



**OPINION:**  
**Dipak Gyawali**



**INTERVIEW:**  
**Asko Luukkainen**



**FACE TO FACE:**  
**Keshab Prasad Bhattarai**

New

# SPOTLIGHT

May 31, June-13, 2013

FORTNIGHTLY



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## From The Editor

Despite efforts by political leaders, Nepal's political situation is yet to come to the right track. Until the leaders agree on the political agenda, the elections are uncertain. Moreover, there is no guarantee that elections alone can enhance political stability and accountability. Nepal has seen several changes in governments and has been going through various kinds of political instability time and again over the last years. This is more of a rule than exception. Instead of delving too much in this uncertain game, we decided to cover the World Environment Day 2013 and its theme to reduce food waste as our cover story. Along with this, we have also covered ICPD+20 and Nepal's agenda for coming days as other stories. Although Nepal has achieved progress in the areas like reducing maternal mortality rate, infant mortality rate and fertility rate, there are still many challenges and gaps. In this context, we have tried to highlight the voices of the government officials and various other stakeholders regarding them. Along with these analyses, there are the regular columns and features in this issue as well.

*Keshab*

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor

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## Poemandu III

The third edition of Poemandu was held at the Nepal-Bharat Library in Sundhara. A B.P. Koirala India-Nepal Foundation, Poemandu is a monthly poetry recitation program, which started since March this year.

The third edition of Poemandu had 23 poets reciting their poems in varied languages as Nepali, Hindi, English, Newari, Maithili and Awadhi. The Indian Ambassador Jayant Prasad welcomed the audience and shared how important it is to create a platform like Poemandu where the promising and eminent litterateurs, writers and poets



of Nepal could come together to share their works.

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nepal Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani also recited some of his poems, which was then followed by the recitation by Abhay Kumar - Secretary of B.P. Koirala India-Nepal Foundation.

## Bodde Addresses NUSACCI Annual Meet

American Ambassador Peter W. Bodde recently gave the welcome address for the 18th Annual General Meeting of the Nepal-USA Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NUSACCI). After underscoring the long and productive beneficial relationship between NUSACCI and the U.S. Embassy, Ambassador Bodde emphasized that the Chamber must act as agent of change to increase trade, attract investment, and rally the business community to develop Nepal's economy.

## A New Alliance for Children

Norwegian Ambassador to Nepal Alf Arne Ramslien and UNICEF Nepal Country Representative Hanaa Singer signed an agreement worth USD\$7,000,000 (40 million Norwegian Kroner) to strengthen and expand Child Friendly Local Governance in Nepal.

This agreement will bolster the partnership between the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) and UNICEF, with support from the Government of Norway, to include children and ensure their participation in all government plans at all levels.

MoFALD Secretary Shanta Bahadur Shrestha thanked the Government of Norway and UNICEF for supporting the national implementation of Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG).

"Norway has always been a partner with UNICEF to improve the lives of children and women in Nepal, and this partnership will now act as a catalyst to

implement the Government of Nepal's vision to link up with all actors, including children in the equitable development of the country," said the Ambassador of Norway.

## Korea Supports Judicial Development Program

Fifteen Nepalese Government officials (Chief Judges, Judges, District Judges, Registrar, Under Secretary and Section Officer) from different courts of Nepal left for the Republic of Korea recently to participate in "Judicial Development for High-level Official, Nepal" training program organized by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

Representative of KOICA HaengLan Jo highlighted that this is the multi year program aiming for the improvement of the judicial system in Nepal. She expressed her hope that their stay in Korea will be informative and the participants will be better equipped with new knowledge and will be responsible for promoting judicial development in Nepal.

## Road To Spur Development In Baitadi

The Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) together with the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and German development agency Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), inaugurated a new road that connects remote villages of Baitadi district in far-western Nepal, providing communities with better access to markets, health centers, schools and other key facilities.

The ceremony was attended by

MoPR Joint-Secretary Bharat Prasad Poudyal, WFP Nepal Representative Nicole Menage, GIZ Country Director Roland F. Steurer and GIZ Program Manager Claudia Maier, as well as local government officials and community members.

"Roads provide vital access and mobility to poor rural communities," said Menage. "With the opening of this road, I am confident people here will have much improved access to social services. The road will stimulate the local economy, improving lives and reducing geographic isolation."

"The inputs from WFP and the German Government complemented each other in a perfect way," said Claudia Maier from GIZ. "On the one hand people were able to bridge their food gap instantly; on the other hand they profited from plenty of new long term income opportunities."

## Dream N Art Program Held

District Education Office (DEO), Bidur Municipality, District Sports Development Committee and KOICA at Colony jointly organized 2013 Trishuli Dream N Art (D.N.A) program 2013.



This was an idea of two Korea Overseas Volunteer's (KOVs) Lee Gwanghwa and Lee Jin. More than 100 people participated in this program. Participants represented government school students, teachers and other adults from Nuwakot area. The main objective of the program was to make a student to draw their dream. Bharat Raj Tripathi, Under Secretary, DEO said that the picture speaks itself and has very important role in our life.

This program improved the quality of tutoring in the field of arts, which gave a wealth of experience and interesting moment to the contestants.



## World Bank Appoints Nepal, Bangladesh Chief

The World Bank has appointed Johannes Zutt as its new Country Director for Nepal and Bangladesh. Zutt joined the World Bank office in Kathmandu recently.

Zutt, a Dutch national, has a wide experience in development since 1990. He joined the World Bank in 1999 and has since held managerial positions of increasing responsibility. Most



recently, prior to this appointment, Zutt served as the Country Director for Eritrea, Kenya, and Rwanda. He had also worked as the Country Program Coordinator for a number of countries, including Angola, China, Malawi, Mongolia, Mozambique, and Zambia, as well as the team leader for numerous country strategies and projects.

## Ncell Gives 20 Motorbikes To Nepal Police

The private telecom operator Ncell handed over 20 motorcycles along with various security and logistic equipment to Nepal Police in a bid to bolster security system in the valley.

Ncell CEO Osman Turan handed over the motorcycles, helmets, 11 sets of computers and 11,000 traffic bands to Inspector General Kuber Singh Rana and Assistant Inspector General Nabaraj Dhakal amid a function.

## IFC To Help Stimulate Investment In Nepal

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, is assisting Nepal to implement a comprehensive reform program that is expected to ease the process of doing business and attract private investment into the country.

The South Asia Enterprise Development Fund, managed by the IFC in partnership with the UK government and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, is extending the support for the program. A statement from IFC says the program covers a broad spectrum of initiatives, ranging from supporting the Nepal Business Forum, assisting the Investment Board to make projects attractive and simplifying procedures for doing business.

Fred Zake, head of IFC's Investment Climate Reform Program in Nepal, said the IFC was committed to supporting the government in improving laws and business regulations, governing private investment and simplifying those relating to banking and financial institutions so that investors find the business environment friendlier and attractive.

## BOK Opens Three New Branches

Bank of Kathmandu (BoK) commenced the operation of three new branches in Gaur of Rautahat district, Dailekh of Dailekh district and Diktel of Khotang district. The Gaur, Dailekh and Diktel branches were inaugurated by the bank's Chairman Narendra Kumar Basnyat, director Govinda Prasad Sharma and director Dr Hem Raj Subedee, respectively amid

separate functions. With the addition of three new branches, Bank of Kathmandu now has a total of 50 branches, eight extension counters, 34 remittance payout agents and 56 ATM units throughout the country.

## Nepal-Russia Innovation Fair Held

An innovation, business and technology transfer fair concluded recently. Organized by International Centre for Informatics and Electronics (Russia), Nepal-Russia Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Russian Centre of Science and Culture, the fair was first of its kind where Nepalese and Russian businessmen made a number of deals.

The Fair was attended by a delegation of Russian statesmen and businessmen interested in setting working contacts with Nepalese counterparts. Inaugurated by Minister for Energy Umakanta Jha, it was attended by head of Russian State Registration Chamber (acting within Ministry of Justice) Valery Nashroy. The stated spheres of interest were establishing contacts with trade and commerce chamber and registration authorities of Nepal, providing law and organizational support to enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Chief researcher of the Federal State Autonomous Research Institution "Centre of Information Technologies and Systems of Executive Power Authorities" Sergey Sovalin highlighted the importance of the fair.

## CEDB Feted As Progressive Bank

Clean Energy Development Bank (CEDB) has been recognized as one of the 25 most progressive banks of the world and becomes the only bank from Nepal and third from Asia to join the Global Alliance for Banking on Values.

The Global Alliance for Banking on Values is an independent network of banks using finance to deliver sustainable development for underserved people, communities and environment. All the members of the alliance strongly adhere to the



principles of sustainable banking and have a shared commitment to find global solutions to international problems and promote a positive, viable alternative to the current financial system.

"Focusing on sustainable outcomes is good for communities, environment, generations that are yet to come, and the long-term strength of our institution," says the bank's general manager Barsha Shrestha.

"We believe banking is about more than just profits," she said, adding that the bank has a singular focus on creating an energy efficient future that connects and empowers its customers. "The bank has been able to become the leading bank in promoting renewable and sustainable energy financing in Nepal." ■



# Hope Amidst The Gloom

By DIPAK GYAWALI



This column was begun almost three years ago, in the face of Loktantra's triumphalism and mainstream corporate media's censoring hegemony, as much a feeble attempt to speak uncomfortable truth to power as to place on record what the new political masters of New Nepal wished to airbrush away from the pages of history. It talked about their shady ethics, myopic vision and external tutelage as well as the unstable foundations of their directionless "new politics". It described how the sanctity of an elected body like the constituent assembly had been systematically debased from the very first day by the oligarchic conduct of major party leaders. It predicted how, for these reasons the CA would be unable to frame a new let alone a workable constitution.

Readers may feel that the chance to crow - "I told you so!" - might be providing me psychological satisfaction, but strangely it does not. The reason is I feel like a passenger who has been screaming at the driver not to take a wrong turn towards a ditch who, when he does find himself stuck in a bus in that ditch with all other passengers of New Nepal, has too many other pressing problems at hand to waste time or emotion gloating.

The other reason is that some of my well-meaning readers are saying I should stop writing this column. Their not-to-be-taken-lightly argument is that the civil society stalwarts who midwived Loktantra are themselves now beginning to say what I had been saying these last three years, and sometimes in much more vitriolic language against the current big party oligarchs, their rudderless leadership and their foreign sponsorship! There is nothing more I can say about how feckless the Loktantrick political class has been than that which its own civil society supporters are now beginning to say in print and on FM stations.

From this column on, I will look hard and try to write about things other than political pathology, but before that, some reflections on why this about-face

from our street-dancing civil society masters.

Civic movements are fueled not by *tamasik* coercive power that is the preserve of the state, nor by *rajasik* persuasive power of market players. They receive their energy from the *satwik* power of the moral high ground. Once that ground is lost, all is lost. And the civil society of 2005/2006 lost it in two different ways. First, they dedicated their *satwik* shield to the service of corrupt politicians and mass murderers who brought the democracy of 1990 to grief, those same leaders who have brought the succeeding "wave of



democracy" of 2006 to grief too, not just by repeating the same corruption on a grander scale and disregarding any semblance of the rule of law but additionally by blatantly kowtowing to foreign tutelage. Our civil society opinion makers have not shown the moral courage to apologize for their misplaced poor judgment in handing over the reins of the country to those who should have been behind bars in the first place. The reason the people of Nepal refuse to follow them today as they did in the Spring of 2006 is because, without exhibiting some moral spine and the courage to admit mistakes, they will not have regained the moral high ground from where their pontificating would be taken seriously.

The second manner in which the civil society has lost its ethical persuasiveness is with its emerging exposure as conduits and major beneficiary of foreign funding for influencing the already corrupt political class within and outside the CA. They

may have accepted that largesse in all goodwill, but, as they say, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. And the country today is certainly in political limbo if not yet in outright hell for which the civil society of 2006 has to take moral responsibility. Certainly, the public is not taking those fire-and-brimstone speech givers of Spring 2006 seriously today since they are perceived as being part of the problem together with the failed political class. It may be that, given how ineffective they have been in guiding the CA to a safe landing and preventing its failing so ignominiously, their foreign sponsors

have lost faith in them. That, many say, is the reason some of them have begun speaking in almost xenophobic language these days against foreign intervention. That, the apathetic public seems to feel, is nothing more than the wrath of the jilted lover that will probably die down in sullen depression in the days ahead.

But let's move on to more cheerful things. The fulminations of the civil society stalwarts against the Khilraj interregnum notwithstanding, the country is relatively peaceful, basic services are running along at C-plus to B-minus, sometimes even A-plus, and an octogenarian Japanese can still come to Nepal and climb Mt. Everest. Despite the failure of the political class to provide leadership, the "just get along" Nepali genius seems to assert itself where it really matters - the passport section of the foreign ministry. Why this is so is because this is after all a country that managed to hold by itself a first-time-ever national referendum in just one day in 1980, and wrote a constitution





## Governance In Chains

By YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

for a completely new governance framework in one month in 1961, a constitution that ran for three decades despite attempts to distort and sabotage it from the right, left and abroad in that period. Why do I give that section of the foreign ministry such high marks?

Last week I had to apply for a new MRP passport, my two-year old MRP having run out of pages. I was dreading having to go through the red tape at the CDO office and face the anarchy at the west gate of the Narayanhiti palace to submit my form in person. The amazing streamlining that seems to have occurred in these two years is something that can be exported to any California Department of Motor Vehicles office that gives driving licenses. The process of filling out the passport application form, getting it verified against one's citizenship certificate and all other signatures in four different rooms at the Lalitpur CDO office took exactly twenty three minutes. I had to use no 'source-force' whatsoever and in three of the rooms they did not even recognize me as a former minister: the same alacrity in service was democratically available to me to a semi-literate grandmother preparing to visit her new-born grandson in Australia. When I thanked the officers there for this remarkable service, they proudly told me, "If nowhere else in Nepal, at least here we have managed to deliver the fruits of Loktantra to the people!"

The story was similar in Narayanhiti. Two years ago, I had to use "source-force" and the good services of a former student who was then in charge of the passport section, even to get past the urine-puddled front gate. This time, my driver stood in line early in the morning for me, called me when the gates were opened, and I found myself number 196 in a very orderly queue with some four hundred people still behind me. In front of me was a young *bhai* from Rukum on his way to Abu Dhabi and behind me another from Sindhuli heading for Malaysia. They could have gotten their passports in forty-five days in their districts for only five thousand rupees, but they were here paying double to get it in seven days. To my question why, they said it made economic sense because they could get all their medical and manpower formalities done while waiting a week for their passport. Those in a hurry could get it in forty-eight hours by paying fifteen thousand rupees. I was done with the queue in just about three hours, time which I spent reviewing an article for a journal seated fairly comfortably under a green covered canopy with electric fans in what used to be the car park for ministers and visitors who had to go and see the King. The toilet inside that serviced this mass of Nepali humanity had running water and none of the ammonia one gets at the TIA.

Nepali society it seems knows that the remittance sector is upholding the economy, and is asserting itself to protect and service what really matters. If only its political class had not failed it so badly, there is no doubt it could have worked wonders with the country's development.

Last week, Nepal's Acting Chief Justice Damodar Sharma clarified that the Supreme Court was only trying to curb the unauthorised movement of "undesirable elements" within the court premises. His response came in the wake of critical references in the Bar as well as the media community about the SC annulling all entry passes issued to journalists recently, days after a journalist was asked to leave the courtroom for not being "decently dressed".

The SC faces arguably the most strident criticism in its history from the media and civil society in the wake of Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi's taking over as the chairman of the council of ministers in March. Hearing on petitions challenging Regmi's appointment as the executive head, on the plea that it is in violation of the principle of separation of powers, has been deferred fifteen times. No one seems to be ready to give Regmi the benefit of doubt on this repeated deferral.

The CJ's taking over as executive head is not the only aberration. A senior advocate and former chairman of the Nepal Bar Association, arguing in a case against a presidential appointee for the anti-graft constitutional body, is also a leading face of the protests demanding annulment of the appointment. This naturally has affected the normally cordial relations between the judges and the Bar on one hand and the judges and the media on the other. Confrontation looms large. The Supreme Court faces arguably the most strident criticism in its history from the media and civil society.

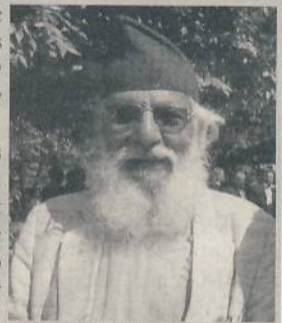
"I know in principle the CJ's appointment as prime minister is wrong. But can the Supreme Court call it unconstitutional and void when the interim constitution that we have has no provision of electing a prime minister when the legislative body does not exist?" a sitting judge confides. "Nevertheless, we not only wished but also advised Regmi against taking up the executive post," he adds. That explains the predicament of the judiciary and its repeated deferring of the hearing.

A helpless SC under attack is not a healthy guarantee for democracy. When credibility of the judiciary is low, and its independence compromised, can elections alone set everything right? That's the big question the president, the PM and the four major parties in favour of the election have failed to answer convincingly. Moreover, the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal- Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) insist on barring those convicted of murder and other heinous crimes from contesting — something the Maoists are reluctant to accept. The parties' credibility, and that of the president and CJ, is at its lowest ebb. The government hasn't yet taken any position on "criminals' right to contest polls", but Regmi seems to look like a rubber stamp of the Maoist party.

The international community is not above criticism for its active lobbying in favour of Regmi. "Why is the international community, most of them democratic countries like India, the UK, the US and Scandinavian countries where the judiciary is independent, keen to damage the reputation of Nepal's judiciary?" asks Kedar Narsingh K.C., former chief of Nepal's Medical Association and a prominent civil society leader.

The murder of former lawmaker Sadrul Miya Haque on Tuesday shows the environment of risk contestants may face during the electioneering. The leaders seem to have begun reading the message on the wall and fearing the worst as public anger is directed against them.

Courtesy: Indian Express



Acting Chief Justice Sharma



## ELECTION

# Hard To Tell When

*Despite the consensus among the political parties to hold the election, they are yet to agree on the election date*

By KESHAB POUDEL

In their public appearance, political leaders, civil society members and government ministers express the need to hold the election in November. There is a virtual consensus on the tentative time for the polls. When it comes to deciding on the actual date, their action speaks otherwise. Nepali Congress leaders and CPN-UML leaders are adding new demands each day and the same is the case of UCPN-Maoist and Madheshi alliance.

A group of civil society leaders, close to Nepali Congress and CPN-UML, are holding separate receptions on the Republic Day, expressing their displeasure to President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav's decision over the appointment of Khil Raj Regmi as the chairman of the Election Council of Ministers and appointment of Lok Man Singh Karki as the CIAA chief. Backed by Professionals' Alliance for Peace and Democracy, PAPAD, the umbrella body of Nepal Professors' Association, Nepal Bar Association, Nepal Medical Association, Nepal Teachers' Union, Nepal Journalists' Association and Nepal Engineers' Association announced a boycott of the official functions to mark the Republic Day on May 29.

"We marked the day at our level," chairman of the Nepal Bar Association Hari Krishna Karki said in a press release, accusing foreign elements of putting the country and democracy at risk. According to Karki, their protest is also aimed at making way for free and fair elections to the Constituent Assembly and urging foreign forces not to intervene in domestic affairs.

They also sought the resignation of interim election government Chairman Khil Raj Regmi as Chief Justice and revocation of Lokman Singh Karki's appointment as chief commissioner of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority.

Similarly, Nepali Congress leader Sushil Koirala and top brass of CPN-UML, including leader Madhav Kumar Nepal also want the resignation of Khil Raj Regmi as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. UCPN-Maoist leaders and leaders of United Madheshi Front are insisting on announcing the election date for November.

In public, election is everybody's agenda. However, no one is showing any sincere effort to create a conducive environment for this. The new disputes between Nepali Congress leader Sushil Koirala and chairman of council of minister Khil Raj Regmi over the demand of resignation has made the situation further uncertain. Koirala even went absent from a meeting of High Level Political Mechanism on 27 May. The meeting was supposed to make decisions on the election date.

Meeting with leaders of four political parties, Chairman of Council of Ministers Regmi on 26 May threatened to take no decision. "I agreed to hold the position because of continuing insistence of all of you. You knocked at my residence, my room and put all kinds of pressure and requested me to be the chairman and hold the elections to end the political deadlock. I accepted your request hoping to bring peace and stability in the country. Instead of creating a conducive environment to hold the elections, you are putting conditions one after another," Regmi reportedly expressed his view in the meeting when Nepali Congress leader Sushil Koirala demanded the resignation.

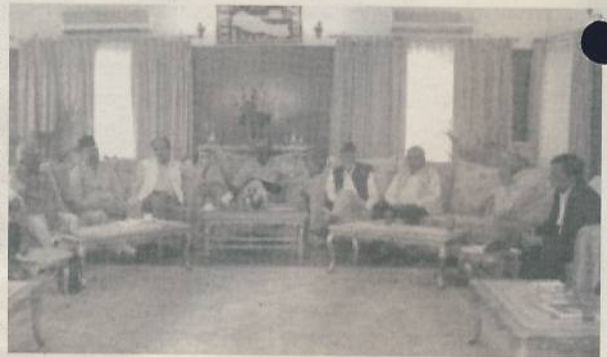
"Instead of supporting the government,

now some of you are asking civil society members to denounce me and the government."

Regmi is said to have had a blushed face while telling the leaders so. "I have never seen such anger expressed by gentle Regmi," said a minister, who attended the meeting, on condition of anonymity.

Regmi cooled down following assurance by Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel, UCPN-Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda and Madheshi leader Mahanta Thakur that they will recommend the date for elections anytime soon.

NC leader Shekhar Koirala told New Spotlight that his party will continue with the demand of resignation as a prerequisite for the announcement of



Political Leaders at Baluwatar

election date. CPN-UML leader Jhlanath Khanal is also insisting on resignation. The recent agitation by civil society members close to Nepali Congress and CPN-UML indicates that pressure will be built for resignation.

As disagreement among four political parties is growing, political factions led by CPN-Maoist and Madheshi Janadhikar Forum continue to press for dismissal of four party high level Political Committee and formation of all party government to hold the elections. Given the present political scenario, it is unlikely to see any breakthrough within a few days.

Regmi told party leaders to come up with a consensus on the election date and CA Election Ordinance by Wednesday or face his unilateral decision. Sadbhavana Party leader Rajendra Mahato withdrew his fasting after the government ministers assured him that the elections date will be announced soon. ■





## Once Upon A Time!

By DR. K. UPRETY

In order to create a so-called balance in the village demographics and to redistribute opportunity, the elites, composed essentially of a half a dozen superannuated persons, concluded that one factory needed to close and its operator sent into exile. A long list of rationale for the closure and the departure was prepared and their benefits eloquently justified. The ruling was engraved in silver on a golden plate. That the closure and the departure would bring heavenly pleasure to the rest of the villagers was notarized by the notary public. That peace, prosperity and progress of the village were now guaranteed was certified by the chief elite. This was,

measuring the pitch, were more intense and frequent than usual.

The morning after the joyful night, the village folks, neatly dressed and ready to partake in their usual chores, went to the local diner for their usual snack of bread. "There is no bread," answered the salesman. "No bread?" echoed the crowd. "The baker is gone. There is no one to make the bread. The bakery is closed," explained the salesman.

Only then the village folks realized that the person they had sent into exile was the only baker in the village. The only one who traditionally produced and supplied bread to all the villagers. His was the only operating bakery. He

**The decision was celebrated with a big fanfare. The public gardens were lit. The zoological park was opened. In every village corner, parties were thrown, dances were organized, and beverages were poured aplenty. The professionals -private, public, liberal, or mixed- all were ecstatic.**

for the elites, an admirable opportunity for the exercise of their imaginative faculties. They skillfully acted like the arbiter of the villagers' taste and the censor of their logic. There was no visible grievance, and protests, if any, were quieted in silence.

The decision was celebrated with a big fanfare. The public gardens were lit. The zoological park was opened. In every village corner, parties were thrown, dances were organized, and beverages were poured aplenty. The professionals -private, public, liberal, or mixed- all were ecstatic. Their long awaited dream had finally come true. The very next morning, even the roosters began crowing well before sunrise, and perhaps to welcome the decision, they did crow longer. The series of cock-a-doodle-does at dawn, according to those responsible for

supplied breads of all types: short bread, long bread, wheat bread, rye bread, bread with sugar and sugar-free bread, bread for the morning, bread for the night, bread for those who lived on the river banks, left and right; and in the evenings, rewarded himself with the remaining crumbs, often crunchy, for his own bite.

The villagers failed to understand why they all had agreed to send the baker away, but soon came to realize that, actually, they had not been consulted; that the decision was imposed from haunts; that their concurrence was snatched; that they had inherited a done deal; and that, in the whole process, the social contract to consult, a requisite in a society of human beings, had been breached.

The elites, accompanied by a horde of *ex-officio* intellectuals, who

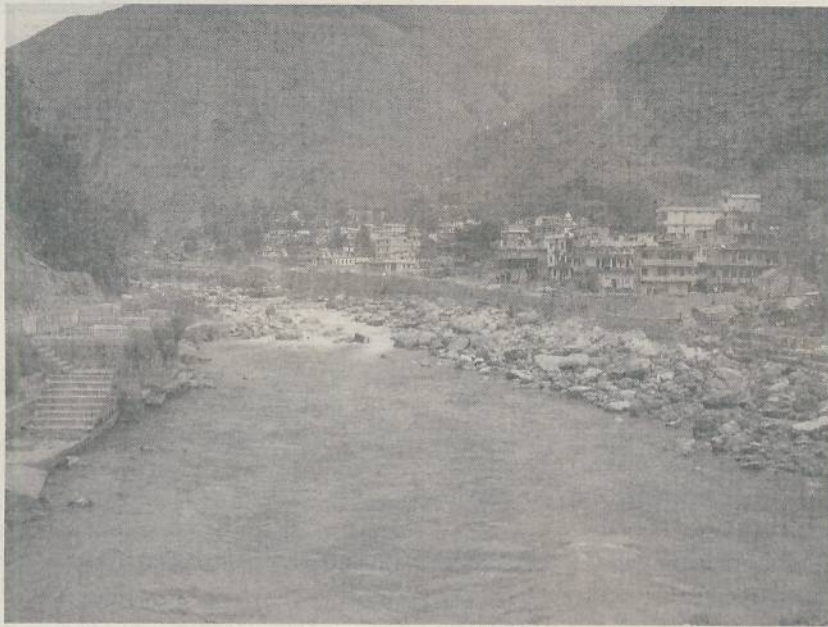
collectively really acted among themselves as if they were a good set of fellows, and with so much on their consciences and shoulders, again decreed that they had no choice but to design a new bakery and to start making bread themselves. For this, they diligently carried out lengthy research. Their investigation covered all aspects of flour, the quantity used as well as the variety available, and other ingredients, such as water, salt, sugar, yeast and so forth. Their research assessed the capacity and the mechanics of the tools and equipment, wheeled the different techniques of mixing the dough, and memorized the multiple steps and processes to be followed. Much time and resources were spent on learning, and, needless to say, all became experts. All were able to propose a shape and length for the bread, they were able to fix the value of the bread, and they were able to create a psalm or an eulogy about the bread, all as they saw fit and, not surprisingly, with their own lens. Yet, inside the oven, the bread would not rise. It would not stick. It would not exude any fragrance. Somehow, the temperature was not right, the gluten was missing, the color was faded, and the product was deformed.

Arguments then continued, counter proposals were then made, blame game then proliferated, scapegoats were then found, skirmishes then initiated, demonstrations then organized, frustrations then expressed, and regrets then came vivid.

At that particular time, whilst thinking freely and opining candidly were still regarded as an expensive and undesirable business, the villagers were forced to come forward with their consensus claim that they first needed bread on their plate, and all shouted "call him a baker or not, we need a bread-maker."

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## NEPAL-INDIA

# The Open Border

*Whatever its political implications, the Nepal-India open border is the lifeline of the people living on both sides of it. Local people appear to have an open mind about their open border*

By KESHAB POUDEL  
Jhulaghat, Baitadi

Joy Bahadur Chand, 52, a resident of Baitadi, Patan, crosses the suspension bridge of Jhulagha, the border, at least twice a week to exchange local products with the people living in Pithauragadh of Uttarakhand. He sells honey to India and, in exchange, brings salt, sugar, lentil and other commodities.

"There used to be more harassment from custom officials and border police. There is no more of this, it is relaxed," said Chand. You cannot close this unique border which has been serving the people living in both the sides for centuries.

Kishan Bohara, 50, a resident of Pithauragadh comes to visit his sister-in-law. His son is married to a girl from Nepal. "Since we have common culture and language, we have marriage and kinship relations," said Bohara. "We have never realized that the border is any barrier to our relations. Our mind is open as the border is."

Although so much proximity is seen in the cultural, social, religious and economic aspects of the border among

people living near it on both the sides, the intellectual debates and discussions taking place in the capitals of both the countries have rarely make mention of this.

"We have common festivals. People of the other side of the border visit the temple in Nepal's side. Similarly, we visit the temples and religious shrines in Uttarakhand. The essential commodities are much cheaper in the Indian side of the border," said Chand. "Our relations are very much based on our own system."

Like other parts of the border, the people living in Baitadi region have also faced the currency crunch. "We have to buy Indian currency by paying up to Rs. 50 higher than the bank rate. As we cannot officially carry Indian currency of Rs.1,000 and Rs. 500, it is very difficult to search IC Rs.100 and smaller currency. Although we have complained several times with our leaders and officials on this matter, they ignore our difficulty."

In a recent interaction with

Nepalese journalists, Indian envoy to Nepal Jayant Prasad indicated that he would take initiatives to address the currency issue.

Chand complained that the currency matter was alright till it was handled by Nepal Rastra Bank. "The entry of money changer has created the problems for us," complained Chand.

Intellectual debates hide the unique aspects of the border. "The open border is threatening our own identity. We must introduce an identity card system to regulate the border," says Buddhi Narayan Shrestha, who has written a number of books on Nepal and India border.

Nepal-India border is open to all. From wildlife to human beings, there is no restriction. The wildlife in national park and sanctuary in the Indian and Nepali sides frequently travel to each other's areas. As human population has created the settlement that block centuries old animal paths, it has increased the conflict between man and animal.

Unlike other countries of the region, Nepal-India border is a natural border. Divided by land, rivers, streams and mountains, there is connection rather than separation. This is the reason it is impossible to man it like other borders.

Although it is divided by Mahakali river and closed minds of elites, it has not made any difference to the people of both the sides to maintain their cultural, religious and economic activities. Chanda and Bohara are two examples of living together with the open border. ■

## NEW SPOTLIGHT

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## Social Media, Unsocial Users

By GUNA RAJ LUITEL

Just a day before the 6th Republic Day, a newsroom leader of a media house wrote this status update on Facebook: "I got an invitation from president Rambaran Yadav to attend a tea reception at his official residence... I don't want to see his face."

I spoke with my newsroom colleagues about this. Can we be so rude in our Facebook or Twitter post? If the president or the prime minister is not doing the job right, you've every right to criticize them. Without such reasons, being nasty is inappropriate.

As a human being, a journalist can't be different. He needs to practice some self-restraint. We've human biases, but as a journalist, we should know when a comment is too rude. You've all the right to present your views with arguments not with your prejudiced mind.

I'm still a social media fanatic. However, before writing status of my social networking site, I've been thinking twice. Until and unless you've blocked some people they can write in your Facebook wall or mention in your Twitter. The person who's writing on my wall should know some decency. My basic understanding is this: Don't write that language which you can't speak in front of the person. Writing is serious than in personal talks.

In my case I've seen tremendous unsocial behavior from the people. I can tolerate people even if they cross the limit. I'm in social media site to listen to them. Social sites are not only for me to update my status, but also an opportunity to understand what other people are doing or saying. Many activities are there and that helps me to do my daily chorus.

However, many people are using abusive language. I saw even the then prime minister Baburam Bhattarai was attacked in his Twitter. He had to request people to be polite and not to spread hatred in social sites. He also requested them to use this medium for the constructive dialogues.

When he'd been requesting them through his twitter message, I retweeted them considering that we've to educate us on netiquette. I believe we can communicate with people without

using abusive language. I'm sure people normally use abusive language when they feel they don't have the proper words or message to deliver.

I felt sad when my paper published stories related to the appointment of Lok Man Singh Karki in Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), some fake and real twitter handlers attacked mercilessly. I've not replied to them, but just listened to them. Newspapers sometimes take positions because they feel that is right. It's just like an individual right to support or criticize. Again it should be proper.

I love to see the constructive criticism. Such criticism helps to correct you. Especially, the news media should listen

starts. I can't ask others not to come, if others don't like my behavior.

However, I've stopped any kind of argument in public space. Yes, if you're arguing with the basis is fine. There should be a level playing field. If one is using abusive language and other is just trying to be more polite wouldn't work.

Usually people in social sites are more driven by the perception created by the media. If you're the active consumer of some heavily biased dominant media you'll definitely end up with the false information and you'll argue on that basis. That will not lead the substantial discussion.

We don't have strong liable law against those whose actions and writings

are defamatory. Many people think they can do online whatever they like. They've not realized what the proper net behavior is. Even the educational

**Now many people realized the wisdom of the crowd. Even in United States of America, newspapers endorse certain presidential candidates. They've to face the pros and cons of that position.**

to the netizen. Now many people realized the wisdom of the crowd. Even in United States of America, newspapers endorse certain presidential candidates. They've to face the pros and cons of that position. The opposition of the position surely doesn't like it. But there's a way to criticize it.

When the messages were flooding against our stories, I'd to wait until they stopped. I just watched, internalized, but didn't say anything. Many of them were asking me to come. I realized if I go back there and argue they'll come and bite me like the wasps. Still there were very generous people who wanted me to be there. Even some of them called me up to remain in Twitter.

Almost after two weeks I've posted message not to use abusive language in social site. One came and said, if you don't like you shouldn't be here. I didn't say anything to him. But his words were ringing in my head. I wanted to tell him: "In a public place you've to respect others as well. You can't say anyone not to come. All are there like you and you've to behave properly."

If I go to open theater I've to limit myself. My freedom ends where other's

institutions are not educating them. I wouldn't be that much sensitive if I didn't get a chance to learn about netiquette. That's why I always like to discuss this with my newsroom colleagues and other friends.

I've pleasant feelings too. I've seen a rally going from my office street. I've clicked that view by my i-phone and immediately uploaded it. However I've got a message from a lady from Jhapa. She said why I've posted such picture. She had sarcastically mentioned that whether I'm joining certain media house. However I liked her criticism and liked her comment. But later she felt so sorry and sent me direct message with apology. However, I said there was nothing wrong from her side.

Just one day after, again I went to see the Facebook status of that media gentleman who was just unhappy of the president's invitation. It was already deleted. I'm sure he must have received feedback like the lady in Jhapa.

Let's not unsocialize in the name of socializing in social media.

Luitel is an editor of Annapurna Post Daily



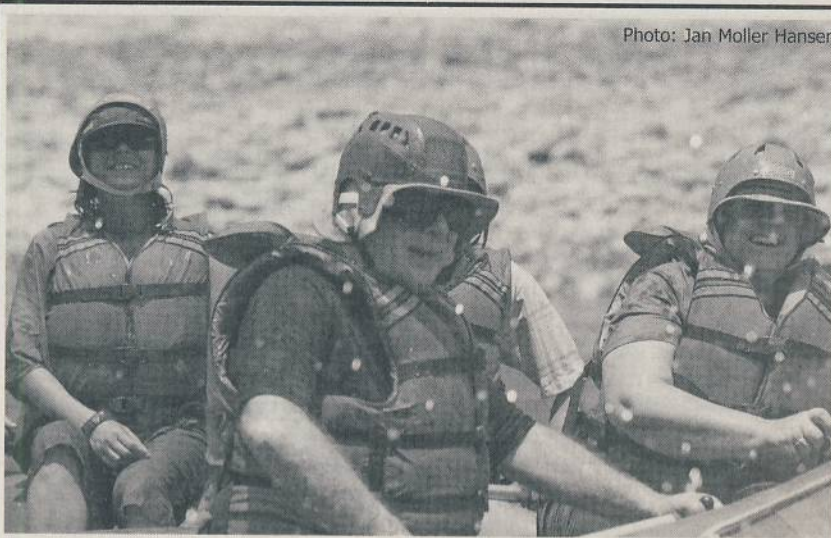


Photo: Jan Moller Hansen

## DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURE

# Rafting & Trekking

*Kathmandu based foreign diplomats spent a few days rafting and trekking in the nearby hills*

By KESHAB POUDEL

Giving the diplomats a break from the hustle and bustle of the capital city of Kathmandu, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nepal Tourism Board organized a family trip for them recently. Participated in by 18 Kathmandu based diplomats and their spouses, the three-day trip named Wet, Sweat and Refresh along two districts, Kavrepalanchowk and Sindhupalchowk, was full of fun and adventure.

Along with rafting and trekking, the inhaling and exhaling of the fresh air at the top of the hill also gave a chance for them to release tension and work pressure. The natural beauty, ethnic and geographical diversity and glimpses of development in a short distance from the capital was another important part of the trip.

"Nepal Tourism Board had organized similar trips in the past. Last year, NTB took diplomats to Rara in the mid-western region," said Aditya Baral, director of Nepal Tourism Board.

Five joint secretaries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an undersecretary and senior director of Nepal Tourism Board, joined in the hectic rafting, trekking and refreshing trip. Instead of organizing the trip in the commercial route, the organizer, Himland

Adventure Treks, chose a virgin steep slope of a hill of Kavre district for trekking.

"I would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nepal Tourism Board for organizing such an important trip close to Kathmandu," said Swiss Ambassador Thomas Grass. "In such a close distance, we saw all kinds of diversity of Nepal."

Although all diplomats attending the trip enjoyed the rafting and camping, some avoided trekking. Despite willingness of so many diplomats, the midday sun forced them to abandon trekking. The FAM Trip started from a night stay at Dhulikhel. The rafting from Sukute, Sindhupalchowk district, a river bank of Sunkoshi to Lamabagar river bank at Kavreplanchwok district took almost three hours.

"The Ministry will organize this kind of trip in the future too," said Dr. Niranjana Man Basnyat, chief of protocol.

Another, almost six hours long, trekking began from Lamabagar, 660 meters, and completed at Maule Chaur, 1620 meters, for a tented camp. The trekking trail passed Bhotetar to Pande Danda and Sikar Kateri (980 m). Dominated by ethnic Tamang community, the trekking trail covered

Merpharangar village and Lama Gaun.

The next trek commenced from Maule Chaur and concluded at the Kot Temal and up to Yangbel Village at a height of 1915 meters. Here one can see Hindu and Buddhist temples symbolizing the centuries' old religious harmony that existed in Nepal. In the Yangbel, there is the oldest Narayanthan Temple, a Hindu temple at the top of the mountain and Buddhist Stupas of Boudha, and Swayambhu from Kathmandu and Namobuddha from Kavre. There is also a statue of Padmasambhava, a great Buddhist master also known as Guru Rimpoche. The trekking came to an end after reaching Mangaltar (780m) at the bank of Roshi River.

The diplomats represented the countries, from mountainous Switzerland in Europe to island nations Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Ambassador from Switzerland Thomass Grass and his wife, Ambassador from Israel Hanan Goder-Goldberger and Jan Moller Hansen, and deputy chief of the mission of Danish Embassy showed the strength and skill to climb the steep mountain. Ibrahim Zuhuree, director of Maldives to SAARC, completed whole trip with refreshment at Dhulikhel resort.

Similarly, ambassador of European Union Dr. Alexander Spachis and his spouse Eleni Spachis and newly arrived Australian Ambassador Glenn White and his wife Marie White LA, Ambassador of Thailand Kanthong Unakul, Sri Lankan ambassador Wijekoon Mudiyansele and deputy chief of Mission of Bangladesh Embassy Mohammad B. Islam and his wife Tansura Z. Khan put their best effort by reaching the top of the hill.

US Ambassador Peter W. Bodde and his wife Tanya Lee Will Bodde joined the FAM trip up to Dhulikhel and ICIMOD's director Dr. David Molden and his wife Karen Lynn Conniff returned after completing the rafting.

From foreign ministry, chief of protocol Dr. Niranjana Man Basnyat, joint secretary Kali Prasad Pokharel, Yagya Bahadur Hamal, Krishna Dhakal and under-secretary Narayan Mainali completed the Trip. Joint secretary Ambika Devi Luitel also completed the rafting. Along with handling relations of the countries, diplomacy is also enhancing the cultural understanding.



## WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2013

## Food Waste

With the improvement in facilities like transportation, storage, packaging, and machinery as well as control of pests, Nepal has drastically reduced the post harvest loss. Experiences of Practical Action show that food loss can be minimized through gravity rope and simple packaging. As the World Environment Day 2013 aims to reduce food waste, there, however, are several challenges before Nepal in this area

By KESHAB POUDEL

Effective transport facility along with modification in packaging can reduce the loss of food. This is what the farmers in the Hukkilung Village of Gorkha District have shown. After construction of the gravity ropeway to transport the vegetable products, the amount of wastes has drastically gone down as the products can reach the market in the shortest possible time inside improved packaging.

Until a few years ago, the villagers used to spend three to five hours to carry their agriculture products to the market, causing a loss of 20-25 percent of their products during the transport. However, they can now ferry the products in 10 minutes. As Practical Action constructed the gravity ropeway, many farmers in the nearby areas are enjoying the fruits.

This is the reason 32-year old Anamian Cheeping and his community members are rejoicing. Thanks to the gravity ropeway, constructed under the support of Practical Action, the distance between the village and Prithivi Highway, one of the major highways of Nepal linking capital Kathmandu with the rest of the country, the distance is a non-issue.

"Our experiences in various districts have shown that the linkage of gravity ropeway and improvement in packaging also minimize the loss of agriculture products," said Sujan Piya, project manager at Practical Action. "Although

the objective of gravity ropeway is to make transport easier for marginal and small farmers, it has also helped farmers in reducing their loss.

As there is the lack of modern cold storage facilities in the villages, Practical Action, a leading INGO, is also helping farmers to build the storage through locally available materials. "We installed the gravity ropeway for easy and short transport, but this has given benefits to the farmers by reducing their loss," said Piya.

Likewise, the access to improved storage has drastically reduced the loss of food products during the post-harvest period. But Nepal's overall food storage system is yet to improve. Annually, Nepalese farmers lose about 25-30 percent of their food products.

According to Post Harvest Management Directorate, under the Department of Agriculture verification, improvement, dissemination and adoption are key factors. After improvement of certain technology like improvement in storage and use of machinery, the post harvest loss is coming to zero.

Its main activity is the post harvest technology generation in perishable (fresh fruits, vegetables and cut flower) and durable commodity (paddy, wheat, maize and legumes) and dissemination of technology to farmers. This includes adoptive research in durables and perishables, integrated stored grain management, Farmers Field School

(FFS), construction and distribution of post harvest hand tools and equipment and monitoring of program implementation at the district level. According to the directorate, there is a loss of 25 percent in vegetables, 20 percent in fruits and 32 percent in potatoes and its seeds, according to post harvest studies.

Nepal Agriculture Research Council has been doing research on post harvest. According to NARC, post harvest technology plays an important role in food security and poverty alleviation of the country. It is multidisciplinary in nature and assuming a growing importance to increase food production to meet the requirements of the expanding population. Realizing the importance of post-harvest technology, the Agricultural Perspective Plan for twenty years (2000-2020 A.D) has given due emphasis to the generation and dissemination of post-harvest technology to improve the socio-economic condition of the country.

#### World Environment Day

As the food security is becoming a major challenge in the coming days, the World Environment Day 2013 will be celebrated this year with slogan of Think. Eat. Save. Reduce your footprint. According to UNEP, the UN Environment Program, the new food-inspired global campaign focuses on the fact that over one billion tons of food are lost or wasted each year.

The campaign, supported by the



## “New Emission Standards In Offing”

- KESHAB PRASAD BHATTARAI

As Nepal is celebrating the World Environment Day on June 5, KESHAB PRASAD BHATTARAI, Secretary at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excerpts:

As the World Environment Day 2013 is being celebrated with the slogan of just to eat, what importance does the slogan hold for Nepal?

The slogan of the World Environment Day is Think. Eat. Save. That means eat for yourself to preserve the environment. There are two aspects of foods. The first is related to the food security part and the other is related to excessive consumption and waste of food. That means the excessive consumption and waste of food create the problem for food security. This will have negative impact on environment. Over eating and wasting foods will put burden on environment also. More energy is required as well as water to produce more food. Environment has to bear the burden of wasted food. The message suggests that one has to consider implication of waste food to the environment. Don't waste food, keeping in mind that it will contribute to preservation of environment. In this context, the slogan of World Environment Day is important for us.

How are you celebrating the World Environment Day?

We are celebrating it at local level also. Eventually, the program needs to be implemented by grass root level organizations. Whether it is adaptation or mitigation, the effect of climate change needs to be taken at grass root level. Because of budgetary constraints, we are unable to hold it nationwide. However, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation as well as NGOs and INGOs are also supporting this.

Food loss and wastes are high in Nepal. Do you think celebrating the environment day on the banner increases food safety?

Food security is related to environment as well as related to Ministry of Agriculture and other

ministries. This is a subject for the whole nation to think. In terms of harvest loss, we are losing huge amount of food. For this, we need to take steps for food security from the harvesting period. We need to look at the whole food chain. Under the Ministry of Agriculture, certain initiatives have been taken to control the loss of harvest. We also need to look at the issue from environmental aspect. There is the need to look at it on a coordinated approach. From food processing to utilization process, we need to concentrate to contain the loss.

Experts predict that the climate change will have long term implication in the agriculture sector. How Ministry look at it?

Agriculture and food security have larger dimensions as the climate change. We cannot change the implications of climate change through mitigation. We need to take steps for mitigation as well as follow adaptation. We need to produce the seeds to adapt with climate change. The agriculture pattern needs to suit with new climate. Similarly, the mountain region also needs a special adaptation programs. We need to launch adaptation program as required by local areas. The Ministry is currently implementing Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA). We are receiving support from Nepal's development partners. I am proud to say that Nepal is the first Least Developed Country to implement it. It is in the initial phase of implementation in 69 VDCs of five development regions and one municipality. Under the World Bank support, we are implementing PPCR. There are also certain programs for climate change adaptation. These include water resources conservation in mountain region and some are directed to protect the wildlife. Even District Development Committees are launching programs at district level and village level.

Your Ministry has broader mandate. Do you have institutional capabilities?



After taking the job as a secretary of the ministry, I came to know that environment touches all the ministries. Whether you talk energy, water, agriculture, pollution, everything is part of environment. Even energy mix concept is widely experimented in the context of climate change. To minimize the impact of green house gas, globally, emphases are given to renewable energy. Despite extensive mandate, our institutional capability is weak. We have just recently established the Department of Environment. The Ministry does not have grass root level institution. We just have environment protection act and regulation. We don't have adequate legal provisions to control air pollution in the urban areas. We are now working to set new air pollution standard. The present green sticker is just a symbolic step. We are unable to fully control the quality of air in the valley. Our enforcement is very weak. We are in the process of adopting new vehicle emission standards. It will complete within a couple of months. After making new Nepal Emission Standards, we will implement it in three areas, Kathmandu, Pokhara and Lumbini. There is the need to control the vehicles which have been running in the street for last forty years puffing heavy smoke. ■



Photo Courtesy: Santosh Gyawali

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and others, aims to reduce food loss along the entire chain of food production and consumption and specifically targets food wasted by consumers, retailers and the hospitality industry.

"In a world of seven billion people, set to grow to nine billion by 2050, wasting food makes no sense — economically, environmentally and ethically," said UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

The World Environment Day (WED) is observed on June 5 every year to promote awareness on the importance of preserving our biodiversity, the need to identify problems related to the environment and ways to take corrective action. It was on this day in the year 1972 that the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was formed.

Between 1.3 billion and 2.2 billion tons of food is wasted every year due to lost harvests, inefficient storage practices and wastage at retail as well as consumer levels, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has disclosed.

This shows that food insecurity is caused not by insufficient production but by poor distribution and imprudent management of available food. As per the widely accepted definition, food security involves not only availability and access to food but also affordability and fulfillment of the dietary needs of people.

#### Nepal's scenario

Nepal reported more than 166 percent rise in cereal imports in 2011/12, when production of cereals stood at a record 7.57 million tons, prompting officials to claim a grain surplus of 886,000 tons. Nepal is headed for a food surplus of 720,000 tons (net 563,000 tons in edible form) in the current fiscal year also.

But, imports of food went up alarmingly by 235 percent during the first five months of the current fiscal year compared to the same period last year. Some 27 districts are in food insecurity due to deficit in supplies.

"Government data shows a national



Food Drying

aggregate situation of comfortable food security. But we have seen significant incidence of food insecurity at household level due to weak distribution," said Dr Hari Dahal, a food security expert. "There is also a huge loss in post harvest period reaching up to market."

In the last 25 years, Nepal suffered food deficits for 15 years and food surpluses for 10 years. "Lack of proper distribution of available food in needy areas also led to food insecurity even during times of food surplus," said Bholaman Singh Basnet, who has been working in food security sector in Nepal.

"The food insecurity scenario in Nepal is mostly related to reduce production in unfavorable years, areas of production not matching the food deficit areas, access or availability problems in remote areas and lack of cash. Nepal at present produces more than 8.0 million tons of food grains in favorable years. The mountain region which has 8% of the total population only produces 3/4th of its requirement," said Neeranjan P. Rajbhandari, an expert.

The report shows that worldwide, it is estimated that about one-third of all food produced — worth around \$1

trillion — gets lost or wasted in production and consumption systems, according to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). A recent report from the UK's Institute of Mechanical Engineers put the figure higher, warning that as much as half of all the food produced in the world — equivalent to two billion tons — ends up as waste every year.

According to the FAO, 95 per cent of food waste in developing countries is unintentional loss at early stages of the food supply chain, caused by financial, managerial and technical limitations in harvesting techniques; storage and cooling facilities in difficult climatic conditions; infrastructure; packaging and marketing systems. Per capita waste by consumers is between 95 kg and 115 kg a year in Europe and North America, while consumers in sub-Saharan Africa, south and south-eastern Asia each throw away six kilos to 11 kg a year.

As there is also a growing tendency of food waste, the World Environment Day 2013's slogan is very relevant and should act as an eye opener for Nepal. Since Practical Action and the government's experiences have also shown how to reduce the loss, the question is when will the ideas effectively implemented. ■



## “Nepal Has Achieved A Lot In Peace Process”

ASKO LUUKKAINEN

Having spent a long time in Nepal, Ambassador of Finland to Nepal ASKO LUUKKAINEN knows many things about this country. As Nepal is passing through a political crisis, Ambassador Lukknainen Asko spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excerpts:

**How do you look at the present state of Nepal in the context of coming elections for the Constituent Assembly?**

I am happy that the Interim Electoral Government was finally appointed. This decision was actually the only way out of the political stalemate in the country. The parties still seem to have different opinions about the size of the CA, threshold of seats, convicts contest etc. But I believe that these issues can be solved. On the other hand, I am disappointed at some parties which are saying that they are not going to participate in the elections unless their numerous demands are met.

**Why are they putting the demands?**

That is a good question which everybody should contemplate about. I believe the elections are the only way to measure each party's support and, therefore, every party should be ready to be subject to this measurement. If a party is not participating in the elections, it cannot claim that it has the people's support since it has no evidence of that. Therefore, I appeal to those parties planning not to participate, please attend. That is the only democratic solution.

**The international community has been expressing concern over the two ordinances related to the transitional justice system. How do you look at this?**

For us, it is very simple — the ordinances should meet the international standards. If they do not, we are unable to support the implementation of the ordinances. Also Nepal's reputation is at stake if the ordinances are not according to the said standards.

**The country has not held local body elections for the last 18 years. How has it been affecting Nepal's development process?**

When there are no locally elected bodies, the transparency of the governance system is weak. People are not heard thoroughly, the decisions are made by bureaucrats. I am one of bureaucrats myself but under strict surveillance of elected representatives of different bodies. I think this is fair; the system works much better when elected bodies are in place. We bureaucrats are then under monitoring.

We are assisting Nepal in rural areas, for example, in rural water supply and sanitation. The problem here is again the missing local bodies. Decisions regarding our investments are made by bureaucrats, not by people who have the mandate from the elections. So my opinion is that

development process has become slower since local bodies are missing.

**Finland is one of Nepal's major development partners. How do you look at the Finland supported projects in Nepal?**

We are active in three different sectors, education and human rights and democracy, rural water supply and sanitation and forestry, of course. Our support to the civil society through NGO's is also substantial, our yearly support to Nepal is about 23 million euro (2.5 billion rupees). In addition to that comes the support to NGO's. The support has been increasing during the last years but at the moment we are in a waiting mode. First election then will it be possible to increase the aid to Nepal. Our program, as such I like, it is supporting in the areas which are of utmost importance to Nepal and targeted to the poorest of the poor.

**Nepal has been passing through a period of political turmoil. How has it been affecting Nepal's development process?**

This is a question people who are Nepali citizens should answer. The recent history, let us say from 1996 when the civil war started, has led to fundamental changes in the country. Nepal is not a Kingdom anymore but has not yet been able to stabilize the democracy in the country either. Civil war did definitely hamper the development but it can in the long run benefit the country a lot. But now consensus regarding the polls and the new constitution is needed, people of Nepal, who have been waiting for this for a long time, are really deserve that.

**What are Nepal's major challenges?**

If we leave away the politics and the need to be able to make compromises between the parties, I would say that the economic development of the country is the biggest challenge. And without fundamental increase in the energy supply, the development is almost impossible. So for me number one is energy supply increase, which would immediately help the local industries to lower their production costs and create new jobs. Everybody in the country would benefit. Nepal has so much hydro power available that it could be an important exporter of electricity in the region and become really wealthy. This huge opportunity has so far been missed. The beauty of hydro power is that it is there forever. The oil producing countries which are now doing extremely well are finally not in such a happy situation.

**How is scarcity of energy hampering the progress?**

One interesting aspect in the poor energy supply (which was much better in 2000-2004 when I was working in Nepal for the first time) is the bad image which it is creating to Nepal. We do not think this often. But when people come to visit Nepal from abroad and realize that the load



shedding is 10-14 hours per day, they immediately start asking why the situation is so bad in a country which has huge reserves of hydro power. And what are the answers to these questions? Normally people blame the politics, bad governance, corruption and what not. So almost immediately the visitors hear negative things from Nepal. By providing sufficient energy this kind of questions/answers, which are not good for Nepal's image, could be avoided.

What would you like to change in Nepal?

One thing above all the others: I would change the culture of organizing bandhas as a political weapon. Bandhas hurt the economy, make people's life extremely difficult, create violence, are against fundamental rights of the people like freedom of move in the country and finally erode the support to those who organize bandhas. Nobody likes bandha, on the contrary people dislike them very much. Therefore it simply does not make any sense to organize bandhas. Bandhas have been defended by saying that they have always been part of the politics. That is true but if we always say that we do this way since we have always done things like this we would still live in the caves! My suggestion is that in the new constitution bandhas should be forbidden. The parties could agree on this and solve their differences of opinion in the elected CA/parliament, not on the streets.

Finland has been supporting Nepal's peace process in the last seven years. As Nepal is in the final stage of completing the peace process, what is your comment on the process?

In the peace process, Nepal has achieved a lot during the last years. When I was working here during the years 2000-2004, the civil war was escalating and the future of the country looked gloomy. Now things are much better. But still the parties need to get closer to each other in order to be able to stabilize the democracy. We all know that the people of Nepal have the desire to peaceful life with regular elections, they should not be kept in uncertainty anymore.

In case, Nepal fails to hold the elections for CA, what will be its domestic and international implications?



Extremely difficult question and my answer is pure speculation. But I have been following Nepali politics for fourteen years now and I have a feeling that if Nepal fails to hold elections, the civil society will not swallow that easily. There have lately been some signs of the increasing activism of the civil society in common issues in Nepal. Maybe there will be a strong peaceful non political movement which will put pressure on the political leaders. I do not believe that any group or party is in favor of violence should the country fail in holding elections. We all have seen how much country needs to suffer if violence would take over.

Do you have any message to people in Nepal?

I have now lived in Nepal for more than five years altogether and this journey continues. During these years I have developed a deep affection to hardworking Nepali people who have lived through difficult times but who clearly love their country and also believe in the country's future. The bright future is coming, I am sure. Above I spoken about the huge possibilities in the energy export, that is one possibility. But also tourism and agriculture will give a lot to the country and we never know what other possibilities are waiting behind the corner, ICT maybe? Wish all the best to Nepal! ■



Think·Eat·Save सोचेर खाऔं, खाना खेर नफालौं: वातावरण जोगाऔं ।



चाहिने भन्दा बढी खाना खाएमा: आफूलाई रोग लाग्दछ, अर्को भोकै पर्दछ ।  
फालाफाल नगरी चाहिने मात्र खाएमा: भोकमरी कम हुन्छ, वातावरण जोगिन्छ ।

# विश्व वातावरण दिवस-२०७०

## World Environment Day-2013

जेठ २२, २०७० (5 June 2013)



UNEP



नेपाल सरकार  
विज्ञान, प्रविधि तथा वातावरण मन्त्रालय





# Social Consequences Of Economic Integration In Asia

By KRISHNA PRASAD SUBEDI

It is hard to mention an apprehending of social consequences of economic integration in Asia, although there are at least some different ways of understanding the concept of social integration. For some, it is an inclusionary goal, implying equal opportunities and rights for all human beings. In this case, becoming more integrated implies mean to be improving life chances. To others, however, increasing integration has a negative connotation, rising up the image of an unwanted imposition of uniformity. And, to still others, the term does not necessarily imply either a positive or a negative state. It is simply a way of describing the established patterns of human relations in any given society. In the case of Asia, integration is used in this sense, as a goal in itself, certain problems are often arisen. Some problems can be summarized in the points:

(a) It is intellectually easy and often politically expedient to assume that grave problems of poverty and in justice can be alleviated through including people formerly excluded from certain activities or benefits. Yet in many cases, the existing pattern of development may be economically and ecologically unsustainable, or politically repressive. Therefore it is always necessary to ask inclusion in what and on what terms. (b) It can be sought without giving sufficient attention to the need for cultural diversity. When this occurs, there can be an imposition of uniformity. (c) In all too many cases, national and international discussion of social development is also phrased in terms of integrating those with nothing into the modern mainstream, as though the groups defined as excluded are surviving in a virtual vacuum. Yet even the most impoverished and apparently disorganized have Asian forms of social organization. Ignoring the real world of the disadvantaged is a danger associated with inclusionary rhetoric, and it makes for bad policy. (d) Finally, there is a risk that narrow concentration on the normative goal of social integration will make disintegration undesirable by

definition. In some cases, however, the disintegration of existing systems of social relations can be essential before progress toward a more just and equitable society can be made. The demising process of poverty provides a case in point.

While rapidly expanding boundaries of economic exchange and cultural contact improve the life chances of some groups, the process of globalization proves devastating for many others. New patterns of integration into a world economy are increasing and the economic insecurity of most people, as farmers, workers and business people around the globe are thrown into competition for scarce resources in hard times. Trends in science and technology promote longer term structural unemployment, thus compounding inequality, marginality and cultural malaise. As opportunity is concentrated in certain regions and countries, and in particular economic sectors, people respond in a number of ways. One of the most problematic is migration, whether internally or abroad. Although migratory processes are positive in many respects, the juxtaposition of people who often share neither a common language nor a common religion, and who have very different customs, makes unusual demands on human tolerance and understanding.

New arrivals also create unusual strains on existing social services. Even if people do not leave their homes, barriers between different cultures are falling under the impact of the revolution in mass communications. Local forms of solidarity are often replaced by new values and ties, which link small groups with access to the global consumer culture to others like themselves across the globe, while increasing the gulf between the global middle class and nationals who cannot join the group. Rapid economic and social accompanied by far-reaching cultural change, makes unusual demands on political institutions. Economic uncertainty and fear of marginalization encourage electorates in established democracies to favor

immediate remedies over long-term policies and the same fears immensely complicate the task of creating effective democratic regimes in countries where such systems of government are only now being established. Furthermore, the global nature of so many of the problems of today reinforces the need for a far more effective system of international governance than that currently available. There is a striking incongruence between patterns of social integration which bind people around the world more closely together than ever before, on the one hand, and the frailty of existing mechanisms for discussing joint problems and promoting joint action, on the other.

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## EARTHQUAKE

# Unsafe Schools

*Nepal's school buildings are at risk from earthquakes despite efforts at minimizing it*

By ARYAA RAJOURIA

A modest earthquake of September 2011 damaged many school buildings in the eastern part of Nepal, reminding the policy makers that Nepal's school buildings are vulnerable to any earthquake.

Nepal is neatly tucked between India and China, along the Himalayas. This location is ideal in some respects, however, fatal in others. This position causes Nepal to fall on the high seismic belt. The frequency of earthquakes, in places with ancient homes and structures, makes Nepal a rather dangerous region.

According to National Seismological Center, it records many earthquakes in a year. In the last three months alone, Nepal has faced four earthquakes of over 4 Richter scale.

On May 5, 2013, the center recorded three earthquakes, measuring 4.5, 4.4 and 4.3 on Richter scale and their epi-centers were in Mugu of western region. Similarly, on April 28, another earthquake of 4.9 in the scale was recorded in Bajhang district. On March 17, 4.7 Richter scale earthquake was recorded with its epicenter in Dhanusha district. Nepal feels a lot of jolts every day below 3 on the scale.

That is, earthquakes take place in Nepal often. However, some earthquakes are more damaging than others. Nepal has a brutal, long history with devastating earthquakes. The last big earthquake took place in 1934, when 20,000 people were killed. An earthquake with the magnitude of 8 or higher on the Richter scale is supposed to take place every 80 to 100 years.

Schools are rented out in old houses, which neglect the idea of quake safety. The use of pillars and other sturdy equipment have not been used in these buildings. When and if an earthquake arrives, these may be the first to fall down.

Schools may have an earthquake safety plan, but they are not put into good use. These planned actions are neither practiced nor pursued resulting in a dangerous, panicked escape after an earthquake.

Not only does the student body not know what to do, but also the teachers aren't aware either. The plan is never put into action, and when an earthquake



Class room

takes place, it is difficult to manage the panicked pupils. They also lack the essentials kit for an earthquake emergency. Some private, usually embassy schools, prioritize the earthquake escape plan and practice. The required attention given to these students concerning quakes makes the environment safe.

However, other private schools have a plan but an unpracticed one. The teachers may know what to do, but the students do not. As Priyadarshani Shrestha, an ex student from Shuvatara School (Lamatar), said, "We didn't really have an escape plan. We had a drill which we practiced once in the two years I was there, we'd go on to an isolated basketball court on top of the slope in which the school stood."

The National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal (NSET) focuses on issues regarding natural disasters,

especially earthquakes. NSET encourages the public to stay safe by utilizing the 'Duck, Cover, and Hold' technique. By ducking under a reliable piece of furniture, one can ensure one's safety during the time period of the earthquake. By covering one's head, one can protect themselves from any severe damages. After an earthquake is finished, one should stay in the safety position in case of any aftershock. If these 3 simple rules are followed in the household or the school ground, many lives could be saved.

There are certain schools that have taken the 'Duck, Cover, and Hold' technique under their wing. One such school is Rupy's International School. Ex-student, Chime Dolkar Nepali, said that they practiced the earthquake drill once a month. This effort will benefit the staff and students when an earthquake arrives. Rupy's International School's buildings are houses, and may not be earthquake friendly. However, with this drill perfected, it would not be likely for an earthquake to harm the students.

Taking basic steps, like adapting the 'Duck, Cover, and Hold' technique within a school will result in a safer study atmosphere within schools. Other than having a basic plan and practicing it, there are many things a school can do in order to ensure safety during a quake.

Chime Dolkar understands this, and has some ideas, "They should offer disaster management classes and every class should be given an earthquake kit containing all the required materials, besides conducting regular earthquake drills."

If these classes were an option, the student would not only know how to handle a disaster but also know why a disaster took place in the first place. New ideas and innovative minds of these educated youngsters could lead to a fresher, more effective way to stay safe during a quake.

The government should also pull up their socks, and standardize the earthquake safety plan. They could create decrees that safeguard students against disasters, such as these large tremors. Officials could do this by following the rules and regulations that NSET has already provided. The safety of the public during an earthquake should be of a very high importance. Like the saying goes, it is better to be safe than sorry.

*Rajouria is an intern*





# The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal

By BIPIN ADHIKARI

Gautam Buddha, also known as the *Shakyamuni*, was born in the Western foothill of Nepal 563 before the beginning of the Christian era. Even though there is some dispute as to the exact year on which Gautam Buddha was born, his birth place, Lumbini, is already an established fact. Buddha founded Buddhism – which is one of the great indigenous religions of the South Asian sub-continent.

The accounts of Buddha's life, discourses, and monastic rules are available in different languages. They are believed to have been written after his death and memorized by his followers. Various collections of teachings attributed to Buddha were passed down by oral tradition, and first committed to writing about 400 years later. They were written in Sanskrit as well.

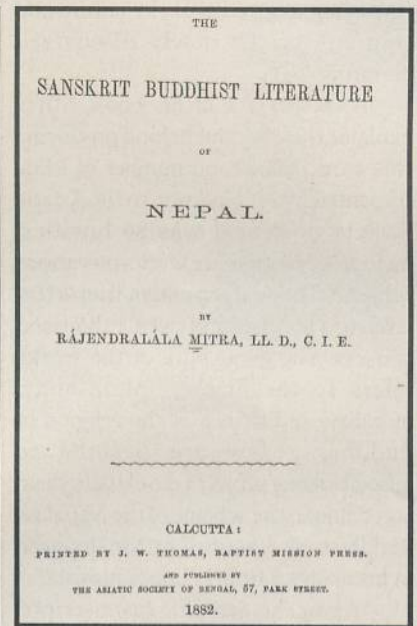
There are enormous amount of Buddhist literature in Nepal. Some of them were composed in Sanskrit at different points of time. There must have been many such literatures in India as well. But they disappeared after the Muslim conquests in the twelfth century. Right after the Buddha's *Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Maha-sutra* (also called the *Nirvana Sutra*), which mentions some of the well-known episodes of the final months of the Buddha's life, different such literatures came to be written or compiled in Nepal and India continuing up to the 12th century AD.

Out of this vast literature, comprising several thousand texts, only a portion was translated into Tibetan between the 7th and 15th centuries and into Chinese between the 2nd and 11th centuries. Of later composition in Nepal are various *Parajika* texts, demonstrating what is known as a Hindu-Buddhist syncretism in the country. Some large compositions such as the *Avadanasataka* and *Mahavastu* also repeat materials familiar from Indic sources. *Svayambhupurana*, *Bhadrakalpavadana*, *Vicitrakarn ikkavadana*, and the *Gunakaran Uvayuha* are just a few examples. The *Svayambhupurana* in particular describes the Buddhist mythology of Nepal.

Rajendralala Mitra's *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1882) is one of the major works on Nepalese Buddhism. Mitra was the first modern Indian Indologist, who also served as librarian of the Calcutta based Asiatic Society for many years. His work was based on the Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts that were discovered and collected in Nepal by Brian Hodgson [1800-1894], the British resident in Kathmandu, making the literature known to the modern world for the first time. The Europeans of that time had no knowledge of these Nepalese literatures. It is thus natural that his discovery of these literatures "entirely revolutionized the history of Buddhism." Mitra is not sure how many such documents were discovered by Brian Hodgson. They may go up to two hundred if carefully arranged and indexed. However, he reveals that "copies of these works to the total number of 381 bundles [were] distributed so as to render them accessible to European scholars."

The book starts with extracts of Buddhist literature named *Abhidhanottara* and ends with *Vratavadanamala*. It also shows the manuscript (MSS) number, according to which they are arranged in the Asiatic Society's Library. *Asoka Avadana* gives the account of the early life of King Asoka Maurya (304-232 BCE) who is said to have visited Lumbini. It also talks about his conversion to Buddhism, and tales and anecdotes related to him by a Yati named Upa Gupta, with a view to illustrate the morality of the Buddhism. Similarly, the *Dvavinsha Avadana* is a collection of twenty-two stories illustrating the merits of devotion to Buddhism and to the duties enjoined by it.

In one of the stories given, "a troop of Brahmans, having made their obeisance to Buddha, expressed their desire to enter *Pra-vrajya* or itinerancy. Instantly all were, by miracle, shaved and their clothes transformed into rags, except one who remained as he was. The Lord said, the cause of this exception was, that the person was full of



Brahmanic pride. On his solicitations, the Lord changed his clothes into rags, but these rags were all dirty. Being asked the cause of this, the Lord said, "that Brahman, in one of his former existences, did not make his obeisance to Buddha *Padmottara*, disdaining to bow to a *Sramana*." In *Ganapati Hridaya*, another piece, there are mantras in praise of Ganapati, "the proof it affords of the Buddhists having adopted the adoration of Ganesha, a purely Hindu deity." In *Divyavadana-Mala*, there is a story of *Rupavati* or *Rupavatyavadana*. "Once when the Lord was at the *Jetavana* monastery his disciples remarked, how wonderful it was that beggars should be the most favoured of all persons to the Lord. The Lord replied, it was even so in his former existences."

Nobody can underscore the importance of these literatures. Hodgson not only discovered them, but also explained about their importance. Mitra notes: "To reproduce them in their entirety would require not one, but many, volumes, and I had therefore to satisfy myself with their bare outlines—their skeletons—omitting all flesh and blood which give them their vividness and interest for the faithful. But reduced and attenuated as they are in the



following pages, they will, I believe, prove useful in elucidating Buddhist traditions and sculpture, and in conveying a fair idea of the nature and contents of the newly discovered literature."

In the preface of his book, Mitra explains the objective behind producing this work: "The total number of MSS, presented by Mr Hodgson to the Asiatic Society of Bengal was 86 bundles, including 170 separate works on various subjects. They vary in extent from a few *slokas* to a hundred and twenty thousand stanzas. The great bulk of the works refers to the history, philosophy, morality, and rituals of the religion of Buddha; a few are devoted to miscellaneous subjects. To classify them according to the scheme of the Nepalese Buddhists as described by Mr Hodgson in his essays, I find, is impracticable."

As to the Sanskrit manuscripts, their age and authority, some are new and some are very old. Nevertheless, each of the literature which has been described is of historical importance. In principle, Buddha's teachings deny the authority of the Vedas. Buddhism is generally viewed as a *nastika* ("it is not so") school of Hinduism. However, Hindus view Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu. This view is based on many Hindu texts including *Bhagavata Purana*, *Bhavishya Purana* and *Narasimha Purana*. The Buddhist *Dasharatha Jataka* (Jataka Atthakatha) represents Lord Rama as a previous incarnation of the Buddha and as a *Bodhisattva* and supreme Dharma King of great wisdom. The Buddhist stories included in the book of Mitra resemble the Hindu *Puranas* in both their content and style. They eulogize the Buddha the way Hindu *Puranas* eulogize various deities, primarily the divine Trimurti God through divine stories.

Rajendralala Mitra has done a great job. He is also the author of a book which claimed in 1872 that in ancient times Hindu people ate beef. This made him quite a controversial figure. But the efforts that the author has put in to bring Nepalese Buddhism to light must be appreciated. ■



## Sports: Down To Nothing

By ADITI ARYAL

The indecent exposure in a highly-viewed and praised Indian Premier League, better known by its abbreviated name IPL, has broken hearts of a good many supporters, viewers, wholehearted fans and well wishers. The most shocking episode turned out to be when the rulers and keepers of the game who try to demonstrate themselves as trustees turn in fact power brokers in pretense. This way IPL shattered not only the trust of people but lost all its appeal and charm, lost all spirit of competition and broke the law.

This is just one reference. Match fixing has always been prevalent and will be there till a long time to come in every sport, especially cricket. It is much more prevalent in sports of lower leagues and status because they are lesser scrutinized. In sports and leagues with big name, money, status and power fixings are risky and perhaps a bit easier in individual as the audience, fan following, as well as the media coverage is very high. The greed and strong desire to become millionaires overnight especially among the cricketers have provided ample opportunities to the match fixers, middlepersons and even made way to underworld involvement.

Some of the sports have lost their initial appeal. What once used to be cherished as fair play and enthusiastic is not the same anymore. Money has stepped in and every bit has lost its luster. Commercialization has made way and much of this has a negative perception on the audience who keep viewing different companies and their propaganda, or their favorite sports star dancing to a stupid theme song. The biggest example of commercialization again has to be IPL, where so much of money is spent on auctions, management teams, players, advertisements and performances by top national and international celebrities that have deluded the direction of the main motive of the sport. When we talk about the Indian Premier League, we talk of big business and refer to a multimillion business venture with very little nationalist passion and motivation

for the game. Players are treated as commodities and their human rights violated all as if to generate the best outcomes of the money that has been invested in them. Players are put up in advertisements and made to endorse brands but get so little as compared to what the company makes out of it. The players are then maltreated and exploited when we think about it.

While this happens, each player is trying his or her best to be the top notch not only as humans strive for perfection and outdoing others like as in earlier but for the benefits that come along, like being opted as the popular face for a commercial or for reality shows. With media as widely spread and received as of this date each player has the ravenousness to become known all over. For this, once they bang upon their performances there paves a way for them to be popular even among the non sport viewers – the media. Then the sport based audiences are disappointed if their favorite sports star doing so well loses his focus on the game and focuses more towards the brand he is asked to endorse.

To be on the top players are indulging in immoral ways and killing the spirit of sport. Doping is one big threat to the sport we love-watching. Doping kills the competition of the sport right away and is just a momentary stimulator but in the long run hampers the health of the user.

All these actions destroy what we love and cherish as sports. While people argue about harsh punishments being introduced along with lifelong bans, that is not the end. Our players need to understand the ethics and our sentiments, excitements, support and love for the game, for them. Our frustrations end after smearing the posters of our once favorite sportsperson and we start loathing the game and the greed that flooded it but what about the immoral and unfair practices that permeated into sports along with money and took all of it down to nothing? Does that have an end or will it proliferate into a bigger giant? ■



## 'Gaps Identified'

PROFESSOR DR. RAM SHARAN PATHAK currently heads the Central Department of Population Studies of Tribhuvan University. Dr. Pathak spoke to New Spotlight on several issues. Excerpts:

What is your impression of the recent National Consultation on Reproductive Health and Family Planning beyond 2014?

It was a good exercise among the policymakers, politicians, experts and various other civil society leaders. As per our objectives, we were able to facilitate the country level dialogue among the policymakers and civil society leaders as well as other relevant stakeholders to identify the critical gaps and challenges.

Could it make any critical achievements?

It is very interesting that we were able to make certain agreements on the critical gaps, challenges and opportunities for the country at the juncture of ICPD beyond 2014. I would like to thank ICOMP and its executive director Dr. Wasim Zaman for giving our central department this great opportunity to hold the workshop.

How do you describe the outcome of the workshop?

We discussed all major issues related to family planning, reproductive health, population and development extensively. The discussions that took place in the National Consultation meeting will help the government understand the views of the civil society leaders, youths, experts and political leaders. ■

Organized by the International Council on Management of Population Programs (ICOMP) and the Central Department of Population Studies (CDPS) of Tribhuvan University with support of Packard Foundation, the two day consultation concluded on May 18 in Dhulikhel, 30 kilometers east of capital. The consultations was first of its kind program to facilitate country level dialogue amongst policy-makers, civil society leaders and other relevant



BEYOND ICPD+20

# Gaps To Fill

*Despite certain achievements in reproductive health and family planning, Nepal has a long way to go to make progress in many other sectors.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Janaki Singh, 21, mother of two, died on the way to district hospital in Chainpur of Bajajng district a month ago due to physiological difficulties during her delivery. Shahi is among hundreds of Nepalis women, still uncertain to survive in the time of delivery.

Kanchi Tamang, 19, a resident of Narayansthan Health Center in Kavre district, had to see abortion after two and a half months. Tamang, who has already a two-year daughter, got pregnancy due to unavailability of contraceptives of her choice. "I came here several times for Norplant, but it was not available here. Had I got Norplant, I would not have been pregnant."

These two cases are incidents which tell about the state of Reproductive Health and Family planning in Nepal. Although the maternal mortality rate has drastically declined giving Nepal the chance to be one of the countries to meet the MDG target 5 and due to increase of awareness of adolescents on the issue related to reproductive health and family planning methods, Nepal still needs to do more to improve infrastructures and improve the supply of all kinds of family planning methods. As a number of people have still a

limited choice on family planning methods, the achievement Nepal has made in population management is still uncertain.

As Nepal has been facing a tough situation, government policymakers, civil society leaders, experts, former parliamentarians, politicians and youth discussed recently on the agenda of Reproductive Health and Family Planning urging government to improve the quality and coverage of reproductive health and family planning service including the contraceptives.

In a National Consultation of Policy Makers, former members of parliament, political leaders and Civil Society leaders on Reproductive Health and Family Planning Beyond 2014, speakers stress the need to address the demand of adolescents and young people aged 10-24 years with young females aged 10-24 accounting 10 percent the total population.

The consultation assessed achievements made and gaps and challenges remaining in the area of RH and Family Planning in Nepal nearly two decades after the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) which was held in Cairo in 1994.



## 'Nepal's Agenda Discussed'

Population expert DR. RAM HARI ARYAL, PhD, has been working in his area for quite a long time. Dr. Aryal spoke to New Spotlight on the unmet family planning needs and policy implications in Nepal.



How do you look at the National Consultation of policymakers and civil society leaders on reproductive health and family planning beyond 2014 (ICPD+ 20)?

As Nepal is in the process of evaluating its overall population policy, it is very important for the country's policymakers, from various ministries, and civil society leaders to exchange their views. The workshop discussed Nepal's agenda and priority for the ICPD beyond 2014 at length.

You also presented a paper on the unmet needs for family planning and policy implications in Nepal, what is your overall observation now?

Of course, the unmet needs for family planning declines with age: from 42 percent, among women aged 15-49, to 13 percent in the oldest age group. However, the gap is still higher in rural areas compared to the urban ones.

Any other trend among the age groups?

Demand for family planning is the highest among women aged 35-39 (88 percent) and lowest among those aged 15-19 (59 percent). Since 2001 survey, over 80 percent of women with unmet needs for family planning intend to use family planning in the future.

As a former chief of the population division and former secretary of the government of Nepal, how do you evaluate the workshop?

The two-day consultative meeting was very important for the government of Nepal. It helped to facilitate the country level dialogue, involving the voices of policymakers, civil society leaders and other development partners. By sending senior participants, the Ministry of Health and Population also showed that it is really serious about the problems.

stakeholders to identify the critical gaps and challenges as well as lessons learned since the implementation of the 1994 (ICPD) Plan of Action.

The consultation concluded that Nepal has achieved remarkable reduction in maternal mortality from 539 in 1996 to 229 in 2009; and also a decline in total fertility rate from 4.6 in 1996 to 2.6 in 2011, many challenges still remain in meeting the needs of information and services for the people, particularly the young people of Nepal.

Nepal is very close to reaching its MDG Goal 5 on reducing maternal mortality and infant mortality by 2015, but much more needs to be done to continue progressing, given there are still too many women who deliver at home, often in difficult conditions and without skilled assistance. Similarly, there is huge supply gap on family planning to the adolescents and youth.

"All women of reproductive age are yet to have access to contraception to avoid unintended pregnancies and all pregnant women do not have access to skilled care during pregnancy and after child birth. And those with complications need to have timely access to quality emergency obstetric care," said Shofica Regmi, 20, a youth participant.

Government is expanding the facilities to meet the need. "It is true that currently only one in three births is attended by a skilled birth attendant in Nepal and a full range of contraceptives are not widely available and accessible. The Ministry of Health and Population is now working to strengthen the referral system to deal with complicated births," said Dr. Badri Pokharel, joint secretary and chief of Population Division of Ministry of Health and Population.

The experiences have shown that universal access to family planning can reduce maternal deaths as well as improve the quality of life of infants. "It is essential to help every young person, woman and couple to decide freely when and how many children they want. Family Planning Association of Nepal has been working with adolescents and youths in different parts of the country to improve the situation," said Dr. Navin N.P. Thapa, director,

Resource Mobilization and External International Affairs of Family Planning Association of Nepal in the consultation.

Political leaders agree on the need to strengthening community engagement and demand for family planning services. "Strengthening partnerships and collaboration with community and approaching all programs with Gender Equality and Equity along with Inclusion of poor, disadvantaged and Marginal Populations are essential," said Chitra Lekha Yadav, former deputy speaker of Parliament and treasurer of Nepali Congress. "The discussions held at the consultation meeting covered wide areas related to RH and Family Planning.

Ananda Tamang, Executive Director of CREPHA presented the situation analysis of Reproductive Health and Family Planning, reviewing its successes, changing needs and challenges. "There is the need to increase and mobilize skilled human resources and enhance adolescents-friendly Reproductive Health and Family Planning Services."

Nepal has 0.29 health workers for every 1,000 people, a small fraction of the World Health Organization recommended 2.3 needed to offer basic lifesaving care, including vaccinations for every 1,000 residents. Despite achievements, the quality of service and number of health personnel. A 2011-2015 government health human resources plan pinpointed this disparity; in the last decade the population grew by 45 percent while public health staffing increased by only 3 percent.

"Indeed, the ICPD Beyond 2014 Review was an opportunity for all of us to renew our collective commitment to address the remaining gaps in the implementation of the ICPD, PoA, and to address new and emerging challenges and opportunities in the nexus between population and sustainable development. This national consultation workshop with our former parliamentarians, CSO representatives, academia, researchers, media and other development partners, which is focusing on looking at reproductive health and family planning beyond 2014, is befitting the very core of what UNFPA believes the next ICPD



## 'Time For Quality Population'

DR. BADRI POKHAREL, joint secretary and head of the Population Division at the Ministry of Health and Population, spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT.

How do you look at the importance of the consultative meeting for the government?

ICPD is a global agenda. The 15 agenda of ICPD are very important for Nepal's overall population management. ICPD is a vehicle to link population and development. Population is one of the important components for Nepal's overall development. As all of us know, we cannot separate development and population. Nepal government has been giving a high priority to the population agenda. My participation in the meeting itself speaks volumes about its importance.



How do you see the status of family planning in Nepal?

Nepal has been one of the pioneering countries in terms of family planning program for a long period of time. It was started since 1960s. Despite such a long experience, Nepalese still see family planning as a method for family control. That is not true. If we look at the current Total Fertility Rate and Population growth, the time seems to have been over to see the control mechanism. The time has come for population management and quality population. Since Nepal is almost at the replacement rate, the old policy needs to be revised now. We need to develop health skills and education for new population. Finally, there is the need to empower the population now.

What is your impression about the workshop?

These kinds of workshops are very important because they provide the government officials with the opportunity to interact with various stakeholders and to know their views. In this context, the Ministry of Health and Population would like to thank ICOMP. Population management is related to management of birth, death and movements of the people. Although there are also so many other agenda like marriage, urbanization and so on, birth and death management and movement of the people are key elements of population management. We discussed a lot on the birth management issue during the two days' workshop.

What is the priority of the government?

The government is now working to reduce the unmet need of family planning. The government has recently signed an agreement with DFID, under which, DFID will provide the much needed resources to expand the family planning method throughout the country. The government of Nepal is now working to formulate the population policy. We don't have a macro-policy to deal with a long term population program. Population is a cross cutting issue and it needs to be dealt with all other issues.

priorities should be for developing countries like Nepal," said Bijay Thapa, Assistant Representative, UNFPA

At a time when Nepal government is preparing for ICPD+20, national consultation with policy makers and civil society leaders on reproductive health and Family planning,

## 'New Issues Emerging'

DR. WASIM ZAMAN, Executive Director, of International Council on Management of Population Programs (ICOMP), was recently in Kathmandu to attend the Country Consultation of Policymakers and Civil Society Leaders towards ICPD Beyond 2014. Dr. Zaman spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT.

How do you look at the ICPD and its importance?



I think you heard this International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) took place in Cairo in 1994 and its Plan of Action (POA) is going to be complete in 2014 after twenty years. The countries and regions, and the whole world, are now looking at what the next thing would be despite

achieving a lot during the period. But, what are some key areas still needing more action like reproductive health, family planning and additional issues like migration, urbanization, poverty eradication and education?

What did you look at in consultation?

The consultation is basically looking at Nepal's success in the last two decades and what the gaps are there and what the challenges are and then setting and identifying what the key actions are that need to be taken in the areas where the challenges and gaps exist. So that is what this consultation is proposing and aspiring to do.

How do you evaluate the progress or achievement Nepal has made in the last two decades?

This particular meeting is focused on civil society, their leaders, parliamentarians and policy makers. So let us say it is a broader meeting so that views expressed by all of them here are noted. When the government sent their official delegation, it represented the official views in one way or the other.

How do you view the overall demographic scenario of Nepal?

In case of total fertility rate, it was 5.6 in 1996 and now it has come down to two point something. In the women empowerment area, poverty reduction, there is a certain improvement. Having said that, in each of these areas, Nepal still has huge challenges. Not only huge challenges but new issues are coming up. Aging for instance will come as people are living longer. So there will be more people of higher age group. If we look at the hill and talk about the environment, soil erosion is going to hit much of Nepal. The land use pattern is seriously affected by the growing population problem. Pollution is now a big issue. Again all these issues are related to population growth and dynamics.

the outcome of the consultation provided inputs for Nepal's participation in the regional and global meetings that are taking place leading up to the Special Session of UN General Assembly to take place in 2014 to chart regional and global actions for Population and Development in 2015 and beyond.



# A Pilgrimage To India

By ABHISHEKH ADHIKARI



It all began with an offer I could not refuse. My Thulo Daddy (dad's elder brother) asked me if I would like to join him in a tour of India. I hesitated a bit. I was planning a job switch, to start the new work immediately. But I also needed a break. When Thulo Daddy told me I could be his guest during the journey, even before I had thought about how I would manage my finances, my hesitation was over. I agreed to give him company during his visit.

We booked the railway and flight tickets from Orient Paradise in Kathmandu. Where it was difficult to get tickets, we paid a little extra and got them. It would be a 28 days journey in total.

We flew to Bhairahawa and spent a night there. We did not want to take chances because it was a bandh season in Nepal. We had one more day to spend in Gorakhpur before boarding the train. From our past experiences we always knew that travelling in north India would not be without isolated instances of meeting unscrupulous men, but not this time.

After a little less than 60 hours of train journey we reached Ernakulam. The train journey was comfortable, but it tried our patience because of delay. Once in Ernakulam we were properly guided and briefed by the Kerala Tourist Development Corporation (KTDC) officer to find a suitable hotel and the sightseeing that was on offer.

The next stop was Alappuzha or Allepey also popularly known as the 'Venice of the East'. Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India had coined the term because of its waters. Alappuzha was an hour and half journey from Ernakulam. The four hours boat ride in the backwaters of Alappuzha was enchanting and tranquil. Not even for a second we felt we were bound by the waters in *Kashmiri Sikara* (the boat). We were taken to a local hotel situated in the bank of backwaters. We were shown the varieties of fish and we were thrilled by the sight of them. We ordered everything for lunch. However, the cook could not do justice to such

fine fishes that he himself had caught in the waters just before his home cum restaurant. Even though we had negotiated the price before because the cook could not prepare the delicious looking fish we felt that we paid more for them.

Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala, was 3 hours train journey from Alappuzha. It was easy to get to Trivandrum. Trivandrum has one of the most beautiful temples, Padmaswamy temple of Lord Bishnu. The temple is magnificent in architecture and its sight is mesmerizing. We were told that uncountable amount and treasures were found in the temple. To enter the temple strict temple rules have to be obeyed.

Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip



of India is another 3 hours journey from Trivandrum. Kanyakumari has Swami Vivekananda temple right in the confluence of Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal. Although we were promised the view of beautiful sunrise and sunset from the hotel room itself it did not happen that way. Of course we went on an auto rikshaw ride to see the sunset from the sunset point. Kanyakumari boasts of beautiful sight of both sunrise and sunset.

Madurai has a beautiful Meenakshi temple. Interestingly the temple was closed when we reached there as the idols of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati were being taken around the city in chariot and huge procession followed it. The day happened to be their wedding anniversary.

Rameshwaram, one of the four *dhams* of India and one of the 12  *jyoti lingas*

was our destination. This whole trip happened because Thulo Daddy had been to other 3 *dhams* and 11  *jyoti lingas* and this was the last *dham* and  *jyoti linga* he had to visit to complete his pilgrimage.

Rameshwaram can be reached after penetrating the sea to some length. The sight of sea on either side of the road is fascinating. Interestingly the lovely beaches of Rameshwaram have not been exploited for tourism. It took us three to four hours to reach Rameshwaram from Madurai.

On our way to Chennai from Rameshwaram we stopped at two places breaking our journey and making it comfortable. First was Tanjavur which has one of the most beautiful temples

made about a thousand years ago. The other place we halted was Tiruvannamalai which has Raman Maharishi's ashram. The ashram is a meditation center and I found myself at my best and quite at home there.

We also went to Amritsar, which is six hours train journey from Delhi. Amritsar is located in Punjab. The sweet talking rikshaw and auto rikshaw drivers made us willingly pay them more than their service to us. The Wagha Border; the border between India and Pakistan, is a place to visit. However, to get to the parapet from where the event can be seen happening every evening, is anarchic. It looks like there is celebration every evening. The women, girls and children danced to the patriotic songs played out loud. The sentiments of India and Pakistan are reflected in the event. Amritsar is also a historic place for the fact that Jallianwala Bagh tragedy happened there. The place brings about mixed feelings of pity, anger and revenge. Finally, a must see Gurudwara, the Golden Temple, is made of gold and surrounded by water on all sides.

The diversity of India is something beyond comprehension and unparallel.



# 'Thrilled At Greening City'

CHANDA RANA

As Nepal is celebrating the World Environment Day 2013 on June 5, Chairperson of Save the Environment Foundation (SEF) CHANDA RANA spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various environmental issues faced by the country. Excerpts:

**Your organization has initiated the effort to make Kathmandu City green. Can you share your experience about this initiative?**

As a first organization to start the urban roadside greenery in Kathmandu, since 1994, it was a great challenge for us though we took it as a pleasure and contributed as much as we could. The vision was to beautify Kathmandu which was turning into a concrete jungle.

**How did you start greening Kathmandu?**

Starting a green belt from Tundikhel, the idea was cover Singhadurbar, Banijya bank, Tukucha belt, Min Bhawan, Babar Mahal, Airport road, Tribhuvan army golf course, Nepal Army HQ premises, Army pavilion, Kharipati barrack, and ring road side Maharjung. We have planted around 8,000 different species of trees. We were running this project mostly by self finance and only by some nominal contribution from local sponsors.

**Can you share some real challenge you had to take up while carrying out your greening effort and special moments of seeing the trees you planted?**

I felt thrilled at seeing the majestic Ginkgo Bilobas. We had planted two hundred trees inside Tundikhel, and Army pavilion. Altogether we have planted 1,000 Ginkgos in Kathmandu.

We were planting tiniest Salix at the Bank of Tukucha river near the Banijya Bank premises. Now you can see our beautiful Salix trees along with few Jacaranda coming up at the Singhadurbar Bridge adding beauty to the premise.

**Besides making the green belt, what else did SEF do to beautify the city?**

We have made "Bhadrakali Shanti Udhyan" at the Bhadrakali triangle, which was misused as venue for political

protests. We worked hard to make this site free of protest, getting a ban order from the ministry. We made a green garden full of environmental messages through cut logs, with lighting provision at light, along with beautiful fountain installed, two pigeons in the middle carrying the message of peace as it was made at insurgency time. We preserved the statue of late king Prithvi Bikram Shah at the middle coating preserving coats which is a brilliant, priceless piece of art and National heritage (which should be seen through the eyes of an artist or admirer) casted by world's renowned sculptor called Demenico Antonio Tonelli.

**What about two environmental parks?**

We made two beautiful mini environmental parks at the south entrance of Birendra international convention centre, installing two beautiful statues casted by renowned sculptor Thakur Prasad Mainali. We asked the cast as a symbol of "mother nature in trouble" due to degrading environment on earth as a message.

It broke my heart when I noticed these statues of mother nature being crushed into dust by bulldozers for road expansion and wished only it could have been saved and shifted inside the BICCI garden. I was out of Kathmandu when it happened.

**What other steps have you taken?**

We made an arboretum inside Kharipati barrack where we have planted trees from the Himalayan range, terai to valley, to show it as a mini botanical garden for our army officers, it gives us pleasure seeing those trees surviving as they were looked after well by the barrack. I was thrilled to see Ritha [local soap] at arboretum when I visited last year. I must thank former chief of Nepal Army General Pyar Jung Thapa for providing us the site for plantation. He was always supportive and keen on maintaining greenery.

**What is your vision about the recent protest for expansion of road?**

Save the Environment Foundation



(SEF) is one of the NGO's and we are still actively working on addressing the urban tree loss issue. We do believe in road expansion indeed, but with planned urban greenery along with saving existing trees, if possible, and if it cannot be worked out, we strongly take there is always some option such as "plantation of appropriate fast growing or already grown up trees at the expanded roadside."

**What is your main project right now?**

Personally I am fighting a lone battle to preserve the Chitwan National Park from the most notorious weed called mikania micrantha, which has already wiped out 20% of the greens, along with trees and grassland, and is posing a serious threat to one horned rhinos, habitats, food and shelter. I have already made a documentary and I am making another documentary on it too as some option identified on the issue to preserve the Chitwan National Park. The objective is to highlight the need for collective approach to tackle the problems. I am contributing from my personal resources as a contribution to Preserve the Nature for Future Generations. ■



# Making Spaces Look Beautiful

By RITISHA KHANAL



An architectural arrangement inside anything from a small house to a large commercial building of all kinds is known as interior designing. It is all about using creativity and technical skills within an area to make it more attractive and functional as per the client's wish. Interior designing is the arrangement of living space, organizing, managing, *planning* and decorating the interiors of rooms, homes, offices, retail shops, showrooms, hotels and many more commercial establishments. Interior designing generally seeks to harmonize every change the space will go through.

There are different types of interior designs in common such as, residential design, commercial design, hospitality design, healthcare design, universal design, exhibition design, spatial branding etc. The profession of Interior Design is relatively new, constantly evolving, and often confusing to the public.

Interior designing is not simply a profession that makes room and places pretty; it takes a little bit more than that. Some technical things like creativity, a delicate but an important quality to have when considering interior designing as profession, is an obligation. Along with creativity, communication skills, visualizing how it will look at the end, are very important factors. Interiors are more than a 'living space' because they are an identity to one's culture. Though the styles of decoration and the items utilized may differ according to the community and the culture; Nepalese community show a keen interest in decorating their spaces.

The Narayanhiti Palace Museum, at Narayanhiti Durbar (formerly Narayanhiti Royal Palace), was constructed under the desire of the Shah King in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was destroyed by an earthquake in 1934. It was rebuilt in a contemporary style in the 1960s on the design of Benjamin Polk, an American architect. For centuries the Narayanhiti Palace stood as a symbol of royalty.

Nepali homes have always been rich

in interior designing decorations. The need for interior designing was rare, but a necessity, in Nepal since a decade back when the luxurious interiors of Rana palaces built in the past showcased ideas borrowed from the west; and the Malla palaces on the other hand, displayed extraordinary craftsmanship.

The new generation of Nepalese architecture is integrating the traditional textures of the Kathmandu valley's Newari architecture into new designs. This combination of culture, tradition and modernity has not only helped conserve uniqueness of Kathmandu but has also resulted in affordable, elegant and visually pleasing buildings. Interior designing is not just decoration of the interior space but it involves aspects of architecture too.

**The new generation of Nepalese architecture is integrating the traditional textures of the Kathmandu valley's Newari architecture into new designs.**

In ancient India, architects used to work as interior designers. This can be seen from the references of Vishwakarma, the architect, one of the Gods in Hindu mythology. Additionally, the sculptures depicting ancient texts, events are seen in palaces built in 17<sup>th</sup> century India.

Taking the example of malls, shopping complexes stood inside Kathmandu valley, completely decorated with extraordinary designs and themes chosen so that more customers visited there. But, there still exist the traditional shops which have been there for decades and have no such designs. They simply decorate their shops on the special occasions like deepawali, durga pooja and other remarkable times. Nevertheless, the profession is progressing within the past few years though it is limited to certain dimensions; like the effect of the education available on interior designing. As a trade or as a profession, interior designing is very new to Nepal.

Secondly, people in Nepal today live a competitively luxurious life. Anybody is not ready to be dominated by the others in terms of reputation which is directly or indirectly reflected by their layout and the placement of their interiors. Moreover, the combination of western skills and Nepalese culture has led to the mind blowing scenario.

The quality of education in interior designing varies greatly between Nepal and abroad. India is the closest place for study outside Nepal. It provides various students obtain a chance to integrate more into the global scenario. The belief that study abroad is better is a predominant criterion for the people who choose Nepal for the interior designing courses, even if those colleges in the nation are the affiliated with one or other institution abroad. Many institutions in Nepal run allied programs usually to sustain, where bachelor's in business administration, bachelor's in hotel management and design are common. Some of these colleges affiliated to interior designing institutions outside Nepal claim to have their curriculum set by the main institute abroad. Moreover, Kantipur College of Hotel management and Interior design, an institute affiliated to Purvanchal University, is the only institute recognized by a national university.

To become an interior designer, specific assignments such as interior design, drawing and computer-aided design (CAD) along with a bachelor's degree in almost any field are usually required. There are also over 300 colleges and universities in the USA that offer programs in interior design and more than 150 professional level interior design programs. There are also specific licensing requirements for interior designers depending on the state. In order to take the exam, one most often has to have a bachelor's degree plus 2 years' experience. The National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) exam is the most common qualifying exam that's available and one who passes it may be registered as an interior designer.

(Khanal is an intern)



## MOVIE REVIEW

ISRAELI FILMS

## Worth Watching

By ARYAA RAJOURIA

Nepal and Israel have always had a good relationship. This relationship is strengthened through the art and culture. Through movies, one can learn so much about another's lifestyle and ethnicity. Flicks demonstrate conflicts and victories of people we shall never personally know, but can relate to very much on a personal level.

Twice a day, for four days, a crowd gathered at the Russian Cultural Centre in Kamalokhari — each person there was a cinema enthusiast, anxiously awaiting the next Israeli film that was about to play. Starting on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2013 and ending on the 24<sup>th</sup>, this was the 8<sup>th</sup> Israeli Film Festival.

The Embassy of Israel in Nepal organizes the Israeli Film Festival annually. The films that are shown deal with matters in Israel that viewers will understand and relate to. All of these films have English subtitles in order to close the linguistic gap. These films talk about the daily life troubles and triumphs of ordinary people.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May Israeli ambassador, Hanan Goder-Goldberge, introduced the movie 'Love and Dance', by saying, "the film speaks for itself". This coming of age film stars Vladimir Volov as Chen. Chen is young man stuck between his Russian mother and Israeli father's cultural differences. One day he stumbles upon a dance studio in which a pretty Russian girl, Natalie, is dancing. He falls in love at the first sight and enrolls himself in the ballroom dance class. This results in him connecting the gap between his culturally dissimilar parents. His dance teachers, once famous ballroom dancers, are fighting demons of their own. This funny, touching movie will have viewers wanting to enroll themselves in a dance class.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 'Bonjour Monsieur Shlomi' was shown. This adolescence comedy had spectators laughing out loud with understanding. Shlomi is a 16-year-old boy, who doesn't do too well in school but turns out to be a genius. The principal tries to get him to enroll in advanced classes, but he isn't interested. He would rather focus on taking care of his family, and the pretty girl next door. Though not as inspiring as 'Love and Dance' this film will have onlookers leaving the theatre with a smile.

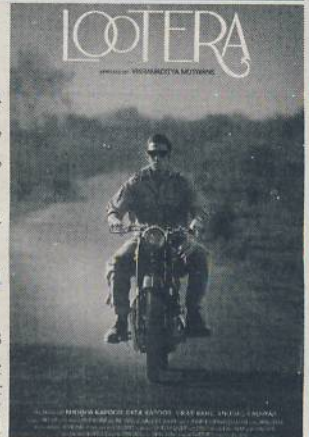
Movies that are so significant to one's everyday life, yet so different from the things we experience, will help us understand people of different places. Israel and Nepal are very different places, however, they are also more similar than we've thought. The movies shown within these four days proved this, and had onlookers looking forward the 9<sup>th</sup> Israeli Film Festival.

## MOVIE PREVIEW

## Lootera

Genres: Romance  
 Producer: Vikramditya Motwana, Anurag Kashyap, Madhu Mantena, Bikrant Shrestha, Vikash Bahl  
 Director: Vikramditya Motwana  
 Cast: Ranveer Singh, Sonakshi Sinha

Inspired from O. Henry's "The Last Leaf", Lootera is the uplifting story of two lovers. Of heartbreak, betrayal... and ultimate redemption. Release Date: 05-Jul-2013



## Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani

Genres: Romance  
 Producer: Karan Johar, Hiroo Johar  
 Director: Ayan Mukerji  
 Cast: Ranbir Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, Aditya Roy Kapoor, Kunal Roy Kapoor, Kalki Koechlin, Poorna Jagannathan, Navin Kaushik, Madhuri Dixit

It is a story of the exhilarating and terrifying journey of four characters as they navigate through their youth; from their carefree laughter as they set off on a holiday together in their college days, until their bittersweet tears as they watch the first of their bunch get married.

Release Date: 31-May-2013



## Karkash

Genres: Dark Humour  
 Producer: Asim Shah  
 Director: Asif Shah  
 Cast: Dayahang Rai, Satya Raj Acharya, Raymond Das Shrestha, Suraj Singh Thakuri, Looniva Tuladhar, Rajendra Khadgi, Raghini Khadgi, Rajan Ishan, Harshika Shrestha  
 karkash, G21 production first feature film venture, directed by Asif Shah - starring Daya Hung Rai, Satya Raj Acharya, Raymon Das Shrestha, Suraj Singh Thakuri, Rajan Ishan, Looniva Tuladhar, Harshika Shrestha, Saibratacharya, Raginikhadgi & Rajendrakhadgi. Release Date: 14-Jun-2013



(Courtesy: QFX Cinemas)



# The Arogya Shree Scheme

By **BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD**



In this column we have often brought up the topic of catastrophic illnesses ( heart attacks, traumatic injuries, chemotherapy and radiation for cancer etc), and how these illnesses may financially devastate a Nepali family. It was therefore welcome news to find out that for some years now in certain states in South India, the Arogya Shree scheme has been working to help families financially deal with these severe illnesses.

It is no surprise that in matters relating to health, South India is exemplary. In Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka the Arogya Shree scheme has been targeting impoverished people ( what these states term, BPL people, that is people below the poverty line) to provide them with quality medical care when dealing with catastrophic illnesses. This is a public- private partnership scheme which clearly delineates the different diseases and traumatic injuries it will

help with. Package rates are offered for different procedures. For example there is a set fee that the government insurance will pay for common cardiovascular procedures such as angioplasty and stent placement to pacemaker implantation to coronary artery bypass graft surgery (CABG). There is also follow up that is included in this scheme. The scheme in general provides two lakhs for each family per year plus an additional sum of Rs 50,000 on recommendation of a technical committee set up by the scheme.

In Nepal as things stand you have to be financially well- off, or politically well- connected to be able to pay up when your family has to deal with a catastrophic illness. Otherwise it is the old story about borrowing money, selling off your land, cattle or jewelry (if you possess them) to pay for the hospital fees.

In countries like India ( and now Nepal too), it is ironical that many of

the latest expertise and equipment are available to deal with many life-threatening illnesses. Witness the growth of the well- appointed hospitals in this part of the world. In fact medical tourism is flourishing in many parts of India. But despite the availability of these personnel and modern equipment, there is no insurance coverage for the average person to avail themselves of these services without resorting to desperate measures. Other states in India are also trying to simulate this successful scheme from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to deal with burgeoning health costs in the face of a catastrophic illness. In the news recently we have heard that Nepal is also trying to have universal health insurance. So along these lines the Nepali government, industrialists, and perhaps even the donor agencies need to seriously start thinking about how to build a Nepali Arogya Shree.

## 'Russian Record On Everest Important'

Russian ambassador to Nepal Dr. SERGEY VASILIEVICH VELICHKIN said this is the important year in the history of Mt. Everest or Sagarmatha as it is celebrating diamond Jubilee of climbing Mt. Everest.

"I am happy to say that Russian Mountaineer Leyla Albogachieva is able to climb the Mt. Everest twice making the history in Russia as a first woman to climb Mt. Everest twice."

Welcoming Russian mountaineer Leyla Albogachieva for her successful bid on Mt. Everest twice, the Russian ambassador also expressed the hope that Nepali athletic team will take part in 2014 Sochi Olympic Games.

Leyla Albogachieva, famous Russian mountaineer who reached the highest summits of all continents, scaled Mt. Everest on May 18. She successfully climbed Mt. Everest from Tibetan Autonomous region of China



in 2012.

"She conquered Everest for the second time taking with her the flag of the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games which she raised on its summit as a symbol of friendship between our countries which is significant in the year of Olympic Games," said Russian

ambassador Velichkin in a program organized in Russian Embassy.

The first Russian Expedition took place in 1982, and since then there were more than 150 expeditions. This year is significant because mountaineer Leyla set a new record in Russian history.



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दिने खालका सामग्री सम्प्रेषण गर्नुपर्दछ ।



नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय  
सूचना विभाग



# फोहर संडूलकलाई सम्मान गरौं ।



एकीकृत  
शहरी विकास  
केन्द्र (CIUD)



प्रिजम् परियोजना युरोपेली संघको  
आर्थिक सहयोगमा सञ्चालित छ।