irrigation Benefit Of Power Projects

By DR. AB THAPA

Recently the government, perhaps in ignorance, took decisions on the implementation of major water resource projects with far reaching, adverse, consequences. The civil society show its concern and step in to prevent the plundering of the water resources.

The people have been kept in complete ignorance of the vast opportunities to produce abundant electricity, far more than what we would be able to consume in the foreseeable future with a relatively small capital investment or even almost free of cost, just like the way Canada did in the implementation of the Columbia hydropower projects. Even the Kingdom of Lesotho has done a similar work in the implementation of the Lesotho Highland projects.

Studies: By now Nepal would have been able to accelerate its industrial development across the country, primarily based on extremely cheap electricity produced by taking the comparative advantage of the vast hydropower potential of our water resources, if we had truly abided by the recommendations of the World Bank, FAO/UNDP, JAICA, GTZ etc. The recommendations were based on detailed feasibility studies carried out with enormous investments. But it is a great misfortune that our recent governments, instead of capitalizing on the comparative advantages of our water resources, are going ahead to kill even the most important and sensitive projects that are crucial for our country's quick economic development. There is an acute urgency that the full attention of the entire civil community, social and government organizations be drawn to avert the dire consequences of the government's mishandlings in order to save our water resources from being devastated.

Nepal's planners and policy makers are mistaken to consider that the benefit to accrue from our major water resources storage projects is mostly electricity generation and the irrigation benefit could be ignored. They seemed to be completely ignorant about the vast studies of our water resources projects carried out in the past. The detailed feasibility studies have clearly established that the irrigation benefit

to accrue actually to our country from large storage type projects would not just be comparable but it would even be far exceeding the power benefit. Let us take the case of the Kankai Storage Dam Project. According to the detailed feasibility study carried out under then West German Government assistance in 1980 the annual benefit to accrue from hydropower generation is only about US \$ 7.24 million whereas the annual irrigation benefit was found to be US \$ 31.46 million. The actual net irrigation benefit to accrue from other large multipurpose projects like the West Seti Project, Karnali(Chisapani) Project etc too are comparable to their power benefit.

Except for Sun Kosi, Kankai and Bhalubang (West Rapti) storage

Except for Sun Kosi, Kankai and Bhalubang (West Rapti) storage projects, the irrigation potential of other very large storage projects, like the Karnali, Kosi, West Seti Projects, are too great to be exploited wholly within our own country.

projects, the irrigation potential of other very large storage projects, like the Karnali, Kosi, West Seti Projects, are too great to be exploited wholly within our own country. Fortunately there is a good market for export of water to India. There is already an international practice to recover the value of exported water in terms of certain percentage on share of the benefits accruing to the water importing country. This type of benefit is called the downstream benefit.

Nepal's long years of persistent efforts to recover its share of downstream benefits has already produced concrete results. A few years back the Atal Bihari Bajpayee Government had constituted a high level commission to recommend to the Indian Government suitable ways to pay royalty to Nepal for regulated water flowing across the border into India. Unfortunately our recent governments are deliberately shutting their eyes to this issue which is extremely vital for the swift economic upturn of our country and also to provide people of our country very cheap electricity in abundance.

Sun Kosi: The necessity of a large storage type project to meet our own growing demand for power, as said in

some quarters, cannot be the justification to implement these projects without making proper arrangements to recover a certain percentage on downstream benefits accruing to India if the irrigation potential of such projects is too large to be fully exploited within our own country. There are other good alternatives. The government could now select a far more preferable project such as the Sun-Kosi diversion storage project or the West Rapti (Bhalubang) project, which are comparable to the West Seti Project in size, to meet our future demands for power. In addition to power, those two projects would have provided enormously large irrigation and flood control benefits within Nepal itself.

Apart from irrigating about 300,000 hectares of Eastern Terai, the Sun-Kosi project would have greatly helped to minimize the risks to life and property of tens of thousands of people living in Sunsari and Morang districts. Similarly the

West Rapti project would have provided year round irrigation over vast areas extending from the Gandak river to the further corner of Banke district.

Terai Politics. It is quite shocking that, very recently, the Ministry of Water Resources has decided to implement the Dudh-Kosi Storage Project that would considerably limit the area of the lands to be irrigated by the Sun-Kosi Project in Nepal. Unfortunately none of our water resources institutions, neither private nor public, raised their voices against this government decision. Even our main political parties and also the Terai based political parties, claiming to represent the interest of the Terai, are not at all seen to worry over such dreadful decision to ruin the irrigation prospect of the Eastern Terai. Apart from generation of cheap electricity and irrigation of almost the whole of Eastern Terai from Birgunj to Saptar-Kosi, the Sun-Kosi Project could be helping to save the life and properties of tens of thousands of people living in Sunsari, Morang and Saptari districts by controlling the maximum discharge and the high sediment flow of the Saptar-Kosi River ■

AIN

Focus On Development

Although AIN members have been working in various sectors like health, rights, infrastructure, drinking water and sanitation, their contribution to education is immense

By A CORRESPONDENT

Whether it is in education, health, drinking water, sanitation, rights based issues or reaching to the poor, International NGOs working in Nepal have been making immense contributions, which are visible in the country's overall progress.

Out of more than 200 International Non-governmental Organizations registered in Nepal, 103 are members of the Association of International NGOs (AIN), which brings over 8 billion rupees annually in Nepal. Out of this, 25 members of AIN spend over 1.3 billion rupees in the education sector.

At a workshop on the Role of INGOs in Education sector, organized by the Education

Working Group of AIN, various speakers discussed the contributions made by AIN members. Inaugurated by Joint secretary of Ministry of Education Janardan Sharma, the workshop saw various papers presented by experts.

Sharma hailed the role of INGOs, particularly the members of AIN, supporting the government's plan to improve education in the country.

"In more than 60 years of contribution in education development in Nepal, INGOs introduced the global level best practices and worked hand in hand with the government priorities and programs," said Kshitij Raj Prasai, coordinator of Education Working Group of AIN. "Twenty seven members associated in EWG allocated nearly NRS. 1,26,000,000 for education sector annually. They covered 70 districts focusing on formal education (basic education development, especially quality education and infrastructure). Along with working in infrastructure, they have also been introducing Global

level Innovative practices and working in grass roots in coordination with relevant organizations.

According to the reports, major players in education in terms of budgetary allocation are Room to Read, Save the Children, Plan Nepal, Care Nepal, World Education, World Vision International, UMN and VSO. They support the government programs and work in coordination with government agencies both at the central and district levels and complement to the government priorities.



Reward for Cause

Sharing the experiences on Community Library supports towards education, Sanjana Shrestha, country director of R E A D , highlighted how libraries are helping empower women and marginalized communities as well. Rohit Pradhan of World Vision highlighted citizen voices and action and education.

United Mission's Yagya Raj Pant shared how education helped empower women.

Along with this, the EDG also supported formation of NGO coordination forums, sharing of successful/best practices from organizations, awareness raising, participation in campaigns and movements such literacy, enrolment, capacity development of NGOs and local organizations. Moreover, AIN members also supported ECD development, formal education (Primary and basic education support including infrastructure development), capacity development (teachers, SMC, PTA, facilitators), vocational education, non formal education, library support, gender development, inclusive education, Scholarship support and material support and publications. ■

STUNTING

Stunting is a key factor holding back progress and well-being of children. Nepal faces a significant challenge with tens of thousands of children under five who are stunted, says a multi-sectoral report released by various organizations.

According to the report, about 41 per cent of Nepali children under five are suffering from stunting, a measure of chronic under nutrition. The consequences of acute malnutrition are profound, irreversible and lifelong. It heightens children's risk of death and damages the brain, ultimately impacting the physical development and the general health and well-being of a nation. It is estimated that it can impact as much as 10 per cent of lifetime earning among the affected and a reduction of up to 3 per cent of the country's GDP.

As Nepal's situation is alarming, prime minister Baburam Bhattarai launched the Multi Sector Nutrition Plan (2013-2017) formulated by National Planning Commission (NPC) as it was regarded as a milestone in Nepal's nutrition sector.

"We have envisioned achieving nutritional well-being of all people in Nepal to maintain a healthy life to contribute in the socio-economic development of the country," Prime Minister Bhattarai said. "Our mission is to accelerate the reduction in malnutrition, enhance our children's brain development and growth."

Supporting the highly anticipated plan, Hanaa Singer, UNICEF Nepal Country Representative, said, "Malnutrition has been a silent emergency in this country; insidious and pervasive, affecting the health, intellectual capacity and productivity of Nepalis, from generation to generation. What has impressed us most is the high level leadership and commitment to uplift the profile of nutrition in the national development agenda and to make nutrition cross the traditional boundaries that it had been relegated to, and making it a matter of concern to other sectors like education, sanitation, agriculture and finance too."

The Multi Sector Nutrition Plan focuses its intervention during the first one thousand days of life. The period from conception to a child's second birthday is critical when young children lose their chance to thrive cognitively and physically if poorly nourished. The aim of the plan is to reduce chronic malnutrition by one third over the next 5 years and within 10 years, bring it down to the level that it no longer hampers the human development capital. ■

“Our Policy Is One Of Non-Intervention; We Are Friends And Well-Wishers Only

DR. ALEXANDER SPACHIS

At a time when Nepal has been passing through a very difficult time, DR. ALEXANDER SPACHIS, Ambassador, Head of European Union Delegation to Nepal, spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT about various issues. Excerpts:

How would you describe EU-Nepal relations in your capacity as the EU Ambassador to Nepal?

Nepal has privileged relation with the European Union and I am proud to serve as the first Resident Ambassador and Head of a fully fledged EU Diplomatic Mission here in Kathmandu. The close and friendly relationship between Nepal and the EU dates all the way back to 1977. The EU's primary aim is to be a trusted partner in Nepal's well being stability, prosperity, ongoing development, and we are a key investor in Nepal's peace, education and economic capacity building, for a democratic and inclusive society.

Our policy is one of non-intervention; we are friends and well-wishers only. Our funding priorities are determined by the requests of our partners in Nepal and align with government strategy. In this sense, the EU is one of the few donors in Nepal that uses systems of government for budget support despite challenges in the area of governance and accountability. Both these principles lie at the heart of EU Development cooperation and we remain committed to prioritise initiatives geared towards promoting democratic governance and accountability as well as human rights.

Nepal is still struggling to push ahead with the peace process, as a well-wisher of Nepal, how does the European Union look at the present scenario?

Nepal's peace process has reached important landmarks. In recent weeks, the process of integrating Maoist combatants into the Nepal Army has been resumed and looks likely to be completed with minimal disruption. Discussion about consensus-building among the parties have resumed as well.

Despite these positive aspects, Nepal's existing institutional arrangements are incomplete, and require the major political parties and

all stakeholders to work together to avoid serious instability. At present, there is no clear legislative process and no easy way of filling vital posts that lie empty in various constitutional bodies. The strains inherent in passing only a one-third budget are beginning to show, and consensus on some hotly-contested constitutional issues remains elusive. On the local level, the long-term absence of elected bodies has had negative consequences for accountability and service delivery. Local elections even in absence of the Constituent Assembly elections or the parliamentary elections are one of the foundations of empowering people at the local level.

In this constitutional vacuum, legitimacy can come only from wide consensus and public approval. The political parties are doing the right thing by holding talks to reach an agreement on the way forward. In Nepal's immediate future, we need to see rapidly a new constitution and in any case the holding of free, fair and impartial elections. It is not for me to say what is the best option, as this is a decision for Nepalese. On the one hand, we hope that the parties will work to preserve the achievements that have been made in the process of constitution-writing and consensus-building over the last few years. On the other hand, political leaders know that they must remain accountable to the people who elected them.

Whatever route is taken out of the current difficulty, considerable challenges are to be expected in Nepal's journey towards sustainable democracy and political stability in the longer term. But these challenges can be met. The countries of the European Union have passed through similar challenges. It was a common resolve of the countries and peoples affected by the worse atrocities of war and instability that inspired the European Union. While it is not for the EU to decide on what is best for Nepal in terms of federal restructuring, I cannot stop thinking that in view of Europe's own experiences of devolution and working in close connection with its regions, empowering people outside of the central



system remains indispensable to ensure accountability and better control of spending of resources at all levels.

Your Excellency, can you share some of your insights on dealing with post conflict issues?

Enduring peace is a precondition for sustainable democracy. Although major gains have been made in the peace process this year, ensuring transitional justice according to international practice remains a challenge. Experiences across the world show that post-conflict impunity creates a dangerous precedent for the future and that transitional justice institutions are essential in breaking cycles of violence. It would therefore be in the interests of long-term peace and prosperity that Nepal acts now to secure justice for the victims of human rights abuse. Commitment to human rights is one of the core values of the EU, and we have been unwavering in our commitment to the protection of human rights in Nepal, also through projects supported by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

Despite the risks and challenges, this is a time of huge opportunity for Nepal. Since it has emerged from a period of intense conflict, Nepal's commitment to multiparty democracy and constitutionalism has not been in question. As a result of increased

political consciousness, engagement and mobilization among the population, Nepal's democracy is deeper now than it was in 1990. If political parties and civil society organisations continue to hold one another accountable and work hard to generate consensus, then democracy can be further consolidated and the expectations of the Nepali people met, despite the many challenges that remain.

What could be a way forward for Nepal?

Elections represent a further opportunity for reengagement and renewal. Elections will allow the Nepali people to give their verdict on the performance of the parties and to confer a fresh mandate upon them. Hundreds of thousands of young people will be able to participate in a formal democratic process for the first time. The EU is a major supporter of Nepal's Election Commission. We have funded the Electoral Support Project (implemented by UNDP), which aims to strengthen its capacity and build up the skills of its staff. This fine institution is a crucial pillar of Nepal's democracy. The EU has also funded voter education programs by Nepali NGOs in some of the remotest parts of the country. Whatever decision is taken by the Nepali people, it remains my opinion that elections – whether it is for a new Parliament or a new CA – should better take place sooner rather than later.

The EU Delegation is fully supportive of Nepal's efforts towards creating lasting peace, stability and prosperity, to meet the aspirations of its citizens. We do so by supporting the poorest, the marginalised, and the excluded communities and regions. Our programmes are exclusively based on need, and not on any other preferences. We will continue our assistance and funding in partnership with and through the channels of the government and civil society organisations. We believe that our financial difficulties at home should not affect our commitments abroad. We look forward to the conclusion of the peace process and to the promulgation of a new constitution. Stable political conditions would enable the assistance that we provide to be used even more constructively and sustainably. We want Nepal to be able to make the best possible use of us.

In all of our relationships and activities, we seek to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of peace, stability, democracy, human rights and prosperity. This has been a period of profound transformation for Nepal and, although the final outcome is still uncertain, we are confident that these same principles will find expression in the political institutions and policies that are adopted. ■



NEPAL POLICE

Towards Normalcy

The month long media controversy over the chief of police comes to an end following the appointment of Kuber Singh Rana as the chief of Nepal Police

By A CORRESPONDENT

Unlike in the army, there is a wide media controversy in the process of appointment of police chief. Finally, the government has appointed AIG Kuber Singh Rana as the new Inspector General of Police (IGP). Known for his soft and gentle behavior, the challenge before him is to lead over 100,000 strong police institution to maintain law and order in the country.

At a time when Nepal Police has been facing several kinds of controversies, including scandals which tarnish the image of Police, Rana will have to take careful measures.

AIGs Kuber Singh Rana, Bhisma Prasai and Navaraj Dhakal were the contenders for the top position in the Nepal Police. Rana was earlier given a clean chit by the court regarding the case of human rights abuses during the conflict period. Whatever the rumors that appeared in the media, Rana, Dhakal and Prasai, from the batch of 1983, were competent and professional cadre of Nepal Police. Of them, AIG Rana was the senior

most. He was elevated to the post of AIG three months earlier than Dhakal and Prasai after IGP Rabindra Pratap Shah succeeded Ramesh Chand Thakuri.

Prior to his appointment as the IG, Rana had served as Metropolitan Police Commissioner, chief of Eastern Region Police Office in Pokhara, Director of Training Directorate in Nepal Police Headquarters, chief of Narcotic Drug Control Law Enforcement Unit, and chief of two zonal offices and seven district police offices.

In the capacity of Chief of Police, he will also serve as the Head of (Nepal Central Bureau) NCB-Nepal, a contact point of Interpol.

He was born in Baugha Gumba-5 of Palpa on 21 July 1960. Rana graduated with Bachelor's of Arts from Tribhuvan University in 1982. In his career in the law enforcement agency spanning over 28 years, he is best known as an honest, dutiful, hardworking and professional cop maintaining zero tolerance on corruption. ■

'Ministry To Contain Foreign Job Fraud'

SOM LAL SUBEDI

At a time when foreign employment issues are becoming thorny, SOM LAL SUBEDI, Secretary at the Ministry of Labor and Employment, has taken several steps to reform it. Energetic and young, Secretary Subedi has taken some important steps in the last ten months of his tenure in the Ministry. Excerpts:

How do you view the foreign employment sector?

This is one of the high priority sectors of the government. The prime minister himself has shown the interest to make it respectful and organized so that no Nepali will suffer humiliation in foreign employment.

What are the major steps you have taken in the area of foreign employment?

Basically, there was no policy in the past. Now there is a policy document on foreign employment. It is a matter of pride for me that the government has already endorsed the Foreign Employment Policy 2068 and we have already prepared its Implementation Framework. Similarly, the Ministry continues the process of reforms initiated earlier to contain the malpractices and corruption in Department of Foreign Employment. One of the important parts is that the government has already approved Foreign Employment Authority Regulation 2068 and it is not under implementation. The double stickers system was introduced to identify those who want to go for foreign employment on individual basis and under organized scheme. After agreement on calling visa system in Malaysia, Nepali workers feel more secure.

What other steps have you taken?

After a long gap, the meeting of Foreign Employment Promotion Board commenced and several decisions were taken regarding the welfare of workers. The meeting of the board could not be held for years. Information help desk was established in Tribhuvan International Airport. EPS training charge was reduced from 70 to 63 dollars. The decision has already been taken to provide mandatory training to the domestic workers going abroad. A committee has been constituted under the convenership of the Ministry with members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and director general of Department of Foreign Employment to develop a system to send workers in Israel. During my meeting with Labor secretary of Thailand in Manila in April, Thailand has shown interest to hire Nepalese workers in the manufacturing sector. I have already requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deal with the issue at the diplomatic level. As the state of foreign employment has changed, the decision has already been

taken to restructuring the Department of Foreign Employment.

What steps have been taken to end frauds in foreign employment?

To effectively contain the fraudulent activities and cheating in foreign employment, the Ministry has already initiated several activities and taken necessary steps. With the initiative of Department of Foreign Employment, concerned manpower companies have already paid 247 million rupees to those who sought compensation from them. The ministry has already established a system to provide free legal service to workers who are victims of fraudulence. Under the new policy, Nepalese embassies were given the right to authenticate the demand paper. This will increase the security of Nepalese workers. A working group is constituted with higher level officials from Ministry of Labor and Employment and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The group has already developed a report to improve coordination and joint working.

What other steps have you taken?

The minimum wages were set to workers who are going to work in Saudi Arabia and domestic worker in Kuwait. Riyal 1000 is set as a minimum salary for those who go in Saudi Arabia and 60 Kuwaiti dollars for domestic workers in Kuwait. We have already signed agreement with Poverty Alleviation Fund to localize foreign employment. To make foreign employment respectful, secure and organized, we need transparency, openness and easy working procedure. The Ministry has already formulated Standard Operating Procedure for all the government offices involved in foreign employment sector.

What about EPS?

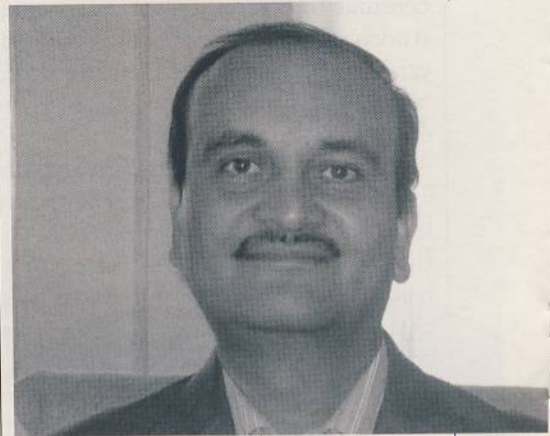
The Memorandum of Understanding is renewed with South Korea with provisions to make EPS system more organized and friendly to safety aspects of the worker. According to this new MoU, Nepalese workers can now work in South Korea up to next five years. Previously, high-level Nepalese delegation used to visit South Korea to sign and exchange letters. However, it was signed here and exchanged it through diplomatic channel. The discussion has already been initiated to amend Foreign Employment Act 2064.

How do you see the skill training?

To improve the skills of Nepalese workers, the Ministry of Finance has already sent a proposal to Saudi Arabia requesting 20 million dollars in support. To sign a Labor agreement with Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel, the draft of MoU has already been sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

What about code of conduct?

The Ministry has already requested



foreign employment entrepreneurs to develop their Code of Conduct. According to them, the Code of Conduct is in the process of preparation. In the areas of Social Security, the ministry has already directed to provide the money collected for Social Security. As a chairman of Social Security Fund, a draft of the act for Social Security Board has already been finalized. So far as in the areas of Child Labor, the discussion on draft of Child Labor Master Plan (2012-2020) has already begun and it will be approved soon. The National Labor Conference was held with endorsement of 15 point charter. The conference was not held since 2061.

What about the elections for Trade union?

The ministry has already directed the concerned industries and industrial establishments to hold the elections for authorized trade unions. Similarly, an Election, Office has already been established to hold the elections for the authorized trade unions of civil servants. Before doing this, representatives of various trade unions participated in a workshop to discuss the role of trade union in administrative reforms.

What major achievements you have made in trade disputes?

The Ministry is able to settle major trade union disputes in Uniliver, Surya Tobacco and Khimti hydro-power project. After discussions, the ministry has sought written suggestions from the Society of Mechanical Engineers in the issue of labor reforms. Employment Information Center Management Directives 2068 has already been implemented. Similar, Vocational Skill Development and Training Guidance 2069 have already been prepared and it is in effect.

What about the amendment of Labor Act?

After consultations with various stakeholders, the preparation has already been made to amend the Labor Act 2049. ■



Promoting Democracy Through Practice

By DHRUBAHARI ADHIKARY

The word “democracy” carries its exact meaning, said late professor Yadunath Khanal once, if it is used without any adjective. If a prefix—such as basic or guided—is added, it only helps to dilute its essence often leaving readers in doubt. The observation appears convincing. But in a given context, such explanation may look incomplete. A simple example could be of a person who just comes from a scene of road accident. He describes how angry passengers beat the bus driver ruthlessly, but a bystander disputes his description. Then the witness reiterates what he said earlier: I saw the scene through my own eyes. Here the allusion to the “eyes” is not redundant as it is used here to emphasize the point being made. It is in this context that the readers of Professor Kharel’s latest book on media need to decipher its title. The word “participatory” is denoting the emphasis the author wants to attach to democracy. The following quotation from page 86 amplifies his argument: “Democracy anywhere considers dialogue essential...” And the dialogue inherently demands participation.

Like the author’s previous publication, *Political Communication*, this book too appears to be the outcome of his painstaking research. This is evident in all the 10 chapters contained in the book. The volume of information in it is remarkable. He must have spent a good amount of time to collect and verify the statements, references and pithy quotations he has drawn from a wide variety of sources. Here is a relevant example from page 48: “Wall posters were the forerunners of the newspapers in Europe and they first appeared in Venice, the Italian city, in 1566.” Side by side, the author has provided bases to take the participatory democracy discourse towards oriental ideas and approaches. Or else he would not have offered references from Ramayana and Mahabharat. Since the author was a student of history before entering the journalism, it might have helped him to employ his knowledge and skills in injecting historical perspectives.

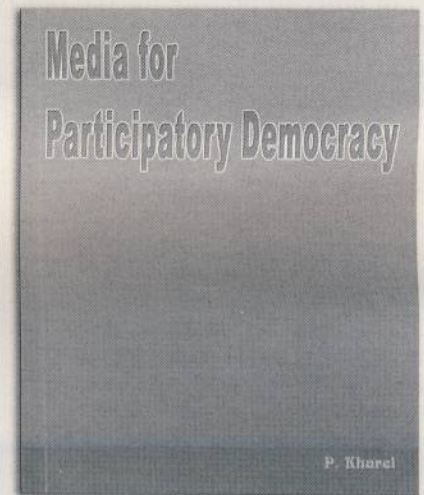
The author has spent considerable space to examine a number of definitions which are relevant for the debate on the main theme of the book. How, for instance, is freedom defined? One sample the author puts forward is as follows: “A liberal defines freedom as implying choice and absence of

restraints while a socialist links freedom with equality.”

A broader picture of how the Nepali media is working needs to be considered is another important aspect of the book at hand. Media’s credibility is palpably low as it has been penetrated by political and external interest groups. Workers of political parties—with leanings to far left as well as to the far right—have sneaked into the media in the guise of reporters. And very few of them possess desirable qualifications and professional competence to work as producers of reports that are balanced and reliable. This stark reality is appropriately summarized on page 55: “Nepal is a country where most mainstream media are too close to political and other interest groups...”

The author has liberally shared his thoughts with readers. And some of the issues raised in the book can persuade the readers to look for alternative approaches. The subject of right to information act is a case in point. Is specific law a must in any country under democratic governance? Not really. The Indian constitution, for example, does not provide for any tailored freedom extended to media—media derives its share of freedom from the right to freedom of expression given to all citizens. That justifies their need for a separate Right to Information Act. But in Nepal, the 1990 constitution guaranteed press and publications rights specifically, and violation of those rights can be challenged directly in the Supreme Court. And lawyers like Balkrishna Neupane have indeed successfully taken such matters of public interest to the highest court. Right to seek information on issues of public interest has been guaranteed to every citizen of this country. Then this question naturally arises: if you can take your case to the highest legal institution on the basis of constitution why should you invoke a subsidiary law, RTI in this instance, and knock the door of a district level court? Fundamental rights of citizens contained in the 2007 Interim Constitution are nothing but a copy of the provisions enshrined in the 1990 statute.

While this book, as indicated earlier, is a mine of information—and mostly supported by convincing interpretations as well as contentions—it also has some mistakes. And this is not unusual. In some pages there are disjointed



Media for Participatory Democracy

Author : P. Kharel

Publisher : Kamala Kharel

Pages : 321+

Price : Not mentioned

First edition, 2012

paragraphs that confuse readers regarding the context of the information and arguments being offered. Similarly, the author has chosen to omit references that can be perceived as inconvenient truth. One such reference can be found on page 36: on the infamous Jallianawallabagh massacre of April 1919 in what was then the British India. Over 400 people including women and children were killed within minutes on the orders of Brigadier General Dyer. And the shooting was carried out by the Gurkhas. That the Gurkhas were used then as mercenaries is a historically established fact. Unfortunately, this tradition survives to this very day and young Nepalis in foreign uniforms continue to be engaged in battles with countries which are not Nepal’s adversaries. This is a great irony. A keen reader of this book might also notice one or two minor/typographical mistakes. On page 124, there is a description of how Maoist insurgents killed a journalist in Bara district. He who lost his life was Birendra Sah, not Dhirendra as mentioned.

These are extenuating flaws in a book with a splendid theme. The message, as inserted on page 41, is: practice promotes democracy. It is another thing that people of this country have been continuously deprived of a chance to practice democracy since the day it dawned in February 1951. ■

Climate Change: Road To Doha

By BATU KRISHNA UPRETY



In order to prepare for the Doha Climate Change Conference (CCC), additional informal sessions of the *AdHoc* Working Groups (AWGs) on the Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) established in 2007, Further Commitments for Annex I Parties, under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) established in 2005, and Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), established in 2011, met in Bangkok from 30 August to 5 September 2012.



The Durban CCC decided to complete the works of the AWG-LCA and AWG-KP in 2013 (Doha) and launch a process to develop a protocol, another legal instrument and/or an agreed outcome with legal force under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change applicable to all Parties and complete ADP works no later than 2015 and implement it by 2020.

In Bangkok, AWG-LCA and AWG-KP focussed discussion on outstanding issues and ADP organised roundtables to collect concrete ideas on the way forward. ADP roundtables focussed on two work-streams, vision and ambition, and work plan. Delegates emphasised, *inter alia*, to follow principles of the Convention, closure of the pre-2020 mitigation gap by understanding countries' "3 Cs" - contexts, constraints and contributions. Some delegates focussed on incentivising the deep cut of GHGs emission, and proposed for ministerial roundtable in Doha on the elements of the future framework.

The developed countries want AWGs on LCA and KP to be closed by 2012

(COP18 in Doha) while developing countries have the pre-condition for their closure and want to resolve all outstanding issues under them. From the Nepalese perspectives, we need to look into what Doha delivers on adaptation, including the means of implementation such as finance, technology and capacity building, and process for incentivising the implementation of the adaptation actions. On AWG-KP, outstanding issues on quantified emission limitation or reduction objectives (QELROs), duration of the second commitment period, carryovers etc. have to be decided in Doha to smooth the work of the ADP as well.

The Closing Statement on AWG-LCA by the Chair of the LDC Coordination Group indicates the need to extend one year of the AWG-LCA if balanced outcome has not been agreed upon in COP18. The LDCs urged to form two contact groups for deliberations in Doha to deepen understanding on ADP roadmap, discuss a work plan for 2013 and beyond, and clarify specific approaches and complementary measures that Parties want to undertake.

Nepal will chair the LDC Coordination Group for 2013 and 2014 period which was decided in Bonn in May 2012. Hence, it was extremely necessary to have Nepal's participation there at a high level. It is noted, with appreciation that, Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology Krishna Gyawali could arrange for short statement in the LDC Coordination Group on 3 September which showed Nepal's strong commitment to offer its services to the LDCs in 2013 and 2014.

Gyawali informed LDCs about Nepal's climate vulnerabilities, formation of core negotiating team, coordination mechanism including the Climate Change Council, Climate Change Policy, climate change projects, and NAPA implementation through LAPA framework. He urged for collective efforts to bring the LDCs in a position to influence climate negotiations in favor

of LDCs.

Gyawali, appreciating the role played by the Current Chair Pa Ousman Jarju from the Gambia and hoping for his continued support, assured, *inter alia*, the LDCs delegates by informing that Nepal intends to continue successful practices, and build on the existing initiatives to continue to making the LDCs visible in the climate negotiation processes. He equally stressed that Nepal will best utilize the experiences of global coordination on LDCs and will continue to strengthen linkages with New York global coordination mechanism on LDCs matters and closed his statement by recalling the proverb 'united we stand, divided we fall'.

The Secretaries or the Heads of Delegation from Bangladesh and Bhutan, including Ambassador of Marshall Island, extended their support, and hoped for successful coordination and deliberation from Nepal to ensure LDCs interests and concerns in climate negotiations. Pa Ousman Jarju informed that he is developing proposals and



negotiating with key donors to transfer responsibilities and resources to the incoming chair Nepal.

Demonstrations were held in the main gate of the UNESCAP with focus on climate justice. Some Nepali NGOs also participated it.

In a nutshell, many delegates of LDCs who interacted with me well appreciated the participation of the Secretary, even for a short period, and expressed their confidence on Nepal for LDC coordination matters. It has really reinforced Nepal's commitment and should continue such participation in future meetings as well. ■



What Acharya's Position In UN Means For Us

By DHAN PRASAD PANDIT

What changes the individuality? Branded school or college or individual self? For recently appointed Deputy Under secretary General to UN Gyan Chandra Acharya, it is his own individual self that made his personality.

Gyan Chandra Acharya is now Deputy Secretary General in the United Nations. His family background is modest, and his academic background does not start from an English Boarding School. Gyan Chandra Acharya is a graduate of Balmiki Campus (now the major campus of the Sanskrit University), and then the Tribhuvan University.

When our educational calendar is not maintained, a number of students are dropping out and education quality comes under a question mark. Even during such a crisis, it is a pride for all of us to see our own graduate appointed to the high post. This regains our prestige and makes our future prospects better. To quote an American-Lebanon man

Khalil Gibran, "a man can be free without being great, but no Man can be great without being free."

Acharya passed his Master's in Economics only after he joined as Section Officer in the Nepalese Foreign Service. So his educational background was purely Sanskrit, without English subject at high school. He completed his school from the Ranipokhari Sanskrit School.

As the saying goes, where there is a will, there is a way. Acharya learnt English in the New Education system as an alternative paper in Balmiki. He was the top student from the Sanskrit background, who passed the examination of the Public Service Commission for Foreign Service by securing the top position. Acharya jumped to the post of a joint secretary in less than one year, when he was in the newly appointed Under Secretary position, through the open competition.

Acharya is not alone in Nepal's Foreign Service with Sanskrit background. Nepal's renowned diplomat late Sardar Yadunath Khanal and Jaya Raj Acharya were also the products of Balmiki Sanskrit campus or Ranipokhari School. They were the experts in *chanankya niti*.

Our country has been passing through a difficult period in areas from economics, to power and diplomacy. We failed to draft the law of the land within the given time. Amidst this gloomy



scenario, Acharya has shown a ray of hope to Nepal that Nepalese can also secure such a high position in the UN Headquarters, New York, to lead the Least Developed Countries, the LDCs. One can believe that Acharya will play an active role to enhance the image of the country or the World's Heritage Site like Lumbini.

Acharya, secretary at Ministry of Environment and Science and Technology Krishna Gyanwali and Dr. Keshav Bhattra (graduate from Harvard), who is now serving as a professor at the British University, all got the free education from Balmiki. Instead of boasting about private boarding schools, we should feel proud about our eastern idealism, with global knowledge.

Mahatma Gandhi is renowned all over the world not because which school he went but because of his work. He championed non-violence against oppressive regime. His contribution to

the Indian people is freedom and the rest of the world is the message of non-violence, peace and freedom. I have seen many universities in the world become popular due to some diligent graduates, though all students cannot be equally competent and diligent.

The Korean University is the pride of Ban-ki Moon where he graduated. During my visit to Korea under the International Educational Exchange Program in 2006, the officials of the Korea University and Seoul National University said they are proud as most of presidents and secretaries are and were their graduates. Ehwa women's university claimed most of the 1st ladies in Korea were their graduates.

A man can achieve success without having the top degree from any renowned university. Acharya had proved that a graduate from Sanskrit College, the Balmiki Campus, or Tribhuvan University could become an international personality with his continued devotion in his profession at a time when the so-called revolutionaries

were busy to target Sanskrit Education. Actually, it shows that he is a genius. His extraordinary intellectual capacity led him to where he reached in National and International platforms.

It is not only a brand name of the education institution, but dedication and devotion of the individual that is important. Branded institutions like Oxford, and Cambridge in England, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Cornell and Berkeley are meaningful but their brand is made by their graduates. Yale is proud of his Graduate Barack Obama as the President of United States State of America.

Similarly, Korea, Seoul and Yang University in South Korea, BHU, JNU, and Delhi University in India are considered reputed universities. However, in some cases individual student is more important than the university. This is what Acharya proves. ■



PRESERVING RHINO Part Of Lonely Battle

Chanda Rana, chairperson of Save the Environment Foundation (SEF), is a lonely voice against a plant which is threatening the rhino habitat

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when, on the World Rhino Day, various organizations have been raising voices to save the rhinos from poaching, Chanda Rana, chairperson of the Save the Environment Foundation (SEF), who has been launching a crusade against a wild plant Mikania Micrantha, which is invading the habitat of Rhinos in Chitwan National Park, is more concerned about the habitat loss.

Due to the infestation of plant Mikania Micrantha, endangered wild animals like rhinos and other important plants are under threat. "If we cannot clean and make efforts to wipe out the plant, it will destroy the whole ecosystem as well as the livelihood of the nearby villages."

Raising the issues since 2008, Rana also released a video documentary in 2009 and highlighted the state of the wild plant that infested a large swathe of grassland. Her documentary drew the concerned national and international personalities over the issue. "I am very concerned about the way the plant is gradually threatening the habitat of the one horn rhinos, other wild plants and threes of the Chitwan National Park," said Rana.

Like last year, Rana also joined the save the rhino campaign with her one slogan to save the Rhino and other wild

animals and important vegetation from the invasion of the wild plant. Unlike other organizations, she organized the program on her own initiative for protecting the bio-diversity of Chitwan National Park.

With the growth of Mikania Micrantha, a wild plant, in and around Chitwan National Park, the habitat of one horned rhinos are now under serious threat. As the plant is gradually covering the areas, rhinos are migrating to new areas in search of habitat.

In an effort to contribute to the fight against rhino poaching, the 3rd World Rhino Day is being celebrated in Nepal and other countries with the theme "Five Rhino Species Forever".

Although the world rhino day has been celebrated to generate the level of awareness regarding rhino poaching, organizers still ignore the threat coming from the wild plants such as Mikania Micrantha. However, president of Save the Environment Chanda Rana is not letting up on her battle to raise the awareness against the plant.

Chitwan is one of the major habitat areas of one horned rhinos. According to a recent survey, there are over 534 rhinos in Chitwan. However, the habitat area is gradually shrinking due to invasion of the wild plant Mikania. Due

to the plant, the grasslands of Chitwan are gradually drying. This forced wild animals to move to other areas. Since last many years, Save the Environment Foundation has been launching various programs against this deadly plant.

Although the government has deployed Nepal Army to protect rhinos from poachers, nobody is concerned about the habitat being lost due to the invasion of the wild plants.

Nepal Army deployed at the park held the view that all the concerned stakeholders need to work together to weed out the plant from the national park so that the habitat of world's endanger rhinos can be protected.

Ram Chandra K.C of Nanda Box Battalion of Chitwan held the view that Nepal Army is able to prevent the poaching due to its better coordination with the local community and local level organization working in the conservation sector. Concerned authorities need to remember the rhinos not only once in a year but in the remaining 364 days as well.

With Chanda Rana's lonely battle against the plant, people at different levels are gradually realizing the severity of infestation. However, the speed is too slow and effort is too little. Rana's message for this year's third world rhino day is clear: take prompt action to contain the plant. ■

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

WORLD TOURISM DAY

Looking Inside

From bringing more tourists to building infrastructure and opening new avenues, Nepal has already made a lot of progress in tourism sector in the last 33 years. What Nepal is unable to do is sustain the growth. Nepal was successful to bring half a million tourists in 1998. However, Nepal's tourism sector received a major setback between 1998-2006. Thus, it took another 13 years to add 300,000 tourists. As Nepal's middle class population has grown, the number of Nepalese holiday seekers also increase. As Nepal has celebrated the World Tourism Day 2012, the time has come now to look at the potential of domestic tourists to sustain the growth

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

Club Himalaya has been holding Changa Chait (a Kite flying competition) in Nagarkot since 2003. With an aim to develop Nagarkot as a destination for kite lovers, Changa Chait was held in October 2011 after a gap of four years. Started by Yogendra Shakya, coordinator of Nepal Tourism Year 2011 and Nepal's renowned tourism entrepreneur, Changa Chait, which is organized and held at Club Himalaya, Nagarkot, helps to promote domestic tourism in Nagarkot area.

As various hotels offer packages to domestic tourists, the number of Nepalese tourists in Chitwan, Pokhara and Lumbini has also increased. At a time when the government is planning to announce two days' holiday, looking at the power crisis in the coming winter, it will have significant impact on domestic tourism.

With the theme 'Tourism and Sustainable Energy: Powering Sustainable Development, Nepal Tourism Board celebrated World Tourism Day on September 27, 2012. However, it is yet to realize the contribution of domestic tourists in sustaining tourism in Nepal.

Still, according to NTB, the celebrations hold high significance in the current Nepalese tourism context. But, it's the time to not only be limited to rituals and be engaged in promotions for the international tourists but also focus simultaneously on internal tourism development as the internal tourism in Nepal has been on a rising trend. The tourism industry will mark the 33rd World Tourism Day 2012 on September 27.

The recent proposal of the government with the intent of reducing energy consumption has called for two

day weekend holidays in government offices as well as in the private sector, educational institutions and other institutions. The proposed move of the government has its effects beyond the energy sector as it offers high chances for the tourism prospects, especially for internal tourism.

"The two holiday plan, if approved, will increase internal tourism in Nepal to some extent. Many people of urban places and especially that of Kathmandu travel if they get two-three day long holidays even now. The hectic life style and the desire to get into a better environment trigger the move to go outside their living arena," said a tourism analyst.

Be it adventure tourism or sight-seeing or just plain travelling to major tourist destinations or religious tourism, internal tourists already constitute a

huge market. However, the focus of the tourism industrialists has not been that much concentrated on internal tourists, but this segment is offering hopes and has the potential to inject more life in **tourism sector** even in this gloomy political times.

The figures also speak as some 40 percent of total people going for rafting are internal tourists, according to various records. Not only in rafting, the number of domestic tourists going for other adventure tourism like trekking, bungee jumping, cycling, among others, is also found very high.

According to Last Resort, Thamel branch, around 20 percent of the total people going for bungee jumping are internal tourists. Some 400 people normally go for bungee jumping in a month of which 80 are Nepalese. During his tenure as a president of Hotel Association Nepal, Prassiddha Bahadur Pandey also made a lot of efforts to promote the domestic tourism to sustain the industry.

According to various other unofficial records, internal tourists mainly prefer traveling for either adventure tourism or go to major tourists destinations like Pokhara, Chitwan, Lumbini and others.

"Adventure tourism is one of the main reasons for the travel of Nepalese. The number of internal tourists going for trekking and other adventures is very high," said president of Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN), Mahendra S. Thapa.

Although the traveling culture in people of Nepal is only slowly developing, internal tourists already constitute a huge segment of the Nepalese tourism sector and this segment has further room to expand. Internal tourism has been continuously rising ever since the end of armed Maoist revolution.

"Internal tourism is basically good and increasing, and it has been continuously on a rise right after the end of armed Maoist insurgency. The two day-holiday proposed plan will definitely add some power into the internal tourism sector of Nepal, if it goes through," said Thapa.



Even current political instability has not stopped people from travelling and the toll of politics is seen less for internal tourism compared to the external. "The political instability has less effect for internal tourists when compared with that for the external tourists. This sector should be given very high priority to establish tourism as a backbone of the nation's economy and even in this gloomy political scenario internal tourism can thrive," said a high level Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) official.

"Nepalese who are going abroad or who have returned from foreign countries are the ones that travel in general. The number of corporate people going for a travel is rising rapidly. But, the local people still don't travel that much. The number of internal tourists has gone up by many folds in the past two-three years," said a travel agent.

But various strikes like stopping tourist buses carrying domestic tourists and hotels giving less priority to domestic tourists might bring major hindrances for the development of internal tourism. But, if all the necessary facilities are provided internal tourism has room to grow, say tourism industrialists.

"But to get a boost for internal tourism, there should be two-day holiday beyond government offices as people like

bankers and people who are working for private companies are the ones that travel mostly. And if the proposed plan goes through, I think travel agencies will definitely bring some packages targeting the weekend internal tourists," said a travel and tours entrepreneur.

Growth at a slower rate

Not only internal tourism, there has been continuous rise in the number of international tourist arrivals. However, the growth when compared with last year is slowly decreasing as the tourist arrival increased by mere 2.5 percent this August as compared with the same month last year.

Mid-September afterwards is considered as a high tourist season (period where tourist arrival is very high), so all the tourism industrialists are hoping to embrace on a nice journey this tourist season as well. But the brewing political unrest is their main concern.

"It is obvious that political instability is the biggest hindrance for the smooth operation of tourism industry in Nepal," said Aditya Baral, Director of NTB.

In January-August of 2012, international tourist arrival to Nepal has risen by 16.3 percent to 377,043, according to Nepal Tourism Board. But, it does not have any record on internal tourism. In the context of growing political instability, luring the domestic tourists can help sustain the tourism industry.

Rara, Splendor Of West Nepal

Wider species of birds (236) nest around Rara Lake. Yet the largest lake in Nepal, ensconced within its smallest national park, is only three hours walk from an airstrip at Talcha, Mugu. It's a beautiful, calm haven surrounded by forests, and a paradise for bird watchers.

Mugu was once part of the Malla or Khas kingdom of the Karnali River basin, which reigned between the 12th and 14th centuries. Artefacts abound – you may see ancient shrines to the local deity 'Masta', wooden effigies of spirits festooned with bells, flowers and cloth, and rock pillar set with figures of the sun and the moon. Southern Mugu has rugged ranges forested with ancient blue pine, spruce and cedar, and is inhabited by Hindu Chhetris, Brahmins and Thakuris.



The northern reaches of Mugu are less frequented. As with Dolpa to the east and Humla to the west, it lies in a vast rainshadow zone. It is arid, less intensively farmed and sparsely populated with people of Tibetan origin. One of the more unusual drivers of the local economy is the medicinally valuable yarchagumba fungus, which grows out of the head of a caterpillar and can be worth over US\$5000 per kilogram.

The Great Himalaya Trail's lower and upper routes make a crossroads at Rara Lake. From here, trekkers can head along the old salt route to Humla, the royal highway to the plains, or take any of several adventurous paths into neighbouring Dolpa. While facilities are still basic, the area is an adventurer's dream – authentic culture, a wealth of natural beauty and the trails largely to yourself.

The great high mountains scenery enchants and fascinates as always. Like most of Nepal, Rara National Park is a naturalist's dream. Animals like the gaur, serow, musk deer, yellow-throated martin and a wide variety of birds such as the impeyan pheasant, Kalij and dove are ever present. Trekkers carry only daypack and walk at their own pace. Average hiking per day will be 6-7 hrs.

Rara trek is probably, one of the most fascinating trek in all the Himalayan range due to its unique tranquility, blending well in perfect harmony with the beautiful mountains & landscapes. The Rara lake is situated at an elevation of 2990m above the sea level and is the biggest lake in the country. The lake is surrounded with juniper & pine forest of the Rara National Park. The way to get to this region is, one can have a flight or bus to Nepalgunj and a flight to Jumla from where a few (2/3) days walk to the point.

Trek passes through the remote village towards the Tibetan border. After entering into this region, one can find the smallest national park and with this park the biggest lake in the country of Nepal. ■



Being Free & Responsible

By ADITI ARYAL

What is freedom of expression? Without the freedom to offend, it ceases to exist.

These words by Salman Rushdie should have been taken a bit too much seriously by some people, especially Manish Harijan, who is now very famous for offending sensitive communities via his artistic expressions. And now that he received death threats, his supporters protested with their lips sealed with tape, hands handcuffed and raised, demanding his safety and fostering his freedom of expression.

Harijan boldly displayed his artwork which consisted of paintings of various Hindu deities blended into images of western superheroes. What he claimed to want to prove was the influence of the West in our lives. But what he ended up doing defamed him, brought him accusation of blasphemy and reflected our vulnerability to sensitive issues like these at the time when some in the nation had just almost finished dealing with the Buddha imprinted shoes.

While Harijan and his supporters do have a soft place for artists and their freedom to express, many apparently still do not. More often than not, people have been criticizing him. His supporters should indeed know that if even a personality like MF Hussain was exiled from his country for similar reasons, what Harijan did has left an open debate about the credibility of his death threats. However, thanks to liberal minds, he needn't face what Hussain did.

Another burning example could be the protests and demonstrations after 'Innocence of Muslims' all around the world. The killing of US ambassador in Libya, destruction of US properties in other countries like Pakistan and Iraq and similar instances show immediately how people are sensitive when it comes to religion. Religion is a very fragile issue and expressers have to refrain from treating it harshly. However, working to eradicate bad traditions via expressing concern in writings, paintings and cinemas is a must. This, as the only step to reform, has always remained a successful strategy.

On another note, freedom of expression has indeed played a pivotal role in development, be it on social networking sites or otherwise. Stories of rulers overthrown with protests and demonstrations aren't unheard of. Women in conservative countries have been rebelling and posting their videos, and this has indeed helped laws to reform, or at the least has helped the authorities be aware of slowly coming changes. Keeping this in mind, one should know how to use it and not violate it. Part of "being free" includes being responsible. Being responsible includes making choices. Just because you can do something doesn't mean you have to do something. Or if you have to do it, you should do it with care.

Lastly, what Salman Rushdie said and implied has resulted in a fatwa on him, and looking from my point of view, that isn't a very impressive situation to be in. ■

'Instability Biggest Tourism Hindrance'

ADITYA BARAL

At a time when Nepal has made significant achievements in the tourism sector over the last few years, Nepal is celebrating the World Tourism Day 2012 on September 27. ADITYA BARAL, Director and Spokesperson of Nepal Tourism Board.

Nepal annually celebrates the World Tourism Day as a ritual. How do you see the significance of this year's World Tourism Day to Nepal?

Every year World Tourism Day comes with a themed slogan inclusive of a social message in a tow. The reason behind celebrating the World Tourism Day is to make the people aware of the theme in vogue which circumspects our daily life and businesses. Ultimately, the thirst is to develop tourism through devising various events and programs, commemorating or corroborating the World Tourism Day. It looks like a ritual in view of the yearly phenomena, however, every year there are hordes of programs and events lined up either for awareness, or towards the sustainable development of tourism. Every year, there is a huge participation of individuals and institutions devising the new mechanism with improvisation in the programs. Thus, it is collaborative and consolidating efforts of national, regional and international partners. For us, as a member of WTO, World Tourism Day is an opportunity to tie up with international tourism fraternity with a common cause bringing all tourism related industries and people together under a common platform.

As Nepal has been selling the same product for quite a long time, doesn't Nepal have other products to sell?

Tourism, unlike manufacturing and commodities, cannot change the shape and size overnight. In order to change the products, many parts of Nepal have to undergo overhauling. For instance, how do we change Chitwan or Pokhara? As you said, yes, man-made creations can be changed but natural attractions are fixed by nature itself. However, the process of creating new destinations is moreover in the hands of private sector and they are driven by the profit. The government can simply help by formulating conducive policies and matching infrastructure. So the diversification process should be initiated by entrepreneurs more than any other sectors. The government or the NTB can't force or drag any tourists to visit any places of our interests without doing anything. Story telling for creating interest and turning it into sales is the responsibility of the destination sellers with the support from NTB. Apart from trekking, mountaineering or rafting, we have many things that have been recently introduced in the market. Zip drive in Pokhara, sky diving in the Everest, Canyoning and Abseiling in Bhote Koshi and Lamjung are a few tourism products that have been marketed internationally by private sector. NTB always

backstops any innovatively created or crafted tourism products or services.

Despite more than six decade long experiences in tourism sector, large portion of rural area is yet to get the benefits of tourism or to make them rural friendly? We have to understand the fact that tourists go to the place that they feel safe, enjoy the serene beauty, and which are accessible, and extend tourism friendly accommodation with proper marketing and promotion back up. Nepal's tourism is driven by the private sector because they are the one who invest, promote and sell the packages. So the private sector should work hand in glove with the local communities (village, district level) through the coordination of Board/government to get the best result in diverting tourists in the rural areas deprived of tourism activities. Initiation should emanate from entrepreneurs because they are genesis of value chain. Tourist first of all should be convinced while choosing the sites or products/services through the sellers by myriads of enticements. The role of others in between this value chain transaction remains meager. If villagers could show the profit, I guess investors would go to Mugu and reap the benefits. we have to acknowledge the fact that Business is driven by profit, it is the bottom-line doctrine.

The tourism arrival results show that the declining number of tourists from India and China affect Nepal's over all scenario. What does Nepal need to do to sustain the growth of tourists from both of neighbors?

In Nepal's context, tourist arrivals primarily depend on the political situation of the country; and the past arrival trends are the glaring examples to prove this fact. Promotion, publicity and marketing are the best tools to promote a destination but they will not work until the house remains in order to welcome them. Fine tuning the value chain is the integral part needed in overhauling our offers. We are gradually losing air component cost competitiveness from our tourism offers (after the tardiness of Nepal Airlines) to both the nations and the hegemony in price culture is rampant amongst the big. Chinese airlines have monopolized their price frame and are proving one of the most expensive sectors in short haul traveling. Thus, without our own extension of network either by the private or the government airlines, we have to stay in their mercy and satisfy ourselves with whatever is received at the receiving end. Avenues for our intervention are not there so far. So, we can only play within the demands created by the market forces. Our thrust and the playground available for creating demands are mismatched for the time being, at this juncture, there can be mere fluctuations in the numbers with our pro-active maneuvering, though the prospects may seem high.

As Nepal is now competing with Indian hill states like Sikkim, Darjeeling and Uttaranchal and Bhutan and Tibet Autonomous Region of China, what advantages does Nepal have compared to those countries to lure more tourists?

Nepal as a tourist destination has everything that these destinations don't have like highest mountain in the world, picturesque Pokhara with lakes and peaks around, jungle safaris crowded with rhinos and tigers and Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha. It is inevitable for tourists to come to Nepal to relish the best tourism products. They do have similar products but not the same; however, diversity that Nepal endows is perfectly unmatched. Hence, we should not be paranoid with their bountiful offers or destination competitiveness. Our status as a sovereign state, history, culture, nature or adventure is unparalleled to any other destinations; therefore, one should not imbibe this particular threat perception ever.

Given Nepal's recent performance with high growth rate, how do you see the future prospect of tourism?

Well tourism is the mainstay of Nepal's economic activities. When most of the leading trades of Nepal have vanished from the market, this is the only trade acknowledged all over the world and within the country. It has embraced our daily life stretching from villages to urban areas. I guess it has unleashed immense potential and will remain so in the long run. Proper nurturing and expansion of this trade would help Nepal fructify its aim of balanced growth for maintaining our social mosaic and harmony. But the essence is, as in the past, we should maintain our decorum of traditional values of treating tourists as our guest. Once this value diminishes, no matter how much we pour in resources, tourists would shy away from this country.

How do you view the average stay of tourists in Nepal? How do you see spending of individual tourist in Nepal compared to other countries of this region?

According to the statistics provided by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, the average length of stay in Nepal is 13.12 and per day spending is US \$ 38.2 in 2011. Nepal's tourism offers are concentrated around tourism triangle viz. Kathmandu, Chitwan and Pokhara, there is a rare space for diversion. Likewise, the top three trekking areas viz. Annapurna, Langtang and Everest are also running in saturation (too heavily crowded). Since there are not many areas and avenues where tourist can spend more, the per day spending in Nepal is comparatively lower than other countries. Also, due to our compulsion of squeezing the prices due to the escalating insurgency in the past, we have still not been able to revise our prices and this has been a bane to increase our revenue.

How do you see the air connectivity? Is it enough to bring a million tourists this year?

Nepal is now well connected to outside world by 31 international airlines. Though there is the capacity to bring



more than one million tourists in Nepal by air itself, most of the air seats are now filled up by Nepalese traveling abroad and coming back home. However, with the operation of three new airlines this year, we are optimistic about bringing more tourists in this year. And the way new airlines are trying to come to Nepal, I guess we will have ample air space to fetch in 1 million tourists to Nepal.

In the changing context, how do you see the role of Nepal Tourism Board?

The role of NTB is ever increasing because the scope of tourism is correspondingly expanding. Today, what is not tourism? For instance, forest, river, rhino, elephant or people, are they not the products of tourism? In coming days, Nepal Tourism Board has to spread its tentacles throughout the country to reach amongst the deprived or marginalized sectors in order to rope in those communities left out from mainstream tourism industry. When the nation is in the process of transition to Federalism, NTB is morally bound to show its presence in all areas wherever deemed feasible. In this context, our national presence and international expansive responsibilities is paramount to drive the development efforts of Nepal's tourism.

How will political instability affect the tourism sector in Nepal?

Tourism flourishes in tranquility. It fructifies in those situations where tourists' movement is not constricted by any internal or external factors. Imagine who would dare to go to war torn countries even if it's free. So it is obvious that political instability is the biggest hindrance for the smooth operation of tourism industry in Nepal. ■

Modified Traveler Information

Nepal is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of bio-diversity 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, bungee 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.taana.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 - Kakkarbhatta
Tel: +977-23-562252, E-mail: infontbkt@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

MOVIE REVIEW

Heroine



Madhur Bhandarkar is eminently regarded for delving into the detailing of varied subjects, be it the gritty life of bar girls [CHANDNI BAR], the socialites and media persons [PAGE 3], the corporate czars [CORPORATE], the people hanging around a traffic signal [TRAFFIC SIGNAL] or the glitzy fashion industry [FASHION]. His movies are in a league of their own. His latest work, HEROINE, orbits around the journey of an actress, the glamour and glitz surrounding her career and the dark side of fame and eminence. Madhur is famed for presenting facts of various subject matters as if he were a man from within the fraternity. In this case, yes, he's an insider and knows accurately how the movie industry operates.

Mahi [Kareena Kapoor] was a Superstar in every sense of the word. She was beautiful, famous, successful and affluent.



Unfortunately, Mahi's inner world was in direct contrast to her outer life. She was prone to intense mood swings, was insecure, unsure and lonely. Mahi's only source of happiness was the all-consuming love for the reigning superstar [Arjun Rampal]. Mahi, unmindful of her career, was only focused on somehow getting her love requited and in her attempt to do that begins a journey spiraling downwards.

Madhur treats the theme of HEROINE with extreme simplicity and unfussiness for the avid moviegoer to decipher. I am sure, the viewer would experience explicit contentment to witness the truth behind the made-up faces of the film world, the shadowy secrets that lie behind the enchanting veneer. The lifestyle, the betrayal, the promiscuousness, the inane tittle-tattle... all this and more is what is expected from a plot that covers the movie industry and it's all there in profusion in HEROINE.

HEROINE is Kareena's film all the way and she delivers an award-worthy performance. It can be said without a shred of doubt, HEROINE is her most valiant effort so far. Apparently motivated by real-life episodes, this is a role not many actresses would have taken from the peril of implementing. Kareena arrests the viewer's attention from Scene A to Z.

On the whole, HEROINE is yet another hard-hitting motion picture from Madhur Bhandarkar. For persistently choosing women-centric themes, for consistently winning national acclaim and most significantly, magnetizing moviegoers in large numbers to view his cinema, the efforts of the maverick film-maker deserve to be lauded. Watch HEROINE for Madhur's imposing direction, for Kareena's superlative performance, watch it also for its fearless, inspiring and enlightening storyline divulging the scandalous realities of the movie industry. Try not to miss it!

(CourtesyBollywoodhungama)

MOVIE PREVIEW

Oh My God!

Genres : Comedy, Drama
 Director : UmeshShukla
 Cast : Akshay Kumar,
 PareshRawal, Mithun
 Chakraborty,
 SonakshiSinha



The story is based on the life of Kanjibhai (PareshRawal), an antique shopkeeper. When a tornado destroys his antique store, he begins to disbelieve in God. The film revolves around his journey at taking down God which he is unable to do, but clearly doesn't realize, and soon begins to fight all the priests of the city, which starts mayhem until Lord Krishna (Akshay Kumar) pays Kanji an unexpected visit. It is loosely based on the Gujarati play, Kanji Virrudh Kanji and also Hindi play, KishenvsKanhaiya. Release Date: 28-Sep-2012

JAI KRISHNA AGRAWAL

Inner Grammar of Lines

India's renowned artist Jai Krishna Agrawal's print making techniques are superb

Renowned artist Jai Krishna Agrawal's printing shows how close Nepal and India are in terms of culture, arts and values. Master print maker Jai Krishna in his Jantar Mantar series demonstrated his own skills in print making.

Inaugurated by Indian ambassador to Nepal Jayant Prasad at Artist Proof Galary in New Orelans Café in Pulchowk, Solo Show of Prints of India's renowned artist Jai Krishna Agrawal represents his rich innovation skills.



Supported by B.P. Koirala India-Nepal Foundation, this exhibition was the first of its kind organised in Kathmandu. "Professor Agrawal is one of India's master print makers. The print works from the Jantar Manter series that feature in the exhibition demonstrates his aesthetic sensibilities and consummate skills. A visual feast awaits the viewers, especially in the delineation of forms and the treatment of spaces and angles within the print frames," said ambassador Prasad.

"Jai Krishnaji was my guru and his print work is superb. Nepalese artists can learn a lot from him," said artist Ragini Upadhyay Grela. Artist Jai Krishna Agrawal emerged as a printmaker at a time when printmaking was a guarded secret amongst a few in India in those days, a print was primarily judge for its technical excellence which compelled the artists to maintain secrecy about their technique.

Bill made to amend Scholarship Act, 2021, (2065)

The Scholarship Act was brought in 2021 BS to make laws to manage scholarships either granted by or through the Nepal Government. The Act was amended twice, the first time in 2025 BS and the second time in 2033 BS. Likewise the Fourth Amendment of the Judicial Administration Act 2043, and the Act made to amend some Nepali Acts related to Education and Sports, 2063 also made some amendments. The Scholarship Act (Third Amendment) 2065, bill to make some general amendments in the Scholarship Act, in 2065 BS, keeping the political changes and the state of education in the country, in mind, was presented in the Legislative Assembly. The amendment bill is being reviewed [now] as it is an appropriate to do a periodical review.

1. Policy issue

Instead of amending and reforming the Scholarship Act brought about in 2021, and incorporating changes in subject during this extended period, it is more appropriate to bring about a new, clear, and time relevant scholarship related Act.

2. Subject Analysis

The definition of scholarship is not time relevant. In the presented bill, "scholarship" has been defined as, a financial subsidy or service made available by the Nepal Government to any individual or educational institution for the purpose of [academic] study or research, or training; or financial grant, service, or technical assistance, provided by any foreign country, international or other donor organizations or by any domestic or foreign educational

institution; or any service defined as scholarship by the Nepal Government after publishing such in the Nepal Gazette.

This definition must be reviewed, and should include scholarships granted by the Nepal government or the state or by foreign institutions through the Nepal Government. The definitions should state that scholarship does not only refer to financial grants or services but also academic opportunities.

Looking at current practices not just financial grants or services but quotas are also considered scholarships. This also includes technical assistance. Scholarships should therefore be totally redefined.

3. In the proposed provision in Article 3, only scholarships granted to the Nepal Government are included as scholarships. It does not include scholarships granted by the Nepal Government. This should also be included. It should also reflect the idea that besides scholarships provided by other governments and institutions, those provided by itself [Nepal Government] or by other institutions and universities should be managed properly.
4. The scope of the Scholarship Act should be widened and legal provisions related to domestic and foreign governments and institutions resolved. There are currently 8 universities in Nepal, therefore the Scholarship Act should clearly state whether the Act can apply to those universities or if it is possible to coordinate with them. It might be appropriate to include to some extent whether the

Act can regulate scholarships given by non-government sectors.

5. It is necessary to categorize scholarships. With the objective of balancing the current educational state of the country, educational institutions, and demand and import, categorization should be done on the basis of type or nature, either in the Act or through a law. The bill is silent on this matter.
6. If the Nepal Government is to adopt a policy of reservation in scholarship, it should make a system where the same reservation policy is applicable in all areas and make provisions in the Scholarship Act along the same line with regards to scholarships as well. Proposing different types of reservation policies in different Acts would create confusion in itself. It is therefore necessary to coordinate with all sectors. The basis for reservation should represent classes backward in educational, economic and social sectors rather than ethnicity. It is necessary that reservation should be based on class rather than on ethnicity. This has not been brought about in the proposed Act.
7. The main idea of scholarship is merit. For the purpose of the development of the country it is necessary that qualified [those deserving on the basis of merit] be given scholarship opportunities. The Scholarship Act should therefore not be brought about placing capacity, qualification, or specialization in

second priority. However the proposed bill does not give first priority to capability.

8. The proposed bill has provisions stating that a Nepali citizen may acquire permission to attain education for other than higher education from foreign countries. This is not a logical argument at all. If it is necessary for the provision to be applicable to all those studying in foreign countries, it should be done so in an equal manner. There is no reason that it should state except for higher education. It should also clarify the provision to take permission for study in foreign countries. If it is for the purpose of foreign currency exchange this should be mentioned in the related foreign currency rate related act. Otherwise why should the government try to regulate those who are going abroad for further studies? Thought should be given to whether it creates hurdles in the implementation of the right to education. The bill is unclear about this.

9. Although the intention of only making scholarships available to those individuals excelling in entrance exams given through community schools is good, it will be difficult to say that this will bring the expected results. It is because of this that the trend to study in private schools but give SLC through community schools began. To ensure that the provision is not misused there must be special provisions in the Act. It might be important to have provisions to implicate and punish those who have misused this provision under criminal offence law. The proposed bill is inadequate in this matter.

10. Article 7 proposes the amendment of Article 7 of the main act. It states that while fixing the claimed amount this amount should not be less than what a student has to pay to study on self paid expenses in a non government educational institution in Nepal. This is not easy to implement in Nepal. Which agency or which college or which university should be take for the comparison? There are different levels and rates of educational institutions in the country. The expenses are different in each subject. It is therefore necessary to clear state the basis for the claimed amount. This proposed provision in the bill cannot be implemented. It is therefore necessary to give thought to the above mentioned suggestions.

This investigation and suggestion report was prepared by Dr Tirtharaj Parajuli for the Nepal Constitution Foundation with inputs from women, indigenous groups, Dalit, Madhesi, youth and other pressure groups. The Foundation is grateful to Dr Ram Krishna Timalina, Amuda Shrestha, Mukta Lama, Dhan Bahadur Saud, Sambojan Limbu, Teku Nepali, Kamala Biswakarma, Bharat Gautam, Tek Prasad Dhungana, Gopi Biswakarma, Dipak Khatiwada, Dinesh Tripathi, Sirshak Ghimire, Jeni Gurung, Abhishek Adhikari, Phurpa Tamang, and Dr. Bipin Adhikari.

This research has been supported by The Asia Foundation and opinions expressed in this report are of the authors and don't necessarily reflects of the Asia Foundation.

घरेलु हिंसा-अपराधको जघन्य प्रकार सबै मिल गरौं यसको प्रतिकार



नेपाल सरकार
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
सूचना विभाग



Vitamin Supplements

By **BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD**

Patients often ask doctors to suggest some vitamins that they can take so that they will be restored to good health. Vitamins are necessary ingredients in maintaining good health, but it is important that both doctors and patients understand that there are lots of different kinds of vitamins being sold to the public that may actually be unnecessary. In fact it may even be harmful (see below). But somehow taking vitamins for good health has so deeply been ingrained in our minds that we do not question the necessity of ingesting vitamins even though there may be no evidence for doing this if we eat a proper diet. Of course commercially too vitamins are a source of profitability, and even for this reason we have to be sure of what we are buying. Here are some new perspectives on vitamins.

Drug companies that make vitamin supplements are not ecstatic these days. Recent data in medical journals now show that the benefit of taking vitamin supplements is well established only to ensure an adequate intake of folic acid (B9) in young women and B12 and vitamin D in the elderly. So, there is no good reason to take some of the highest-

selling vitamins (A, C and E) routinely if you are eating a normal, balanced diet. In fact a placebo-controlled trial in Finnish smokers taking high dose vitamin A supplement showed that there was significantly increased lung cancer rates in the vitamin A cohort. Consuming biologically-active substances (vitamins) should not be assumed to be risk free. This bad news regarding potential impact on vitamin sales does not stop with vitamin A.

A pooled analysis of data from 26 clinical trials including 105,065 subjects found that vitamin E supplements was associated with an increased risk of death. Similarly, another study of 11,350 people showed that preventive use of over 200 mg of vitamin C per day did not reduce the risk of developing a cold or the severity of cold symptoms. So much for sugar-flavoured vitamin C pills.

Vitamin D supplement, however may be useful in the elderly, especially those with dark skin with limited exposure to sunlight. Vitamin D will strengthen bones and prevent fractures. Older people may not be able to absorb vitamin B12 found in meat and fish. Folic acid (

B9) deficiency leads to birth defects (neural tube defects) which occur early in pregnancy before most women know they are pregnant. Folic acid is available in beans, peas, oranges and dark-green vegetables which we do not seem to get enough of. Hence supplementing the diet of women of child-bearing age with folic acid has decreased the incidence of these birth defects in their offspring. Hence adequate intake of folic acid in young women is important.

For sure, in impoverished areas of the world like Nepal where there may be vitamin deficiency in the regular diet, taking vitamin supplements may be prudent. For example, vitamin A deficiency leads to night blindness in the developing world. Deficiency of vitamin C causes bleeding gums and slow healing of wounds. Vitamin A is found in dairy products and yellow or orange fruits, and citrus fruits are rich in vitamin C.

Finally, vitamin supplements unlike what was hypothesized, do not seem to prevent heart attacks, strokes, and cancer, diseases prevalent in both the rich and poor worlds. ■

NCELL LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Real Big Deal

One of the biggest gatherings in Nepal of internal as well as international writers—Ncell Nepal Literature Festival—was recently concluded in Kathmandu. Renowned writers from both within the nation and abroad took part in the most happening literary event of the year.

The second edition of the Ncell Nepal Literature Festival 2012 was organized by The Bookworm Trust from September 20 to 23 in the premises of the Nepal Academy at Kamaladi, Kathmandu.

Some 100 well-known writers from Nepal and abroad participated in the literary festival. Nepali writers Abhi

Subedi, Dhruba Chandra Gautam, Jagdish Ghimire, Chaitanya Mishra, Khagendra Sangraula and Bhuwan Dhungana took part in the event.

“We have been organizing various programs to further the much needed literary discourse in Nepal. This Festival is an extension of such efforts. We believe that this Festival will play a vital role in the development of our literature and reading culture,” said the Festival Director, Ajit Baral.

International authors who arrived Nepal to take part in the event included the revered Bengali writer Sunil



Gangopadhyay, the bestselling Amish Tripathi and Advaita Kala, the Indian-Nepali writers Dr. Kumar Pradhan and Mana Prasad Subba, who is also a Sahitya Academy winner.

According to Baral, the participation in the festival was very overwhelming and they received a much larger audience than expected.

The 2nd edition of the Ncell Nepal Literature Festival turned out to be a huge success just like the first edition.



Red Bull
CashFull

RED BULL को Pull-Off Ring मा तपाईले पाउनसक्नुहुनेछ *

रु. १ लाख

You Won Rs. 1 Lakh

रु. २०,०००/-

रु. १०,०००/-

रु. ५,०००/-

Pull-Off Ring मा अंकित नम्वर पुरस्कार प्राप्त गर्नको लागि फोन नं: **०१-४४४४४४** मा सर्भिक गर्नुहोला ।
 पुरस्कार दाबी गर्न **Pull-Off Ring** को पुरा माज सम्बन्ध हुनु जरुरी छ ।

*सर्वेस्र लागू हुने छैन । प्रकृतित कर कसकन बलोटिम पुरस्कार यस्तित कर कसकने जस्तित ।



KRATINGDAENG
Red Bull

THE ONE & ONLY ENERGY DRINK



Three Stars to Ruslan Vodka

Ruslan Vodka was recently awarded 3 Stars for its superior taste and quality by ITQI (International Taste and Quality Institute, Belgium).

100%
PROTECTION



Superior
taste
AWARD
★ ★ ★



**RUSLAN
VODKA**

Triple Distilled
For Outstanding Smoothness



नेपालमा बनेको
BLENDED & BOTTLED BY
ASIAN DISTILLERY PVT. LTD.
Parsa, Nepal

70° PROOF 750 ML



७७७७ ४४४४ ५५५५
Your friends from Jeevatika had invited you to drink responsibly!

CERTIFICATE



Ruslan Vodka
Asian Distillery Pvt. Ltd.
is granted the

Superior
taste
AWARD 2010
★ ★ ★

Brussels, May 27, 2010

Louis Frere
Managing Partner

The International Taste & Quality (ITQI) is the leading Independent Chef - and Sommelier - based
dedicated to judging, certifying and promoting superior tasting food and drink.

INTERNATIONAL TASTE & QUALITY INSTITUTE