

Opinion : Dr. A.B. Thapa

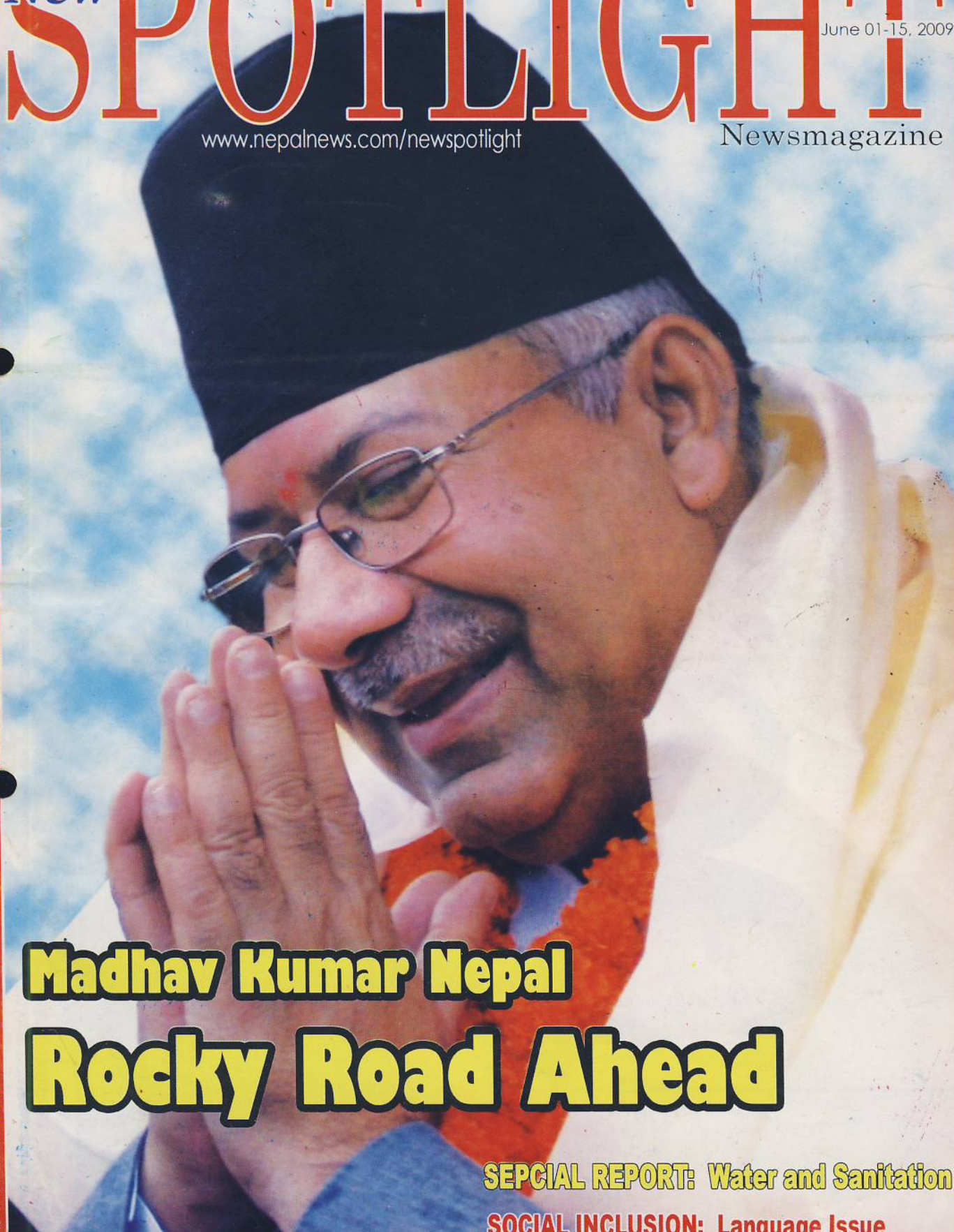
Interview: Sanjaya Adhikary

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Newsmagazine



Madhav Kumar Nepal Rocky Road Ahead

SPECIAL REPORT: Water and Sanitation

SOCIAL INCLUSION: Language Issue

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अब... १* रु. १ मै बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंक बढी भन्दा बढी
नागरिकहरुमा बैंकिङ्ग सेवाको पहिलो अनुभव
पूर्व बानी बन्न सकोस भन्नाका लागि सगौरव
प्रस्तुत गर्दछ... **मात्र रु.१ मा**
“आपनै बचत खाता”
सम्पूर्ण अन्तराष्ट्रिय स्तरको सेवा सुविधा सहित ।



जीवनका पहिला पलहरू देखि नै बचतको बानी
सुरक्षित भविष्यको लगाती



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EDITOR'S NOTE

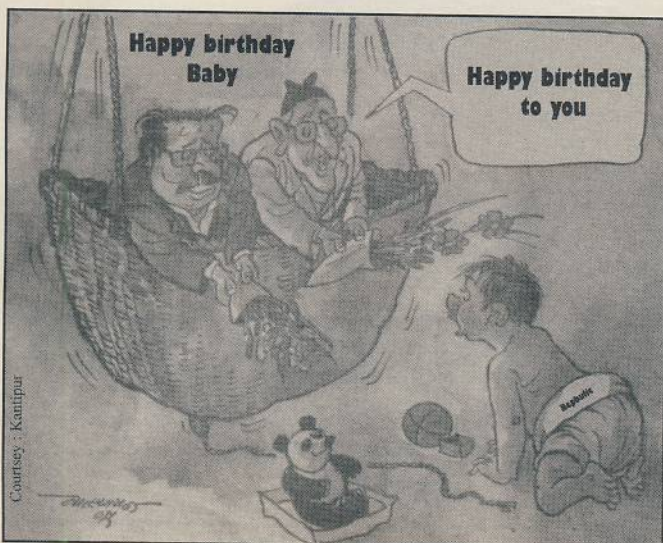
Nepali politics went through major upheavals over the past two decades of the restoration of democracy. The change first ushered in a multi party parliamentary democracy in a constitutional monarchy, in 1990. After a brief abortive direct royal rule early this decade, the 240-year-old kingdom has now turned into a republic. The momentous changes have however made little difference in changing the lot of an average Nepali. The reason: politics took centre-stage pushing the development agenda to the back seat. Induction of violence to push the political agenda did not help the matter. It instead pushed the country to the brink. To make the matters worse, hard geo-political realities went largely ignored — in a country that is sandwiched between rising, and rival, nuclear powers, each with a billion plus people.

No wonder, 60 years after it entered into modern politics Nepal is still left in the community of backward countries. It is easy and convenient to squarely put the blame on the political leadership. They indeed deserve to be chastised for the present state of the nation state of Nepal.

But other sectors of society can not escape the blame too. Media is no exception. The Nepalese media grew in leaps and bounds over the past 20 years. It has been crucial in setting the agenda of change. But whether it has been successful in setting the right agenda is open to debate, given the state Nepal is currently in. It is on this critical count that we think the media needs to do a self-introspection. Guided solely by this solemn objective we have decided to launch the New Spotlight Fortnightly Newsmagazine.

We have sought to put together a team of professionals who look beyond the immediate present to guide the nation towards a distant future — with a clear vision. We do not want to make tall claims. But we certainly hope to be different. We hope to be realistic. We hope to be objective. And, with your support and encouragement, we are confident we can make a difference.

Keshab Poudel
Editor and Publisher



TRANSITION

APPOINTED: Surendra Pandey as a minister of Finance and Vidya Bhandari minister of defense by president Dr. Ram Varan Yadav on the recommendation of prime minister.

Min Bahadur Rayamajhi as a chief justice by president Dr. Ram Varan Yadav on the recommendation of Constitutional Council.

Scaled: Moutainer Appa Sherpa Mt. Everest 18 times setting a new record.

Resigned: Vice chairman of National Planning Commission Dr. Gunanidhi Sharma and members Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Rammani Pokharel and Sunil Babu Shrestha after the formation of new government.

Attorney general Yadav Lal Vaidya tender his resignation to prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal.

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER AND CHINESE PRIME MINISTER

extended congratulations to newly elected prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal. Indian prime minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh expressed the hope that traditional relations exist between the two countries will flourish during the tenure of prime minister Nepal. Chinese prime minister Wen J Bao expressed his congratulations to Nepalese prime minister Nepal for his successful tenure to maintain friendly relations exist between the two countries.

Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan extended heartfelt congratulations to the office of the Prime Minister of Prime Minister of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal Madhav Kumar Nepal.

According to the press released issued by Japanese Embassy in Kathmandu, Japanese prime minister said, "I am pleased that our two countries have been enjoying a friendly relationship over the years. I look forward to working with Your Excellency in further strengthening the cordial and cooperative relations existing between our two countries.

"Your country is addressing various challenges to decide a future form of nation at a historic juncture, in which the system of government had changed. I hope that all parties cooperate with each other and focus on formulating a new constitution, consolidating peace and democracy, and bringing stability and welfare to the people of Nepal under Your Excellency's leadership. Japan has been and will continue to support efforts of Nepal," said Japanese prime minister Taro Aso.

THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS WARNED US citizens of risks of traveling to Nepal and urged to take caution when traveling here. In an updated travel warning following the ouster of Maoist-led government from power, the US state department said it remains concerned about the security situation in Nepal and urges American citizens to obtain updated security information before they travel and to be prepared to change their plans on short notice. This replaced the Travel Warning for Nepal issued by the department on November 21, 2008. The warning said political violence remains a problem in Nepal. The Young Communist League (YCL), a Maoist Party subgroup, continues to engage in



PM Madhav Kumar Nepal Taking Oath of office with President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav

extortion, abuse, and threats of violence, particularly in rural areas. Youth groups from the other two main political parties, the Nepali Congress (NC) and the CPN (UML), have also formed and clashes continue among these political rivals. Violent actions by multiple armed splinter groups in the Terai region along the southern border with India remain a significant concern. It further said, protests, demonstrations and disruptions frequently occur and that the resignation Maoist-led government has created an environment of increased political instability and the potential for demonstrations to be called without advance notice. Given the nature, intensity, and unpredictability of disturbances, American citizens are urged to exercise special caution during times when demonstrations are announced, avoid areas where demonstrations are occurring or crowds are forming, avoid road travel, and maintain a low profile. The US department also said crime in the Kathmandu valley continues to rise and police resources to combat such crime are limited. The statement also reaffirmed that U.S. government's designation of the UCPN (Maoist) as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist" organization under Executive Order 13224 and its inclusion on the "Terrorist Exclusion List" pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act remain in effect.

POPULAR MOUNTAINEER APPA SHERPA broke his own record as he reached the top of Mount Everest for nineteenth time on May 21. Sherpa reached the top of the highest peak in the world at around 8 a.m. today after 364 days of his previous record. While

he conquered the peak last year to raise funds for a school in Thame, this year he scaled the peak for raising awareness on climate change and global warming. He also placed Bumpa, a sacred copper vase containing 400 elements handed over to him by Rimpoche Ngawang Tenzin Zangpo of Tengboche monastery on top of the world at the peak. Appa had left for the summit on April 6.

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR INTEGRATED MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT (ICIMOD) organized a regional training on monitoring of glacier growth and retreat from April 27 to May 15. The 17-day training is the first of its kind in the country providing practical training on the Yala Glacier in Langtang district, ICIMOD said. The training course aimed to disseminate information on how to measure and calculate the mass of a glacier. Speaking during the closing ceremony, Environment Minister Ganesh Shah said, "We hope this training course will help devise a long-term monitoring scheme targeting at least one glacier in the country." According to Adarsha Prasad Pokhrel, chairperson of the Nepal National Committee for UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP), Mera peak glacier in the Khumbu region has been identified as a benchmark glacier to monitor glacier growth and retreat of other glaciers. During the training, experts called for a concerted and coordinated monitoring scheme for glaciers in the Hindu-Kush Himalayan region. Eighteen trainees from Nepal, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan attended the training. ■



Prachanda Terms New Govt 'A Puppet'

Ex- Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda said, Friday, May 22, that it is quite possible the new coalition government will be a puppet of reactionaries and different power centers. Addressing the parliament, Dahal alleged the partners of the new UML-led coalition of engaging in a dirty game as they try to install a new government. Describing the exercise to form the new government as part of a 'counter-revolution', the Maoist chief said those "rejected by the people" are now being placed at the helm. The caretaker Prime Minister in his speech repeatedly questioned the morality of other political parties alleging them of not being able to stand for sovereignty, integrity and unity of the nation. Dahal, who spent most of his time criticizing other parties, said former allies betrayed him in the army chief episode. The parties, according to him, had agreed to take action against the army chief, but later they did a complete about face. Describing the President's decision to reinstate the army chief as being regressive and unconstitutional, he said the Maoist party would continue peaceful protests to restore civilian supremacy. Dahal also took a swipe at army chief Rookmangud Katawal, referring to the Rayamajhi Commission's report in which Katawal

has been found guilty of suppressing the Janandolan-2. He said Katawal repeatedly challenged the elected government's orders. Furthermore, Dahal claimed the rumors of power capture by the Maoists were part of a conspiracy to derail the peace process and incite fresh conflict. He said he was ready to face action if the rumors of his party bringing weapons into the PLA cantonments to capture the state were proven. He made it clear that the Maoists would not run away from the peace process and the constitution-drafting process. In his speech, the outgoing Prime Minister also

made indirect reference to Indian pressure that is believed to have played a role in bringing down the Maoist-led government. He said he tried to establish relation with India as required in the changed context and that the two neighbors should not be seen as "big brother-small brother" anymore and the relation between India and Nepal should be brought on a par. *Compiled from reports*

Blast In Church, Two Killed

Two persons were killed and over a dozen others wounded when a bomb went off at the Church of Assumption in Dhobighat on May 23. The deceased have been identified as Celestina Joseph, 14, a ninth grade student of St Mary's school and a resident of Betia, India and Deepa Patric, 30. The former died while being taken to the hospital and the latter died while undergoing treatment. 14 others who were injured are undergoing treatment at Alka Hospital, Jawalakhel and Patan Hospital. Situation of two is reported to be critical. The bomb went off at 9.15 am when as Saturday prayer was about to begin. There were about 150 people in the church when the bomb went off, an eyewitness who introduced himself as Gabriel told Nepalnews. Police said it was a low-intensity IED hidden underneath the seat in the prayer hall. Father Bogati, chief of the Assumption Church has condemned the incident.

Damodar Gautam of World Hindu Federation also condemned the blast saying attacks on religious shrines were unfortunate. No one has officially owned up the blast. Involvement of Nepal Defense Army is suspected as pamphlets suggested that the group carried out the bomb attack. The little-known Hindu extremist outfit has mentioned various demands in the pamphlet including declaration of a Hindu nation, compulsory Sanskrit education till middle school, and public holidays on Hindu festivals. The same group is believed to have killed Father Joshn Prakash in Dharan last year.

Compiled from reports

Currency Gains Make Gold Cheaper

Nepali currency recorded a robust gain against major convertible currencies, including the US dollar, as the currency market went topsy-turvy this week. This gain, coupled with a dip recorded in international gold prices, however, caused the bullion market to spiral downwards. Nepali currency gained Rs 3.48 vis-à-vis the US dollar over the week, as the currency market recorded major upheavals, with Forex dealers revising the rupee's value upward as much as three times a day. The dollar was valued at Rs 76.17 on Friday. Nepal Rastra Bank, the country's monetary authority, had fixed the exchange rate of a dollar at Rs 79.65 on Sunday, but domestic currency continued to gain throughout the week amid sharp gains made by the Indian currency, with which Nepali rupee is pegged. While the domestic currency gained more than two rupees against the dollar on Tuesday, it further strengthened on Thursday, when it was valued at Rs 76.45 per dollar. Likewise, Nepali currency recorded a sharp Rs 3.33 gain against the euro and also strengthened by 79 paisa against the pound sterling. The euro was exchanged at Rs 104.99 on Friday, while the pound sterling was valued at Rs 120.29 on the day. Going by the open market exchange regime, the rate may vary with commercial banks. The bullion market spiraled downward as the price of gold recorded a drop of Rs

51 per gram over the week. It traded at Rs 23,665 per 10 grams on Friday. Gold dealers attributed the decline to an upward valuation of Nepali currency, as well as a downward revision of international gold prices. According to Nepal Gold and Silver Dealers' Association, gold was traded at Rs 24,175 per 10 grams on Sunday. However, subsequent to a sharp overnight gain by the Nepali currency, its price went down by more than Rs 1,000 over the next two days. Gold was traded at Rs 23,150 per 10 grams on Tuesday. The prices started to rise from Wednesday on account of the international price rally. The price of silver, on the other hand, recorded a slip of Rs 1 per 10 grams over the week. Silver was traded at Rs 367 on Friday. As Nepal fulfills its bullion requirements through imports, any fluctuation in the price of gold directly impacts domestic rates.

Myrepublica.com reports END

Some Banks Are At Risk: Governor

The Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), Deependra Bahadur Chhetry, has stated that some of the banks have put deposits, the hard-earned saving of people, at risk and that the central bank could take tough steps against the banks at any time to safeguard the depositors' interests. Chhetry, who was in Biratnagar to inaugurate the head office of Srijana Finance, however, did not disclose the names of the banks in possible trouble. Referring to the action the central bank took against Bank of Kathmandu, Governor Chhetry said that the NRB intervened because of the disputes among its board directors and because the board attempted to operate the bank as a private property. "Our sole aim behind the action was to protect the deposits of the people," said Chhetry, elaborating that the new board formed by the central bank would hold the annual general meeting of the bank and form a new board of directors by the end of this fiscal year. Chhetry further stated that the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) has unearthed yet another incident of financial embezzlement in

another reputed bank. "The CIAA has already filed a misappropriations case against its promoters," he stated, refusing to divulge the name of the bank. Inaugurating the new finance company, Chhetry also said that the government has taken a policy of supporting banks and financial institutions that have been established with an aim to invest in agro-based industries. Chhetry praised banks and business associations for positively supporting the government's Youth Self-Employment Program (YSEP), but he noted that more than the expected number of applications for loans under the program had made managing the program difficult. He went on to say that youth employment was an issue directly linked to the country's peace and security, and that supporting the YSEP could help create a more investment-friendly environment. He also said that the Rs 200,000 to be pledged under the program was not a grant—that individuals taking the money would need to pay back the loan to the fund.

Compiled from reports

KOICA Volunteers in Town

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has dispatched seven new KOICA Volunteers to work in Nepal for two years. They arrived in Katmandu on May 28, 2009 and were welcomed by the Representative, Ms. Bok Hee Kim and other officials of KOICA Nepal Office at the Tribhuvan International Airport.

These new KOICA Volunteers will be assigned in different organizations

namely District Education Office Nuwakot, Nepal Children's Organization, Nepal Police School, Biswa Bhasa Campus, Panauti Technical School and Shanti Model Secondary School in Rupandehi will share Korea's experience and knowledge in Early Childhood Education, Taekwondo Instruction, Korean Language, Automobile and Computer education with the Nepalese people.

After their arrival they will undergo 8 weeks of local adaptation training organized by KOICA Nepal Office which focuses mainly on learning the Nepali history, language, cultures, lifestyle and visiting and staying in denizen homes.

Volunteer program is an important aspect of KOICA's cooperation program in Nepal. Since 1990 KOICA has been dispatching about 20-35 volunteers annually to Nepal, and they are receiving positive feedback from the recipient organization as well as the local people and have been serving to support the friendship and cultural ties between Nepal and Republic of Korea. KOICA is responding to requests from many Nepalese organizations in various fields by increasing the number of KOICA volunteers to Nepal.

Total 31 KOICA Volunteers from different background are currently working in various governmental organizations and are engaged in fields such as nursing, medical technician, childhood education, computers, agriculture, automobile maintenance,



social welfare, special education etc and are getting recognition and respect for their efforts and contributions.

Banks Raise Deposits And Profits

The 25 commercial banks have boosted their deposits, net profits and lending in the third quarter of this year. The third quarterly report of the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the central monetary regulatory body, mentions that the national banks continue their positive growth amidst the global meltdown. The report says Nepal's commercial banks raised 27.35 percent more deposits, totaling Rs 502.55 billion including foreign currencies equivalent to Rs 50.87 billion, in the third quarter this year compared to same period last year. Last year they had collected only Rs. 394.62 billion. Government-owned Rastriya Baniya Bank collected largest amount (Rs 60.67 billion) followed by another state-owned Nepal Bank Ltd. (42.60 billion). However, the private Nepal Investment Bank is fast catching these two banks in terms of deposits. Similarly, loans and advances of the commercial banks increased by 31.44 percent, amounting to Rs. 356.46 billion against last year's figures of Rs. 271.19 billion. Nepal Investment Bank Ltd. was the largest provider of loans and advances, which provided Rs 34.41 billion, followed by Agriculture Development Bank, Nepal (ADBN) with Rs. 30.46 billion. The banks in total earned a net profit of Rs. 9.66 billion compared to Rs. 6.35 billion same period last year. RBB has earned highest net profit amounting Rs. 1.54 million, followed by Nepal Bangladesh Bank which posted net profit of Rs 939.22 million. *Compiled from reports*

Gurkhas Win Settlement Rights

The British government announced a climbdown over settlement rights for Gurkha veterans, saying all of the Nepalese fighters who have served at least four years can apply to live here. The amended settlement guidelines, announced by Home Secretary Jacqui Smith in the House of Commons, were greeted by an explosion of applause and



victory cries by Gurkhas and campaigners gathered outside parliament. Gordon Brown has "made a brave decision on behalf of the bravest of the brave," said Indian-born actress Joanna Lumley, who spearheaded the fight against residency restrictions on Gurkhas who retired before 1997. "This will be received in Nepal today with the greatest joy and gratitude," she added, standing in front of Gurkha veterans in wheelchairs wearing their service medals awarded by the British army. Under the outgoing rules, Britain would only grant residency rights to 4,300 ex-Gurkhas, falling short of demands that they be granted to all 36,000 Nepalese ex-soldiers who served with the British army before 1997. But announcing the new policy, Smith told lawmakers: "All former Gurkhas who retired before 1997 and who have served more than four years will now be eligible to apply for settlement in the UK. "On the basis of the figure of 10,000 to 15,000 main applicants that has been suggested by Gurkha representatives, I expect to be able to welcome these applicants and their families over the course of the next two years. "I'm making resources available... to do this and I'm making it clear there should be no time limit on these applications." The government was forced to change its stance after it suffered a defeat on the issue in a Commons vote last month. Smith said that after the defeat, ministers had undertaken to "respect the will of the

House" and drawn up the new rules. She reiterated that Gurkhas who retired after 1997 — when their base was moved from Hong Kong following the territory's handover from Britain to China — already had the right to settle here and more than 6,000 had done so. Britain's border authorities have been instructed to process 1,400 outstanding applications from former Gurkhas "as a matter of urgency by June 11," she added. Successful applicants would be entitled to bring with them their spouses and dependent children under 18. An emotional Lumley said: "It is one of the happiest days of my life. This is a landmark day we will never forget." She said she remained a "daughter of the regiment" because her late father had fought with the Gurkhas. The star of the cult TV comedy "Absolutely Fabulous" has led the campaign, which has also been backed by the opposition Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. As public anger built over the government's original position, Brown agreed to hold a private meeting with Lumley over the issue. And amid extraordinary scenes, she ambushed Immigration Minister Phil Woolas in a TV studio after several veterans were told their residency applications had been rejected. About 200,000 Gurkhas fought for Britain in World Wars I and II and more than 45,000 died in British uniform. Around 3,500 Gurkhas currently serve in the British army, including in Afghanistan. *Compiled from reports* ■



PM Nepal (Left) and former PM Thapa : How stable are they ?

NEW GOVERNMENT

In Stable Instability

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal vows to chart a new geography of Nepali politics but the old history will continue to haunt him

BY SUSHIL SHARMA

Madhav Nepal's odyssey to Nepal's top executive office has come amidst unusual turn of events. The UML veteran is not an elected member of parliament. He lost from two constituencies — by a good margin.

He was brought into the parliament through backdoor. He got nominated to the deputies. But he is not the leader of the parliamentary party of the UML. The former UML general secretary stayed away from the elections for the party's newly created powerful chairman's chair.

In contrast, the outgoing prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal won from two constituencies — by a commanding margin. He is the chairman of the parliament's largest party, the Maoist communist party. And leader of the Maoist parliamentary party as well.

After he stepped down, his successor would normally have been the leader of the second largest party and the main opposition.

The main opposition leader, "power-hungry" Girija Prasad Koirala, opted out, instead, in favor of the third largest party, the UML. But not for the obvious person — the leader of the parliamentary party

The man holding the position is Jhlnath Khanal. Unlike the eventual new prime minister, Khanal got into the parliament by virtue of a victory at the hustings.

He is also the elected chairman of the UML.

The electoral loser has ended up getting the better of the two winners — Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Jhlnath Khanal. In the much-vaunted loktantra under 'a uniquely inclusive, representative and sovereign' parliament — the 601-member constituent assembly.

True, the UML, along with its then-boss Madhav Nepal, was seen as a front-runner for the job. Before the constituent assembly elections. The

election results proved all the calculations wrong.

But, as it turned out, the game was not over yet. The 'wrong' calculation has been 'righted' in less than a year. Through the sheer number games.

The game that catapulted the winning leader of the majority-less single largest party to the top executive job has brought him down — and placed a losing leader of a party half the former's size at the pedal.

Perhaps this unusual turn of events is what is behind the confidence exuded by the new prime minister.

After assuming office, he said the government will last until a new constitution is framed — in a year's time from now — and a new government is put in place under fresh elections.

The shaky coalition of fractured partners that Nepal leads does not inspire confidence, though.

The new prime minister might have hoped to pull it off on the strength of what many see as his key assets — flexibility and accommodative nature.

But skeptics would bank on his known weaknesses of inconsistency and indecision to argue that the new occupant of Baluwatar premises is making a castle in the air.

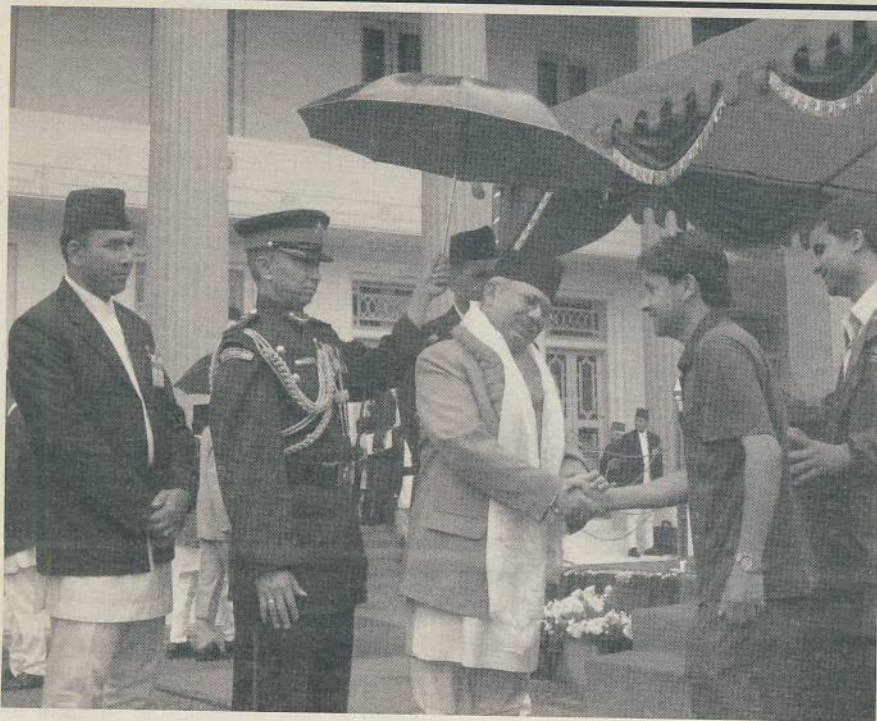
The electoral loser will also have his moral grounds too weak to stamp his authority on the hotchpotch of more than a dozen parties.

More important, no government in the post-1951 democratic Nepal has survived its full term.

From the nominated interim coalition of Mohan Shumsher to the elected two-third majority government of B.P. Koirala between in the first nine years of multi party democracy and constitutional monarchy.

From Surya Bahadur Thapa to Lokendra Bahadur Chand and from Tulsi Giri to Marich Man Singh Shrestha under absolute monarchy. And from a majority government of Girija Prasad Koirala and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai to a minority government of Man Mohan Adhikary to a series of coalitions of Sher Bahadur Deuba and others under constitutional monarchy.

All died a premature death. So did the first republican government of Pushpa Kamal Dahal. The monarchy is gone. But not the instability. So, the odds do not favor the new prime minister. History will keep haunting him, even as he gets desperate to reverse it. ■



PM Nepal : Difficult task

Rocky Road Ahead

Like all the previous governments, the government led by Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal begins his journey with a rocky road ahead leading twenty-two political parties having different common priorities and ideology. The challenge is no to manage the political parties, economy and drive the government smoothly

By KESHAB POUDEL

This government will complete its full tenure, completing its task to draft the new constitution of Nepal. It is merely a dream of some of politicians to see the downfall of this government soon," said Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal addressing a meeting of the secretaries of the government.

Although prime minister Nepal reacted confidently about his government's tenure, his reaction speaks volumes. If Prime Minister Nepal is so confident, why did he feel the need to speak in a meeting of senior bureaucrats that his government will survive?

Given Nepal's history, all elected prime minister post-revolution of 1950 have faced similar challenges. The problems haunt them as soon as the

government starts to function. Nepal's political reality is the continuation of uncertainty and instability. Political players and policies come and go but no party and no political leaders have been able to bring the stability in the country.

Although Nepal was elected five days ago as a prime minister, he is yet to expand his cabinet. The house of major coalition partners Nepali Congress and Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) is divided.

Nepal has enormous challenge ahead rising unemployment, economic development and improving law and order situation. Bringing back the constitution making process to right in track is another challenge.

Similarly, the unruly Maoists, whose government collapsed following their

decision to sack the Chief of Army Staff, is in opposition, prime minister Nepal will not have easy way ahead. After the conciliation of Resolution Motion against president Dr. Ram Varan Yadav by the speaker of CA Subhash Chandra Nembang, Maoist will certain to create more pressure inside the CA and street.

The government's decision to withdraw the letter forwarded to president Dr. Ram Varan Yadav sacking army chief general Rukmagad Katuwal will further give fuel to Maoist unrest. The dissention within his party and coalition and strong opposition from Maoist will definitely to put more pressure on Prime Minister Nepal, who is regarded as a soft spoken and easily accessible person.

One has to see how his own personal character will support his government to tackle all kinds of political problems.

In this context, Unified-CPN-Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai's comment that this government will collapse within a month has some solid points. If a government like Maoist which had two thirds majority in the Legislature Parliament can fall, there is no guarantee that this government with just over 350 seats and a plethora of conflicting parties and policies can complete its term.

When the institution of monarchy, with such a long history and traditions abolished and humiliated by the Constituent Assembly, there has been no party, person or institution that has been able to fill the role of stability and continuity that the monarchy had given Nepal.

Since Nepal's birth as an independent nation, Nepal's internal dynamics remains predominantly influenced by external dynamics and external factor remains more influential in modern Nepal internal political dynamics.

Out going prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal even outlined this vehemently speaking how external elements force him to resign. "I don't want to follow the dictates of "Prabhu" (God). My government fell only when I disobeyed "Prabhu"," said Dahal criticizing the international forces.

Renowned American scholar late

Leo Rose writes in his book *Nepal: Profile of a Himalayan Kingdom* writes, "It is normal phenomenon for the foreign policy of any society to be strongly affected by domestic political and economic factors, and this is certainly the case in Nepal. But, the reverse principle- namely, that international factors have a strong and often decisive impact on Kathmandu's domestic policies - is even more apparent. This is painful fact of life for many Nepal's, and one that some of them would prefer to ignore."

The collapsed of Maoist led government - one of the most powerful governments in decade- re-established the fact that Nepal's fate is to live under a different alliance but in perpetual political instability. "The tenure of office of a Nepali Prime Minister who was persona non grata in New Delhi was likely to be short. Consequently, the view from New Delhi became an important, even the most important consideration in the internal politics of Nepal," writes Sri Lankan Scholar Shelton Kodikara in his book *Strategic Factors in Interstate Relations in South Asia*.

Despite the appointment of a new prime minister, Nepal is again in political turmoil facing a new round of crisis. The new drama is shocking for the people, who expected a year ago that abolition monarchy and elections of Constituent Assembly will bring a new prosperous and stable Nepal.

As describe by American Scholar late Leo E. Rose in his book, *Nepal: Strategy for Survival* is still valid as he published his book in 1971. "To Kathmandu, the current potentialities of external domination and subversion are not very different in kind- though they may be in degree- from those with which Nepali governments have had to contend for at least two centuries." And if the problems are not particularly new, neither is the repertory of response devised by the Kathmandu authorities. ■

MAOIST MOVE

A Suicidal Act

No body knows what compelled Maoist leader Prachanda to take suicidal decision to dismiss army chief Katuwal

By A CORRESPONDENT

"I know this decision will ruin my government but it is my compulsion to take the decision," said former prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal to one of the minister of his cabinet who frequently asked him not to take decision regarding army chief Rukmagad Katuwal.

"Prime minister did not elaborate what his compulsion was but he seems to be in pressure to take that decision which will ultimately suicidal for Maoist leader Prachanda and his own party," said a former minister on condition of anonymity.

Even in his written statement in Legislature Parliament, the former prime minister mentioned that supply and industry minister Rajendra Mahato warned him saying that it will be suicidal to his party and government.

Instead of avoiding the crisis through political means, Prachanda decided to commit political suicide and dismissed the army chief violating the constitution and law. According to interim constitution, it is the president who is given role to appoint the army chief on the recommendation of cabinet. However, Prachanda's cabinet dismissed the army chief without officially informing president Dr. Ram Varan Yadav, who later reverse cabinet's decision at midnight and asked general Katuwal to continue.

Following this decision, Prime Minister Prachanda tendered his resignation though the address to the nation. "Maoist will regret in future taking unacceptable decision on wrong ground.

"I met Prime Minister Prachanda at



Prachanda : Under pressure

8 in the morning requesting him not to take this suicidal decision. He replied me that this is his political decision taken under unavoidable pressure," said former minister Rajendra Mahato.

Although there is every possibility that Maoist will move with a new agitation slogan, it is going to be another blunder for their party. After increasing hostility with president Dr. Ram Varan Yadav, whose mid-night decision prevented a major political turmoil, Maoist will now use all derogatory remarks against chairman of Constituent Assembly Subhas Chandra Nembang, who cancelled Maoist motion against president. ■

“This government will complete its full tenure”

- PM MadhavKumar Nepal

After taking oath of prime minister, Prime Minister **MADHAV KUMAR NEPAL** straight went to his office in Singh Durbar and briefly spoke with NEW SPOTLIGHT just 24 hours before his national address, Prime Minister Nepal spoke about the need to have unity among all political parties. Excerpts of his interaction:

How long this government will last?

This government will complete its full tenure as prescribed in the Interim Constitution.

But, Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattaai said that your government will fall within a month. How do you look at it?

Some body may have dream and some body may have imagination to see the fall of this government but it will not happen. What I can say is that this government does not have any threats. Even I have told my secretaries in my address that they should work without taking any notice or comments regarding the stability of the government. I asked them to support the government to carry out its policies and programs.

Maoists have been saying that your government declined the question of supremacy of the civilian rule in the army. How do you see it?

Maoists are trying to fool the people arguing that the party supremacy is civilian supremacy. I want civilian supremacy but it must be under the constitution and rule of laws. One must respect the constitution and rule of law.

What are the priorities of your government?

The priority of this government is to write the constitution and maintain the law and order situation in the country. Other priority is to take the peace process at its logical by rehabilitating, reintegrating and restoring Maoist combatants.

After the release of the video of Maoist leader Prachanda, Nepali Congress is demanding to reduce the number of Maoist combatant as claimed by Prachanda. How do you look at it?

The government will take care all Maoist combatants as per the previous agreement. It is the responsibility of the government to take care them.

Recently, there is controversy over Nepal army. How do you see their role?

Nepal Army has played very important role in peace process and turning Nepal into a republic. It was the commendable role of Nepal Army. This government will respect their sensitivity.

Maoists have been launching vehement opposition against President Dr. Ram Varan Yadav. How do you see President Dr. Yadav's role?

I don't see any rational behind Maoist accusation. President Dr. Ramvaran Yadav is playing highly appreciable role as a guardian of the country and constitution. His role is highly commendable and beyond the controversy.

How optimistic are you that the constitution will promulgate in time when main opposition Maoists are such critical against your government?

They will also support the process of constitution making without making any hesitation. I am certain that Maoist leader Prachanda will cooperate with us in constitution making process. Our alliance with Maoist is old as we have joined hand signing 12 points agreement and several others including comprehensive

peace process. I am committed to all agreements.

Do you believe that Maoist will accept your suggestions?

There is no alternative to peace and unity among us. We can not formulate the new constitution without common programs and unity among us. Even for the sake of protection of our unity, we need to strengthen our alliance.

Maoists have been claiming that they started some poor people oriented programs. How this government will see it?

We will not change any of the programs. If their programs are good and people oriented, we don't have any hesitations to continue them. There is no question to amend any of their programs.

Do you think Maoist leaders will respond to your good gesture?

Maoist leader Prachanda has played very important role to bring back peace in the country. No body can undermine his role. I don't think such a wise leader will create any trouble for us. Maoists too know that delaying the formulation of the new constitution will serve no body's interest.

You have been saying allot of the things simmilar to what Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala said in the meeting of Legislature Parliament. How come there are these similarities?

Girija Prasad Koirala has played very important role in making Nepal as a federal democratic republic. He led the coalition government during the crucial transition period. He should be given due credit and respect.

Because of your differences, how will be your relations with United Maoist party?

I want to have cordial and good relations with Maoists. I have already told you that we cannot make the constitution without support of Maoists. Maoist leader Prachanda will support us.

When will the expansion of cabinet be complete?

It will complete within a few days. I have already requested our coalition partners to send the name of ministers. I hope they will send their names soon.

Is there any differences?

We don't have any differences over the cabinet formation. The problems will be settled soon.

Do you think Maoist will support?

I am positive on their response. As I have mentioned there is no way out other than to go for national consensus. ■



MADHAV KUMAR NEPAL

Rise Of A Phoenix

MK Nepal dons the cap of Prime Minister after many a false starts

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Though Nepal was a front-runner for the position of prime minister and president many times in the past, he always had to contend with last-minute defeats.

This time, however, Nepal was successful at taking over the reins of Singhdurbar as the second prime minister of the republican Nepal.

A person who had lost from two constituencies – Kathmandu and Rautahat – in the last year's Constituent Assembly (CA) election, he not only was nominated as a member of the CA but also was elected by the majority of the assembly as the prime minister within a year.

Last year, immediately after the April 10 election, then general secretary of CPN-Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), Nepal, had called a press meet at party headquarters in Balkhu to announce his resignation as party chief following his defeat combined with the dismal performance of his party.

"As a leader of the party, I must shoulder the responsibility of this defeat," he had then told the reporters.

He not only resigned from the position of general secretary of his party, Nepal also declined offers to stand in by-election.

But hardly a year later, Nepal has come forward to take up the mantle of chief executive of the country.

Nepal was little known beyond his party periphery before 1990. He was catapulted to the central leadership of the party as its general secretary in 1992 after then general secretary Madan Bhandari, whom many considered a charismatic figure, was killed in a mysterious jeep accident.

What he lacked in Bhandari's charisma, Nepal more than filled with his political acumen and dexterity – which ensured that he remained a



Name: Madhav Kumar Nepal
Father's name: Mangal Kumar Upadhyaya
Address: Gaur Rautahat, Bhansar Tole, Ward no 3.
Date of Birth: 1953, February
Education:
 Trijuddha High school Birgung 1967
 I.Com. Thakurram Multiple Campusts 1972
 B.Com. Mahendra Moran Campus Biratnagar 1974
Politics
 Since 1966 affiliated to communist ideology
 1970 Joined Nepal Communist Party led by Pushpa Lal
 1975-1976 Full time political worker
 1975 actively involved in the activities in Jhapa and Morang district to constitute Central Party
 All Nepal Communist Party Revolutionary Coordination Committee 1976
 Founder member of Nepal Communist Party Marxist-Leninist
 1994-2008 General secretary of CPN-UML
 2048-2056 leader of opposition in National Assembly
 1995 Deputy prime minister foreign and defense
 2000 opposition leader of Parliament

central character in Nepali politics for the next decade and a half.

In between, Nepal once became a powerful deputy prime minister during UML's nine month rule back in 1995. He continued to hug the political limelight as a prospective candidate for

PM's position before, during and after the King's direct rule.

CA Turn

Little over a year ago, Madhav Kumar Nepal's party CPN-Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) had canvassed in a victorious mood for the Constituent Assembly (CA) election.

Buoyed by sundry opinion polls and newspaper analyses, Nepal was confident that his party would emerge with majority and he would become the first elected prime minister of a republican Nepal.

Those hopes were dashed when his party came in third behind Maoists and Nepali Congress (NC), while he, himself, had to contend with defeats in two constituencies.

But again, his hopes soared when Maoists dropped hints of backing him as the first president of Nepal.

The last-minute switch of loyalties by the Maoists meant that Nepal had to contend with defeat once again. He later told a magazine in an interview that 'anybody else would have gone crazy (having suffered series of such near misses).'

Nepal's stars changed four months ago when, overnight, he was not only nominated as a CA member after compelling a UML CA member to resign and make room for him, but also backed by all major parties including the Maoists to lead the powerful Constitutional Committee.

Whether in the efforts to bring the Maoists to mainstream or amid the political hard bargain during the often-tricky peace process, Nepal established himself as a flexible leader with a special knack for coordinating.

These same knacks were often criticized as signs of unstable and weak character by the critiques.

The man who had been knocked out a number of times during the contest for power by the NC president Girija Prasad Koirala in the past, ultimately became the prime minister at the strong proposal of the Congress veteran.

He was elected unopposed in the parliament. The Maoists boycotted the election process.

But that does not mean he remains unopposed in his affairs of state. He will have to face Maoists' huge opposition at every turn. And that is where his much-clamored skills like flexibility and coordination will be put to severe test. ■

WATER AND SANITATION

Challenges

To Meet

In Himalayan republic 14 million people are living without access to sanitation and a further 6.8 million people have no pure drinking water. Therefore the challenges before Nepal are enormous. Studies have linked sanitation to many social problems from high drop out rates for young women in school, high infant mortality rates and social discrimination. Without improving the coverage of sanitation and drinking water, Nepal cannot reduce the present rate of poverty. Despite this, water and sanitation sector are yet to be prioritized by government and major donors. In a bleak scenario, Water Aid Nepal (WAN), a British based INGO, has demonstrated that small community programs can bring tangible change to the lives of millions of people living in rural parts of Nepal as well as local development program. WAN has been lobbying for access to fresh water and sanitation to be enshrined as a human right in the new constitution.

By **KESHAB POUDEL**

"As a politician and the member of Constituent Assembly, I would like to assure all of you that the new constitution will place sanitation and drinking water as a fundamental right," said former minister of Works, Housing and Physical Planning addressing the program Amplifying Voices for Effective Sustainable Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Services for All organized

by Water Aid Nepal last month. "We harped enough political slogans in the last two decades ignoring how many of our people do open deception and drinking undrinkable water."

A decade ago, it would not have been possible to hear such statements from a minister. Minister Gachhedar, who signed the SACOSAN III declaration on behalf of Nepal in New

Delhi November 2008, spent his 45 minutes long speech highlighting the importance of drinking water supply and sanitation facilities in society like Nepal.

Minister Gacchedar's remarks showed that the attitudes are changing at top level regarding sanitation and water. Thanks to the program and campaigns launched by International

non-governmental organizations like WaterAid Nepal and several other local NGOs, people at various levels come to realize the importance of water resources and sanitation to reduce poverty.

“All of us know that without making a progress in the coverage of sanitation and drinking water, we cannot improve human development index,” said Suman Kumar Sharma, joint secretary of the Ministry of Works, Housing and Physical Planning.

A report prepared by Om Prasad Gautam, Social Development Adviser, Water Aid Nepal under the Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) revealed that there is high absenteeism and high drop-out rate among young women during the period of menstruation due to lack of proper facilities. The survey—which was based upon the study of various schools, revealed that half of the respondent (53 percent) had been absent in school at least once due to menstruation. Many women though physically present in the school, were unable to perform well due to poor concentration and attention resulting from the constant worry. Lack of privacy for cleaning and washing (41 percent) was the major reason identified by survey respondent for being absent during menstruation.

The recent studies have shown that one of the reasons behind the high infant mortality rate is due to water and sanitation. According to a study conducted by Water Aid Nepal, annually 10,500 children die in Nepal due to lack of drinking water and sanitation.

In 1990, Nepal's water coverage was 46 percent and the coverage of sanitation was merely 6 percent. “Now the situation has changed, and the water supply coverage reached to 76 percent of population and sanitation is 46 percent. The 30 percent gap between sanitation coverage and water supply is a big challenge for health improvement,” said sociologist Kamal Adhikari, Environmental Sanitation Section, Department of Water Supply and Sewerage.

According to a report of WAN, however, water coverage is only as high as 48 percent, if a reasonable water



Water tap: No water to drink

fetching time (15 minutes) is factored into the calculation. Also it cannot be assumed that of this 48 percent all have access to safe water. The proportion of people who consume water without household treatment (e.g. boiling) is as low as 15 percent. In its report, “Improving Water and Sanitation Governance Through Citizens’ Action”, WAN writes access to sanitation is gradually increasing, but at a lower rate than access to water. Sanitation coverage (latrinalisation) has reached 46 percent of people in Nepal.

This figure includes shared latrine facilities. The number of households with an individual family latrine is lower at 36 percent. Latrine sharing is more common in urban settlements than in rural (urban 34 percent and rural 8 percent) and is most widespread in slum and squatter dwellings.

Although Millennium Development Goal aims to provide sanitation and drinking water to all by 2015, Nepal sets 2017 as a date for universal coverage of water and sanitation.

A study conducted by Rabin Lal Shrestha, Research and Advocacy Manager Water Aid Nepal, revealed that due to poor sanitation and water

standards Nepal loses Rs. 3.6 billion on account of health expenditure. This does not factor in the economic impact of disruptions to education and other social issues. In terms of benefits, global studies indicated that investment in water and sanitation can give economic return of Rs. 9 for every Rs. 1 invested.

Annually, Nepal requires huge amount of budget to fulfill the demand of water and sanitation but the study conducted by Water Aid Nepal's Shrestha shows that there is still a huge shortfall in investment. The three years Interim Plan 2007-10 plans to provide services to additional 796,000 people in the forthcoming year. However, the budget is only sufficient for 477,000.

Growing Gap

With the shortfall in the budget, the gap is between haves and have-nots continue to grow to extreme levels. The poor are at least eight times less likely to receive services than well-to-do communities.

WAN holds the view that pure drinking water and sanitation is a fundamental right of the citizen and it needs to be recognized as such in the constitution. During the third South Asian Ministerial Meeting on

“MDG target will be met”

SUMAN SHARMA

Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Work, Housing and Physical Planning **SUMAN SHARMA** is well known person having long experiences working in the areas of drinking water supply and sanitation. Sharma now heads the water and sanitation division at the Ministry. Excerpts:

How do you see the state of sanitation and drinking water? Is Nepal in a position to meet the Millennium Development Goal by 2015?

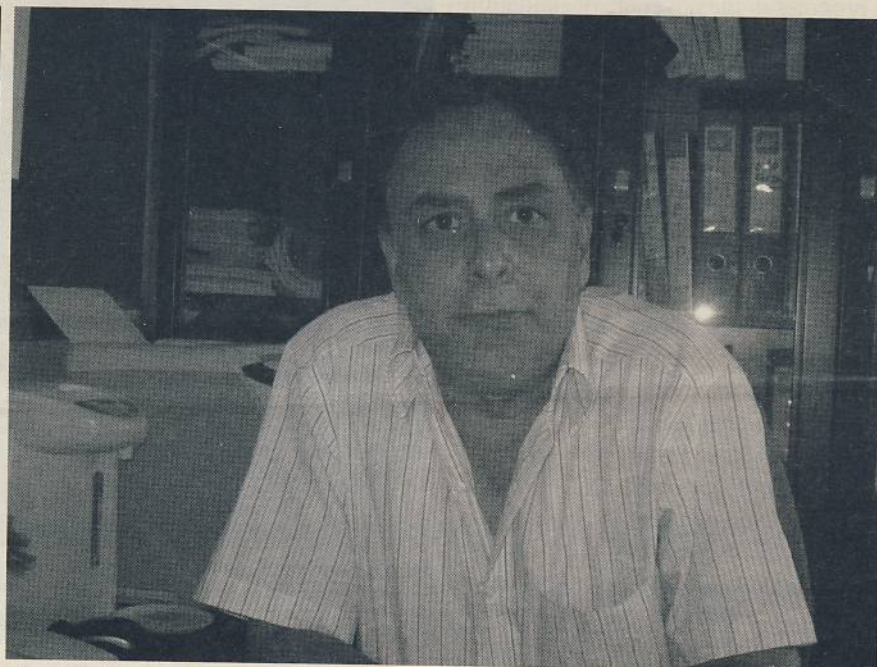
I can definitely say that the MDG target will be met. These targets are derived from 1990 base figures. The activities in water supply and sanitation is quite good. We have already increased our water supply coverage to 78 percent and 48 percent in sanitation. Although our figure meets the MDG by 2017 our national target to provide basic sanitation and water.

How do you derive the base?

This target is derived from 1992 base figure. The pace of development in water supply and sanitation is satisfactory. We have already 78 percent in water supply and 48 percent in sanitation. We have recorded figures of 78 percent in drinking water and 48 percent in sanitation coverage. Even if we meet MDG's target, we have our national target that is to increase the universal coverage by 2017 in sanitation and drinking water. Everybody should have the right to water and sanitation facilities.

How do you see the gap in resources?

It is not necessarily the government is alone responsible to this gap. MDG is a coverage generated by the activities within the country. The plan is built looking at the government and outside sources. The resources are coming but the problem is that there is not streamline. There duplication of the work in some places by different agencies but in some place there is virtually no project at all. One of the studies conducted by Water Aid Nepal



showed that there was duplication of the program.

How do you see the state of program?

If we see the map of concentration of sanitation projects, we can a lot of agencies are concentrating in same area. For example, the places like Kalikot, Humla and Mugu, we don't see any programs. But, there is concentration of lots of agencies in urban areas. The government has increased its resources in water supply and sanitation. If we read, we can see overwhelmingly the budget is diverted to the major project. I can say now that without such big projects, the resources has increased a lot.

How much budget do you require?

We need approximately about Rs. 7 billion by 2017. According to that plan, we need about Rs. 1 billion in sanitation but we are spending hardly Rs.50 million. There is a huge gap in sanitation but there need to optimize the resources in drinking water.

How do you see the support of international donors?

They are very much supportive to us. For example, the World Bank

recently agreed to provide 40 million dollars. After a visit by a director of the Bank, they saw the relations between people, development, water and sanitation. They realise that so much could be done with so little cost and change the quality of people's life.

How important the sanitation and water sector?

It has linkage with almost all index of MDG. For example if you want to increase access in education, you need to increase sanitation in schools. Because of lack of toilets, young women are not going to school.

Which is the donor agency leading in terms of investment in water and sanitation?

Actually, it is the Asian Development Bank which is the leading agency now investing in the water and sanitation sectors. They have been supporting the urban water supply programs in different parts of the country.

How about INGO?

Among the International Non-governmental Organizations, Water Aid Nepal is the leading agency supporting various water and sanitation program throughout the country. ■



Sanitation in New Delhi, the ministers of the region agreed that sanitation needs to be considered the fundamental right of their citizens.

WAN is also planning to urge G-8 members to allocate enough resources for water and sanitation in the forthcoming meeting of G-8 members in Italy. WAN urges the developed countries to constitute an international institutional mechanism to review the development of water resources and sanitation annually.

With an aim to increase the access to water and sanitation, WAN, has been vigorously making efforts to sensitize the various stake holders like donor communities, government officials, NGOs and local community.

State of Sanitation

One in every two Nepali people practices the open air defecation. National Arsenic Steering Committee revealed that 15 percent of total 339,515 Tube wells have arsenic level above the WHO standards. According to this standard, 1.5 million people are using arsenic contaminated water. The national standard, which is lower, estimates about 300,000 people are using arsenic contaminated water.

As a major international partner supporting water and sanitation sectors in Nepal, Asian Development Bank has

been providing much needed resources in the water and sanitation sector under different programs. US\$700,000 was provided for the community based water management project. In 2008 US\$820 thousands was provided for the water supply, sanitation, and waste water management: secondary towns integrated Urban Environmental improvement program. Similarly, under the Water Supply, Sanitation and waste management program, the ADB provides \$45 million in grants in the areas of improving the quality of water supply, sanitation, and urban

service delivery to emerging towns and development projects in the period of 2009-11.

According to ADB's Country Partnership Strategy Midterm Review 2005-2009, at the end of the Tenth Plan in 2006, 76.6 percent of the population had access to drinking water against the planned target of 85 percent, while nearly 45.8 percent of the population had access to improved sanitation (against the target 50 percent).

Under the Global End Water Poverty Campaign Sanitation and Water For all, Water Aid has been putting pressure on G8 countries to pay attention in sanitation and water areas. Addressing a program in Kathmandu last month Barbara Frost, CEO, Water Aid UK said that water and sanitation are two key elements without which there can be no sustainable development in health, education and livelihoods, locking people into a cycle of poverty and diseases.

Nepal's quest for development cannot be met without bringing change in the present status of water and sanitation. What Nepal needs is now to increase financial flows as well as to recognize sanitation and water as a fundamental rights through participation of the organization like WAN. ■

EEC Nepal Fourth AGM

With the establishment of European Economic Chamber of Trade, Commerce and Industry (EEC)-Nepal – which held its 4th Annual General (AGM) under the theme to develop trade commerce and industry is to develop nation – the efforts to boost the export to European Union (EU) country have gone up on 22 May.

AGM elected Dibya Mani Rajbhdari as a chairperson for another three years recognizing his tireless effort in economic development of the country. AGM also honoured three important personnel (Ambica Shrestha, Min Bahadur Gurung and Dr. Upendra Mahato who have made tremendous contribution towards the nation through business and philanthropic activities that they are no involved.

As per its theme, EEC-Nepal has been for last five years tirelessly working towards the end. After the conclusion of meeting, the 69 member strong General Assembly chalked a policy at the AGM to guide the chamber for another one year.

Inaugurated by Chairman of Constituent Assembly, Subash Chandra Nembang, Dr. Alexander Spachis, and Charge d Affairs, delegation of the European Commission to Nepal delivered they key note speech appreciating the work that has been carried out by EEC-Nepal since its inception few years ago.

Established in Kathmandu in 7 March 2005 to strengthen socio-economic ties between Nepal and European Union, the EEC-Nepal is implementing two European Union funded projects geared towards capacity building of local chambers and tourism promotion. ■

'Safe water, effective sanitation and hygiene services are basic human rights'

- Sanjaya Adhikari

SANJAYAADHIKARI, country representative of WaterAid Nepal, has long experiences in working development sector. As the country's large number of population has been facing the problems to get drinking water and sanitation facility, Adhikari is heading a leading INGO committed to serve the needy people. Adhikari spoke to NEWSPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excepts:

But the reality, however, is that every year 10,500 children die, before their fifth birthday, from water related diseases caused by lack of safe water and effective sanitation services.

How important is water and sanitation services in reducing poverty and enhancing peoples lives?

Imagine Nepal in lasting peace, and free of poverty. Nepal - where quality of life guarantees human dignity for every children, women and men.

What is the reality ?

But the reality, however, is that every year 10,500 children die, before their fifth birthday, from water related diseases caused by lack of safe water and effective sanitation services. Women and girls in rural areas travel long distances to fetch a bucket of water. In doing so, girls often miss schools and also fall sick at times. Many urban communities face acute water shortages. Water bodies are increasingly threatened by pollution as you can see from the rivers around you.

How important is the water and sanitation ?

Despite its importance to public health improvements, poverty reduction and environmental protection, sanitation has had a low profile when compared to water. Simply put, water and sanitation sector is in a stage of moral "crisis" - a crisis which does not capture national headlines, but I think the one that can be more catastrophic in the longer run.

How is the state ?

Safe water, effective sanitation and hygiene services are basic human rights, which underpin health, education and livelihoods, forming the first, essential step in overcoming poverty. Nepal is rich in water resources and in people with the technical knowledge to provide these services and yet 54% of people remain without access to sanitation and 24% without water (these coverage figures, however, are highly contested due to lack of an acceptable definition). What this situation implies is the need to improve the sector performance.

At a time when Nepal is drafting a new Constitution, how do you see the importance to include water and sanitation as a fundamental right?

Despite being consistently cited as one of the top priorities by poor communities in advancing their lives, sanitation and water have received less priority in development agenda and national plans. With the right political will, resources and drive it is possible to ensure water and sanitation for all and to thereby enable people to a healthy life and a life with dignity.

How is the situation ?

Nepal is going through a critical period in its history. The preparation of a new Constitution provides a unique opportunity to include water and sanitation as a basic human right. We are working closely with the civil society, through end water poverty campaign, to push for this fundamental right of the people. The engagement of civil society organizations in South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) III was instrumental in recognizing the right to sanitation and water in the official declaration. The results of end water poverty campaign thus far have been encouraging and we are certain that, with concerted effort, this objective will be realized.

How will federal structure affect sharing of water resources?

As Nepal gears towards the design of federal structure, another issue at stake is discourse on water resources planning and management - who controls water resources, how decisions are made in the allocation and sharing of water resources, how will deprivation of, and inequality in, water resources addressed? These issues need urgent attention and only with critical thinking, analysis and shared learning, will Nepal be able to respond to these new challenges that are in front of us.

Can you pls explain the kinds of programmes WaterAid Nepal has been implementing?

As the only INGO in Nepal that exclusively focuses on water, sanitation and hygiene, WaterAid Nepal works with its partners on demonstration projects. It has a 20 years history in Nepal during which it has successfully tapped

a growing number of NGOs and civil society to provide access to a range of experience, innovation and advocacy in the sector.

What has your organization has been doing ?

Over the past couple of years, it has been building a stronger policy focus and quality documentation of its work to meaningfully contribute to sector development and influence sector policies and practices based on learning and evidence from the ground. In others words, WaterAid Nepal is gradually building itself as a credible sector catalyst.

What is your experience of leading and managing development programmes?

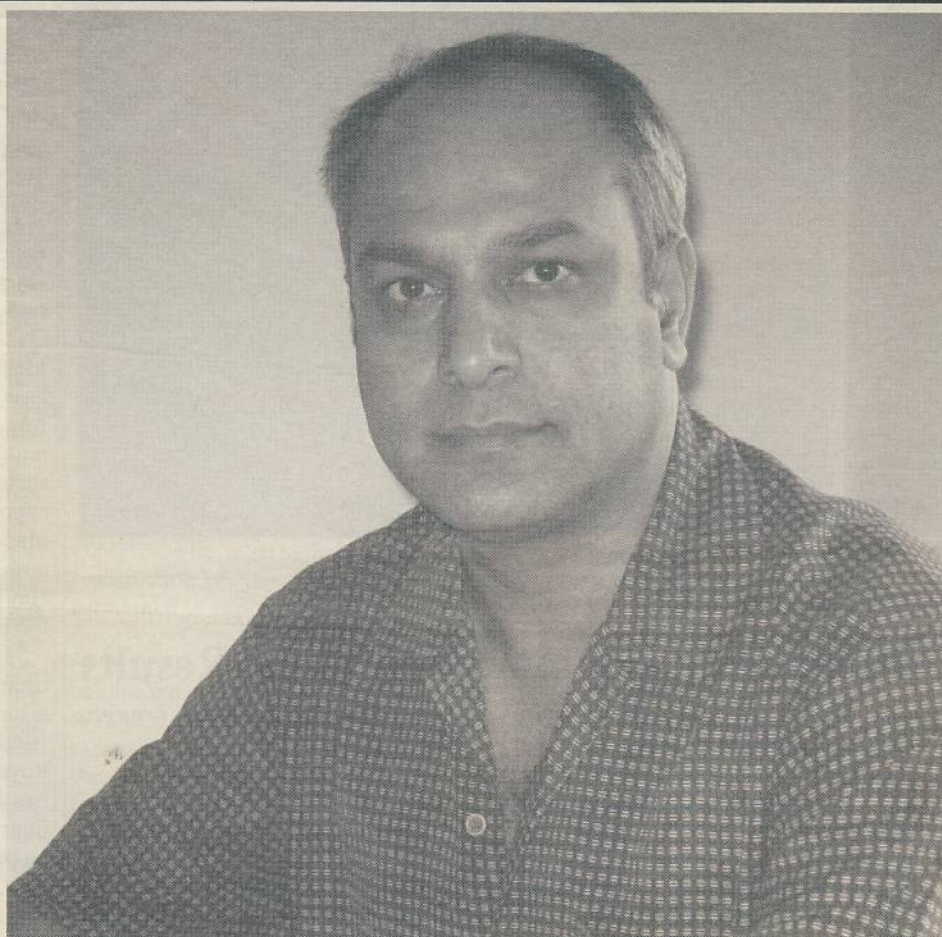
Responsive, accountable and transparent institutions of governance are often the missing link between policies and practices. Even when a country

seeks to implement pro-poor national policies and target its interventions, faulty governance can nullify the impact. So to get effective services delivered on the ground, reforms of governance institutions, both at the supply and demand side, need to be emphasized. For this, capacity development for enhancing governance effectiveness is central to improve the ability and authority of leaders, governments and public organizations to realize development results.

What is the role of National or Local government ?

When national or local governments don't respond to development priorities or are less unresponsive, people rely on civil society organizations to hold leaders, governments and public organizations to account. The goal is not for civil society is to take over the legitimate functions of the state, but to forge, on behalf of the poor, a strategic alliance between three organs of the state (legislative, executive and judiciary) and people so that the state effectively behaves in responding to the rights and priorities of citizens.

How do you think sector governance can be improved then?



Holding service providers accountable to meet the peoples' development priorities - in the context of water and sanitation - the basic rights on water and sanitation is a bottom line requirement. Opening up service providers to users' participation and building partnership with civil societies will foster transparency and accountability. Institutional monitoring and evaluation that tie financing to performance can also enhance accountability.

What do you advocate ?

I would promote and advocate for the following fundamentals as essential: (a) including the right to water and sanitation in the new Constitution, (b) preparing a coordinated sector effectiveness development programme, (c) increased and better sector financing, (d) policy focus on sanitation and hygiene, (e) clear distinction of institutional roles and responsibilities, (f) enabling and strengthening participation of all stakeholders in policy and practice dialogue, (g) joint peer reviews on sector performance and identifying barriers that impede access, (h) ensuring that poor and excluded people benefit from services, and (i) strengthening knowledge management in the sector. ■

*WaterAid
Nepal
works with
its partners
on
demonstration
projects.*



Dr. Bhattacharya : Extrem Slogans

MAOIST

Nationalist Slogans: Anti-National Results

Actions performed by Maoists harping on nationalist slogans have brought about anti-nationalist results

By KESHAB POUDEL

Accusing external elements for intervening internal politics of Nepal, particularly in reference with the collapse of Maoist led coalition, former Prime Minister Prachanda and the third man in his party ranks, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, tried to justify that the government fell because of their nationalist stands. However, anti-nationalist symptoms have surfaced in their actions in reality.

Despite the resonance of Maoists' slogans of nationalism, Nepal's state institutions, traditions and practices have been badly shaken, and Nepal has appeared for the first time in its history the weakest as an independent and sovereign nation.

When the Maoist led government collapsed, Prime Minister Prachanda, who's unconstitutional in his own word an act of political compulsion, prompted the crisis, fingered out intervention of external element, mainly of Nepal's southern neighbor, for his downfall. Prachanda, who has himself claimed that he spent in India eight years out of ten years of violent insurgency in Nepal, did not hesitate to present nationalist posture harping on anti-Indian slogan. Former Prime Minister Prachanda, however, could hardly explain which of his acts protected Nepal's own interests.

Prime Minister Prachanda's abrupt decision to seek clarification from Chief of the Army Staff, Rukmangad Katuwal, did not only cost him his chair, but also postponed Nepali Prime Minister's scheduled official visit to China. What prompted Prime Minister Prachanda to pick up this political fiasco, which was sure to create a crisis in Nepali politics, with the army on the threshold of his proposed visit to China? Why did he not wait for a month even when his coalition partners were requesting him not to make single party decision? He did not say anything about it in his nationwide address and press conference.

Former Prime Minister Prachanda's action against Chief of the Army Staff, General Katuwal, not only cancelled Prime Minister's important visit to China, but also made Nepal Army suspiciously take an alert position for survival.

In the name of civilian supremacy and national independence, Dahal's actions aimed at pushing aside Nepali Army, a powerful institution. Addressing a press conference Prime Minister Prachanda divulged, "External element is behind the fall of our government. "I don't want to pinpoint name of the government," said Maoist leader Prachanda.

Prachanda's colleague and the third man in his party command, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, openly accused India for

intervention in Nepali internal politics to an extent that the Indian External Affairs Minister of State has strongly reacted against the accusation.

"One cannot be a nationalist just by harping on nationalist slogans and by accusing external elements. What is important is to see the result of such slogans. Maoists leaders harp on nationalist slogans all the time, but these slogans produce anti-national results," says a political analyst.

After the abolition of monarchy, Maoists have made efforts to weaken the base of Nepal's nationalism. Just after a few months in power, Maoist tried to interrupt the age old practices of religious shrine, Pashupatinath, in the name of appointing Nepali nationals as priests in place of Indian Bhattas. That action tarnished Nepal's image throughout the Hindu community and seriously affected the interest of Nepal.

In the similar way, Prachanda even tried to shake the judiciary by proposing a junior judge for the position of Chief Justice in the place of Min Bahadur Rayamajhi, a senior judge. This debate too has weakened position of all the judges of Supreme Court who have been waiting to be promoted on the basis of seniority.

From the time of People's War launched by CPN-Maoists till their nine months in power, Maoist leaders have been harping on the nationalist slogans all the time, but these slogans have merely made Nepal and Nepal's situation weaker.

Maoist slogans to hold Constituent Assembly election have cost much to Nepal as the election has dragged the country into long unending political, ethnic, religious, linguistic and regional quagmire. Similarly, the abolition of monarchy prior to forming a viable institution with legitimacy and popular base has created a major vacuum.

When Maoists launched People's War in 1996, Nepal had a properly functioning multi-party democratic system with constitutional monarchy. Although Nepal has seen many political ups and downs, Nepal was in the process of learning by doing with periodic elections and government accountable to the people.

Maoists' violent actions, slowly and gradually, weakened democratic institutions at the local level, the parliament at the center and all the state's institutions that had evolved during five decades long experiments. One can clearly see Nepal's interests enveloped, ignored and sacrificed by mere slogans of nationalism and slogans against intervention of external element. ■

WATER CAN BE NEPAL'S MAJOR EXPORT

-Dr. A.B. Thapa

Demand for water worldwide and also in India is rapidly growing as a result it is becoming increasingly scarce. Water has already become a valuable export item. But Nepal is totally unaware of this vast economic potential. In actual fact, the benefit to accrue to our country from the export of water could even exceed the benefit from the hydroelectric power, which has been highly acclaimed as the only exportable natural resource available in our country in abundance.

India's Growing Demand for Water

The world's population grew enormously in the 20th century. According to UN estimates, 1.65 billion people lived on Earth in 1900. By 1999 the world's population had passed 6 billion people, and the UN estimates that it will reach 9 billion people by 2050. But the annual supply of renewable fresh water will remain constant.

In India the demand for agricultural water dominates the total demand for water. India has the second largest population in the world. There are plentiful rains over most of the country but they are concentrated in a few months. As a result, India is already experiencing water scarcity. Mr. Chaturbedi M.C. had claimed that by 2005 the total ground and surface water would have been assigned to users and thus further irrigation would be restricted.

India Willing to Buy

India is showing a great deal of interest in development of Nepal's storage dam projects that would help to increase virtually by four times the sustainable flow of our major rivers. Recently the information provided in the Indian news media clearly indicates that few years back the Government of India was engaged in developing a policy to obtain the consent of Nepal through revenue sharing agreements in respect of the regulated waters discharged from the storage reservoirs built inside our country. A special high level commission constituted by the last Bajpee Government of India had even started to function to conduct studies to this effect. Unfortunately, our government is not as yet seen paying any attention to this highly important development that would have helped our country to gain access to a totally new stream of enormously

large benefits accruing free of cost from the large storage dam projects to be implemented inside our country. Mysteriously, our government is now bent on grant license to private parties to implement large storage dam projects completely ignoring their vast export potential. Very soon the West Seti storage dam project is going to be the casualty.

Price of Exported Water

Experience of other countries tells us that a formal agreement must be signed between water exporting and purchasing countries to ensure recovery of water export benefit even before the start of the construction of the storage dam project earmarked to export water. Since the last forty years Canada is being paid for export of water to the USA. Very recently the landlocked country Lesotho has started to receive payments from South Africa for export of regulated water flowing across the border after power generation in Lesotho.

Canada is receiving from the USA according to the treaty signed between them 50% share in net benefit accruing to the latter from the use of the regulated water. Canada is entitled to receive in perpetuity such benefit from the USA for the water exported to latter after hydropower generation in its territory. Landlocked Lesotho is receiving 56% share in net benefit accruing to South Africa from the use of regulated water exported to the latter.

Landlocked Lesotho

Lesotho, formerly Basutoland, is bordered on all sides by South Africa. Lesotho is one of only three nations in the world to be completely encircled by a single country (the others are San Marino and Vatican City). Its dependence on South Africa for access to the outside extends to economic reliance as well, and has deeply affected the development of the country since independence in 1966. The kingdom of Lesotho is mainly mountainous and has a total area of 30,355 sq km. Lesotho was able to reach an agreement to recover a fair share of downstream benefit (water export) despite its complete dependence on South Africa.

Lesotho Highlands Water Project

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) is one of the largest and most intricate construction projects currently underway in the world. The LHWP has been conceived to export water to South

Africa and also to generate electricity for use in Lesotho.

The Treaty

Realization of the scheme is made possible under a Treaty signed by the Republic of South Africa and Lesotho in 1986. Under the terms of the Treaty, South Africa agrees to pay a royalty for water delivered from Lesotho for the duration of the Treaty. As stated earlier the royalty will be 56% of the total net benefit to accrue to the South Africa from the use of the exported water.

South Africa agrees to pay for the entire capital cost of structures required for water transfer, roads, bridges etc Lesotho will bear only the cost of the hydropower to be built for supply of electricity within its territory.

In first phase only 18 cum/sec water will be exported to South Africa by partially implementing the LHWP at a cost of US \$ 2.2 billion. Hydropower will be generating only 72 MW. South Africa will bear the entire cost of the first phase project with the exception of relatively small cost of the hydroelectricity station. South Africa agrees to pay each year to Lesotho for 18 cum/sec water a lump sum \$25 million (in 1991 prices) for the first 50 years of the Treaty, subject to various adjustments for inflation and other financial considerations.

Export Royalty in Perpetuity

The South Africa would be recovering in full the capital cost of building the scheme within 50 years. After that the royalty will be renegotiated for the period after 50 years. Thus, the Lesotho will be receiving in perpetuity the royalty for export of water.

Lesson to Nepal

Nepal must hold negotiations to reach an agreement with India to get a fair share of downstream benefit prior to taking the final decision to implement our storage projects. Else our country would be deprived of such downstream benefit for ever. We all would be failing to protect our legitimate national interest whereas even the most backward landlocked country in Africa like the Lesotho is able to recover a great proportion of such net downstream benefit to accrue to the South African Republic from the use of the regulated flow of rivers after hydroelectricity generation in Lesotho ■

Linguistic Diversity in Nepal: Situation and Policy

by Pro Dr Yogendra Prasad Yadava

Research Fellow, SIRF 2006

1. Background

Nepal is rich in its cultural and linguistic diversity. Nepalese belong to 103 caste and ethnic groups (CBS 2001) who are largely Hindus, Buddhists, Kiratis, Animists, and Muslims and speak around 92 languages officially-recognised by the state (CBS 2001; Yadava and Turin 2007). As a result, Nepal has evolved as a unique cultural space with numerous religious and philosophical values, customs and practices (Pradhan and Shrestha 2006).

Despite being a multilingual nation, a single language, viz. Nepali, has been given power, recognition and prestige while, as a corollary, the remaining minority languages and their communities are impoverished and marginalized. As a result, linguistic minorities have remained socially excluded from harnessing national benefits in fields such as politics, economy, education, employment and so on. It is, therefore, necessary to address these issues of linguistic minorities in the context of inclusive democracy in Nepal. It is from this perspective that the present study has been undertaken.

2. Objectives of the study

The goal of this study is to present the current situation of the existing linguistic diversity in Nepal, with a focus on the linguistic minorities such as Janajati and Madhesi and to propose an inclusive language policy and planning with a view to enabling these socially excluded groups to access the benefits of the national system and accommodate themselves into it. More specifically, this study addresses the following objectives:

- i. To present an approximation of Nepal's languages on the basis of existing studies including various census reports.
- ii. To provide their details such as genetic affiliation, demography, literate traditions, ethnicity, bi/multilingualism, domains of language use including education,

language shift and vitality, language endangerment and the like.

- iii. To see how social exclusion of diverse forms is related to their linguistic issues; and finally,
- iv. To propose a viable language policy and plan of action for Nepalese languages which can induce the social inclusion of deprived language communities into the national system.

3. Methodology

To achieve the goals of this study, the following research devices and tools have been devised and used:

- i. Review of existing literature
- ii. Preparation of an inventory of stakeholders for eliciting relevant information
- iii. Development of a questionnaire to understand language situation and assess the stakeholders' needs and perceptions
- iv. Collection of relevant information on marginalization of linguistic minorities in social, economic and political fields;
- v. Other relevant methods required.

4. Major findings

1. There exist variations in the various estimates about the identification of languages spoken in Nepal. Hence, there is a need for their precise identification through an objective linguistic survey.
2. Due to the lack of adequate studies about several languages it is difficult to understand the precise genetic relationships among languages.
3. With respect to heteroglotonyms, some language communities have negative attitudes towards these tendencies; a few are neutral and most are positive towards heteroglotonyms.
4. There exists no satisfactory account of information about regional, social and stylistic varieties of languages in Nepal.
5. Most languages have been confined to just their oral traditions and have not been introduced to any writing systems.

6. There is no standardization of languages including Nepali.

7. Most of the language communities are dissatisfied with the language census figures.

8. Linguistic diversity is a fact to be reckoned with in Nepal.

9. Multilingualism or bilingualism is widely prevalent resulting in language convergence and language loss owing to language shift.

10. As for the domains of language use, the following observations have been made in this study:

- Nepali alone has been used in administration.
- There are 15 mother tongues used in primary education as a subject, medium or both.
- There has been recent thrust to introduce quite a few languages in media.
- Nepali has been mostly used a second language in the hills and the mountains and Hindi in the Terai.

11. Most language communities have expressed interest in preserving and promoting their mother tongues.

12. Very few languages have availed language resources in print and mass media.

13. Most speakers have positive attitude towards their mother tongues.

14. Most languages are more or less threatened with extinction and need to be revitalized and promoted.

5. Recommendations

In order to resolve the linguistic issues and challenges, there is a need to envisage the following two types of language planning:

- i. corpus planning (i.e. intervention in the forms of a language) and
- ii. status planning (deliberate efforts to allocate the functions of languages and literacies within a speech community).

5.1 Corpus planning

- o To carry out linguistic survey for precise identification of Nepalese languages and their dialects and their genetic relationships through a definitive standard;

- o To provide their details such as genetic affiliation, demography, literate traditions, ethnicity, bi/multilingualism, domains of language use including education, language shift and vitality, and language endangerment;
- o To develop practical orthographies for preliterate languages, including choice of script;
- o To carry out linguistic documentation and descriptive studies in the languages identified;
- o To develop multi-lingual dictionaries;
- o To prepare grammars – descriptive grammars, reference grammars, and pedagogical grammars; and
- o To preserve and promote endangered languages through their immediate documentation and revitalization programmes.

5.2 Status planning

In the context of the envisaged federal structure of the country there is a need for designing Nepal's language policy to preserve and/or promote all local, regional, and national languages. Roughly speaking, this inclusive policy may be categorized as follows:

5.2.1 Official language policy

Keeping in view the restructuring of Nepal into various linguistic states, it would be legitimate to suggest a bilingual policy for each state, a policy favoring the two official languages: a lingua franca (federal language) and a regional language.

A lingua franca is used to communicate across linguistic barriers. Nepali, a lingua franca used mostly in the hills and mountains and Hindi used mostly in the Terai can be legitimate choices for official language. If states are created on linguistic basis, each will have its regional language which can be used as another official language apart from Nepali or Hindi. Some of the possible options from among regional languages include Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Tamang, Newar, Magar, Avadhi, Bantawa, Gurung, and Limbu. However, some minor languages (such as several Rai languages, Dhangar, Santhali, Urdu, Bhujel,



etc.) are confined to just one or more specific VDCs. In such a case they can be used as medium of local administration provided that these languages are translated into the two official languages. This provision will ensure equal linguist right to every language community. Based on 'territorized' individual rights, such an inclusive language policy recognizes the same rights to all members of a community within a specific region.

5.2.2 Policy for use of language in education and media

The following three types of recommendations for use of language in education need to be incorporated in the envisaged language policy for Nepal:

- o To determine the minority languages for which mother-tongue literacy programs are most urgent and most viable;
- o To develop model primers should for these languages employing content that is sensitive to the local language, local teaching style, local art, and local culture;
- o To conduct the training of competent and fully qualified mother tongue teachers;
- o To develop adequate "bridge materials," designed to take the minority-language student from basic competence in his or her mother tongue to competence and ability in Nepali or other languages of wider communication (LWC);
- o To postpone the introduction of

international languages like English to a later phase, after skills in the mother-tongue and the LWC have been adequately addressed;

- o To continue ongoing production and distribution of primers, readers, and manuals for mother tongue education;
- o To do school mapping for existing and future students to co-relate with access to schools;
- o To propogate radio announcements and bulletins pertaining to health, environment and other social issues; and
- o To operate regional broadcast service in regional languages by Radio Nepal and FM programmes owned and operated by local communities.

5.3 The founding of National Language Academy

To regulate and monitor the strategies and activities enshrined in the language policy it is imperative, as in India, China and elsewhere, to establish a "National Language Academy", having autonomous status, and having the responsibility of understanding and articulating "best practice" policies with respect to mother-tongue and multilingual education.

Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF): An Introduction

As a follow-up to an assessment of Norwegian support to NGOs in Nepal (2001), the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Kathmandu, envisaged a

need to stimulate further research on processes of national building, social exclusion and poverty, and the role of the civil society in Nepal. As per the report titled "Social Exclusion and Nation building – Assessment of prospects for enhancing the role of research and research institutions in Nepal" (June 2003), the Government of Nepal and Royal Norwegian Embassy at Kathmandu, agreed in 2005, to establish a *Research Fund* and support *research cooperation* between a Norwegian and a Nepali research institution to carry out research on issues of social exclusion. SNV Nepal was invited to manage the research fund.

The *main objectives* of the Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) are as follows:

- Produce high quality and critical research on causes of social exclusion in Nepal and ways to accommodate and manage diversity.
- Make social science research more relevant to excluded and disadvantaged groups and their agendas.
- Ensure that research more effectively contributes to policy and public debate and a deliberative democratic process

A total of 25 Research Fellowships were awarded in 2006 and 2007. A total of 150 Apprenticeship Grants have been awarded in 2006 and 2007. Two Norwegian research institutions and five Nepali research institutions are cooperating in carrying out research and have published eight research papers.

SIRF is in the process of carrying out policy dialogue with the political party leaders, government agencies and civil society organisation through dissemination of critical discourse related to the outcome of the research programme, as well as allowing for advocacy groups to "take back" and use the research results for their own purpose. SIRF is also working with political party leaders and Constituent Assembly (CA) members to make the Constitution more inclusive.

The Government of Nepal is initiating the process of making the Fund an independent autonomous body under the new law to be enacted by parliament.

Funded by: Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF)

Indigenous Knowledge- An Identity of Tharu

By: Mohan Das Manandhar
Rojan Bajracharya*

The current political transformation in Nepal – to which contemporary political parties directly or indirectly trace their lineage – has been substantially supported by the rising voices of the suppressed indigenous. So, the common consent has been slowly built between the concern stakeholders to debate on the social inclusion issues for the Nation Building which has been the main theme of policy dialogue forums like Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF).

It is important to recognize that Nepal is cultural and ethnic mosaic so the country can capitalize the benefit of these complexities if the country is cognizance with the essence of all ethnic and cultural groups. In consistence to such spirit, the recent ethnic movements aware the government on the ethnic right and the latest one is the Tharu movement. Nevertheless, the problem associate with the Tharu movement is that it focuses on the political and civic right against government's enlisting them in Madeshi but the defining socio cultural identity of Tharu community still remains. Professor Yogendra Yadav, research fellow of the SIRF, opine on the commonality of language in Terai, the major residential area of Tharu. So, we deduce that the language, the most referred cultural identify by the some Terai based activists, won't identify all ethnic communities of Terai including Tharu. Hence, the question arise on how can Tharu be identified from the other inhabitants of Terai?

Whatever the answer to that question, nearly every individual Tharu agrees that Tharus are enriched with Indigenous Knowledge which distinct them from any ethnic communities of Terai. In this regard, we would like to highlight the findings of a SIRF funded research conducted by Gopal Dahit which focuses on the Indigenous Knowledge of Tharu.

The study has listed 19 areas of Tharu Indigenous Knowledge which are unique by nature and practices. Primarily, the study focuses on three types of Indigenous Knowledge namely, medical system, food and drinks and organizational system.

In terms of medical system, Tharus have three basic practices and practitioners. These are: Tharu Mantars practiced by *Guruwas* (spiritual/shaman), Massage by *Sohrinya* (birth attendants) and other practice-men/women, and Medicinal plants by *Baidawas* (herbalists).

In terms of Food and Drinks, Tharu prepares the distinct food items - *Dhikri, Khariya, Kapwa, Kanjwa, Mar and Jhajhara* - which do not match with other communities.

In term of organizational structure, Tharus have an old and genuine organizational system that has evolved to regulate their main profession, agriculture. The organizational system is divided into four levels namely, village lead by Barghariya, irrigation by *Kulapani Chaudhary*, Family/ household led by *Gardhuriya* and Agro-farming led by *Kisanwa*.

Dahit claims that the Indigenous Knowledge of Tharu is in the verge of extinct due to the social exclusion practices of the country.

As per the essence of the study, we conclude that Tharus are enriched with their indigenous knowledge and the government should acknowledge it which will traditionalize such knowledge in the society and consequently concretize the identity of Tharu.

(* Both authors are associated with Social Inclusion Research Fund. The views expressed are those of the authors' alone and do not represent the author's affiliated institutions)

Japanese Flowers Arrangements

Organized by Japanese Embassy, large number of Nepalese sees something creative in Ikebana and the Japanese Tea Ceremony

By A CORRESPONDENT

Till a decade ago, only a few Nepalese know about the Ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangements, but it is popular among many people now. Thanks to regular annual programs and training organized at Japanese Embassy, many Nepalese are attracted to Ikebana.

Like in the past years, Japanese Embassy, with the support from Japanese University Alumni Association Nepal, organized Ikebana and Tea Ceremony at the Embassy premises recently. Inaugurated by Madame Ikuko Mizuno, the Japanese ambassador's wife, the program was arranged with the cooperation of Mrs. Toshiko Nishizawa, who is an experienced instructor of these two Japanese traditions and Japanese culture.

Mrs. Toshiko Nishizawa, who came to Nepal at the end of April to demonstrate Ikebana and the Japanese Tea Ceremony, had shown how can various kinds of flowers, be arranged in systematic manner, and bring them to life. Ikebana is usually translated as the Japanese art of flower arrangement, but the materials of Ikebana can include freshly cut branches, vines, leaves, grasses, berries, fruit, seeds and flowers as well as wilted and dried plants. In fact, anything may be used and in contemporary Ikebana, glass, metal, and plastic are also employed.

Like all forms of arts, the Ikebana also requires concentration as well as creativeness. As one of the traditional arts of Japan, Ikebana has developed a symbolic language as well as decorative concepts and the use of natural, ephemeral flowers and branches makes the dimension of time an integral part of the creation.

"The demonstration of Ikebana and tea ceremony represents the true tradition of Japan. It is an art of Japanese flower arrangement which was practiced in the last 500 years. This represents the long history of Japanese philosophy of sense and beauty," said Madame Ikuko Mizuno. "Ikebana is more than flowers in a container as it



is an art form in which living branches, leaves and grasses blossom and are arranged so that the human and nature are brought together harmoniously. Today this traditional way of maintaining Japanese philosophy is all over the world and loved by many people who are seeking spiritual peace in their hearts and minds. There are many styles of Ikebana, with different philosophies behind each. Buddhist philosophy and strong connection to the natural cycle of birth, growth; decay and rebirth have a deep spiritual value. Today, there are over 3,000 Ikebana schools in Japan with million of students."

Similarly, the tea ceremony has its own history and cultural value in Japan. One has to follow certain rituals when practicing the Japanese Tea Ceremony. From beginning to end, there are various stages one needs to follow.

"Tea ceremony in Japan back some 800 years. Buddhist monks used tea to help them concentrated during

mediation. Rituals were developed around the sharing of the tea ceremony. The host prepares and serves tea and sweets to guests. Both hosts and guests follow," said Madame Ikuko Mizuno.

In the tea ceremony, to keep the ceremony simple and attractive, there are no wasted moments. This nature demonstrates spiritual aspect of Japanese people and stresses harmony and precise rule designed to keep the ceremony simple and attractive, free of wasted moments. This unique art and culture demonstrates spiritual aspects of Japanese people and stress harmony and coexistence in the unity of the individual and nature. ■

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"Well Written Reports are Appreciated by Donors Not the Performance"

Mrs. Kamala Acharya (Dhungel)

Mrs. KAMALA DHUNGEL (ACHARYA), who was elected Vice Chair of the South and East Asia Regional Committee of IUCN in Bangkok last March 2009, has been working in the field of environment and women empowerment since 1989. Since then, Mrs. Dhungel and her environmental groups are consistently working both in urban and rural areas of Nepal to help empower women and address environmental issues. Dhungel spoke to **New SPOTLIGHT** on various issues. Excerpts:

You were recently elected as Vice Chair of the South and East Asia Regional Committee of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in Bangkok. How much time you have to give now for your international engagements?

The Women in Environment (WE) which I represent is a modest organization with only over 5000 woman members and has its focus primarily on national issues. As a member of the IUCN, it is but natural for WE to familiarize itself with global and regional issues as well. Moreover, environment has transboundary character, such as climate change, global warming, and desertification. With a new responsibility as Vice Chair now, I may have to devote little more time to link up our national activities with IUCN's regional programs and overall missions.

Who are your international partners except IUCN ?

The SAME International, Japan, is one of them. Individual members of the SAME have been personally contributing to support our rural school building and community health programs in Mahottari. They have supported to construct one beautiful school extension building for the Tamang Community in Bhim Dhunga at the outer rim of the Kathmandu valley. WE is about to complete a fast-track rehabilitation and peace building program supported by OTI/USAID. In November 2005, WE had collaborated with Seoul based Asia-Pacific Environmental Council (AEC) to organize an international environmental conference (APNEC-7) in Kathmandu which was supported by Japan Environment Council (JEC), UNEP, IUCN and WWF. In the past WE has carried out programs in over 15 districts of Nepal with the support of many international agencies, such as DANIDA, USAID, UNDP, UNICEF, GTZ, WB, ADB, JICA, SNV, WWF etc.

In your two decade long work in social services sector since 1989, what major achievements have you made ?

It would not be possible to list all our completed activities in the space that your paper may allocate for me. Actually, I don't like to call them our achievements; it is for the beneficiaries and targeted communities to tell what it is. Many of them you have yourself personally seen in the field.

However, I must mention some of the exceptional works. I term them exceptional simply because very rare women's groups might have ever done such hilarious works in rural areas of a country in conflict when woman volunteers had confronted rebels carrying guns when the infrastructural building works of concrete nature were being built on demands of the rural communities in Mahottari. These works have directly benefitted over three hundred thousand rural people. Poverty alleviation and drinking water projects supported by the World Bank through PAF and Rural Drinking Water Program at the community level still continues, although WE as an institution does not receive even overheads. In the past, WE worked for rehabilitating the squatters in Balaju with DANIDA support, and supported a rural child care center with the help of WWF to enable local women build their income generating capacity near the Bardia National Park. WE also worked with fifteen schools of the Kathmandu valley and developed environmental curriculum for school children. WE worked with other women's groups in recent few months to sensitize local women leaders and CA members about constitutional issues of women's concern.

Donors supporting these programs must have become proud of you and your organization. Is not it so?

Yes ! some genuine donors are very happy. But many donors I have worked with pay only lip services, they don't care the outcomes. If you are clever enough to write a sophisticated project report sitting on the table without going out to the field, you get appreciation. I know, foreign officials working for the donors have to satisfy their own bosses at their headquarters. The host country people, the real local recipients, need actions and results, whereas the donors need good reports. Some of our projects were sabotaged by Nepalese officials working with donor agencies, through wrong briefings at the center, despite their open appreciation before the local communities and promises to continue support. Even their Heads who visited the field have wholehearted appreciated the work but later they have backed out. Grounds were either deficiencies in writing reports or politics. Some donors, I can name, have been playing politics, and they are biased towards one against the other. I have seen a couple of donors making allegation against one leading NGO that it was close to a political party but the same donors were seen supporting the others who still are closer to another party. Double standard is found amongst them also. I feel sad to say so, as it may hurt the feelings of many genuine donors. Serious problems are with our NGOs and governance machinery as well.



Q. Why don't the recipient organizations deny accepting funds and come out openly against such donors?

WE had taken stands on a couple of occasion when differences existed between us and our donors. WE even denied to accept funds when we were simply asked to receive funds for another international agency without any substantive role defined for us. Many recipient organizations have very little options except to accept what donors say. Local NGOs have to compete with INGOs, who locally grab funds that are allocated by the foreign governments from their tax payers money for Nepal and the Nepalese. Even the Government and UN agencies compete for local funds like NGOs. Works that can very well be done with less funds by national NGOs are given to expensive INGOs and UN projects, where incompetent foreign experts get lucrative job. Many qualified Nepalese have unsuccessfully argued with donors on these issues. In some cases, you are not even allowed to defend your case when donors impose wrong policies; neither are they transparent. Inclusiveness has become another new tool these days for them to monopolize recruitment process against fairness and competitiveness. We know, they cannot do so in Vietnam, Cambodia and even in India. But they have free hands in Nepal due to deficiencies in governance. I believe, individual contributors like Japanese, who visit the site and personally see performance results with their own eyes before making any further commitments, are much better than institutional donors who don't play a fair game. Perhaps, foreign governments should be advised to commission an investigative team to find out the reality about the use of donors' funds. All I say is: "the rule of law should apply to all".

Q. If a benevolent donor offers to support you a project, what would be your priority?

I doubt you would ever get such a donor who would unconditionally offer support. However, 'compulsory education and low cost sustainable housing with jobs for Dalit community' would be my first priority followed by a rehabilitation program for the victims of political conflict through an environmentally sustainable housing and self-help scheme, as a second choice. ■



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