



OPINION:
Dipak Gyawali



ENCOUNTER:
Christopher W. Williams



FACE TO FACE:
Khil Raj Regmi
Mohan Vaidya

New SPOTLIGHT

Nov.08-29, 2013

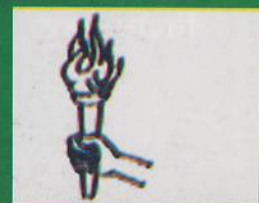
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CA POLL

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From The Editor

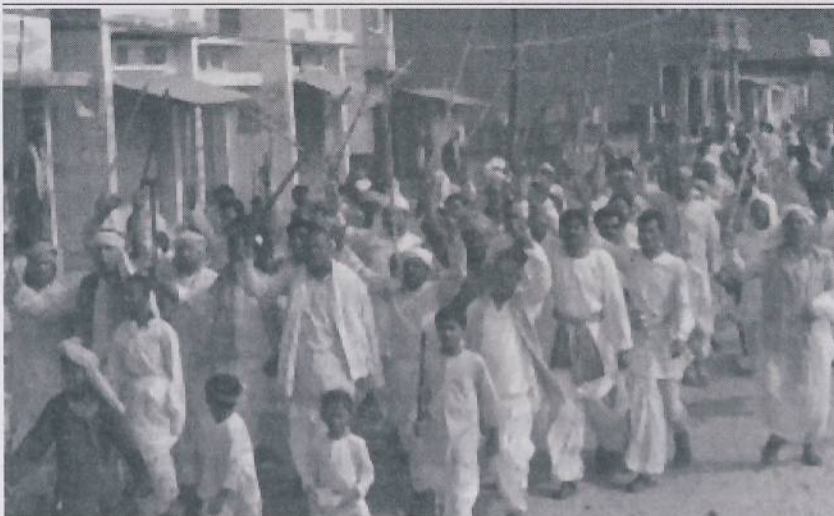
On November 19, one and a half week after the publication of this fortnightly, Nepal will, hopefully, go to vote for the national election to the second Constituent Assembly. Although the CPN-Maoist has intensified its campaign calling for the boycott of the election, it is unlikely to reverse the current election process, which has already crossed the point of safe return. Despite the feeling of uncertainty generated by Nepal's geo-political reality, given the present political trend, nothing will deter the elections. Looking at Nepal's electoral process, it is not difficult to predict a hung parliament, with three major political parties short of sufficient votes to pass the constitution. However, horse trading will be the rule among the major political parties after the elections. Thus, the outcome of the election does not necessarily mean political stability in Nepal or the constitutional process getting back on the right track. As elections are the beauty of democracy, there is no other way out either. In this context, we have decided to look at different aspects of the CA election as this week's cover story. As a magazine covering alternative views, our report is different than the mainstream newspapers. Our analysis may look different from that of others because we also look at the geo-political aspects. But, we cannot follow the popular news of the day. Along with the political story, we have also covered the contemporary development and other issues.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

NEW SPOTLIGHT FORTNIGHTLY

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Japanese ambassador presented credential

Masashi Ogawa, the new Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Nepal, presented the Letter of Credence to Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, President of Nepal this afternoon amidst a ceremony held at the President House, Shital Niwas, Kathmandu.

UK introduces priority visa service in Nepal

From 6 November 2013, customers in Nepal who apply for a UK visitor visa can request a brand new Priority Visa service. For an additional fee of NPR 7000/- (including taxes), the Home Office will expedite the visa application and return the documents in 6 working days.

Customers may request this service if they are applying for a visitor visa (excluding student visas) and have travelled without difficulty in the last five years to one of the following countries: UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada or a Schengen country.

British ambassador to Nepal Andy Sparkes said, "I warmly welcome the introduction of the Priority Visa Service in Nepal. The United Kingdom remains very much open for genuine travellers. I hope that eligible business and leisure visitors – particularly those with long-standing ties of friendship with the UK – will make full use of this service, which will reduce the application time to six working days."

Computers handed over

The Embassy of Israel donated three computers each to Autism Care



Ogawa joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1979. He has served in various positions in overseas mainly in China as well as at home as a diplomat.

In recent years, he had served as the Director of Japan-China Economic Affairs Division and Special Coordinator of the Personnel Division at MOFA before being appointed as the Ambassador of Japan to Nepal.

Association of Nepal. Ambassador of Israel to Nepal Hanan Goder handed over the computers that were donated by various organizations in Israel and he visited both the organizations and speaking during his visit to the organizations, Ambassador Goder said, "we should all support the work of these lovely organizations that do wonderful work for the community. They are doing holy work and we are proud to be associated with their mission".

According to a press release of Embassy of Israel, the donated computers are expected to assist the organizations in keeping records of the people with such special needs and other administration works.

U.S. Embassy Supports Kartik Nach

The U.S. Embassy hosted a preview of the time-honored Kartik Nach tradition on October 31. This unique form of storytelling through dance, started in the 17th century, has not been performed in its entirety since 1949.

New French Ambassador Presented Credential

Newly appointed French ambassador to Nepal Martine Bassereau presented her Letter of Credence to president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav.

Japanese Karaoke Competition 2013 organized

Aiming to at the promotion of Japanese culture to the friendly people of Nepal, the Japanese Language Teachers' Association Nepal (JALTAN), in association with the Embassy of Japan as co-organizer, is organizing the Japanese Karaoke

Competition 2013 held recently.

The competition is jointly supported by JICA Nepal Office, Japanese Association in Nepal, Japanese Universities Alumni Association Nepal (JUAAN), JICA Alumni Association of Nepal (JAAN), and Nepal AOTS Alumni Society (NAAS). (Ambassador of Japan) will also attend the event.

According to a press release of Japanese Embassy, it is hoped that this type of occasion will help promote cultural ties between the peoples of the two countries, which ultimately helps to the expansion of ever-growing friendly and cooperative relationships between Japan and Nepal.

Jimmy Carter to Lead Carter Center Delegation

The Carter Center announced today that former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former Deputy Prime Minister

Dr. Surakart Sathirathai will co-lead the Carter Center's delegation to observe Nepal's



Nov. 19 constituent assembly election. The Center's mission will include more than 50 observers representing 27 nations deployed throughout the country.

President Carter, Dr. Sathirathai and the Carter Center leadership team will meet with key stakeholders, political parties, independent candidates, civil society organizations, government officials, and the international community, and will observe polling and counting on Nov. 19-21.

According to The Carter Center, it is observing Nepal's constituent assembly election at the written invitation of the Election Commission of Nepal and Chairman of the Council of Ministers Khil Raj Regmi.

Nepal Economic Summit 2014 From Feb 24

The Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), in association with Samriddhi Foundation, is preparing to organize Nepal Economic Summit 2014 from February 24 next year.

With the slogan 'Destination Nepal — for Investment', the three-day summit is scheduled to be held at Soaltee Crowne Plaza in Tahachal, Kathmandu.



FNCCI president Suraj Vaidya said the seminar aims solely to create a platform where business leaders, experts, high level political leaders and international delegates will search for a common ground that will help make Nepal the best destination for local as well as foreign investors.

"As the country is having its elections soon, the new government needs to know what economic reforms the country needs and what measures will be possible to attract more and more investment to the country," Vaidya said.

According to him, the summit will help all stakeholders (government, economists, businessmen and investors) explore measures to make Nepal an investment friendly country.

The three-day long seminar will be focused on ways to explore investment potentials in tourism, agriculture and alternative energy, the organizers said.

"Nepal has tremendous investment potentials. However, hurdles like effective and scientific policies and lack of investment-friendly environment have always been there," Vaidya said, adding that the summit would look for ways to tackle these problems.

Meanwhile, Shahil Agrawal, an executive committee member of FNCCI, said larger investment was needed in the country for it to get close to the pace of development that other countries in the world had.

Rafting Operators Report Drop In Business

Rafting business dropped by around 15 percent compared to the same period last year. The Nepal Association of Rafting Agents (NARA) attributes this to decrease in the number of adventure tourists, inability by many companies to address safety issues, increase in pollution in the rivers and most importantly, due to the fear of violence and insecurity due to the scheduled election.

Nani Kaji Thapa, president of the NARA, said most of the rafting operators have reported 10 to 20 percent drop in their business this season compared to the same season last year. "Even though we increased the tariff for rafting on the Trishuli and the Bhotekoshi rivers to US\$ 30 and \$50 per day, respectively, up by just \$5 per day for tourists other than from China and the SAARC countries, the revenue from the business went down as there were a very few rafters this season," said Thapa.

The association has set tariff for rafting on the Trishuli River for tourists from China and the SAARC countries at \$25 per day. He further said that due to the decline in business, rafting operators could not fully follow the increased rate and even sold the package at cheaper rates.

Gail Heads £331M DFID-Nepal Program

Dr. Gail Marzetti, the new Head of DFID Nepal, taking office on 28 October 2013, succeeds Dominic O'Neill. Gail

Marzetti is an Agricultural Economist with a strong background in development, having worked for many years in Brazil and Mozambique. She has worked for DFID since 2000 in a variety of roles



including Head of Office, United Nations/DFID representative and most recently as Deputy Director of DFID's Research and Evidence Division.

According to a press release of DFID-Nepal, Gail has a PhD from the Institute of Development Policy and Management at Manchester University which examines the impact of cash cropping on poverty and food security in post-conflict Mozambique.

On arrival, Gail said, "I am delighted to have the opportunity to live and work in Nepal for the next few years. The UK has a strong relationship with Nepal, and we have been implementing our four year (2011-2015) country plan, which I am sure is and will make a significant difference to the lives of many poor people in this country. I am looking forward to working with the Government and people of Nepal and all our other partners to make this happen."

McGoldrick Meets FM Koirala

Finance Minister Shankar Prasad Koirala has said development expenditure is going up impressively this year with the timely announcement of annual budget and subsequent approvals of development programs by the government.

At a meeting with Jamie McGoldrick, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Nepal, Koirala expressed the government's commitment to properly utilize development budget.

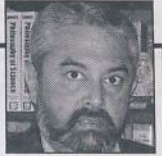
Informing McGoldrick about the progress in formulation of Development Cooperation Policy (DCP), Koirala said the government would make the policy flawless by incorporating suggestions from stakeholders, including leaders of different political parties and former ministers.

On the occasion, McGoldrick said UN will support Nepal's development activities even after the upcoming election.



Another Week In Delhi

By DIPAK GYAWALI



Spending a week in Delhi always provides interesting insights on what roils Mughlani socio-politics and that across the spectrum from 'inspiring', through 'good' and 'bad' to the outright 'ugly'. This trip just before Tihar to attend India's annual water forum also provided me an opportunity to engage with academics, journalists and politicians as well as to "say it like it is" about what is happening in Nepal that does not get reported down South due to supine self-censorship in the face of glowering officialdom in India's corporate media. The experience this time was surprisingly weighted towards the 'good' and even 'inspiring'.

The TERI-organized water forum was an opportunity to understand how water problems are perceived in India, and the focus was on efficient use of water especially within the dominating political economy of agriculture, industry and urban water supply, a

occasion I would have to term both 'enlightening' and 'inspiring', though not without its pitfalls as I will explain further below. The focus was CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility, an issue that has moved from simple feel-good whitewash in the cut-throat corporate sector to a law with some baby teeth that requires companies to spend two percent of their profits on social welfare. Having suffered 11 years in parliamentary limbo, this law recently passed the lower house of Indian parliament after it was pushed through by its younger (and better exposed to global trends) parliamentarians from the ruling and opposition benches.

It would mean that Indian corporations are conservatively expected to collectively spend some two to three billion rupees per year at current earnings on social welfare activities. A major corporation's executive mentioned to me that his

move is closely watched by the international community, especially the South-East Asians. Indeed properly steered through in the days ahead, India might end up taking global leadership in this area of corporate philanthropy in the 21st Century the way the US did globally for much of the 20th Century with its Ford, Rockefeller, Gates and other foundations. In the case of the US, its citizens can get tax exemptions of twenty to thirty percent for up to twenty to fifty percent of their gross earnings that they may donate to what are called 501(c) non-profit companies. Given that educational organizations in the US enjoy tax-exempt (and tax-exempting for donations) status, much of US individual philanthropy has veered towards building top class universities, hospitals and research establishments, unmatched anywhere else. On this front, US laws have made citizens through self-willed donations sovereign, not governments distributing largesse through tax earnings for political patronage.

While one could not help being infected by such enthusiasm as one heard at that CII meeting, India is far from reaching American standards, and this well-meaning initiative has equally great pitfalls ahead that could as well sink it badly. It is not that Indic culture does not have such genetic social memes to help it along on this path. There is the heavily ingrained religious norm that "giving *daan* (gifts) to Brahmins" would "help preserve Dharma". The widespread cultural belief is the fossilized remains of a glorious ancient tradition that helped build Nalanda and Taxila universities two-and-a-half millennia ago, which today survive in perfunctory rituals bereft of its original meanings.

Properly revived, this meme could give strong competition to the best of individual and business charities anywhere in the world, and help build the basic foundations of India's modern science that have remained more or less moribund where Nehru and Homi Bhabha left them. However, it is a long way to Nalanda from today's India of high-level political corruption, bestial rapes and urban social insensitivity; but

But given India's powerful bureaucracy which does not like the idea of power moving out of its hands to the private sector, one cannot ignore trip clauses coming into force in the absence of powerful political leadership capable of withstanding bureaucratic shenanigans, which shackle the process with deadweight rules that will make it near impossible to do business in this new way.

welcome departure from the approach of the last decades that was blind to wastage but which hoped to overcome all problems by just building new schemes, especially in the neighbourhood Himalaya. Interestingly, what were not discussed, despite a Bangladeshi expert's feeble attempts to do so, were transboundary waters. Clearly, the latter is too complex an issue, and Indians seem to have realized that without rectifying their internal mess within this sector, they cannot hope to find solutions from across the borders, and even if they did, it would prove to be ineffective. It is a lesson India's neighbours too would do well to heed.

I was invited to attend another roundtable meeting organized by former water resources minister Suresh Prabhu with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), which proved to be an

company had almost three million dollars equivalent to spend in Bihar's flood amelioration efforts! As India's growth picks up in the years ahead, this amount can only be expected to increase exponentially, said Suresh Prabhu, as he championed spending much of it on the water sector and specifically its growing but mismanaged urban water needs. As the minister for state for corporate affairs Sachin Pilot put it as chief guest, perhaps taking a leaf off the former King of Bhutan's Gross National Happiness, this new law was about "how we become a happy country" getting the private sector to spend some of their profits at the local level on substantially improving social and environmental woes and "not on merely distributing *halwa-puri*" at religious events as India's trading class has traditionally done.

This initiative now puts India at the forefront of innovations in CSR, and this

fresh wind from any direction always brings with it the whiff of hope.

The dangers ahead for this new initiative are many. For one, the nitty-gritty of the laws to facilitate and regulate these efforts are yet to be crafted, which is natural, as a lot of trial-and-error efforts will have to mark this route. But given India's powerful bureaucracy which does not like the idea of power moving out of its hands to the private sector, one cannot ignore trip clauses coming into force in the absence of powerful political leadership capable of withstanding bureaucratic shenanigans, which shackle the process with deadweight rules that will make it near impossible to do business in this new way.

Both India and Nepal have enough such examples. In India, the first efforts to bring in the private sector into power generation failed miserably because the private sector, which wants to know only three words ("cents per kilowatt-hours" at which the state corporations would buy power), was made to comply with sixteen pages of submitted calculations that would require filling in details of how corporate chiefs travelled! In Nepal, the wonderful idea of the travel trade people getting to spend two percent of their profits to promote tourism got legally corrupted into two percent extra tax to support another meaningless bureaucracy, the Tourism Development Board!

Already a section of the Left has voiced opposition to the CSR legislation saying it panders to powerful corporations and allows them to set the social agenda instead of the government, and thus would end up being pro-rich and anti-poor. They argue for two percent additional tax on corporations that would go to government coffers for this purpose. This can be seen also as Leftist alarm against "public-private" partnership: the Red Left in India and Nepal have been weaned on a diet of "revolution around the corner" and any reform is viewed as counter-revolutionary and setting back the "inevitable" revolution instead of exposing the perfidy of the bourgeoisie to the masses.

Another issue with CSR is that this Indian effort is limited to only big corporations, and they cannot spend it on neighbouring countries – and by corollary on India's socially highly marginalized borderland areas where the social and environmental problems are most severe. It excludes small businesses and ordinary citizens and hence, far from being a mass-based movement, has the potential to remain confined to corporate dilettantism. Indeed, the executive mentioned above who had some three million dollars to spend in Bihar's flood amelioration, when questioned about how he intended to go about tackling this problem, had only old ideas of check dams and afforestation, popular in the media but long debunked as bad watershed science. How Indian corporations will open themselves to critical new ideas and avoid the trap of old, failed clichés remains to be seen and carefully watched as it has the potential for changing the way philanthropy is done all over South Asia and beyond – for good or for bad – in the years ahead. ●

NEPAL CHINA COOPERATION

Facing Snags

Although government officials often express positive signs towards Chinese financed projects, nothing is moving in the implementation stage

By A CORESPONDENT

After waiting for the response of the government for months, Chinese ambassador to Nepal Wu Chuntai knocked the door of finance minister Shanker Koirala urging him to proceed ahead within bringing in the Chinese aircraft.

At a time when Nepal Airlines, the state-owned national flag carrier, is virtually operating without any aircraft, Chinese aircraft may boost its own domestic operation providing air services to rural

Aircrafts are required to increase the services in the rural parts of Nepal and nobody seems to understand the reason behind the stalled process.

China has already signed a commercial deal to sell four aircraft to Nepal and provide two additional aircraft as grant.

Although minister Koirala said the process to ink the pact will go forward once the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation completes



Chinese Ambassador Wu Chuntai (Left) and Finance Minister Koirala

issuing type certificate — flight operating licenses after assessing airworthiness — to the proposed aircraft, he too seems to be unaware how

and remote parts of Nepal.

However, nothing is moving. Although China has urged Nepal to immediately start moving the process of bringing in China-made aircraft for state-owned Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) ahead, the government is yet to take steps.

"We have already completed the necessary process on our part. The ball is now in Nepal's court," Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Wu Chuntai said while calling on finance minister Shankar Prasad Koirala last month. Wu has asked the Nepali government to speed up the process to seal the agreement by the second week of October.

long it will take.

This is not the first Chinese aided project facing hurdles in Nepal. Recently, Chinese funded projects were facing many hurdles in the stage of implementation.

"One has to understand the reality that China is Nepal's northern neighbor with its own security interests attached. It is foolish to think China walks out like the World Bank did with Arun III and other western aid agencies under harassment," said a former Nepalese diplomat on condition of anonymity. ■

SECOND CA POLL

Then Uncertainty

Despite the escalation of the political violence, political parties are finally preparing for the second Constituent Assembly election slated for November 19. At a time when the major political parties are launching nation-wide election campaigns, pledging everything from road to electricity, hospitals and finally new constitution, the 33 parties led by the CPN-Maoist are launching anti-poll activities, announcing a ten-day long general strike from November 11 to 20. Given the current political trend, it is unlikely that the CPN-Maoist coalition can make any significant impact to postpone the election. As election is going to be held on a mixed-electoral process, it is likely to produce a hung Legislature-Parliament, with major three parties UCPN-Maoist, Nepali Congress and CPN-UML securing a combined two thirds. Unlike expectations, it will neither bring much needed political stability, nor the new constitution

By KESHAB POUDEL

"Give us a two thirds majority, we will give you the new constitution. If our party secures a majority in the elections, we will negotiate with the Indian to settle the problems of wild elephants," thundered UCPN-Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda.

Nepali Congress leader Sushil Koirala made similar remarks. "Nepali Congress needs a two thirds majority to write the new constitution. Nepal will have a new constitution only if Nepali Congress secures two thirds," demanded Koirala.

"CPN-UML needs a majority to give an effective government and write the new constitution," said CPN-UML leader and former prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal. "I will assure you that CPN-UML will bring the new constitution in six months if it is voted to power with majority."

When leaders of three national parties are demanding two thirds and

majority votes, the fractured Madhesh based parties are putting their best efforts to retain their earlier success. At a time when major parties of previous CA are harping on the slogan of new inclusive constitution, economic prosperity, RPP-Nepal, monarchist anti-federalist party, is making its inroads too. In recent times when leaders of major political parties are confined to their own constituencies, RPP-Nepal leader Kamal Thapa travelled from east to west by road on vehicles, competing with UCPN-Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who has been using choppers in the campaign.

Although there are incidents of violent clashes between the workers of major parties and violent assaults by CPN-Maoist led alliance, they do not seem to have the power to deter the election campaigns. From using social media like Facebook and Twitter, the parties are visiting the people in their

traditional door-to-door campaigns.

Whatever Prachanda, Koirala and Nepal may publicly demand, they are unlikely to secure a majority, given the present electoral process. Even in the last elections, when Maoists were able to swing the vote, they were short of 70 votes or below the magic number 301. Electoral pundits predict that nothing will substantially change this time. As UCPN-Maoist is split, this is likely to give benefit to Nepali Congress and CPN-UML. Similarly, factions in Madhesh based parties are likely to benefit the three national parties.

Although the Maoist-led 33-party alliance continues issuing threats to disrupt the November 19 polls, by accelerating their violent activities in different parts of Nepal, such incidents are confined to particular regions, including eastern, far-western and mid-western hills.

As political parties and candidates



From left UML Leader Adhikary, U-CPN Maoist Leader Pasang, NC Leader Rana and RPP Nepal Leader Thapa

are launching door-to-door campaigns, the elections tempo has overshadowed all other activities. Looking at the election campaigns and participation of people, a good percentage of voters are likely to turn out in the coming elections.

According to Home Ministry, the election campaign is much more peaceful than the previous one. In 2008, the election campaign was more violent. Till writing the story, there were 70 violent incidents that occurred in different parts of Nepal, including the incidents of physical assaults against UCPN-Maoist candidate in Panchthar and CPN-UML candidate in Bhojpur. •

“Compared to last elections, the situation is peaceful. Security personnel will not let anybody to violate the law,” Home Minister Madhav Prasad Ghimire told New Spotlight.

As the national and international election observer groups have already mobilized their observers throughout the country, the election is now under a close scrutiny. Given the present situation, the election is unlikely to be postponed without a major political upheaval or crisis. That kind of situation is unlikely at the present political scenario.

Security Situation

Although the security is beefed up, it is still unknown how the security forces will tackle the Maoist cadres who will come out to make their general strike successful. As security forces are scattered across the country for the elections, Maoist cadres are united to crack the security. According

to security experts, the government needs to think about contingency plans to meet the Maoist threat after November 11. “We have a contingency program to deal with Maoists,” said a senior police officer. Although the government has promoted Upendra Kanta Aryal as the Additional Inspector General of Police to replace current chief of Police Kuber Singh Rana, who is retiring next week, how effectively the new chief can handle the chain of command is an important matter.

Although there are sporadic incidents of election related violence, they are largely local. Since the government has made a good security preparation, security agencies are capable to defuse any kind of disruptive activities. According to Home Minister Ghimire, the government has already directed the concerned district administrative offices to take legal actions against those involved in activities undermining the elections. To give a sense of security to the people, Nepal Army is conducting flag march in all 240 constituencies. Nepal Police has already arrested a number of Maoist cadres involved in violent activities. Home minister Ghimire told this scribe that the government will enforce the law effectively.

Regmi's Efforts

Following the escalation of election related violence, chairman of the council of ministers Khil Raj Regmi called a meeting of the High Level Political Committee on November 4 and expressed dissatisfaction over the growing

political violence among the cadres of major parties. Regmi also requested the party leaders to support the security agencies to minimize the Maoist threat. One of the party leaders, who attended the meeting, told that Regmi expressed his frustration and anger over major party's apathy towards violence.

In an hour-long meeting, chairman of council of ministers Regmi, and leaders of major political parties agreed to stand for elections. Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel told this scribe that members of the high level committee expressed their commitments to uphold the election momentum and work to reduce the tension.

Given the present political trend, the election to the Constituent Assembly is unlikely to be postponed even in the case of continued violence by the Maoist alliance. As leaders of major political parties and workers are already deeply involved in the election process, the election tempo is in full swing and irreversible.

However, some political leaders like CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal and NC leader Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat suspect that UCPN-Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal is conspiring to postpone the elections. According to Nepal and Dr. Mahat, Prachanda may side with Maoists in case he senses his party will lose the present position from the coming election. UCPN-Maoist leader Prachanda outrightly opposed the views expressed by Nepal and Dr. Mahat terming them as conspirators.

National Security Council's Report

At a time when the government, political parties and security personnel are making the final preparations for the elections, the National Security Council presented a report to chairman of council of ministers Khil Raj Regmi showing the possibility of intensification of violence in the coming days and resumption of conflict in future in case Maoists remain out of the election process. Chairman of council of ministers Regmi rejected the suggestions of the National Security Council's report to accommodate the Maoists at the last minute through any change in the election process. In a special meeting of high security officials on November 5, chairman of council of minister Regmi assessed the situation and asked security chiefs to take all necessary action to prevent possible Maoist violence.

Maoist Strategy

Although Maoist party workers are intensifying their violent activities, they have not yet made any adverse impact on the election campaign. In the last few weeks, Maoists have been targeting the candidates and their election campaigns. The violent acts of Maoist have injected some kind of fear among the voters and common people. But, it has failed to produce any large scale implications. According to a Maoist source, they have postponed their indefinite strike, initially proposed from November 11 to November 15. According to Maoists, they will put all their strength and energy to paralyze elections from November 15. Although no open claim has been made yet, police and security agencies have discovered a number of hand made weapons and bombs planted in various parts of Nepal. Even capital Kathmandu is not immune. Maoists have also decided to send almost all their leaders underground. Only half a dozen of senior leaders including Mohan Vaidya, Pampha Bhushal and Dev Gurung are in the front line. Officials of the Ministry of Home have looked at Maoist new tactic cautiously. Minister of Home



Maoist Leaders

Madhav Prasad Ghimire told this scribe that this is the sign of weakening Maoist strength.

However, the situation is much different in the hills of mid-west, eastern and far western region. Maoist affiliated Limbuwan Rajya Parishad is creating havoc in nine eastern districts, attacking candidates and their vehicles. Similarly, panic is also there in mid-western and far-western hills. In the recent weeks, security personnel have recovered a number of press cooker bombs from different parts of the capital. All this indicates that Maoist are working to terrorize the voters.

International Concern

UN Resident Coordinator to Nepal Jamie McGoldrick, on behalf of the international Community in Nepal, said the international community is encouraged by the resolve, but also the restraint shown so far by the police, security forces and the Home Ministry, in providing election security with professionalism in the face of provocation during this sensitive period.

"Especially we commend the role of thousands of candidates who are conducting their election campaigns abiding by the Election Code of Conduct. Many politicians and their supporters are campaigning peacefully and lawfully despite unacceptable

threats and disruptions," said McGoldrick in a statement.

The international community has been showing a great concern, McGoldrick said, adding, international community supports the men and women of Nepal in their right to express their views in peace, either as candidates or voters. "Everyone should respect the democratic right to take part in a peaceful, open and inclusive election," he said in the statement.

While denouncing the threat, violence and Bandhs carried out by some forces against the election, international community in Nepal also urged concerned parties to respect universal principle of free election and the rights of others. "Bandhs or strikes, when enforced by violence or the threat of violence, are a violation of the political rights of citizens and against the laws of Nepal. Preventing peaceful campaigning by others is also unlawful," added the statement.

Elections Activities

The Election Commission has already decided to issue temporary voting cards to all the voters. According to chief election commissioner Neelkantha Uprety, the commission will start their distribution from November 10. Uprety told this scribe that the EC will also distribute the temporary voter ID

cards at the house of each voter.

EC Committee Against Election Violators

Following incidents of rampant violation of the election code of conduct, the Election Commission (EC) has formed a high-level committee headed by the chief election commissioner to take action over the major incidents of code violation.

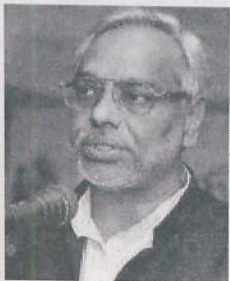
The four election commissioners are the members of the high-level committee, which will come into effect from Sunday. The constitutional body on Saturday also authorized the four election commissioners to take action on the spot against those found guilty of breaching the election code of conduct.

"The high-level committee will be responsible for taking decision on incidents of the election code of conduct about which the four election commissioners cannot take necessary decision on their own," said Chief Election Commissioner Neel Kantha Uprety.

As per the EC's decision, Election Commissioner Dolakh Bahadur Gurung has been authorized to oversee violation of the poll code in the Western Development Region, Ila Sharma in the Central Development Region, Ram Bhakta PB Thakur in Mid-western and Far-western Regions and Election Commissioner Ayodhee Prasad Yadav will be responsible for looking into incidents of the election code of conduct violation in the Eastern Development Region.

"The team of commissioners derives authority from clause 7 of the Election Commission Act, 2007 to take action on the spot against any

breach of the election code of conduct," said Uprety. "The chief commissioner as chairman can take action just like the other commissioners



Rajendra Mahato

and he also chairs the committee if the team is unable to resolve some issues at different levels."

EC To Enhance Implementation Of Poll Code

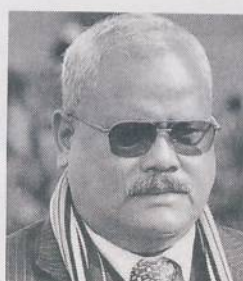
The commission decided to enhance the implementation of the election code of conduct. According to the Election Commission, the commission decided to instruct chief district officers (CDOs) and district police chiefs through the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to coordinate with chief returning officers and returning officers for effective implementation of the election code of conduct.

The EC decided to instruct them (CDOs and district police chiefs) to stop anyone on the verge of breaching the code of conduct and take corrective measures if someone is found acting against the poll code. The commission's decision comes at a time when there are media reports on rampant violation of election code of conduct even by top leaders of several political parties.

The election code of conduct bars a candidate from using more than two vehicles during the electoral campaign. As per the election code of conduct, any candidate who is found breaching the election code of conduct can be fined a maximum of Rs 100,000 and the EC can annul their candidacy and can disqualify them from contesting polls for six years.

Possible Scenario

Since major political parties have already jumped in the election campaign, disruptions in the process are less likely. One cannot rule out the possibility of sporadic incidents of violence. The recent activities by



Vijaya Gachhadar

Maoists have showed that the violence will intensify in the coming days, mainly after November 15. However, it will have little



Neelkantha Uprety

or no implication at the national level. Certain level of violent clashes during the last leg of election campaign may be likely. Along with the clashes with cadres of Maoist, the clashes may also occur among the contestants and their parties.

So far as the election results are concerned, the present trend clearly indicates that three major political parties, the UCPN-Maoist, Nepali Congress and CPN-UML, will secure a combined two thirds of majority and Madheshis will have to pay a price for their fractured politics. Election pundits are predicting that Kamal Thapa led monarchist party RPP-Nepal will make a certain difference in the election. Despite this, no political party is likely to secure even a simple majority given the nature of current electoral process, hence a hung parliament.

In a situation when CPN-Maoist, a major radical political force, is outside the electoral mainstream and RPP-Nepal is making certain progress for a hung parliament, Nepal's prolonged political instability will have no easy way out any time soon. In the last five years, between 2008 and 2013, Nepal has seen five governments: four under communist parties and the interim caretaker government led by chief justice. As political parties do not have any agreement on major constitutional issues, new constitution will also be unlikely any time soon.

Given Nepal's past experience and geo-political lessons, a stable government will still be a far cry. Whether election or no election, Nepal's political crisis will continue beyond November 19.

“Make No Doubts About November 19 Elections”

- KHIL RAJ REGMI

As he always does, Chairman of the Council of Ministers KHIL RAJ REGMI showed a quiet and calm demeanor throughout his hour-long meeting with a select group of journalists at his official residence in Baluwatar recently. Brushing aside all controversial questions, Chairman Regmi discussed the current political situation in both formal and informal ways. His underlying tone of expression was one of confidence that the elections will be held on November 19. Excerpts of the conversation, compiled by KESHAB POUDEL:

As the CPN-Maoist continues to issue threats, how possible it is to hold the elections on November 19?

The elections will be held in a peaceful, transparent and free and fair manner. Nobody needs to have any doubt about this. It will be more inclusive and participatory than all the previous elections. Don't be skeptical about the elections. I want to assure you all that there will be elections on November 19 because there is no other way but elections to bring the constitution making process back on the right the track.

Why is the government stressing so much on elections?

The election is the only way out to find an amicable political solution. The people's court is supreme in a democracy. The election is the only way to guarantee an accountable government. Thus, there will be this election on November 19. Every Nepali is waiting for it. I firmly believe that all Nepali will come out to support the government in holding free and fair elections. At a time when an overwhelming majority of the people and political parties are in favor of the election, nobody can disrupt the November 19 polls. I am speaking this from my heart. Let people decide about their future. My aim is to create a congenial environment for broader participation.

Why are Maoists left out?

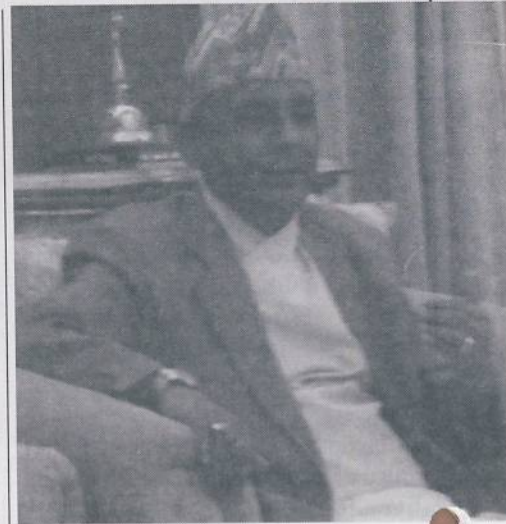
I don't want to resort to a blame game. The government and political parties held several rounds of formal and information talks with the Maoists and waited till the last minute for their positive response. Unfortunately, they decided not to participate in the elections.

As the chairman of the interim council of minister, what is your personal assessment?

My one and only mission is to hold the peaceful Constituent Assembly elections on November 19 and install an elected and accountable government. I am confident that the new Constituent Assembly will also formulate the new constitution in the stipulated time. I am a judge and I will give justice to the people through the coming elections. Since the first Constituent Assembly is reported to have completed over 90 percent of work, the new CA will complete the task of writing the constitution. My only duty now is to hold the elections. Given the present preparation and support given by the people and political parties, I have no doubt in my mind about the November 19 elections. In my 32 years' career in judiciary, I always maintained impartiality and neutrality. This is the testimony I can show to assure the election held under the present interim government will be fair and free. Even the international community accepts this fact and reality.

How do you estimate the strength of forces who are opposing the elections?

Holding the elections is a big agenda and there is no other greater agenda than this. Since there are a handful of persons and parties against the elections, they will be swept away by the flood of people. Since the government has made a good security preparation, security agencies are capable to defuse any kind of



disruptive activities. We have seen, during the period of filing the nominations, that nobody can stop the people from realizing their wishes. Those who are boycotting the elections do not have an alternative to justify their agenda among the people.

How about the security arrangements?

As there are good security arrangements to ensure safety and security to the voters, I am expecting high turnouts on the election day on November 19. The voter turnout will be even higher than that of the last CA elections since the law and order situation is far better now than the last time. The government is prepared to deal with any possibility of disturbance, including the proposed ten-day general strike.

There are reports that the government is mobilizing the Nepal Army for elections. Is it like the past or different?

The government is mobilizing the army as per the Interim Constitution. Nepal Army has been a part of security arrangements in the past elections. There are certain confusions because of the word used in the constitution. Nepal Army will be mobilized under an Integrated Security Plan under the order of civilian authority or the chief district officer. I am very much

satisfied with the security arrangements prepared for the Constituent Assembly elections. All the security forces including Nepal Army are ready to handle any kind of situation.

What is the state of law and order in Terai?

To maintain the law and order in the Terai region, Nepali security agencies have been working very closely with their counterparts in India. We are concerned about the security situation. Nepal Police is coordinating with Indian Police to manage the border during the elections. Like in the past, Nepal will coordinate with Indian police to maintain the law and order and check criminal elements from crossing the border. Nepal Police has maintained good coordination with Indian security officials from high level to district level. The government has been taking stock of the security situation and analyzing it on a day to day basis. Compared to 2008 CA elections, the number of violent incidents are very few.

What do you do following the holding of the November CA election? Will you return to the Supreme Court as Chief Justice?

My whole concentration is now on November 19 CA elections. I have not thought about anything beyond November 19. I firmly believe in the conviction: conquer unfriendly situation through friendly behavior and overcome negative thinking with positive look. Thus, I am optimistic about the CA elections on November 19. That is my only one aim now. ■

"We Will Not Allow To Hold Elections"

MOHAN VAIDYA

At a time when the election for CA is just knocking on the doors, CPN-Maoist leader Mohan Vaidya Kiran still believes that the elections will be postponed. Excerpts:

As political parties are reaching the people and a large number of people have already been mobilized in the election process, don't you think your call for boycott of the elections has little meaning?

I don't agree that all people are getting involved in the election process. Although they don't have a voice, an overwhelming majority of people are opposing the election. Our boycott is gaining popularity at the grass root level. The present election campaign of four parties is just fake.

Since the chairman of council of ministers Khil Raj Regmi and leaders of six parties have already made it clear that there is no question of postponement of elections for the sake of your party. How do you respond to this?

Khilrajji and leaders of so-called six parties are the stooges of foreign powers. As long as people are with us, we don't care about their commitments. We will show our strength from next week. Only then can the people say who has strength and who does not have.

Do you mean your party will use violence?

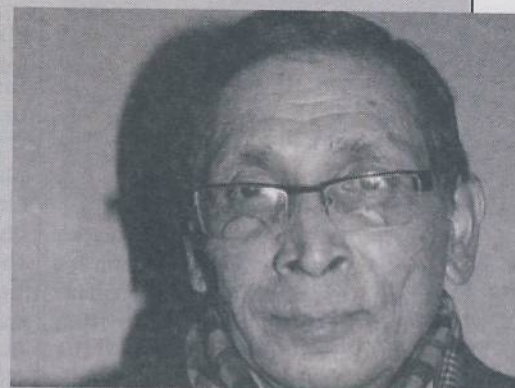
We want to hold peaceful rallies and programs. However, we will retaliate in case the government uses force. Our intention is not to use violence.

Don't you think stopping public life and public transport by using the force is also an act of violence?

We are just calling on the people to take part in our general strike slated from November 11. We are not forcing anybody to do so.

Opposing the elections is opposing the right of the people. If so, how does your party still claim to be the party of the people?

Don't misunderstand us. Our party is not against meaningful elections. It is our party which sacrificed the life of hundreds of people to hold the elections for the Constituent Assembly. How can we oppose our own baby? We want to take part in the elections. We are opposing the method of holding the elections at the behest of four parties and foreign elements in disguise.



At a time when all international community, national elements and security forces are working hard to hold the elections on November 19, aren't you afraid of the price you may need to pay for launching activities against the democratic elections?

I want to repeat to you that we are not against the elections and we are not pursuing violence. Our aim is to stop the elections which will push Nepal into a prolonged political violence. It is unfortunate that those who supported the peace process also failed to understand us. How can an election get legitimacy if it is conducted under the four parties' influence by a government of nominated chief justice? We are still working to pursue our cause with the international and domestic communities.

It is almost likely now that the elections will be held on November 19 despite opposition. What would be your future programs?

We will continue to launch our struggle against mockery of democracy and Constituent Assembly. By just holding the elections does not mean that we have lost a battle. When we launched People's War in 1996, many political parties termed us as a bunch of people. It is not a question of holding the elections only but it is a question of whether the people accept the results of such elections.

What do you want to say to the people?

We appeal to all concerned parties, governments and people to postpone the election to avoid violent clashes in the country. The time has not gone out of hand. If someone thinks that the elections without participation of Maoists will bring a solution, let them try. We don't want to waste time and resources. ■

Election, Its Observation & Monitoring

By PRATYUSH NATH UPRETI



Election and government are two facets of any democracy. Election reflects will of the people in their choice of government, so in order for the government to be responsive to the people, conducting elections from time to time is of utmost importance. Unfortunately, in the history of Nepal, since the first democratic election for national parliament in 1959, there have been a total of eight elections from (1959-2013). So, how can the government be responsive to the people if elections happen only for eight times in fifty two years of our democratic history?

In spite of controversial decision to appoint the Chief Justice as the head of the election government, and these developments after that, we are heading towards yet another Constitutional Assembly Election. With the latest development, I am confident that election will take place, but I am concerned whether the election can be free and fair. Election observers are one of the essential parts of a free and fair election and their role in the upcoming election is very important and challenging.

This time, the EC has called for strict adherence of law disallowing those organizations which didn't submit their observation reports to take part as observers again. For the upcoming CA election, there are a total of fifty nine observation organizations have registered in the Election Commission. Out of fifty nine, three are International Election Observation groups, which have already deployed their long term observers in all five development regions. Among them, Asian Network for Free Election (ANFREL) has deployed 10 Long Term Observers. Similarly Carter Centre has deployed 17 Long Term Observers, whereas European Union has deployed thirty four Long Term Observer. And all three

organizations are deploying short term observers for ten days of election.

International observers: Legitimacy to electoral process

International election organization plays an important role in legitimacy of electoral process. So, reports of such organizations are very much essential for they ensure whether the elections had been conducted in a free and fair manner. Election reports, prepared by observation organizations like the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), and Carter Center etc. are based on a strong and acceptable methodologies, and have received great attention and contributed to the enhancement of

political debate in the particular countries concerned as well as in the international community in general. There are many international norms in the forms of

declarations and codes of conduct with regards to international and domestic election observation. Among them is 2005 UN Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and its Code of Conduct for International Election Observers and the 2012 Declaration of Global Principles for Non-Partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations and its Code of Conduct for Non-Partisan Citizen Election Observers and Monitors. However merely employing observation does not ensure transparency. Indeed, there must be neutral and independent observation of electoral processes to help assure credibility. The presence of independent, unbiased observers builds voter confidence in the integrity of the election process and the management authority.

Free and fair elections

It is said free and fair elections are the soul of democracy. It is essential for election management to be impartial, and elections must be free and fair if the

true will of the people is to be made known. The preamble of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 says, "Guarantee the basic rights of the people of Nepal to make a constitution for them on their own and to take part in a free and fair election to the Constituent Assembly in an environment without fear". But the question arises: "What is a free and fair election?"

There is no single concrete definition of "free and fair". All definitions attempt to incorporate the concepts of basic democratic values. Although the right to a representative government is affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there is no universally accepted meaning of the phrase "free and fair election". Some scholars argue that it is easier to identify what is not free and fair than to actually establish what is. However, an election that can be considered as "free" must be conducted in the absence of threat, pressure, and violence towards voters, and be for one to be tagged "fair", then there must be no discrimination against particular candidates and all must be treated equally.

National Observation

For the coming election, fifty six national observer organizations have been registered in the Election Commission. It is expected that more than thirty thousand national observers will be going nation-wide to make the election free fair. Among them, National Election Observation Committee (NEOC) is planning to deploy 10,000 national observers after so much of tussle with ECN about eligibility criteria for observers and voting rights of observers. With the Supreme Court decision, it is a happy scenario — now it will be more convenient for observers to vote and observe the election.

Struggle for existence

Taking into consideration the political scenario, the second CA election is a very important stage in the developing of our nascent democracy and completing the process of writing the much-awaited Constitution of Nepal.

*Upreti is an Advocate
For full article: www.spotlightnepal.com*



ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Partnership For Prosperity

The new ADB's Country Partnership Strategy will support Nepal's development objective of accelerated, sustainable, inclusive economic growth

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when Nepal has been making efforts to accelerate development projects by making them inclusive and sustainable, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Nepal's largest multilateral development partner, has come up with a new Country Partnership Strategy.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved the strategy with Nepal that will anchor ADB assistance to the country over the next five years. According to a press release, ADB will extend long-term public and private sector finance for capital investment in the areas of transport, energy, water, and other basic public services, such as education and skills development; investments that will ensure poverty reduction, as well as inclusive and sustainable growth. This funding is expected to be just under \$1.5 billion over the next five years. ADB expects to raise double this amount from other partners from both the private and public sectors.

"The Government and ADB worked very closely together to define a strategic framework that will allow ADB and others to join up in funding the type of investments that can transform Nepal. The strategic work was done in close consultation with key public agencies and private enterprises, as well as with civil society and other development partners. What we now need is to convert this into projects that ensure value for money and deliver development effectiveness," said Juan Miranda, Director General of ADB's South Asia Department.

Nepal, which will hold constituent assembly elections next month following a period of political transition after the end of armed conflict in 2006, has a great potential to scale up hydropower development, tourism, and agriculture, and to benefit from its strategic location between the People's Republic of China and India. However,

impediments such as critical power shortages, poor connectivity and water supply, and weaknesses in its human capital base, investment, and governance are undermining that potential.

ADB's five-year strategy will tackle these critical constraints through high priority energy sector investments to strengthen domestic energy security and promote exports through public-private partnerships. Integrating Nepal with the regional and world economy by expanding its airports and trans-boundary road networks and modernizing customs will also be a focus of ADB's assistance.

Improving urban infrastructure such as water supply and sanitation in centers such as Kathmandu is another critical activity. ADB will also help with irrigation and watershed improvement to boost productivity and commercialization. Meanwhile, ADB's education program will target schools, higher education, and vocational and technical skills training.

The new strategy also places significant focus on governance, financial management, climate change, reforms for private sector investment and sustainability, institutional development and better project implementation performance but will have the flexibility to respond to emerging needs in the business environment during the political transition.

Asian Development Bank Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for Nepal 2013-2017 will also tackle impediments to broad-based, employment-centric, inclusive growth, including (i) the infrastructure deficit, (ii) the low human capital base, and (iii) poor institutional capacity including governance.

In 2013-2016, programs will primarily focus on energy, transport, and urban sectors. Education and



Joint Secretary of MOF Madhu Marasini (Left) with ADB Country Director Kenichi Yokoyama. File Photo

agriculture transformation will also be supported. Support will be increasingly selective and focused to deliver timely, sustainable, and quality results. In energy, the goal will be achieving energy security at home with stronger institutions. In transport, the CPS will support Nepal's Country's Strategic Road Network in rural and urban areas. Key airports will also be upgraded to boost tourism and industrial development.

Although it has been delayed for more than decades, ADB's CPS stresses that it will complete the Melamchi Tunnel and connecting distribution systems by 2016. It will provide assistance to secondary and small towns to improve their urban environment.

In education, ADB will support skills development and the school sector reform program. In agriculture, ADB will support implementation of the Agriculture Development Strategy, with a focus on water management with value chain development. "Support in the above sectors will be enhanced with mainstreaming of good governance including public financial management, gender equality and social inclusion, and environmental sustainability including climate change and disaster risk management," said ADB in its press release. The CPS prioritizes institutional development of selected priority sector agencies with long-term partnerships to enhance portfolio performance.

The CPS will also support measures to boost private sector development by helping selected public-private partnership energy projects and improving the environment for private and foreign direct investment. ●

CHINDIA: Fresh Air In Old Ties

By ABIJIT SHARMA



When Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited China at the height of Hind-Chini Bhai Bhai, thousands lined up along the streets of what was then called Peking to give him a thundering cheer. As he drove with Chinese counterpart Zhou Enlai the air rent with an unmistakable bonhomie. Much water has flowed down the Ganges and the Huang Ho over the past 60 years. The two Asian giants who fought an acrimonious war eight years after that momentous visit are today knocking at the door of the elite club of the world super powers. The communist China has emerged as the world's second largest economy while the world's largest democracy India has been hailed as a fast emerging economy. China is a veto-wielding permanent member of the UN Security Council while India has been eyeing such a seat in the world body. Cooperation and rivalry have marked the relations between two of the world's most important countries. As much was evident last month when China played host to the Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh.

There was no cheering crowd lined up on the Beijing streets this time around. The Hind-Chini Bhai Bhai had

become a thing of the past. But Prime Minister Singh's visit revived the memories of the golden past. Most important, perhaps, was the fact that for the first time since 1954 the two countries exchanged visits at the prime minister level in the same calendar year. Singh's Beijing sojourn had been preceded by his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang's tour to Delhi. While Singh's could be his last visit to the Dragon land as the head of the government, coming as it did less than a year before general elections, it was the first foreign visit for the Chinese premier Li within months of assuming the office following the change of guards in Beijing.

Significantly, the visit reflected a fresh air in the bilateral relations. China played host to two other Prime Ministers — of Russia and Mongolia — even as it rolled out red carpets to the Indian premier the same day. But special treatment was reserved for the special guest from India. Premier Li personally escorted Singh around the Forbidden City. A rare lunch had been arranged with Li's predecessor former Premier, Wen Jiabao. Singh was also one of the rare foreign leaders to have been invited to address the ruling Communist Party's Central School on the outskirts of Beijing. The Chinese media treated the visit as a very special event and paid glowing tributes to the two leaders. According to China Daily, it was a 'visit of vision and legacy', with the leaders of the two countries making

use of the occasion to share a similar vision of being "low on expectations and high on pragmatism".

Although many contentious issues like the issue of stapled visa and border disputes predictably remained unresolved, the giant Asian rivals were successful in sending out a message to the world that they can work together notwithstanding a number of seemingly unbridgeable differences. Said China Daily, the two countries were firm and committed in working together. According to experts, the agreement on border defence cooperation and the agreement on harnessing trans-border rivers stand out as examples out of the nine agreements signed during the visit.

The border agreement provides for the non-use of force in case of any face off on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and resolving disputes through talks and meetings, starting right from the border personnel level. Not that there had been no agreements in the past, but many say it is the first time that a systematic and a more credible approach has been followed.

It would however be premature to be too optimistic. Notwithstanding a fresh air injected by Singh's China visit, many

ifs and buts remain before one could see a turn-around in the relations between India and China. China is suspicious of India's role and position on one of its most soft spots — Tibet. That the Dalai Lama's sanctuary remains in the bordering Indian state of Himachal Pradesh and that what China sees as the suspect Tibet designs of the West has many buyers in India will continue to be a thorn in the bilateral ties. India on its part will continue to be uncomfortable with China's relentless support to arch-enemy Pakistan. That such thorny irritants were not even touched on during Singh's visit also shows the cautious approach of the two.

Irrespective of the turn the relations between its two giant neighbours takes following what the joint statement described as the visit of a great importance Nepal cannot remain immune to its effects. Nepal has been too preoccupied with the impending constituent assembly elections to ponder the potential fallouts of the new developments in the China-India relations. But it can ill afford to remain indifferent because, as an old adage goes, the grass is crushed no matter the two elephants make love or war.

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Nehru with Zhao: Blast from the past



Thinking about Nepal's Think Tanks

By BIDUSHI ADHIKARI

With elections approaching, Nepal hopes to take one closer step towards living up to the democratic nation it claims to be. While the effects of the Maoist led Civil War are just a stain on our history, Nepal still has a long way to go in terms of constitution-building and political stabilization. One kind of organization that helps with policy making, economic development, and political strategies through research, advocacy, and political dialogue is a think tank.

Nepal has several think tanks working within the communities and tackling various policy issues we face. Some think tanks, like the Institute for Social and Environmental Transition, Climate Change Network Nepal, and Forest Action Nepal, are dedicated to raising awareness about global climate change or helping people realize the consequences of their actions on the environment. Others, like the Himalayan Institute of Development, are dedicated to analyzing the effects of changing public policy issues. They aim to help people understand how changing policies will impact different aspects of the community, like poverty, political ideologies, or economic stance.

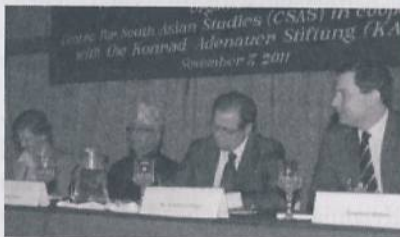
So what determines the success of these things of think tanks? Advocate Phurpa Tamang said, "For think tanks to be successful in what they do, they need to have a clear mission and vision and exercise transparency. They need to have a solid plan about nation-building, whether it's at a local, regional, or national level. And lastly, the state, too, needs to support think tanks, financial and otherwise."

The existing think tanks have had a profound effect in our community in many ways. For example, the Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS), which researches on South Asian regional cooperation, peace and conflict, and "Nepal's conduct of international relations," has taken the discussion of these South Asian and Nepalese issues abroad to many

countries, like Germany, Italy, Thailand, and India. Locally, the think tank has organized seminars and conferences, where topics like environmental issues, armed conflicts, and constitution-making have been discussed and books about disaster management and regional cooperation and interaction have been launched.

Yuvraj Ghimire, senior news analyst, said that for a think tank to become successful in the work it does, it needs to have "people of ideas and opinion who understand their respective subjects in a wider context." He further added that people working within a think tank need to have an "intellectual integrity" as "ideas may not conform to that of the general mass." This, in turn, can lead to think tanks being "misunderstood" or even "vilified," added Ghimire.

Dr Bipin Adhikari, who is the chairperson of a think tank NGO,



Nepal Constitution Foundation, also agreed though that there are many think tanks in Nepal covering different public policy issues, they have been facing problems. He said, "The first problem obviously is the problem of long term investment, which is not coming. The second problem is concerned with the declining quality of their works. This does not help them to institutionalize and become sustainable."

As many think tanks are independent of the government and non-profit, they have to depend on donors or investors for financial support. In Nepal, many international donors visit a think tank, learn about its work and processes, and then decide to invest money. Through this

funding, think tanks can carry out the research, advocacy, or fund other means of accomplishing their goals.

However, this dependency on donors can pose as a problem too. Tamang said that sometimes, "think tanks are so heavily dependent on their donors that their objective can waver from their initial goals." Think tanks may find themselves compromising their goals in order to keep their donors, without whose support they cannot exist, happy, he said.

As think tanks can play a key role in bringing about practical thinking and change into communities, some new think tanks are also coming soon. For example, the Kathmandu University School of Law, which is launching its five year joint law and management degree next year, is also considering establishing a non-profit think tank in the school that builds consensus on significant constitutional, legal and policy questions.

According to Adhikari, who is also steering the process at the law school, "an independent think tank and research centre of this sort will specialise in constitutional reform in Nepal. It will undertake research on human rights, devolution, the system of election and representation, justice sector changes, secularization, constitutional watchdogs and similar other issues."

Adding further, Adhikari said, "the think tank will also introduce comparative constitutional concepts and knowledge about comparative constitutional practices into the Nepalese constitutional debate. It will pursue these objectives through its activities - research, teaching, information exchange, resource centre, consultancies and research collaboration. Through this, we hope to bring about sustainability of venture and quality of output in our work, which are interrelated and the key aspects of a successful think tank."

PRACTICAL ACTION

Healthy Community

By implementing its program SWASHTHA, Practical Action has shown a way to a healthy community

By A CORESSPONDENT

Tirth Maya Lopchan, a resident of Bagbazar Chowk of Saradanagar of Chitwan district, has seen a completely new cycle of life from a dirty place of a few years ago to a hygienic and clean locality of the present day.

"Our locality was regarded as the dirtiest place till 2009. After the implementation of SWASHTHA, a project by Practical Action in 2009, the state of sanitation has changed drastically. We are proud about that," said Tirtha Maya Lopchan, sharing her experiences in the backdrop of a sidewalk program during the SACOSAN-V in Kathmandu. "Out of 80 houses, only eight houses have toilets and there was rampant open defecation. Our community has complete sanitation now, with almost all houses having the toilet."

At a time when the high level government delegations were discussing about the way to improve sanitation, a group led by Lopchan was showing how sustainable sanitation was possible in poor communities.

"Along with bringing sanitation, SWASHTHA also changed the health of the people. Before implementation of the project, there was no day when a children or an elderly did not visit the hospital or medical store to treat typhoid, diarrhea and the like disease. Now, water-borne diseases are rare in the community," said Lopchan.

"Along with sanitation, we also use different methods to purify water. We didn't know the importance of sanitation and healthy behavior before."

Along with Nepalese government officials, NGO activists and delegates from South Asia listened the experiences of Lopchan. From a state with virtually no toilets for defecation and wells for safe drinking water and sanitation, the situation has changed significantly in the community and this

set up a unique example in the Nepalese context.

"Our program is related to urban water, sanitation and waste," said Shrish Singh, head of program, urban with sanitation, Practical Action. "Every single household in the community now has toilet, safe drinking water, improved sanitation conditions, better hygiene practice, proper waste management, and better kitchen management. Thus, the community has been declared as a healthy community."

Under the co-funding support of European Union's non-state actors in development program, UN-Habitat's Water for Asian Cities program and the ISLE of Man government, the project was implemented by Practical Action in partnership with MuAN and ENPHO as non-state actors and the respective municipalities and concerned VDCs as local state actors.

"This is a small project to show how we can achieve complete sanitation and make the community healthy," said Hari Krishna Poudel, head of Chitwan District Urban Development Division, which is now expanding the program in other localities with the government's resources.

"The project implemented from 2009-2012 focused on Bharatpur, Gulariya, and Tikapur Municipalities of Nepal with the main objective of improving the health and wellbeing of the urban and peri-urban settlements. The project also worked on the few urban environmental problems of neighboring municipalities and small towns like Rantanagar, Ramgram, Siddharthnagar, Sunwal, Bardghat and Kawasoti," said Achyut Luitel, country director Practical Action Nepal Office.

Experts in SACOSAN-V argued that water and sanitation related diseases are amongst the leading cause of disease and death in the South Asia Region including



Nepal. According to a study, each year 14,700 people die because of unsafe water, lack of sanitation and unsafe hygiene practices. This affects the young children more severely. The studies have shown that 12700 children under the age of five die due to poor hygiene and sanitation and acute respiratory infection.

In Nepal, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) attributes to 10 percent of deaths each year. A lot of focus has been given to increase access to water and sanitation and make people adopt hygienic practices and achieve Open Defecation Free (ODF) status. However, not all are able to achieve the expected results. Here comes the Practical Action's integrated approach to WASH, instead of a sector specific approach in order to improve environmental health conditions of urban poor communities. "We adopt three participatory approaches, household centered environmental sanitation, school led total sanitation and community led total sanitation for sustainable promotion of water sanitation and IAP reducing facilities," said Singh. "Our SWASHTHA includes safe water, better sanitation, personal hygiene, kitchen management and solid waste management."

After the implementation of the project, eighty household of Baghbazar tole in Sharadanagar in Chitwan District set an example almost unique in Nepal and the region, with every single household consuming safe water, using improved sanitation facilities, practicing safe hygienic behavior, enjoying improved kitchen and managing solid waste properly. This is what, Lopchan claimed in the gathering, is a healthy community of Nepal. ■



Warsaw Climate Change Talk: Roadmap To Paris

By BATU UPRETY

Negotiators have been meeting twice a year to effectively implement the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for nearly two decades now, but the temperature is rising and extreme weather events are continuing to claim life, livelihood and property, particularly of the poor people.

Adopted on 9 May 1992 in New York, Parties to the UNFCCC decided the Berlin Mandate during the first session of the Conference of the Parties (CoP1) in March-April 1995 in Berlin. The Mandate focuses, *inter alia*, on updating and making available national inventories of anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases, and formulate and implement national and regional programmes to mitigate climate change impacts and facilitate adequate adaptation to climate change. Several decisions have been made to implement the Convention during the last 19 years of Convention's entry into force.

In 1997 (CoP3), Parties adopted the Kyoto Protocol that obliges the developed country Parties to reduce GHGs emissions by 5.2 percent below 1990 level. The CoP7 (2001) made a package of decisions to support LDCs (LDC Work Programme, guidelines for NAPA preparation, establishment of LDC Fund and LDC Expert Group) to adapt to climate change impacts. In 2005, Kyoto Protocol entered into force to reduce GHGs emission. Parties adopted Bali Action Plan in 2007 to decide on shared vision, enhanced actions on mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity building. In 2009, climate change got high priority in the international agenda as Heads of State or Government of about 120 Parties met at Copenhagen to decide on future of global poor, livelihoods and resources affected by climate change. They agreed to generate USD 100 billion annually by 2020. In 2010, Parties made important decisions on adaptation, finance and technology. In 2011, Parties decided to start a process of making a protocol to address emerging threat of climate change by 2020 and formed an Ad Hoc Working Group on Durban Platform for

Enhanced Action (ADP). The 19th session (CoP19) will be held in Warsaw from 11 to 22 November 2013 and Parties are expected to decide on roadmap to Paris (CoP21).

Nepal has participated in all CoPs and meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies (SBI and SBSTA) including other climate change meetings since 1992. Nepal has influenced decision on non-renewable biomass methodology to benefit from Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) in 2007 in Bali. In 2009, Nepal drew the attention of the international community on the impacts of climate change in the Himalayas, and started



Warsaw Climate Change Conference venue

'Mountain Initiative (MI)'. The International Conference of Mountain Countries on Climate Change in April 2012 in Kathmandu decided the Kathmandu Call for Action (KCA) on MI. Nepal's in-country initiatives and regional and international conferences on climate change since 2007 also contributed to be a Chair of the LDC Coordination Group for 2013 and 2014. Nepal has now two responsibilities – leading 49 LDCs and raising national concerns to benefit from UNFCCC process. National interests and priorities might be inconsistent with other LDCs. If Nepal does not raise impact of climate change in the mountain and move forward KCA, three years of government efforts will be of no use. It is likely that Nepal's concerns will not be raised till early 2015.

Nepal established the Core Negotiating Team (CNT) on UNFCCC process in early 2012 to ensure multi-sectoral delegation (at least at diplomatic, legal and subject specialist levels). Nepal started preparing country concerns, ideas and inputs for CoPs since 2009. This year, Clean Energy Nepal has prepared the information note and resource kit on UNFCCC

negotiation for Nepali participants attending the CoP19. This note provides key issues on: (i) adaptation, loss and damage, and agriculture; (ii) ADP – pre-2020 and post-2020 agreement; (iii) equity; (iv) finance; (v) low carbon economic development strategy, technology development and transfer, and capacity building; and (vi) mitigation (REDD+).

Two separate pre-CoP19 interactions were organised in Kathmandu on 30 and 31 October 2013. The NGO organised interaction focused on Nepal's issues to be raised in Warsaw, and Government-organised consultation focused on LDC Group coordination approach and strategies to influence the climate negotiation. It seems that government formed support team and CNT did not meet and discussed on national issues and priorities to be raised during CoP19.

UNFCCC negotiation is between and amongst governments and climate change focal point should drive the process and engage more government officials in the national team. It helps to build and strengthen national capacity, translate understanding and knowledge into national policies, implement climate change activities and benefit from the UNFCCC process as in the past.

UNFCCC negotiation is more political and economy-driven. Nepal's CNT and previous delegation from 2009 onwards recognised representations at diplomatic, legal and technical levels, and it requires up-scaling, at least, till 2015 Paris Conference.

Nepal has twin roles of negotiating on issues from the interests of LDC Group and a sovereign country. The major concerns for Warsaw would, *inter alia*, be to coordinate effectively the interests of 49 LDCs, protect national interests, keep partners at equidistance, and strengthen Nepal's capacity in general, and government capacity in particular, on climate negotiation to benefit from UNFCCC process. ■

LO MANTHANG

Search For Balance

Experts and local people discuss ways to balance development and conservation in Lo Manthang in the upper reaches of the Himalayas

By A CORESPONDENT

At a time when the local people at Lo Manthang, an ancient mountain kingdom located in Upper Mustang, are concerned about the existence of their homeland once the area is enlisted as a World Culture Heritage site, a group of international experts and local stakeholders have gathered and discussed various ways to address the people's development aspirations and preservation needs for the place of cultural and historical importance.

HimalAsia Foundation, Department of Archaeology of Nepal, Kathmandu University and UNESCO office in Kathmandu organized the event with support from Oriental Cultural Heritage Protection Alliance, Paris, France, International Symposium on Safeguarding Lo Manthang and Cultural

renowned experts to assess the outstanding cultural, spiritual and natural values of the city and cultures surrounding it.

Roads are likely to make it much easier for the local people to visit different sites and more remote locations, but this intervention will also bring many influences from outside with unforeseeable results.

"The conference helped national and international experts and a range of stakeholders to focus on various issues, including possibilities for supporting the local communities of Upper Mustang in keeping a healthy balance between all the challenges and managing precious heritage for the future in the best possible way," said Susanne von der Heide, director Himal/Asia

Foundation, Germany/Nepal. "This is the right time to discuss the issue."

There are differences of opinion among the



Landscape of Upper Mustang as a first-of-its-kind. Different stakeholders shared their views and highlighted the importance of conservation of Lo Manthang.

Local stakeholders, international experts and government authorities shared their views on the need for preservation of the unique heritage of Lo Manthang. However, the local people showed a bigger concern for their own development needs and argued that they wanted preservation that gave them development.

The two-day international symposium on Safeguarding Lo Manthang and the Cultural Landscape of Upper Mustang brought together

stakeholders. International and national experts pursue the idea of preservation of ancient landscape at the cost of development. However, local want preservation to go alongside development of the region.

Local people held the view that once the site is declared a world heritage site, the authorities would curtail their access to the place and restrict development works necessary for improving their livelihood. They also stressed the need to have connectivity by road. "We want preservation of heritage as well as improvement in our livelihood. We don't have any objection if cultural preservation is made looking at the livelihood of the people," said Indra

Dhara Bista, Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) Cultural Heritage Conservation Sub-committee Lo, Upper Mustang. "Declaration of World Heritage site would affect the livelihood of local communities who are dependent on Lo Manthang and surrounding cultural landscape."

At the function inaugurated in the presence of Jigme Shinge Palbar Bista, Gyalchung, of the former Kingdom of Lo Manthang, Upper Mustang, head of UNESCO office Axel Plathe said organizing this kind of international symposium is timely.

"Our efforts must be sincerely directed to conservation and preservation of cultural sites in Lo Manthang. We also need to listen to the voice of local stakeholders on the issue of their own development," said former King Bista.

Others too expressed concern. "We fear that once the site makes it to the list, locals' development needs, including better education and health, will be dominated by the conservation efforts of artifacts in the area," said Tsewang Bista, Lo-Gyalpo Jigme Foundation, Upper Mustang Nepal.

After opening up of Lo Manthang in 1992, American Himalayan Foundation, Global Heritage Fund, Himal/Asia Foundation have been taking initiatives to preserve the ancient cultural site of Lo Manthang. "We have already renovated a number of wall paintings which are on verge of ruin, by maintaining their uniqueness," said John Sandy, Global Heritage Fund.

Renowned historian Dr. Ramesh Dhungel also presented a paper highlighting the historical importance of the region. Similarly, Professor Dilli Raj Sharma of Tribhuvan University presented his paper on The life of Buddha in Stone Sculptures in Western Nepal. Sudarshan Raj Tiwari, renowned architecture of Nepal, also presented his paper. Presenting his paper, Roberto Vitali, Indiana University, Bloomington USA, highlighted the importance of the territory, human habitat and patterns of religious transfer in Byangthang, Mustang and Dolpo.

The message of the two-day symposium was that sustainable development of Lo Manthang is possible only through a mutual dialogue between the locals and the conservationists. The key is balance. ■



Why Political Parties Shatter Dreams of Constitution

By LALA NARA DADCI

In 1993, during an interview regarding his book untitled *Problems of governance*, Professor Lok Raj Baral was underlying the need for a more democratic political leadership. At that time, the two-year old Nepalese democracy comprised Nepali Congress and Unified Marxist-Leninist parties as major political forces. They won successively the highest number of votes at the 1991, 1994 and 1999 elections. In the interview, Baral was conveying his fear that a procedural democracy-based system would further accentuate the already existing elitist Nepalese system. He was standing for a "democracy by performance" being that powerful to ensure democracy in facts rather than just in principle through official texts and procedures.

But time has moved on ever since. Along with the end of the conflict in 2006, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) came to be considered as a new political force. Twenty

years later, is a system with four strong political parties the guarantee for diversity and functional democracy?

The scholar D. Mayhew was noticing in *Partisan Balance, Why Political Parties Don't Kill the U.S. Constitutional System* the unprecedented role of political parties as key-element in the creation of the U.S. constitutional system. In Nepal, so far, they did play a substantial role but in a different way. Nepalese political parties are actually known more for constitutional deferral than formation of a constitutional system. The interim constitution effective since 2007 still waits for being replaced by a permanent, sustainable constitution.

Did the Nepalese political system have proven to lack of procedural provisions by excessively supporting politics while leaving aside the technical part?

Actually, in 2013 as in the past, criticism is pervasive over the overall political landscape. Political leaders and political parties are blamed on several grounds. They are said to blame one another as soon as things go wrong. They also did not meet citizens' expectations.

Criticism seems however to have become more diverse while political parties were flourishing.

Nowadays some contend, in addition, that they do not publicly explain concepts, and conditions underlying political issues at stake. Dipendra Tamang, President of Alliance for Peace, regrets for instance that political parties had given neither a clear definition nor details on federalism; which is yet a critical issue. Little explanation inevitably leads to misinformation. According to M. Tamang, the lack of ability to interact and listen to people, of simply feeling what others feel is the reason behind that hurdle.

A study conducted by Paul Piff of UC Berkeley showed that upper-class individuals have reduced

Professor Baral was conveying his fear that a procedural democracy-based system would further accentuate the already existing elitist Nepalese system.

to live without needing to develop solidarity-based relationships, people with greater financial means, political leaders included, would seek first and foremost to differentiate from others. Elitism feared by Professor Baral did not vanish. But sparking criticism is not restrained to simple citizens. Political representatives themselves emphasize flaws of political leadership. "This is what has made the four-major-political-parties-system replacing a vital technical system" central committee of RPP Sunil Tapa asserts.

Some others also underscore the point that political parties' manifesto always reflects same matters, the old matters. That might be against the following criticism than political parties lately advocate the importance of young people to renew political thought.

Nonetheless, in spite of criticism, political parties' indispensable function has been kept intact ever since the birth of the first political parties in the

1950's. M. Tamang and Som Niroula, Senior Programme Officer of Alliance for Social Dialogue are categorical. Political parties are essential to rule the country.

Beyond criticism, common grounds are coming into sight. When asking whether taking the 1990 Constitution back and reviewing it would be a solution to the present political deadlock, most of the people interviewed rather choose a constitution draft which goes forward. Even RPP Nepal, apparently fiercely opposed to other parties' political agenda by willing to have a King back as symbol of the state, is basically looking for a similar purpose; political stability and national unity.

Consider criticism between political parties themselves this time. Criticizing "the traditional parties" for not being enough committed into the new constitution writing, CPN-M Dipak Sapkota was assuming in the 2012 Bulletin that the mission of a new constitution is to bring about "an equalitarian and welfare society through state restructuring". And what means "state restructuring" if not change bringing about political stability, the greatest hope and first goal of central committee member of Nepali Congress Nabindra Raj Joshi? At the end of his article, the CPN-M Bulletin writer was clearly stating the objective: "to get a pro-people constitution which will bring the political stability and economic progress".

Today, the most contentious issues have been identified. Questions over ethnicity or geography-based federalism and type of governance have to be given high priority. But constitution does not make all. "The function of the constituent assembly would be to take the identity and values of the New Nepal fashioned through social and political processes and give it constitutional recognition and expression" (Foreword of the model constitution of Nepal, Alliance for Peace initiative). In 2008, within ten days, a mini constituent assembly of twenty-five young students representing national political parties managed to get along in order to draft a consensus constitution. One can thus take a positive stance. It is surmised that procedural democracy is fully compatible with democracy by performance. Political parties will have to push forward efforts towards a balance between several democratic trends, and to be ready to make concessions. Excess has limits that moderation transcends.

Lala is intern from France

Diaspora's Jamboree

In a decade, except for times with Russia-based Upendra Mahato, Jeeba Lamichhane and few others, Non-Resident Nepalis have not made any significant investment and contribution to Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) claims to be an organization committed to bring resources and expertise to transform Nepal, the reality speaks otherwise and shows bitter results. In the last one decade, Russia based businessman Upendra Mahato, Jeeba Lamichhane and few others invested in various sectors contributing to give fame to NRN.

The first president and pioneer of NRNs Upendra Mahato donated his money in health, education and religious sectors. However, the same is not true with other NRNs who prefer more or less to get concessions and benefits from Nepal rather than solid contribution.

working in Gulf, Malaysia and South Korea and not remitting their money, Nepal would not have surplus foreign currencies. According to the report of Nepal Rastra Bank, over 80 percent foreign currency is coming to Nepal from these areas. According to Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, NRN's investment in the last 10 years is just 30 billion.

"Nepal receives remittance in the tune of Rs 450 billion a year. However, a large amount of money is coming from informal channels," said Deputy Governor Gopal Prasad Kafle. "I would like to appeal to the NRNs to support in bringing remittance to the country through formal channels."

Kafle also said remittance flow from South Korea, Australia and the United Kingdom is very negligible. He solicited the support of NRNA to encourage

Nepalis to send money home through formal banking channels.

At a time when everyone is looking critically at the role of NRNA, Shesh Ghale, an Australia-based Non-Resident Nepali, was elected as the third president of Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) defeating his nearest rival Tenzi Sherpa. There are a lot of challenges before president Ghale, 55, the CEO and Executive Director of MIT Groups Holdings. He has already announced he would invest in Nepal in a five star hotel project.

"As the government has already formally registered NRNA, NRNs

have now an obligation to show how they can make a difference here," said foreign minister and home minister Madhav Prasad Ghimire. "We hope NRNs come up with projects and investment."

NRN's assured that they will come up with investment. "NRN is a part of Nepalese society. We want to contribute to make Nepal a prosperous country. In the last one decade, NRNs have already shown that where they can invest," said founding chairman Upendra Mahato.

Out of 802 votes, Ghale bagged 510 votes against his rival Tenzi Sherpa, who acquired just 280 votes. Around 1,300 were eligible to cast their votes to elect a new NRNA leadership for the next two years.

Similarly, Bhuwan Bhatta and TB Karki have been elected as Vice-presidents of NRNA. Bhatta received 348 votes while Karki acquired 300 votes. Likewise, Kumar Panta defeated Rajen Kandel for the post of General Secretary by 35 votes. Patna bagged 395 votes. The sixth general convention of NRNA also elected TB Karki and Bhawan Bhatta as the vice-presidents, Kumar Panta as the general secretary, Ranju Thapa as the secretary and Badri KC as the treasurer. President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav said it is high time for NRNs to contribute to Nepal's overall development. As common people are evaluating closely the role of NRnA, newly elected chairman Ghale has a lot of challenges before him to prove that his organization can make difference.



In all conventions, NRNs lobbied for dual citizenship and repatriation of property as their main agenda. Along with this, they even held their conference through government grant. The question naturally arises: where is the contribution then?

Although Indian, Chinese, Sri Lankan and Pakistani Diaspora are yet to get facilities like NRNs receive in Nepal, they have made a great contribution to transform their own mother lands. The current high economic growth in India and China is the result of the investment of their own Diaspora.

Had Nepal's poor laborers not been

कल इण्डिया...

मात्र रु. २.९० प्रति मिनेट

साथै कतार, साउदी अरेबिया, यू.ए.इ., बहराइन र कुब्रेतमा फोन गर्दा अब मात्र रु. १२ प्रति मिनेट ।

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नेपाल टेलिकम

“Volunteers Are Reaching More Places”

SHIV RAJ CHAULAGAIN

Since the formation of the National Development Volunteer Service under the National Planning Commission, a lot of change has been happening in the rural areas. At a time when the national volunteers have been making a difference in national development, director of National Development Volunteer Service (NDVS) SHIV RAJ CHAULAGAIN spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excerpts:

At a time when many volunteers have been working in Nepal from different countries, how do you see the performance of national volunteers working in different parts of Nepal?

The concept of volunteerism has been there in our society since time immemorial. During the time of crisis, chaos and disaster, people have shown the tendency to support their neighbors and communities. However, the modern volunteerism has produced different perceptions and is a little bit different. It is regarded as a way to share skill, knowledge and idea among one another other. Nepal government has institutionally been involved in volunteerism through the National Development Service since 1976. This program was made mandatory for those students who enrolled in Master's Degree. Run under the Tribhuvan University, hundreds of students served various parts of Nepal and contributed to the transformation. However, it was abruptly stopped due to political reasons. It was a part of curriculum and the students had to file village profiles.

What are the differences of your program?

This is the program solely run by the government. National Development Volunteer Service is under the National Planning Commission. Launched in 1999, this is the first of its first kind program designed to offer young and literate Nepalese to serve the rural parts of Nepal in their respective fields for certain period of time, sharing their knowledge and experiences. This program is run under the sole funding

of the government of Nepal. Since its inception in 1999, we have also been receiving support from Nepal's development partners. In the last one and a half years, UK's International Development program DFID, KOICA, UNESCAP and UNV have supported us to mobilize our volunteers. Similarly, Ministry of Health and Population has also been launching Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs). Likewise, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has also mobilizing volunteers. However, NPC is the only government body launching the program in the name of volunteers. Although we receive the fund from Nepal's development partners, ours' is the only program initiated and solely funded by Nepal government.

Why did the government start it?

Launched at the time of intense conflict, National Development Volunteer's Service (NDVs) acted as an institution to mobilize the volunteers for different sectors of development, including education, health, agriculture and other technical assistance in various sectors. When the government launched the program, there was absence of government employees in district offices. Volunteers were mobilized as an agent for bridging development, as a change agent. In the period of one and a half decades, over 9206 volunteers have already been mobilized in different sectors, covering 72 districts. It was started from 20 districts in 1999. There are now 310 female and 348 males serving in various districts as volunteers. The areas include Health, Engineering, Agriculture and Veterinary. Out of the volunteers, the highest numbers are in health with 452 followed by veterinary 121, engineering 45 and agriculture 40.

What about partnership programs?

We are intensifying our partnership with international development partners. We have three focus areas like mobilization of volunteers, partnership and networking and promotion of volunteerism. We have already built our networking with likeminded volunteer organizations. We have been sharing our experiences with international



volunteers and shared our views. We have also had an inventory for partnership with various volunteers. The concept of mobilization of volunteers is part of the program to bring the change agent or to improve the service delivery. Under networking program, we have partnership with the volunteer organizations and agencies working in Nepal. During the day of celebration for international volunteers, we shared the dias with various organizations.

One of the problems with volunteerism is that we don't have a volunteer policy. This is creating problems to develop and identify partnerships. There is the need to make clear policies regarding the role of the center. According to present provisions, a person is allowed to work as a volunteer up to two years. We issue appointment letters for six months initially and the tenure is extended up to two years. The present set of volunteers will be phased out from coming July and we have to recruit new volunteers.

How much salary does a volunteer get?

The salary will be enough for a volunteer to survive. The salary depends on the region and district. The salary ranges from a minimum of Rs. 9000.00 to Rs. 16,000.00. The monthly allowance depends on the qualification of volunteers and the region of placement, particularly geography. The volunteers are posted in the district offices. Presently, the highest numbers of volunteers are in Parbat district, with 19 volunteers stationed there. ■

BOOK

On Governance

Former Secretary Shyam Prasad Mainali Has Written A Book That Highlights Issues Related To Governance And Constitution

By A CORESPONDENT

With rich insights into bureaucracy and government, Shyam Prasad Mainali has authored a book that comes as a welcome addition to the shelf on good governance and constitution. This book is helpful mainly for those who want to prepare for jobs as section officer, under secretary and joint secretary.

In this volume, Mainali includes the agenda of governance structure, constitution and good governance.

The book is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with state and governance, the second is about constitution and law, the third deals with public service and public management and the fourth deals with resource management and planning.

The book analyzes the agenda of governance structure, right to information and transparency, nation building and state building, governance system in Nepal, national security management and multi-level governance.

Issues of constitution, constitutional law and constitutionalism, constitutional development in Nepal, executive, legislature and judiciary, fundamental rights of the citizen, guiding principles of state policy and constitutional bodies make up a significant chunk of the book. It also talks about the separation of power, human rights, civic sense and civic responsibilities, law making procedures in Nepal, rule of law, democratic values and norms, social inclusion and positive discrimination.

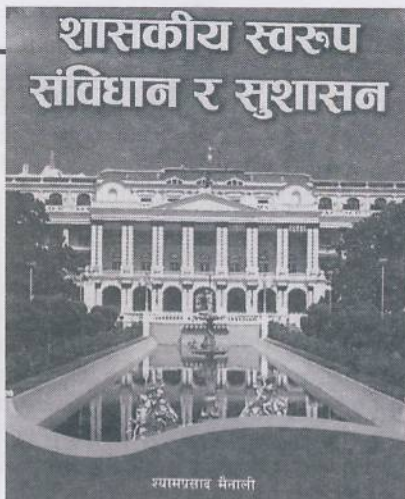
Other topics dealt with in the book are public service and public management, political neutrality, public commitment, transparency, public accountability, use of public fund, morals and ethics, civil service, bureaucracy, public management, public policy, public service charter and e-governance.

Human resource management, recruitment and human resources, human resources utilization, maintenance of human resources, public

financial management, planning and budgeting system in Nepal government, accounting and auditing system, financial management and public accountability and development plan and present periodical plan and participatory planning and development have also received considerable space.

"This book is very useful for those who aspire to join the civil service. At a time when the country has been passing through a political transition, it is very important to know what is happening in the country," said professor Dr. Jayaraj Acharya.

"This book is very helpful. After reading the manuscript, I came to realize that Mainali's book is going to be the handbook for civil servants," said former vice chancellor of Kathmandu University.



Governance Structure, Constitution and Good Governance
For section officers, under secretaries and joint secretaries
By Shyam Prasad Mainali
Published by Mainali Books and Stationary
Price: Rs. 719
Pages: 660

"I have spent almost 34 in civil service. During my tenure, I had in my mind a book which could help administrators as well as those who aspired to join the civil service. This book is dedicated to those," says Mainali.

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My Odd Emergency In Gothenburg

By DHAN PRASAD PANDIT

A taxi driver was waiting for me at the Gothenburg Airport. I saw him showing a placard with my name. After greeting him, I put my luggage in the Deluxe Taxi. We were off on a half-an-hour journey. The taxi driver gave me a lot of information about Sweden. We talked about the differences in our thinking about our governments. As a political science and gender studies teacher, I had to think about equality, equity and public-private relation. This was the first lesson for me as a citizen. I faced some trouble in the guest house due to my ignorance. The driver gave me the key to the guest house of the Gothenburg University and returned. I opened the main door, took the staircase to the first and the

hands, but never tried to listen and understand my problem. There was neither a cell phone nor internet to communicate. I was exhausted, after 14 hours flight and two transit stays in Doha and Frankfurt. I started thinking about how to spend the night in the lonely staircase without sufficient oxygen and drinking water. Sometimes, we believe in good or bad luck. I thought it was my bad luck, and started calling people in the street from behind the glass door. Finally, a lady came near my door, she looked into my face and tried to listen to me but it was not clear.

During my visit to Sweden, I found two or three humanly Full Black or half Black people, no matter what gender they belonged to, or Nationality, One Rwandan, Another Swedish and Another Not decided at Kenyan or Swedish.

When I got rescued from the self locked situation, I used the back door, not knowing about the right door at the Guest House. I got locked on the emergency door

side. I could not open my floor's door by the same key, which I used while going out. Lacking good ventilation in the emergency door side, I started crying for help. Several people gestured with their heads and hands but kept going their own way. No one really listened to what happened? Why is he asking for help? What is the matter? Let's listen if it is OK to help him or so on. More than

30 minutes, I was sweating and exhausted, nervous, and sad. At that difficult time, one half Black Lady came near my door and listened to my voice

asking for help. She listened to me, looked at and read my paper. Luckily it was in my pocket Guest Service Invitation letter. And she said she would try to help, and asked me to not worry. At that time many White people were walking in the same street without listening to or feeling for another human being's request, with voice and gesture. That half black lady called her husband, and her mother there and all of them stayed outside my Emergency Door, until the Rescue Man came and opened the door from the back first and opened my door to get me out of the difficult situation. The Swedish white man did not ask me a single word about how it happened? I think he was angry with me because he could be busy somewhere and he had to come just to open this door from which distance I do not know. This was in a summer vacation in Sweden on 31st July 2013.

Actually that lady also looked at my paper from outside of the door and telephoned others for help in Emergency or Guest Service. She also said, "I will stay until your door will open." How much love can one give as strangers? I found Sophia as an angel for me during that time. And I remember stereotype is always wrong. We cannot differentiate humans by color, sex, nationality, geography, language, wealth or poverty, height, and weight or anything like that.

(Dhan Prasad Pandit, Associate Professor, Political Science, Padma Kanya Campus, Kathmandu)

The driver gave me the key to the guest house of the Gothenburg University and returned. I opened the main door, took the staircase to the first and the second floors, using the same key to my room, kitchen and common room.

second floors, using the same key to my room, kitchen and common room. It was evening, but sunny. I thought of going for dinner or for eating something outside. I took a wrong door, as there were two doors in the corridor. I thought that was the door I entered. I opened it with the very key, and the next door with the same key. Then I tried to go out through the main door but I couldn't open it. I tried to go back to my room but I could not open the door to the corridor and the second floor with the same key. It was a big surprise and shock for me. I didn't know about the emergency door. There was no sufficient ventilation in that area. Then I looked out to the street through the glass door. Several people saw me and kept going. They nodded their heads and shook their

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“Terai Poses Sanitation Challenge”

CHRISTOPHER W. WILLIAMS

CHRISTOPHER W. WILLIAMS, Ph.D, executive director of Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, was recently in Kathmandu to attend the fifth South Asian Sanitation Conference. In the backdrop of the conference, the council executive director spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues related to sanitation and SACOSAN-V. Excerpts:

How do you view the SACOSAN-V?

The evolution of SACOSAN is very significant in a number of ways. The first thing is that the governments are in the center stage in each of the country and the head of the delegation are in the centre stage of the process in leading most of the sessions, driving the agenda, advancing how to address the serious issues of sanitation and hygiene throughout the region. In many other parts of the world, sanitation conferences of this kind have not reached in that level. That was the case with SACOSAN ten years ago where external support agencies quickly or essentially were doing a lot of drafting, working behind the scene and in many cases taking a frontal representational role, telling the agenda which was perhaps helpful in the beginning in terms of consultations. But, it is not healthy for sustainability as each country has to take the responsibility and ownership of the process and then the full fledged ownership.

How do you view the role of the civil society in SACOSAN?

SACOSAN historically had separate civil society forums which took place outside of the conference. Essentially that reflected on the part of non-governmental organization, various associations, and women groups and in some cases associations or federations which were coming from different countries and regions. They had to have separate stages where they could talk on their own issue and tried to inform the debate taking place in subsequent places, between government and international organizations.

What is the level of their participation?

People coming from non-governmental organizations and social movements of various kinds are in different panels and they have had active participation and they have dedicated events and side events throughout the course. Of course, this is not perfect. But what I can say is that SACOSAN is no more a heavily government-dominated program or that the people outside the government are silent.

How do you look at the level of understanding?

The level of understanding about behavior change, the community based approach and the role of non-state actors in the implementation of national program of sanitation and hygiene are regarded as agreed upon approaches and common set of approaches and many other sub-regions were struggling for SACOSAN itself ten years ago, these are three broader areas where one can see the changes in the last one decade.

What challenges are there before Nepal?

Nepal has a unique challenge in terai districts along the belt with India. What is encouraging is that the government has really decided to make it high priority. They have a national campaign for elimination of open defecation in the country by 2018. They have a number of initiatives and they have been pushing for this. They have also a number of commitments to make the resources at the local government level and they have structures of national, regional, district and village WASH coordinating committees. There are a lot of things taking place to meet the 2018 target.

What is your impression on the current programs?

There are certain regions of the country where it is hard to reach. Due to cultural, social-historical, political reasons, disparities have existed. There are significant numbers of population needing to be made as a priority in order to achieve the national target. I think the government gets that. They have decided to emphasize that they need to focus their energy in terai districts.

Why are the terai's programs important?



Without addressing the problems in terai, Nepal cannot achieve the national target of universal coverage. Nepal government is sending the right signal that they are committed to their goal. Numbers of external development agencies have rallied behind the government as the government is leading the process as we don't want to say what they want to do.

How do you view the role of donor communities?

External agencies are providing support to government and non-governmental organizations under a decentralized approach. There is an enormous support pouring in to Nepal through agencies like Water Supply and Sanitation Collaboration Council, and UNICEF. We had discussions with the Finnish Government, and USAID. If we can act together, external agencies will support the program to reach all the population.

What do you suggest for the population with special needs?

In any part of the world, not just in Nepal, there would be population of special needs. There would be groups who need special focus if we want to make universal sanitation coverage. Not only certain historically disadvantaged

or marginalized populations, but people from other communities, have special needs. Physically disabled, women having menstruation or pregnant or elderly have special needs. There are numbers of population for which sanitation facilities either do not exist or they are not created for them. Universal coverage is also a question of equity. There would be population in Nepal with special needs. There would be population needing a special focus.

How is your organization supporting them?

There are three ways we have been supporting. We have been instrumental in getting the participation of government officials of highest levels in inter-country working groups. We have been supporting the participation of non-state actors or various NGOs, international groups, associations, women groups associated with sanitation to make sure that non-governmental organization, disabled and women groups are well represented in SACOSAN.

Is there any other area?

Other areas in which we are involved in pushing the equity issue is making sure that the part of the discourse of discussions take place during the SACOSAN. Lastly, we also have sanitation fund which has been supporting numbers of initiatives in this region, not only in Nepal but the whole region. We are looking at India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and we are not looking at the advocacy side of it. But, we also need to be helping the government and non-governmental organizations to apply decentralized approach to large scale in improvement of sanitation. So, we are hoping that what one has been doing in an individual country would be shared and the experiences will be available for all the members of SACOSAN.

How do you see your investment?

We have invested significantly in having other regions of the world to learn from the experiences of SACOSAN. We have some representatives from ASIASAN (South East Asia Sanitation Conference), AFROSAN and South East Asia Sanitation Conference which is a very complex makeup within Africa. We are very interested in tapping the learning experiences and methodologies by which SACOSAN has grown over the last ten years. So we can share those experiences with other regions of the world. Ultimately, this mechanism is very powerful and advancing with common understanding and political commitments.

How do you look at the agenda of sanitation?

First of all sanitation is receiving a lot of attention, partly because of it is unmet target of MDGs, but also because it is seen as very good for money. If you invest in sanitation, what we have been investing now in other areas like health care will be driving the cost. It will reduce the cost of medicine or stop people from going to clinics for preventable diseases. If you invest in sanitation, you can save the money. The way sanitation is being improved is not dependent on the external support alone. Most of the funding is going now towards behavior change which is getting people to understand the relationship between sanitation and health and hygiene and human dignity. It means people are making their own investment. For every one dollar put into the program in behavior change, five dollars can be saved. A number of governments have recognized that this is the area for good investment for money. ■

SANITATION AND WATER

Election Agenda?

Despite the widespread crisis of water and sanitation, Nepal's political parties are yet to make sanitation as their election agenda

By A CORESSPONDENT

At a time when the global partners have hailed Nepal's achievements in the area of sanitation coverage, Nepal's political parties, which are contesting the national elections on November 19, are yet to make it their election agenda.

After hosting the SACOSAN-V successfully, Nepal has sent a most important message to the global community that partnership of government, civil society and private sector can make a lot of difference to increase people's access to sanitation.

In its ten-point declaration, the delegations of the region expressed their commitments and agreed to an open defecation free South Asia by 2023 and progressively more towards sustainable environmental sanction in order to achieve the commitments.

Although Nepal's half of the population still go for open defecation and annually, over 6000 children die of diarrhea due to lack of proper sanitation and supply of drinking water. Similarly, thousands of others are admitted to hospitals for treatment of water-borne diseases. Yet, Nepal's political parties do not seem to show any real concern about it.

Despite the apathy from the political leadership, Nepal has made certain progress in sanitation sector. Ashutosh Tiwari, country director of WaterAid Nepal writes in his Facebook wall that even citizens of small towns near Boston city of the United States of America launched a campaign to make their locality open defecation free zone. According to Tiwari, they were inspired from Nepal's current trend of declaring many places open defecation free zones.

While the government has set 2017 as the deadline for meeting the universal target for access to basic sanitation by all the citizens of Nepal, the present achievement rate has been sluggish. Nepal government has to declare all 75 districts as ODF in four years. But, only 915 VDCs among the total 3915 have become ODF till now, which is only 24 percent of the total VDCs.

Despite making progress, Nepal has long way to go before achieving the progress. ■





TEENAGE PREGNANCIES

Growing Challenge

UNFPA's state of World Population Report highlights a grim scenario for teenage pregnancies as 7.3 million girls under 18 give birth in developing countries every year

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when UNFPA released its annual World Population Report, Menuka Thapa, 17, living in Slum of Bagmati gave birth to a child. Thapa is not alone. Hundreds of Nepal's teen girls living under poverty have been passing through a similar bleak scenario.

"About 1 in 5 girls aged 15 to 19 in Nepal are mothers or pregnant. Yet the vast majority doesn't use contraceptives (86% of married adolescents aged 15-19) and have the highest unmet need for family planning (about 42%, highest in South Asia). Hence the risks of a child giving birth to a child are very high. More programs are needed to help them delay the first pregnancy and space subsequent pregnancies. These programs should promote access to and utilization of modern contraceptives," said Ms. Giulia Vallese, UNFPA Representative to Nepal.

Given that adolescent pregnancies are of particular concern among rural and uneducated adolescent girls, more efforts are needed to increase access to adolescent- and youth-friendly services. Such services need to be delivered in a sensitive, confidential, non-judgmental, and non-discriminatory way, regardless of marital status. They should include sexual and reproductive health and HIV

information and services, including contraception, prevention and treatment of STIs and HIV and maternal health services, regardless of marital status.

Recent research has suggested that teen pregnancies in the developing world are declining, but more than 7 million girls under the age of 18 are still giving birth each year and suffering drastic consequences.

The U.N. Population Fund expressed particular alarm about the dangers facing girls 14 or younger, who account for 2 million of the 7.3 million births to women under 18 in developing countries. This group faces the gravest long-term social and health consequences from giving birth as teens.

"A girl who is pregnant at 14 is a girl whose rights have been violated and whose future is derailed," the fund's executive director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, said in London.

The report looked at births to women under 18 worldwide, the underlying causes of teen pregnancy, and possible solutions to the problem, which the U.N. said is part of a vicious cycle of rights violations.

"Adolescent pregnancy is most often not the result of a deliberate choice, but

rather the absence of choices," Osotimehin wrote in the report, citing lack of access to an education, job opportunities or health care.

The report said that high rates of adolescent pregnancies correspond with other social problems, like powerlessness and poverty. In many instances, the pregnancies are a result of sexual violence. The issue is most evident in the developing world — with 95 per cent of births to women under 18 occurring there. Ten per cent of women aged 20-24 in the Middle East reported at least one birth before age 18, while 22 per cent did in South Asia and 28 per cent did in Western and Central Africa, the report says.

Every day, 20,000 girls below age 18 give birth in developing countries. Nine in 10 of these births occur within a marriage or a union — highlighting the scourge of child marriage.

"The birth or pregnancy in one adolescent is unacceptable," Osotimehin told reporters in London. "Whether it's going up or down is not the issue — 7.3 million is huge."

The report cited data gathered in 54 countries through two sets of surveys carried out between 1990 and 2008 and between 1997 and 2011. They showed a drop in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 who reported giving birth before they were 18 from about 23 per cent to about 20 per cent. The countries covered by the surveys are home to nearly two-thirds of the total population of developing countries, excluding China.

In some places, the data noted, the decline has been rapid, due to a decrease in early and arranged marriages. Even then, one girl in 10 has a child before the age of 15 in Bangladesh, Chad, Mali and Mozambique.

"Childhood must never be derailed by motherhood," it said, calling for greater efforts to end child marriage and more action on gender equality.

According to UNFPA, out of 500 million adolescent girls in the developing world, more than 3 million of them — aged 10 to 19 — live in Nepal. Imagine 3 million adolescent girls educated, healthy and happily enjoying their childhood in their homes, schools and public spaces. Adolescence is a crucial period of life and a vulnerable one: young girls and boys experience body changes, deepen their values, develop new relationships and start

dreaming about their future.

However, many harsh realities stand in the way of realizing the dreams of our adolescent girls such as poverty of opportunities, gender discrimination and inequality, multiple forms of violence, abuse and exploitation, child labour, child marriage, adolescent pregnancy, deep rooted patriarchal norms and values, to name a few. Adolescent pregnancy is a key developmental issue.

Adolescent girls under the age of 15 are up to five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20s. Pregnant mothers, if too young, are at a high risk of dying while giving birth or suffering from complications, including obstetric fistula and uterine prolapsed.

The overwhelming majority of adolescent girls who become pregnant in Nepal are married and pressured to have a child. There is also a direct correlation between lack of education and child marriage (72% of women 20-24 were married before 18 whereas this figure drops to 23% for women with secondary education of higher). Furthermore, 37% of married adolescent girls aged 15-19 or nearly two in every five girls are not working. The major reasons quoted for this are disapproval from their family to work and small children to look after. Even among those who are employed, 76.2% are not paid in cash or kind for their work.

Since the educational status of adolescents and youth influences many health indicators, collaboration between the health and education sectors is the key. ■

NEW SPOTLIGHT

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Ncell Nepal Literature Festival Ends

The Ncell Nepal Literature festival ended with the last session of poetry recitation. The four day long festival that started on 25th October ran through four straight days with the participation of a huge number of authors, artists, poets and literary enthusiasts along with a large number of crowds that gathered for the literary extravaganza.

The highlight of the day remained the first session which was entitled "Celebrating Rajesh Hamal" in which another artist Anup Baral held a discourse with the much celebrated author Rajesh Hamal.

According to a press release, a huge number of crowds that came to listen to the talk were kind of mesmerized when actor Rajesh Hamal shared much of the emotional account of his life. The audience enjoyed the talk as well as asked questions which were really touchy and moved the actor himself.

The next session was followed by Somesh Verma in conversation with versatile Annie Zaidi on the topic entitled "Reporting the Unknown Turf" in which the duo held discourse on journalism, how author Zaidi started her career and about quitting frontline journalism, her blog, newspaper, her book, her career as an author and her writing habits.

The simultaneous discussion which was held on the title "Akhayaan ra Gairankhayan", speakers Amar Neupane, Mohan Mainali and Nayanraj Pandey held discussions over fiction and non-fiction. The session, moderated by Anand Rai, talked about the various aspects of writing fiction and non-fiction.

Following the session, Rabi Thapa and British author Ned Beauman discussed the topic of "Growing up with Granta". They discussed Granta, Beauman's book, his writing process and research methods, among other things.

The fourth session of the day entitled "Nepali Bhasa kasko" was held on the Nepali language and its challenges in today's world by Basanta Thapa and was moderated by Khagendra Sangraula.

Meantime, at the Dabali, very interesting discussions were held over the generation gap. For the session titled, "Pustantar" six speakers namely Sailendra Saakar, Dr. Benju Sharma, Buddhisagar, Anbika Giri, Shyamal and Pravin Adhikari took part. Kishore Nepal and Basanta Basnet moderated it. The discussion ran for almost two hours and the crowd really enjoyed it.

There were two divisions between the views of the new generation represented by Buddhisagar, Giri and Adhikari who held a debate with the 'old' generation represented by Saakar, Sharma and Shyaamal.

The much enjoyed discussion dwelled over the various ideas about the generation, generation gap, the new and old form and style of writing.

The last day of the program also saw the release of a book entitled Gayab Sabhamukh written by Bashudev Adhikari. Author trio Rajan Mukarung, Krishna Dharabasi and Amar Neupane released the book at the special function.

Following the book release, a discourse was held over the future of journalism entitled "Chapa Patrakaritakobhabisyaa". The discussion was participated in by senior journalists Akhilesh Upadhyaya, Amit Dhakal and Rajendra Dahal and was moderated by multimedia journalist Rajneesh Bhandari.

The discussion was held over the future of journalism, the scope of journalism and also dwelled on the debate of print and online media.

Meanwhile, the festival ended with poetry recitation from 18 different poets, which received a big round of applause from the audience.

In the concluding session, executive director Niraj Bhari said that the festival turnout of 20000-25000 has encouraged the organizers and hoped for an even more successful turnout in next year's festival. ■



Second Suns



By **BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD**

A new book entitled the Second Suns (Random House) tells the story of two revolutionary eye doctors, Dr Sanduk Ruit from Nepal and Geoff Tabin from the US. It is a story of innovative medicine and compassion.

Dr Sanduk Ruit from Olangchungola in Taplejung district won an open scholarship to study medicine in the prestigious King George Medical College in Lucknow, India. After specializing in ophthalmology Ruit was mentored by the famous Australian, Dr. Fred Hollows, in ground-breaking cataract surgery. This modern technique, which Ruit helped perfect, involves a deft incision in the cornea, removal of the cataract, and placement of the new lens. Recovery is prompt.

Reams have been written about how exquisitely competent Ruit's hands are in performing cataract surgery even in the most difficult places with lack of resources. This book has nothing new to add to the well-known operating skills of this surgeon. But what is amazing is how effectively Ruit, working closely with his counterpart Dr Geoff Tabin, has been able to propagate his magic technique to the furthest corners of the world, including Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, Mongolia and even North Korea. Ruit was driven from the start in trying to provide world class cataract surgery to the poorest communities on earth. And the book describes in some detail how this shared vision of these two innovative doctors helped many thousands of patients worldwide who otherwise would not be able to see. In addition what this book brings to the fore is how quickly Ruit performs these cataract operations. In villages where hundreds of patients are waiting to have their cataract surgery, speed is of the essence.

But speed has to be accomplished without surgical complications. An important study (referenced in the book) in the American Journal of Ophthalmology clearly demonstrated that one of the world's best and fastest eye surgeon, David Chang from the US, took nearly twice as long to operate on each patient as Ruit had. The study also revealed that ninety one % of Ruit's cataract patient had normal vision compared to Chang's 78 % after one day of surgery. This is an essential difference for people who have to walk home over difficult terrain soon after the operation. At six months time, 98% of both Chang and Ruit's patients had excellent eyesight. The article clearly showed that the cataract surgery Ruit was doing in

monasteries, schools and police posts was comparable to outcome patients could expect in modern American hospitals.

Dr. Geoff Tabin too is an amazing man driven with the sense of strong altruism. He has many accomplishments. He is Harvard educated, a serious tennis player who captained the Yale tennis team when he went to college there, and a well-known mountain climber who has summited Everest and many other mountains. Despite all these accomplishments he also shows deep humility when he tells the Dalai Lama that in the field of cataract surgery "everything I have achieved, I have achieved with the partnership of Ruit". The book is also well balanced in its pitch as it depicts Ruit's grumpy nature at times with Tabin often appearing to be a hyperactive adolescent.

There is however a melancholic presence pervading this book: the author, David Relin, who also wrote the best seller Three Cups of Tea with Greg Mortenson took his own life in 2012. Many events in that book were found to be either fabricated or excessively embellished by Greg Mortenson. Nepali readers of this new heart-warming book about Sanduk Ruit and Geoff Tabin will find that contrary to Three Cups of Tea, this book rings true.

लागू औषध खेलबाड होइन यसबाट बचाउँ र बचाऔँ ।



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