

Opinion: Dr. Ananda Bahadur Thapa

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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Aug 04-10, 2006



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Civil Society

Call For Elections Date

Peace Process : UN Involvement
 Doha Round Suspension : A Blow to WTO Process

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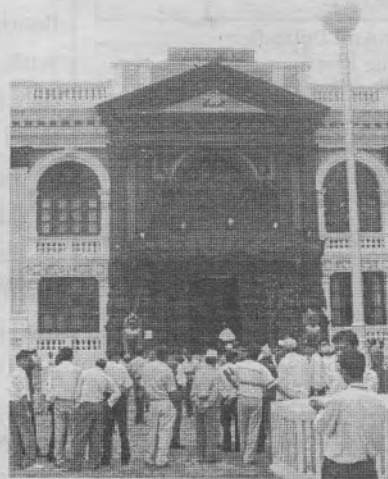
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COVER STORY : Call For Elections Date

This time the civil society members are on a agitation to press all concerned to announce the date for CA polls Page 12



UN MISSION: Arms Of Discord

Will the nudging by the UN help settle the thorny issue of arms management? Page 10



CHINESE MINISTER'S VISIT : Security Concern

Chinese vice minister Wu Dawei reiterates the Chinese view that Nepalis can resolve their problems on their own Page 11

SPOTLIGHT

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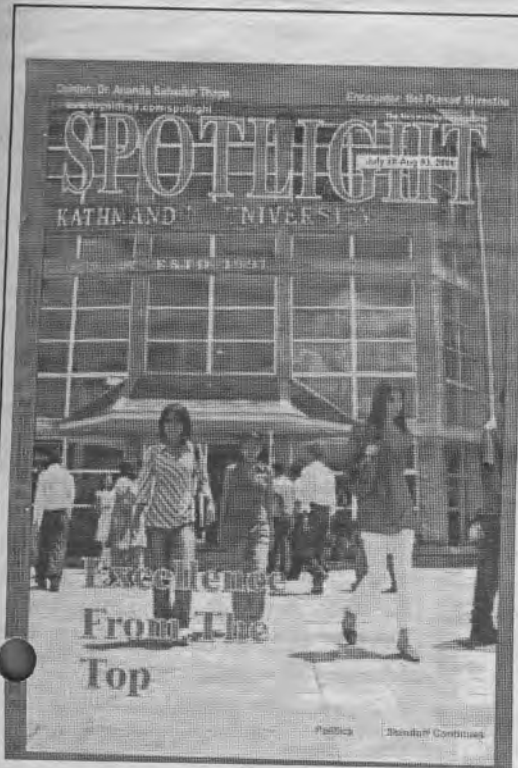
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Clouds of uncertainty seem to be dogging the country. Hardly anything is going the right way. The head of the caretaker government being totally incapacitated to attend the office, the government has become rudderless. Ministries are without secretaries, corporations without their heads, diplomatic missions abroad without their chiefs and the whole nation without discipline. The interim constitution is still in the limbo and the elections date not yet visualized even in imagination. The country is being run by the dead House of Representatives restored to life by the debatable proclamation of the King, who has been shorn of all powers since. Instead of the King, the House has become despotic as it has assumed all the authoritarian powers of the King and nobody in the country has the guts to challenge it giving birth to democratic authoritarianism. Nobody knows what is the tenure of the House. Such a bizarre situation seldom comes in the history of a nation. And the international community, too, has accepted it without a murmur. Some resident envoys are callously transgressing their diplomatic etiquette and Nepalis are swallowing every thing, lock, stock and barrel. No sense of pride or patriotism bothers them. Even the so called High Level Probe Body seems to be befogged given to witch-hunting, even summoning justices of the Supreme Court or the former Speaker of the House for investigations about repressing the movement for democracy. Perhaps, they are not aware of the famous parable of Jesus when he had said, "Let the one who has not sinned cast the first stone." Or, could it be possible they have not been able to establish the source from where all the repressions had emanated, or they don't have the spine even to point their fingers at that source? Why are the Palace officials and all those who led the King astray are being spared from investigations? Get this thing over as soon as possible. Vindictiveness never pays and mercy is twice blessed – the giver and the taker. Since, nobody seems to be bothered about the real trends of the political situation in the country or refuses to see it through, let the civil society come forward and shoulder the responsibility of leading the way. Of course, it too needs a lot of screening of the wolfs in lambs' skin. Don't the Maoist leaders see which way the wind is blowing? The country cannot afford any more inhuman violence. The peace must not be broken. It sure is difficult to find the only and only way to save the country but it is not impossible. What we need is sacrifice, integrity and love for the country. ■

Madhav Kumar Rimal
Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Appreciative Job

It is in the hands of captain either to sink or to float a ship. If the captain is good then the riders don't need to worry about the ship. Like successful captain of the ship, leader of Kathmandu University (KU) has also proved himself a very good leader by turning (KU) a private university, into an institution of education excellence with his honest efforts. We all need to be proud to have such a nice University with very appropriate authority (Leadership Matters, July 28).

Suraj Shah
Rabi Bhavan

linens in public. Now, if they have truly decided to move ahead together, then they need to show their commitment by implementing it into action. Until and unless they don't stop their symptoms of immaturity by quarreling in similar matters, the problem of the country is not going to be resolved. (Growing Complications, July 28)

Sudin Pandey
Bijuli Bazzar

Thanks To Rain

Thank God that we didn't have to incur delay this year to till our land and sow paddy like last year when there was acute shortage of rainfall. Last year my family and I were very upset at not being able to harvest our land on time due to the late arrival of rainfall. May God each year be so graceful to us. (Wet Nepal July 28).

Tika Rai
Ilam

Keep It Up

While other universities are badly influenced by political crises and have, lost their quality of education, Kathmandu University is the one, which is able to keep its quality stable through its proper leadership. Keep it up. (Leadership Matters, July 28)

Subah Tamang
Tripureswor

Don't Be Indifferent

I am a regular reader of your magazine. Since I am the student of Economics, I really enjoy the economic reports on your magazine. This time the article "An Alarming Trend (July 28)" is very interesting. The article shows how global we have become in terms of economy that the crises of Middle East could shake our macro- economic stability by increase in oil prices. It teaches us we are somehow bound with each other and can't be therefore indifferent about the events happening anywhere else in the world.

Mukesh Shah
Dhobighaat

Don't Create Controversies

On the one hand, Maoist leader and member of rebels' negotiation team Dinanath Sharma said "We send letter after informing Sitaula. It was sent not to disrupt the peace process or to stop the UN's involvement but to make our stance clear before the people and the international community"; on the other hand, Deputy Prime Minister Amik Sherchan said "The PM, before he went to Bangkok, had directed me to send the letter to UN after consultations with the Maoists, but then Prachanda was busy outside the valley. I along with Dr Ram Sharan Mahat, had even drafted the letter" (The Himalayan times). From this controversial debate, what kind of conclusion can a normal citizen draw? Whom should they trust? In such condition, instead of being in strong alliance and moving ahead together they are quarrelling with each other in such matters. This problem can be solved by themselves; they don't need to wash their dirty

Have A Positive View

Obviously, if something happens in Nepal then the reaction is sure to be shown by the neighbors (Similarity Or dissimilarity? July28). Nevertheless, we should be concerned that their reactions are only to listen to but also to pay heed to. However, it is good to hear that they have similar and positive view about Maoists in Nepal because it directly or indirectly affects in making a positive decision about the Maoists. After all they are also Nepali and our brothers and sisters.

Minu Shrestha
Chabahil

Best Wishes

As Kunti Muktan is my favorite singer, I always wanted to know about her. Profile of this edition has helped me to fulfill my queries of knowing her deeply. I hope the profile segment could lure the young readers like us by giving us new flavor by writing profiles of new and upcoming pop singers and rappers like DA69 etc.

Tripti Poudyal
Tinkune

Army Chief Stays Away From Rayamajhi Commission

Chief of Army Staff, General Pyara Jung Thapa flew to Pokhara on a 'prescheduled mission' on Sunday (July 30) morning instead of attending the interrogation by Rayamajhi Commission. The Commission had summoned General Thapa at 11 am to inquire about charges of army-led repression against People's Movement. However, at around 11:05 am, the Commission received a faxed message from the Ministry of Defense that stated General Thapa had to go to Pokhara on previously arranged program and, therefore, could not come to the Commission. The message did not indicate when General Thapa would visit the Commission. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court, on Sunday, concluded that there was no need to suspend General Thapa on charges of repression of the people's movement. Responding to a petition demanding the suspension of General Thapa, acting chief of Armed Police Force (APF) Basudev Oli and then valley chief of APF Dilip Kumar Shrestha, the SC stated there was no need for their immediate suspension. *Leading dailies report.*

20 Army Men Accused Of Indiscipline Taken Into Custody

Twenty army men including captain Robin Bikram Rana have been taken into military custody and investigations initiated against them following the midnight drunken brawl, abduction of cops and their torture by Rana and his team. Home Minister Krishna Sitaula, speaking in the parliament, said that the government was in full control of the army and that no one found guilty will be spared. The government has formed a committee headed by joint secretary at the Ministry of Defense Kasinath Sharma to probe the incident and recommend course of action. On Saturday (July 29) morning at 2 am in Thamel, Rana had quarreled with policemen on duty there. Following the incident he brought around 20 soldiers from Bhairabnath battalion, surrounded the police post in Durbar marg, abducted some policemen and tortured them. The Nepal Army Public Relations Directorate has

stated that a General Court Martial has been set up to punish Rana and other military men as they were found involved in "indisciplined acts by the preliminary Court of Enquiry." Meanwhile, MPs in the House termed the incident as yet another sign of lack of discipline in the army and even questioned if the government had full control over them. They said that the Bhairabnath battalion, which is charged of gross torturing and other human rights abuses, ought to be dissolved. *Compiled from reports.*

Japan Stresses On Arms Management First

Japan has also stressed for the management of Maoist arms first before they are inducted into interim government and before the elections to constituent assembly. The visiting Japanese senior vice minister Yasuhisa Shiozaki who wrapped up his two-day visit to Nepal on Saturday (July 29) said "managing the arms was needed before there is any interim administration." Significantly, Shiozaki added that the army raised by the Maoists and the Nepal Army should not be treated on a par. "The process (of arms management) should be such that it gives the rebels international recognition as a group while the government is supreme," Shiozaki attributed Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala as saying during his meeting with the PM. He made it clear that the issue of arms management should not be extended to mean management of the arms used by the Nepal Army. He cited the instance of the army chief taking oath in parliament as enough indicator ruling out the need for it. *Leading dailies report.*

Maoists' Strongarming Should Be Checked, Moriarty Tells PM

The US ambassador to Nepal James F. Moriarty, on Saturday (July 29), met with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and suggested that the government should be serious in countering the continuous "bullying behavior demonstrated by the rebels." Moriarty also stressed the need to stop the rebels from joining the government until they lay down arms. This was the first meeting between Moriarty

and Koirala after the former returned from an extended visit to Washington. Moriarty had met PM Koirala before going to the US and reinforced the US view to deal sternly with the rebels. Moriarty told Koirala that "Washington was very, very concerned about what could happen in Nepal at a time when the government has been struggling to deal with the rebels sternly." The issue which the US ambassador to Nepal Moriarty stressed and brought to the attention of PM Koirala was "perhaps the rebels could someday end up overpowering the state, given the way they are casting their influence in every walk of life." The reference, confided a source, is to the recent reports and instances of the rebels still running amok in the countryside and going about extorting people in the cities. The US ambassador's reference was also to instances of the Maoists' "bulldozing" into trade union bodies and stepping up pressure on employers. US ambassador Moriarty is also said to have lamented the way development projects across the country could come to a grinding halt if the "intimidation did not stop." PM Koirala is said to have maintained his stance of "not giving in to the rebels at the cost of the law and order situation in the country." He is also said to have confided that "the alliance was finding it tough to enforce the eight-point deal." *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

Maoists Abduct And Thrash An Entrepreneur

Maoist cadres have abducted and brutally thrashed a carpet entrepreneur in Kathmandu, Hari Krishna Thakuri, a carpet entrepreneur who is also president of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Kathmandu-Sindhuli Contact Forum, was abducted from his residence in Thali on Tuesday (July 25) morning. He was then taken to Maoists' contact office in Baudha where he was thrashed. He has been admitted to Model Hospital. He told reporters that the Maoists had threatened to kill him if he informed anyone about the incident. Some Maoist cadres claimed that he oppressed workers and abducted him, the charges which Thakuri vehemently denies. Meanwhile, UML has roundly

condemned the Maoist action and asked its leadership to take action against guilty persons. *Kantipur daily reports.*

Army To Get Two More Aircraft

After the Chinese company refused to refund the payment on the sales of two MA 70 aircraft for Nepalese Army (NA), the government is said to have decided to go ahead with the sales. Earlier, the government had announced that it would not make any new purchases of weapons or equipment for the army. During the tenure of the royal government, the process was initiated to buy the two aircraft from a Chinese company to help army transport its logistics. And then government also paid the first installment of Rs 400 million to the company. Now when the current government requested the company to refund the amount and cancelled the order, it replied that it cannot do so since it had already initiated works to build the aircraft. As such, the current government seems to have decided to go ahead with the purchase as any move to cancel the order would result in the loss of Rs 400 million. The total price of two aircraft is Rs 2 billion – payable in five installments of Rs 400 million every year for five years. Senior army officials have claimed that the two aircraft would soon arrive 'within a month.' At present, the NA has 16 helicopters and six aircraft with four helicopters and two aircraft out of order. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

Parliament Directs Govt. To Ratify Rome Statute

The House of Representatives, on Tuesday, unanimously endorsed a resolution directing the government to ratify Rome Statute, which would make Nepal a party to International Criminal Court (ICC). An MP of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Parshuram Meghi Gurung put forth the resolution stating that being a member of ICC would help in checking impunity. The ICC has come into force since July 2002 after 65 countries ratified it. Speaking at the parliament, deputy prime minister and foreign minister KP Oli said that the government was in favor of ending

the culture of immunity and impunity. He said the government would take initiatives to ratify the Rome statute. Likewise, other MPs said that it was essential for Nepal to join ICC in order to take action against war criminals. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

Bill Aiming To Clip Powers Of The King Reaches The House

A bill that aims to impose taxes on the properties of the King and royal family members like common citizens has reached the House of Representatives for endorsement. Likewise, amendment proposals of several legal provisions and acts have also reached the House. These amendments would formally de-link the King's or royal family's association from a number of organizations and so on. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

SC Endorses Rana-Led RPP's Position

The Supreme Court, on Tuesday (July 25), quashed the decision of the Election Commission (EC) to freeze the election symbol of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) led by Pashupati SJB Rana. After Kamal Thapa walked away from RPP and floated his own party under the same name, the EC froze the official election symbol 'plough' and gave two different symbols – peacock and vase – to Rana-led and Thapa-led factions of RPP prior to February municipal polls. Rana had approached the SC demanding that his party is the genuine RPP and, therefore, must get the official symbol. The apex court declared that the EC cannot freeze the symbol of any national party. "Finally, the court gave us justice," Rana reacted after the verdict was delivered. *Leading dailies report.*

Eldest Child Of Monarch Can Access To Throne

The cabinet, on Monday, altered the Royal Succession Act 1959 introducing a new provision allowing eldest child – male or female – of reigning monarch to access to the throne. The decision has altered the 238-year-old history of Shah dynasty

where only the eldest son could accede to the throne. The decision has paved a way for eldest daughter – of Crown Prince Paras – Princess Purnika – to accede to the throne. She is now second in line to the throne after her father Crown Prince Paras. Likewise, the cabinet meeting also decided to provide state perks to only five members of royal family including the King, the Queen, the Crown Prince, the Crown Princess and the Queen Mother. Earlier, all royal family members and relatives used to enjoy the state perks. *Leading dailies report.*

Army Officers Do Not Appear Before Rayamajhi Commission

Following the footsteps of their chief, senior army generals who had been summoned by the Rayamajhi Commission did not appear for interrogations. They reportedly said that they would come only after the chief General Pyara Jung Thapa first goes there. General Thapa, on Sunday, missed his appointment with the Commission and instead went to Pokhara on a 'prescheduled program.' On Monday, the Commission had summoned generals Rookmangad Katawal, Kul Bahadur Khadka, Gajendra Limbu, Kiran Shumsher Thapa, colonel Suresh Karki and retired general Dipak Bikram Rana. Meanwhile, chairman of the commission – which has been formed to investigate charges of repression during people's movement – Krishna Jung Rayamajhi has said that the commission has not yet suspected the generals and hoped they would come for interrogation soon. He, however, added that the commission would not surrender before the army. "Our power is the people. If we face any problem, we will approach the people," he said. Reports say, the commission has now summoned the army chief on Thursday. Meanwhile, MPs have demanded that the army chief and generals who refused to appear before Rayamajhi Commission be suspended. Responding to the demands by MPs, deputy prime minister Amik Sherchan, speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister, said that the government will take action against anyone who tries to violate the law. *Compiled from reports.*



King Gyanendra receives credentials from Sri Lankan Ambassador Amaralal Sumith Lakandala

Kantipur

THE VISITING JAPANESE SENIOR VICE MINISTER FOR Foreign Affairs Yasuhisa Shiozaki informed about the Japanese government's decision to provide grant assistance of Rs 600 million to help in radio broadcasting in Nepal. He further informed that Japan would provide necessary help to Nepal on rehabilitation and reconstruction based on a framework prepared by Nepal government. During the meeting with deputy prime minister and foreign minister KP Oli on Friday, he pledged Japanese support in the peace process, UN involvement and constituent assembly elections.

POACHERS HAVE KILLED THREE RHINOS IN THE FOREST of Chitwan National Park in a week, a source at the Park said, adding that the poachers also injured one male rhino. While two female rhinos were killed in Chitwan, a male rhino was killed in Nawalparasi, the source said. The poachers managed to take away the horn of one rhino.

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB) HAS ANNOUNCED that it would increase assistance to Nepal this year. The Director General of ADB for South Asia Kunio Senga made this decision after meeting with Prime Minister, finance minister, ministers, political leaders, officials and civil society partners. Senga had come to Kathmandu on a visit to assess the political situation and prospects of ADB assistance. Meanwhile, Senga said that Melamchi is an important project for Nepal's development and committed ADB's continued assistance to it. He said the ADB wishes to see the project completed soon. He said that he urged Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat to call a meeting for Nepal's development partners and provide a concrete framework for foreign assistance.

CHINA HAS PLEDGED GRANT ASSISTANCE OF RS 900 million to help in the development process of Nepal. This amount is more by Rs 200 million compared to China's regular annual assistance. Chinese vice minister for foreign affairs Wu Dawei who is on a three-day visit to Nepal further pledged that China would provide 'concessional loan' of Rs 1.8 billion to Nepal. "The assistance would be used in ongoing Chinese projects and other activities," said Finance Secretary Bhoj Raj Ghimire after signing an agreement about the assistance. About the concessional loan, Ghimire said, the government would decide after studying the conditions and period for payment. Acting Foreign Secretary Bhagirath Basnet said that the Chinese team was focused more on economic assistance. "We have urged them to revoke the provision of mandatory requirement (to Nepalese) of transit visa for Hong Kong. We have told them that since we do not impose any visa fee for visiting Chinese nationals, they should also reciprocate," he said. During the

talks between Chinese and Nepali delegation, issues related to support in technical and medical field, increasing scholarships in medicine and engineering field and so on were also discussed. Meanwhile, during the meeting with the Chinese vice minister, deputy prime minister and foreign minister KP Oli is said to have told him that Nepal government considers all Tibetan refugees who arrived here after 1990 as illegal. In a response to separate media query on a deal about the import of an airplane, Oli said the government is importing an airplane from China and will use it for civil aviation purposes.

AT A TIME WHEN THE STATE-OWNED NEPAL OIL Corporation (NOC) is suffering from severe financial crisis, its supplier Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has sent a letter asking it to specify the date for payment of dues along with interest. "IOC has sent a letter asking to specify the date for payment of dues along with 10.25 percent interest," said executive director of NOC Biswanath Goyal. Due to spiraling rise of petro prices in the international market, NOC's accumulated dues to IOC have reached a whopping Rs 9 billion. Just as the government was preparing to hike the price of oil, the IOC sent the letter. A team of IOC officials are scheduled to visit Kathmandu shortly to discuss the issue of payment of dues.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED INCREASES to the financial resources available to Nepal under the DFID bilateral development program and British Government's Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP). Planned bilateral expenditure by DFID in the UK financial year will increase by 10 percent to Rs 4.29 billion, according to a press release issued by DFID in Kathmandu. The increase in resources comes in response to changed political context in Kathmandu. Bob Smith, the acting head of DFID in Nepal, said, "The additional funds will be used to support priorities agreed with the government and will be focused on programs aimed at supporting peace, democratic change and basic services for the poorest and excluded." The British government's GCPP funding for Nepal will more than double this financial year from British Pound 1.5 million to 3.4 million, according to the release. The GCPP is jointly funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defense and DFID.

THE GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO SET UP THE FOREIGN Employment Development Board. According to Minister of State for Labor and Employment Promotion Ramesh Lekhak, the government is drafting law to set up the board. He said the board would include representatives from line ministries and specialists. He said that government would soon present a new bill on Foreign Employment Act at the House of Representatives to facilitate foreign employment sector. He stated that separate departments would be formed to look after labor and foreign employment sectors.

FOR THE FOURTH TIME SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE Nepal-German Sports Cooperation in Athletics in 2003, a Nepalese coach has been granted by the German government, a five months' study term, i.e. from 4 September 2006 until 31 January 2007, at the University of Leipzig in Germany, according to a press release by the German Embassy in Kathmandu. Earlier, Bishow Bam Malla - handball; Binod Sainzu - judo; and Kausalya Khatri - volleyball were given similar scholarships. This year the Nepal Sports Council (NSC) basketball coach Dinesh Chandra Nakarmi has bagged the scholarship. It is the key element of the Nepal-German Cooperation in Sports to improve the Nepalese sports' structure with the qualification of human resources (NSC coaches), the press release adds.

“The seven party alliance government and the so-called Parliament are not only steeped in illogicality but also looking for excuses from the deal.”

Prachanda Maoist supremo alleging seven party alliance that they are 'drifting towards forging ties with regressive force spreading confusion about their party' in The Himalayan Times.

* * *

“Permission should be given if TV and radio stations want to broadcast the interrogation live.”

Ishwor Pokhrel, UML MP demanding that free access be given to media to broadcast the interrogations by Rayamajhi Commission, addressing parliamentary session.

* * *

“The UN can only be (of) assistance if it's absolutely clear of what it has been asked to do and has to rest on a common understanding between the government and Maoist.”

Ian Martin, head of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal insisting that both the Maoist and government should make their visions clear at first then only seek help from the UN, in The Kathmandu Post.

* * *



Bimarsha

“Since Nepal has always stood against all sort of crimes against humanity and wants to end state of impunity anywhere in the world, Nepal Government should ratify the Statute.”

Parashu Ram Meghi Gurung, a CPN-UML lawmaker, tabling the proposal at the House of Representatives directing the government to sign the Rome Statute.

* * *

“Management of arms is needed before there is any interim administration.”

Yasuhisa Shiozaki, senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, stating that arms of the Maoists must

be managed before they join interim government and before elections to constituent assembly is held, speaking at the press conference at the end of his two-day visit to Nepal.

* * *

“We asked a lot of questions, because, from our point of view, the important side of the mission is to learn and acquire as much information as possible about the points of view

of everyone, also of their concerns. We were able to clarify in our own minds what were their concerns and also their own way of looking at the peace process.”

Staffan de Mistura, head of the UN team visiting Nepal, talking to reporters after meeting with Maoist chairman Prachanda.

* * *

“The letter would definitely change the UN's way of looking at Nepal.”

Murari Raj Sharma, former permanent representative of Nepal to UN giving comment on the letter sent by the Maoists to UN at a program at Reporters' Club.

* * *

TRANSITION

AUTHORIZED: Rastrya Prajantra Party, led by Pashupati SJB Rana to use 'plough' as its election symbol by the Supreme Court.

ARRIVED: The UN assessment team led by Staffan de Mistura, to learn about the state of peace process and identify areas where UN can help.

DIRECTED: The House of Representative, the government, to ratify Rome statute.

RETURNED: Wu Dawei, Chinese vice minister for foreign affairs, after completing three-day visit to Nepal.

Yasuhisa Shiozaki, Japanese senior vice minister for foreign affairs, after completing two-day visit to Nepal.

Kunio Senga, Director General for South Asian Region of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), after completing his assessment visit to Nepal.

NOMINATED: Man Bahadur Biswakarma, as a member representing Dalit community, at the ICDC, by the talks teams of the government and the Maoists.

EXTENDED: The ceasefire for another three months by the Maoists.

The deadline for the finalizing of the draft constitution by the Interim Constitution Drafting Committee (ICDC), by ten more days, by the talks teams of the government and the Maoists.

APPOINTED: Prabhu Budhathoki, a reputed environmentalist, as country director of World Conservation Union (IUCN-Nepal).

Rajendra Dahal, senior journalist and editor of Himal Khabarpatrika, as the chairman of Press Council-Nepal.

Benju Sharma, as the chairperson of Nepal Television and **Shailesh Acharya** as chairman of Film Development Board.

ELECTED: Prakash Raut, as the president of Supreme Court Bar Association.

Pawan Kishore Rathi, as the president, **Narendra Khatiwada** as the vice president, **Gobinda Dhungel,** as general secretary and **Devendra Khadka** as treasurer, of Nepal Courier Service Association, by its 12th convention. Elected members include **Raj Kumar Yadav, Shyam Pahadi, Durga Subedi** and **Niranjan Thapa.**

Bihar's Chief Minister And Kosi Problems

By DR. AB THAPA

Just sometimes back Bihar's Chief Minister Mr. Nitish Kumar had spoken to Nepalese journalists about the close relationship that exists between the peoples of Bihar and Nepal which dates back to ancient period. Surely Nepalese people are very much touched by the warmth of his statement. In the interview with the Nepalese journalists he did not fail to mention about the Kosi flood problems. As a person solely involved to prepare the basic documents from the side of our Government "Planning Kosi High Dam Project", "Kosi Canal Navigation", "Sun-Kosi Dam Project", and in leading the Nepalese team in finalization of the 1997 Kosi Study Agreement with the Government of India I would like to draw the attention of the Government of Bihar to the following matters of the utmost concern to the peoples of Bihar and Nepal.

Kosi Flood Problem

The Kosi river known as the river of sorrow of the Bihar shifted from east to west over 120 km in the last 200 years. In the past about 8000 sq. km. of lands have been laid waste as a result of the sand deposit. In course of shifting, many towns and villages were wiped out, and heavy losses of property, cattle, and human life were inflicted. Fortunately the embankments built few decades ago temporarily helped to check the lateral shifting of the Kosi. But at present the detention basin upstream of the barrage at Hanumannagar is almost full of sediments. Soon the embankments would be ineffective to control the Kosi floods.

The Kosi river is now on the verge of shifting to the east far away from its present course. The peoples of Nepal and India are heading for a natural disaster of an unprecedented scale. But only few in Nepal and India appear to be concerned. Even the international agencies noted for their active role in studies of the environmental problems and water resources have not yet realized the extent of this danger. It would be unfortunate if the Kosi swings to the east taking the lives and properties of millions in South Asia by surprise while all of us will merely be silent spectator.

Rise in Kosi River Bed Level

The Kosi River brings every year an enormous quantity of sediments from its catchments in the mountains. Sir Claude Inglis an expert on Kosi had attributed the shift of the Kosi River channel to excessive sand load carried by the river. Leopold and Maddock considering Kosi behavior had stated that a braided stream will tend to shift laterally at a rate dependent on the rate of accumulation of material being deposited. As one course becomes higher than possible adjacent paths, the river would shift.

Data published in the American Society of Civil Engineering in March, 1966 indicate that in the period between 1938 and 1957 every year on an average about 100

million cubic meters of sediments used to be deposited on the Kosi River bed. The maximum such deposition was around Nirmali in India not far away from Hanumannagar. There was very big change in sediment deposition pattern immediately after the completion of the Kosi barrage in 1963.

All the past studies confirm that the Kosi River bed just upstream of the barrage has significantly aggraded due to sediment deposition. On account of poundage, sediment deposition had occurred, flattening the bed gradient. The bed slope of the river in the pond area was about 0.61 m per km in the year 1956 prior to construction of the barrage, which became flatter to about 0.42 m per km in the year 1969, ie in six years of the functioning of the barrage. Studies were made to determine the sediment deposition based on post flood 1963 and 1970 surveys. These studies indicated a bed level rise at a rate of about 0.05 m per annum. in the pond length of about 10 km upstream of the barrage.

Alarming Situation

Few years after the commissioning of the Kosi barrage there was a big flood in 1968. A discharge of about 25,000 cumecs was recorded. The flood at that time did not pose any serious threat. At present the conditions might be altogether different. It is said that whenever the discharge exceeds 9,000 cumecs, which is fairly common, the whole area between the embankments is submerged. Such observations raise the fear that a flood similar to 1968 flood in magnitude could prove to be catastrophic. It should be further remembered that the 1968 Kosi flood is not exceptionally rare. A flood of this magnitude has already been observed twice within the last 50 years. Fortunately in course of the last 35 years the maximum flood discharge of the Kosi River has not exceeded 16,000 cumecs.

Scale of Devastation

All the past and present studies and the very recent observations indicate that the Kosi is quickly turning into a hanging river and we are heading for an unprecedented flood disaster. Such flood disaster would not be just one time event. Like the Yellow river floods disaster in China in the past, the ferocious floods of Kosi would also be frequently hitting particularly the North Bihar wiping out towns and villages, and laying vast area of lands bare with sand deposits. The eastern and the southern boundaries of the flood-affected area could extend up to Mahananda river and the Ganges respectively. India's railway and roadway linkages with her northeast states could also be severed. In a similar type of China's Yellow river's latest flooding in 1938 the number of persons killed alone was about half a million. After this flooding big storage dams were built to control the Yellow river floods. The river is now completely regulated. There are no more flood damages. It is stated in CHINA DAILY (October 16, 1998) that the Yellow river dams have helped to save flood damages as of now of about US \$ 50 billions.

1997 Kosi Study Agreement

In course of the discussions to finalize the 1997 Kosi Study Agreement, the leader of the Indian team, Chairman, Central Water Commission of the Govt. of India, had expressed off the record that from now on they are fully convinced of the fact that the biggest benefit to accrue from the Kosi development would be the flood control. Until that time the Indian Government was seen to be drifting away from the facts that it is absolutely indispensable to provide storage dams in the basin to prevent the Kosi flood disaster. The Indian Government was saying that the Kosi flood control problem has already been resolved after the completion of the construction of embankments on both sides of the Kosi River.

Immediate Intervention

Provision of dams in the drainage area with very big storage volume is the only lasting solution to the Kosi flood problem. It is the opinion of the renowned experts and scientists involved on the Kosi study in the past. We can draw such lesson from the past experience of China also. It can be concluded that there are no substitutes for the large storage dams to control the Kosi floods. However, the storage dams should be provided in time.

The Kosi Dam Project is expected to be perhaps the largest in the whole world in terms of the height of the dam and the total installed capacity of the power station if this project is to be planned to accrue benefits to the desired extent. We should beware of unintentional give-away in Kosi development. The optimum Kosi development should not be compromised. A less than optimum dam could preclude optimum development of the Kosi Dam Project for all time. As a result, it is going to take a very long time even to complete the detailed study of such a giant Kosi Dam Project. No wonder it took China more than 20 years just to complete the detailed study of the Three Gorges Project which can be considered to be more or less on a par with the proposed Kosi Dam Project in size and also in volume of investment.

The imminent danger of the Kosi floods to be triggered off by the sudden change of its course is too great to be ignored. Luckily, the implementation of the relatively small Sun-Kosi Storage Dam Project at the earliest could provide effective shield from the threat of the Kosi floods for about next 40 to 50 years. If future studies confirmed that there is room for doubt about the capacity of the Sun-Kosi Storage Reservoir alone to control the Kosi floods, we could also think of implementing the small Tamar-1 Storage Dam Project side by side with the Sun-Kosi Dam Project. Thus, we need not rush to implement in very near future the mammoth Kosi Dam Project which has been considered to be indispensable for the safety of life and property of millions in our region.

Sun-Kosi Irrigation Benefits to Bihar

Irrigation benefits to be accrued to Bihar from the use of the water diverted from the Sun-Kosi reservoir would be greater than such benefits to Nepal even if Bihar would be getting it for free. The feasibility study of the Karnali (Chisapani) High Dam project carried out under the aegis

of the World Bank provides a great deal of information on irrigation planning. They can be applied for planning irrigation from the Sun-Kosi Dam project. It can be said based on the Karnali feasibility study that India would be getting for free as return flow about 65% of the water diverted from the Sun-Kosi reservoir for irrigation in Nepal's Eastern Terai. Only about 35% of the diverted flow would be effectively used for irrigation in Nepal. Thus about 65% would return via surface and groundwater. Of the 65% returning, 15% could enter into deep subsurface aquifer, leaving 50% for return as surface water and shallow groundwater. The return flow from the Nepal Terai would drain back into innumerable small streams flowing from our country into India. They can easily be tapped in the Indian territory for irrigation. The canals provided to divert such surface return flow for irrigation could also be used to deliver underground return flow by providing tubewells for abstracting such underground water.

During winter season the ambient temperature is too low in our Terai as well as in North Bihar for the cultivation of crops like the paddy that requires application of maximum amount of water for irrigation. Usually crops like the wheat are grown that are less susceptible to low temperature. In case of wheat the water requirement is less than half of the paddy. The water diverted into Terai from the Sun-Kosi reservoir during winter season for the generation of electricity would thus be far in excess of our need for irrigation in Eastern Terai, and, as a result, such excess water would be freely available in Northern Bihar for bringing a vast area of lands under irrigated agriculture.

There can be a great deal of variations in cropping patterns adopted by the farmers in Nepal Terai and Bihar. It is often due to considerable differences in meteorological conditions. As a result, even for the same type of crops the maximum stress period for irrigation could advance ahead or go behind within a certain time range. The spreading of the peak water requirement for irrigation over a longer period would certainly help to increase the area of lands going to be irrigated in North-Bihar by the surplus Sun-Kosi water flowing out from Nepal across the border into India.

In Conclusion

It is very clear that the Sun-Kosi dam project should come ahead of the Kosi project, and sooner the Sun-Kosi project is completed the better it would be for millions of peoples in India and Nepal. The peoples of Nepal and India who have already sensed the danger of future Kosi floods would be very grateful if we decided to launch immediately the plan to undertake the construction of the Sun-Kosi Dam Project. Such move could be made, without waiting for the completion of the detailed feasibility report, primarily based on a swiftly prepared interim report. Such interim report updated from time to time as the feasibility study progresses could be used for preliminary discussions with the donor agencies, buyers of electricity and other concerned agencies.

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

UN MISSION

Arms Of Discord

Will the nudging by the UN help to settle the thorny issue of arms management soon?

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

After holding the first round of meetings with the representatives of the government, the political parties and the Maoists, the visiting team of the United Nations urged all sides to come up with a common position regarding how the world body can help in the management of arms before the team leaves for New York on Thursday.

As the UN makes the first tentative steps towards involving in the peace process in Nepal, it seems to have encountered the lack of uniform voice about its perceived role among different players here.

As the issue of arms management has become the single most sticking point in taking the peace process forward, the nudging by the UN could compel the political actors to bury their differences.

The fundamental difference on the issue of arms management seems to

be the way the armies of the state and the Maoists are perceived by different actors. While the government, political parties and the international community have said that Nepalese Army (NA) should not be treated on a par with Maoist Army, the Maoist leaders think otherwise. As such the latter are miffed at the growing demands of segregating their army and the weapons before they are inducted in the interim administration.

Talking with the UN team leader Staffan de Mistura early this week, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala reiterated

that the Maoists could join the interim government only after decommissioning their weapons. He said the Nepali Army could be confined in barracks and Maoists militia separated from their weapons.

This is where the Maoists vehemently differ. Maoist spokesperson Krishna Bahadur Mahara said that his party's army cannot be separated from their weapons until the elections to

Constituent Assembly are held. Talking to Kantipur Television recently, he said that his party would abide by the eight-points agreement, which calls for UN monitoring of both the armies in a similar method.

Given such a situation, it is hard to comprehend how the two sides would be able to bury their differences before Mistura leaves for New York, where he

is expected to submit his assessment report to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Mistura has already said that 'an opportunity would be missed' if such a common position is not reached by the stipulated time.

"Hopefully, we will get from all sides an understanding on a minimum common denominator, which will help us to present to the UN Secretary General the position of Nepal regarding the arms management issue," he said after meeting with the Speaker of the House of Representatives Subas Nemwang.

The UN team is also reported to have put forth their formula of arms management during their meeting with the Peace Committee. According to Ram Chandra Poudel, who heads the committee, the team forwarded a proposal whereupon Nepalese the Army would be confined to the barracks, weapons would be taken away from the Maoist militants and kept in a armory. Such an armory would be locked and the keys would be in two or three hands even as the Maoist army would be confined in their camps.

In the backdrop of UN team's timetable - they refused to term it as ultimatum - the government's and the Maoists' have started homework to present a common position on arms management. "We will try to give our viewpoint till the time of the UN team's departure," said Pradeep Gyawali, member of the government talks team. Likewise, Maoist spokesperson Krishna Bahadur Mahara said that they were trying to forge a package understanding on all political issues including the arms management.

The UN team, in an effort to "talk and listen," met with broad spectrum of political actors. They also met with Maoist chairman Prachanda and his deputy Dr. Baburam Bhattarai last week. During the meeting, Maoist leaders put forth their position regarding issues such as arms management and peace process. "The meeting was positive. We will be seeking UN assistance in technical matters (of peace process) wherever required," Prachanda said after the meeting.

"We asked many questions, because from our point of view, the important side of the mission is to learn and acquire as much information as possible about the points of view of everyone, also of their concerns," Mistura said after meeting the Maoist leadership.

It was during the time of UN team's stay in Kathmandu that the Maoists extended their ceasefire by three more months. Though things are moving rapidly, it is still not clear how the issue of arms management and that of the overall peace process move forward in the days to come.



Mistura: Hopeful

VISIT OF CHINESE MINISTER

Security Concern

Chinese vice minister for Foreign Affairs Wu Dawei reiterates China's stand that Nepalese can settle their problems on their own

By KESHAB POUDEL

As in the past visit of other high level Chinese officials, Chinese vice minister for Foreign Affairs Wu Dawei reiterated that China always wants to see Nepal as a prosperous, independent and sovereign nation.

Less than two weeks after his departure from Nepal, Chinese officials said that Nepalese leaders understood the sensitivity of China and Tibet. There came sudden outburst of violence in Kodari - Nepal-China border point. Whatever the reasons behind it, the incident showed there are elements active to damage the cordial relations between the two countries.

Wu Dawei, the first high level Chinese official to pay visit to Nepal after the formation of new seven party alliance government, stressed the need that Nepalese are capable enough to settle their own problems hinting that China will not accept any country's hegemony and interference in Nepal.

In his visit, Chinese government also pledged an assistance of 120 million Yuan equivalent to Rs.1.08 billion to Nepal. Chinese deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs K.P. Sharma Oli said that the Chinese government has announced to provide Nepal financial aid of 120 million Yuan increasing China's regular support by 50 percent. "The money will be used in any sector according to the need of Nepal," said Oli.

"China supported the democratic movement and change in Nepal in the past as well as the present democratic government," said Oli. During his visit, Chinese leader also met prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar

Nepal and other high ranking officials. Chinese side, among others, reportedly raised the question regarding the Tibetan refugee issues.

"I hope the leaders of Nepal understand the sensitivity of Tibetan refugee issues. I believe that Nepalese government will handle the refugee issue



Dawei: Expressions of concerns

properly," Chinese minister Wu told the media at Tribhuvan International Airport before returning home.

Following the high level meeting and exchange of views, Nepalese and Chinese leaders expressed that they have warm and cordial relations understanding each others' sensitivity.

"Nepal-China relation is neither problem free nor problem dominated. The relations has not been able to attain the necessary height and make up edifice for strong economic linkage between Nepal and China irrespective of the several agreements including the Syaphrubeshi Rasuwagadhi highway signed in 2001 May between then Koirala

government and Chinese government. In the last five years period after Royal carnage in June 2001, Delhi has been playing dominant role and its brazen interference has increased in Nepal," said Madan Regmi, chairman of China Study Center. "Recent visit of Wu Dawei is in line with the continuity of China's support to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and development of Nepal and China's effort to see Nepal be united and solve its problem by safeguarding the nation. Besides, China has a lot of clout in Nepal and despite active interference of Indo-American axis to dictate the terms of Nepalese destiny and to further accelerate the pace of Indian colonization of Nepal, the Chinese policy for its own security and other sensitive concerns have been projected strongly. His visit once again reaffirms Chinese standing policy not accepting interference from any foreign powers in internal affairs of Nepal," said Regmi. "China will never allow Nepalese soil to be used as a springboard for anti-Chinese activities. This government should not play double role," cautioned Regmi.

Meanwhile, the media correspondents of southern neighbor based in Nepal had most negative views on the visit. "Though they had earlier supported King Gyanendra's direct rule and stepped up arms sale to the regime, the Chinese government drove a favorable bargain, getting Nepal's support for its one China policy in exchange of the aid," writes Nepal based correspondent of Indian Abroad News Service. "However, last year, after King Gyanendra seized power through a bloodless coup, to show its support to the monarch who had become isolated in the international community, China hiked its assistance by 20 million Yuan."

This is not a single case of differences between China and India on Nepal's issues. Chinese have resolutely pursued that Nepalese can solve their problems on their own. Sharing more than 1500 kilometer border with Nepal, Chinese have shown more concern towards Nepal in the last few months. ■

CIVIL SOCIETY AGITATION

Demanding

For

Election Date

At a time when the Seven Party Alliance government and the Maoists have shown little enthusiasm regarding the announcement of the elections date for the Constituent Assembly and, thereby, prolonging the life of the present government, civil society members have come out in the street demanding the date for the elections. For the first time in last few months, Nepal's civil society members have come out in the streets with a genuine demand to enfranchise the people. When pushing for such a genuine demand, civil society must choose a civilized way of conducting agitation and not resort to disrupting the lives of common people

By KESHAB POUDEL

For the first time in the last three months, Civil Society members led by Dr. Devendra Raj Pandey, Krishna Pahadi and others staged a peaceful Dharna at Ratnapark, the main street of capital Kathmandu. As usual, the traffic of the city was forced to a standstill creating problems for the common people.

Holding placards with various demands like announcement of the date for the elections of Constituent Assembly, interim constitution, formation of interim government and dissolution of present House of Representatives and actions

against the security personnel involved in oppression of People's Movement II, the civil society launched a fresh agitation. All do not agree with all the demands put forth by them but their major demand calling for the announcement of the date for the election of CA is a common demand of people of all walks of life.

The elections, whether it is for constituent assembly or any legislative body, is a medium through which people choose their own representatives to run the country's affairs. "The power center has been changed again by Janandolan II from traditional center led by the King to the democratic center elected by the people. Therefore, there ought to be no

room anymore for nominal intermediary parasitic power centers. The more this class of nominated persons gets the space and time, the more vested interests of the class multiplies with all its inherent evils. Sooner the people elect representatives of their choice better it is for all," said an analyst.

Although there are disagreements over the ways of conducting the agitation, no one can oppose the genuine demand of civil society members. Civil society needs to do introspection and correction about the ways of conducting agitation though. By creating traffic problems for the common people, civil society cannot justify their demands.



Parliament: When will be the next elections?

“Since some regressive elements are hatching conspiracy against the elections of Constituent Assembly, our aim is to expose such conspiracy and press the government to announce the date for elections,” said Krishna Pahadi, leader of Civil Society movement for peace and democracy. “Members of House of Representatives and some leaders of seven parties alliance are, knowingly or unknowingly, working to encourage regressive forces. If the date for the elections is announced, all of us will go to the village to campaign for democratic republic.”

This is for the first time when civil society has come out in a street with reasonable and genuine demand pressing the government to announce the date of elections for Constituent Assembly (CA) as soon as possible. Those who provoked civil society to follow unreasonable courses in the past seem to be now criticizing them for their recent actions. Even the populist media have found little time to defend this agitation organized for genuine demand.

“Civil society must initiate some civilized ways of conducting demonstration and agitations. One of the most civilized methods of expressing disagreements with the establishment was set by Bertrand Russell, famous philosopher, while protesting against nuclear weapons and war,” said the analyst. “If such protest could be held in the street of London without any nuisance in the street, why that cannot be tested in Nepal. The elites of this society know much about democratic and civilized ways of protests as most of them were educated in western institutions.”

One section of political activists including the leaders of seven parties hold the view that the recent agitation organized to press the government to announce the date for the CA is not in the interest of stability and Loktantra. Despite their commitment to Loktantra, they see the agitation announced by civil society will help regressive forces.

Although he did not openly oppose the agitation of civil society, CPN-UML leader Jhalnath Khanal cautioned various civil society leaders not to launch any agitation which will strengthen the hand of regressive elements. “Civil society members are raising good demands but they must see whether their demand will benefit the interest of Loktantra or regressive forces,” said Khanal.

Nepali Congress leaders, too, hold the view that this is time for constructive cooperation not confrontation. “There are various elements who are trying to exploit the present political transition. Thus, all those who backed the agitation for Loktantra must maintain restraint,”

said Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel. “Everyone has right to criticize the government in Loktantra but it must not benefit regressive elements.”

Leaders of mainstream parties want to prolong present transition period without announcing the date for elections. The announcement of elections date will shorten the political instability as well as life of the government ending the mechanism to rule the country without popular mandate.

“If someone wishes to shorten the political instability in Nepal, the date of elections for Constituent Assembly should be announced as soon as possible,” said the analyst. “Thus, one of the civil society members’ demands to hold the elections for CA is logical and reasonable. Their important demand to dissolve the House of Representatives implies that members of CA will have function as parliamentarians. Otherwise the precondition to dissolve the HoR will have no relevance.”

Everybody is talking about CA but nobody is talking about the modality of CA and its functions after holding the elections. The function of CA and its role is going to be very crucial for the country. Even the civil society members are yet to discuss the fundamentals to be included in the CA.

“Till the constitution comes out from CA, its members must have the power to function as a parliament. The CA must have power to nominate prime minister and to have the government on a prime ministerial form,” suggested the analyst. “Prolonging the election for the CA for indefinite period would prolong uncertainty and instability with dangerous implications, Some vested interests in power at present are interested to have an interim constitution without popular representation as long as possible.”

The CA must have both the power of making the constitution and running the government. It must have power as much as in the present parliament. Besides that it would have power to enact laws including the fundamental laws.

Priority On

Weapons Management

From prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala to home minister, and other leaders

of seven party alliances, the priority for them is now the decommissioning of arms and ammunition rather than the elections for CA. "The government will announce the date for CA only after the Maoists lay down their arms," said deputy prime minister and foreign minister K.P. Sharma Oli. "We cannot hold the free and fair elections as long as the management of the arms and ammunition of the Maoists."

The Maoists, however argue that they will not lay down their arms as long as the elections for the CA are held. "Don't think we are here to surrender our arms and ammunition. We will hand them over only after the elections for the CA," said Dinanath Sharma, member of Nepal Communist Party-Maoist.

As the government wants Maoists to lay down their arms first and Maoists argue for the CA elections and arms management together, it is inevitable that the present transition will be prolonged for indefinite period.

Nepalese have bitter experiences in 1950 about the elections of CA as it was finally dropped following nine-years-

long political instability. If the Maoists and the SPA government do not find any compromise, the elections for CA may turn into fiasco as it was in the past.

Some believe that the government can do both the announcement of elections date as well as the process of decommissioning the Maoists arms through the international and domestic arrangements. If government announces the elections for CA, Maoists too will be under pressure to lay down arms. At a time when the United States is pressing the Maoists to lay down the arms, the announcement of elections date will further press them to surrender their weapons.

In his recent meeting with prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, US ambassador to Nepal James F. Moriarty reportedly stressed the need to stop the rebels from joining the government until they laid down arms. The Himalayan Times reported that Moriarty told Koirala that "Washington was very very concerned about what could happen in Nepal at a time when the government has been struggling to deal with the rebels sternly."

Implications of Instability

The instability in Nepal may invite several seen and unseen external interests to play their games. A small country between two big neighbors is always vulnerable for their roles to influence politics of this country and entering into competition to gain upper hand.

Recently, Nepal's two neighbors have already shown their concern over the prolonging instability and its implications to their own security. Indian foreign secretary Shyam Saran in his recent visit to

Nepal stressed the need for peace and stability in Nepal. Indian intelligence agencies have hinted that Nepalese Maoists supply their weapons to Indian Mafias.

Similarly, in his recent visit to Nepal, Chinese vice minister for Foreign Affairs Wu Dawei, too, suggested the need to bring peace and stability in Nepal.

American, European and Japanese continue to hold the view that the Maoists should lay down their arms and join the political mainstream. Japanese senior vice minister Yasuhisa Shiozaki, who returned Saturday following his two-days visit, stressed the need to manage the arms before Maoists join the government.

"Control and management of arms is the most important part in the peace process. If Nepal wants, we are ready to send elections monitoring mission in the interest of free and fair elections," said Shiozaki.

"Nepal should create a situation by itself in which cold war situations between major powers of the region get unlearned. Once the election is held, many of the confusions, worries and tensions of the common people will have a just and democratic redress," said the analyst. "Let the Maoists be baptized. Instead of pushing them to violent way of life, it is better to involve them for their reeducation and reorientation for constructive role in politics."

Confusions And Contradictions

After the formation of Loktantrik government of seven party alliance, the day to day life of common people became very uncertain as road blockades became a regular phenomenon in the valley as well as other parts of Nepal. Since the date of elections for CA is yet to be announced, uncertainty rules the minds of people.

"A truly popular government backed by a fresh opinion of the people would subside frustration and pessimism which is rampant at present. This civil society group is reasonable in the sense they have not emphasized much on interim constitution. Other agencies or groups of persons would prejudice the public opinion by involving in an irrelevant debate for the form of the interim constitution and,



Party agitation: Demands galore

thus, the formation of interim government," said the analyst. "This comical drama of drafting interim constitution will have no sense if the date of elections for CA is announced. If the genius is available to draft an interim constitution within 15 days, it would not be impossible to find out a team of elections commissioners who could hold the elections within next four months."

Nepal has a long expertise and institution to hold the periodical elections on schedule. Such elections were held in a few months preparations in the past when the parliament were dissolved for mid-term

elections. That can be done in a faster speed now because of development of transport and communication in recent years. The question of law and order also would not be a barrier. The arms management debate is a ploy to prolong the status quo in power without any scrutiny and accountability of the common man," said the analyst. "The present power position has become so dangerous that there is no check and balance in its actions. The King has been pushed behind the four walls of the palace and naked sword is hanging over the heads of judicial bodies including the judges of Supreme Court. Rayamajhi commission has been maneuvered for humiliating ex-chief justice of the SC as well as the former speaker of House of Representatives."

"As long as the uncertainty prevails over the forms of next constitution, the issue of holding the elections for CA may be prevented and it will again create chaotic situation ripe for the agitation III (Janandolan III)," said the analyst. "The general opinion of the people showed they were not so confused and anarchic when the present constitution was in complete operation during the last three parliaments. All the confusions came out after the postponement of elections for indefinite



Civil society members in agitation: "Announce the date for CA"

Gorkhapatra

period after the October 4, 2002. In these four years, the people were pushed aside having no say in the government and the legislation of the country."

Following the dismissal of then government led by Sher Bahadur Deuba, several unstable governments were formed and dissolved instead of holding the elections. "The King was unwisely advised to head the government which was completely against the constitution. In fact, the constitution got a very unjust treatment that time and now for its no fault. It is going to be torn out as a waste paper. Let any constitution come, it will not have any miraculous power till it gets respect and allegiance from all and particularly from the persons who hold the real power. In Nepalese context, he who holds a position in the power has greater freedom to use or misuse it in accordance to his/her character," said the analyst.

"The HoR will support the government to announce the date for the elections of CA," said Subas Nembang, speaker of House of Representatives. "Members of parliament also want to see the CA elections."

The Role of Civil Society

In a situation when uncertainty is prevailing over whether the elections for

the CA will be held or not, members of civil society can press the government and the Maoists to create the conducive environment for the CA elections.

"If the date of elections is announced, the atmosphere of the country will change. We will also start our campaign for democratic republic," said Pahadi.

The politicians who want to prolong the interim period and reap the beneficiary power keeping the sovereign people away from polling booths have allured civil society members offering substantial number of seats in interim parliament.

The Maoists who demands 30 percent reservations for civil society members have attempted to lure them. Persons in power are also trying to woo the vocal leaders of civil society offering them substantial positions.

Although the country's major political parties have been talking about the need to write the constitution through the constituent assembly, the leaders are yet to show the interest to frame the modality of Constituent Assembly. The time is now to announce the date for elections of CA, which will make the people as a real power to chart their own destiny. ■

WTO PROCESS

Doha Derailed

For an LDC like Nepal, the collapse of Doha Development Round could bury the promises of duty free access to developed countries' markets

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

In the words of suave master of one-liners, the Indian Commerce Minister and its chief trade interlocutor Kamal Nath, the Doha round is somewhere "in between the intensive care and the crematorium."

Nearly eight months after the Hong Kong Ministerial, the Doha round – named after the 2001 WTO Ministerial conference held in Qatari capital that decided to pursue development agendas in the global trading regime – could not be saved despite a series of intensive haggling among the trade

representatives of six major economies – the US, the EU, Japan, Brazil, India and Australia – in Geneva.

But the news did not come as a bolt from the blue. Most civil society organizations and trade watchers had concluded that the talks were doomed to fail since the major actors were adamant on their positions. The main issue under discussion was opening up the agricultural market of developed countries and industrial market of developing countries – which are of immense trade interest to each other.

This time the developing countries led by India and the EU have blamed the

US for the collapse of the talks. "There is no roadmap as of now for trade talks. There are big gaps in mindsets. The US wants access for its subsidized agricultural products in India and other developing countries without cutting its huge farm subsidies," Kamal Nath stated after the breakdown of talks in Geneva last week. He added that the US had been "virtually isolated in the trade talks, even as the EU supported the position of developing countries led by India and Brazil." The US gives \$19.6 billion to its farmers as subsidies and wants flexibility to increase it by another \$3 billion, which is unacceptable, Nath said. Added the European Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, "The US was unwilling or unable to show any flexibility on cutting the amount of support it gives to its farmers." However, the US Trade Representative Susan Schwab argued that the talks failed because "unfortunately, the promise of flexibility on market access coming from G 8 summit did not materialize."

The Doha round was being looked upon with big hopes by the developing as well as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). They hoped to use trade as a means of overcoming acute poverty. However, the talks collapsed after the US and EU refused to reduce farm subsidies and to reduce tariff on farm imports, respectively. Reports say that although agriculture comprises of only 10 percent of total international trade, it is the sector that has most distortions. Between them the US and EU are said to subsidize their farmers to the tune of \$360 billion a year. Unfortunately, this is the sector where developing countries and LDCs, too, can expect to make headway into the markets of developed countries. That is why the Doha round was so crucial for developing and LDCs.

With the failure of the G 6 Geneva talks to carry forward the Doha Development Agenda, the pace of liberalization has slowed for the time being. Earlier, the WTO members had set the deadline for reaching the agreement on Doha round by this August in order to allow the US president George Bush to endorse the deal on a fast track basis. However, he loses this special authority



Nepalese farmers: What lies in the store for them?

provided by the US Congress in June 2007. Whether the US Congress would renew the special authority would depend on the result of Congressional elections later this year in the US.

Implications Of Doha Collapse

From the perspective of LDCs like Nepal, the collapse of Doha means that the promises made by developed countries during the December Hong Kong ministerial to provide a number of concessions could disappear.

In Hong Kong, the developed countries had promised to provide duty free and quota free access to 97 percent of products from LDCs. They had also promised to provide technical support in an integrated framework and provide aid for trade incentives. All these hinged upon the success of Doha round negotiations. "With the suspension of Doha round indefinitely, these commitments may not materialize now," said Navin Dahal, executive director of South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE). "Although the WTO process is an evolving trade round and earlier commitments will continue to stand, the pace of liberalization could be delayed by what happened in Geneva last week," he added.

That apart, the failure of Doha round, which would most certainly delay the next round of liberalization, could spur a rush for entering into bilateral trade deals.

This kind of total or partial failure of WTO process could spur the already happening rush for signing RTAs (regional trading agreements) and BTAs (bilateral trade agreements). Since January 1995 (when WTO formally came into being), 130 Free Trade Arrangements (FTAs) have been notified to the WTO.

"There are two facets to this proliferation: on the one hand, the establishment of the WTO (and its Single Undertaking) has facilitated the expansion of FTAs by setting a set of common trade obligations, particularly disciplines on non-tariff measures; on



Garment workers: No respite in sight

the other hand, setbacks in advancing the multilateral agenda through Ministerial Conferences have created new outlets for consideration of bilateral and regional options," write Murray Gibbs and Swarnim Wagle, in a discussion paper titled "The Great Maze: Regional and Bilateral FTAs in Asia."

The situation has evolved in such a manner that due to the slow-pace in multilateral progress, even traditional multilateralist countries like Japan are entering into FTAs with other countries or regions. Likewise, South Asia has also seen a burst in BTAs like between India and Nepal; India and Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka and Pakistan and so on.

However, the spur of BTAs may not be good news to small developing and LDCs since in most cases, such agreements have WTO-plus obligations.

Reasons Bhagirath Lal Das, a prominent expert and former chief of UNCTAD, "In the FTAs between north and south countries, the latter are being asked to give in areas other than trade like in TRIPS, security etc." Furthermore, WTO-plus obligations like in environment and labor standards, intellectual property rights etc are included in such FTAs, which could be detrimental to the interest of developing nations.

Why Doha Collapsed?

Apart from the visible standoff in issues such as farm subsidies, there may be larger reason for the collapse of Doha round. Many trade watchers believe that the failure in Geneva reflects a larger problem that has started haunting the WTO process. "The Doha Development Round has started suffering from the political realities," stated Amir Khosru, former Commerce Minister of Bangladesh, who was recently in Kathmandu to take part in a Regional Meeting on "South Asia and Doha Round Negotiations" organized by South Asia Watch on Trade, Environment and Economics (SAWTEE). "Realities have surfaced now and things have started to grind to halt because for politicians, whether from South Asia or United States, at the end of the day what matters most is another election," he said.

Therefore, in recent months, the US or European leaders have not been able to meet the demands made by developing countries on slashing domestic farm subsidies as they have to confront their constituencies. Initially, the trade issues got the prominence and everyone started making promises, but now when the time to deliver or as WTO general Secretary Pascal Lamy likes to call "moment of truth" has come, the politicians have developed weak knees leading to the derailment in the pace of liberalization. ■

WFP AIRLIFTS FOOD

Operation Against Hunger

The UN WFP starts airlifting food to help tens of thousands of people in far western region suffering from hunger and drought

By A CORRESPONDENT

In an attempt to help the beleaguered and miserable masses of hunger-stricken poor people in remote areas of far-western region, a UN agency has started an operation to transport food.

The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) began emergency helicopter operations to help feed 250,000 drought-affected people in the far west. According to the WFP Representative Richard Ragan, "This is only 1st stage of much larger planned airlift. Of the 10 districts we're hoping to feed, only Bajura, Dailekh, Kalikot, and Jajarkot have benefited so far. The other six hard hit areas of Rolpa, Rukum, Dolpa, Humla, Jumla and Mugu won't get any food unless we are able to raise more funds. Of course, we take things very seriously when we read reports about 'famine looming,' or hear that 'people are eating uncooked rice because they are so hungry.' We have also asked government if we might get the support of the Nepal Army for transport assistance."

"Many of the targeted locations can only be accessed by helicopter making this USD\$5.3 million program logistically one of the most difficult and expensive operations in the world for WFP," said Ragan. The start of the monsoon rains has now made road access nearly impossible with trucks blocked by landslides and rising rivers. WFP NGO partners SAPPROS and DEPROS are working hard to find alternative transportation, including tractors, mules and porters. In some instances, villagers have had to walk up to five days to collect their rations, according to press release issued by the UN Information Center in Kathmandu.

For the airlift, three commercial MI-17 helicopters hauling four metric tones

of food per flight are being used. As of 30 July, 188.12 metric tones had already been airlifted to Bajura district. An additional 1,300 Mt of food will be airlifted to Humla, Jumla, Dolpa, and Mugu districts.

In addition to the airlift, 1,100 metric tones of food-aid have been delivered by truck to Bajura, Jajarkot, Kalikot, and

Dailekh districts. Although NGO partners and communities are on stand-by, awaiting food-aid deliveries to start operations in the districts of Rolpa, Rukum, Jumla, Humla, Dolpa, and Mugu, these remaining six affected districts may not receive WFP emergency food assistance should no additional funding be pledged, the press release adds.

WFP is continuing to closely monitor the food security situation in the far-west and has received reports that some villages are again facing problems with this year's crop as a result of hailstorms, strong summer winds and poor rainfall. "We know this is an area that has chronic food shortages but several years far below average production have pushed people over the edge" said Ragan.

Nepali Ophthalmologist Bags Magsaysay Award

Director of Tilganga Eye Center and reputed ophthalmologist Dr. Sanduk Ruit has bagged the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay award this year. He is the third Nepali to win the award. He obtained the award under the category of Peace and International Understanding.

He won the award for work in providing lenses at an affordable price to the partially blind poor people. The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF), in a press release, stated that the award goes to Dr. Ruit for "placing Nepal in the forefront of developing safe, effective and economic procedures for cataract surgery, enabling the needlessly blind in even the poorest countries to see again."



Dr. Ruit took the initiative with the Fred Hollows Foundation to manufacture these lenses for about \$4, making it affordable for the poor people. The cost of an intra-ocular lens used for modern cataract surgery is very high – about \$100 per lens. "I am feeling exhilarated to be awarded the Magsaysay, which was bagged by Mother Teresa," Dr. Ruit said, adding, "My work for the people who cannot afford to see this world has been rewarded." Earlier, two Nepalis Mahesh Chandra Regmi and Bharat Dutta Koirala had received the Magsaysay award on literature and journalism discipline, respectively.

The Board of Trustees of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) announced that this year six individuals from Cambodia, Korea, the Philippines, Nepal, and India, and a Filipino organization, will receive Asia's premier prize, the Ramon Magsaysay Award.

Born in Taplejung, Dr. Sanduk Ruit completed his medical training in India and returned to his country as a government health officer. Specializing in ophthalmology, he learned from his mentor Dr. Fred Hollows the latest cataract micro-surgery techniques using implanted intraocular lenses.

GRASSROOT SUPPORT

Touching Assistance

A Japanese national mobilizes support back home to assist the schools and promoting greenery in Nepal's villages

By A CORRESPONDENT

With the objective of spreading the message of education and environment, a Japanese NGO called NPO Green Solutions has been helping in the construction of schools and afforestation programs across different countries including Nepal.

On the occasion of the golden jubilee anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Nepal and Japan, the NPO Green Solutions Japan president Teizo Shinohara visited Nepal recently. Shinohara said that his efforts are aimed at helping the education sector by funding the construction of school buildings as well as at helping the environment by making students aware



Shinohara's aid: For education and environment

about it and involving them in tree-plantation campaigns around their school areas. He believes that by instilling the sense of environment protection in early childhood, the society and the larger community can benefit in the long run in terms of production of aware citizens.

Last month, the Japanese NGO mobilized support from a reputed Japanese company called Matsushita Electric Works Co. Ltd as well as Matsushita Electric Works Workers' Union and Kwasei Gakuin University to help in two major causes in Nepal. It helped in the building of road in the vicinity of Child Development Center in Khadka Bhadrakali Village Development Committee (VDC) of Kathmandu district and in the construction of school building of Dhara lower secondary school in Paranchaur VDC-5 of Kaski district.

In both the places, the NGO led by its president Shinohara mobilized the children and students and involved them in plantation of over 500 saplings of trees.

According to Shinohara, the campaign of tree-plantation will have a long-term educative impact on children and make them aware about environmental issues. The major aims of his NGO also include promoting green environment and education. The NGO believes that both are of equal importance to the mankind. Treating young students as young saplings, the NGO has been promoting the cause of 'school forest' by launching tree-plantation programs in the vicinity of schools. This, Shinohara says, brings young people close to nature and environment.

At a time when modern lifestyle in encroaching the urban households in

Nepal, it is important to teach children about the importance of conserving nature and environment in order to ensure a sustainable development. During this visit, Shinohara was accompanied by two students from Kwanej Gakuin University including Kazuki Fuji and Uki Nagata.

These apart, till now Shinohara has also helped raise funds for the building of four school buildings in the name of Masakazu Mizutani, who is the president of Matsushita Electric Works. The four Mizutani schools are in different parts of the country. ■

Happiness Index: Nepalis Fare Better Than Neighbors

Despite the years of violent conflict, poor economy and lack of opportunities, Nepalis have been measured to be happier than their counterparts in India or Pakistan.

According to the first 'World Map of Happiness', Nepal is the 119th happiest place in the world. The report shows that India is the 125th happiest country in the world, behind Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

The map is prepared by Adrian White, a British analytic social psychologist from University of Leicester and it rates 178 countries. Pakistan is 166th while Bangladesh (104), China (82) and Sri Lanka (93) have all scored higher than Nepal on the study's measure of three major sources of happiness — health, wealth and access to education.

Denmark comes out as the happiest place while Burundi in Africa is shown to be the unhappiest nation.

The study was based on data from individual countries and findings of over 100 studies surveying 80,000 people by UNESCO, CIA, WHO, New Economics Foundation, Veenhoven Database, Latinbarometer, Afrobarometer and UNHDR between 2002 and 2005. ■

GARBAGE MANAGEMENT

Recurring Menace

Compelled to bear with the smelly streets, Kathmanduites call for a stable solution for this recurring problem

By SAHISHNU POU DYAL

No sooner than a weeklong strike by its employees had been resolved (from July 13-18), the Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) ran into rough waters (from July 23) with the locals of Teku refusing to allow dumping of untreated garbage in their locality. Hardly a day had gone by since the KMC reached a negotiated settlement with Teku locals, it was eyeball to eyeball with the residents of Sisdole landfill site in Okharpauwa of Nuwakot district (from July 30).

The residents demanding better facilities for the local people stopped KMC garbage trucks from emptying in the landfill site and forced to return 20 such trucks on July 30 back to Kathmandu.

As the KMC's garbage-filled trucks continued to run from pillar to post searching for a place to drop their goodies, the people of Kathmandu suffered from reeking smells from heaps of uncollected garbage in city thoroughfares.

This garbage problem could not have come at worse

period. At the peak of monsoon season and amid the rapidly growing infection incidents of diseases such as jaundice, typhoid and gastro enteritis (even a few cases of cholera were detected in the valley hospitals last week), the pictures of uncollected garbage provide an ominous mixture.

In what could be termed as worst of ironies, huge heap of garbage was collected at Open Theater, which overlooks the city's biggest public hospital – the Bir Hospital.

Whether due to employees' strike or demands made by local residents, the management of garbage appears to be of nobody's concern. At a time when the political leaders as well as civil society

leaders are focusing on the issue of management of arms, the issue of management of garbage has been overshadowed. "It is an irony that these leaders have forgotten that disease and germs kill many more people than arms do," said an exasperated Kathmandu resident.

Although KMC has been named as chief culprit for the mismanagement, it would be highly illogical to suppose that only the KMC will be able to overcome this problem. "The civil society must wake up to this problem. They can play a major



Uncollected garbage: Stinking problem

role in making all concerned people aware about hazards of obstructing garbage dumping. If some local residents have some grievances, those can be resolved through dialogue," said another resident of Kathmandu.

The KMC, on the other hand, needs to brush up its garbage management department to increase efficiency. In fact, the primary job of the erstwhile "Safai Adda" (Cleanliness Department), which is the predecessor of present day KMC, was management of garbage in the valley. It was formed in 1976 with the purpose.

"We need to accept our drawbacks that we are not been able to collect all the wastes that come out daily from Kathmandu. It is about 20 to 30 ton

everyday that we cannot collect. But we are doing our best to collect all the wastes," said Rajesh Manandhar, one of the heads of the Waste Management Department at the KMC. He added, "We collect 420 gms of wastages per person per day, which means about 320 tons of total wastages as a whole from Kathmandu Municipality area."

When asked how the KMC dealt with hazardous wastes such as those coming from the hospitals and big industries, he answered, "In Nepal there are not much hazardous wastages like in industrial countries. Most of the wastages can be recycled and other can be simply managed but the wastage from hospitals and liquid wastes like different kinds of chemicals are hazardous ones. However, not all of the wastages from the hospitals can be considered as hazardous. Out of total wastages from hospitals, 23 percent is hazardous waste

(infectious); three percent is hazardous but non-infectious, 12 percent is non hazardous saline bottles; and 62 percent is ordinary medical wastes. Unfortunately, if a small portion of hazardous wastes are mixed with non-hazardous ones, the latter will also turn hazardous. So they should not be mixed."

As per the latest data available at KMC, out of the wastes generated in the city, 69 percent are of organic nature; nine percent are paper; whereas other wastes include plastic (9 percent), cloth (3 percent), metal (one percent), glass (three percent), rubber (one percent), construction materials (two percent) and others (three percent).

The improperly thrown wastage is the main problem since they cannot be collected well. The KMC has come a long way from the time when it used Kharpan (carried by men) and tractors to collect the wastages to the present time when there are a large number of garbage collectors working with 64 vehicles including 28 tractors, 16 tippers (Eicher), 10 tippers (Mazda), three Compactors (Japanese), four Skips (Toyota), one Skip (TATA) and two Skips (Leyland). But this is still inadequate to address the garbage problem of a city whose population has exploded in the past few years. ■

BOOK

Transit Regime

Kishor Uprety, senior counsel legal vice-presidency of the World Bank, discusses the issues of transit regime for landlocked states

In international trade, landlocked countries face many disadvantages. Their geographical locations isolate them from the sea and also limit their access to seaborne and international trade.

Although there are landlocked countries in Europe also, the landlocked countries of that region are given uninterrupted access to sea as other countries. So far as the landlocked countries of Asia and Africa are concerned, their economic development is badly affected by frequent interruption in their access to sea. The studies have shown that the coastal regions tend to be more developed than inland ones.

"The international community has recognized, and in part addressed, some of the constraints they face through a number of international legal instruments and plethora of political and normative instruments. In the course of the last century, through the constructive and concerted efforts of both landlocked and transit States, there has been considerable improvement in the situation of landlocked states," writes Roberto Danino, Senior Vice President and General Counsel of World Bank. "The study reviews the evolution of the regime of landlocked states, with special attention to the link between international law and development. The study provides detailed historical account the legal, and to some extent the political, relations of landlocked and transit countries and

examines the difficulties all these countries have faced."

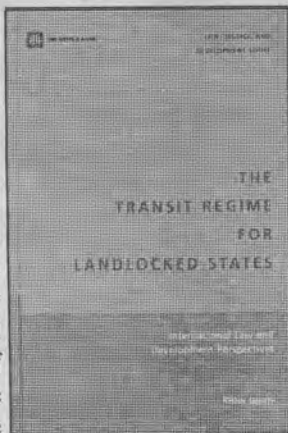
The book analyses, among others, the three major facets of public international law (customary law, treaty law and state practice) and goes into detail in the areas of both law and fact, in particular by reviewing a sample of the bilateral arrangements between landlocked and transit states.

Despite promulgation of many international laws and regulations, landlocked countries are yet to have uninterrupted access to sea. Being one of the landlocked countries of the world, Nepal too has been facing one or other kinds of problems regarding the transit rights.

Many books have already been published over the years but there are only a few books that reveal the existing transit regime for landlocked states with reference to international law and development perspectives.

The book discusses the strengths and limits of existing international law related to the free access of landlocked states to and from the sea. The book analyzes whether the provisions of international law satisfy the economic demands of landlocked states, the majority of which are among the world's poorest nations.

The book also comments on the ongoing international initiatives and developments aimed at addressing the theoretical as well as practical problems faced by landlocked states. Having specialized on the transit regime, Uprety has already published a number of books.



**The Transit Regime
For Landlocked States:
International Law and
Development
Perspectives**
By: Kishor Uprety
Published by: The World Bank
Pages: 204
Price: Undisclosed



**People's Movement II 2062-63
Tremors of 19 days Agitation**
By: Arvinda Rimal
Published by: Tanka Prasad Acharya
Memorial Trust
Pages: 95
Price: Rs. 75

BOOK

People Power

A couple of books have already been published about the two-weeks-long decisive people's movement of April 2006 but only a few of them have tried to analyze the developments looking at all different perspectives. Arvinda Rimal's book is one of them.

Although Arvinda Rimal was a well known name in communist movement of Nepal, he gave up the ideology in later phase and turned into a devout devotee of god.

Being a person with inside out knowledge of Nepalese politics as well as the role of external and internal forces, Rimal has made efforts to judge the role of political forces including King Gyanendra, Maoists, political parties along with external powers like India, USA and China in the course of political movement here.

Although his book is based on newspaper reports and rumors and some of his knowledgeable sources, this is first of its kind book which sheds light on all different aspects. Despite some subjective arguments over certain issues like the role of King Gyanendra, Rimal is capable of giving some important elements in the book. This book is interesting to read for all who are interested to know more about the 19 days of struggle.

Costs Of Conflict

By: PROFESSOR HARI BANSH JHA

Conflict occurs mostly in poor countries. It has a tendency to perpetuate once it erupts as pervasive poverty makes societies more vulnerable to conflict; while conflict creates more space for poverty. The violent conflict is the prediction of future large scale violence. Even in the post conflict situations, there are chances of the war resumption. In the international arena, war resumes within five years in 44 per cent of all post conflict situations.

Nepal at the present time is also passing through post conflict phase in which open warfare has ceased to exist. However, the internal situation of the country during this period is tense with major chances of large scale violence to erupt again. This time is very crucial. Experience of many other countries shows lapse in ceasing the opportunity during this phase might cause violence again. But careful handling of the situation could help restore peace for which it is most essential to launch economic development activities vigorously.

In light of the prevailing situation, it was appropriate for the Centre for Economic and Technical Studies (CETS) to organize two-day seminar on "Role of Civil Society in Conflict Mediation and Peace Building in Nepal" on July 15 and 16, 2006 at Nepal Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhel in cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), a research wing of Social Democratic Party of Germany. During the seminar, experts on the subject of conflict and peace discussed wide range of subjects related to the role of civil society in conflict mediation and peace building. Apart from the issue like UN's role in arms management, the participants also discussed such aspects as economic costs of conflict and media's role in peace building.

It was found that ever since the eruption of conflict in Nepal in 1996 as many as 15,000 people have been killed. Nearly 270,000 people are believed to have been displaced and 1.5 million youth have been forced to migrate to various countries for security, safety and livelihood. Besides, 1,500 VDC buildings have been partially or completely destroyed. Several rural bridges, schools, communication installations, district level government offices, police posts and private properties have been damaged.

During the period 1990-2000, the GDP growth rate in Nepal was 4.8 per cent, which declined perceptibly to 2.6 per cent when the conflict escalated between 2001 and 2005. This resulted into annual economic loss of GDP by 2.2 per cent. In monetary terms, Rs. 92.5 billion is estimated to have been lost between 1991 and 2005.

Furthermore, the development expenditure recorded annual growth rate of 0.7 per cent between 1990 and 2000 at 1994-95 price. But it declined by 4.6 per cent between 2001 and 2005. Reversely, the actual defense expenditure which recorded 4.8 per cent between 1990 and 2000 at 1994-95 price grew spectacularly by nearly 12 per cent over the period 2001-2005.

The GDP growth rate in the current fiscal year 2005-06 declined to as low as 1.9 per cent from 2.7 per cent last year, which is largely due to the cumulative effective of conflict. There has also been human and capital flight from the conflict affected regions. Nearly 20 per cent of the male working age population had to leave certain affected districts. The conflict also dampened private sector investment and confidence owing to insecurity and at the same time lowered public investment caused by the curtailment of development spending. Sales of the private sector reduced by 20 to 25 per cent in the rural market.

Hence, to ensure that violent conflict does not erupt in Nepal again it is essential that the vicious circle of conflict and poverty is

broken through economic development. Development activities not only provide an opportunity to different groups to work together but it also makes them forward looking rather than looking at the past. Any job providing alternative to fighting not only provides a new identity but it also has a tendency to forget the feeling of revenge of the past. It is the degree of economic development that can determine the possibility of occurrence of shooting and looting. Generation of massive employment opportunities through developmental activities and distribution of its fruits among different groups can largely break the chances of renewing conflict.

The rebel groups need to trade war and weapons for work and employment. These people should learn to make best use of new skills to reintegrate and contribute to peacetime workforce. Besides, seed money also needs to be given the women, young and disabled for starting business, small enterprises, learning trades and finding new jobs for which vocational training should be provided by the government institutions, NGOs, and religious groups. Micro and small enterprises should be developed and employment intensive work program be initiated.

In Mozambique, over 9,000 ex-combatants were provided skills-training courses and they were also given essential toolkits to start their own businesses. Over 70 per cent of these trained persons were employed and 600 micro-enterprises were created. However, some of these activities are so expensive that the resource-constrained country like Nepal cannot afford to make all needed investment. Hence, apart from the government, the donors, private sector and the civil society should join hands together to mitigate the problem.

The civil society could also help create Multi-donor Development Fund to support development activities. Besides, they could lobby and advocate at the national and international levels for debt write off of Nepal as this country is heavily indebted and its per capita income is too low (US \$ 160 in 2004 as per World Development Report 2006). The per capita debt in this country is NRs. 13,000, which needs to be waived in the post-conflict situation so that the expected resources are diverted to the development activities.

Nepal's model of development during the post-conflict situation should also be based on the development of power. If this country has to be developed, massive power generation through hydro-power projects is unavoidable as there is immense scope of its development at micro, small, medium and mega levels. Nepal, if at all it follows this model, it can not only provide livelihood support to the population affected by the conflict but could also get rid of the insurgency related problem for ever once the poverty is rooted out from the country through the development of power.

Consolidation of peace should go simultaneously with activities related to reconstruction and development. It will not be wise enough to wait for the reconstruction and development plans to take its course till the political processes are over. If the state is not able to provide the general people means to improve their livelihood through reconstruction and development, the high pitch of April revolution is likely to wear off and the people will be disenchanted and disillusioned with this system as well in not too distant future.

(Professor Jha is Economist and Executive Director of Centre for Economic and Technical Studies, CETS)

JAPANESE MINISTER'S VISIT Support For Peace Process

Japanese senior vice minister Yasuhisa Shiozaki stresses the need to deal with the Maoists arms before poll

By A CORRESPONDENT

In the last one week, Nepal has seen visits by several high level delegations from different countries.

Although Japan is far from Nepal, it has made tremendous contribution to the overall development of Nepal. Along with a team from

the Maoists and the Nepal Army should not be treated on a par," he said.

After meeting with prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, US ambassador to Nepal James F. Moriarty also stressed the need to stop the rebels from joining the government until they lay down arms. Moriarty told Koirala that "Washington is very very concerned about what



Shiozaki: Friendly advice

the United Nations, two high level delegations from Nepal's two neighbors also visited Nepal. Indian foreign secretary Shyam Saran and Chinese vice minister for Foreign Affairs Wu Dawei, who have high security stakes in Nepal also visited Nepal.

The visit of Japanese delegation has to do with the genuine peace and prosperity in Nepal. Toeing the line of the United States and Western countries, Japanese senior vice minister said that managing the Maoists arms is necessary before formation of any interim administration in Nepal.

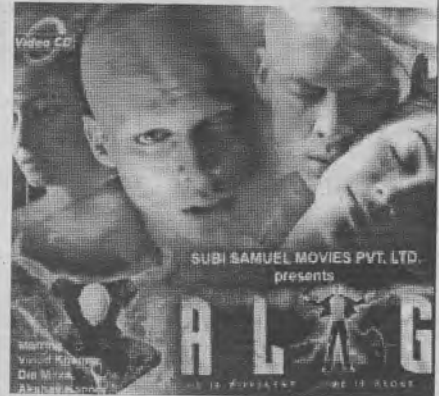
After signing peace deal between the government and Maoists, this is the first time any Japanese top-level visitor has commented on political issues. "Management of the arms used by the Maoist is the first thing to do before an interim arrangement and elections for Constituent Assembly are held," said Shiozaki. "The army raised by

could happen in Nepal at a time when the government has been struggling to deal with the rebels sternly," writes The Himalayan Times. Regarding the Maoists, interim arrangements and armed management, the Japanese government - who is the largest donor of Nepal - share similar line with western countries.

After paying three-day visit to Nepal, senior Japanese vice minister also pledged to assist in the peace process. Japanese minister also indicated that they will provide the elections monitoring mission to hold the free and fair elections.

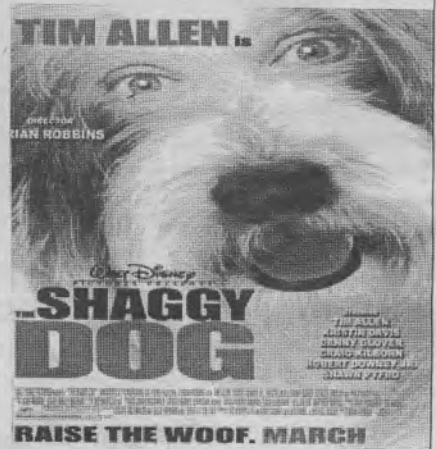
Although Japan is far away from Nepal, Japan has been always supporting Nepal in its troubling times by offering economic assistance and other means. From energy to infrastructures like road, health and education, Japanese have invested substantial amount of money to improve the infrastructures in Nepal.

CINEMA



Hindi

Phir Hera Pheri
Chup Chup Ke Fanna
The Killer
Omakara
36 China Town
Gangstar
Krish
Alag
Goalmaal



English

Shaggy Dog
She's the Man
Down in the Valley
House of Dead 2
Hale Light
Tuespasseus
Kidulthood
Over the Hedge
The Boston
Madea's Family Reunion
Source : Super star Ph : 4242000

NISHA SHARMA

Life Is A Theater

Sharma is the most prominent lady artiste who has been continuously giving out stellar performances in the stage

By KABI ADHIKARI

Perhaps that was the time when the environment of theatre was supposed to be golden age. Like the mass of people who are very eager to go to cinema halls these days, the same way thousands of people used to buy tickets in black for watching 'Drama' on stages then. Though there was no publicity or marketing through Television or ads, the stage drama attracted huge crowd. It was at the age of five that Nisha Sharma first set her steps on the stage when she played in a drama named 'Kankal' made of Bijay Malla. Thus, began the stage journey of Nisha Sharma.

Neither her family members nor others were aware of her innate talent in acting. Sharma's talent slowly became known when she played a role of a school girl in 'Prithvi Akash Magchhe'. That was her home production.

Born in 1971, in Kalimati, Kathmandu, Sharma is a gifted woman with multifaceted personality. She is an artiste who has played both in tele-serials and drama. Her first tele-serial was "Jeevan Bima" made again by Bijay Malla. She played in many popular serials including 'Dosh Kasaiko Chhaina', Nimitta Nayak', Chatureko Daupetch', 'Hat kholako goretto', 'Ahat', 'Laxmania', Sandhya Sarash', 'Bhid Dekhi Bhid Samma', among others.

She was active in tele-serials after 1990. As the value and charm of stage drama had been decreasing, she began getting popular through serials. However, in subsequent years she returned to the stage. For more than three decades now, drama has remained the centre of her life. She stepped into this world of make-belief at the early age of five. She says she will never be able to stay away from it. She has already performed in more than 40 dramas in her life.

Her performance as Nora in "A Doll's House" by Henry Ibsen made her very famous in many countries. While watching her performance, many audience found their expressions of pain in it. Sharma got the opportunity to visit Denmark, Norway, Bangladesh and so on to perform 'A Dolls House'. The response of audience was very touching, she explains.

Similarly, 'Agniko Katha' has also carried its own story that made her to visit such countries, like Russia, Denmark, Bangladesh, India etc. The participation of India, Germany, Iran, Thailand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh including Nepal had celebrated Agniko Katha in 'School of All India Medical Theatre'. "Mayadevi ka sapana" directed by herself also won accolades, where her main role is very attractive.

"To me, drama in real sense is something that depicts each and every aspect of materialistic life as well as spiritualism in an artistic manner," says she. For further support in drama field, she has visited some countries for training. In 2002, Sharma went to Denmark for 6 months. Similarly, in 2005, she got a chance to go to Norway twice where she took one and half month of training in Norwegian Theatre School. She attended theatre-related class, and process of drama in 'Theatre Academy Norway'.

She reveals that the most dangerous part of playing parts in drama is the psychological impact the one has while playacting diverse character roles.

Sharma has performed in various street dramas aimed at raising public awareness on issues such as plantation of trees, pure water, sanitation, etc.

She has also played in few feature films. But she wants to introduce herself as a practitioner artiste of theatre but not the artiste of film industry because the environment of film industry is not 'suitable' to her. The self-satisfaction that is found in theatre, cannot be found in film industry, she believes.

Apart from this, Sharma is a teacher at Gurukul. Aarohan is an organization registered in 1982 whereas Gurukul is a project. Gurukul was inaugurated in 2002. Apart from creating and staging plays, Gurukul has also been imparting theatre education. She has been 'Guru Ama' to the 17 young students who are studying at Gurukul Theatre. Students are not allowed to leave Gurukul until they complete their course of certain period. This has increased the devotion of students towards drama. Since most of the students study there on scholarship, this has added financial burdens on the association. With the partnership of Norwegian National Theatre and Denmark, it is mobilizing resources to meet those demands.

As a recognition to her contribution in this sector, she was awarded the prestigious Dabali Award for the year 2003 on World Theatre Day, Shikhar Puraskar for 'Bhid Dekhi Bhid Samma', Nimitta Nayak in 1988/89. Likewise, the ITI (International Theatre Institute) has also recognized her for her contribution.

Her husband Sunil Pokhrel is an equally big name in Nepali theatre sector. Sharma finds it very easy to work with her husband. ■

New Kids On The Block



Sharbari Chauhan and Shibani Chauhan are the latest singers to hit the market. Young and talented, the Chauhan sisters have released an album of songs for children.

The album "Sha-shi" was released recently amid a function by senior singer Fatteman Rajbhandari. There are eight songs in the album. Lyricists of the song include both established and new writers including Krishna Hari Baral, Mukunda Raj Shara, Raman Ghimire, Dinesh Adhikari, Manjul, Kiran Kharel, Ram Prasad Dhungel and Bir Singh BK. Likewise, music compositions have been given by reputed musicians such as Raju Singh, Laxman Shesh, Shambhujit Baskota, Sachin Singh, Shila Bahadur Muktan, Alokshri and Ram Bhandari.

Both the sisters study at DAV School. Their parents – father Shankar Chauhan and mother Amita Chauhan – have encouraged their daughters to sing. Amita Chauhan has produced the recording of the album and has declared that the royalty received from the sales of the cassettes and CDs would be provided to Baal Dhadkan – an NGO that helps in the treatment of children with cardiac ailments. ■

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