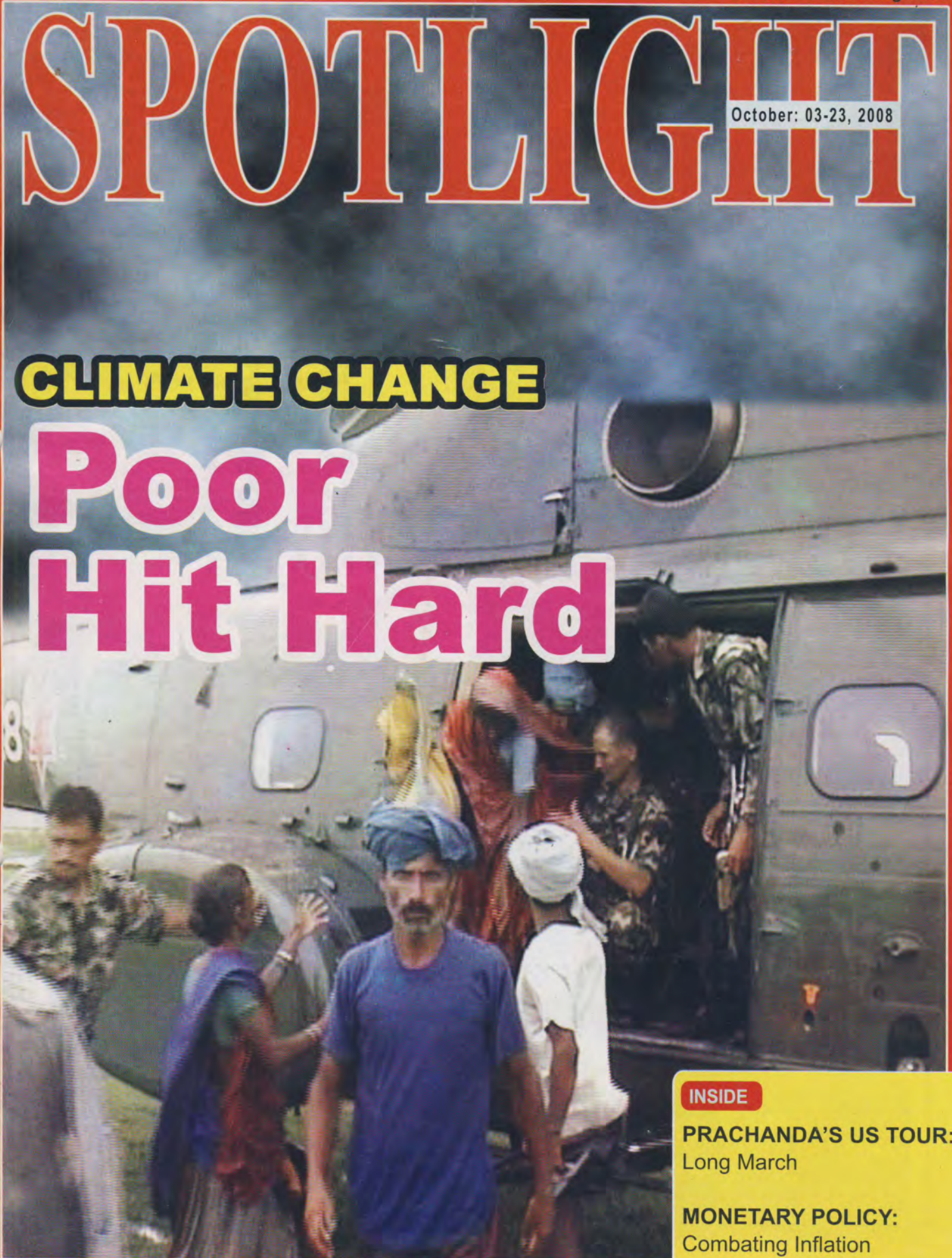


SPOTLIGHT

October: 03-23, 2008

CLIMATE CHANGE

Poor Hit Hard



INSIDE

PRACHANDA'S US TOUR:
Long March

MONETARY POLICY:
Combating Inflation

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अब... १* रु. १ मै बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंक बढी भन्दा बढी
नागरिकहरुमा बैकिङ्ग सेवाको पहिलो अनुभव
धर्न बानी बस्न सकोस भन्नाका लागि सजोरब
प्रस्तुत गर्दछ... **मात्र रु.१ मा**
“आफ्नै बचत खाता”
सम्पूर्ण अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय स्तरको सेवा सुविधा सहित ।



जीवनका पहिला पलहरू देखिनै बचतको बानी
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Bhatnagar - 41 527331, Nepalgunj - 81 523932, Janakpur - 56 532821, Narayangarh - 56 532821



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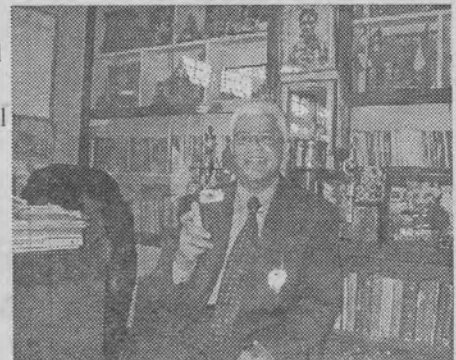


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SPOTLIGHT

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

Vol. 28, No 07, Oct. 03, 2008
Aswin 17, 2065

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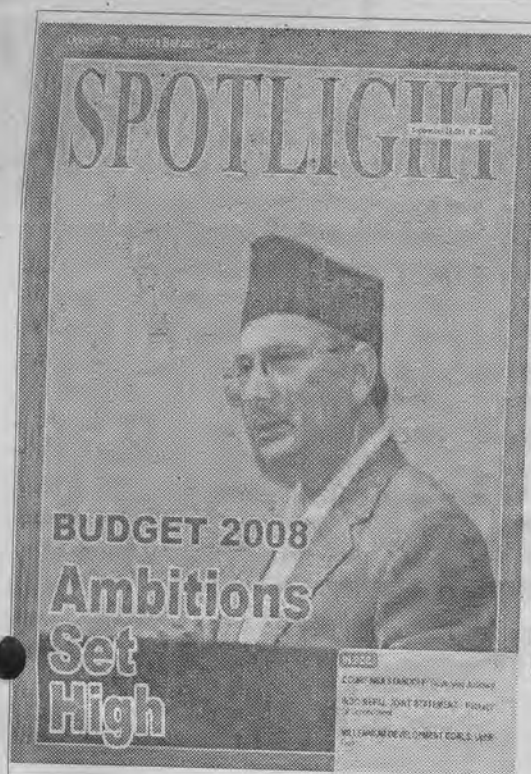
Distribution : R.B. News Paper Traders
New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Ph : 4232784, 2020247, 4244679
E-mail : rbnewspaper@hotmail.com

Printers : Pioneer Offset Printers (P.) Ltd.
Dillibazar, Kathmandu
Ph : 4415687, Fax: 977-1-4438650

C.D.O.Regd. No
151/039-40
Postal Regd. No
42/61/62
U.S. Library of Congress
Catalogue No. 91-905060

After a prolonged violent struggle over a decade, in which almost fifteen thousand innocent Nepalis lost their lives, the millions of poor Nepalis were expecting some revolutionary improvements in the administrative behavior of the communist ministers in the government headed by the Maoist supremo Prachada. But coming back home after two and half months sojourn in the United States of America, it was a big frustration for this scribe to see that the Maoist ministers including the Prime minister himself are following the examples set by their corrupt predecessors of taking their family members with them while visiting foreign countries on official tours. It seems the high principled communists leaders too cannot withstand the temptations of misusing the poor tax payers money and the alms donated by richer countries. All the high sounding principles melted into thin air as soon the communists assumed power. They too, it seems, are not different than other ministers of yore. If they keep on behaving like their former colleagues, they too will have to bear the same fate and their honeymoon days will be short lived. Besides, the total disregard shown by the Maoist leaders to the religion, culture, traditions and identity of Nepal does not bode well for their longevity. Indeed, the Maoists have their own religion, their own culture, their own tradition and their own identity. Hence, they refuse to respect and follow their country's they have been privileged to rule. If the Maoists keep on denying the Nepali culture and identity, they are sure to be swiped away, sooner rather than later. As such, we would like to pray to our Benign Mother to grant them sufficient wisdom to respect and honor the Nepali culture and identity. We would also like to take this opportunity to wish all our Nepali sisters and brothers a Very Happy Vijaya.

Madhav Kumar Rimal
Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Mixed Business

After reading the budget of Nepal's new brand of revolutionaries, I have drawn a conclusion that Maoists are neither capitalists nor hardcore communists but they are simply opportunists. In his maiden budget finance minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai mixed all kinds of economic jargons. As a leader who struggled for such a long time in the name of class less society, Dr Bhattarai has shown no faith in it when he drafted the budget 2008. This budget exposed Maoist face. My question now is if they can adjust within the system, why they had to launch such a deadly insurgency?

*Jamuna Kayastha
Via Email*

Harmful Budget

At a time when the country's economic situation is bleak and macro-economic stability is in very serious position, the budget presented by finance minister and Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai will do much harm than good to the country (Budget 2008: Ambitions Set High Spotlight September 28 October 02). After reading his budget, I came to realize that Dr. Bhattarai's party destroyed almost everything including precious infrastructures as an insurgent and now he is destroying stable economic process. Otherwise, there is no reason to bring such a huge budget with huge deficit. Whatever the results, finance minister Dr. Bhattarai has nothing to lose like in the past when his workers destroyed bridges, health posts, roads and bombed the government property. This budget is nothing more than a bunch of populist slogans which will ultimately ruin Nepal's economic system. Spotlight has rightly pointed out lacunae of the budget.

*Binaya Subba
Via email*

Closer To People

Presenting a people-oriented budget, finance minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has shown that it is possible to bring

people oriented policies. Of course, there are some bunch of so called economists who defend the interest of capitalists. This is the budget presented keeping in the mind interests of labourers, peasants and oppressed people. There is subsidy in various areas and protection for poor, old and others. This is a very bold budget. I think majority of poor people will support Dr. Bhattarai and his party and those who have been opposing the budget are agents of capitalist and petty bourgeois.

*Suman Khadka
Second year BBs Student
Minbhwan Campus
Via Email*

State Of Sanitation

In his interview, WaterAid Nepal's country representative Sanjaya Adhikary pointed out many interesting things about the state of sanitation coverage in Nepal (Spotlight September 19-25). Adhikary said the current investment level on sanitation is insufficient. Although the government spends huge amount of money in other non-productive sector, nobody seems to care about this. It is very unfortunate to know that every year 13,000 Nepalese die, before their fifth birthday, from water-related diseases caused by lack of water

and sanitation services. I would like to congratulate WaterAid Nepal for launching nationwide campaign to increase the access to sanitation. Interview of Adhikary was interesting as well as eye-opener. Instead of giving space to politicians, it is better to know something from persons like Adhikary about Nepal's developmental aspect.

*Sarad Shrestha
London, Via Email*

Sanitation Story

It was very interesting to read cover story on sanitation coverage in Nepal. As Nepal has been celebrating International Year of Sanitation, this issue needed to be highlighted in a paper like Spotlight so that Nepal's donor partners can realize what is happening in Nepal. As a Nepali, it is very unfortunate to know that over 90 percent of the people still do not have latrine in their homes and are forced to go to open places for the purpose. This is a major challenge in front of the political leaders who have been preaching the slogan of New Nepal. If the government cannot provide a small amount of money to build toilets, how can one believe that they will have vision to change the fate of Nepal. It is again disappointing to know that even the budget allocated to the sanitation section cannot be utilized properly because of lack of coordination among various agencies. The time has come now to spend more money in the sanitation.

*Lilly Thapa
Via email*

Paper Quality

One of the disappointing parts of Spotlight is its quality of paper and printing. Spotlight is one of the professional magazines of Nepal but its quality of paper and printing is poor. In the competitive global market, the quality materials are not enough to sell the magazine what is required is good looks and nice printing. I hope it will come out with good printing quality along with good material.

*Sulochana Shrestha
Kupondole, Lalitpur*

**NOTICE: The next issue of
SPOTLIGHT will come out
on October 25 after
Dashain holidays**



Nemwang Says Ca Is A 'Weapons-Free' Zone

Subas Nemwang, chairman of the Constituent Assembly (CA), has said that the CA is a 'weapons-free' zone. "The CA is a weapons-free zone. Considering its sensitivity, the government has taken up the responsibility of providing security to CA," Nemwang said, adding that no CA member needs to bring in bodyguard into CA. He made the statement at CA meeting, Friday (Sep 26), after Nepali Congress (NC) gheraoed the rostrum and obstructed CA proceedings demanding investigation into reports that some Maoist CA members were bringing in armed bodyguards into CA. He said that Home Minister will soon clarify the situation before CA. The NC also obstructed the CA proceedings, Friday, accusing the Finance Minister of failing to bring in amendment in budget in writing before the assembly. *Compiled from reports*

Koirala Warns Maoists Against Undermining Democracy

In a hard-hitting speech, former prime minister and president of Nepali Congress (NC) Girija Prasad Koirala, Friday (Sep 26), warned Maoists against undermining democracy. "Prachanda (PM Dahal) and some Maoist leaders have started saying that parliamentary democracy has failed. I want them to look at the example of United Kingdom – the mother of parliamentary democracy,"

Koirala said addressing a function organized in the capital by NC student wing Nepal Students Union (NSU). "They have started attacking democracy. I want to say that I accept this challenge. We will now fight back," he said. The octogenarian leader said he will now visit districts to energize his party. He also raised objections at efforts to 'politicize' national army. "I won't allow it. The Nepali Army is a national army, it does not belong to anybody," he said. Koirala also drew the attention of United Nations towards news reports that some CA members of Maoists were carrying gun-toting guards into CA. Meanwhile, speaking at the program, NSU president Pradeep Poudel said that a campaign will be kicked off to expand NSU organization in schools. *Compiled from reports*

Jhakri Elected ANNFSU President

Ram Kumari Jhakri has been elected as the president of the All Nepal National Free Students Union (ANNFSU) – the student wing affiliated with the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML). She became the first-ever lady to hold the mantle of ANNFSU in its history. At the 19th convention of ANNFSU, which concluded in Pokhara on Friday (Sep 26), she defeated Gokul Gharti to grab the post. She bagged 1308 votes against 781 of Gharti. "This victory is going to be important in achieving my aim of working in favour of poor, suppressed people, and women," she said. Because of dispute over the number of representatives, the ANNFSU convention had become prolonged and the election for executive committee could take place only on Friday afternoon after it was agreed to increase the number of eligible representatives by 40 percent. *Compiled from reports*

Over 5000 Refugees Resettled, Mix Marriages Not To Qualify

Over 5,000 Bhutanese refugees have left their camps in Nepal to resettle in third countries this year, in one of the United Nations refugee agency's largest and most promising resettlement programs, UNHCR said. The vast

majority of the refugees have left for the United States, followed by Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, Canada and Denmark, under the program. Over 50,000 Bhutanese refugees have expressed interest in resettlement – just under half of the total 107,000 refugees from Bhutan who live in seven camps in eastern Nepal. The UN refugee agency said. "Some of them have been in exile for as long as 17 years." UNHCR spokesperson William Spindler told a news conference in Geneva Tuesday (Sep 23). Regular meetings have been held with the refugees to discuss resettlement and other durable solutions, as well as provide information for women at risk or people with disabilities. "Refugees are being offered English classes as well as additional vocational and skill-based training to prepare for a life in a new country," Spindler added. While another 2,000 to 3,000 refugees are expected to leave Nepal for third countries by the end of this year, UNHCR "continues to advocate for the option of voluntary return to Bhutan for those refugees who wish to do so, and hopes that talks on repatriation can restart soon," he further said. UNHCR attributes the success of the program to close cooperation with the Nepal government, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the resettlement countries. US and other European countries have expressed commitments to resettle over 80,000 refugees. The resettlement began early this year. In the meantime, a resettlement bulletin regularly published by UNHCR said mix marriages between refugees and Nepalis or Indians would not qualify for resettlement. Of late Bhutanese refugee youths have become most sought for marriages before getting resettled. Recent media reports said at least 113 such mix marriages have taken place in the last six months. *Nepalnews.com reports*

Judges And Lawyers Agree To Bury The Hatchet

The Bar-bench dispute has come to an end with a meeting of the full court deciding to withdraw its earlier decision to ban Nepal Bar Association (NBA) president Bishwo Kanta Mainali from practicing in courts for six months. In the

wake of mounting pressure from different quarters, not to mention the protest launched by lawyers, the full the ban on the NBA president had been lifted. Following the full court decision, NBA also decided to call off its protest programs going on for three days now. Representatives of the bench and NBA later met at the Supreme Court and signed an understanding to end the dispute. The ban on Mainali came in reaction to his controversial public remark that the "judgeship is a license for corruption". Protesting the decision, lawyers around the country had boycotted the court proceedings from Sunday onwards. *Nepalnews.com reports*

Govt To Decide Soon On Tibetans: DPM

Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Bamdev Gautam said Monday (Sep 22) that the government would soon decide the fate of Tibetan refugees residing in Nepal as the country would no longer be able to bear the burden they cause. "The government will soon decide the matter through review of the existing laws or by giving them the status of Nepali citizens," he said while talking to local journalists in Pokhara. He also said that the government would take very strict measures to stop the use of Nepali soil against others. "We'll arrest the protesting Tibetans and initiate action against those having identity cards while handing over others with no identity papers to the UNHCR." There are around 14,000 Tibetans here with ID cards and refugee status, which the government conferred on Tibetans entering Nepal before 1985. It has been 13 years since the government stopped issuing such ID cards even as around 2,500 Tibetans have been entering Nepal every year. "Most of those (Tibetans) arrested don't possess identity card or passports which means they are living in Nepal illegally," Gautam said, adding, "If we can't stop this, we are not a country." Claiming that over 100,000 Tibetans have been sheltering in Nepal on various pretexts, DPM Gautam said, "If we continue issuing identity cards to every Tibetan, they will double within 50 years. So, it's high time we decided over this as we can't keep them here like this any more." He also warned the Tibetans not to "misuse" the rights given them as a goodwill. "Legal action will be taken if

they are found isusing their rights while in Nepal." Meanwhile, Nepal's Ambassador to China, Tanka Karki, said that China is happy with the action the government of Nepal has been taking against Tibetan protesters in Kathmandu. Earlier this month, the government had handed over 132 Tibetan protesters to UNHCR in order to determine their refugee status after arresting them during three-day long protests outside of the Chinese Embassy visa section. According to UNHCR officials, they are still investigating their status. *Compiled from reports*

Tax In Schools Triggers Row

Education minister Renu Yadav said Tuesday (Sep 23) that the government would not bow down to pressure for withdrawal of its decision to impose 5 percent service tax on private schools. Speaking at the Reporters Club, minister Yadav said the government came up with the tax policy in order to provide free education to children from backward regions, Dalits and Madhesi community. Saying that private schools must also be prepared to help the government in making education available for all, the minister made it clear that there would not be any rethink on the decision to levy tax on private schools. She maintained that private school operators should refrain from using pressure tactics against the government policy. In the budget statement on Friday, the government had announced that five percent tax would be levied on all private schools. Meanwhile, private school operators have opposed the imposition of tax. Speaking at the Reporters Club, Umesh Shrestha, a former president of Private and Boarding Schools Organization of Nepal (PABSON), said the tax would "only add burden on the students" and there would be a strong protest if the government refused to take back the decision. "We will launch strong protest programs if the tax is not revoked immediately," he said, "Forty percent private schools will come to a closure in no time." *Compiled from reports*

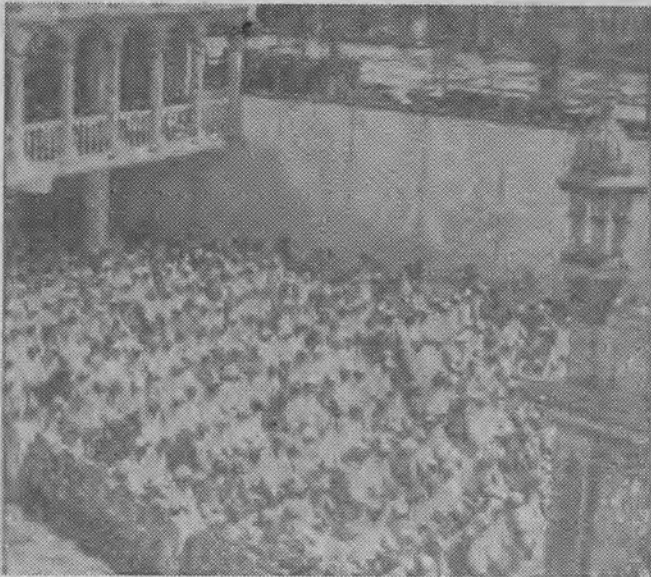
Ministers' Jaunts Ridicule Govt Austerity Vows



Even as the government has approved a special directive through the cabinet, vowing to check unnecessary expenditure, one-third of the ministers of the current cabinet have left the country on foreign junkets putting great pressure on exchequer, reports Nepal Samacharpatra daily. Eight ministers are currently on foreign visits. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' is currently in New York – his third foreign visit since he became prime minister – to attend UN general assembly. He is leading one dozen member delegation there. Foreign Ministry sources reveal that the PM is entitled to \$ 360 as daily allowance on foreign visits. He is accompanied by his wife Sita from state coffers. Foreign Minister Upendra Yadav has also left for New York on Wednesday. He is leading a four member delegation. Information and Communication Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara is in North Korea. Defense Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal' is in China while Youth and Sports Minister Gopal Shakya is in Ajarbaijan. Culture Minister Gopal Kirati has left for Hong Kong. Agriculture Minister Jaya Prakash Gupta and Law Minister Dev Gurung have gone to India. Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Hisila Yami returned, on Wednesday, from the United Kingdom. Each minister is entitled to \$ 210 as daily allowance on foreign visit. *nepalnews.com reports* ■

SPOTLIGHT Family extends heartfelt wishes for a prosperous, and happy life to all its readers and patrons on the occasion of Bada Dashain of 2065 BS.





Nepalese Muslims Praying Ramzaan Prayers

THE SUPREME COURT (SC) has ordered the government to ensure smooth supply of essential food to 13 districts of northwestern Nepal. In response to a writ petition, the apex court ordered the authorities to take steps to provide food to over 300,000 people reeling from hunger in those districts. The bench comprising judges Balram KC and Kalyan Shrestha gave the order. The bench asked the government to become serious to avert the humanitarian crisis.

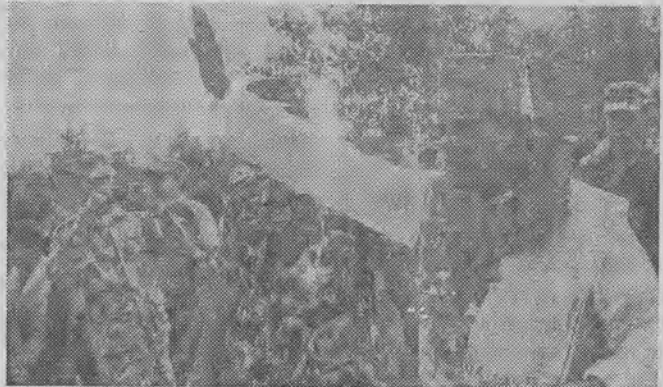
WORKS IN DABUR NEPAL HAVE RESUMED after a month due to workers' strike. The workers and management have reached a fresh 11-point agreement on paving the way for resumption of its factory from Friday (Sep 26). According to Badri Bajgain, vice president of All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF), there has been an agreement on distribution of bonus after a report is presented by the Ministry of Labour and transport regarding income and expenditure of the industry. The workers had resorted to strike demanding bonus as per Labour Act and Bonus Act. Likewise, the two sides have also agreed to form a welfare committee. It has been agreed that the factory will not cut down salaries and facilities during the strike period.

INDIAN EMBASSY HAS OPENED A CAMP office in the eastern industrial town Biratnagar to facilitate movement of goods and vehicles through India to the central and western region of the country, which had been obstructed after the Koshi floods damaged a portion of the East-West Highway in Sunsari district. Minister for Foreign Affairs Upendra Yadav inaugurated the Camp Office on Wednesday (Sep 24), the PTI reported. Speaking on the occasion, the Foreign Minister thanked India for responding with urgency to the request of Nepal. Yadav said this gesture indicated that the Indian government was sensitive to the problems of its tiny neighbor. According to a joint statement issued during Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's India visit, the two sides agreed to open the office to facilitate movement of Nepali vehicular traffic through India. The office has been opened in the building housing Morang Chamber of Commerce and Industries, on

temporary-basis. Millions of people in Nepal's Terai region and across the international border in Bihar have been displaced after the Saptakoshi river breached embankment last month.

NEPAL ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY (NEA), Wednesday (Sep 24), signed an agreement with Power Trading Corporation (PTC) of India to import additional 60 MW electricity. NEA director Arjun Karki and chairman of PTC India, T.N Thakur, signed the deal at the end of the two-day 'Power Summit 2008' in Kathmandu. As per the agreement, India will supply 40 MW power through Duhabi-Kataiya transmission line while 20 MW will be delivered through Tanakpur-Mahendranagar transmission line. Signing of the agreement was delayed by hours as the two sides differed on the tariff of the imported electricity. Later, they agreed to go for the existing rate. Nepal has already been importing 60 MW power from India. An understanding to import additional 60 MW power from was reached during the recent visit of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal to India. The import deal is believed to be a short-term solution to the load-shedding in Nepal.

CORRUPTION WATCHDOG Transparency International (TI) has ranked Nepal as 121st corrupt country scoring 2.7 points among 180 countries surveyed worldwide in its new report. TI had ranked Nepal in the 131 position with 2.5 points last year. Despite improvement in tackling corruption Nepal still remains as a 'corrupt nation' as a country scoring below 5 points indicates serious corruption problem in the public sector. Only Bhutan scored points above 5 in south Asia. The TI raised concern over poor action against corruption, instead rewarding those having accused of corruption in Nepal. 'Ex-ministers, such as Chrinjibi Wagle and Govinda Raj Joshi, who both have cases pending in the courts, have nonetheless been inducted into the legislature as parliamentarians,' the report said. It further adds, "Serial bank defaulters who willfully fail to pay back loans face no punitive action, although the Amartya Group was forced to pay back more than US\$44 million," adding, "Warrants to arrest embezzlers and fraudsters are not acted upon." TI said allegedly corrupt influential people are freed by the Special Court on flimsy pretexts. It is a situation in which the rule of law has been compromised and impunity prevails. TI has also raised concern over prevailing corruption in Melamchi project, which could not complete in the last one and half decade. ■



President Dr. Rambaran Yadav travels to far western districts to take stock of the disaster unleashed by floods and landslides

KOSI DAM HYDROPOWER

WORLD'S ONE OF THE LARGEST HYDROPOWER

▪ AB Thapa

At the time of the feasibility study of the Karnali high dam project (Chisapani) completed under the grant assistance of the UNDP in 1966 the total installed capacity of that project was estimated at only 1,800 MW and another 900 MW was to be added later on. However, it was found in course of the latest feasibility study of that project completed in 1989 under the assistance of the World Bank that the installed capacity of that project should be 10,800 MW and there should be a provision to add later on additional 5,400 MW.

The installed capacity of the Kosi dam hydropower fixed at 3,000 MW in 1981 study report of the Indian Government is also very much on lower side. It has been explained hereinafter how the annual regulated flow of the Kosi is expected to exceed such flow of the Karnali, and the Kosi hydropower would be operating at about 50% higher dependable head compared to Karnali hydropower. Both these hydropower plants

are expected to serve almost the same region of North India. Thus, it can outright be said that the optimum initial installed capacity of the Kosi dam hydropower would be around 16,000 MW.

New Research

Recent advances in studies of the Himalayan region provide a whole bunch of information crucial for planning high dams. Such information were extensively used for detailed design of the Karnali high dam. The Karnali studies carried out by a consortium of renowned consulting firms of several countries under the aegis of the World Bank in close consultation with the governments of Nepal and India have helped to come to the conclusion that contrary to earlier understandings, the problems to be actually encountered in dam planning in the Himalayan belt are far more difficult and also complicated. This has been clearly demonstrated in finalization of the design of the Karnali high dam. It is not difficult to find out that the dam of the Kosi High Dam Project would be far bigger in height if this project is developed without risking to jeopardize the longevity of its useful life.

Limitation of Indian Study

The height of the Kosi dam proposed by India in 1940s was 269 meters. At that time the world's highest

dam was the 221 meters high Hoover dam on the river Colorado, which was built in 1936 in the United State. The proposed Kosi dam not only topped in height the Hoover dam which was at that time the highest in the world but far from that the Kosi dam height exceeded the height of the latter by a huge margin of almost 50 meters.



Embankment type dams are best suited for those places where we have to build very high dams and where the geological conditions are not quite satisfactory. Of late several very high embankment type dams have already been

The Karnali studies carried out by a consortium of renowned consulting firms of several countries under the aegis of the World Bank in close consultation with the governments of Nepal and India have helped to come to the conclusion that contrary to earlier understandings, the problems to be actually encountered in dam planning in the Himalayan belt are far more difficult and also complicated

built. The Rogun dam being built in the former Soviet Union is 335 meters in height. However, in those days the technology of embankment type dams was not yet fully developed to safely apply for very high dams. Indian experts must have faced with a difficult choice to compromise in favour of a dangerously high concrete type dam to regulate the enormous flow of the Kosi.

Insufficient Storage Volume

The gross storage volume of the Kosi reservoir at a dam height of 269 meters according to Indian proposal will be only 13.45 billion cubic meters. This volume is too small to effectively regulate the Kosi river over a reasonably long period. New studies have shown that we may need to provide a reservoir about 40 billion cubic meters in gross volume. We can arrive at such conclusion based on the criteria applied in planning of the Karnali dam project.

Why Kosi Dam Project was Abandoned?

At some stage Indian experts must have realized that

despite the great risk at 269 meters dam height, the volume of the storage reservoir would still be quite insufficient to regulate satisfactorily for a long period the Kosi river. We know of late that the height of the Kosi dam would have to be well over 300 meters if it is planned based on criteria developed under the supervision of the World Bank, which has been applied in design of the Karnali High Dam Project. Amidst such grave doubts it would have been a terrible blunder to decide to implement the proposed Kosi project. This could be the plausible explanation why it was decided to abandon temporarily the plan to build Kosi high dam, and instead to provide guide embankments to control temporarily the river.

Kosi is Bigger than Karnali.

There is a similarity between the Karnali and Kosi rivers. Both these rivers originating in the Tibetan plateau debouch into the plain of Terai after passing through the geologically fragile mountain region of Nepal.

Despite such similarity, the Kosi is obviously a river bigger than the Karnali.

The total drainage area of the Kosi is about 60,000 sq. km., as against only 44,000 sq. km area of the

Karnali. Similarly the total volume of annual flow of the Kosi is about 52 billion cubic meters whereas such volume of the Karnali is only 44 billion cubic meters. The silt problem of the Kosi river is by no means less sever than that of the Karnali. Thus the Kosi in every respect is a bigger river than Karnali. It clearly implies that a larger storage reservoir would be needed to regulate the enormous flow of the Kosi. Nevertheless, let us suppose that the requisite storage volume of the Kosi reservoir would be just equal to such volume of the Karnali to have an idea what would roughly be the height of the Kosi dam.

World's Highest Dam

According to the Karnali project feasibility study the gross volume of the Karnali reservoir would be 39 billion cubic meters at 270 meters proposed height of the dam. Out of it the dead storage volume, effective storage volume, and the flood regulation volume would be 12 billion cubic meters, 16 billion cubic meters and 11 billion cubic meters respectively.

Let us hypothesize that the gross volume of the Kosi storage reservoir would also be 39 billion cubic meters. The height of the Kosi dam can be determined for a certain volume of the reservoir using the available topographical survey data of the Kosi dam site. Based on such data the height of the Kosi dam would be over 335 meters if a storage reservoir 39 billion cubic meters in volume is to be provided. Such Kosi dam would be the highest in the whole world. The

hydropower station design based on revised height of the Kosi dam would be expected to operate at about 50% higher dependable head.

Completion Time

Irrigation and inland waterway development are two other major components of the Kosi High Dam Project apart from flood control and hydropower according to Indo-Nepal 1997 joint study agreement. This project is similar to China's Three Gorges Project in terms of volume of works and complexity of engineering problems. It took China thirty years to complete the construction of the Three Gorges Project including the later part of the study.

Clearly it is going to take a very long time to implement the Kosi project even if the funds required for the construction are readily available. Undoubtedly this project is ruled out as a possible option to resolve quickly the rapidly worsening Kosi flood problem. However, the detailed study of the Kosi

The total drainage area of the Kosi is about 60,000 sq. km., as against only 44,000 sq. km area of the Karnali. Similarly the total volume of annual flow of the Kosi is about 52 billion cubic meters whereas such volume of the Karnali is only 44 billion cubic meters. The silt problem of the Kosi river is by no means less sever than that of the Karnali. Thus the Kosi in every respect is a bigger river than Karnali.

dam project should be continued with a far greater seriousness under the continued technical guidance of a panel of few well reputed experts competent to advise on project of this scale. ■

**A Happy and Greetings on the
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Ministry of Finance : Tough task ahead

MONETARY POLICY

Close Watch On Inflation

The monetary policy of 2008/09 takes inflation as the key evil

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Just as the budget this year was delayed by two months due to political uncertainty, the monetary policy, too, has been released after two months have already passed in the new fiscal year.

The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has released the monetary policy for the fiscal year 2008/09 on Monday (September 29).

The policy has termed rising rate of inflation as the main challenge and has vowed to proceed cautiously and strictly to control this rising rate.

"In order to combat the inflation rate, we have taken a number of measures such as increasing the bank rate from existing 6.25 to 6.5 percent; increasing Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) from 5 to 5.5 percent and announcing willingness to

intervene in the open market to manage the liquidity," said acting governor Krishna Bahadur Manandhar.

The rate of inflation has reached 7.7 percent on yearly average in the last fiscal year, which ended two and a half months ago. The monthly average of inflation has been increasing sharply in last few months. In the month of Shrawan (June/July) it reached to whopping 13 percent.

"We aim to rein in the average yearly inflation rate at 7.5 percent in the fiscal year 2008/09," said Manandhar.

Meanwhile, addressing the Constituent Assembly (CA) last week, Finance Minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai had also said the government is committed to keep inflation low — around 7.5 percent as projected in the budget estimate for the new fiscal year.

According to him, significant decline in the price of oil in the global market and the government's efforts to increase growth and improve efficiency of the supply mechanisms will be instrumental in checking price rise, which currently stands at 12 percent.

Answering the queries raised by lawmakers during the parliamentary debate on the budget, he said, "I am very careful about the inflation and will keep it in check. I will not allow the inflation to increase just because of government expenditure."

Saying that the government is committed to check misuse of resources, the Finance Minister, who presented a Rs 2.36 billion budget that has been dubbed by experts as inflated and ambitious, claimed that the government will be able to implement its programs thanks mainly to improved revenue collection.

According to a press release on monetary policy issued by the central bank on Monday, it is stated that the remittance earning has increased by 42.5 percent to reach Rs 142.68 billion in the fiscal year 2007/08 compared with Rs previous fiscal year. The total foreign exchange reserve has surged to Rs 212.62 billion — which is adequate to foot the total goods import bill for 11.3 months and goods and service import bill for 9.1 months.

Despite the yawning trade deficit, the Balance of Payment (BoP) remains favourable with surplus of Rs 29.67 billion — up from Rs 5.9 billion surplus a year ago.

The policy states that GDP growth rate in 2007/08 stood at 5.6 percent compared with 2.6 percent in the previous year. It states that the growth rate in agriculture sector stood at 5.7 percent — compared with 0.9 percent previous year. The handsome growth in agro sector was pulled by 16.8 percent growth in paddy production. Likewise, the growth of non agriculture sector stood at 5.6 percent — compared with 4.1 percent previous year. ■



PM Prachanda: Whirlwind Tour

PRACHANDA IN US

Long March

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' uses his trip to the US to earn diplomatic points for his party

By A CORRESPONDENT

In less than two months since he became the prime minister of Nepal, Maoist chairman Prachanda has already made a whirlwind tour of foreign capitals. From Beijing to New Delhi and, most recently to the UN headquarters in New York, he has been busy rubbing shoulders with the world leaders.

And he seems to have made the most of the opportunity in trying to convince the international leaders about his party's intentions and aspirations.

Addressing the 63rd session of the United Nations early this week, he attempted to justify the decade-long armed struggle waged by his party since 1996, saying the movement was launched for the liberation of the common man "from the clutches of age-old suppression, deprivation, marginalization and outright negligence by the then existing polity."

He claimed that people in Nepal overwhelmingly voted for his party with the hope of change.

"They voted in favour of change and transformation that my own party had fought for so many years," he said.

In what would sound as music to the ears of international community, he repeatedly underscored commitment to democracy and human rights.

He said that the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission would preserve the centrality of peace by seeking a balance between peace and justice. He also lauded the UN for establishing an office of its regional centre for Peace and Disarmament in Kathmandu.

PM Dahal also took the opportunity to make a case for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), saying that LDCs should be ensured dedicated support and cooperation to make the world just and inclusive.

"We want full implementation of the respective global compacts, the Brussels Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Almaty Program of Action for the

Landlocked Developing Countries." He urged the world body to deal with the issues of LDCs separately and also said Nepal is committed to continuing to provide its troops for UN peacekeeping missions.

He called for fulfilling the "solemn" pledges made in 2000, and at the 2002 World Conference on Financing for Development. "We need to create a regime of common but differentiated responsibilities, in which the developed countries will lift the burden of adaptation in the vulnerable countries, such as the least developed countries and small islands. The world will stand to benefit in addressing the climate change if we are able to harness the tremendous potentials of Nepal's hydro-power as it is a renewable and clean source of energy. For this, Nepal is ready to invite and encourage investment in its hydro-power projects," he added.

He further said, "Nepal is committed to restoring law and order, providing immediate relief to the people affected by the conflict, fighting against the cancerous growth of corruption and starting an economic recovery package focusing on pro-poor growth, infrastructure development and public-private partnership."

While appreciating the UN's role in Nepal's peace process, PM Dahal said the world body must also tackle such development challenges as religious extremism, nuclear weapons proliferation, trans-national crimes and gross human rights violations.

On climate change, he noted that Nepal is witnessing melting of glaciers and shifting weather patterns, and strongly appealed for international support to help protect its environment. A regime of common but differentiated responsibilities also must be created, he added.

The PM also appealed to the international community's support and cooperation to protect and promote the pristine environment of the Mt Everest and the Himalayan Range.

"The mountains provide life-supporting water downstream for more than a billion people. It needs to be protected and utilised properly to contribute to the humanity as a whole," he said.

Stress On MDGs

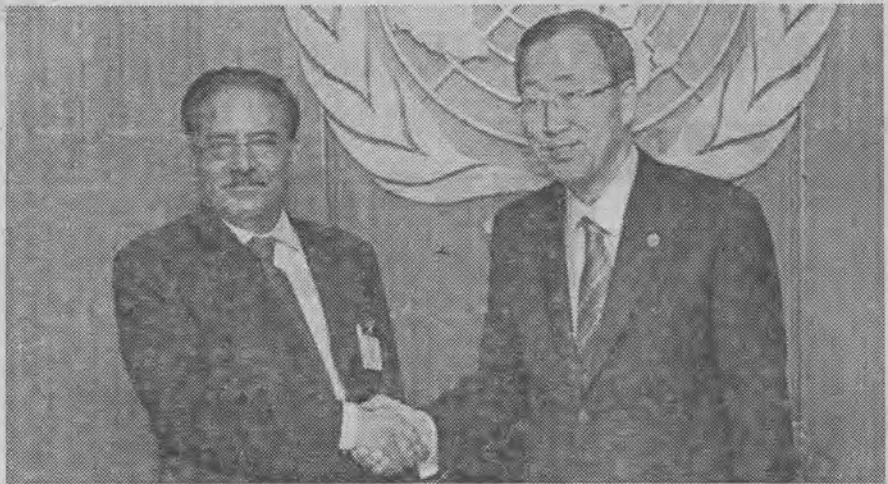
Earlier, addressing a Roundtable on Poverty and Hunger at the UN General Assembly high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on poverty and hunger, he said "making poverty history" will sound empty without a genuine support and cooperation from the developed countries, adding investment for development in the poorer countries is "an investment in the peace and stability of the world."

PM Dahal said despite the commitment of the international community to take on poverty, hunger, diseases and many of the development challenges confronting the world, "it is ironic that more than a billion people, the so-called "bottom billion", mostly in developing countries, are still trapped in conditions of grinding poverty with an income of less than a dollar a day." He called this "unbecoming of the contemporary human civilization, which has so much of affluence and prosperity at its disposal."

PM Dahal also rebuked the developed partners for providing only 0.28% of their GNP as development aid, as against the commitment to provide 0.7%, adding that development aid has declined in actual terms. "Most of the least developed countries are still outside the debt relief initiatives," he said. "Under such conditions, the target of reducing poverty and hunger and meeting other MDGs will be very difficult."

Elaborating on Nepal's "mixed result" on the achievement of the MDGs, PM Dahal said, "We are on track of achieving goals related to halving the poverty by 2015, achieving universal primary education, reducing under-five child mortality, and providing safe drinking water." He further said that despite internal conflict, the percentage of people living in poverty has been reduced to 31% and that the country has made significant progress in improving access to education and health services.

"But we have numerous challenges to address. The biggest challenge is effectively addressing mortality among newborns and reducing hunger among the children under five. We have to address the problem of inequality and exclusion, which is denying the



Prachanda shakes hands with UN SG Ban ki-Moon: New phase of relations

distribution of fruits of development to the people, who often live in the periphery of the state and the economy."

He said the current government is therefore committed to put the people, who have been traditionally marginalized, at the centre of its development strategy and initiate collective interventions at various levels. "We feel that MDGs on their own cannot be achieved by all and more specifically by the LDCs. We can meet them only with global political support, stronger partnerships and coordinated efforts of all. Our achievements, including in reducing poverty, are likely to be thwarted by the rising food and oil prices and threats of climate change," he said, adding that short term relief and long term measures are required to deal with them in a comprehensive manner.

PM Dahal also said financing for development of the developing countries should not be an obstacle when there is so much political will around this Assembly. "The situation we are facing demands visionary and strategic choice to be made globally. It is about time that this Assembly rose up to its challenge and adopted that strategic choice. After all, investment in development in the poorer countries is an investment in the peace and stability of the world," he added.

Commitment To Democracy

According to news report by Reuters, PM Dahal attempted to assure the skeptics who fear one-party communist rule in Nepal as the former rebellions lead the government. "There is serious confusion and misunderstanding about

our overall position in terms of economic development," he told the gathering of Asia Society, adding, "We are not fighting against the capitalistic mode of production." He further said government was committed to the peace process and to democracy, while trying to raise living standards of the people.

"We are in a democratic phase and we are going to apply the democratic form of government — it is quite clear," he added.

Encounter With Bush

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal attended a reception hosted by US President George W. Bush and Laura Bush in honor of the Heads of Delegation and spouses in recognition of the sixty-third session of United Nations General Assembly Monday evening in New York last week. He had a brief chat with President Bush on the occasion.

PM Dahal also met with several world leaders and top US officials on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. Dahal held bilateral meetings with Sheikh Hamid Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, and US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Richard Boucher separately.

Similarly, Dahal met with First Vice President of the Council of State of Cuba Jose Ramon Machado Ventura, and Prime Minister of Mongolia Bayar Sanj, Russian Foreign Minister and leader of Russian delegation Sergey Lavarov. The Nepali PM also attended a reception hosted by UN Secretary General Ban-Ki-Moon in honor of the leaders of the delegations. ■

CLIMATE CHANGE

Hitting The Poor

With an unusual rainfall pattern, Nepal's poor populations living in different parts of the country are prone to be trapped into the vicious cycle of natural disasters. Although there is not yet enough proof, the climate change is gradually contributing to such new phenomenon affecting the life of poor people who do not produce many emissions to heat the earth. The recent flash floods in far western region, which affected the life of more than 100,000 people, mostly landless and poor, indicated who will have to bear the cost of climate change in future. Since poor are going to suffer the most, it is time to think about remedy plan

By KESHAB POUDEL

Bulu Chaudhari, 40, a resident of Tikapur Village Development Committee of Kailali district 600 kilometer west of capital, has lost everything. The flood washed away his huts, rice fields and few belongings including a pig, a goat and chicken. Living in government

resettled area, Chaudhari, a former bonded labor, has nothing to eat and nothing to wear. Father of four children, two daughters and two sons, Chaudhari is looking at the bleak future.

"After more than 10 hours of

torrential rain, the river nearby our newly settled areas swelled to such a level that it washed out almost 100 huts and paddy fields affecting the life of about 800 people," said Chaudhari. "In the last few years, we feel something different in



People affected by floods: Rendered Homeless

nature with freak rain, warmer temperature and revival of mosquito borne-diseases.”

Kamala Bohara, 42, of eastern Kanchanpur Municipality has a similar story to tell. The recent flash floods washed away her small huts, paddy field and some cattle. Bohara is now homeless and there is nothing to feed her family of five. “I have never seen this kind of rain and flash floods,” said Bohara. “The rain poured in such a manner that the swollen river took away all my belonging.”

Flooding has affected 42 village development committees (VDCs) and two municipalities of Kailali district, and four VDCs and one municipality of Kanchanpur district. Out of 42 inundated

VDCs in Kailali district more than one dozen VDCs of south-east Kailali have been badly affected.

The floods have caused significant damage to lives, livelihoods and infrastructure. The far-western region of the country is cut off from the rest of the country due to damage of the east-west national highway in many places. Many of the feeder roads and embankments were also swept away.

Drinking water and electricity supplies, schools and public buildings have collapsed. Many private houses, property, domestic animals and standing crops have been washed away. According to the national news media reports, thousands of people have been

directly affected and displaced.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Kailali District, about 700km southwest of the capital, was the worst affected, with more than 8,900 families displaced in 19 Village Development Committees.

“It will take several days to repair the road and we are faced with heavy challenges to help the affected victims,” said Chief district officer of Kailali district Bhojendra Chettri.

There have been no reports of people dying of disease; however, precautionary measures were needed to avoid any possible outbreaks as the number of displaced remained high, said officials

from the District Public Health Office (DPHO) in Kailali.

Meteorologists argue that this kind of rainfall is not unnatural at this time of season as the monsoon is still on, though at its fag end. What they see surprising is the changing pattern in rainfall. "The numbers of rainy days have shortened but the rain fall is more intensive resulting in flash floods and landslide," said meteorologist Dr. Madan Man Shrestha. "The climate change is bringing effect in Nepal."

The recent devastating flood caused by excessive rainfall is not enough to prove that the climate change has started to show its effect. But, what one can predict is that the unusual rain pattern will affect the livelihood of poor population in future.

Monsoon Pattern

Monsoon begins in June and continues up to the end of September in Nepal. During this season, monsoon blows from south-east direction and brings rain to the country.

According to International Center for Integrated Mountain Development



Flooded City: Rising problem

(ICIMOD), up to about 3,000 meters annual rainfall totals increase as the altitude increases; thereafter, annual totals diminish with increasing altitude and latitude.

First, given the northwestward movement of the moisture-laden summer monsoon (June to September), the amount of annual rainfall generally decreases from east to west. Second, the

horizontal extension of hill and mountain ranges creates a moist condition on southland east facing slopes whereas it produces a major rain shadow on the northern sides of the slopes. Eastern Nepal receives approximately 2,500 millimeters of rain annually, the Kathmandu area about 1,420 millimeters, and western Nepal about 1,000 millimeters.

Although there were excessive rains in far western region - both hill and plain - the overall rainfall was a bit higher in September. According to Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, there is almost 1000 mm rainfall recorded in far west in three months till September 28.

It recorded unusually heavy rain in several parts of western Nepal in September 19. In its report, the meteorological department said Dhangadhi town in Kanchanpur district recorded over 400 millimeters of rain in a 48 hour period. It is one third of the rainfall supposed to be received by the region in monsoon.

In addition to the disaster in eastern Nepal, incessant rainfall in the mid-western and far-western regions between



Mountains: Fragile Ecology

19 and 21 September has resulted in more flooding and landslides in eight more districts.

Kanchanpur and Kailali, have been particularly hard-hit, with more than 30,000 families displaced by flash floods killing more than 65 people.

Of the around 22,000 displaced households, about 19,000 families have returned home. Only about 3,000 families who lost everything in the floods are sheltering in the government-run temporary camps, Kailali branch of Nepal Red Cross Society said.

According to Sitaram Joshi of Nepal Red Cross Society, those sheltering in various schools and VDC offices need to be shifted to permanent camps immediately as they are prone to various endemic diseases like diarrhea and pneumonia due to lack of safe drinking water and sanitation.

Chief District Officer (CDO) of Kailali Chettra Bahadur Bhandari said that the victims who returned home also need relief materials. He also said the displaced ones will be moved to permanent camps soon.

Rescue and Rehabilitation

As usual, Nepal Army is in the forefront of rescue efforts followed by Nepal Police and Armed Police. The army rescued more than thousand people trapped in the floods.

The government estimates that the total damage in the far western region might be over Rs. 5 billion. Ministry of Home has already announced package of about Rs. 75 million rupees. From schools to hospitals, road to houses, the government needs to pump a lot of money in rehabilitation.

As the rain devastated the region, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners have issued an appeal in response to flooding in the east of the country. The appeal seeks \$15.5 million to cover the needs of at least 70,000



NA Helicopter : Rescue operation

Photo : Nepal Army

people over the next six months.

The United Nations World Food Programmed (WFP) in Nepal will provide emergency food assistance for up to 170,000 people displaced by severe flooding in Far West Nepal. WFP will provide the needy with a mixed-commodity basket: rice, lentils, vegetable oil and salt, according to a WFP press release. WFP is also providing relief supplies to some 70,000 people in Nepal's eastern region who were displaced when the River Koshi burst its banks last



DPM Gautam: Promising Immediate Relief

month.

"We have witnessed the generous response of local communities, who, despite widespread poverty, have helped affected families with food, water, and clothing and who have helped shelter the displaced. I hope that donors will also respond with generous assistance to help communities and local government shoulder this load, and ensure that

This humanitarian support continues," said Robert Piper, Humanitarian Coordinator for Nepal. "As it will be many months before these families will be able to go home, their support will prove crucial to stabilize the precarious conditions of the displaced."

Academic activities in over a dozen schools in Doti district have remained halted for a week due to incessant rains and landslides. "Buildings of over a dozen schools collapsed following the downpour on September 20 and 21. Winds blew away tin roofs of over 60 school buildings making it impossible to conduct classes" said Chandra Bahadur Bohara, headmaster of Dahanirauli-based Krishna Lower Secondary School.



Agriculture Land : Searching alternative

Academic activities have also come to a halt in those schools that have escaped the flood and landslide fury. "Floods and landslides have swept away many bridges, making it impossible for students to go to schools," Nawaraj Joshi, a teacher in Dewali, said.

Climate Change

An unusually hard-hitting monsoon season in Nepal has raised concerns about the impact of climate change on Nepal's poor. Since the torrential rains began in June, at least 150 people have died and over 100,000 have been forced out from their homes.

Although the carbon footprint of the poor is a fraction of that of the rich, they are the ones that suffer the most from the extreme weather phenomena for which global rising temperatures are at

least partly responsible.

"Nepal is highly vulnerable to such climate shocks, as many of its people already live in conditions of extreme poverty, and are unable to withstand such meteorological disasters," said Dr. Shrestha, former director general of Department of Hydrology and Meteorology.

People of Nepal have to face two faceted problems as almost half of its population relies on the Himalayan glaciers for its water supply. The ever rising temperatures are melting the glaciers, causing extreme flooding. When the glaciers finish melting, the populations will be facing drought.

The combination of monsoon and glacier floods has destroyed infrastructure and damaged harvests in

southern plain of Nepal, which will have a severe impact on the country's agricultural production.

Hitting The Poor

The flooding in far western Nepal came a month after Koshi River in eastern Nepal breached its banks and flooded the area where property worth of millions of rupees.

According to Ministry of Home Affairs, about 50,000 people were displaced during that flooding and more than 100 people have died in flooding and landslides across the country since June.

Aid agencies are struggling to provide assistance to thousands of families displaced by flooding in western Nepal. The displaced are being temporarily sheltered in several schools



Village washed away : Excessive rain

Photo : Nepal Army

in the area or with relatives, but there was an urgent need to build temporary camps.

"We are in the process of finding empty land to build the camps as families are living in difficult circumstances and there is a need to find them better shelter," said Chief District Officer of Kailali.

Between 10 and 12 health camps have already been established to provide treatment and medication to a large number of the displaced, in particular children, left vulnerable to diarrhea, acute respiratory and eye infections.

According to experts, the current inundation is so massive that it has totally altered the habitation pattern of decades, if not centuries, with the flood waters surging through relatively safe villages, farmlands, fields, buildings and other infrastructures.

The abandoned population has no option than to depend on external help for survival. Compared to other parts of Nepal, far west Nepal has high prevalence of poverty. According to Nepal Human

Development Report, the per capita income of GDP of far western region is lower than national average.

"The majority of people who became homeless are the families of bonded labor," said chief district officer of Kailali. "They don't have any money or any material."

According to the World Bank's Interim Strategy Notes 2007, with the average per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$ 270(2005), Nepal remains the poorest country in South Asia and ranks as the twelfth poorest country in the world. As overwhelming number of population rely on the agriculture, any change in the weather pattern is inevitable to affect the agriculture production – the livelihood of many.

Adaptation Programs

Although every one has been talking about the need to start adaptation program to deal with climate change, only a few steps have been taken so far. From governmental to non-governmental organizations, every one has been talking about this, but all the organizations are

busy organizing seminars and workshops rather than doing something concrete.

Climate change and global warming issue is highly debated in academia and among the city elites who spend almost all their times traveling around the world but only few seem to be concerned about the tragedy being suffered by poor.

"The government is also stressing the need for an adaptation program. This is the only way to reduce the effect of climate change," said Purushotam Ghimire, spokesman of Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology.

Although some INGOs like Practical Action has implemented a pocket program on adaptation to climate change, it is too small. It has been implementing adoption program in a Jugedi village in Chitwan district, 100 kilometers east of capital.

International experts also express worries on recent floods and rain in South Asia including Nepal. Atlantic hurricanes and floods in South Asia are reminders of the risks of ever more extreme weather linked to a changing climate, Achim Steiner, the head of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said.

"These natural disasters do reflect a pattern of change that is in line with projections by experts on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)," he said. "In addition to the human suffering we have an economic escalation from damage from natural disasters," Steiner said.

"Natural disasters are increasingly becoming a major risk to our economies," Steiner said. "Our societies cannot afford this; our insurance industry cannot afford an escalation of risks. Winter are going to be less cold and rain is going to be less and intense."

As the climate change is inevitable to bring such freak weather pattern, the time has come to focus on adaptation to climate change. How to protect the poor from climate change is going to be the major challenge and who will pay the bill? ■

“Education Needs To Be Skill-Oriented”

- Dr. Baburam Pokharel

DR. BABURAM POKHAREL, founder principle of Vinayak Sudha Higher Secondary School and College, is a well known educationist. Established twenty years ago as a primary boarding school, V.S. Niketan now has 5000 students. Owing to its outstanding contribution, Ministry of Education awarded V.S Niketan with the recognition as the best school of this year. Dr. Pokharel spoke to SPOTLIGHT on various issues regarding the present state of education and performance of his school. Excerpts:

How do you see the recent achievement made by your school?

Since its establishment twenty eight years ago, the school catered to the need of medium class people for quality education. We have been providing quality education to those kinds of families. Since appearing in School Leaving Certificate Examination in 1988, the school has always secured excellent positions. Our students secured board first in 1997 and board second in 1999. Thanks to its excellent performance in the year 2007-08, our school was chosen as best school of the year. For this prestigious award, management, teachers, parents and students all have played important role. My intention is to make this institution more service-oriented rather than business-oriented.

As a person involved in promoting quality education, how do you see the present state of quality of education in private as well as government schools?

I have been arguing for a long time that the present national education policy needs to be reformulated as it has failed to address the problem. It is very unfortunate to say that the present students produced under the present education policy are unable to fulfill the need of the country and they are unable to compete in employment market. Our students with higher degree have qualification certificates but they don't have knowledge and skill. This is the reason there are high percentage of unemployed people in Nepal. There is a need to change the policy of education making it more competitive, knowledge-based and skill oriented.

How competitive is the education imparted by private sector?

The education imparted by private sector is complete

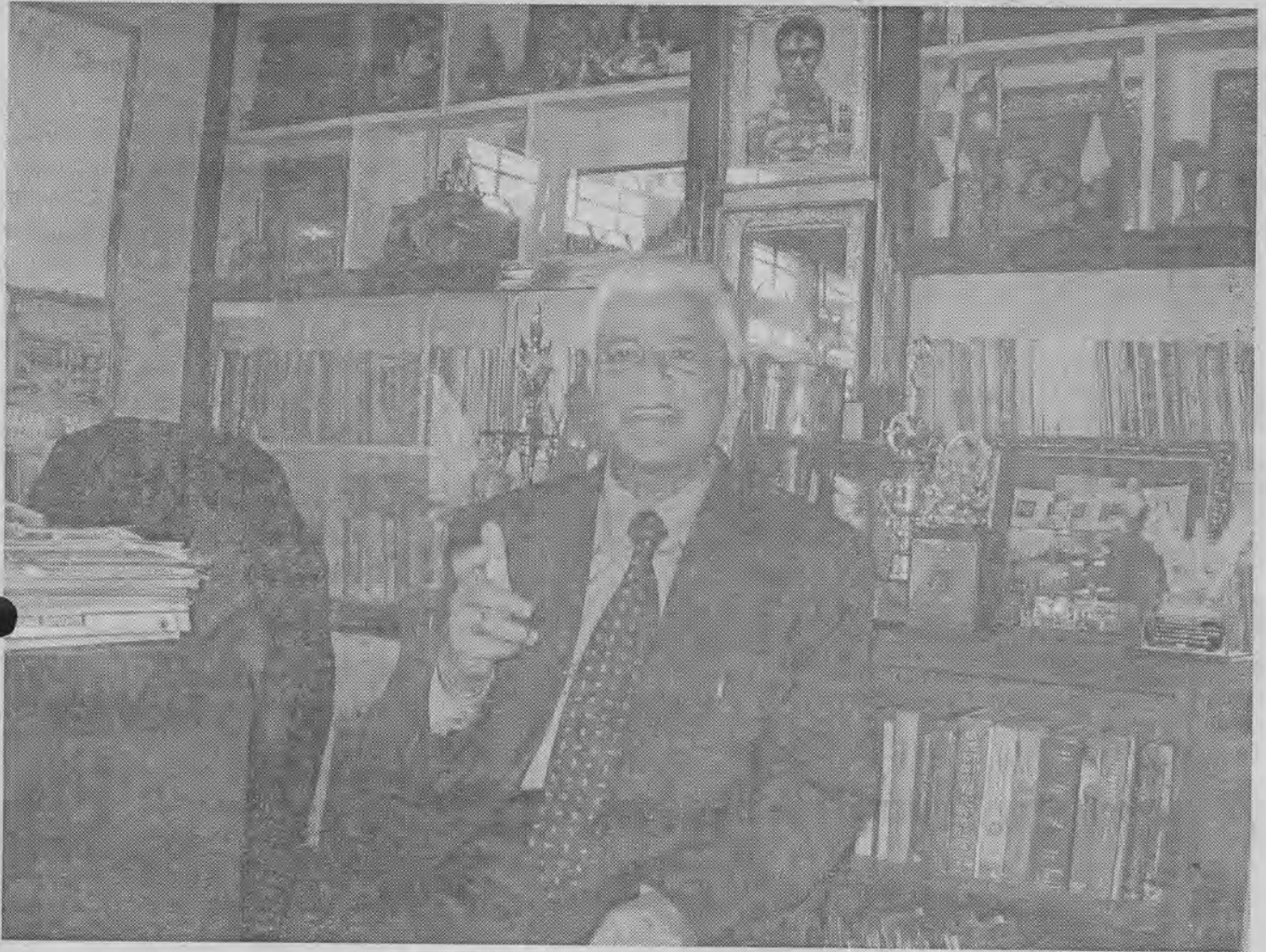
as well as of better quality compared with the education imparted by government sector. In the past, the quality of education was measured in terms of results in education but now the situation has changed. The quality of education is now measured by how a student competes in global market and how he is able to compete there. If you compare the quality of government and private sector in terms of their performance in producing competitive students, you don't need to hesitate to say that the students from private schools are more competitive. We have been producing good students who have competed successfully in global market.

What about gap in quality imparted by government and private schools?

There is a big gap between the government and private schools. What needs to be done is to improve the quality of education in government school. We also need to encourage the public private partnership in education sector. There is a need to involve private schools to improve the quality of government schools. Finally, new education policy needs to be formulated keeping in mind long term needs and interests of the country. Instead of encouraging all students for higher education, the new education policy must consist of vocational education where a drop out students should be given opportunity to acquire vocational skills. The education should be employment oriented, vocation oriented, professional, technical and scientific. These five components should be incorporated in the new education policy.

How do you see the recent government decision to levy five percent service tax in private sector education?

At a time when the government has been talking about the need to nationalize education, this policy indicates its willingness to seek partnership of private sector. The government recognized the role of private sector by imposing five percent taxes. Private education institutions are often involved in controversy because of their lack of involvement in social sector. After paying five percent service tax, we can say that we are fulfilling our social responsibility. This is a very good beginning. However, there is a need to clarify the process. How the government



will make mechanism whether we will pay the tax to the ministry of education or finance – these issues should be cleared. There are also some private schools which are unable to pay it. There must be separate policy for them. Otherwise, many private schools will be shut down.

What is the percentage of students the private sectors are covering?

We are catering service to about 25 percent of the students of the country. In terms of results, we produce high quality students with much more pass percentage. Private schools save about Rs.10 billion annually in education sector.

Despite such contribution, why private schools are often attacked?

It is because of misunderstanding about our roles. The law does not define our role. First of all, there is a

need for rule and regulations. Private sector also needs to highlight the role

played by them. Most important thing is to feel social responsibility. ■

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Dr. Pradeep Vaidya with a patient in Hospice Nepal. He is working there as a part-time volunteer.

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

A new methodical treatment

By: Abhushan Gautam

Hospice care is both a philosophy of care and a structured delivery of services that focuses on helping patients cope with life-limiting illness. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and a holistic approach, hospice and palliative care strives to address and manage any source of distress for the patient whether it be physical, emotional or spiritual. To encapsulate the entire picture, hospice is more about caring than curing.

Palliative care is often mistakenly thought of solely as end of life care, as the patients involved are mostly victims of terminal diseases – that includes AIDS, Cancers and Tuberculosis – who have received sure-death

approvals from their respective doctors. While applying the principles of palliative care to dying patients is clearly important, palliative care can –

and should – be integrated along the disease trajectory.

In the last few years, there has been a significant change in the attitudes of people about terminal diseases in Nepal and a need for hospice care. Newly established hospice houses are either funded by foreign countries or have been run on a community level by indigenous donors and religion-based groups. These institutions are at the forefront of a movement within countries with limited resources to give greater attention to the needs of such patients for whom there is no cure.

“Before 2000, we would tell patients, “We cannot do anything more. Please go home.” That is what was so disheartening Terminal patients would have to go home and die in pain, with no doctors to treat them.”

“The whole system in Nepal has

changed,” Dr. Vaidya declares. “There was a time when palliative care was considered unimportant, even in the hospitals. Patients and families had only their doctor to rely on, and he or she was busy with patients with a possibility of cure. Most hospitals now have separate palliative care units, where a dedicated nursing staff looks after patients. This team approach has decreased the physicians’ workload, and the families are happier to have the undivided attention of a nurse who becomes almost a member of their family.”

The number of hospice houses inside and outside the Kathmandu Valley has been on the rise since 2000. Hospice Nepal and Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital were established in 2000 with financial help from the Belgium-based INTCR (International Cancer Relief Society). Likewise, Maiti Nepal has established two Hospices in Kathmandu and Jhapa districts to provide holistic care for the children and women who are terminally ill, or suffering from various diseases. Sonja Kill Memorial Hospice located at Gokarna of Kathmandu District provides necessary care and support for survivors whose families and society have stigmatized and outcasted. The Hospice boasts a capacity of 43 beds and provides medical treatment to survivors who are infected with HIV/AIDS, Multi Drug Resistance Tuberculosis, Hepatitis and other chronic diseases. An isolation unit with capacity of 3 beds also has been operating since January 2006.

Similarly, The Saemmul Hospice House was recently opened in Thankot by a group Christian missionaries from South Korea. Surrounded by the majestic hills of the Kathmandu Valley, even the sight of hospice house comes along as a great stress-reliever. The new isolation unit contains modern equipments and amenities like no other in Kathmandu Valley. And, currently the building shelters nearly 12 cancer patients and 2

AIDS victims.

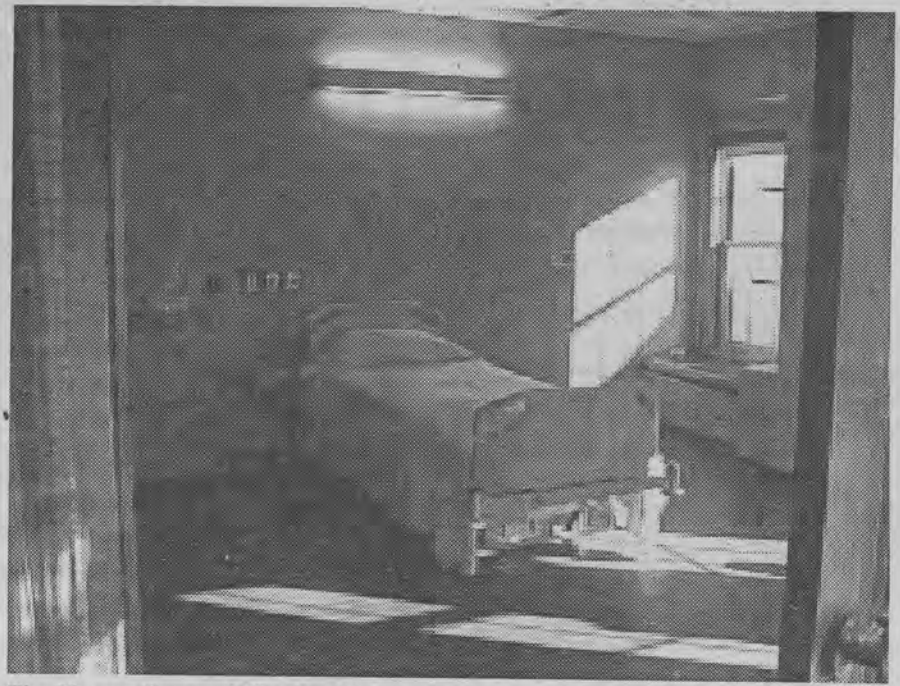
Such institutions have devised new methods for wholistic treatment and care for such patients. This includes unique treatment procedures such as respite therapy, aroma and art therapy, environmental therapy and communication therapy. The main focus is to instill a beacon of hope and satisfaction in these patients so as to eliminate fears of their imminent death.

Spiritual and faith therapies enable them to understand and comprehend a proper concept of death. Dr. Bong Ho Shun at Saemmul Hospice recalls a young Christian woman who, at age 32 had developed breast cancer. The young patient underwent surgery, but the cancer had already spread.

"We managed her pain with morphine and told her she could go home," recalls Dr. Shun. "She knew she was dying, but she was afraid that her Hindu family would not respect her wishes for a Christian death. When the time came, she called her family member and her nurses together, she asked her brother to read a Hindu prayer, she lay down with her Bible scriptures, and she passed away very contentedly. That she could die pain-free, and with dignity, keeps us going."

In a family-centered society such as Nepal's, family members make decisions on behalf of their ailing loved ones and often don't want doctors to relay the poor prognosis to the patient. That information is better shared by a beloved husband or a favorite daughter. Then again, sometimes it is the patient who instructs her caregivers how she wishes to die. The focus of hospice relies on the belief that each of us has the right to die pain-free and with dignity, and that our loved ones will receive the necessary support to allow us to do so.

In the process of providing unconditional care and treatment, hospice houses have, although now, been stonewalled with numerous



The Korean Saemmul Hospice House contains modern equipments and amenities like no other in the Kathmandu valley.

hindrances. The problems of limited availability of morphine drugs and vaccination devices in the capital poses a likely threat of obstructing quick and periodic delivery of medicine to these patients. The delivery of palliative care in countries as Nepal can be hindered by limited access to opioids and other symptom-relieving medications, rural dislocation of a population, competing health priorities, war or political instability, and limited access to health care services

We want to deliver palliative care to the door of the people who need it," he says. "That is our ultimate goal."

For that to happen, says Dr. Sudip Shrestha, morphine must become more widely available all over the country — not just in hospitals or hospices but also in the context of home based programs. In Nepal, nearly 86% of the population lives in rural areas—and most of them have unrealistic fears regarding opioids. Compounding the problem; very few impatient beds in the capital city of Kathmandu are designated for palliative care.

Similarly, lack of specialized and

trained volunteers in this field is retrograding the woes of looking after increasing number of hospice patients. Various training programmes and workshops have been conducted so far but this has still proved to be insubstantial in attracting enthusiastic and willing-to-work volunteers. Then, again, there are problems of inadequate funds and financial resources for running the institution and ensuring remuneration for full-time workers.

As grave as though the road-blocks might be, hospice care is growing as the foremost option for the care of impoverished patients throughout the country. Many young volunteers are now willing to take the initiative and many new entrepreneurs are getting involved so as to maximize the community outreach in the outlying districts to aid terminal patients.

Dr Sudip Shrestha at Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital speaks optimistically, "We don't yet have awareness at the government level, but there is so much enthusiasm for palliative care that we are now building hospices near Kathmandu. We have a bright future."

Gautam is student of Malpi Institute

POLITICS

Enlightening Exposure

Traveling to three major power centers within a period of a month, Nepalese prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has got much needed exposure

By KESHAB POUDEL

From birth place of Karl Marx to masonry of Chinese leader Mao in Beijing and leaders of non-violence Mahatma Gandhi's Samadhi in New Delhi and finally visiting the land of Statue of Liberty in the, Prime minister Dahal under whose leadership more than fifteen Nepalese were killed in the name of "People's War", visited all three major power centers. It will now be interesting to see what this exposure will bring and what will be the implications of these visits to Nepal's crisis.

"I had to concentrate on China, India, the US and other countries to create conducive environment for peace," said prime minister Dahal upon his arrival to Tribhuvan International Airport. "The time and situation demanded it. Now that it has been accomplished, I will focus on domestic matters."

Whatever prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal learned in the past as a communist activist, now he is in a compelling situation of unlearning process. Though he preferred to visit birth place of Mao, he found modern China completely different than that of Mao's vision. Prime minister Dahal seems to be very much enchanted with the tremendous progress of China in every area.

"I have seen heaven and earth coming together when I attended the concluding ceremony of Beijing Olympic," said prime minister Dahal giving his impression about new and emerging China.

Dahal may not have any dilemma to choose between two ways of change – Mao's China or Deng Xiaoping's China.

Similarly, a couple of weeks after his visit to China, prime minister Dahal left for Indian capital New Delhi and paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi's Samadhi,

who spent his entire life for non-violence. PM Dahal also went to Bangalore, a model city of New India.

China is a state controlled society with limited democratic freedom whereas India has full-fledged democracy to the extent of functioning anarchy. The team led by prime minister Dahal, who himself conceded that he spent almost eight years in India out of ten years of violent insurgency in Nepal, had an opportunity to compare between the two and draw inference which may help to chart out his future political programs.

In New Delhi, prime minister Dahal reiterated that Nepal-India relations are special and it cannot be compared with that of any country.

On his way to USA, prime minister Dahal went to birth place of Karl Marx, Mecca of communists. As a first visit to Europe as a prime minister, Dahal had an opportunity to get a glimpse of Germany and its culture.

Finally, he landed at New York, the city of statue of liberty and country of freedom and democracy. During his short stay in USA, prime minister Dahal has been able to mix up with varied sections of people both international community as well as immigrant Nepal's. Prachanda, whose party had during its armed war declared US imperialism one of its bitterest foes, regarded his interaction with US President George W. Bush and American officials as one of the biggest achievements of his US trip.

"I told Richard Boucher (US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs) that we had made considerable progress in the peace process and were now the ruling party that had come through an election," Prachanda said.



PM Dahal : High hope

"You should also change your old mindset."

Within two months after becoming prime minister, he has been able to see various societies having different political models and infrastructures.

For outsider this visit is a major diplomatic victory for the new Maoist government of Nepal and the ongoing peace process as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is coming to Nepal next month on a two-day visit. Ban would be the second world leader to endorse the Maoists after former American president and Nobel peace prize winner Jimmy Carter. The UN chief did not avail of the invitation when then prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala sent invitation to visit Nepal in April.

Whatever political dogma Dahal might have and whatever heinous stigma as a show piece leader of terrorist operation in Nepal may have created psychological impacts upon him, all three visits seems to have enhanced his self-confidence.

But still he will face an upheaval task to lead a nation-poorest in economic term but richest in cultural heritage. A small incident of Indraujatra festival showed that however the ultra revolutionary ideas leaders may carry with them they have to bow down before the resentment of the people who have deep respect to their cultural heritage. Given the geo-strategic position of Nepal, the days ahead are much challenging for the present government under the leadership of Dahal. ■

“More than one’s language, caste, being Madhesi or Pahadi... the important thing is that are all Nepalis.”

President Dr. Rambaran Yadav, inaugurating a program on cancer awareness organized by BP Memorial Cancer Hospital in Chitawan.

“They voted in favour of change and transformation that my own party had fought for so many years.”

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’, addressing the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

“Prachanda (PM Dahal) and some Maoist leaders have started saying that parliamentary democracy has failed. I want them to look at the example of United Kingdom – the mother of parliamentary democracy.”

Girija Prasad Koirala, former prime minister and president of Nepali Congress (NC), addressing a function organized in the capital by NC student wing Nepal Students Union (NSU).

“Nobody can enter into Constituent Assembly carrying weapons.”

Bamdev Gautam, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, addressing CA.

“The CA is a weapons-free zone.



Considering its sensitivity, the government has taken up the responsibility of providing security to CA.”

Subas Nemwang, chairman of the CA, saying that no CA member needs to bring in bodyguard into CA.

“The deputy prime minister is under prime minister. He should not be preaching.”

Top Bahadur Rayamajhi, a senior Maoist leader, hitting at the warning by deputy prime minister Gautam regarding the ban on carrying weapons inside CA.

“I am aware about the concerns of inflation. I will do what needs to be done to prevent inflation from increasing.”

Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, Finance Minister, addressing the Constituent Assembly.

“What is the meaning of democracy, freedom of speech and expression? We no longer live in the ice age. We know our grounds and limits.”

Nisha Adhikary, a participant at the Miss Nepal Beauty Pageant 2008, which was stalled after government order, in The Kathmandu Post.

TRANSITION

RETURNED: Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ after completing a visit to New York, United States, where he attended the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly.

Hisila Yami, Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, after completing a visit to the United Kingdom.

ATTENDED: Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda,’ a reception hosted by US president George Bush

in honor of visiting heads of states and governments.

LEFT: Upendra Yadav, Foreign Minister, for New York, United States, to attend the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly. He leads a four-member Nepali delegation.

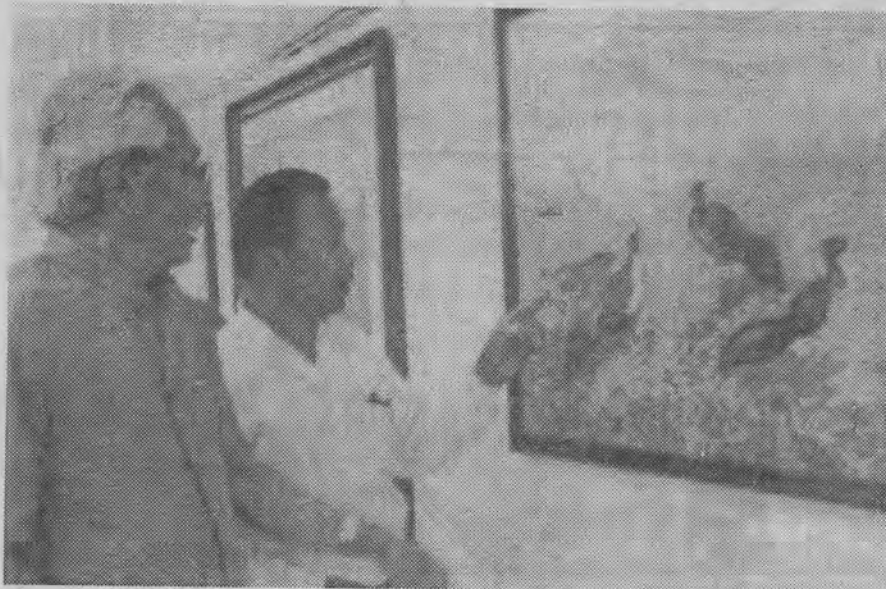
Jairam Ramesh, an Indian Minister of State for Power and Commerce, for home, after completing his visit to Nepal where he attended the Third Power Summit.

ELECTED: Ram Kumari Jhakri, as the

president of UML-affiliated All Nepal National Free Students Union (ANNFSU), at the national convention of ANNFSU. She became the first woman president of a student union in the country.

RESUMED: Works in Dabur Nepal, after an agreement between management and workers. The factory had been shut down for a month due to dispute.

RANKED: Nepal ranked 121st among 180 countries in the corruption index prepared by Transparency International.



travelled to all important destinations. He travelled from Kosi Tappu to Chitwan National Park and from Kagbeni of Mustang to Myagdi.

"Birds choose different places to live in accordance with the changing season. Some birds have permanent place," said Poudel. "This is the reason I have to travel extensively to get their pose done. The poses of birds are different in different time."

Nepal is home to hundreds of species of birds. Hundreds of tourists visit Nepal for bird watching in various parts of the country.

Poudel's show is on display at Nepal Art Council Gallery.

Artist Poudel is also involved in the book prepared by Lainsingh Bangdel who had compiled the pictures of 887 birds of Nepal.

In his oil paintings, he uses the color to in accordance with bird and their natural surroundings. Some birds are playing in green pastures and some birds are feeding their siblings.

He has already sold a number of his paintings on bird in different parts of the world but this time his exhibition was not for sale but just for the exhibition.

Poudel also chooses different time and various seasons to paint the birds.

From Kathmandu to Pokhara, Chitwan and Dharan, artist Poudel has already exhibited his solo painting exhibition in different places. ■

ART

Flying With Birds

Artist Hem Poudel's collections depicts birds found in Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

Every artist has his/her own interest. Some like to do painting on landscape and others on human behavior. The attractions and themes are always different to different people.

Artist Hem Poudel too has his own theme of interest, that is birds.

"I like to paint the color of birds in their own natural way and natural presence. Because of my habit, I traveled to various parts of Nepal in order to study the habits, habitats and activities of birds," said Poudel. "I have collected a number of birds' pictures. Some of these birds are on the verge of extinction."

Poudel captured the image of birds flying in high mountains, hills and terai. He also draws the picture of birds living in Simsar and forest. "The birds have their own seasons to migrate. Some birds come to Nepal during winter and some stay Nepal temporarily before going to another destination," said Poudel. "It is very interesting to draw the picture of birds

as well as their habitat."

He has captured images of almost all the birds found in Nepal. In his 65 pieces of paintings of birds, Poudel, popularly known as bird artist, shows he has



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