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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

June 08-14, 2007

Climate Change Effects on Nepal



Politics : Unity or Discord
Viewpoint : Barry Lowenkron

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प्रस्तुत छ...

रु. १,०००/- मा लोटस बचत खाता*

...अब मात्र



Lotus

बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकले तपाईंहरूको विश्वास र चाहनालाई ध्यानमा राखि फेरि ल्यायो जीवनभरको लागि मात्र रु. १,०००/- मा लोटस बचत खाता । यो योजना नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकका सबै शाखाहरूमा लागू हुनेछ ।

विरसूत जानकारीको लागि नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकको शाखाहरूमा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला ।



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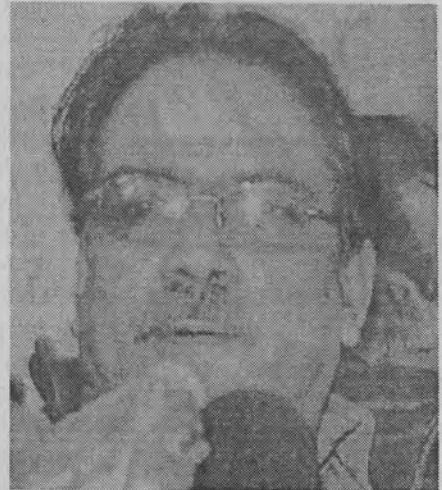
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Only accord, not discord, can save the nation Page 20

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Dr. Minendra Rijal Central leader of Nepali Congress (Democratic) Dr. Rijal talks about his party's positions on key issues

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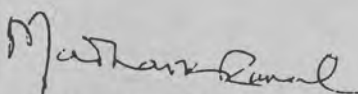
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Soundrels can become politicians and get away, not the quislings. Sooner or later they will have to pay a heavy price for their treason. It was, indeed, shocking to find the country gradually sliding towards disintegration coming back home after three and a half month travel abroad. A government and parliament without a recognized opposition, still unable to function smoothly as all the constituents are fighting to nurse their own interests. Except glib talking through their hats to keep the millions of poor Nepalis opiated of a new shining future, the politicians of leading political parties, constituents of the government, are busy strengthening their own positions totally oblivious where they are leading the nation to. The Prime Minister is so isolated and helpless that he cannot take any action against criminals whom he denounces in public. There is absolutely no law and order in the country. For over a decade, this country's economy has been shattered taking the poorest country in the region to become the poorest country in the whole continent of Asia. Even the diplomatic community, which enjoys full security even in an enemy country, has to warn the government to perform their duty and provide them total security. This community, which constitutes the main financial foundation that is keeping the bankrupt country afloat, is fully aware about the incompetence of the government. They also know that their contributions are not yielding any tangible fruit. But they don't mind their pittance going to waste. They can afford it. What surprises us is why the United States, the mightiest power in the world, and India, the mightiest power in the region, are blindly supporting this impotent establishment? Whom are they befriending? The corrupt and nincompoop politicians or the poor millions of Nepal? It is time the poor people of Nepal must be made wiser to such a situation. The lotus-eating Nepalis have to be awakened up. And this must be done by some patriotic people who must pluck the courage to face the anti-national political forces and jump into the national political arena. We know there are unlimited faceless people who are extremely worried at the prevailing situation in the country. They need a charismatic leader to arouse them from their uncertain state of mind. In the total dearth of honest and patriotic political leadership, the King should have been able to fill the gap. But King Gyanendra forgot he was living in the twenty-first century. His unrealistic ambitions only contributed to aggravate the fluid politics of the country and have brought it to the brink of disintegration. He has only created a situation where people have been forced to think about the redundancy of monarchy in the country. Once famed Nepal's security forces, too, seem to be engulfed in an atmosphere of hesitation. It seems they are losing the profound confidence that kept them bubbling all the time. Dear readers, my absence from the country was indispensable. As such, I would like to request you to bear with me. Now, the time has come when we cannot prevaricate if we want to save our motherland from being totally annihilated. We must not forget that "procrastination now is not only the thief of time, but as events forecast, will also cause us lose our identity."



Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Economic Concerns

The cover story "Hamstrung Economy" (SPOTLIGHT June 1) shows how the situation of economy has deteriorated sharply. It shows the naked facts that Nepal is moving downhill rapidly. If this rot is not arrested immediately, the country may land in a ditch. Prudent economic policies must be implemented to prevent economic debacle and steer the country out of turmoil.

Ganesh Bista
Dhobighat

respecting people. So, let us not beg others to pay for our fuel. Let us educate our people and tell them the utter need to rise the price of fuel. If properly told, Nepali people will be willing to bear additional burden on their wallets.

Jiten Gurung
Sanepa

Bhutanese March

The Long March by Bhutanese refugees ("Long March Cut Short" SPOTLIGHT June 1) marked beginning of a new phase of agitation by the refugees who have been suffering from decade long injustice and inhumane treatment by not only Bhutanese but also Indian authorities. Just like 'poverty anywhere is threat to prosperity everywhere,' 'injustice anywhere is threat to justice everywhere.' The wise and prudent leaders of India must see this stark reality and understand the gravity of the problem. They cannot and must not hide behind the 'bilateral issue' shield any longer. Look at the injustice and suffering of fellow human beings living in dilapidated camps. These over 100,000 human beings have lost their lives, their land and their hopes. Don't play with fire. No one should expect that these refugees will continue to bear the problem forever. There will come a time when their tolerance will break and they will resort to armed insurrection. If and when such situation comes, that will be unfortunate to Nepal, Bhutan and India also.

Shiva Thapa
Satdobato

Korean Perspective

The interview of South Korean ambassador Sang-Jung Nam (SPOTLIGHT June 1) provided insight into how South Korean government has been helping Nepal. The ambassador highlighted the importance of signing EPS between Nepal and Korea. Fortunately, recently the parliament passed an amendment bill on foreign employment, which has allowed the Nepal government to sign the EPS. Hopefully, the EPS will benefit more Nepali workers, and also Nepali economy – which is heavily dependent on remittance income.

Komal Joshi
Lagankhel

Violence Mars Nation

Apropos the cover story "Hamstrung Economy" (SPOTLIGHT June 1), it is clear that the unending series of violence have had terrible effect on the socioeconomic sector of the country. There have been recent reports in news media that there are now nine separate armed groups operating in various parts of the country. Most of them are based in Terai. This is a scary development. When one armed group Maoists were able to wreak such havoc, one can only guess what will happen if all these nine groups start to grow and escalate violence. If that really materializes, we can say goodbye to our economy. Nowhere in the world can economy prosper when there is total absence of law and order. As chaos sets in, investments and capitals will fly. And the people of Nepal will be left high and dry.

Diwas KC
New Baneshwore

Message of Melamchi

The Maoist Minister Hisila Yami has shown that she is able to take stand but now it is high time she demonstrated flexibility (Hamstrung Economy" SPOTLIGHT June 1). Everyone knows that the Severn Trent is not a credible and reliable company. But since the Asian Development Bank wants to see previous agreements honored by the

government, Yami should now issue a statement agreeing to let ST come because ADB will otherwise pull out of Melamchi. Given the growing population, Melamchi is a must and Yami also knows it. So lets not jeopardize the whole project just because one company's credibility is not good. Besides, the Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited (KUKL) is already there to monitor and oversee the ST once it starts to manage valley's water. The KUKL – which is led by government officials and private sector representations – should and could monitor ST and not allow it to repeat failures here. Besides, by so doing Yami will earn political points as well – both by her stand and by her flexibility.

Narsingh Khadka
Baluwatar

Oily Politics

It is actually a matter of tremendous national shame that our Prime Minister has been compelled to beg the Indian ambassador to ask Indian Oil Corporation to resume normal supplies of fuel (Hamstrung Economy" SPOTLIGHT June 1). Adding insult to the injuries, the IOC refused to resume normal supplies. It should be clear to everyone that IOC will not compromise with its commercial interests. And we should stop expecting such concessions. We may be poor but we are self-

Water Shortage Worsens

Due to dry weather and growing demands, the water shortage has worsened in Kathmandu valley. According to Nepal Water Supply Corporation (NWSC), supply has decreased by 50 percent. An engineer at the NWSC said that because of the short supply it is difficult to supply water to a household even once every four days. He said the NWSC hardly supplies 88 million liters of water a day down from its normal supply strength of 160 MLD. The shortage has resulted due to decline in water level in surface sources.

Kantipur daily reports

PM Dissatisfied By Notes Of Dissents

Referring to notes of dissents written down by five parties on various topics along with the recent 11-point agreement among eight parties, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has expressed dissatisfaction. Addressing a mass meeting held by Nepali Congress (NC) in Birtamode, Jhapa on Saturday (June 2), PM Koirala said it was improper for parties to write down note of dissent on issues of high national importance. "Only the Constituent Assembly can complete the big change. With their notes of dissent, I feel they have given me with incomplete responsibility," he said. PM Koirala said that in order to carry out huge responsibility of conducting elections, the government might be compelled to take some tough decisions. He expressed his firm commitment to hold CA polls by Mangsir. On the issue of republic, PM Koirala said it will come gradually through a process. "I don't think the King, who is also a part of this society, has to flee just because republic is announced. I also think that republic might come even without announcement," he said. *Kantipur daily reports*

SC Asks Govt To Compensate Families Of Disappeared

The apex court, on Friday (June 1),

ordered the government to pay compensation to the families of 83 persons disappeared by the state. In response to a number of similar writ petitions, a division bench of the SC comprising judges Khil Raj Regmi and Kalyan Shrestha ordered the government to pay Rs .5 lakh each to the families of three disappeared persons, Bipin Bhandari, Dil Bahadur Rai and Rajendra Dhakal, and Rs 1 lakh each to the families of 79 other missing persons. The bench also asked the authorities to pay Rs 2 lakh as compensation to the family of Chakra Bahadur Katawal, a high-school teacher from Okhaldhunga, who was killed in government detention. The court also ordered the government to form a high-level commission to probe the involuntary disappearances. Almost all involuntary disappearances by the state had occurred during the decade-long Maoist insurgency.

Compiled from reports

House Disruption: Rs 29.37 M Goes Down The Drain

The parliament resumed on Thursday (May 31) after a two-month-long disruption, causing a cumulative financial loss of Rs 29.37 million. This amount is the sum total of salary and allowances meant for 329 lawmakers, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. Each legislator draws about Rs 44,288 as salary and perk every month. On top of that, s/he draws Rs 150 as transport fare after attending a parliamentary meeting. A legislator's monthly pay comprises Rs 18,240 as basic salary. His personal assistant draws Rs 9,000 as monthly salary. The legislator also gets Rs 1,248 for the payment of electricity and water tariffs, Rs 6,500 as housing allowance, Rs 2,000 for payment of telephone bill and Rs 1,300 for miscellaneous expenses. Each legislator draws Rs 200 as per diem. The Speaker of the House draws about Rs 60,600 as salary and allowances per month if he does not use the government-provided quarter. He is also paid for the payment

of telephone bill and is provided with transport facility. The government also provides salary to the Speaker's personal assistant. The Speaker's staffers comprise one undersecretary, a section officer, a computer operator, two drivers and two peons. The Deputy Speaker draws Rs 54,600 as salary and perks each month and is provided with transport facilities. The Deputy Speaker can also keep a personal assistant. Her staffers comprise one undersecretary, a senior non-gazetted officer, two drivers and a peon. The breakdown of the Deputy Speaker's pay is: Rs 19,200 as basic salary, Rs 20,000 for housing, Rs 6,700 for electricity, Rs 6,700 for telephone, Rs 1,700 as miscellaneous expenses and Rs 300 for newspapers. Chairpersons of parliamentary committees and whip of the ruling parties enjoy similar facilities. The government disburses to each of them around Rs 46,468 every month. They draw Rs 18,720 as basic salary. The rest of the money is meant for paying salary to the personal assistant, clearing electricity, water and telephone bills, purchase of newspapers and other miscellaneous expenses. They also get fuel for their vehicles. Their staffers comprise two drivers and a peon. Each of the Chief Whips of the ruling parties draws about Rs 49,198 per month in salary and perks. Each of them gets Rs 20,400 as basic salary; Rs 9,000 for paying the personal assistant; Rs 8,250 as housing allowance; Rs 1,248 for payment of electricity and water tariff; Rs 2,000 for payment of telephone bill; Rs 300 for newspapers and Rs 2,000 under miscellaneous expenses. A chief whip gets 230 litres of petrol every month and five litres of mobil every three months. His staff comprises one undersecretary, a senior non-gazetted officer, two drivers and a peon. Lawmakers say they have not drawn per diem as it is being collected for the victims of Janaandolan II. *The Himalayan Times daily reports*

Bomb Explosion At Maoist Party Office

Two bombs were hurled at the party office of Maoists at Buddhanagar, Kathmandu on Tuesday (May 29) night. One of them exploded and caused slight damage at window panes of the first floor of the office, say reports. Police officials have said that one of the bombs, which did not explode, was found at the gate of the office. Police said both were socket bombs. Maoist leader Dinanath Sharma condemned the bomb explosion and has asked the government to take action against the culprits. Meanwhile, The Himalayan Times has reported that it received an anonymous call from a person identifying himself as an activist of Nepal Defense Army claiming responsibility for the blast. A few days ago, too, two bombs were discovered at the party office premises. They did not go off. Later, the Nepal Defense Army had claimed responsibility for planting those bombs as well. The Nepal Defense Army is a relatively unknown organization, which is said to be fighting for the restoration of Hindu state. In the past, it has exploded bombs in Birgunj and Biratnagar. *Compiled from reports*

Pay Dues For Normal

Supplies: Ashraf

The Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) must clear its dues and abide by its agreement with Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) for smooth supplies of fuel, said Jawed Ashraf, commerce counselor at the Indian Embassy. Addressing a press meet on Tuesday (May 29), Ashraf said that NOC should make full payment of current supplies on schedule and liquidate outstanding dues at the rate of Rs 240 million per month. He said that since this is a commercial issue between two state-run entities, the problem must be solved on commercial basis. Ashraf rejected reports that IOC has reduced supplies of fuel by 40 percent. He said the reduction may at most be around 25 percent. "The problem is that NOC has

been increasing its demand enormously without being in a position to pay for it," he said. Ashraf pointed out that price of petroleum products in Nepal was lower than in India despite the higher duty and transportation cost in Nepal. He added that although IOC had no contractual obligation, it had been supplying fuel to NOC as a goodwill gesture even in the absence of payment. The NOC's outstanding dues to IOC have crossed Rs 4.85 billion. *Nepalnews.com reports*

Refugees Suspend Long March

Following the meeting among Indian authorities, Nepali administrators and Bhutanese refugees in Panitanki on Wednesday (May 30), the refugees have agreed to suspend their Long March for 15 days. "It was agreed in the meeting that talks would be held between authorities of India, Nepal and Bhutan and refugees to solve the problem within 15 days. Arrested refugees would also be released, while compensation would be provided to families of refugees killed in clashes with the police and the injured would be supported in their treatment," said Jaya Mukunda Khanal, CDO of Jhapa. Meanwhile, the UN refugee agency has expressed extreme concern over "a violent confrontation on the Mechi bridge, that divides Nepal and India, between marching refugees and Indian police and is saddened over the death of one refugee and several injured." "We are indeed extremely concerned by the latest developments and fully understand the increasing frustration of the refugees about the lack of progress on repatriation," said Abraham Abraham, UNHCR representative in Nepal. Consistent with the call of the Government of Nepal, UNHCR appeals to all refugees to return to their respective camps and urges all sides to refrain from violence and the use of force, the UNHCR states in a press release. "The UN refugee agency together with the international community will make every effort to

ensure that as many doors as possible are opened in terms of a lasting solution to the plight of the refugees, including voluntary repatriation and the implementation of third country resettlement. It strongly supports the right of refugees to return to Bhutan, but at the same time asks refugees to uphold the right of every individual to make informed choices and take decisions regarding his or her own future."

Compiled from reports

PM Terms YCL As Young Criminal League

A visibly upset Prime Minister has termed Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) as a band of criminals. Talking to a delegation of businessmen in Baluwatar on Monday (June 4), PM Girija Prasad Koirala said, "They are doing whatever they like. I think they are Young Criminal League." He vowed to take strong action against YCL and directed Home Minister Krishna Sitaula to proceed with action. Koirala's strong reaction came in the wake of public trial they (YCL) held about controversial banker Sitaram Prasai after abducting him. YCL cadres abducted Prasai from his office Cottage and Small Industries Development Bank Limited in Kamaladi on Sunday. He was quizzed by YCL cadres regarding what they claim as allegations of embezzlement of Rs 70 crore. On Monday, Prasai was produced before thousands of people at Open Theater before he was handed over to Metropolitan Police Range in Hanumandhoka. At Open Theater, Prasai rejected all charges of corruption leveled against him. YCL's valley commander Sagar said that they will take action against Prasai if police do not do so. Nine months ago, Nepal Rastra Bank had asked police to arrest him on charges of fraud but the police did not arrest him. Meanwhile, the police have filed case against him at Kathmandu district court and have kept him in remand. *Leading dailies report*



Speaker Subas Nemwang at the 41st AGM function of FNCCI
Nepal Samacharpatra

MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOR AND TRANSPORT

Management Ramesh Lekhak has said that the government will sign labor pact with South Korea within a month. Following the agreement, Nepalese workers can go to South Korea under Employment Permit System (EPS) scheme. The EPS will allow them full-fledged recognition and legal benefits. "We have accorded priority to this pact," said Lekhak. By approving the amendment bill on foreign employment act, the parliament has already opened the way for signing the pact. With the new amendment, the government can send workers abroad by itself. This provision is necessary to send workers to South Korea under EPS. It is expected that 5000 Nepali workers can go to South Korea – a lucrative destination – annually.

THE VISITING US ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Barry R. Lowenkron has said that he believes earlier agreement on deciding the fate of monarchy through Constituent Assembly (CA) should be honored. At a time when some parties including Maoists have been demanding that the parliament declare republic immediately, the senior Bush administration official advised to stick with the earlier agreement. The eight parties have signed agreement to decide the fate of monarchy by a simple majority by the first meeting of elected CA. If there was an agreement (on CA) and if Nepali people are saying let's have the CA, then have the CA and move on to elections, Lowenkron told reporters after meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Bhojraj Pokharel. Don't say lets put it aside and have republic instead, he added. Lowenkron said that violence has no role in elections and added there should be no tolerance for violence. The US official also met with Foreign Minister Sahana Pradhan and Speaker Subas Nemwang on Thursday. Talking to reporters after his meeting with Lowenkron, Speaker Nemwang said that the US official

inquired if the situation of security had become complicated. "In view of recent incident with the American ambassador outside valley, he expressed worries about law and order situation and asked if it could affect CA polls," Nemwang said.

NEPAL OIL CORPORATION (NOC), on Thursday (May 31), made payment of Rs 1 billion to Indian Oil Corporation (IOC). Subsequently, the IOC has informed it will resume normal fuel supplies from Friday. The NOC sent the payment after Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) released the money as per the decision of the cabinet. "Of the total outstanding dues we paid Rs 1 billion," said deputy general manager Umesh Dahal. "We have requested them to resume normal supplies. They (IOC) have said they will provide fuel for as many days as can be supplied for one billion rupees," he said. Now the remaining outstanding dues stand at Rs 4.95 billion. Because of non-payment of dues, the IOC had cut down supplies by 40 percent triggering acute fuel shortage in Nepal.

STATING THAT THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE to Melamchi Water Supply Project (MWSP), Minister for Works and Physical Planning Hisila Yami has written a letter to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) requesting it to review its condition. In her letter written on behalf of the government, Yami has said that she is willing to abide by any option other than handing over the management contract to Severn Trent. "The government has written the letter in soft language," she said, adding that she has stressed on public-private partnership. We are willing to work in public-private partnership model as per ADB's concept, she has written in the letter. Yami has clarified that Maoists are not against Melamchi project.

SIXTEEN PEOPLE WERE BURIED to death in a snowstorm in remote region of Dolpa district where they had gone to collect Yarshagumba. The herb hunters were buried under snowstorm in Tyangtyagelake area. Reports says hundreds of villagers of Sharmi VDC have gone to the northern region of the district for collecting the precious herb. The dead bodies were later recovered by rescue mission led by Nepali Army.

NINE PERSONS INCLUDING FIVE OF A FAMILY were killed when bomb went off destroying a house in Gothadi village of Palpa district. The house belonging to Tara Bahadur Thada Magar – located 35 km southeast from Tansen – was destroyed in the explosion. Maoists had left behind many bombs in buckets in the village during the insurgency and locals were using them to break rocks while constructing the Gothadi-Khairani road, locals said. "Locals took three buckets full of bombs in Tara Bahadur's house on Tuesday morning. Three went off simultaneously while they were taking them out of a bucket," said an eyewitness Arjun Regmi. ■

"I don't think the King, who is also a part of this society, has to flee just because republic is announced. I also think that republic might come even without announcement."

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, addressing a mass meeting in Jhapa, in Kantipur.

"The soil is the same, the people are the same then why do we talk about new Nepal? We should rather work to build peaceful and prosperous Nepal."

Sher Bahadur Deuba, president of Nepali Congress (Democratic), in Dhangadhi.

"In a multi-cultural country like Nepal, it will be dangerous to go for federalism on ethnic lines."

Ram Chandra Poudel, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, talking to reporters in Jhapa.

"We supported Girija Prasad Koirala because of his international image."

Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader, in Gorkha.

"Moriarty (US ambassador) was stoned by the people because he is



conspiring against the people by visiting army barracks. He should be expelled from the country."

Suresh Ale Magar, Maoist MP, addressing a party meet in Charikot, in Nepal Samacharpatra daily.

"The government lends moral support to the movement for repatriation and democracy by Bhutanese refugees."

Krishna Sitaula, Home Minister, at a press meet in Jhapa.

"They (Madhesi agitators) are working towards disintegration of the nation."

Keshab Mainali, president of Chure Bhawar Ekata Samaj, in Jana Bhawana.

"The problem is that Nepal Oil Corporation has been increasing its demand enormously without being in a position to pay for it."

Jawed Ashraf, commerce counselor at the Indian Embassy, at a press meet.

TRANSITION

TRANSFERRED: The Home Ministry has decided to transfer two dozen Chief District Officers (CDOs) and police chiefs of some Terai districts. As per the Ministry's decision, Madhav Prasad Regmi has been transferred as CDO in Morang district; Prem Narayan Sharma in Sunsari; Himnath Dawadi in Saptari; Bal Krishna Panthi in Siraha; Mod Raj Dotel in Kathmandu; Bimal Prasad Dhakal in Bara; Netra Prasad Sharma in Mahottari; Ram Sharan Chimoriya in Dhanusha; Shashi Shekhar Shrestha in Makwanpur; and Bhola Prasad Shiwakoti in Kaski. Likewise, Surya Prasad Shrestha has been transferred as CDO in Ramechhap district; Ratna Raj

Pandey in Chitwan; Shambhu Ghimire in Palpa; Jitendra Bhandari in Parbat; Abdul Kalam Khan in Gulmi; Drona Pokharel in Dhading; Sharda Bhakta Poudel in Kanchanpur; Tej Prasad Poudel in Pyuthan and Phanindra Pokharel in Taplejung. Furthermore, the Ministry has transferred Shambhu Koirala and Kamal Kanta Regmi to the Home Ministry and Shankar Aryal has been dispatched to Sarlahi as assistant CDO. Kathmandu's CDO Sthaneshwore Devkota has been transferred to manage Department of Prison Administration. Likewise Superintendent of Police Milan Basnet has been transferred to Saptari; Mingmar Sherpa to Siraha; Bhog Bahadur Thapa

to Janakpur; Subash Chandra Choudhary to Kailali and Ganesh KC to Sarlahi.

LEFT: UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, leaders KP Oli and Bharat Mohan Adhikary for New Delhi, India for political consultations. Nepali Congress leader Chakra Bastola, NC-Democratic leader Prakash Man Singh, NSP-Anandidevi leader Hridayesh Tripathy, Maoist leader Dinanath Sharma, leftist leader Nabaraj Subedi, also for India.

RETURNED: Barry Lowenkron, US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, after completing four-day visit to Nepal.

BETRAYAL OF HILLY PEOPLE'S INTEREST

(Nepal's Water Resources Development)

- By Dr. AB Thapa

Politicians, planners and entrepreneurs in Nepal are seen telling the public that the livelihood of the local people would be greatly improved by implementing large hydropower projects such as the West Seti, Karnali Chisapani, Tama-Kosi, Kali-Gandaki-2, Buri-Gandaki, Andhi Khola projects, which are storage type projects. Is it really true that the people would be better off after the implementation of large storage dam projects? Or it is merely a deception. Let us see what the river basin residents of Canada are saying now thirty years after the implementation of the Columbia River storage dam projects.

Columbia River dam projects have provided enormously large benefits to Canada. Apart from the direct power benefits generated at hydropower stations in Canada, that country received from the USA a big sum of money in return for flood control benefits to accrue to latter. On top of it, Canada is receiving in perpetuity from the USA in return for providing the water storage 50% of the additional power generated at 11 downstream hydropower stations in the USA. Despite the fact that Canada took full advantages of the Columbia River dam projects, the people living in the Columbia river basin are still feeling deep resentment at the way they were treated. The following are the excerpts from the Canadian reports published sometimes back.

Basin People in Canada Bitter About Projects

In 1967 an American resource economist had predicted that the Columbia River Treaty would provide an economic "shortfall" for the Columbia Basin. Today that loss is considered incalculable. If negative environmental and social impacts are considered the effects on the region are even more aggravated. The Basin bears the symptoms of the negative Treaty impacts with lower development and economic growth in many parts of the Basin, particularly those areas affected most directly by the reservoirs. The resentment and bitterness over how the region was treated thirty years ago is still in the minds and memories of many Basin residents. The Treaty dams

created four reservoirs flooding 60,000 hectares of land in the Columbia Basin. Included in the flooded land were dozens of small communities and thousands of acres of farmland and harvestable forest. The reservoirs damaged a regional fishery already crippled by the loss to other dams on the Columbia River. The flooding destroyed precious wildlife habitat and turned pristine natural lakes into huge fluctuating industrial reservoirs. The Arrow Lakes reservoir can rise and fall seven stories in height at the beach at Nakusp. During recent drought years Valemount residents had to drive more than twenty miles on lake bottom from their community dock on the Kinbasket reservoir to find water. As well as destroying potential wealth the reservoirs have acted as barriers to resource development in parts of the region. But perhaps the worst impacts were the human costs. Thirty years ago more than 2,300 Basin residents were uprooted and moved from their homes and, in many cases, their livelihoods to make way for the reservoirs.

Agriculture in Nepalese Hills and Dams

The valley bottoms of all major rivers are extensively cultivated, with paddy, maize, cereals, pulses, mustard etc being the most common crops. Reservoir formation would eliminate these cultivated lands. There will be enormously large loss of agricultural production

Large Number of People Evicted

The areas to be submerged by the proposed storage reservoir are densely populated. According to 1979 UNDP study about 47,000 people would be displaced to implement the 360 MW Kali-Gandaki 2 storage project. Similarly according to 1979 UNDP study about 22,000 and 14,000 people would be displaced if the 180 MW Andhikhola and 460 MW Buri-Gandaki projects respectively are implemented. These are the storage projects selected by the Government to implement in near future.

Earthquakes and Dams

The geotectonic lines in Nepal which determine the geological structure of the Basin consist of two major thrusting faults; the Main Central Thrust (MCT) and the

Main Boundary Fault (MBF). These faults extend in an east-west trend across Nepal, acting as the major division between formation groups.

The formation of a large reservoir overlying a tectonically active and faulted areas would lead to an increase in seismic events. An existing dam at Koyna in India was believed to have triggered an earthquake of magnitude 6.3.

Dams and Development

Recently World Commission on Dams has published a report "Dams and Development". The report provides in-depth information on dams related issues. Few such issues are presented hereinafter.

Dams at the Centre of Controversy

Dams have made an important and significant contribution to human development, and the benefits derived from them have been considerable. In too many cases an unacceptable and often unnecessary price has been paid to secure those benefits, especially in social and environmental terms by people displaced and by natural environment.

Dams are at the centre of controversy, dispute, and even violent confrontation. There are many reasons largely related to the scale and scope of the dams and the impacts.

Impact of Dams on Local People Devastating

Large dams are unique among major infrastructure projects in the scope and manner in which they affect the pattern of access to resources, and their distribution across space, time and social groups. They are generally justified by national or regional macro-economic benefits while their physical impact are locally concentrated, mostly affecting those within the confines of the river valleys, and along the river reaches.

Large dams have significantly altered many of the world's river basins, with disruptive, lasting and usually involuntary impacts on the livelihoods and socio-cultural foundations of tens of millions of people living in the regions. The impacts of dam-building on people and livelihoods- both above and below dams- have been particularly devastating in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where existing river systems supported local economies and cultural way of life of a large population containing diverse communities.

Local People Ruined

Dams take a set of resources- a river and the lands along

its banks, generating food and livelihood for local people; and transform them into another set of resources- a reservoir, hydropower and irrigation, providing benefit to people living elsewhere. There is a sense therefore in which large dams export river and lands, removing them from the productive domain of one community to make them available to another. Grand Coulee provides a vivid example. Native Americans were physically displaced by a project that provided power to industry and households in a city some 250 km away. Furthermore the water and land that had previously supported their livelihoods was dammed and diverted to provide white settlers with irrigated farming

Resettlement Problems

Resettlement for the large dams tends to be on a large scale than resettlement for other types of physical infrastructure. Roads and thermal power plants can be sited on marginal land whereas dams generally flood rich and fertile agriculture land.

Those resettled from dam or reservoir sites very often lose not only their homes but also their livelihoods. Relocation in rural settings where good land is already occupied can be problematic.

Rio Principle and Environment

In 1986 the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Development (DRD). It marked a significant step by the international community in developing a normative framework that specifies responsibilities in applying a human rights approach to development. It moved beyond the sphere of individual human rights to address relationships between different interest groups in society and their interaction with the state. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development adopted in June 1992 the Declaration usually known as the Rio Principles. Several of them are of immediate relevance to water and energy resources management. Principle 3 of that Declaration recognizes the right to development, but insists that it be met in an equitable way that considers future generations as well as present participants in development. Principle 4 of the Declaration insists that sustainable development requires environment to be integrated with the development process and form a central feature of the aim of that process.

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

CA ELECTIONS

December Deadline

Despite plethora of dissenting notes, the eight parties agree, in principle, to hold CA elections by mid December

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

It is a strange document. Although leaders of eight parties hailed it as 11-point agreement, there were five notes of dissents registered by five of the eight parties – undermining the credibility and strength of the whole agreement.

On May 31, the top leaders of eight parties reached a broad agreement to hold the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections by Mangsir (mid-December). The meeting also agreed to ask the Electoral Constituency Delineation Commission (ECDC) to review its report. As per the agreement, the cabinet will fix the actual election date after consultations with the Election Commission (EC).

The agreement, however, was marred

by notes of dissent by five parties. The Maoists, despite having signed the agreement to hold the polls by Mangsir, have stated that they still continue to believe that CA elections might not happen till the monarchy is there. Maoist leader Dinanath Sharma said that his party has agreed for new elections date but has expressed different consent as regards the reason why the elections could not take place on stipulated time.

The UML has written down a note of dissent on the decision to review the ECDC report. The party has stated that it believes only Proportional Representation-based electoral system will resolve problems.

On the other hand, Nepal Sadbhavana

Party (NSP-Anandidevi) has written a note of dissent stating that the ECDC report be totally reviewed. Furthermore, Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP) has written a note of dissent demanding land right to tillers. People's Front also wrote down a note of dissent demanding republic declaration from the parliament.

Following the dissent-marred understanding, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala rued that he was being given crippled responsibility. Hitting out at the trend of noting down dissents in agreements, he said he needs complete and adequate responsibility to implement the agreement.

Meanwhile, after two months of being in a state of limbo, the parliament finally resumed its session on May 31 following the decision by the eight parties to review the report of ECDC – as per the demands of Madhesi MPs. On the very first day, seven bills and some reports were presented at the parliament. The parliament also approved the much-awaited Foreign Employment Third Amendment bill - opening the legal path for 5000 Nepali workers to go to South Korea for work this year.

GOVT-MJF TALKS

Hard Negotiations

The first round of formal talks only took up soft issues. Hard negotiations on difficult issues still remain

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The first formal talks between the government and the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) finally begun on June 1.

In the first round of the formal talks between the government and the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) held in Janakpur, the government has agreed with one half of the 26-point demands put forth by the Forum.

The demands that have been met by the government team include forming State Restructuring Commission;

declaring those killed during Madhes agitation as martyrs; providing compensation to families of the dead; and providing relief and treatment to those injured during the agitation. Likewise, the government side also agreed to carry on dialogue to seek help of UN technical team in their further talks; drop charges against MJF leaders; ensure access of Madhesis, Dalits, women, Janjatis and backward people to all organs and levels of the state; and proportionate distribution of

resources.

They also agreed on demands like returning seized properties by the Maoists; ensuring industrial security and declaring date for Constituent Assembly elections soon.

However, the two sides are yet to take up difficult issues. MJF president Upendra Yadav said political issues will be raised in next round of talks. "Issues like autonomous Madhes province, right to self determination and census will be taken up on next round of talks," he said.

The government talks team was led by Peace and Reconstruction Minister Ram Chandra Poudel and the MJF team was led by its chairman Upendra Yadav. Poudel's team also comprised two state ministers, Gyanendra Karki and Ram Chandra Yadav. The MJF talk team comprised its coordinator Sitanandan Raya, Mohammed Nasir Siddiqui and Kishor Biswas.

DIPLOMATS' CONCERN

Shocking Insecurity

Irresponsible acts by Maoists force diplomats to issue a strong statement demanding security

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Although they have joined the government, the Maoists have not been able to rein in their overzealous activists as was demonstrated by the pelting of stones at the vehicle carrying US ambassador James Moriarty in Jhapa recently.

Unfortunately for the country, the normally reticent diplomats have now issued a strong statement demanding security. Such actions by diplomats give a very negative message and damage the credibility of whole Nepal not only that of Maoists.

The Maoists are peeved at the continual inclusion of their party in the terrorist list by the US Department of State despite their becoming a part of Nepal government. But, wrongfully and dangerously, they have equated that move by the US government with the individual ambassador.

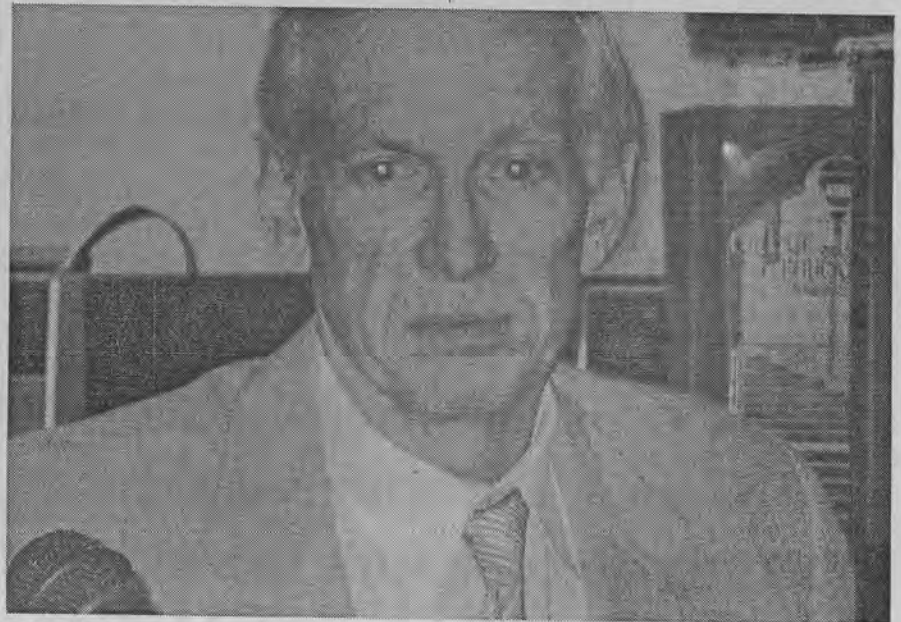
Ambassador Moriarty, who is wrapping up his term in Nepal in few weeks' time, has been drawing huge criticisms from the Maoists because of his candid remarks about the path Nepal is heading towards. He has always been in the forefront pointing out the dangers of Maoists' joining mainstream politics without making the strategic decision to abandon violence. This, he has been advocating not as his personal position but as that of the US government.

By pelting stones at Moriarty, therefore, the Maoists have not only hit at the individual but the representative of a sovereign country.

What followed was a rare censure by the whole of diplomatic corps expressing displeasure at the lack of security.

Last week, 15 diplomatic missions based in Nepal issued joint concerns about insecurity to them and have demanded safe environment for them to function. The diplomatic corps of Nepal

have demanded that security and safe movement of foreign diplomats must be assured.



Moriarty: Bitter experience

"The Diplomatic Corps of Nepal is deeply concerned by an upsurge in recent weeks of security incidents that have threatened foreign diplomats or otherwise impeded their work in the country. We condemn any and all attempts to harm, threaten, or interfere with foreign diplomats working in Nepal," a statement issued by Diplomatic Corps of Nepal said. In the strongly-worded statement, the diplomatic corps have termed as unacceptable the "targeting or threatening of diplomats in Nepal on their countries' official business."

The statement urges all political groups and activists to respect customary norms and reject violence or intimidation. Significantly, it also reminds the government "of its role to ensure security and safety for diplomats."

The statement was issued on behalf of Embassies of the United States of America, France, Germany, India, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Denmark, Israel, Australia, South Korea, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Bangladesh and Finland.

Immediately, the government was compelled to respond to the diplomats' concerns. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala apologized on behalf of the government during his meeting with visiting US Assistant Secretary of State Barry Lowenkron. Home Ministry's

spokesperson Baman Prasad Neupane said the government is ready to tighten security arrangements if diplomatic missions call for the same.

On the other hand, Maoist leaders are yet to take responsibility for their behavior. A senior Maoist leader Suresh Ale Magar publicly said that Nepali people had pelted stones at Moriarty because he started making rounds of army barracks to hatch conspiracy. Speaking at a program in Charikot, he accused Moriarty of visiting army barracks and conspiring against Nepali people. Ale Magar was recently denied a visa to travel to the United States to attend a program organized by the UN.

As such, the concerns expressed by diplomatic community could damage the government's efforts to hold credible polls in a free, fair and peaceful environment. ■

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Tipping Point

Although Nepal emits very negligible - 0.01 percent – of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) into the atmosphere, global warming, is gradually changing its climate triggering profound impact on the livelihood of the people. Most of the vulnerable people of the consequences of climate change are poor subsistence-based farmers whose livelihood method though being nature-friendly are ultimately becoming victims. The climate change is now a stark reality. As Nepal celebrated June 5 as World Environment Day with usual rituals, how it will develop programs to cope with this new reality remains to be seen. As this year's slogan is *Melting Ice: A Hot Topic*, it is relevant to Nepal's condition

By KESHAB POUDEL

Kaji Sherpa, 58, a resident of Junabeshi of Solukhumbu district, had not known much about mosquito bites in the past. Now, it is reality in his life. Gyalu Tamang, 68, of Chandanbari of Rasuwa district could not grow tomatoes in his village, which lies above 12,000 feet from sea level, in the past. But now he can grow many vegetables including tomatoes.

Sherpa and Tamang both of them now feel the climate is hotter than it used to be two decades ago. This is what almost all people above the age

of 50 living in the Himalayan regions have felt of late.

"I didn't know about mosquito bites when I was young. Now, you can see mosquitoes here despite cold. We also grew some vegetables in our farm land which we could not grow in the past," said Kaji, not knowing scientific reasons behind it.

Living as a subsistence-based farmer and virtually emitting zero Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) into atmosphere, Sherpa and Tamang, however, have to pay the price of

climate change caused by heavy GHG emission by industrialized nations.

"I am happy that we can grow tomato in our field of about seven thousand but it is strange to see flies which we only saw in Trishuli till a decade ago," said Tamang.

Farmers like Sherpa and Tamang's life depends upon the hospitable and stable climate. If there is any change in climate, they are the first people to face most difficulties. The people living in mountain and hills are also vulnerable to extreme weather events

such as drought and monsoon storms. In the past few years, some parts of southern Nepal faced the drought.

Both of them are unaware about the fact that the atmosphere is changing. This is just

a beginning for them. Tamang and Sherpa's grandchildren have to face the real consequences of climate change. It has already been predicted that Himalayan regions have to bear many phenomenal changes in coming decades.

As the livelihood of farmers in Nepal depends on stable climate, any change in climate from its natural conditions may significantly influence Nepal's national economy. The pattern of rainfall determines the annual production of the farmers.

This pattern has ceased to remain stable now as farmers face more hostile and strange

weather patterns like that seen by Tamang and Sherpa. "If there are some changes in the climate, our whole agriculture system will suffer. This is the reason government is taking steps to cope with new reality," said Bal Krishna Prasain, Secretary at the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MoEST) addressing the program to mark the World Environment Day.

"We have seen fluctuations in weather pattern as well as temperature. This is a great concern for all of us," he said.

According to UNEP, the earth has warmed by approximately, 0.75 degree Celsius since pre-industrial times. Eleven of the warmest years in the past 125 years occurred since 1990, with 2005 as the warmest on record. There is overwhelming consensus that this is due to emissions of greenhouse gases, such as CO₂ from burning fossil fuels. Warming in this century is projected to be between 1.4 and 5.8 Celsius.

The impacts of climate change are already visible. "The debate over whether earth is warming up is over.

SPOTLIGHT/June 08, 2007



Glaciers: Lifeline of millions

This is a fact and reality to live with it. The question now is how to mitigate the future disaster accelerated by spirals of destructions and to train the people how to cope with the changing environment," said Dr. Madan Lal Shrestha, director general of Department of Hydrology and Meteorology. "The situation is now is such that we are approaching the point of no return."

With a low per capita income and lowest consumption, people in the Himalayan and mountain region don't have any option other than to live with it.

According to Dr. Shrestha, the temperature is rising in Himalayas at the rate of 0.09 degree Celsius per decade which is higher than terai where the temperature is rising at the rate of 0.04 degree Celsius. It means the temperature of Himalayan region will go up by 9 degree Celsius in next hundred years.

For the Himalayan region, it will create severe imbalances as the snow will melt at higher rate. The visible impact of the warming is the depletion of glaciers - and this is not only the case of Nepal but is also a global concern.

In the past, nobody believed the grim forecast of effects of GHGs by scientists but in the past five years, trends have shown that their predictions have come true. A recent study suggested that many more glaciers will burst in Nepal, which will even threaten the settlement of mountains like that of Sherpa and Tamang,

As there are more than 2000 small and big glaciers around the Himalayas in Nepal, rising temperature will make them more vulnerable. In the past few decades, some glaciers have already burst causing heavy losses to infrastructures and human lives. Few years ago, the Tsho Rolpa created the havoc in the region. But, it was stabilized following mitigation efforts.

As most of the settlements are below glaciers, the outburst of glaciers can cause major damage to human settlement as well as the infrastructures built along the river side. Once glaciers burst, it will have major implications in overall river system.

"In the context of this change in climate, the recent Fourth Assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted that glacier melt in the Himalayas is virtually certain and it will increase

“We Are Being Punished For Other Countries’ Industrialization”

-Madan Lal Shrestha

Director General of Department of Hydrology and Meteorology Dr. MADAN LAL SHRESTHA is a well known scientist. Expert on meteorology, Dr. Shrestha also has experience of working in international sector. Dr. Shrestha spoke to KESHAB POUDEL on various issues related with the climate change and its implications to Nepal. Excerpts:

What will be the major effect of climate change to Nepal ?

One of the major effects of climate change will be in the Himalayan region. If temperatures rise, the snow will melt faster which is going to create a major problem. Our whole eco-system, our life style and our vegetation will change. If snow melts down fast, our river system will suffer. During the lean season, our rivers contribute more than 60 percent of water to Ganges. This will affect not only Nepal but the whole region. The change of volume of water will have effect in the sectors like irrigation and hydro power. We have been observing the effect of climate change in the mountain areas. The greenhouse gas is increasing in the atmosphere causing rise in the temperature. In another hundred years, the temperature will rise up by 6 degree Celsius.

How much greenhouse gases does Nepal produce?

We are not responsible to release the greenhouse gas as our contribution is very insignificant because we don't have any industry in the country, which produce large volume of CO₂. More

the countries are industrialized, more greenhouse gases they produce. Although our contribution is negligible, we are compelled to suffer from its effect. We are being punished for other countries' industrialization. Rich countries may be able to cope with consequences but being a poor country we have to suffer a lot.

Which are the areas the climate change will affect most?

Rising temperature will affect our crop pattern, health related issues and, most importantly, supply of water. Economically, poor people are incapable to handle it. Unlike people in rich countries, poor people are very much vulnerable to climate change.

How do you see the fluctuation of temperature in the valley?

Although this year temperature has not broken the record set in 1988 when the highest temperature was recorded at 36.5 degree Celsius, one can see the change in the pattern. This year's temperature pattern is higher than normal; but it is yet to exceed the extreme temperature. There is no doubt that the temperature is rising around the world. The climate change is there. For example, the cold days are gradually receding and warmer ones are increasing.

Where is the temperature rising most?

The rise in temperature is higher in the Himalayas than in the lower elevation. This has become main concern to us. The high Himalayas is the place for snow and glaciers, which is the main source of fresh water.

Temperature is rising in Himalayas by 0.09 degree Celsius, which is higher than terai. In terai, it is 0.04 degree Celsius in day temperature. It will create imbalance as the snow will melt at higher rate. The visible impact of the warming is the depletion of glaciers and so it became our concern. Such depletion of glaciers is not only the case in Nepal but in most part of the globe and so it is a global concern. This is not the problem of Nepal but that of the whole region as our glacier contributes water to big rivers of this region.

How dangerous is the climate change?

The scientific evidence is now overwhelming: climate change is a serious global threat. A global concerted effort is necessary to combat with such global warming. The harm is already done and it is necessary now to understand the vulnerabilities and look for the adaptation options.

How do you measure weather pattern in Nepal?

We have 15 stations manned and synoptic. We collect regular weather information. We have 100 meteorological centers around the country. Almost all the stations have recorded increase in temperature. We can see the rain is increasing in summer and declining in winter. Major floods are occurring in every two to three years. We can see mosquitoes in Himalayan region. Vector-borne diseases are going up even in mountain areas.

Are you monitoring the glaciers?

We have been monitoring glaciers. We have also developed model to predict what will happen in next twenty five years. We have been observing five glaciers. Tsho Rolpa is the first glacier where we have taken mitigation step to prevent its outburst. It is the glacier of highest altitude mitigated by us. We have more than 2000 glaciers across the Himalayas and some of them are really in vulnerable situation. Although we have very limited budge, we have been monitoring glaciers in Langtang and Solukhumbu and Tsho Rolpa. We have been monitoring glaciers since 1970. If you want to study behavior of glaciers, you need to do detailed study. In context of this change in climate, the recent Fourth Assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted that Glacier melt in the Himalayas is virtually certain and it will increase related flooding, rock avalanches from destabilized slopes and disruption of water resources.

What are the global actions?

The recent Fourth Assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that the warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as it is now evident from increase in global average air and ocean temperatures, melting of snow and ice, and rising sea level. It is very likely that anthropogenic greenhouse gas increase caused most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid 20th century.

How do you see the process of ice melting?

Ice melting is major problem. If temperature rises, our glaciers will have to suffer a lot. Glacier Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) is going to be a regular phenomenon. The GLOF will threaten the life of people living in the



hill region. Even it will affect agriculture sector. Ice melting is now the global concern. If our snow melts fast, it will affect the south Asian region as a whole. The snow melting in Himalayan region is taken as a serious issue.

What is the climate change?

Climate change is the fluctuation of temperature resulted by increase in greenhouse gases in atmosphere. Although Nepal produces very insignificant volume of greenhouse gases, its atmosphere is gradually warming up as other countries around the world. The change in climate affects the earth-atmosphere system in various ways and in different scale. The tracks of the cyclones and also the extra tropical disturbances will be influenced.

How do you prove that Kathmandu's climate is changing?

A vivid example is the snowfall in Kathmandu valley. Snowfall in the hill tops surrounding Kathmandu Valley is a regular winter phenomena. However, this winter, on February 14, most places of the valley witnessed snowfall. This

is an example of fluctuation in weather pattern. The last snowfall in Kathmandu valley was 62 years before, on the afternoon of 6 January 1945 - two decades prior to the establishment of Department of Hydrology and Meteorology. Along with the valley, many parts of the country experienced the snowfall. If the situation continues, the valley's atmosphere in next one hundred years will go up by 6 degree Celsius.

Do you see any effect of climate change in recent fluctuation in temperature?

In the past few weeks the dry and hot weather that prevailed in the country also showed the effects of rising temperature. It has been noticed that the temperature is rising, which has substantial impact in water resources, agriculture, tourism and almost all the fields. It is the visible effect of the climate change. For example, the highest temperature in Kathmandu is increasing with the rate of 0.5 degree Celsius per decade. This is too high. It will increase by 6 degree Celsius in hundred years. ■

related flooding, rock avalanches from destabilized slopes and disruption of water resources," said Dr. Shrestha.

Support of International Organizations

International organizations are also supporting Nepal to cope with the present situation. UN organizations like UNEP, World Wildlife Fund for Nature Conservation (WWF) and IUCN too have been supporting Nepal to develop the strategy to cope with new reality. Some organizations are supporting Nepal through carbon trade.

"An impact of global warming has also been reported in Nepal, IUCN could help in building capacity of the country in climate change adoption. As economies of our neighbors have been rapidly growing, the country should prepare to cope with both challenges and opportunities coming from these mega economics, particularly the pressure on natural resources," said Prabhu Budhathoki, country representative of the World Conservation Union (IUCN-Nepal).

Although the issue was neglected for quite a long time, efforts are being made to cope with new change. "With the changing climate conditions that are happening all around the world, Nepal needs to be able to adapt to these," said Jeffrey A. McNealy, IUCN's Chief Scientist who was recently in capital.

As the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is climbing fast, the earth is heating up. Most of CO₂ comes from burning fuels for energy—gasoline in cars and coal for electricity. The United States with less than 5 percent of the global population produces one quarter of all greenhouse gases.

Effect of deforestation through clear cutting and burning shows far beyond the affected areas. The fires



Himalayas: Vulnerable to global warming

release still more carbon into the atmosphere, fewer plants survive to convert CO₂ into oxygen.

Till two decades ago, no one could say exactly what it would be like when the earth became hotter and only a few people cared about global warming. Although global

warming is a slow process and it will still take decades to bring about devastating

results, this has already become a reality for all.

Although industrialized and developing countries are puffing more GHGs into the atmosphere, the people living in far remote parts of Nepal have to pay the price.

Whether one likes it or not, suddenly and unexpectedly, the crisis is upon us now. One of the major effects of climate change will be in the Himalayan region. If temperatures rise, the snow will melt faster which is going to create a major problem. Nepal's eco-system, life style and vegetation will change.

"If snow melts down fast, our river system may have little water. During

the lean season, our rivers contribute more than 60 percent of water to Ganges. This will affect not only Nepal but the whole region. The change of volume of water will have effect in the sectors like irrigation and hydro power," said Dr. Shrestha.

Although this year's temperature has not broken the record set in 1988 when the highest temperature was recorded at 36.5 degree Celsius, one can see the change in the pattern.

"This year's temperature is higher than normal; but it is yet to exceed the extreme temperature. There is no doubt that the temperature is rising around the world. The climate change is there. For example, the cold days are gradually receding and warm nights are increasing. It is virtually surging. The rise in temperature is higher in the Himalayas than in the lower elevation," said Dr. Shrestha.

Although global warming is affecting Nepal, it cannot do anything alone. It is not easy curbing the global warming like eradicating small pox or putting man in space but one has to search ways to contain it. ■

SEF

Saving the Environment

Although it is a small organization, Save the Environment Foundation (SEF) has made tremendous efforts to protect the environment

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when flora and fauna of country's oldest national park are struggling to survive from wild climber *Mikania micrantha*, SEF, a small NGO, has come out with an ambitious plan to start the clean up campaign.

"It is a huge task. What we want to do is to start clean up campaign," said Chanda Rana, executive chairperson of SEF. "If we cannot start the clean up campaign now, it will invade whole forest and fauna of Chitwan National Park. When I met a senior official of buffer zone project, he showed me alarming trend as the present infestation is estimated to have affected over 20 percent of the entire national park area."

According to SEF, the invasion is showing severely damaging effects on young trees, shrubs, grasses in mostly reverine forest and grass lands. It smothers shrubs and small trees which are important source of food and bedding for most of wild animals in the park.

One does not need to be environmentalist to work for the protection of the environment. This is what has been shown by a group of housewives who have come together to launch remarkable works to protect the greenery.

Headed by Chanda Rana, SEF's members have proved that their spare times can be used to enhance greenery in the country. From planting trees along the front road of Singhdurbar Secretariat and road to International Airport to preserving historical statues of various figures, SEF has also protected the garden in front of Birendra International Convention Center.

Established in 1994, the organization has been celebrating the World

Environment Day each year focusing on SEF's theme "from confrontation to coexistence with nature for future generations."

At a time when all other organizations



SEF : Commitment for cause

have been celebrating the World Environment Day, SEF has announced an ambitious program to clean Wild Climber *Mikania micrantha* from Chitwan National Park.

"The wild climber locally termed as banmara lahara is found to have been invading the flora of Chitwan National Park. When I visited Park a few months ago, I found that *Mikania micrantha* is gradually destroying forest and fauna. I was so shocked that the forests are gradually under the cover of this plant. Then, I decided to contribute something," said Rana. Upon receiving the information, about the infestation of this wild weed, a SEF team recently visited the national park and observed the

situation of infestation by this climber.

Mikania micrantha is an extremely fast growing, sprawling, perennial vine and one of the world's most notorious invaders which rapidly colonizes distributed habitats, retarding the growth of crops of natural vegetations by competing and producing plant inhibitors.

"This is just the preliminary level of information gathered by SEF. A detail study of the problem and its solution will continue over the period. I hope that this little effort to save the perishing trees of Chitwan would contribute to the international effort to conserve nature and natural resources," said Rana.

Every organization celebrates the World Environment Day by organizing various programs but SEF has its own way to celebrate it. As organization dedicated to the protection of green trees, SEF always focuses its plans on protecting greenery.

With an aim to maintain greenery in the city and to make the city green, SEF has already planted more than 2000 trees. "Out of 2000, more than 80 percent trees have survived. The trees planted in the road of Singhdurbar have already started providing shed to the people," said Rana.

As it has done in the past, SEF's mission is clear: increase the number of trees to reduce the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. ■

“We Don't Want To Be Captive Of The Past”

-Dr. Minendra Rijal

Central Committee member of Nepali Congress (Democratic) Dr. MINENDRA RIJAL is a well known younger generation leader of the party. Known as a close aide of former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, Dr. Rijal is also a member of parliament nominated by his party recently. Dr. Rijal who hails from political hotbed of Morang district, is frank and soft spoken leader in his party. Dr. Rijal, who is also the chairman of Apex College, spoke with KESHAB POUDEL on various issues regarding contemporary political process. Excerpts:

The biggest stumbling block from here up to the CA elections is Maoist behavior. They still run parallel state in districts and VDCs. Unless they change their mindset as a political party, it is virtually impossible to hold the CA elections in healthy, free and fair environment.

How do you see contemporary political situation?

I am hopeful that we will be able to deliver what we have promised to people but there are still lots of confusions. In the recently signed 11 points agreement we all have agreed to hold the elections for constituent assembly. Five parties chose to write note of dissent on the agreement. Whatever differences are there, we are moving together to fulfill promise to hold the election for CA. Of course, the task is very challenging. I guess everything will be alright. The informal understanding is that we will hold elections by Mangsir 10 (November third week). The technical difficulty is that eight party cannot announce the elections as the government has to announce it. One of the articles of constitution also needs to be amended.

How do you see prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala's recent statement in Jhapa that he will take strong action?

He has said such things so many times in the past. I cannot explain what he means unless he shows it by doing. The taste of pudding lies in its eating. I will not be satisfied merely by words.

At a time when leaders of all political parties have been championing New Nepal, your leader Sher Bahadur Deuba said prosperous and developed Nepal, how do you see difference in this statement?

I don't see any major difference. All of us want to see New Nepal as a prosperous and developed as said by Sher Bahadur Deuba. Every one has imagination about Nepal but no one has articulated their vision about what New Nepal will be like. Sher Bahadurji's expression is clear and simple. We are evolving new Nepal and the goal is prosperous and developed Nepal. This debate will continue till the CA elections and formulation of new constitution by the CA. People

of different ideologies, economic backgrounds and ethnicities will articulate their own vision and finally we will find consensus on all the issue. I don't have anything to say about the use of words. For instance, even development and prosperity carry lots of controversies. It is not a unified monolithic concept. There comes questions like whose prosperity? Development has many dimensions.

Former prime minister Deuba also said Maoists are still terrorizing the people and obstructing the peace process. Do you believe the elections for CA will be held?

The biggest stumbling block from here up to the CA elections is Maoist behavior. They still run parallel state in districts and VDCs. Unless they change their mindset as a political party, it is virtually impossible to hold the CA elections in healthy, free and fair environment. As long as people cannot vote their conscience freely and without intimidation, CA elections is useless. This movement mandated us to establish new state with equal opportunity and through the elections of CA. The people don't want constitution gifted by the eight party leaders and people want to have new ownership of what new Nepal looks like.

How hopeful are you on holding the elections for CA in December as proposed by prime minister Koirala?

There are difficulties as behavior of the Maoists has not changed but we don't have other options either. We have to hold the elections in coming December as committed by prime minister. I do understand the difficulties but it is our responsibility to create conducive environment to hold the elections for CA. If we fail on that, we will face many challenges and difficulties. If we don't hold it, we will face more complicated and more difficult situation than now.

After a long delay, eight parties held a meeting and suddenly endorsed 11 points agenda. How did it happen so suddenly?

It did not happen so suddenly as the preparations had been made since long time. Actually, the meeting was not held because of atrocities committed by Maoists. Once the Maoist leaders agreed to abide by the decision, the meeting was held.

Why are the Maoists still pressuring the government?

In the past, Maoists had extracted a lot of concessions from the government through their

pressure tactics. Maoists have got a wrong impression that they will get what they want. So they have been pressuring the government. This time Girijababu took a stand. He demanded the clear signal from Maoists regarding their role. It is a compromise process. They have to abide by peace and non-violence and wishes of the people.

How do you see the situation in Madhesh?

The situation in Madhesh is not clear yet and how it evolves will determine the future course of the country. We have already made some efforts to address the genuine concerns. There are still many issues that need to be addressed. We can settle some of the issues before CA but only CA can settle most other issues. Along with Madhesh, we have to address the aspirations of marginalized communities like Dalits, ethnic groups and others. Some issues can be addressed now but not all of them. How all these forces play out nobody knows. It is our duty to create the situation to hold free and fair elections for CA.

How do you see the process of Congress unity?

It is just in initial stage as unity of the party is wish of overwhelming majority of Nepali people. We have to do a detailed homework and we cannot unify the party just by saying that we are unified. We need to sort out details. We need to unify Nepali Congress long before the CA elections. Tasks forces have already met and identified difficult issues. We want to create the synergy in the party. We want to make one plus one equal to three. If we address all the issues, then our unity will be meaningful.

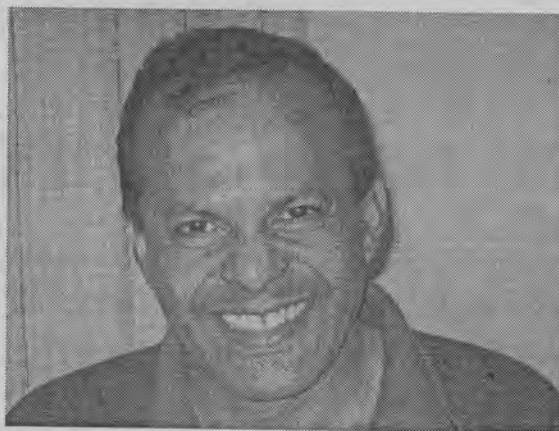
How do you see ideological differences between the two parties?

I am not in a blame game here when we are actively working for unification. Frankly speaking, we don't have major ideological difference as both our parties believe in ideals of liberal democracy. Nepali Congress as to transform now in changed context. Our party believes in the wishes of the people. We also need vision and imagination for future. We don't want to be captive of the past.

What do you mean by being captive of the past?

Do you mean there is no utility of ideology of BP?

One cannot afford to forget the foundation on which one stands and the foundation of Nepali Congress is created by BP Koirala, Ganeshman Singh and still alive leaders like KP Bhattarai. Even GP Koirala has made a lot of contributions. I believe in evolutionary process. There are utility of variety of institutions. The utility of monarchy was different in 1950 than today. There has been sea change in the process. Even the forms of democracies have changed now. There is now talk about consensual democracy. The forms of democracy, state and monarchy have



changed. Now people are even talking about the need for federal structures. Even our two parties have accepted federalism. The debate is now how federal Nepal will be like.

How important is BP Koirala's legacy in Nepali Congress?

Nobody can ignore BP Koirala's ideology. He laid the foundation of Nepali Congress. His policy of national reconciliation cannot be ignore. For me, most important part of his views is what he said during his last leg of political career addressing a mass meeting in Open Theater. "While I am not around, if you are confused, you touch the soil of this country and ask yourself what should be right decision." The message he was trying to give was ask your conscience what is the need of time. To me this is the central message. Whenever I form an opinion and take major decisions, I always follow BP's advise. I always get inspirations from BP and Ganeshman Singh. I have got a lot of messages from BP Koirala's recently published books. If we get his message in our heart, certainly we don't have to be confused.

How do you see the stand taken by Maoists on Melamchi?

It is unfortunate to say that Maoist minister is trying to oust Asian Development Bank from Melamchi. If Melamchi is not constructed, it will have major impacts on the residents of valley. Nepal will also lose its international credibility in front of donor communities like ADB- which has been making efforts to contribute to Nepal's all round development. It is in the interest of nation to implement Melamchi project.

What are your economic agenda?

I think foremost agenda for all is to find out ways to satisfy 500,000 job seekers who enter annually into Nepalese employment market. If we do not provide employment to them, they will constantly create problems. Unemployment is going to be major problem for Nepal within a few years. ■

The situation in Madhesh is not clear yet and how it evolves will determine the future course of the country. We have already made some efforts to address the genuine concerns

POLITICS

Unity or Discord?

Politicians have two choices: pursuing unity for broader interest or following politics of discord and pushing the country towards chaos

By KESHAB POUDEL

“I want to see prosperous and developed Nepal. We need to work together for it,” said Sher Bahadur Deuba, former prime minister and leader of Nepali Congress Democratic addressing a press conference in his hometown Dadeldhura. At a time when all his colleagues including prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala have failed to define the rhetorical jargon of New Nepal, Deuba came out with the term ‘developed and prosperous Nepal.’

As he is much younger than prime minister Koirala, Deuba seems to have a motivation for the results from development and constructive works.

Politics of Nepal has reached into a point where all high sounding promises for a New Nepal seem to have failed. Having ruled the country three times as a prime minister, Deuba was prompt in sensing it when he demanded a developed Nepal than the rhetoric of New Nepal.

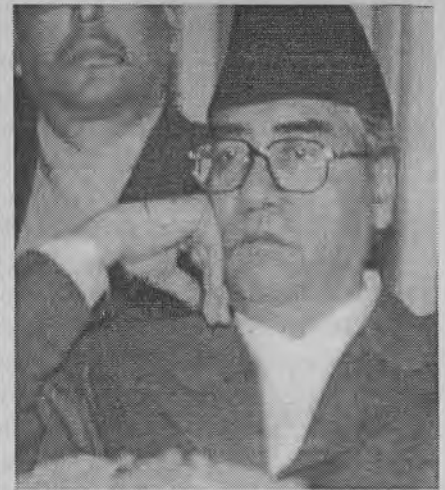
Whether one wants to make New Nepal or developed Nepal, there requires unity not discord among all political forces. Unfortunately, after coining a phrase New Nepal, the country has seen severe disturbance and rampant destructions and discords among political forces.

Series of Violence

According to a report of the Kathmandu Post May 3, more and more armed outfits are emerging in Nepal, raising a question mark over the sustainability of peace process. Nine armed groups are in operation in Terai, which have already killed 29 persons.

“Violent insurgencies have appeared in a phase-wise manner. In the previous phase, all these actions and atrocities were committed under the brand name of Maoists. The imminent threat of violence and destruction entered into another phase as new insurgency has replaced the brand name from Maoists to Madhesis. Unlike Maoists, Madhesi violence has been in operation under various brand names but the discipline upon these fractions is same and consequences are also the same,” said a political analyst who closely observes the political situation.

Different brand names have created confusion to detect their center of command and logistic support but they appear similar in character and performances. There is a continuity of uncertainty and instability launched against Nepal and its peaceful life.



Deuba: No rhetoric

Politicians who have been in power since a year have nothing to boast for contributing to the development of the country except causing disturbance and rampant destruction.

King's Rule

During the direct rule of King Gyanendra, these problems went out of control. King Gyanendra, whose sheer short sightedness to restore democracy after three years, intensified discord and pushed the country into present phase of destruction.

“This council of ministers will give utmost priority to reactivating multi-party democracy in the country within three years with implementation of effective reforms by restoring peace and security,” said King Gyanendra forming the government under his chairmanship and dismissing the government led by Sher Bahadur Deuba. (The Rising Nepal, February 2, 2005). King might not have thought how costly his experiment was going to be for the institution of monarchy as well as for the country.

Unfortunately, King Gyanendra

lost all his powers very shortly but the biggest losers were the people. "People have lost a constitution written with exceptional national consensus and the process of elections and the process of making and unmaking governments by the political decisions of the elected representatives of the people in the parliament. All these precious things have been lost. Along with the law and order as well as peace and opportunity for prosperity in Nepal, no politician is secure in his position to give a concrete roadmap for normalization of political process," said the analyst.

Wreaking Havoc

Geologists have a prediction that Nepal, at any moment, may suffer a severe earthquake. That has not bothered the people much because politicians are there to wreak havoc in the minds of the people on a daily basis.

In the race for wreaking havoc, even the octogenarian prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala is not lagging behind. Just on last Sunday, there was a headline of the speech of prime minister that he would not hesitate to take strict actions to deal with the present crisis. "I, in the capacity of prime minister, might take strict action to maintain law and order. I cannot tolerate allegations. Nobody should consider me a weak person. Nobody and nothing can deflect me from my goal," said Koirala in eastern town Jhapa addressing a mass meeting.

He didn't explain much. His organization as well as the team in the government has no clue in their mind on what type of strong actions

he meant. But reviewing the past record of the government, it is another rhetoric delivered to the people as political tranquilizer.

Characters and contents remain same. As it has worked in the past, it may continue for some time more. It is not only the rhetoric which has maintained this kind of politics in the country. Behind the screen, there are some other elements which play a role to make and unmake persons and politicians of this country.

Whenever the crisis worsens these days, there is a rush towards the Southern power center.

Just on Sunday (June 3), standing committee member of CPN-UML Bharat Mohan Adhikary left Kathmandu for New Delhi to join CPN-UML delegation led by general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal.

"A UML leader told this daily that the delegate would confer with the Indian leaders mainly on the eight party unities and the latest decision to hold the constituent assembly election by mid-December, Indian cooperation in holding the constituent assembly and the ongoing Terai unrest," writes The Himalayan Times (June 4, 2007)

In the last few days, almost all political parties had their prominent leaders in New Delhi including the close aides and advisors of prime minister. "Whether the latest warning of strong actions by the prime minister has any relevance with or not (with the visits) may remain as a guess work but it is definitely unfortunate for this country which has a pride of its independence," said the analyst.



Prachanda: Rebel-rousing

Time to Change

It will serve nobody's interests by merely accusing each other in politics. This unpleasant and harmful situation has to be changed, which is in the larger interest of all, not only countrymen but also Nepal's friends and neighbors.

More than 15000, precious lives have been lost and the number may go to any extent but it is definitely not going to serve anyone's interest -internal or external.

"Once peace is destroyed and violence is adopted as the rule of the game then it has no limit in deterioration as it is said violence begets violence. So are the lessons of the many disturbed areas of this region. Nepal has not yet come down to the violent situation like in Kashmir or Assam or Jharkhand in India as well as that of Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. Situation is yet manageable in Nepal but it requires sincere commitments for peace and fair politics," said the analyst.

As instability in Nepal is deeply connected with external centers,

Nepal needs goodwill and support from others. If that is not there, varied brands of groups may come to maintain the movement of instability. What requires most is the realization from all that there may enter bigger and more dangerous players in the troubled situation of this country and take it to the point of total loss and devastation.

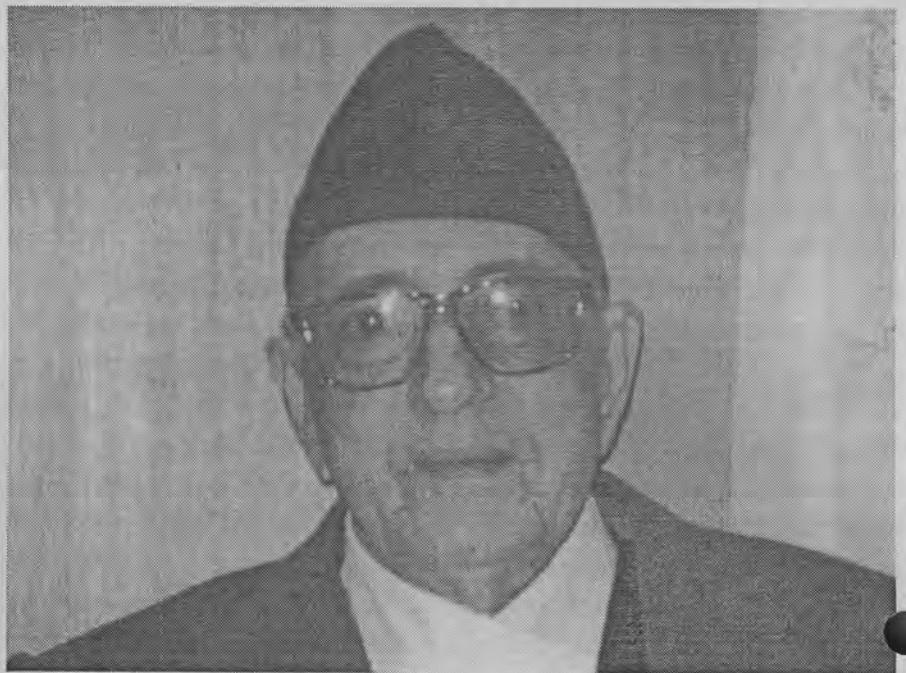
National Unity

Nepal has yet an optimistic side on the theme of national reconciliation and national unity. There has been a debate going on inside the country more prominently since 1976 at the initiative of late B.P. Koirala. He himself relentlessly went into debate throughout the country, which had a powerful influence in the party he led as well as enlightened people of this country.

According to the political analyst, in fact, unity and harmony have been basic characters of the common people of this country who live in subsistence level in the village. This appeal for unity has a strong social base which is easy to communicate.

The country has a chance to find out point of unity and forge broader alliance based upon that. There is no other political issue which is in the interest of all and which broadens the base of unity than the national interest.

Prominent Maoist leaders in recent days have enumerated national interest as their inalienable goal. On the other extreme lies the monarchist opinion, which emphasizes national interest more than anything else.



PM Koirala: Growing discord

No national mind can understand or entertain varied and contradictory tests of national interest.

But the problem is of establishing an honest contact and communication between divergent views and interests on the point of national interest. Unfortunately, Nepal does not have visionary leaders like B.P. Koirala to swim in anti-current and get rid of populism. Sometimes, the people get the leader they deserve and sometimes they are cursed to suffer under shortsighted and block headed ones.

CPN-Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai in his recent interview stressed the need to protect and promote national interest. Other Maoist leaders in second ranks vow to safeguard the cause of national interest. In the Maoist leadership all are not the same. Each of them needs individual assessment of their role in the party. They might have been in the minority and unhappy with the course of actions taken by majority at time. It will be unfair and unjust to

keep all of them into one bracket and prescribe a treatment against them.

“Forget their past involvement, if Maoists are able to prove bonafide of their intentions by their actions. They have started realizing national interest as supreme,” said the analyst.

Similarly, on the other extreme, there were many well meaning and sincere persons who dedicated service to the King to salvage the situation inspired solely by national interest and preservation of nation itself. If nation loses its identity, it is not only the King or aristocrats who would lose but the whole mass of people would lose something very precious- their national identity.

“Despite all the setbacks in the political process, there is still an option in this country to explore the possibility of reconciliation between all the political forces from traditional to radicals. The country is at the crossroads of choosing between discords and unity. The politics discord has no rule and no discipline and leads to total destruction,” said the analyst. ■

TAXING EXERCISE

Nepal Law Society (NLS), in cooperation with the Internal Revenue Department (IRD) and Danish Embassy, organized a two-day training program-cum-workshop on Tax Laws on June 2 and 3.

Over 30 participants including practicing lawyers from across the country attended the workshop where experts held lecture sessions to describe about the concept and laws related with tax system.



With the objective of enhancing the skills and knowledge of lawyers, the NLS held the program where issues such as Value Added Tax (VAT), Income Tax, Excise Tax and other revenue related laws were thoroughly discussed.

Inaugurating the workshop, acting chief justice Kedar Prasad Giri underscored the importance of revenue generation for the economic development of the country. He said that since capable lawyers would also enhance the capacity of courts, such training workshops would go a long way in developing the country in this age of global competition.

Dip Basnet, director general of IRD, said that such workshops were essential because of prevalent confusion and diverse interpretations of revenue laws.

"As this workshop is taking place on the eve of preparation of budget of coming fiscal year 2064/65, the recommendations by the participants here would be useful for us," he said.

Basnet said there were huge number of appeals on cases related with tax and said training lawyers would help taxpayers to be better represented.

Rana Bahadur Shrestha, joint secretary at Ministry of Finance, said taxpayers' education was their top priority. "We want to raise right tax in right way. Tax administration, obviously, works in a conservative manner as they are always preoccupied with meeting revenue targets. Here lawyers and tax auditors can help taxpayers by better representing them. This will also help to broaden tax net and increase tax compliance," he said.

Udaya Nepali Shrestha, executive member of NLS and former Law Secretary, said there were less tax compliance due to numerous complications on tax laws.

Anil Kumar Sinha, executive member of NLS, said that the Society has been holding series of training programs to educate taxpayers, lawyers and other stakeholders.

According to another NLS executive member Komal Prakash Ghimire, such training will be held in six phases within few months. He said that in second phase, government lawyers will be trained while in third and fourth phase judges of district and appeal courts will be trained. Likewise, university teachers will be trained on fifth phase while officials of Revenue Tribunal will be trained on sixth phase.

Book List

- Fateful Interview, Madhav Kumar Rimal,Rs. 400.00
- Beyond The frontiers Women's stories from Nepal Padmavati Singh/2006.....Rs 200.00
- Bonded Labour Kamaiya in Nepal. Padma Raj Lamichhane/2005.....Rs. 350.00
- Dhoopee "The Juniper" A Long Poem. Toya Gurung/ 2006.....Rs. 185.00
- Distribution of goods and Services in Nepal's Conflict Ananda P. Shrestha \Hari Uprety\2006.....Rs. 200.00
- Ecotourism in Nepal with theoretical concepts and principles Damodar Prasad Bhatt\2006.....Rs.675.00
- Development planning in the Era of Globalization. Govind Nepal\2006..... Rs. 110.00
- Human Rights yearbook 2007 Kundan Aryal\2007.....Rs.500.00
- Insurgency Affected People of Nepal Rehabilitation. Ujjwal Upadhyay\2006.....Rs.100.00
- Mass Media in Post -1990 Nepal Pratyous onta\2006Rs.200.00
- My Life Story Ramhari Sharma Nepal \ 2006 Rs.....250.00
- Nepal -Japan Relation, Ram Kumar Panday\2006 Rs. 2000.00
- Nepal Struggle for Existence -Jagadish Sharma\2006 Rs.999.00
- Nepal Postage Stamps Catalogue 2005, Chandra Kumar Stapit \Deepak Manandhar \2005 Rs. 150.00
- Nepal 's conflict and its impact on Public Ananda P. Shrestha \Hari Uprety \2006.....Rs 150.00
- 15. Peaks and Pinnacles Mountainering in Nepal Harka Gudung\2004.....Rs. 500.00
- The Sakyas, Ajaya Kranti Shakya \2006Rs. 350.00
- Simple Convictions My Struggle for Peace and Democracy Girija Prasad Koirala\2006.....Rs. 250.00
- 18 Uncertainty on a Himalayan Scale, Thompson \Warburton \ Hatley \2007..... Rs. 250.00

"One Cannot Have Ballots And Bullets In A Democratic Process"

Barry Lowenkron

BARRY LOWENKRON, US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, recently visited Nepal. During his four days visit, Lowenkron also met with senior government officials including Prime minister, foreign minister and civil society members. Lowenkron addressed the press before leaving Nepal. Excerpts of press meet.

On Purpose of Visit

Purpose of my visit was to encourage all parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to adhere to their commitments to bring lasting peace and democracy to Nepal and to call for a firm date for the Constituent Assembly elections and to examine human rights protection and abuses. During my four day visit, I met with government officials, political party leaders, human rights activists and civil society representatives to review ongoing development in Nepal.

On US support

The US, strongly support Nepal's peace process and democratic development, and we will do what we can to help ensure its success. We congratulate prime minister Koirala and the political parties for announcing that Constituent Assembly elections will be held by December 15, and most likely in November. We now urge Interim Government to draft and pass the necessary elections laws and to provide security across the country. Elections are at the heart of democracy, and the Nepali people deserve the opportunity to have their voices heard through free and fair elections later this year.

On Maoist Activities

We remain hopeful that the political process will unfold in a way that will truly address the concerns and the aspirations of the Nepali people. It is in that context that we remain concerned about Maoist actions. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed last November paved the way for democracy in Nepal, but immediately afterwards, the Young Communist League was formed. Moreover, the peace agreement contains clear commitments that have yet to be honored by the Maoists. The message of the United States is clear: one cannot have ballots and bullets in a democratic process. Intimidation and violence have no roles whatsoever in the democratic process of any country. Nothing justifies the use of violence as a legitimate political tool.



On His Meeting With PM

During my meeting with prime minister Koirala, I commended him on his leadership in securing agreement among the parties for an election date. We both agreed that there is much hard work ahead, and the prime minister clearly stated that he would not be deterred by any effort to defer or derail democratic process. We also discussed the importance of ensuring that the voices of all of Nepal's people are clearly taken into account. We hope that the political parties and government will find ways to listen to the voices of all Nepal's people and bring them into an inclusive, peaceful, democratic society.

On Human Rights

Respect for human rights is a requirement for all parties, including the government and the political opposition. In that context, I also had the opportunity to discuss the National Human Rights Commission, like all commissions in democracies, must be truly independent. The prime minister assured me that he shares his goal and would move to ensure a fully functioning, independent National Human Rights Commission in the immediate future.

Future of Democracy

Nepal's democracy's future is full of potential but there is much work to be done. I made clear to the prime minister and to all others in my discussions, that the United States stands ready, as a friend and a supporter, to assist at this critical time. We strongly support a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Nepal and

look forward to working together toward that end.

On US Policy

Let me be clear about the overall US policy whether it is in Nepal or other countries. As I said before, violence should play no role in a democratic

political process by any party in any part of the world, this case, the Maoists. To me, their actions reflect they have yet to make strategic decision to abandon violence, coercion, and intimidation.

On YCL

I was hopeful for multi-party democracy last year when multi-party agreement came together. I saw year 2006 as a great hope of this country and in conversation with

my colleagues and ambassador in Washington also gave that hope. But, you have one party that is at the same time signing an agreement and has developed, nurtured and sustained an organization Young Communist League. There is a fundamental question about their intentions. There should be no role to YCL or any organization that advocates violence.

On President Carter's Visit

President Carter and Carter Center have done great works around the globe to advance human rights. He is traveling here in a capacity of former president. His overall aim here will be to discuss on elections for Constituent Assembly and to address the issue of violence and to address a specific issue of schedule.

On Bhutan refugees

We look at the issue of human rights in broader context to the refugees. My counterpart on Population and Refugees is following my visit this year. We want to assure that the refugees would have opportunity to come to the United States. I want to be very clear that we will not force anybody coming to the United States. This is the humanitarian issue.

On Monarchy

Our position on monarchy is clear. It is not for us to decide the future of monarchy but it is the people of this country to decide the future of monarchy. We want peaceful and democratic Nepal. We don't have any position on monarchy. ■

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