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From The Editor

With the water level in Nepal's snow fed rivers drying, the power cut of over 12 hours a day in urban areas may worsen. However, the situation in the rural areas, which are moving towards the alternative energy sources, will heave a sigh of relief. After the introduction of bio-gas, solar, micro-hydro and biomass and similar sources of energy, Nepal's overall energy supply situation has changed. It has also increased the access of the rural population to sustainable energy sources, contributing to improve their livelihoods. Although Nepal's position in terms of energy security is still low or close to the bottom in the global energy index, the recent census report has indicated certain changes in the use of energy sources. Although over 64 percent population relies on wood as a source of energy for cooking, 2.41 percent people use the bio-gas. Over 67.2 percent of the population uses electricity for lighting, an increase from 39.8 percent of 10 years ago. This indicates that alternative energy sources like solar are bringing major changes. In this edition, we have taken up the state of alternative energy as the cover story. As Nepal is celebrating the Earthquake Safety Day, we have made efforts to look at the state of disaster management in the country. Other regular political and economic issues form part of our routine coverage.

Keshab

Keshab Poudel
Editor



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Govt, UNICEF Sign Country Action Plan

The Country Program Action Plan (CPAP) between the Government of Nepal and UNICEF for the period 2013-2017 was signed at a short ceremony in Kathmandu recently. Madhu Kumar Marasini, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance, and Ms. Hanaa Singer, UNICEF Representative, signed on the document that outlines programs that will be implemented according to the Basic Cooperation Agreement between the Government and UNICEF of 1996. This is the 4th CPAP between the Government and UNICEF since 1996. The overall goal of UNICEF's country program (2013-2017) is to directly address the policy, system, and societal factors that influence equitable access to education, health care, nutrition, sanitation, clean water, protection and information for women, adolescents and children. It will do so by focusing on 15 low performing districts (10 in the mid and far western hills, 4 in the central terai and 1 in eastern terai), helping the government to narrow the gap between the have and have nots, and by developing and refining legislation and multi-sector policies at national level. It will help to build more responsive, quality services in the field of health, education, protection etc. especially to

Yang Attends TMLP Anniversary

Chinese ambassador Yang Houlan attended the 5th anniversary celebration ceremony of Terai Madhesh Loktantrik Party. He had a cordial conversation with the party leaders, including its president Mahanta Thakur.



According to Chinese Embassy press release, party president Thakur said his party attached a great importance to the development of party-to-party exchanges with China to promote a friendly cooperation.

Ambassador Yang congratulated the party's 5th anniversary and expressed



those who are most deprived, and will focus on changing social norms and behaviors of individuals, communities and society to improve their lives and those of their children and adolescents.

The main areas of focus for the US\$ 144 million CPAP are: Governance, Policy, Planning and Evaluation; Health, Nutrition and HIV; Education; Child Protection; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; and a new program on Adolescent Development and Participation.

Alongside other partners, UNICEF has contributed to many of the development gains achieved by Nepal, especially in maternal and child health, basic education, HIV prevention and treatment, child protection, nutrition, water and sanitation, and evidenced-based policy. UNICEF Nepal currently has 175 staff and has zonal offices in Biratnagar, Bharatpur and Nepalgunj.

willingness to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with his party to promote the all-round development of the friendly relations of Nepal and China.

India To Help Build Embankment

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Jayant Prasad handed over a cheque of NRs. 256.947 million to Minister of Irrigation Mahendra Prasad Yadav, as India's contribution towards construction of embankments along Lalbakeya, Bagmati and Kamla rivers in Nepal which is being undertaken in accordance with the decisions taken at the 6th Meeting of India-Nepal Joint Committee on Inundation and Flood Management (JCIFM).

India has been providing assistance to Nepal for strengthening and extension of embankments along these rivers. With the present assistance, the total grant assistance already disbursed for embankment

construction along these rivers, stands at NRs. 2543 Million, of which NRs 97.71 million was released in July 2012, NRs. 165.5 million was released in 2008, NRs. 531.5 million in 2009, and NRs.599.78 million in 2010 and NRs. 545.35 million in March 2011 and NRs.345.73 million in October 2011.

Separately, India has committed grant assistance of NRs. 181.37 million for flood protection works along Trijuga, Lakhandei, Sunsari, Kankai and Kaligandaki rivers and NRs 95.2 million along Gagan river in Nepal. The flood protection works along Trijuga, Kankai and Lakhandei rivers have been already completed.

EU Donates Mobile Food Lab

The European Union has donated a mobile food testing van to the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC), Nepal Government, under the EC-Nepal WTO Assistance Programme, which is a major step to safeguard the health of Kathmandu locals.

The donation of the van is part of the EC-Nepal WTO Assistance Programme which constituted an EU support of EUR 2 million (NPR approx 228 million).

The programme that concluded a year ago in 2011 also received the support of UNIDO (170,000 Euros) and UNESCAP (27,000 Euros) while the Nepal Government's contribution in kinds amounted to (114,000 Euros).

The main goal of the programme was to address Nepal's trade related obligations following its accession to the World Trade Organization in April 2004.

"The project has come a long way and has contributed substantially to assist mainly two departments of the Nepal Government - Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology (NBSM) and Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC) - to upgrade the skills of their technical staff with training programmes and their existing laboratories for acquiring international accreditation and thereby raising hopes for increased exports for Nepal in the years ahead," said Dr. Alexander Spachis, ambassador, Head of European Union Delegation to Nepal.

"The DFTQC is indeed very thankful to the European Union for extending its support, which has helped us get international accreditation for our laboratories. This, I am, confident will help promote Nepal's exports in the international market and have a positive impact on the country's economy in the long run," said the DFTQC Director General Jiwan Prabha Lama. ■

“We Have Investors In Nepal Who Are Very Capable And They Should Be Allowed To Compete In The Global Market”

Narendra Kumar Basnyat

President, Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI)

You have been appointed the president of the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI). How difficult do you think will the job be in the current political crisis?

Leading the CNI will be a difficult job, but I am sure that I would do everything in my authority to guarantee that enthusiasm remains high among industrialists. Due to the current prolonged political crisis, the economic sector of the nation is suffering heavily and is not moving in the right direction. Investors' confidence is also decreasing. However, the possibilities are also very high. So I will work in making the investment environment better by holding talks with all the concerned stakeholders and take steps, which will benefit the whole nation. I will continue with the previous agenda of the confederation, and take additional steps in the direction of attracting foreign direct investment, creating ways for employment generation and try to solve the current issues of the industrial sector.



What are your views on social investments?

CNI would encourage social businesses like in the past. We will further expand the Public Relief Fund that had previously been set up in the CNI. We encourage firms and people for social investments.

What do you think are the challenges for the industries of the nation?

Political instability has hurt the nation a lot. Along with political uncertainties, power crisis and labor issues are other things that are severely hurting the nation's economy. In Nepal, the investment cost is also high. These issues have directly made negative impacts on the investments. As the investments are costly, production will suffer and so will the economy. There is the need of construction of dedicated grids to ease the current energy crisis for the industries. But we will try in our limits to make the current environment more favorable and will also work continuously to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

How should the labor issues be solved?

As the political parties are split, the unions affiliated to them are also split. The number of labor unions is already high in the country. They seek improper donations from the industries. The labor issues should be solved without delay. Politics should be kept out of the unions. There should be only one trade union.

Should the Nepalese be allowed to invest outside of the country like you have been saying?

In the open market economy, the investment which is sitting idle should be allowed to be invested beyond the national territory. If somebody invests abroad then it will be a pride for the whole nation. We should come out of the mentality that if people are allowed to invest abroad then they will settle outside. Rather, people should be given options to invest abroad, and the government should also organize proper channels to bring in profits from abroad. We have investors in Nepal who are very capable and they should be allowed to compete in the global market. The government should not confine them within local territories.

(Interview based on the Basnyat's views expressed during his press conference)

Himalayan Bank Concluded 20th AGM

The 20th Annual General Meeting of Himalayan Bank Limited has been concluded.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Manoj Bahadur Shrestha, Chairman of the Bank, presented the Bank's Annual Report for the fiscal year 2011/12. Presenting the report, Chairman Shrestha stated with satisfaction that during the period under review, the Bank was able to carry on its activities and operations satisfactorily and the Bank has established its

identity as a pioneer bank in the financial sector of the country.

Chairman Shrestha highlighted in the meeting that the Bank's total deposit reached Rs. 47.73 billion during the period under review, recording an increase of 16.64 percent over the deposit of the previous year. Similarly, the loans and advances reached Rs. 35.96 billion during the period under review, recording an increase of 9.10 percent. The Bank has been able to earn an operating profit of Rs.1,057.056 million during the review period. Net profit of the Bank reached Rs. 958.638 million. The AGM has declared 15 percent bonus share and 13.421 percent cash dividend on the paid-up capital to the shareholders. After issuance of the bonus shares from the profit of fiscal year 2011/12, Bank's paid-up capital will be Rs. 2.76 billion.



According to a press release of the Bank, during the period under review the Bank has opened 3 new branches in different places and 10 ATMs in different locations, making a total number of 39 branches and 74 ATMs all over the country. The Bank is planning to establish at least 3 new branches in various parts of the country and deploy 10 ATMs in different locations. Similarly the Bank is in the process of promoting its remittance services in Asian, American and European market too.

Talk On Nepal China Trade Relations

Ambassador Yang Houlan met with president of Nepal-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry Rajesh Kaji Shrestha and exchanged views on enhancing bilateral economic and trade relationship.

Shrestha extended his gratitude to China for giving zero tariff treatment to nearly 8,000 Nepalese commodities, which would greatly foster Nepalese economy and employment if Nepali side could fully utilize this policy. He noticed that more and more Chinese commercial delegations had arrived in Nepal and hoped that his Chamber could have further cooperation with Chinese side in order to promote bilateral economic and trade relationship to a higher level.

Ambassador Yang highly appreciated the Chamber's focus and efforts for bilateral economic and trade relationship. Yang said China has always supported Nepal's economic and social development and endeavored to make China's rapid development benefit Nepal.

Denmark support to Renewable Energy Program

Denmark has announced it will be providing Danish Kroner 205 million (US\$36M) to help with the implementation of the National Rural and Renewable Energy Programme (NRREP) in Nepal. The agreement was signed by Finance Minister Shanta Raj Subedi, and Danish Ambassador Mr. Morten Jespersen on behalf of their respective governments.

The objective of the program is to reach more than one million rural households with alternative energy technologies, including small hydropower, biogas, solar cells and improved cooking stoves. Lack of access to energy in rural Nepal is a major challenge for Nepal's socioeconomic development and for securing long term peace.

Since 1998 Denmark has strategically been part of building up and supporting the Government in developing and rolling out renewable technologies in rural areas of Nepal, which are not part of the central grid. The new National Rural Renewable Energy Programme, which runs from July 2012 to July 2017 will be led by the Nepalese authorities. NRREP's budget is projected to be US\$ 184 million and will be funded by Development Partners and the Government. ■

Escaping Electoral Accountability

By DIPAK GYAWALI



Loktantra finds itself caught in a cleft: legitimacy of its oligarchy is wearing thin without a fresh mandate; but elections could not be held in November and will not be held in coming April either. If the underlying reasons behind the gridlock are not sorted out, perhaps they will not be held in November 2013 either. Propaganda and glib slogans have not been able to hide the contradictions in policies and practices that are resurrecting themselves to the embarrassment of Loktantra's national players and its international underwriters.

There are three primary reasons. The first is fear among party oligarchs as well as their henchmen on two counts. The politics of money and muscle practiced by them since the restoration of multiparty democracy (and taken to new heights in political violence by the Maoists) requires them to be in control of the Home Ministry to misuse the state apparatus for "booth capture" and other unsavoury means. As these lines were being written, news just came in of Sujata Koirala of the Nepali Kangress saying, contrary to stated party policy, that Kangress could join the Baburam government if it got the home ministry (and it was taken away from her constituency nemesis Bijaya Gachhedar). The other element gripping them with fear is, given how they betrayed the trust bestowed on them and given how they are being thrashed by their own cadres, how are they to face the voters?



Election Commission

The second reason, which is more clearly articulated by district rather than national party leaders, is the lack of an overarching frame within which to hold elections, i.e. elections for what? There is no agreement within or between parties on the broad political framing of whatever it is New Nepal is supposed to look like. Whatever was passed fraudulently by the late lamented CA is increasingly coming under a question mark. What is a canvassing politician to tell the people they are voting for? Another meaningless, bickering CA? Without any public apology such as disqualifying the past 601 from standing again for at least another term? Without acknowledging that the "roadmap" and the overall architecture of 2005/2006 regime change was based on fraudulent foundations?

The third important reason is that all the major parties, despite their shrill rhetoric to the contrary, are in reality neo-feudal outfits of a handful of oligarchs using their party as fiefdoms. They expect to be reigning warlords in their parties for life and think not of graceful retreat or retirement even when rejected by voters. They also have no shame in being the dominant party voice in matters rightfully belonging the CA even when not members of that body. Their decisions are never

taken in formal party sessions but in closed private setting, decisions that are subsequently rarely endorsed officially, thus leaving them under a cloud of resentment and suspicion. This has been true of almost all the many multi-point agreements the party oligarchs have announced over the last half dozen years.

One foremost proof of the neo-feudal nature of major political parties in Nepal is their dismissive attitude towards local elections. Young Nepalis who were not quite 18 and could not vote in 1997 are now 33 years old and have not seen direct democracy at the local level. In a country where local democracy with elections of mayors and village chiefs has been in place since the Panchayat, this neglect by party oligarchs borders on the criminal. The excuse given for this dereliction of duty in 2002 was lack of safety due to the violence of the Maoist insurgency; since 2006 it has been "federalism" and the need to first complete an ill-conceived, myopic "nation

restructuring". The first reason was proved invalid by the King holding municipal elections in February 2006, and the second has now become laughable with the ignominious collapse of the CA.

When the King called for holding municipal elections, the mainstream seven parliamentary parties called for a boycott, which was within their legal rights even though it was morally unjustifiable for parties calling themselves democratic not to go to the people as did Burma's premier democrat Su Kyi. What was criminal on their part was asking the Maoists to assassinate candidates as per a hit list supplied by them. This serious charge was made on national TV and print around mid-July 2006 by Prachanda, Baburam and Dinanath Sharma, *and has not be refuted so far by any of the seven parliamentary parties or journalists and editors beholden to them!* The assassinated but ignored souls of the Janakpur mayor and others are crying for justice even as a drama is currently unfolding of Col. Kumar Lama and the assassins of the Dailekh journalist. Surveys done before those elections showed that some 42% of the voters intended to vote; the ensuing violence meant that only 22% actually voted. Given that generally about 60% turnouts are normal, it indicates that a third of the voters actually turned up to vote despite the party-sponsored terror.

Now that the CA has collapsed overtly on the issue of the undefined adventurism of federalism, what the King attempted looks more democratic than what followed. The very rationale for having a CA and also the model of democracy pursued thus far are under questioning. It was a myth that a CA and a constitution framed by it would bring peace, prosperity and

social justice to Nepal; and this half-a-century myth kept alive by extreme leftism and half-baked Marxism has now exploded. It was also claimed that this CA was the most representative and inclusive parliament that Nepal has ever had. Maybe; but then it was also the most incompetent and ineffective rubber stamp of a few oligarchic party honchos. On the last day of the CA before its collapse, when it became evident that it would not even convene, some CA members engaged in sloganeering in front of the TV cameras, shouting they were not mere sheep. Unfortunately they were, and for four years, with this shocking realization coming to them only on the last day just before the CA's collapse!

Waiting for a mythical federalism to materialize before holding local elections is now increasingly realized as chimera and chicanery. The real reasons are only sleazy ones of filling party and personal coffers by looting money allocated for local development. Whatever federal model might emerge in the years ahead, Dhulikhel municipality and its voters, for example, are not going to change whether the town becomes a part of Tamsaling or Newa Rajya. And the same applies to VDCs. Hence elections to these bodies need not be kept hostage to "nation restructuring". The primary reason why party oligarchs have bypassed this path of local accountability is because they are neo-feudals: they fear the emergence of new and younger political leadership, which, emboldened by the actual electoral mandate it would enjoy, can defy the decisions of sterile party oligarchs in favour of what its constituency actually wants.

One more reason why fresh elections will not be held soon is the international factor. Having wasted an estimated one hundred billion rupees on the CA (about eighty per cent of which was international), having invested heavily in Nepali politicians of the current dispensation that have turned out to be gods with feet of clay, the international community backing the regime change of 2006 finds itself in the same cleft as Nepal's major political parties. It is the classic case of an extravagant prince and his money lender: one hates the other but is locked in an embrace of mutual ruin, unable to break free. Loktantrick Nepal has become a playground of external forces, and unless these players see a reasonable chance for electoral results to emerge in their favour, they will not put pressure for elections. And Nepal's political Lilliputs will continue their loot as long as it lasts. ■

POLITICS

Prez Waiting To Act

President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav has very narrow choices given the failure of the political parties to nominate a consensus candidate

By A CORRESPONDENT

Even if he extends the deadline another time, President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav is unlikely to get the name for a consensus prime minister in the political stalemate that is continuing. Since November 22, 2012, President Dr. Yadav has already given eight deadlines calling on the political parties to select a consensus candidate.

As the head of the state, Dr. Yadav cannot wait for a longer period without a government to hold the new elections. Neither can he take a step, which will be considered as going against the constitution.

However, in a few days or weeks, the President will have to step in to settle the current political crisis irrespective of the possible stiff opposition from UCPN-Maoist and SLMM.

It seems that President Dr. Yadav is losing his patience with big four political parties. His recent meeting with smaller political parties is an indication of his displeasure.

"We requested the President to dismiss the present government and form a new national consensus government. There is no alternative before him other than to dismiss it," said Upendra Yadav, leader of Madheshi Janaadhikar Forum.

Although the president has been repeatedly saying that he still prefers the consensus candidate from four major political parties, the present political differences among major political parties have shown that a consensus candidate is unlikely to come from them.

The President's choice is narrowing. At a time when leaders of Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have outrightly rejected the proposal for a neutral prime minister, the President's options have further narrowed.

"The resignation by the present government is the first step for political consensus," said CPN-UML leader Jhlnath Khanal. "UCPN-Maoist has been dilly-dallying by proposing various



options. If the prime minister does not tender his resignation, we will launch a nationwide agitation," said Khanal.

Although President Dr. Yadav is now consulting with the politicians, constitutional lawyers and the people from various walks of life, it seems that he will wait for another few weeks before taking a decisive step. By saying the present government led by Bhattarai cannot be a national consensus government without tendering resignation and new appointment, president Dr. Yadav has already hinted that the days of Bhattarai are close to end.

Possible future scenario

As CPN-Maoist, a breakaway faction of UCPN-Maoist, is holding its sixth general convention and UCPN-Maoist is holding its convention in February, president Yadav's new move will have larger implications in the internal politics of both the parties.

Whether the President acts or not, Nepal's prolonged political instability is likely to intensify in the coming days. After the outright rejection by opposition parties to recommend the name of neutral person to lead the election government, the prime minister and ruling alliance have already made it clear that they will go for the revival of dissolved Constituent Assembly in case of failure to find a consensus candidate to hold the elections in April 2013. Nepali Congress and CPN-UML's decision to launch nationwide agitation to press ruling alliance and Prime Minister Bhattarai is receiving the support from even the CPN-Maoist, the breakaway faction of UCPN-Maoist. All this is pointer that political chaos is looming large. ■

Exercising Sovereignty

By DR. SURYA DHUNDEL



'Constitution is a legitimate device for exercising sovereignty of a democratic state', wrote Justice Thomas Cooley, a prominent constitutional scholar of the nineteenth century, in his *Treatise on Constitutional Limitations*. Designated authorities of the state and individual citizens are either empowered to exercise or obliged to respect the use of sovereign power as per the dictates of constitutional provisions and their underlying principles, including evolved democratic conventions and institutional practices applied in democratic world through internalisation processes. Such processes are both constitutional and political, and developed for the benefit of people and in the larger national interest. During crises, however, the danger of such processes from being derailed, blocked or distorted increases. Exceptional provisions are entrenched in democratic Constitutions for a wise and rational exercise of extraordinary powers for redressing problems and bringing the derailed process back on the constitutional track. Present day Nepal is at the constitutional and political crossroads facing serious obstructions caused due to undesired and unexpected termination of the representative Constituent Assembly on May 27, 2012. The challenge before the constitutional experts and political scientists is to offer suitable constitutional and political exits leading the country to a democratic election for enabling people to decide.

The Interim Constitution of 2007, which was an outcome and legitimate device of the mandate of the *Second People's Movement (2006)*, was originally meant for less than three years until it had not been replaced by a new Constitution. However, it has now been stretched longer due to extraordinary situation created by the failure of the Constituent Assembly to produce a constitutional draft for adoption. Who is to be blamed for this? No one but the top authorities of the Assembly, including party leaders, incumbent government and all CA members, who must be accounted for CA's failure despite people's utmost trust on them. Free and fair elections for another CA through democratic means are possible if the country gets a consensual government for opening constitutional obstacles.

The Supreme Court's directives to the

CA Chairman and PM to work out on options at the CA before it expired, went to their deaf ears. Even the smaller parties and individual members paid no attention to the Supreme Court orders, and opinions articulated in subsequent cases. Blame games and mudslinging prevailed all through, till CA's death until now. As a consequence, the country already in acute crises, is being governed today on ad hoc basis under a caretaker administration. The right to democratic exit through electoral ballots, unconstitutionally denied to the people since the dissolution of CA, may only be secured by activating extraordinary provisions of the Interim Constitution. "Political consensus" amongst political forces is a must in order to form a 'national unity government' which may legitimately enable the Head of State exercise 'extraordinary power' under Article 158 of the Interim Constitution for removing constitutional obstacles on the way towards electoral polls. Over seven months of immensely valuable period of the nation have been wasted by the Government and the parties against the will of the people despite serious presidential efforts. Attention is drawn in this note towards extraordinary devices, in the words of Justice Thomas Cooley, for the legitimate exercise of sovereignty under the Interim Constitution.

The Interim Constitution has mainly four extraordinary provisions that allow the President, as Head of State, to exercise powers in special situations in the interest of the nation but on the advice of the Council of Ministers. The first is the Executive Power to 'declare a State of Emergency' by Proclamation or Order (Article 143). Second is the Legislative Power to promulgate 'Ordinance' (Article 88) in absence of parliament or when there is no parliamentary session. Third is the Military (a form of Executive) Power, under civilian control, to be managed and mobilized within the constitutional and legal framework if there need be (Article 144-148). And the Last is a blend of constituent, legislative and executive powers, which normally do not exist in any democratic Constitutions (except India, Pakistan and Bangladesh for a limited purpose), and is to be exercised in exception for 'removing difficulty in the implementation of the Constitution' (Article 158). But the exercise of all these powers is subject to

parliamentary scrutiny.

For a legitimate political exit under minimum constitutionalism, the present situation demands the exercise of two exceptional powers (Removal of Constitutional Obstacles and Issuance of Ordinances under Articles 158 and 88) without immediate parliamentary scrutiny as envisaged by the Interim Constitution. In the appointment of Supreme Court Justices and Constitutional Commissioners, which has become so urgent, a way out must be constitutionally innovated. The nature and scope of both these 'extraordinary powers' have been contextually interpreted by the Supreme Court in some cases so far, and its scope may be further expanded.

The use and abuse of the provision of the 'Removal of Constitutional Obstacles' in the past is certainly a matter of concern for all democratic Nepalese. Equal concerns are with regard to the potential use of the unexplained nature and scope of Head of State's functions and principal obligations (duties) under Article 36 A, in harmony with other constitutional provisions and democratic practices. In the government formation process, both Articles 36 A and 38 have to be democratically and contextually understood and harmonized with other provisions of the Interim Constitution as well, especially with the Preamble, Articles 33 (R1), 43, 57, 88 and Article 158, for ensuring a democratic exist. A fair, reasonable and democratic exercise of all these powers by the 'Council of Ministers' and 'Head of State' as per the spirit of the Constitution, and through consensus with other political forces, within the framework of the principles of the rule of law and democratic constitutionalism is the key question not understood by many political actors. How to link up the exercise of these politico-constitutional powers with the powerful and independent Supreme Court's regimes under PIL and extraordinary jurisdiction as final interpreter of the Constitution also needs to be explored in the national interest, despite judicial self-restraints to enter the political arena. Failure of the constitutional institutions and political leaderships to timely assess and respond to the seriousness of the deepening national crises is bound to allow the people to break all the barriers.

Dr. Dhungel is a Constitutional Lawyer

ARREST OF COLONEL LAMA

Army Set Back

Irrespective of the reason behind the arrest of Nepal Army Colonel Kumar Lama in the UK, the incident will affect the Nepal Army's international peace keeping missions

By A CORRESPONDENT

For the first time, Nepal Army has faced a serious case to deal with as one of its high ranking colonels, who was on his way back home from the UN peacekeeping mission, was arrested in London. Colonel Kumar Lama, a military observer in the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), was arrested by the Scotland Yard at St. Leonard's-on-sea near Hastings over torture he was alleged to have committed during the decade long conflict.

"The further action against colonel Lama will depend on how the government of Nepal makes efforts to convince the British Right Court that Nepal is in the process to deal with rights violation issues by forming credible institutions," said professor Surya Subedi, an international law professor at Leeds University.

Lama is not a lone figure accused by rights groups in violating human rights during the 12 years long deadly Maoist conflict. Along with security personnel, hundreds of political leaders, including Maoist top brass, have been facing similar accusations.

The premature reaction shown by Nepal's foreign minister Narayan Kazi Shrestha has further complicated the matter. Instead of following the quiet diplomacy, showing the government's own commitment towards universal human rights and showing its willingness to establish Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Disappearance Commission, deputy prime minister Shrestha used provocative statements against United Kingdom, serving the interests of those who want to contain Nepal Army roles in the international arena. Participating in the international peace keeping missions, the Nepal Army has transformed its

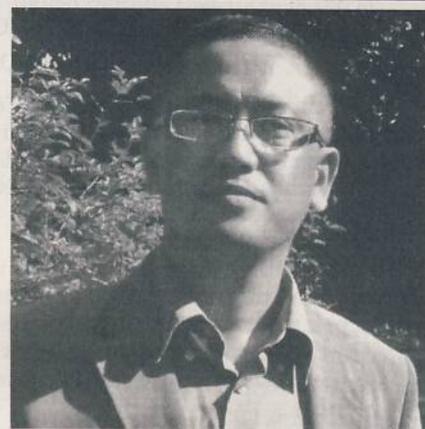
image into a professional army having extensive international contacts.

Some suspect that the arrest of serving Nepal Army officer over suspicion of being involved in torture is just a beginning of massive game plan of various forces to discredit the army. Some senior officials within the UN system still believe the role of Nepal Army for UNMIN's humiliating exit from Nepal. Officials of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights too have similar grudges against the Nepal Army's role for their exit. Along with this, Nepal Army's growing exposure to international arena through UN is also seen as a security threat by most powerful regional power.

In his article published in Nepal in Transition from People's War to fragile Peace, former head of United Mission in Nepal Ian Martin directly hinted his displeasure over the role played by Nepal Army and India against the presence of UN in Nepal. His expression spoke volumes.

In this broader and complicated game, what Nepal does not have is a political leadership with diplomatic caliber to make a deal. Surrounded by hostile forces near and far with weak government at home, Nepal Army has to fight back on its own. "The arrest of Col. Lama is an attempt to conspire against army," said Nepali Congress leader and former foreign minister Sujata Koirala.

UN official Kieran Dwyer has already indicated the possibility of reduction of Nepalese presence in UN. Nepal is currently the seventh largest troop contributing country to the UN with 4,492 of its army and police personnel serving in 11 UN missions around the world.



Colonel Kumar Lama

"This arrest may prove to be a welcome step towards accountability, but it also really highlights the Nepal government's failure to provide justice for the thousands of victims of torture, enforced disappearance, unlawful killings and other human rights abuses in the country," said Polly Truscott, Deputy Asia-Pacific Director.

The UN and the international community allowed the premature departure of UNMIN and OHCHR, before they completed their missions as stated in the comprehensive peace agreement. Do they have the moral authority now to blame the government for not enacting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? The country which has historical relations with Nepal denied visa to the chief of the police on the one hand and allowed entry to colonel Lama to arrest him on the ground of their laws based on human rights instruments. More surprising is that the human rights community is endorsing Lama's arrest without questioning the dual standards played by western communities," said a lawyer.

Although human rights as universal principle should be respected by all including Nepal. Nepal Army has human rights abuse problems, but the way human rights groups are harping on anti-army stand serves no one's interests.

Whatever be the reason behind the arrest and whoever may have played the role to block the functioning of transitional justice system, Lama's arrest is a victory for those who dislike Nepal Army's growing international connection and exposure. ■

“We Have Given Options To Opposition”

SHARBENDRA NATH SHUKLA

Former minister and General Secretary of Terai Madhesh Loktatrik Party, a major constituent of the present coalition, Sharbendra Nath Shukla is a popular politician from western Madhesh. As the demand is growing for the formation of national consensus government, Shukla spoke to New Spotlight on various issues.

What is the political way out?

Election for the Constituent Assembly is only way out to settle the present political crisis. Nepali people need a constitution which will be drafted by the Constituent Assembly. Parties like ours need CA more than so called national or bigger party.

Opposition political parties also agree with you. How do you see their demand to form national consensus government under their leadership?

There is no doubt that national consensus government is required to hold the elections. I don't think it is legitimate step to pull down this government. By reshuffling this government, we can add the ministers from other parties and turn this government as national government.

Opposition parties including Nepali Congress have already proposed NC leader Sushil Koirala as their candidate. How do you look at it?

Despite their tall claim, opposition parties want the chair of prime minister. They are not sincere to the elections of CA. Had they really been sincere for the poll, they would have joined the government long time back to create conducive environment to hold the elections. Instead of giving any new options, opposition parties are just demanding chair of prime minister. This is a legitimate government and it is unconstitutional to hand over chair to other parties. We have also given them options.

Can you explain the options?

The first option is to join the present government. Second option will be to nominate new prime minister from the present coalition to replace Dr. Baburam Bhattari. Our third option is to form a neutral government under an independent person. However, the opposition has rejected all of them. They just want chair for them and nothing other than that.

Do you think elections can be held by April?

If all political parties agree, nothing is impossible. As a ruling alliance, we have shown optimum political flexibility. However, it is now opposition political parties to decide what they want.

What is the stance of Samyukta Loktantrick Madheshi Morcha (SLMM)?

We have already submitted nine point demand. One of our demands is to give the continuity to the present government. We have already appealed opposition parties to join the government and hold the elections.

How do you the demand for the revival of dissolved Constituent Assembly?

It is mere a dream and it is an impossible demand. Only way out for the present political crisis is to hold the elections for new CA. Nepal's all political parties and people also want this.

What is the issue for new elections?

One of the major agenda for the elections will be to provide elections right to over 7 million populations. They are denied right to vote on the ground that one cannot register in the voter list without valid citizenship certificate. At a time when 3.5 million Nepalese are going abroad and more than 3.5 person who born from an inherent citizens of Nepal are yet to register in Voter Identity card due to failure to get the citizenship certificate. The government has to amend the Citizenship act to pave the way for 3.5 million populations to get the citizenship so they can vote. ■



“No Option But To Protest”

DR. SHEKHAR KOIRALA

Known for his ability of melting with the people, Dr. Shekhar Koirala is one of the prominent members of Nepali Congress. At a time when the country indulges in the controversy over who can lead, former CA member Dr. Koirala spoke to New Spotlight.

What is the solution for the current political deadlock?

Resignation of prime minister and formation of neutral government is the only a way out to end the current political deadlock. Once Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai realizes this, everything will be settled. The prime minister is blocking the process of consensus.

As the prime minister has already made it clear that he is not going to resign any time soon, what will the opposition

political parties do now?

We have already decided to launch a nationwide agitation. We need to create a situation that will compel the prime minister to resign. I have been saying this from the day one knowing that UCPN-Maoist is not going to tender the resignation so easily.

Why should Nepali Congress be given to lead neutral elections government?

Since Nepali Congress has a proven record that it can hold the elections free and fair. NC held several elections in the past, including that of CA, in which Nepali Congress lost the elections and became second. Even the Nepali Congress prime minister himself has lost the elections when he was in command. No political party can hold the free and fair elections like NC.

UCPN-Maoist leaders are saying that they support NC candidate for prime minister in case they first joined the present government till amendment of constitution?

Nepali Congress has already sacrificed everything to bring the Maoist into political mainstream. The time has come for Maoist to reciprocate with it. Since Nepali Congress has already nominated its president Sushil Koirala for prime minister, Maoist has to resign to pave the way for him.

Do you think Maoist will resign?

I have been personally stressing the need to launch the nationwide agitation to force Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai to resign. I don't believe that Maoist will support Sushil Koirala to become prime minister without showing his strength. National agitation is the only a way to press this government to resign.

If Maoist is not going to allow Sushil Koirala to become prime minister, why Koirala has he not prepared for agitation?

Sushil Koirala has also realized now that Congress needs to show its strength. Nobody will support Nepali Congress without proven strength. The agitation is the way out.

Do you think people will come to street?

People are fed up with this government.

What do you think of the possibility to revive the Constituent Assembly?

I don't know why we need revival. If we could not draft the constitution in four years, how could we draft in two months. This is sheer non-political issue. Revival of Constituent Assembly is impossible in this juncture.

Why is Maoist demanding this?

This is Prachanda's another political gimmick. UCPN-Maoist leader Prachanda has already proved himself as an untrustworthy politician. This is a tragedy. Nobody knows what he speaks next.

Do you think the election is possible in the present juncture?

All the political parties have been expressing their commitment to elections. After the formation of consensus government, everything can be settled. The national consensus government will take necessary steps to create a conducive environment. ■





Indian President Pranab Mukherjee Conferring Honorary General of Indian Army to Nepalese Army Chief General Rana in New Delhi

NEPAL-INDIA

High Level Visits

Just a week after the visit of President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, Nepal Army chief General Gaurav Sumsher is in India for a ten-day long visit

By A CORRESSONDENT

At a time when the row between president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav and prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai is intensifying over president Dr. Yadav's one to one meeting with Indian politicians and India's senior officials, Nepal Army Chief General Gaurav Sumsher Rana has received the title of honorary general of Indian Army from Indian president Pranab Mukharjee in India.

Although it is an internationally followed diplomatic practice to conduct one-to-one visit between the heads of state, Prime Minister Bhattarai and his advisors openly criticized President Dr. Yadav's one to one meeting with Indian leaders, including Indian president Mukharjee.

"A ceremonial president does not need to hold one-to-one meeting with any officials. President Yadav violated the norms," said deputy prime minister and foreign minister Narayan Kazi Shrestha. Despite differences with Prime Minister Bhattarai, Shrestha sided with prime minister in the present row.

Anger behind Prime Minister Bhattarai and his deputy Shrestha is understandable as president Yadav is

said to have projected Prime Minister Bhattarai as a person behind the present political stalemate during his meeting with Indian leaders and officials. "Our sources in New Delhi told us that president Yadav expressed his dislike of Bhattarai to Indian leaders and officials and lobbied for opposition leader Sushil Koirala," Devendra Poudel told New Spotlight.

One of Kathmandu's renowned businessmen having very good contact with Indian establishment also supported Poudel's complaint as being close to the fact. "What I can say is Indian leaders were very upset from President Dr. Yadav's presentation as a Congress sympathizer but not President of Republic of Nepal."

"President Dr. Yadav has maintained his diplomatic limits in his India visit. When he met Indian leaders and officials, his one point agenda was holding free and fair elections and brining back stability in Nepal," said a member of the entourage of President Dr. Yadav to New Spotlight on condition of anonymity. "The President rejected any possibility to go beyond the constitutional limit and repeatedly told

Indian officials that there is the need of a consensus government to hold the elections at the earliest. President Yadav's argument may be dislike of India."

The difference between the President and present coalition government appeared even in New Delhi. Opposing the views of president Dr. Yadav to hold free and fair elections by a consensus government, Minister for Irrigation, and member of the entourage, Mahindra Yadav separately met Indian foreign minister Salman Khurshid to oppose President Yadav's views.

The recent statement of Indian Minister for External Affairs Salman Khurshid seems to be a reflection of his frustration. Inaugurating the 8th South Asian Free Media Conference-2013 in Amritsar, Punjab, Khurshid said he did not want to request the political parties anymore to end the political deadlock rather appeal to the Nepalis to strengthen democracy, and India was ready to support the cause.

"Now Nepali people should act from their side to strengthen democracy in the country and India wishes to support their effort," Khurshid added addressing Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) in Lahore. Earlier, New Delhi had voiced its support for a consensus government during President Ram Baran Yadav's recent visit to India. Meanwhile, political parties in Nepal had been failing to meet all the deadlines given by the president.

Nepal's army chief general Rana also met with India's Defense Minister A.K. Antony and India's National Security Advisor Shiva Shankar Menon. Indian President Pranab Mukherjee conferred the Honorary Rank of General of the Indian Army on General Rana at an investiture ceremony.

Nepal Army Chief General (CoAS) Rana met with Indian Defense Minister A.K. Antony and other high-level defense officials at their office in South block. Rana also held meetings with Indian Navy and Air Force Chief. The agenda naturally was security.

Nepal Army's Chief General Rana's meeting with his Indian counterpart General Bikram Singh was confined to matters of bilateral interests. ■

NEPAL BAR ELECTIONS

Contradictions Within

Despite their disagreement in the national politics, leftist groups joined hands against the Nepali Congress or the democratic front in Nepal Bar Association elections

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have been putting up a united front in the central level politics against UCPN-Maoist and its front, terming the Maoist design a tyranny. However, this does not explain the elections of Nepal Bar Association, where all communist parties have put up a common front against the Nepali Congress-led democratic alliance.

It seems that nothing is impossible in Nepal. There is no left or right or no center so far as making alliances is concerned. Led by advocate Congress loyalist Sher Bahadur KC, the Nepali Congress-led front is now contesting the Nepal Bar Association elections with the united communist front led by advocate and CPN-UML loyalist Hari Krishna Karki.

Whatever political stand they have and what every political ideology followed by them, there is a lot of contradiction in the alliance. Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have been fighting together against UCPN-Maoist design to impose tyranny in the country.

Candidate of United Progressive Left Front Karki and Nepali Congress sympathizer and Democratic Front Candidate K.C shared the same platform when they joined the political rally against UCPN-Maoist. However, advocate K.C and Karki are bitterly divided in the elections campaign accusing each other as a destroyer of independent judiciary.

"My candidacy is for the protection of independent judiciary. Only in liberal democracy, there is a possibility to have an independent judiciary to protect the rights of people. Democracy has no meaning without independent judiciary," said Sher Bahadur K.C. presidential candidate of Democratic Front close to Nepali Congress.

Whenever there is a division in the



Hari Krishna Karki

Communist led left front, Nepali Congress gets a benefit. When CPN-UML and Maoist lawyers choose to contest the election of Nepal Bar Association separately, Nepali Congress supported candidates of democratic front sweep the elections, like in the last elections. Earlier, when the communists stood united, the democratic front was defeated.

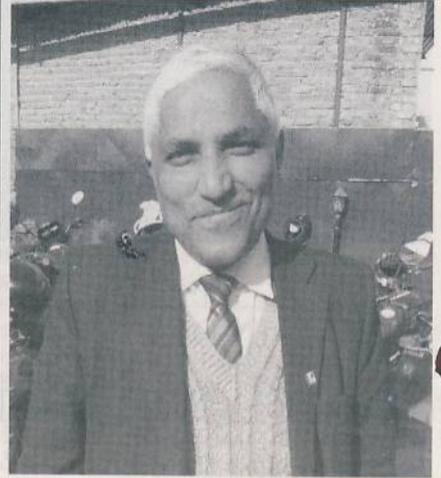
Democratic front and Progressive left front have their own slogans for the coming elections. Victory of K.C. is victory of democracy. Vote to K.C means vote to democracy and independent judiciary. The slogan of Democratic Front questioned the credibility and ideological commitment of left alliance towards liberal democracy.

Vote for progressive left front is vote to progress and change in judiciary. "Our team is committed to independent of judiciary. At a time when the judiciary has been passing through a very crucial phase with vacancy of large numbers of judges at Supreme Court, our team will work to end the situation," said Karki.

"Our victory ushered a new era for the independent of judiciary," said Karki former secretary of Nepal Bar

Association.

From the sympathizer of extreme communist CPN-Maoist led by Vaidya to UCPN-Maoist and liberal communist CPN-UML and other small fringe communist parties, all leftists have backed advocate Hari Krishna Karki's front. In terms of ideology, UCPN-Maoist and Maoists are likened to totalitarian communist ideologues Mao



Sher Bahadur KC

and Lenin. CPN-UML regards itself as a liberal communist party though it is yet to condemn or criticize the communist ideologues.

There is a middle front of ethnic and minority groups but it can make a little difference in the big battle of advocate Karki's left front and K.C's Democratic Front. Both the parties are claiming that they will win the elections. As leftist political parties make a united front, democratic front has to face a tough time.

The Bar is a leading organization of more than 15,000 legal brains of Nepal. It is sad, however, that it could not make any substantial contribution to the CA, neither on the constitutional issues nor as a watchdog. It could have pressurized the assembly to produce a constitution within a given time, given the pressure the Supreme Court judgment could build on the issue. A question arises: Is the Bar for Rule of Law or constitution of the country or is it there only to do politics? The new aspirants must answer this question.

Whoever may win the NBA's elections, implications in terms of its functioning are nothing major. ■



Giuseppe de Rovato on King Prithvi Narayan Shah

By BIPIN ADHIKARI

Father Giuseppe de Rovato's "An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal," published in 1786, is the rare eye-witness description of the *Gorc'ha* conquest of the Kathmandu Valley in 1767-68. It is believed to be the first article written by any European on King Prithvi Narayan Shah – the founder of modern Nepal. The article was translated and published in English by Sir John Shore in the second volume of the *Asiatic Researches* from Calcutta in 1790.

In this 16-page document, Giuseppe de Rovato describes the Kingdom of Nepal in a nutshell. The focus is on its three main principalities spelled as *Cat'hmandu*, *Lelit Pattan* and *B'hatgan*, with high appreciation of their houses, wood doors and windows, streets, temples, and water supply system. He states that the Kingdom is very ancient and it has preserved its peculiar language and independence. The cause of its ruin, according to Rovato, is "dissention which subsists among the three kings" of these three principalities.

The write up outlines some information on Hinduism ('Brahmanism') and Buddhism ('Baryesu') as practiced in Nepal. The difference in practice between Hinduism in Nepal and India, he says, is that in India, the Hindus are "mixed with the Mohammedens, their religion also abounds with many prejudices, and is not strictly observed; whereas in Nepal, where there are no Muselmans (except one *Cashmirian* merchant) the Hindu religion is practiced in its greatest purity." The main purpose of Rovato's documents, however, remains to describe how the King of *Gorc'ha*, "having already possessed himself of all the mountains which surround the plain [Valley] of Nepal, began to descend into the flat country, imagining he should be able to carry on his operations [here] with the same facility and success as had attended him on the hills."

Father Robato, who was the prefect of the Roman Mission, describes the nature of the expedition of the King of Gorkha following the first defeat with Kirtipur

people: "The King of *Gorc'ha*, despairing of his ability to get possession of the plain [Valley] of Nepal by strength, hoped to effect his purpose by causing a famine; and with this design stationed troops at all the passes of the mountains to prevent any intercourse with [the Valley]; and his orders were most rigorously obeyed, for every person who was found in the road, with only a little salt or cotton about him, was hung upon a tree; and he caused all the inhabitants of a neighbouring village to put to death in a most cruel manner: even the women and children did not escape, for having supplied a little cotton to the inhabitants of Nepal; and when I arrived in that country at the beginning of 1769; it was a most horrid spectacle to behold so many people hanging on trees in the road. However, the King of *Gorc'ha* being also disappointed in his expectations of gaining his end by this project, fomented dissensions among the nobles of the three kingdoms of Nepal, and attached to his party many of the principal one, by holding forth to them liberal and enticing promises; for which purpose he had about 2000 *Brahmens* in his service."

What Rovato writes about King Prithvi Narayan Shah does not hint anything good about him nor his military capacity or strategic thinking that led to the conquest of Nepal Valley. It must be pointed out here that some of the descriptions in the Account of Father Rovato as noted above may have been exaggerated. As Rovato was based in Nepal Valley, any aggression on it was also an aggression on his missionary activities here (including the business of Christianization). The new ruler had apparent dislike for 'firangees' (Europeans) in general. Firstly, Shah did not want them to come and convert the local people into Christianity. Secondly, he was not in favour of the British East India Company trading with the hill principalities and continuing using Kathmandu Valley as the transit point between Tibet and India for their trade.

As Prithvi Narayan, who had begun his military campaign since 1744, continued to expand his influence in the Nepal Valley, it eventually came into conflict with the British power in Bengal – the later already being in some relationship with the Valley principalities by that time. Robert Clive's victory over the Nawab of Bengal at the battle of 'Plassey' (Palashi) in 1757 had already helped the British to consolidate their position in Bengal. One of the major issues in dispute with the British even after the consolidation of *Gorc'ha* in the Valley of Nepal was the question of trade both with and through Nepal.

Additionally, Father Rovato, who was expelled from Lhasa along with his colleagues who were working for the Capuchin mission founded there in 1760, was not a preferred person for the new ruler of Nepal. His link with the British was suspected in the Nepal Valley. The Capuchin Fathers were said to have tried to build better relationship with them. For example, Rovato mentions that he and his colleagues provided medical aid to Prithvi Narayan Shah's brother who was wounded during the first Kirtipur war. This did not help the Capuchin fathers much.

When *Cat'hmandu* King Jayaprakash Malla sought the help of the East India Company in his fight against *Gorc'ha*, suspicion fell on the goodwill being created. When *Gorc'ha* soldiers surrounded half the city of *Lelit Pattan* to the westward, King Jayaprakash also had to run away from his house, which was close by, "to avoid being exposed to the fire of the besiegers." It was only with the greatest difficulty that *Gorc'has* had been convinced later that the Christians be allowed to leave the country. Father Rovato indeed left the Valley on 4th February 1769. He is also said to have provided some details of the topography of Nepal to the British after he left Nepal.

Unless verified by other sources, the descriptions therefore may have some of his bias and effect of the propaganda war of which *Gorc'ha* rulers were known for at that time. ■



Nepal Rastra Bank

NEPAL'S MACRO-ECONOMY

Dismal Deficit

Increasing imports and decreasing exports have been Nepal's international trade stories for a long time. But the worrying part is that the situation is not improving

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

The total export of Nepal is so dismal that it cannot even finance the import of total petroleum products that are coming through India.

In the fiscal year 68/69, Nepal exported a total of NRs. 74.6 billion and made imports of NRs. 462.7 billion. While petroleum products of some NRs. 92.3 billion alone were imported, according to various media reports.

Although remittances have provided the economy a needed lifeline, such dependency on remittances cannot be relied for long. Nepal's economy has been suffering from all directions. From political crisis to labor problems and power shortages, everything has impacted on the economy.

According to the Nepal Rastra Bank's (NRB) Macroeconomic Situation of Nepal, which is based on four months' data of FY 2012/13, the current situation of Nepal's economy is very dismal and if major actions are not taken then it will go downhill even in the future.

Due to high growth of imports, the

ratio of export to import declined to 14.8 percent in the review period from 17.5 percent a year ago.

Although the overall Balance of Payment (BOP) received a surplus in the four months of 2012/13, the surplus is seen only due to high remittances received by the country.

The overall BOP recorded a surplus of NRs. 140.7 million during the four months of 2012/13 compared to a surplus of NRs. 46.31 billion during the same period of the previous year. The current account, however, posted a deficit of NRs. 1.77 billion in the review period in contrast to a surplus of NRs. 20.73 billion in the same period of the previous year.

"The deficit in the current account was primarily due to a substantial rise in the imports of merchandise, the deficit in the net services income compared to a surplus in the corresponding period in the previous year and the slow growth of workers' remittances in the review period," states the NRB report.

However, for the common people, the

problems are also high as the inflation is on a rise. The year-on-year (y-o-y) inflation as measured by the consumer price index increased by 10.5 percent in mid-November 2012 as compared to 8.5 percent in the corresponding period of the previous year.

The gross foreign exchange reserves also increased by 0.7 percent to Rs. 442.33 billion in mid-November 2012 from a level of NRs. 439.46 billion as at mid-July 2012.

The merchandise exports went up by 11.7 percent to Rs. 26.46 billion in the four months of 2012/13. Such exports had increased by 10.7 percent to Rs. 23.69 billion during the same period of the previous year. On a monthly basis, merchandise exports decreased by 15.3 in October/November of the current fiscal year compared to that of the previous month.

During the review period, the revenue mobilization of the Government of Nepal also grew and the government's total expenditure increased by 4.5 percent. The government budget remained at a surplus of NRs. 14.07 billion.

"A high growth of resource mobilization relative to government expenditure accounted for such a surplus during the review period," states the report.

On the other hand, the reserve money decreased by 5.6 percent during the review period as against an increase of 17.0 percent in the corresponding period of last year. ■

NEW SPOTLIGHT

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INGOs

Mostly Misunderstood

Despite their contribution to development by involving the marginalized population, the INGOs have remained mostly misunderstood

By A CORRESPONDENT

From health to education, drinking water to sanitation and livelihood to disaster preparedness, the INGOs have been supporting a range of development activities undertaken by the local NGOs and helping uplift the livelihood of the needy, excluded population of Nepal.

However, only a few takers recognize the role and contribution of the INGOs. Government officials, the media people and politicians, all tend to portray the INGOs in a negative light without understanding the proper functioning of the INGOs in Nepal.

According to the Social Welfare Council Act, all INGOs need to register with the Social Welfare Council and the INGOs implement the programs with approval from the SWC. All INGOs also submit their expenditure and annual program to the council.

Despite such mandatory legal provisions, even the recently published Good Governance Action Plan directed the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare to bring all INGOs under one window policy and make their annual expenditure transparent.

The Social Welfare Council Act 1992 has made it mandatory for INGO to sign the General Agreement before launching projects or programs in Nepal. With a membership of 101, the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN) has been formed to collectively raise the voice with these concerns.

People working in the INGOs agree that there is a possibility of irregularities happening in some INGOs but they say it is not true that all INGOs are bad. Recently, the Social Welfare Council reportedly was working to take action against 40 INGOs registered in Nepal.

"We cannot say anything about those INGOs which are not the members of AIN. Out of 270 registered INGOs, only

101 or 40 percent are the members of AIN," writes Ashutosh Tiwari, chair of AIN, in his Facebook wall.

All AIN members are following the laws and regulations in Nepal and submitting their annual report and expenditure to SWC as per the law. As the Social Welfare Council is the regulatory body for all INGOs, the INGOs have been submitting their annual expenditure to the SWC.

Along with raising awareness level of people on social issues like gender based violence, the INGOs have also contributed in other sectors. The INGOs annual contribution in development sector is around 7 to 9 percent.

"Out of 270 INGOs registered in Nepal, an overwhelming number of INGOs have been effectively working in various sectors helping local NGOs to carry out development activities at the local level," claimed Madan Rimal, senior official at SWC.

Act Provisions

Social Welfare Act, 2049 (1992) Clause 15 talks about the permission and agreement. According to Clause 15(1), any foreign non-governmental organization, if it desires to work in Nepal, will need to submit an application to the council for permission before starting its work.

Sub clause 3 says the permitted foreign non-governmental organization shall have to reach an agreement with the council.

Clause 19 of the act relating to economic assistance says social organizations and institutions willing to get material, technical, economic or any other kind of assistance, either from Nepal Government or foreign countries, international social organizations and institutions or missions or individuals, shall submit a project proposal and application along with details to the council as prescribed.



Social Welfare Council

Under the yearly assistance of two hundred thousand rupees for the project, that is to be finished immediately or may take only giving prior notice to the council and after the completion of the said work, a report should be submitted to the council, within the period of three months.

While providing economic assistance to the approved projects by the foreign organizations, assistance shall be channelized through the commercial banks operating within Nepal.

Similarly, the clause 26 specifies the need to submit an annual report. Clause 26 (2) says social organizations or institutions affiliated with the council should submit audit report, to the council within the period of six months after the completion of fiscal year along with the details descriptions of their work and activities.

Clause 21 account and auditing: The clause 21(2) says the Audit of the Council shall be carried by the department of Auditor General. The sub clause 3 says account and auditing of the social organizations, affiliated with the council shall be as prescribed. As a regulatory authority, the Council, if it so wishes, inspects or causes to inspect the accounts documents, along with cash and kind, of the social organizations and institutions affiliated with the council at any time.

At a time when there is a huge gap in carrying out the development activities at the local level in the absence of elected representatives at the local level, Nepal's over 200 INGOs have been making a lot of difference. In the absence of local elected representatives, the INGOs are filling the gap by supporting local NGOs to carry out development activities targeting marginalized and vulnerable population ■

Bill Made To Control And Regulate The International Trade Of Rare, Endangered And Protected Wild Fauna And Flora 2067

A. Name, objective and reason of the bill is unclear:

The name, objective and reason for the bill is unclear. The objective and reason behind bringing the bill has been mentioned as such : for the implementation of the Convention on the International Trade on Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora to which Nepal became a signatory in 1973 and to regulate the international trade of rare, endangered, and protected species of wild fauna and flora. The term "trade" mentioned in the Act indicates that the bill has been created for trade itself and that trade can be conducted but certain terms and conditions have to be followed in order to do so. It would be more appropriate to use another term instead of trade, such as the "illegal transport/ or smuggling of".

B. Leeway to do anything if permit papers have been obtained: As the Act allows for the trade of rare wild fauna and flora after obtaining permit papers there is the possibility of illegal trade on the basis of obtained permit papers. The provision in Article 3, sub section (2) which states "Whatever else is written in subsection (1), if permit papers have been obtained rare wild fauna or flora or samples of such can be kept, utilized, exported, transported, or wild fauna can be raised, or rare wild flora planted, cultivated, or samples of such wild fauna and flora produced for the purpose of academic research, investigation, testing, training, exhibition, conservation education, bio-diversity conservation or educational purposes, remaining within the mentioned terms and conditions," clearly indicates towards this. If this is the case it can also mean that if permit papers can be obtained anything can be traded. How many of such items or samples of such items can be produced? How many shouldn't be allowed to be produced? This is not clear in the Act. As no limit for production has been defined it could lead to the illegal smuggling [of the produced item].

C. Sub sections (2) and (3) of Article 4 has provisions detailing whether it is appropriate to give permission for the

plantation, cultivation, or nurturing of rare wild fauna and flora or samples of such, or the keeping, use, or production of such wild fauna and flora or samples of such, or for the export or transport of such. Likewise Article 4 sub section (4) has provided provisions for [mandatory] consultation with a scientific agency for the purpose [mentioned above]. However there are no clear provisions defining why such wild fauna and flora can be produced, used, or traded. The only reason that is mentioned is scientific study and investigation. One single such provision cannot fulfill the objectives of the Act.

(1) Subsection (6) of Article 4 provides for appointing necessary conditions while issuing permit papers as under subsection (5); the managing agency may mention the necessary criterias and methods that are to be adopted while nourishing or raising such wild rare fauna, planting or growing such rare wild flora, or producing, keeping for self, or using, and/or mediums that should used for transporting, methods of keeping it in the vehicle, routes of transport, residences, while exporting or importing such wild rare fauna and flora, or samples of such, and/or necessary conditions for using such wild fauna and flora. The provision of keeping conditions that are not legally defined but are termed necessary can be mis-used. If the Act does not clearly indicate the conditions the implementor can appoint the conditions as per their will and misuse it. Therefore the conditions must be clearly fized in the Act itself. That is why this provision allowing trade on the basis of permit papers is therefore unclear.

D. Provision of right to estimate with terms such as "as appropriate or as appointed" It can be seen that the permit papers for trade can be issued by the concerned officials on the basis of his/her personal assessment. This sort of assessment rights should not be given to an individual because it makes the individual autocratic and self willing. Subsection (3) of Article 8 states that "Upon verifying requests made under sub-section (2) by consulting with scientific agencies if the managing with scientific agencies if the managing agency considers it appropriate to issue permit papers, the managing agency may issue permit papers in the prescribed style

to the concerned individual, organization, or agency to nourish or raise such wild fauna, or plant or cultivate such wild flora or produce or keep with self, or use, or export or import such wild fauna and flora or samples of such." This provision clearly indicates that assessment right has been given. The term "as appropriate" is not defined word. Undefined terms in the legal system cannot give defined justice. The provision of "as appropriate" can allow the official the right to do whatever s/he pleases. It is necessary to make this clear and visible. There are many such places in this Act where many undefined, unclear and repeated terms have been used.

It is necessary to define the works and responsibilities of the scientific agencies in the Act clearly. By simply stating in Article 13(3) that "the other works, responsibility and rights of the scientific agency shall be as appointed" the Act has not directed the scientific agency in a clear manner. Laws should not be made undefined or confusing with double meanings. This not only adds to the confusion but also to decisions being made on personal whim. If laws are made to be implemented on the basis of an official appointing the law then the maker and implementor of the law are the same. If the person who is supposed to implement the law is given the responsibility of also making the law s/he will make the law so that it is easy for him. The works, responsibility and right of scientific agency which plays the important role of implementing the law, must be better defined and appointed in the Act and law itself.

Restricted rights to Regulation and Directives: Article 30 and 31 of the Act has given the government the right to make the regulation and directives. It is not good to give the government the rights to make decisions on such an important and crucial matter. Giving the concerned offices and government departments the right to frame the regulations and directives allows for vested interests to be given prominence. Therefore all the necessary conditions and systems must be provided for in the Act.

Except for those matters that cannot be done by the Act and *must* be made by the government, all others must be specified by

the Act. If the implementing agency is given the responsibility of also making the policy such an Act will not be able to give justice. Therefore the government should not be given rights other than those necessary for the easing of the implementation of the laws. Also it is necessary to clearly state in the Act the subject areas in which regulations can be made.

Crime and Punishment : Legal freedom gives space for self - fulfillment: Actions prohibited by Act, and punishments accorded have been provided in the subsections of Article 15.

Social and cultural impact of the Act

Any act, law, or regulation must be made to make the life easier for people and not to further burden them or create hurdles. Although Acts and laws are made for society many are actually harming society.

As per the theory that "the people and the state are and should be the protectors of wild fauna and flora" mentioned in the preamble of Convention on the Illegal Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), the people must be made aware of why it is necessary to protect wild fauna and flora the benefits of doing so. To do so there must be better relations between the people and the state.

However there are many examples of policies and regulations made for the protection of forests, national parks, wild fauna and flora benefitting illegal traders and smugglers instead of the people and the state. The carelessness of forestry user groups, poaching of protected wild fauna, lack of compensation for people re-settled from protected areas are negative examples. Below is a short analysis of whether past mistakes have been corrected in the present version and the impact of past experiences on this Act.

a. Protected forest area:

Protected forests which cover 2785.7 square kilometers make up 18.81 percent of the total area of Nepal. In a country like Nepal where there are rising problems of landless, bonded laborers and poor farmers the idea of protecting, (and that too without getting direct income) more forest/land cover, wild fauna and flora than is necessary is itself debatable. It is not clear how much income is generated from protected forests. And neither is this income directly connected to the people. This directly and indirectly benefits those who are involved in poaching and corrupt

government officials and has not been seen to aid others.

If wild animals from protected national parks kill people the compensation given to the family of the victim is nothing compared to fines and punishment people convicted of killing protected wild animals. This has valued wildlife more than human life. No animals life can be more valuable than human life. The law needs to be more people oriented and not more animal oriented.

Communities living outside and around protected forests and national parks are often the victims of the protected forests. The water, land and forests make up a major part of their livelihoods but laws and acts brought without consultation with the concerned communities force the people there to resettle from their location. Permits for even simple limited activities such as fishing, gathering fodder and firewood are not renewed on time, fishing permits are issued to Indians. Such actions cause the local community to be deprived and discriminated.

(B) Protected mammals of Nepal:

Several animals listed in Appendix 3 and 6 of CITES and also protected by the laws of Nepal such as the Garui Gai, Wild Yak, Hisping Hare, Royal Stag, Musk Deer, Pygmy Hog, Pandolin, Black Buck, Water Buffalo, are also used by the local community where the animals are found for consumption and even medical cures. These animals are usually found in the Himalayan or mid hills region and are used by the people of the area. The mountains and hills of Nepal are inhabited by people from various indigenous communities who have been traditionally using such animals for food, medical, commercial (and cultural) purposes. Prohibiting the indigenous communities from using such could be unjust for them and could violate their right to food. Further because many animals are consumed for medical purposes and not just as food it also violates their right to live. Laws should complement society's faith and culture and not oppose them. Care should be taken to understand what cultures adorn societies. Because laws are created on the basis of prevalent cultural and religious values the faith, culture and traditions of local concerned communities and societies should be kept in mind while creating laws.

Laws should be people oriented not animal oriented

Many of the laws and regulations created for the protection of forests and wild fauna and flora have not been able to fulfill the desired objectives. If this bill is to achieve its objectives consultations must be held with concerned local communities, individuals and agencies that are likely to be affected by the making of the laws.

Acts created for protection and conservation seem to be going against local indigenous communities and their cultures.

As this Act has been brought about to implement CITES it is more important to understand the objective of CITES.

CITES seems to have kept traders as their targeted group. The Nepal government has proposed it accordingly. This needs to be corrected.

It is the objective and religion of traders to earn profit. As they are willing to bear a 4 paisa loss for a 2 penny gain they do not care about the social impact of their actions. The Act does not clarify where and how it is trying to uplift society and therefore could have a negative impact. It is therefore necessary to analyze this act on the basis of social impacts as well.

Before creating this Act it is necessary to hold intensive interactions with local indigenous communities, stakeholder agencies and organizations or their representatives and activities conducted till date reviewed.

This working paper was presented in the interaction programme organized by the Nepal Constitution Foundation on 23 Kartik 2069.

This investigative paper was prepared by advocate Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar for the Nepal Constitution Foundation with inputs from women, indigenous communities, Dalit, Madhesi, youth, and other concerned pressure groups. The Foundation is grateful to Sushila Nepali, Mhammad Siddiqui, Sunil Kumar Pariyar, Apsara Chapagain, Angdawa Sherpa, Ram Kapali, Sita Gurung, Chandrika Prasad Yadav, Shyam Kumar BK, Dr. Ravi Sharma Aryal, Dr. Udaya RajSharma, Barna Bahadur Thapa, Phurpa Tamang, Ambar Prasad Panta, Padam Bahadur Shrestha, Abhishek Adhikari, and Bipin Adhikari.

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“Disaster Policy Coordination Lacking”

PURUSHOTAM GHIMIRE

Annually, Nepal has been celebrating the Earthquake Safety Day on January 17. The day reminds the people of the devastation Nepal's great earthquake of 1934 caused. As Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries in terms of natural disasters like floods, earthquakes and landslides, PURUSHOTAM GHIMIRE, joint secretary at the National Planning Commission, spoke to New Spotlight on issues. Excerpts:

How do you view the state of natural disasters in Nepal?

There has been an increase in the number of natural disasters over the past few years and Nepal has been incurring huge losses annually. Nepal is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world and studies have already shown that climate change will intensify the disaster related incidents in the days to come. For instance, between the period of 1971-2007, there were casualties accounting for over 27,000 lives, 50,000 injuries and 3,000 missing. More than 5 million people were affected by the disasters. As Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and climate change is interrelated, they need to be taken up together. How can you separate them?

How do you see the present setup in terms of the DRR?

Of course, there is a high level institutional mechanism headed by the Minister of Home Affairs and the Home Ministry is responsible to coordinate the disaster related issues. Yet, disaster is still to get a high priority. Under the existing law, there are several committees at different levels under the Ministry of Home to coordinate with the Disaster Risk Reduction issue; there is always a gap in coordination at the policy level as well as at the ministerial level. In this context, the need is there for a multi-stakeholder national coordination mechanism.

How do you see the level of resources?

I don't think resource is a problem any more in the area of Disaster Risk Management and Disaster Risk Reduction. Along with the government's annual budget, Nepal's development partners have also been spending resources in the sector.

How do you see the expenditure pattern?

One of the challenges is to use the available resources properly. The resources must be spent in a result oriented manner. Despite spending resources in eastern Nepal, we have been unable to restore schools and other infrastructure and provide relief to the people. It is unfortunate that we have yet to map district level resources and equipment. This is happening because of the lack of institutions to coordinate at the policy level.

What role can institutions like the National Planning Commission play in DRR?

As the planning advisory body of the government, NPC has been actively promoting ideas to mainstream DRR into development activities through its periodic development plans. Along with other sectors, NPC has a mandate to approve annual plans and programs, including on disaster related issues before their implementation.

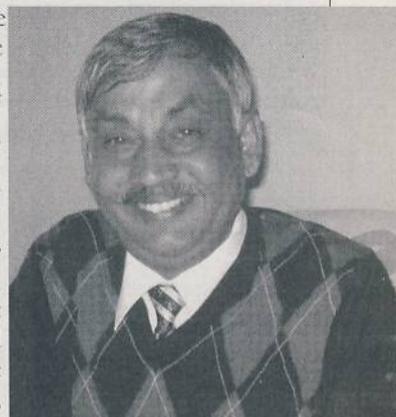
How do you look at disaster from the development perspective?

As disaster has been creating havoc in the development sector by destroying property worth of millions of rupees, the time has come now to look at disasters from a development perspective as well. Although disaster management is not generally associated with plan and financing, there are in fact a number of schemes in operation, such as for drought proofing, afforestation, drinking water, etc, which deal with the prevention and mitigation of the impact of natural disasters. This is the reason NPC has been actively promoting mainstreaming DRR into development activities through its periodic development plans. The tenth five development plan, Interim Plan 2007-2010 and 2010-2013 also incorporated DRM and DRR to deal with disasters.

What is NPC doing now?

As the National Planning Commission is not in the process of formulating the three years plan. We are trying to include the issues relating to the management and mitigation of natural disaster more explicitly in coming three years plan. Our experiences have shown that the impact of major disasters cannot be mitigated by the provision of immediate relief plan only. Our Disaster Risk Management is heavily influenced by calamity relief. Disaster is beyond that. Last year's

earthquake in the eastern part of Nepal taught us many lessons. For instance, we are yet to build the schools, buildings



and other infrastructure damaged by the quake. It showed that we need to be sensitive towards disaster prevention and mitigation aspects. As they also directly hit the development sector, disasters need to be looked at from the development perspective.

How do you see the state of coordination?

Given our past experiences, there is a growing realization about the need to have a strong mechanism to coordinate the inter ministries to implement the DRR and CRM.

As long as the existing act remains, one cannot change the mechanism. How do you look at this?

Although the government has already tabled the new Natural Disaster Bill in the parliament to deal with the disaster issue in the broader perspective, it is now stalled due to the dissolution of the parliament. The existing Natural Calamity Act is in the process of replacement. The new bill for the first time proposed a central level Disaster Management Authority to look at the issue in broader perspective. I don't think it will alone fulfill the required institution to bridge the existing gap at the policy level. The roles of National Planning Commission will still there is policy harmonization and coordination.

What level of coordination is working now?

There are adequate resources allocated by the government and international donor communities and INGOs. What is lacking is the policy level coordination. The present Disaster Relief Act just talks about the local level coordination during the time of disaster but it does not envisage the body for policy level coordination. ■

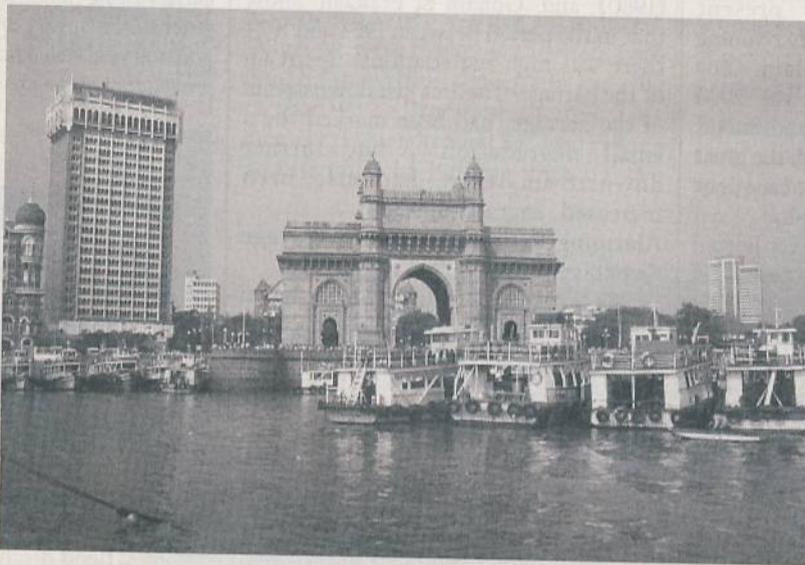


Amchi Mumbai

By **ABIJIT SHARMA**

Vacations always mean travelling for me. And this time it was no different. Being an avid traveller, I've always loved visiting new places. More so, in a diverse place like India. This time my destination was the financial hub, the home of Bollywood and the 'Gateway of India', Mumbai.

As soon as we landed in the city, we were greeted with a warm rush of air. Mumbai, being close to the sea and experiencing a tropical wet and dry climate, never sees harsh winters. Rather, it remains warm throughout December to February. The summers sees huge amount of rainfall though. We started our city sightseeing



the locals, is a relaxing place to be especially during dusk. The Siddhi Vinayak Temple, popularized by celebrities and business men alike attracts a lot of domestic tourists and the Haji Ali Dargah, a marvelously built Muslim Dargah is no different. Moreover, the history carried by the city and its monuments make it even more interesting to travel. IN other words, for someone looking to explore India, Mumbai remains as travellers' paradise.

the very next day we reached. The first thing that caught my attention was the laid back attitude. Although a financial hub and a metro city, Mumbai seems much more relaxed and laid back, very unlike other cities like Delhi. The Marathi people seem more welcoming and friendly, something quite strange to find in the northern part of India. At one instance when I was queing up for the train tickets, one gentlemen asked me sensing my impatience, 'Bhai, Dilli se ho kya?' (You look like you're from Delhi!)

Around the City

Mumbai has a lot of tourist attractions. The sea side Marine Drive, Hanging Garden, Colaba Market, Siddhi Vinayak Temple to name few. What struck me most while going around these places was the colonial feel the city still carried. Old buildings along with Churches and offices from the time of the British still find a place in the main city between the tall skyscrapers. Although populated and quite hectic the main area has been quite well maintained. Colaba is a busy bustling tourist market and houses one of the oldest cafes of not only Mumbai, the whole of India, the Leopold Café. The sea side Marine Drive, a popular hangout among

Ek Chaalis ki Last Local

When one talks of Mumbai, it is impossible to leave out the Local Train. The Mumbai Local, a public transport is famous for its huge crowd. And it lived up to its reputation. Boarding the train, finding your way inside and then settling seems like a huge Herculean task. To avoid the the huge crowd, one night after spending time at a local café, we decided to board the last train that left exactly at 1:40 am. To our surprise, even when the seats were empty people were standing on the doors peeking outside. Out of curiosity, I asked one passenger for the reason. He firmly replied, 'This is the way we enjoy Amchi Mumbai!' ■

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Nepal And India Headed For Far Worse Kosi Flood Disasters

By DR. A.B. THAPA



Peoples of Nepal and India must be alarmed that that our region is quickly heading for far worse Kosi flood disasters. Certainly, the scale of the 2008 Kosi flood disaster would be just the tip of the iceberg by comparison with the upcoming Kosi flood disasters. **Kosi Could Abandon its Course For Ever**

We might be very close to the days when the swollen Kosi would permanently abandon its present course and it would be freely roaming over its vast eastern floodplain. The damages, that resulted from the 2008 bursting of the eastern embankment, would pale in comparison with the great losses of life and property consequent upon the coming catastrophic Kosi flooding. Even the distant West Bengal and Bangladesh lying on the old courses of the Kosi might not be completely out of the Kosi flood danger. **Lesson from China's Bitter Experience**

We should draw lesson from the terrifying experience of catastrophes when the Yellow river of the China known as the Sorrow of China just like the way the Kosi is known as the Sorrow of Bihar used to burst periodically its embankments in course of high floods. The Yellow river like Kosi now flowing well above the surrounding lands burst its embankments in 1931 and 1887 that resulted in loss of life between 2 to 4 million and 1 to 2 millions respectively. **River Bed Rise**

Kosi rising in the Himalayas and emptying into the plain at Chatra after traversing the mountain region, brings with her every year an enormous quantity of sediments estimated at 120 million cubic meters along with 52 billion cubic meters of water. The annual volume of Kosi sediment is about 5 times greater than that of the Sutlej at Bhakra, and two times greater than that of the Nile at Aswan.

Various studies done on Kosi so far come to one common conclusion - the Kosi carries enormous load of sediments that it is unable to transport far beyond. The river, therefore, deposits huge quantity of sediments. In this process of building up an inland delta, the river shifted over 120 km from east to west during the period

from 1736 to 1954.

In 1966 a study of the delta cone of the Kosi river made by Prof Gole CV Dr. Chitale M. appeared in the "Proceedings of the American Society of Civil Engineers". The study explains that the delta building of Kosi was still incomplete. The authors have cautioned that the existing measures (embankments) may be short lived.

The studies carried out by Sanyal (1980) and Gohain & Prakash show that in the period between 1963 and 1974 there was high aggradations upstream of the barrage. The area just downstream of the barrage had been marked by a small degradation. But further downstream, there had also been increased aggradations.

Alarming Reduction in Kosi Barrage Capacity

The Kosi barrage had been designed for a maximum flood discharge of 9.5 lakh cusecs. The maximum flood water level was 25 feet above the bed level. Similarly, the normal pond level was 15 feet above the bed level. According to Gohain & Prakash the annual rate of the sedimentation upstream barrage based on observations as of the early 1980s is about 5 cm per annum. It implies that within the last 60 years after the commissioning of the barrage a layer of 3 meters thick sediments might have already deposited on the river bed. Now the maximum flood water depth might be only 60% of the original depth.

We can calculate the present maximum flood discharge capacity of the Kosi barrage assuming that the maximum water depth would be only 60% of the original depth. It can be roughly calculated based on the formulas of French Engineer Antoine Chezi and Irish Engineer Robert Manning. We will find that at present the barrage might be able to safely discharge a flow only up to 5.0 lakh cusecs. Gohain & Prakash have reported in early 1980s "If the discharge exceeds 8400 cumecs (or 3 lakh cusecs), which is fairly common, the whole area between the two embankments is submerged."

Sedimentation Problems Will Worsen

Within the last 60 years twice the flood discharges up to 9 lakh cusecs had been recorded. But after 1968 the maximum Kosi discharge never crossed

the 6 lakh cusecs limit. It is now an accepted scientific conclusion that the high flood discharges resulting from heavy rainfalls are the primary cause of increased sediment flow. The following is an excerpt from the Karnali project report prepared under the World Bank's assistance.

"The sediment load from mountainous areas, such as the Himalayas and the Karakoram, is believed to be derived extensively from localized mass wasting (landslides) rather than from generalized surface erosion (Carson 1985). Sediment yield should thus be better correlated to precipitation or runoff events which are two of the



main factors causing landslides and gully erosion."

It is seen that within the last 45 years the Kosi flood discharges were far below the maximum discharges already recorded twice within the last 60 years. As a result, we might not be wrong to conclude that within the last 45 years the Kosi barrage project might have been spared to face serious sedimentation problems. However, there is a great probability that in very near future the situation could take an alarming turn. **What Comes Next?**

In 2008 the Kosi had burst the eastern embankment and shifted its course heading to south-east when the flood discharge was only about one lack and sixty thousand cusecs. This flood discharge is quite insignificant compared to about 9 lakh cusecs. flood discharges, which have already been recorded twice within the last sixty years. Despite the fact that the Kosi has changed its course at such a low flood discharge, Bihar suffered very heavy losses. It is frightening even to think of the horrors if the Kosi would suddenly burst the embankment at a time when the flood discharge is close to nine lack cusecs. There would be a total devastation of almost the whole north-east Bihar and



This Trek To Ghale Gaon

By ABHISEK ADHIKARI

A lot must have come out in the print and shown in the television about Ghale Gaon of Lamjung - the synergistic output of culture and tourism. This is a neat and clean village in which out of 108 households, 77 belong to the Gurung community. The view of a mountain range, the sunset and the sunrise mesmerizes everyone, who has been there. I have overheard a couple speak with their friend about the view of sunrise from Ghale Gaon as better than that from Tiger Hill in Darjeeling. It brought a smile on my face. I have never been to Tiger Hill to watch the sunrise. The sunset here is equally magnificent. The hospitality of Khagan Singh Gurung's family made my stay in Ghale Gaon more enjoyable.

All the minibuses going to Besishahar were packed. That meant no seats, just two days before Tamu Loshar. Chetan, my cousin's son, and I took a minibus which was going to Pokhara and got down at Dumre. Of course, we paid the full fare of Pokhara. The conductor had not left any room for bargaining and we were desperate to reach Besishahar, the district headquarters of Lamjung from where the trek to Ghale Gaon starts.

From Dumre, we took a bus to reach Besishahar in about two hours. It was an experience in itself. There was no space to place a foot and there were still more people wanting to climb onto the bus. However, to my amazement, they climbed in and they fitted well inside the bus, despite the fact that there were lots of complaints from the passengers. I had got a seat which I had to offer to a lady carrying a suckling in her pouch. Then I had to struggle in the bus to place my feet in the right spot.

Besishahar is a small town with all the basic facilities. On the way to Besishahar, a fellow passenger Lokendra Bahadur Pariyar, who was a little tipsy, told me that it would take us around 12 hours to reach Ghale Gaon if we chose to walk. When we had started from Kathmandu, we had in mind this trek till Ghale Gaon from Besishahar. There was an alternative way to reach Ghale Gaon as well. Travel by jeep. In fact, it was the most popular

way to choose. It would take around 3 hours by jeep.

We explored the possibility of trekking till Ghale Gaon and most of the people we talked to suggested that it would take us not less than four hours. We decided to walk. It took us eight hours.

On the way to Ghale Gaon, during our first couple of hours, we met one *Sarki Ba*. I could feel a tone of social outcast in his speech when we got introduced. When we were exploring the route with him, he showed us a steep hill and told us that we had to climb the hill. That moment, I thought *Sarki Ba* loved talking and he must be kidding with us. We



Ghale Gaon

had noodle soup and omelets and then resumed our walk.

Once in Baglungpani, we could again see the hustle and bustle of the village and at the background clear view of snow peaks of mountains. We had lunch at Kapur Gaon. It was another three hours' uphill walk till Ghale Gaon. In between, we came across the winding dirt road which was in use to reach Ghale Gaon.

The road trip would not have given us the satisfaction that we got by trekking. It is a one lane road and it would not have been a comfortable ride.

We stayed at Khangan Sing Gurung's house. Ghale Gaon is well known for home stay. The committee allots guests to the respective houses turn by turn. However, we chose our own place as we did not go to the committee asking for it. I am not sure if we could do that way, but there was no objection from anyone. So I assume it was also a norm to be able

to choose where the guests wanted to stay. There was a French ex colonel staying in the same house for the night.

I wasn't sure if I had picked the right house to spend the night till I saw the room from inside. It was cozier than expected, though from outside it did not at all look that appealing. In the evening, we saw the sunset and the golden peaks of the mountains. The mountains changed their colors at different hours, between golden, silver and snow white.

The local chicken meat and *dhindo* made out of millet along with other vegetables was there for the dinner. Of course, there was rice for those who wanted it. Khagan Singh Gurung, his wife, two daughters and a son in law and two granddaughters, who had all gathered to celebrate Loshar the next

day, gave us company in the dinner time. Not to forget Monsieur Vincent Reymond, he took a keen interest in everything that was happening there at that dinner. We were tired in the evening and soon after dinner went off to sleep. We could hear others enjoy the cultural show that was happening at Ghale Gaon that evening.

Next morning I went out to see the sunrise. The mountains received the first rays of sun turning themselves into golden peaks once again.

After breakfast we chatted with Khagan Singh Gurung for a while. He unfolded to us a few chapters of his life. He was in the Indian army and had fought the 1965 and 1971 wars for India against Pakistan. When his children did not survive in his absence he removed his name from Indian army. He had lost six children and now has two daughters.

It was time for us to leave. We parted ceremoniously. *Ama* (Khagan Singh Gurung's wife) put *tika* on our forehead and a flower garland around our neck. We had spent enough time with the family to have an emotional parting. It took us a little less than six hours to reach Besishahar. We trekked down and did not take a ride in the jeep for various reasons. ■

OCCUPY BALUWATAR

Search For Justice

The movement has been supported from all quarters and has gone viral in the social media

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

"We demand that the Prime Minister of Nepal should personally guarantee that his government will prevent the incidents of violence against women. In cases that do take place, we demand that he ensures justice. Only when he fully and effectively prosecutes the perpetrators of violence against women like Sita Rai, his government can be considered committed to ensuring the rule of law," reads the demand from the initiators of the Occupy Baluwar Movement.

Occupy Baluwar Movement, a public movement to end violence against all forms and to end gender based discriminations, has been gaining pace and has seen a huge public participation. The movement has been supported from all quarters and has gone viral in the social media.

Violence against women has been increasing in Nepal, to the extent that, in some cases, government officials, who are there to protect the citizens, have been found involved as perpetrators.

People from all around the country have been participating in the 'Occupy Baluwar' movement, directly or indirectly, which is supposed to continue till the fourteenth of January. People are coming together demanding justice for victims of violence against women.

The news of Sita Rai, a migrant worker, who was first robbed by immigration officials and then raped by a police officer, went viral in the social media just after it appeared on the news.

Sita Rai is not the sole victim of such violence in Nepal. Reports on sexual exploitation of minors have become public in the recent times adding to the public outrage.

Cases of Chhori Maiya Maharjan and Saraswati Subedi have also generated a public outrage.

The extent of cruelty and the severity of the cases have received vigorous public attention. The common people are now openly protesting against the futile governmental efforts in such cases.

According to Bandana Rana, a prominent Nepali rights activist, it was not very common for women to stand up against violence in the past, but now the time has demanded for them to stand up and they are standing up for their rights.

Rana, who has been a leading figure among the rights activists, demands strict government actions against the charged.

"Many victimized girls and women aged between 14 and 30 are participating in the movement. This movement has empowered them and made them aware of their rights," said Rana to the media.

The movement coincides with similar protests in India that are held after the death of 23-year old student who died after being raped in Delhi.

"While education may over time promote gender equality and help change mindsets, in my view, legal literacy is the need of the hour," said Priya Hingorani, senior Supreme Court lawyer of India to the BBC.

The same thing applies even in the case of Nepal. In Nepal, violence against women has been so frequent that it demands straight forward legal action from the government to prevent such cases from happening. The women should be made aware of their rights in the first place.

A cabinet meeting had decided to provide some NRs 150,000 in



compensation to Sita Rai, which has been rejected outrightly.

Such simple move of the government against such severe cases has caused even more anger in the public. People even held boards which read "Rape for 150,000" while protesting around Baluwar.

"Hang the rapist", "Hand over the guilty to the public", "Make rapists chemically impotent", are among many Facebook status posts that are updated by the people demanding stringent actions against the accused.

The movement against all kinds of discriminatory and gender-based violence has definitely opened the eyes of many. Although the government has been repeatedly saying that they are taking the cases seriously but it has not been promptly taking actions.

If the government fails to take strong actions, the outrage is expected to go even wider.

(Names of women changed for their privacy and information taken from the official Facebook page of Occupy Baluwar movement) ■

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Changing Lives

The Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC) has helped enhance the access of the rural population to energy. According to the recently published Census Report of 2011, 67.26 percent of the population now uses electricity as the main source of light. Similarly, 2.41 percent population uses biogas as the main source for cooking. This indicates that the alternative energy sources like bio-gas, solar, micro-hydro and wind power are reaching the people. In a country with the world's lowest electricity consumption, the use of alternative energy sources will provide a long term solution to increase the access of the rural population to energy in exchange for an affordable one time investment

By KESHAB POUDEL

At a time when most of the urban areas of Nepal have been passing through severe power cuts, spanning over 12 hours a day, the villagers in Priti Village, in the north of Ramechhap district, 150 kilometers east of capital Kathmandu, has surplus electricity.

Built under the government subsidy, the project generates 24-kilowatt electricity from Tingli River for supply to the entire village. The local people are using only six out of the 24 kilowatts of power. A micro-hydro built in Dumja river in Gupteshwor village of Ramechhap district generates 35 kilowatts of electricity, where the demand is just over 9 kilowatts.

"We are generating surplus electricity of over 18 kilowatts, but there is no market to sell the surplus," said Krishna Kumar Sunar, president of Dumja River Micro-hydro project.

Thanks to the micro-hydro, the livelihood of the people of in the two villages has changed drastically. "We don't need to pay additional money to buy kerosene or burn pine trees to light the house and people are looking up to establishing small industries by using the electricity."

Establishing alternative energy sources like micro hydro, solar, biogas, wind and improved stoves need a one-time investment. These schemes then

provide electricity for a long time. Lawa Kumar Koirala of Salyan Village, of Solukhumbu, 250 kilometers east of capital Kathmandu, has also some reason to rejoice. After the installation of biogas plant in his home, his family does not have to go to forests to collect firewood. Villagers use bulbs for light, instead of kerosene. Like Koirala there are one hundred families in Solu district who are using the biogas as a source of energy.

Nepal has over 300,000 bio-gas plants, costing some Rs. 15,000 each.

"Bio-gas saves our money and provides clean and healthy energy for cooking and lighting home," said Koirala. "We can pay back the money."

Similarly, solar power is now the main source for lighting many households. Even the people in the urban areas like Kathmandu are moving towards solar energy as an alternative source to address the uncertainty of electricity supply by NEA's central grid.

In Kharbang village, the community was involved from the inception phase and trained to maintain and sustain the micro hydropower plant. The project is focusing now on promoting sustainable livelihoods, through technical capacity building and direct financial assistance.

AEPC's Contribution

The Alternative Energy Promotion Centre-AEPC has been promoting alternative energy sources like mini/micro hydropower, biogas, solar, wind and biomass in the country. With support from various development partners, the center has been providing subsidy supports and technical assistance to develop mini/micro hydropower projects, installment of solar, biogas, improved stoves and wind.

Thanks to the continual involvement of the center, alternative energy has been used to bring about a drastic change in the livelihood of tens of thousands of rural population contributing to poverty alleviation campaign as well. The energy has changed the status of education, health as well as income of the people. The supply of energy has reduced the burden on women.

The AEPC is under the Ministry of Environment, Science, and Technology and it has been supporting development and installation of micro-hydropower plants ranging from 5 to 500 kW, with a cumulative capacity up to 15 MW. The implementation of these plants will be done through two AEPC projects: the Rural Energy Development Program and the Minigrad Support Program of the Energy Sector Assistance Program.

"These projects have inherent direct benefits. Off-grid power generated by mini-hydro will provide a large number of rural households with electricity and power for lighting, milling, and other needs. Such off-grid renewable energy systems not only help in poverty alleviation but also have direct local environmental benefits," said experts.

APEC for rural industries



Along with providing support to generate electricity, the AEPC has brought a plan to promote small and medium scale industries in rural areas with the alternative energy plan. With an aim to promote and develop renewable energy technologies and small, medium scale industries, the centre has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries (FNCSI).

Executive Director of the Centre Govinda Raj Pokharel said they have made a policy decision to increase access to power and bring it into use for people in remote parts of the country.

"The centre will promote alternative energy along with micro-hydro projects not exceeding 1 MW in remote areas as such projects will not be implemented by Nepal Electricity Authority in the next five years or NEA has no plan to connect them to the national grid," said Pokharel

"The centre has already supported communities in the construction of more than 700 micro hydro projects (total 25 MW) ranging from 100 KW to 500 KW. Three lakh biogas plants, solar panels in 3.5 lakh households and 6.5 lakh smokeless improved stoves were installed

in the country with support from the centre," said Keshab Prasad Bhattarai, secretary at Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment.

According to APEC, the country has already earned 2.1 million US dollars in the last 3 years selling carbon by saving trees after installation of biogas plants. Among other supports are solar, biogas and other sources of energy to promote small and medium scale industries.

Pokharel said they will formulate an action plan to implement more such projects. "A solar drier for apples in Helambu, which is not transported to the market, is an example of a new support programme, and our support for small industries can improve rural economy, promote self-employment and increase export," said Pokharel.

Contribution of Micro Hydro

According to an estimate, by the end of 2012, 15 percent of Nepal's electricity will be generated from micro and mini hydropower plants. For each new micro hydropower system, 40 new businesses are created. The micro hydropower plants are part of a larger project seeking to promote renewable energy sources to provide reliable, low-cost electricity to a large number of isolated, rural

communities in Nepal.

With an objective to reach more than one million rural households with alternative energy technologies, including small hydropower, biogas, solar cells and improved cooking stoves, AEPC has been working in various parts of Nepal. Executive Director professor Dr. Govinda Pokharel remains instrumental to bring these changes.

Lack of access to energy in rural Nepal is a major challenge for Nepal's socioeconomic development. With increased access to energy, chances to improve the living standards of rural women and men, increased employment of women and men as well as productivity are bigger. Alternative energy also reduces dependency on traditional, dirty energy, leading to better prospects of sustainable development.

Experiments have shown that energy is the vital tool, which enhances and supports the ability to pursue basic and productive activities in building economy from the individuals to the macro level. Access to safe, clean and reliable energy guarantees the basic and productive operation of end-uses. Secure energy access for productive end-uses promotes productivity, generates employment and enhances livelihood.

Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC)

With the aim to popularize and promote the use of alternative/renewable energy technology, to raise the living standard of the rural people, to protect the environment, to develop the commercially viable alternative energy industries in the country, Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) was established as a government institution on November 3, 1996 under the then Ministry of Science and Technology. APEC's main objective is to develop and promote renewable/alternative energy technologies in Nepal.

AEPC was set up to help meet the clean energy needs in Nepal. Acting as an intermediary institution between the operational level NGOs/private



promoters of renewable energy and the policy decision levels in relevant ministries, AEPC's activities include renewable energy policy formulation, planning and facilitating the implementation of the policies/plans.

The main role and responsibilities of AEPC are to formulate short, medium and long term policy and plan formulation in addition to promotion of development programs, standardization, quality assurance and monitoring.

APEC's Programs

Along with microhydro, AEPC also promotes other alternative energy sources. Biogas program (Biogas Support Program (BSP) began in July 1992. As of 2012, it is one of the major source with over 300,000 biogas plants installed under the BSP alone, in over 2800 VDCs and all over 75 districts.

It has also made a major contribution in the solar power installations. Solar Photovoltaic System, Solar Home Systems (SHS), Small Solar Home Systems, Institutional Solar PV systems (ISPS) and Solar PV Water Pump System (PVPS) and Institutional Solar PV Systems (ISPS) are some of the popular systems introduced by APEC.

Although the government plans for developing the wind energy sector in Nepal have existed for some time, it is only since the establishment of AEPC in 1996 that serious research and development has taken place. Despite these efforts, wind energy is still in its infancy in Nepal and limited data is available for research and modeling. Nepal's rugged geography presents another challenge to wind energy projects.

Nepal has a very high potential to exploit the renewable energy resources. However, the potential has not been exploited to the fullest. The energy sector of Nepal is characterized by a very heavy reliance on traditional resources which contribute more than 85 percent of the total energy consumption. Use of Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) can reduce the dependency on traditional energy and help to protect the environment and reduce emission of greenhouse gases, contribute to sustainable development, regional balance and increase the economic activities. It ultimately contributes to improve the health and educational status of the population as well. ■

Nepal Is A Country Endowed With High Potential For Alternative Energy Resources

PROF. DR. GOVIND RAJ POKHAREL

PROF. DR. GOVIND RAJ POKHAREL, Executive Director of Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) is well known person having a long experience in promoting alternative energy in Nepal. Pokharel spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on various issues regarding state of alternative energy in Nepal. Excerpts:

How do you see the state of alternative energy in Nepal? What is the level of contribution in energy supply?

Nepal is a country endowed with high potential for renewable energy resources like hydro, solar, wind, biomass etc. The country has abundant hydroelectric potential. The theoretical hydroelectric potential has been estimated to be as high as 83,000 MW of which 42,000 MW are considered to be technically and economically feasible. Similarly, Nepal also has huge potential for solar energy. The country is located at favorable latitude that receives ample amounts of solar radiation. From solar energy alone, around 2,920 GWh of energy per year can be harnessed with utilization of just 0.01% of the total land area of Nepal. Other renewable energy sources abundantly available in the country are biomass and wind. The sustainable supply of fuel wood from reachable area of all land resources is around 12 million tons. Likewise total production of animal dung is about 15 million tons. Utilization of 10% of the total area of Nepal could commercially generate more than 3,000 MW of electricity with consideration of the installed capacity of 5MW per km².

However, we are not able to fully convert it into useful energy. Presently, around 12 % of population is electrified by alternative energy sources like micro hydro plant and solar home system. Around 900 thousand households are using clean energy solutions like improved cook stoves, biogas etc. for cooking. Although, the share of alternative energy sources is still small, it has increased by more than 50% since 2005.

What role Alternative Energy Promotion Center has been playing in Nepal to promote people to use the alternative energy?

Alternative Energy Promotion Center is a national focal government organization for promoting renewable and alternative energy technologies in Nepal. AEPC is acting as an intermediary institution between the operational level i.e. NGOs/private promoters of renewable energy and the policy decision levels in relevant ministries. AEPC's activities include renewable energy policy formulation, planning and facilitating the implementation of the policies/plans, standardization, quality control and monitoring.

What is the role of Alternative Energy Promotion Center to increase the access of rural population in electricity?

Since establishment AEPC's main focus is has been to maximize the service delivery and service delivery efficiency in the use of renewable energy resources and technologies in the rural areas and to provide opportunity to low-income rural households to use RETs. Therefore, nowadays we can see that there is load shedding in urban areas but even remote places of Nepal are electrified by micro-hydro plants and solar PV systems.

Why alternative energy is important for the country like Nepal? As an executive director of AEPC, what are your views?

In my opinion, alternative energy or renewable energy is only one viable mean in Nepal to increase access of energy to its population. As you know, Nepal has diversified land structure from plain to high Himalayas and also settlement pattern is scattered and sparse. National grid extension in some places is not economically feasible. Big hydro projects need a huge investment and all the petroleum products consumed in Nepal are imported from India or overseas in the refined form for direct consumption which is causing the economic burden for the country.

The high potentiality of the renewable energy resources available in the country is the most appropriate option for Nepal. It also helps to reduce the dependency on the traditional biomass energy resources and fossil fuels and to manage the energy crisis of the nation. This ultimately helps to minimize the degradation of the environment.

It is said that the alternative energy is expensive

comparative to the other traditional sources. How do you look at it?

Yeah, I agree that initial investment cost of alternative energy technologies are expensive compared to the other traditional sources of energy. But I don't agree with your statement that the alternative energy is expensive comparative to the other traditional sources. In the long-run alternative energy is mostly cheaper than the traditional sources because alternative source is almost free but you have to pay always for traditional source. Hence, if the financial mechanism can be developed in such a way that users can pay in installment basis like house, vehicle mortgage than users will not feel initial financial burden.

What is the reason behind celebrating the Alternative Energy Week?

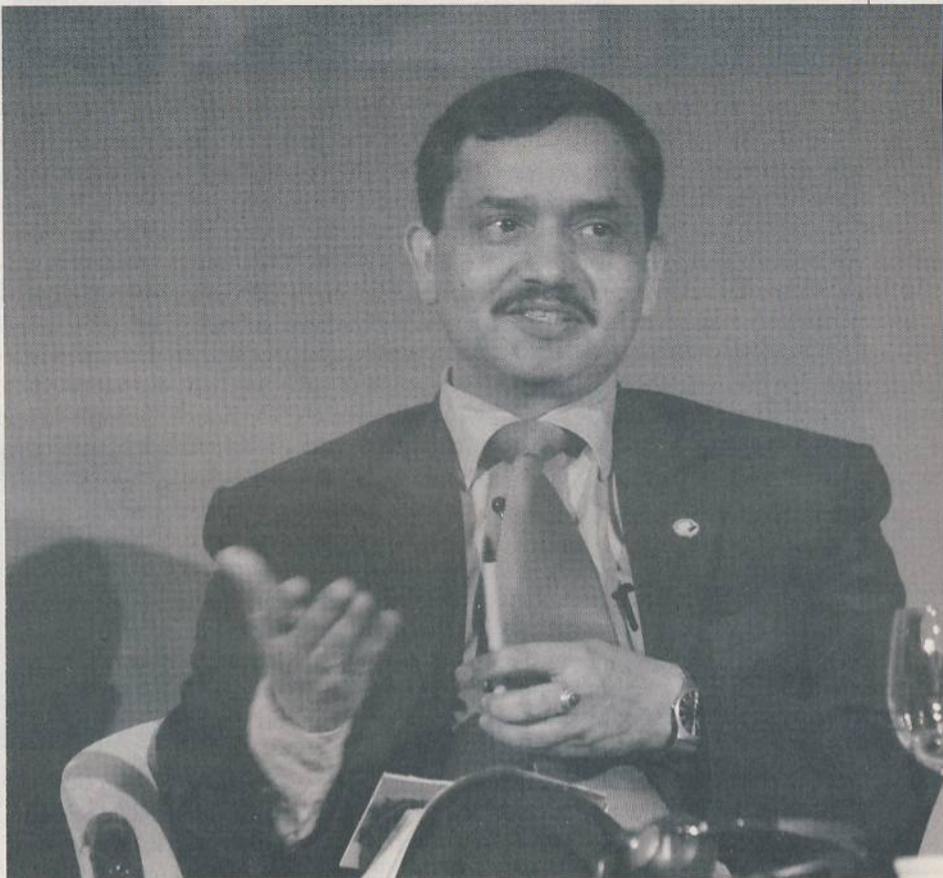
The reason behind celebrating the Renewable Energy Week 2013 is to create awareness about renewable energy to general public for wider use of renewable energy in Nepal and to show that that renewable energy is viable solution to minimizing present energy crisis. In addition, the event aims to attract private sector investment in renewable energy sector and sensitize policy makers for improvements in renewable energy related policies to create enabling environment.

Among various alternative energy sources, which is more popular?

In my view, all of the RE technologies promoted by AEPC are quite popular amongst its users. This can be justified with the numbers of users or beneficiaries of these technologies. The use of MH and Solar PV cannot be weighted on same basis with the Biogas and ICS. The earlier two are mainly for lighting whereas the others are for clean cooking mechanism. Besides, MH and Solar are complementing technologies. These two technologies are not promoted in same area. AEPC has clear well written policies that the duplication of technologies is not allowed.

At a time when the power cut hour is increasing due to lack of power supply, don't you think solar energy can substitute traditional energy?

Of course, there is no doubt regarding the fact that Solar energy based technologies such as Solar Photovoltaic or Solar Thermal systems are the best substitutes. Right now, in the urban sector, we can see individual households opting for small scale Solar PV solutions for home-use. Even the



institutions like banks, corporate offices, hospitals have adopted larger size system to meet their immediate energy needs. Besides Solar PV which generates direct electricity; Solar Thermal systems also play a crucial role in minimizing use of electricity from national grid as well as reduce dependency on imported petroleum products.

Besides solar, bio-gas and micro-hydro, what is the state of wind power?

As stated above, Nepal also has a great potential for harnessing of wind energy. AEPC is carrying out wind mapping in several districts. The collected data is very crucial for designing wind power systems. AEPC is developing policy to promote wind energy technology. AEPC has also addressed subsidy mechanism for promotion of wind energy technologies in the upcoming subsidy policy.

How Nepal's development partners are supporting in the promotion of alternative energy in Nepal. Can you explain the countries involved in the area?

Development partners are very positive and supportive in promoting alternative energy in Nepal. Let me inform that AEPC is implementing a five year National Rural and Renewable Energy Program (NRREP) which is a single framework program that allows government to collaborate with many development partners. AEPC is currently working in partnership with Danish government, Norway government, GiZ, SNV, ADB, WB, EU, UNDP, KfW and other development partners. ■

The CEAPRED Hope

By ADITI ARYAL



Something For The Community

By BIDUSHI ADHIKARI

In my six months as an intern in CEAPRED, one of the finest NGOs in Nepal, I learnt about my country much more than I ever had without this experience. From the beginning of the internship, I found the size and reach of this Nepali organization as overwhelming. I initially took CEAPRED as an agricultural organization, but as I worked there, and became more at home with it, I understood how ignorant I had been. CEAPRED definitely specializes in the agricultural sector but its approach goes to improve thousands of rural lives, mainly the disadvantaged communities, including women.

Nepal has too many NGOs. Many are well established and are renowned for their work. CEAPRED has never been much in such limelight despite all the work it has carried out for over the past two decades. Thousands of people have been able to feed, clothe and educate their families after CEAPRED and its projects intervened in the deprived areas. Going through various firsthand data and success stories from the field made me learn how effectively beneficiaries have made their lives better. While, earlier, people lived just a hand-to-mouth and relied on labour in India to make some money, they no longer do that because agriculture is sufficient to now comfortably run their lives.

CEAPRED as an entity has been working to uplift people from all castes, creed, religion, region, language, ethnicity and gender, with around 170,295 families. As our country is wholly agriculture dominated, basing all its programmes and projects on agriculture is the best strategy for any NGO in Nepal to rightly serve the nation to develop.

Interestingly, CEAPRED has links and support with diverse foreign donors and agencies. Not many NGOs in Nepal have such varied links and smoothly running and completed projects. As an intern, I recognized CEAPRED as the only NGO in Nepal to be so successfully working for humanity but with a very low profile for itself. In a country with more talks than works CEAPRED is an exception and my faith in this country with no path as of yet restored every time I got involved with the work of CEAPRED.

CEAPRED is much more than just an NGO. To the beneficiaries it is a savior which pulled them out of their constant impoverished lives by improving their food security and enabling them to change their agricultural pattern (from subsistence to commercial) with new improved technologies. Their produce is linked then with markets where they get paid more than they did in the past. I have personally come across self accounts where people confessed they could not eat sufficiently for more than three months from their lands of as much as 9 ropanis. They then relied on labor work or fell into debts. CEAPRED just taught them to utilize their land, which could simply become their source of luxurious lives thereafter. Also women farmers made way and their confidence increased along with their income. The destitute people in situations we cannot imagine became better-abled financially and socially. Now they tell how they eat healthy and nutritious food, send their children to school and clothe them all round the year. This is a significant accomplishment even the government cannot boast of achieving.

Despite thousands of stories like these, not many people know of CEAPRED, which, as I said earlier, is more than an organization. CEAPRED is the finest example of an NGO in Nepal. I can boldly assume it to be the best and the only NGO to actually do something to eradicate poverty. Such institutions sometimes help us ponder about the plight of the country and beam with some rays of hope for progress. In a country where nothing ever goes right, there are people working 9-5 to make lives of the rural poor better, trying to develop projects so that the poor can benefit and improve their hand to mouth lives.

I learned life a great deal after joining CEAPRED. As my internship period is almost over, I have nothing but hope for CEAPRED to continue doing what it is doing and help as many people that need help and try and recruit more interns like me who can proudly claim to be a part of CEAPRED family and see rural life like I did. ■

I had been nagging my mother to give the garbage collector some extra notes to collect the trash from in front of our house. We had not made the mess, but the disgusting pile destroyed the harmony of the short bushes. However, my mother simply stated, "If you want something done, then do it yourself." When I looked pleadingly at her, she added, "Anyway, these people would never understand. Whatever you do, they will continue to throw trash around."

Though upset at hearing those words, I decided that something had to be done. Anyway, doing some productive work would break the monotonicity of my holidays. So, with my sister and some gloves, we set out to clean the incredible mess.

It took the whole day to produce four, giant bags of garbage, and still, there was garbage left. While we worked frantically under the sun, our neighbors came and lurked around. None of them offered us any help even though it was their mess we were clearing out. They whispered amongst themselves, probably wondering why we were doing something so pointless.

Then that very night, when the electricity was out, I saw fire outside and realized they were burning trash! I was angry and frustrated. I felt betrayed. I felt like the whole day's work was to no avail. In the end, they did just what we had avoided.

In just one day, I had learned something about my neighbors and probably many others too: they were ignorant, ignorant of our purpose for cleaning up, ignorant of how bad it was throwing garbage like that. I realized that it was up to those educated about these things to share the knowledge with others. Furthermore, that day tested my responsibility as a student, my boundaries as a dreamer, and, moreover, my benevolence as a human being. What could I do for others? How much could I dedicate myself to a selfless cause? Ultimately, something ignited in me, something that today pushes me to do something for the community.

MOVIE REVIEW

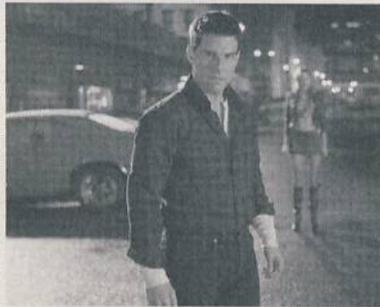
Jack Reacher

As an attempt to set up a new action franchise for Tom Cruise, Jack Reacher is an unfortunate accident all round



"He's a ghost," the other characters in Jack Reacher say of its tough-as-nails hero, a former military cop who went "off grid" years before, and, like Macavity the Mystery Cat, only turns up when you least expect him. Straight after this ludicrous conversation, there's a polite knock on the door. Guess who?

Tom Cruise has become a treat to watch when he's mocking his own vainglory, in *Rock of Ages*, say. Here, playing the 6ft 5in, 18-stone protagonist of Lee Child's novels, it may be that irony has abandoned him after all. He gets embroiled in fisticuffs with five burly guys outside a Pittsburgh pub – a breeze for someone of Reacher's supposed stature. But it's a genuine feat with Cruise doing it, as if Bilbo took one look at those trolls in *The Hobbit* and sent them packing with roundhouse kicks.



As an attempt to set up a new action franchise for Cruise, Jack Reacher is an unfortunate accident all round. You can't blame it for the timing of the Connecticut shootings, which caused its US premiere to be postponed: it starts with a sniper gunning down five hapless innocents along a riverfront promenade.

On the other hand, the plot of Child's book, *One Shot*, is fair game and not exactly state of the art. When the chief suspect calls for Reacher's help, we already wonder if the case against him isn't perhaps a smidgen too perfect. It takes the police and defence lawyer (Rosamund Pike) weeks to realise this – a quick flick through the pages of Agatha Christie's *The ABC Murders* (published in 1936) might have speeded things up.

Poor Pike is playing catch-up right the way through. She has to look wide-eyed with amazement at every transparent twist, while also competing with Cruise in a kind of cleavage Olympics. Can you really pass the bar exam with a double-digit IQ?

The movie achieves time travel by mistake – it's as if we're being beamed back to a lumpen shoot-em-up from 1985 starring Chuck Norris. Indeed, the script feels less like the work of Oscar-winning writer-director Christopher McQuarrie (*The Usual Suspects*) than one generated from trawling the website chucknorrisfacts.com ("Chuck Norris does not sleep. He waits.").

Meanwhile, Werner Herzog's role, as a Russian spook called the Zec, requires him to describe chewing off his own fingers to avoid starvation at a Siberian work camp. For Herzog, this feels like disappointingly restrained behaviour. Jack Reacher tips constantly into self-parody and doesn't know how to signal it, like someone trying to wink at you without the benefit of eyelids. (Extracts from *The Telegraph*)

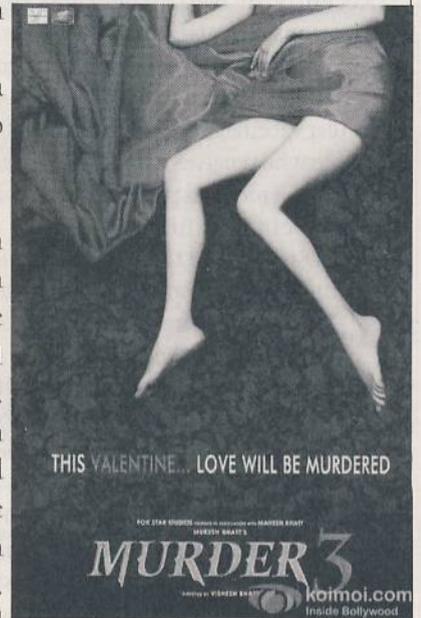
MOVIE PREVIEW

Murder 3

Directed by :Vishesh Bhatt

Cast: Randeep Hooda as Vikram, Aditi Rao Hydari as Roshni, Mona Lizza as Nisha

Murder 3 is an upcoming Indian thriller film and the sequel to the 2011 film, *Murder 2*. Directed by Vishesh Bhatt and produced by Mahesh Bhatt, the film will release in February 15, 2013. This is the third installment in the Murder series and is reportedly a Bollywood remake of thriller *The Hidden Face*.



Adhyaya

Genres: Love Story

Director: Prabin Syangbo

Cast : Karma, Sushil Raj Pandey, Shanti Giri, Dimple Khanal, Aakash Magar, Ashok Rijal, Ankita Budhathoki, Abhay Baral

"ADHYAYA is a combined LOVE story of three different boys living in the same society with different family backgrounds who don't know each other. The boys try to find the meaning of love in their own ways with obstacles come front and struggle to get their love.



Release Date: 11-Jan-2013

Life-saving Immunizations

By **BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD**



Recently in Nepal there has been a scare regarding vaccinations. Because vaccinations are given to large numbers of people, vaccines sometimes get blamed for problems that may not have been caused by the administration of the particular vaccine. For example, someone from the vast numbers of people who receives a particular vaccine may coincidentally suffer from a medical problem (without the symptoms of the disease being manifest) at the time of the vaccine administration. And then later, the vaccine is blamed for the problem. This is not an uncommon happening. But of course there could be problems with the vaccine being administered using unhygienic methods which may cause an infection. And for sure, even when a particular vaccine has been around for many decades, it may still cause problems to one particular patient, but this does not mean that the particular vaccine has to be stopped. Or, as with the MMR vaccines, there may be misperceptions about the vaccine causing autism.

Several years ago in Pokhara I remember a six year old French child who died of suffocation due to the complications of diphtheria, a vaccine-preventable illness. His French parents with whom the child lived did not believe in vaccinations. Having seen many young Nepalis die of diphtheria and other similar vaccine-preventable illnesses (measles, tetanus, whooping cough), I am unable to comprehend the mindset of the anti-vaccine activists in the developed world.

In a sense public health officials in the developed world are struggling with the consequences of their own success in the prevention of diseases using vaccines. When most members of a community are vaccinated against a particular disease, the minority who do not receive the vaccination are also

protected by a phenomenon called "herd immunity". However recently there have been outbreaks of measles in Europe and the US because many people are choosing not to be vaccinated. This may be a genuine clash between individual liberty and social welfare. Unlike in the developing world where we continue to witness the onslaught of many vaccine-preventable infectious illnesses, anti-vaccine activists in the developed world may have forgotten diseases like small pox and how they were brought under control.

Small pox had been a scourge for thousands of years. In Nepal too there are temples dedicated to gods that cure small pox. In the twentieth century alone before small pox was eradicated in 1977, it killed a staggering three hundred million people. Now, amazingly only two tiny vials of this virus exist, one in Siberia and the other in Atlanta in the USA.

Realistically though, just like sudden weather changes at the top of Mount Everest that may determine which group of climbers will be successful, the organism (virus or bacteria) may have the last word. In 2003 the viral disease SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) scared everyone and whole departments were created by the World Health Organization to tackle the problem and try to produce a vaccine; but surprisingly the virus disappeared at the end of 2003. Similarly in 2009 a novel influenza virus, H1N1 emerged in Mexico and threatened a global pandemic and vaccination was strongly recommended, but then the disease appeared to peter out.

Those examples notwithstanding, we should never be complacent about trying to obtain the life-saving vaccines which have helped modern medicine triumph over common infectious diseases prevalent in countries like Nepal. ■

PRITHVINARAYAN SHAH

The Unifier

Politicians, scholars and common citizens remembered Prithvi Narayan Shah the great for his contribution to uniting Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

There have been many ups and downs in the history of Nepal in the last decade. From a monarchical unitary kingdom, Nepal has now become a republican nation. However, what has not changed is the geographical reality as often referred to by late King Prithvi Narayan Shah and reconciliation propounded by B.P. Koirala.

Although the Maoist leaders have made every effort to unmake Shah's statement and interpret Nepal's position differently, what Prithvi Narayan Shah the great said is still a reality. Situated between Asia's two great powers, India and China, Nepal, as a yam between two boulders, that Shah aptly phrased, is an unrivalled statement.

At a time when the voices of secessionists is growing, people from various walks of life have been gradually coming openly to remember Prithvi Narayan Shah the great and his contribution for uniting Nepal. Managing Director of Explore Nepal (P) td. Bharat Basnet can be seen wearing daura suruwal, with a locket of Prithvi Narayan Shah at his coat.

From children to young people, politicians to social workers and business entrepreneurs, a number of people paid homage to Shah the

great for his contribution for launching unification process. Like in the past tourism entrepreneur and social worker Basnet was in the lead. Basnet's Explore Nepal has been championing the ideal of Shah for a long time distributing his pictures and Dibaupadesh.

Whether there is a monarchical system or republican Nepal, Basnet continues on his march. Even at the hype of secession and republicanism, Basnet continue marched pleading people that Great King Shah should be eulogized for his great contribution.

In an interaction program organized recently by Explore Nepal in Bhojan Griha, politicians, academicians and scholars highlighted the need to uphold the contribution made by Prithvi Narayan Shah. CPN-UML leader Jhala Nath Khanal, CPN-ML leader C.P. Mainali and Nepali Congress leader Ananda Dhungana, as well as Mod Nath Prashit, praised Shah.

Chaired by Basnet, the Interaction program reminded Shah's importance in Nepal's present context. This is a month when Nepal's two great visionary leaders were remembered for their noble contribution. Nepali Congress celebrated National Reconciliation Day, albeit distorting B.P.'s real life, in an organized way. However, the maker of modern Nepal Prithvi Narayan Shah too has had diehard followers. ■



Bharat Basnet



Education



Refurbishment

All I dream of



Travels



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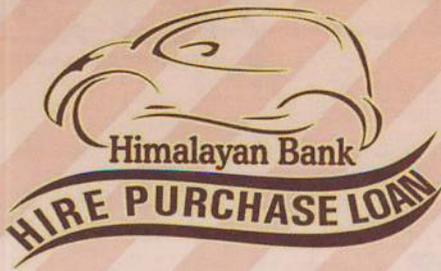
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नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
सूचना विभाग



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११.२५%*



हिमालयन बैंक सवारी साधन कर्जा
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- कर्जा अवधि ८ वर्ष सम्म
- अनिशुचित ब्याजदरको जोखिमबाट मुक्त
- दोश्रो वर्षपछि मात्र ब्याजदर floating हुने
- कर्जा भुक्तानी समान मासिक किस्ताको आधारमा (EMI basis)
- कर्जा स्वपूँजी अनुपात ८०%
- कर्जा सेवा शुल्कमा २५% को विशेष छुट

यो योजना ३
महिनाको लागि
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* शर्त लागू हुनेछ ।