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Raghuji Panta



Rajan Bhattarai



Rajendra Rai



PM Madhav Kumar Nepal



Bishnu Rijal



Yadav Sharma

Yes Prime Minister

INSIDE

Special Issue: Social Inclusion Policies in South Asian States

UNMIN: Extending Uncertainty

Food Crisis: Hunger Strike

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मात्र रु. १ मा

“आफ्नै बचत खाता”

सम्पूर्ण अन्तराष्ट्रिय स्तरको सेवा सुविधा सहित ।



जीवनका पहिला पलहरू देखि बचतको बानी सुरक्षित भविष्यको लगानी



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“The Maoists should take responsibility for the parliament impasse.”

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, addressing a public function in Gothatar.

“Just like heroes end up victorious in films, we will win in politics.”

Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’, at a function organized to welcome 94 film artistes into Unified CPN-Maoist fold.

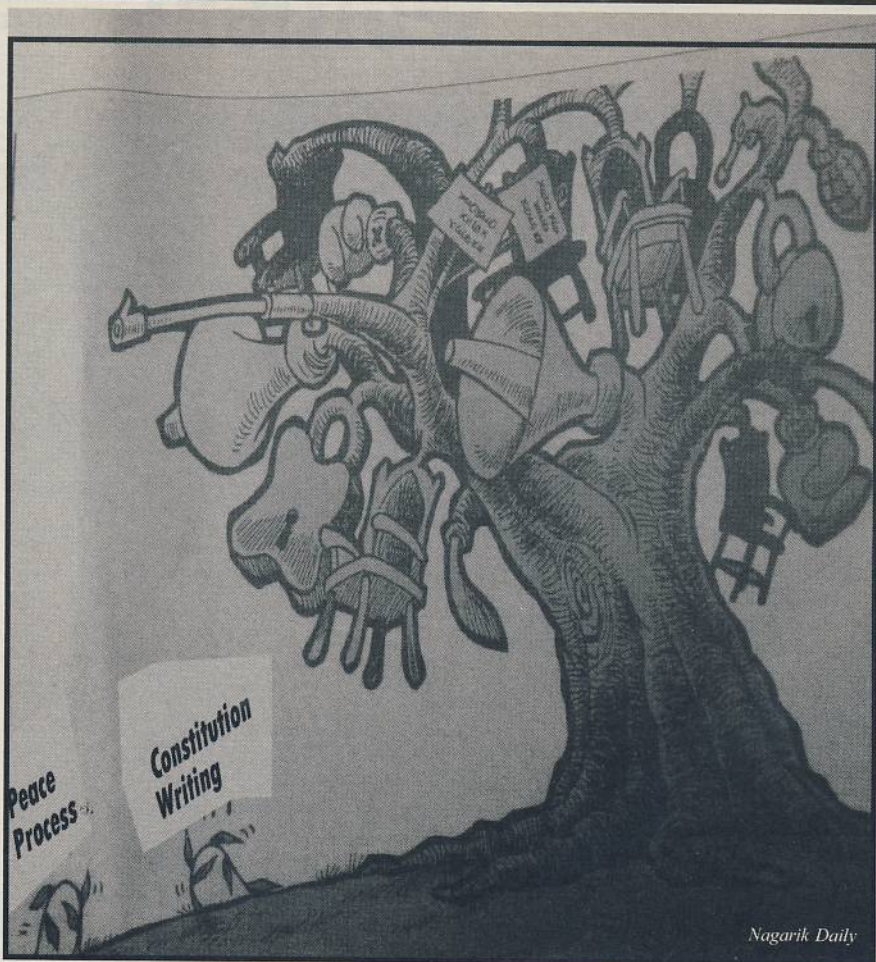
“I have asked Prachanda to head the high level political machinery to guide the government. I have told him that I will also stay in it as a figurehead.”

Girija Prasad Koirala, former prime minister and president of Nepali Congress, in an interaction with reporters.

“Maoists want to establish Gurilla supremacy in the name of people’s supremacy.”

CPN-UML leader K.P.Shrama Oli, in Kantipur speaking at Madan Bhandari Memorial program.

“I am still a fan of Michael Jackson. I have been thoroughly inspired by his style.”



Sanjay Shrestha, a renowned Nepali pop singer, on the death of Michael Jackson, in Nagarik daily.

“He was literally the emperor of pop music. We were all affected by his kind of music.”

Om Bikram Bista, famous Nepali singer, mourning the death of

Michael Jackson, in BBC Nepali Service.

“Lal Salam (Red Salute) comrade.”

Famous Nepali actor with die-heart monarchist background joining before Maoist party before Maoist chairman Prachanda in Jandisha.

TRANSITION

APPOINTED: Shankar Pokharel, Minister for Information and Communications, as the spokesperson of the government.

Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada, as the vice chairman of National Planning Commission (NPC), by the cabinet.

Keshab Acharya, as the chief economic

advisor at the Ministry of Finance, by the cabinet.

FORMED: A high-level party mechanism comprising Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, Chairman Jhalanath Khanal, General Secretary Ishwor Pokharel and Secretary Bishnu Poudel, formed by the CPN-UML to assist in smooth running of the government.

EXTENDED: The government has

agreed to extend the mandate of UNMIN by another six months once its expires on July 22.

INSTRUCTED: Rakam Chemjong, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, to hold talks with the armed groups in Terai, by the cabinet.

DECIDED: The government has decided to establish embassies in Canada, Brazil, South Africa and Kuwait



Newly Appointed Ministers Taking Oath of Office with President Dr. Rambaran Yadav

PRIME MINISTER MADHAV KUMAR Nepal on Wednesday (June 24) expanded the Cabinet for the fourth time, adding six new faces. In the latest extension, the PM inducted five cabinet ministers, representing two Terai-based parties and a fringe party. Five new ministers are two each from the Gachhadar faction of Madhesi Janadhikar forum (MJF) and the Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP) and one from Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP). Meanwhile, PM Nepal administered the oath of office and secrecy to the newly appointed ministers amid a program in presence of President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav this afternoon. Sarat Singh Bhandari and Mrigendra Kumar Singh Yadav from MJF were sworn in as Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation and Agriculture and Cooperatives respectively. Likewise, Ram Chandra Singh Kusawaha and Ganesh Nepali from the TMLP were sworn in as the Minister for Education, and the Youth and Sports respectively. Deepak Bohara of the RPP has been appointed the Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation. He also administered the oath of office and secrecy to Man Bahadur Shahi of the CPN-ML as State Minister for Land Reforms. Though only two ministers from the TMLP were

sworn in Wednesday, the party's Mahendra Raya Yadav as the Industry Minister was sworn in on Thursday. So was the party's nominee as Minister of State for Industry Dan Bahadur Chaudhary.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS REVERSED THE PREVIOUS government's decision to sack Chief of Army Staff Rookmangud Katawal and appoint Lt. General Kul Bahadur Khadka as acting CoAS. A cabinet meeting held at the Prime Minister's office, Singha Durbar took the decision. CoAS Katawal was sacked by the Maoist-led government on March 3. President Dr Ram Baran Yadav blocked the erstwhile cabinet's decision by asking Katawal to remain in position. Prachanda resigned the next day over the same issue.

UN WORLD FOOD PROGRAM HAS CALLED ON protesting groups to allow safe and unhindered passage of humanitarian relief convoys — food assistance — across the Terai. As a result of ongoing strikes in the Terai called by various groups, the WFP has been unable to deliver more than 400 metric tons of food assistance to thousands of food-insecure Koshi flood victims, said WFP Country

Representative in Nepal Richard Ragan in a statement. "In observation of basic international humanitarian principles, I urge all protesting groups to allow safe and unhindered passage of WFP humanitarian relief convoys so that vital food assistance can reach Koshi flood victims in a timely manner," Ragan said.

THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL IS MAKING significant efforts to eliminate human trafficking but has not fully met the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, says the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report. The annual report notes that Nepal still does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. It says the government continued modest efforts to prosecute traffickers and raise public awareness on trafficking during the reporting period, though its efforts to adequately punish labor trafficking could be improved. Additionally, trafficking-related complicity by government officials remained a serious problem in Nepal. Nepal maintains its status as a Tier 2 country in the US State Department's report released on June 16. "Nepal is a source country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and involuntary servitude. Children are trafficked within the country and to India and the Middle East for commercial sexual exploitation or forced marriage, as well as to India and within the country for involuntary servitude as domestic servants, circus entertainers, factory workers, or beggars." According to the report, NGOs working on trafficking issues reported an increase in both transnational and domestic trafficking during the reporting period, although a lack of reliable statistics makes the problem difficult to quantify. NGOs estimate that 10,000 to 15,000 Nepali women and girls are trafficked to India annually, while 7,500 children are trafficked domestically for commercial sexual exploitation." ■



Menon Refutes Reports Of Border Encroachment

Indian Foreign Secretary Shiva Shanker Menon Sunday (June 21) reiterated his government's commitment to extend support to Nepal in its transition to multiparty democracy and the ongoing peace process. Menon, whose visit comes close on the heels of reports that Indian side encroached Nepali territory in various Indo-Nepal bordering points, however, refuted that there has been unnecessary propaganda and publicity regarding the invasion of Nepali soil by India. "The fact is 98 percent of India Nepal boundary has been demarcated," said the Indian bureaucrat at a press conference in the capital today before wrapping up his two-day official Nepal visit. He added that the border dispute should be resolved through discussion between the representatives of the two neighbors. "A peaceful and democratic Nepal is in the interest of Nepali people of India and of the region," said Menon, adding, "I also made clear this is Nepal's process there is no change in that. There is no change in our commitment in building our bilateral relationship which is very important for both the countries." Menon said that India will make every possible effort to help Nepali people in achieving peaceful and prosperous Nepal. He said that relationship with Nepal is and will continue to be highest priority to India. During his stay in Nepal, the Indian Foreign Secretary called on President Dr Ram Baran Yadav, Prime Minister Madav Kumar Nepal, Foreign Minister Sujata Koirala, Defense Minister Bidya Devi Bhandari, Home Minister Bhim Rawal and his Nepali counterpart Gyan

Chandra Acharya. Apart from that Menon also met with top leaders of major political parties including former Prime Minister and Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala, former Prime Minister and Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, CPN-UML Chairman Jhalanath Khanal and Madhesi Janadhikar Forum leader and Deputy Prime Minister Bijaya Gachhadar. Menon had arrived in the capital for a two-day visit on Saturday.

Compiled from reports

Ex King Gyanendra to speak out?

Ex King Gyanendra who has been keeping mum over the political developments in the country is said to be preparing to speak out. According to sources close to Nirmal Niwas, the ex King is anxious with the deteriorating political situation. And he is preparing to speak out in one way or the other on the occasion of his birthday on Asar 23 (July 7). Meanwhile, to mark his 63rd birthday, a committee has been formed headed by former ambassador Khilendra Prasad Pandey. The committee is preparing to celebrate the occasion by raising slogan in favor of restoring monarchy for 'safeguarding democracy and nationalism.' Ghatana Ra Bichar weekly

Menon's Secret Missive On Maoists

Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon has asked the major parties to keep the Maoists out of power. This was revealed after Nepali Congress (NC) president Girija Prasad Koirala spilled the beans during his meeting some close party aides. Menon reportedly asked Koirala to ensure that Maoists remain out of power. He is even said to have urged the parties to try and bring about change in 'Maoist behavior.' "India seems bent on by-passing the Maoists," Koirala was quoted as telling his aides. Menon also told Koirala that even though anti-government protests were sure to create anarchy in

Nepal, the government should strictly deal with the protests. He also assured of India's support in this regard. *Jana Astha weekly reports*

NTB Launches Campaign In India

With the objective of promoting Nepal among the Indian consumers targeting Indian summer holiday season in New Delhi, Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) in partnership with Nepal Embassy, New Delhi, Nepal Airlines and Nepalese Private Sector companies has launched consumer promotion campaign in two big shopping malls of New Delhi, India in different dates from 19-21 and 26-28 June 2009, says a release from Nepal Tourism Board. The consumer promotion program has been initiated to further position the "Nepal Tourism Year-2011" campaign to achieve substantial growth in tourism industry through new programs. The Nepalese tourism promotion among Indian consumer was launched from 19-21 June 2009 at V3S East Center Mall in New Delhi in the first phase. A booth in traditional Nepalese style was set up in the shopping mall. In addition, information dissemination on Nepal Holiday Packages, attractive discount packages offered by Nepalese Private Sector, plasma screens displaying video clips of vivid tourism product of Nepal, lucky draw contests for visitors at the booth, Nepali souvenirs and gifts for visitors were other attractions of the promotion, the release added. *Leading dailies report*

CONCOE's Interactions

Attended by chief justice of Supreme Court Min Bahadur Rayamajhi,



chairman of Constituent Assembly Subhash Chandra Nembang, senior judges of the Supreme Court, members of the Constituent Assembly representing various political parties, former chief justices, judges of Appellate courts, legal luminaries, members of civil society and lawyers the interaction program began with a speech by Chief Justice Rayamajhi. The Chief Justice stressed the need for an independent of judiciary in new constitution. Chairman of Constituent Assembly Subhas Chandra Nembang also said that the CA will bring the new constitution in accordance with the schedule. Convener of CONCOE Dr. Surya Dhungel holds the view that the law community can play a very important role in bringing a democratic constitution into effect. President of the Supreme Court Bar Association said that this interaction was organized to help the constitution making process.

Role of Retired Civil Servants

Organized by Administrative Court and Public Administration Campus, minister of General Administration Rajendra Shrestha inaugurated a half day workshop on the role of former Civil Servants in the constitution making process. Chaired by Sobhakar Parajuli, whip of the Nepali Congress, participants discussed how they can support the constitution making process. Chairman of the Administrative Court Kashi Raj Dahal stressed the need to utilize the expertise

Khanal has said that the preparations for the budget is going on in full swing. Asked whether the ongoing House disruption has affected budget preparation, he said, "Our work has not been

affected. We are almost ready." He said that the budget will be presented in the second week of July. However, due to political differences, the winter session of the parliament continues to be obstructed. The winter session needs to be ended and budget session convened to present the budget. Secretary Khanal hinted that this year's budget will be larger than last year. "The Finance Minister will give the exact size of the budget when he announces it. I can say that it will be larger than Rs 236 billion (last year's figure)," he said. Khanal said commercializing agriculture and creating employment opportunities for rural youths through it will be top priority of the budget. "This time we will include the issues related with climate change also as priority because its affects are hurting our agriculture as well as industrial economy," he said.

Compiled from reports

Question of Fundamental rights

The Society for Constitutional and Parliamentary Exercise (SCOPE) organized a half day workshop on Fundamental Rights and Issues of Social Inclusion. Chaired by Chairman of SCOPE and senior advocate Badri Bahadur Karki, Binda Pande, chairman of CA's

Fundamental Rights and Directive Principle Committee, revealed that her committee is in the final stage of preparing the draft to table at the CA. She said that new constitution will



include many important clauses designed to protect the rights of the people. Senior Advisor to the Social Inclusion Research Fund Mohan Das Manandhar expressed the hope that this workshop will help the committee to accommodate the expert views in making the new constitution inclusive. Sociologists Dr. Chaitanya Subba presented his paper on the issue of social inclusion and member of CA Ramesh Lekhak and advocate Purna Man Shakya spoke about the need to write inclusive fundamental rights. Former speaker of House of Representatives and senior advocate Damannath Dhungana highlighted the importance of inclusion in the changing context.

Govt Panels To Monitor West Seti

The government formed a steering committee and a task force to monitor the activities of the West Seti Hydro Project and to effectively carry out the project activities, national news agency RSS reported Wednesday. A National Planning Commission member, who has been assigned to look into energy issues, will lead the steering committee and the director general of the Electricity Development Board will lead the task force. Secretaries of the ministries of finance, agriculture and cooperatives, home, water resources, land reform and management, forest and soil conservation, environment, science and technology and the director general of the Electricity Development Board will be members of the committee. *Compiled from reports*



of retired Civil Servants in the constitution making process.

Budget Preparations In Full Swing

Finance Secretary Rameshwore



Royal Alina's In Kantipath

After successfully operating, five branches at valley's five main city centers, Royal Alina Baker Café opened its new restaurant in Kantipath. As their previous five restaurants, Royal Alina's Bakery Café will have similar kinds of high quality and hygienic food. Situated just above Mandala Book Point, the restaurant will offer all kinds of food to different age groups. "We are in the process of expansion. Because of growing popularity of our food menus, we will expand our chain in more places in future," said Arjun Bhandari, head of the Royal Alina's Bakery Café Chain.

Developing Countries' GDP To Slow To 1.2 Percent: World Bank

The World Bank has estimated economic growth in developing countries of 1.2 percent this year, and said that without China and India, output would shrink 1.6 percent. Amid the worst global financial and economic crisis in seven decades, the multilateral institution eight days ago lowered its outlook on global growth, to a contraction of 3.0 percent this year. It slightly revised the global gross domestic product (GDP) figure Monday, to a 2.9 percent decline. The development lender's preceding forecast, published in late March, put developing countries' annual growth at 2.1 percent, and at zero if China and India were excluded. In 2010, global growth was projected at 2.0 percent, and that of the developing countries at 4.4 percent, according to the bank. Excluding China and India, the developing countries would grow 2.5

percent. China's economy was forecast to expand 7.2 percent in 2009 and 7.7 percent in 2010, while India's forecast was for 5.1 percent followed by 8.0 percent. The latest World Bank forecasts on gross

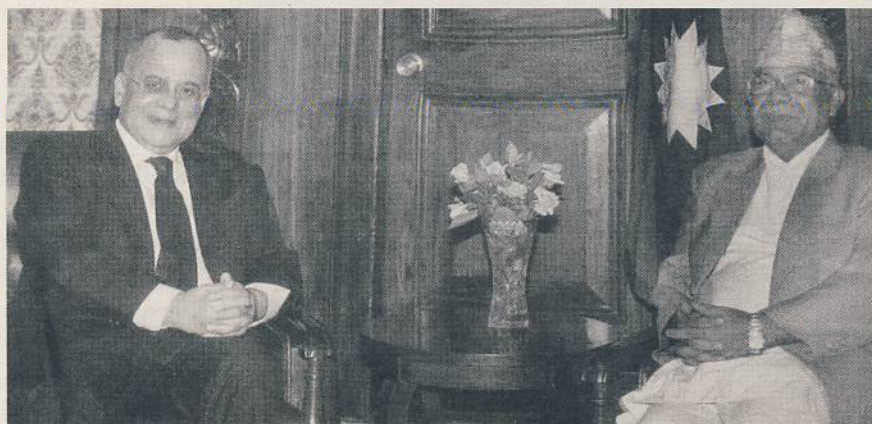
domestic product (GDP) — a measure of goods and services output in a country — came in a report, "Global Development Finance 2009: Charting a Global Recovery," published to coincide with a three-day Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics opening Monday in Seoul. The World Bank expressed concern about the thinning flow of private capital into developing countries, which has fallen nearly by half this year — 49 percent — to 363 billion dollars compared with 707 billion in 2008, after a record 1.2 trillion in 2007. The development lender also projected a 9.7 decline in global trade volume this year, before a 3.8 percent growth rebound in 2010. "The need to restructure the banking system, combined with emerging limits to expansionary policies in high-income countries, will prevent a global rebound from gaining traction," Justin Lin, World Bank chief economist, said in a statement. The anti-poverty bank called for "special attention" to "the risk of balance-of-payments crises and corporate debt restructurings in many

countries," in order to "avoid another debt crisis as seen in the 1970s and 1980s." That was particularly the case in the hard-hit developing countries in Europe and Central Asia, where GDP was projected to fall 4.7 percent this year, before a slight recovery to 1.6 percent growth in 2010. A similar pattern of decline and rebound was seen for Latin America and the Caribbean, where a 2.2 percent GDP contraction in 2009 would be followed by a 2.0 percent expansion the next year. Other regions of the developing world continued to show growth but no contraction. In East Asia and Pacific, GDP was expected to rise 5.0 percent in 2009 and 6.6 percent in 2010, while South Asia would expand 4.6 percent, followed by 7.0 percent. GDP in the Middle East and North Africa was expected to rise 3.1 percent in 2009 and 3.8 percent in 2010. Sub-Saharan Africa would expand 1.0 percent, then accelerate to a 3.7 percent pace next year. The relative economic weakness in the developing countries after recent years of robust growth heightens the risks of social unrest and deepening poverty, the 185-nation institution said.

Compiled from reports

Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Paid Visit

Pakistan's foreign secretary Salman Bashir recently paid official visit to Nepal. During his visit, Pakistan's foreign secretary called on prime minister and foreign minister. He also discussed bilateral matters during the talk with his Nepali Counterpart foreign secretary Gyan Chandra Acharya. ■





Prachanda with NC and UML Leaders: Selling Idea

MAOIST POLITBURO

Raid Signals

The agenda of storming into Singh Durbar with a national government takes precedence over the customary "nationalistic" rhetoric

BY SUSHIL SHARMA

Soon after reports of scathing comments at the Maoist politburo meeting on recent reports of border encroachment, two of Prachanda's top guns got calls from two senior Kathmandu-based diplomats of a powerful mission for an urgent meeting.

A week later, the much-publicized Maoist politburo meeting ended, without the customary "nationalistic" rhetoric.

The focus was more on a "national" government.

Chairman Prachanda thundered, "We will soon lead a joint national government."

According to him, it's only a matter of weeks. "The present government is a water-bubble that will burst in no time."

He did not explain the reasons behind his new-found confidence. Interestingly, it came a month after "the foreign masters engineered his ouster from the seat of power."

As he predicted a national government, Prachanda was conspicuously low-key in repeating the "foreign master" allegations.

The former rebels have also been less than forthcoming in expressing the camaraderie with their Indian revolutionary counterparts, dubbed terrorists by the Indian government.

Clearly, the "anti-terrorist" security

operation in the West Bengal village of Lalgarh has sent red herrings across the Nepalese Maoist citadel.

Sources say, Prachanda is under tremendous pressure to rein in his "hardliner" comrades if he wants to have another go at Singh Durbar.

At the politburo, he fell short of the target. He could not get the idea of "national government" Okayed.

All he secured was a unanimous decision to take the idea to the much larger body – the central committee.

A Maoist-led joint national government is, therefore, a distant reality, if at all.

But if Prachanda does succeed in sidelining the likes of Mohan Baidya, C.P. Gajurel and Netra Bikram Chand, he may not be far from the target.

Double-speak is what he should stop to regain the trust of the influential power centers, said a source close to one of such centers.

Prachanda did partly succeed in the politburo meeting. He made it sure that the "nationalistic" rhetoric on border encroachment got a back seat whereas keeping the "national" government agenda in the driver's seat

THE AIDES

All The

Prime Ministers'

Men

Arguably the weakest prime minister in recent years heading a fragile 22-party coalition, Madhav Kumar Nepal faces an uphill task of leading the country through a very critical political transition. Cool and extraordinarily tolerant, Nepal is also criticized for weak leadership and inconsistency in thoughts and actions. Seeking to ride on his strengths, he has sought to make up for the weaknesses by hiring a number of advisors. He also banks on the advice of some close acquaintances and the party colleagues who have not been officially hired. A look at the men who matter to him.

By SUSHIL SHARMA with SAROJ DAHAL

Widely known as a cool person, Madhav Kumar Nepal is today in the hot seat in the Prime Minister's office.

As head of a 22-party coalition, his job is by no means easy.

The first and foremost challenge is to keep the fragile coalition running. The coalition partners are not cohesive.

None too taxing is to clear the main opposition block on the road. The former Maoist rebels are a formidable

force, despite a sudden exit from power.

So, how does prime minister Nepal cope with the challenges?

Is he, like many of his predecessors, lonely at the top? "No," say close aides, "he has kept many people around him for advice and guidance".

Official Advisers

Prime minister Nepal has six official advisers under his belt. All of them are close personal acquaintances.

Leading the list is Raghu Pant. A Nepal loyalist, the chief political adviser is a UML politburo member. He has been given a ministerial ranked position.

The former cabinet minister was press adviser to Nepal's first elected communist prime minister, Man Mohan Adhikary, in 1995.

Pant has been assisting his boss in negotiations with own party leaders and



PM Nepal : Searching his men

the leaders from other parties.

He regularly goes to the prime minister's office at Singh Durbar as well as the official residence at Baluwatar.

He does the drafting of most of the political speeches of the prime minister, however the PM himself gives the final touches.

Says Pant, "I have drawn from my experience and closely watched the political developments to give right advice to the prime minister."

Bishnu Rijal is the prime minister's press advisor. His cell phone has never stopped ringing since he took up the job a month ago.

He has the responsibility to answer all media queries about the prime minister and his activities.

Given the government secretary's rank, Rijal was earlier editor of the UML mouthpiece, the Budhbaar vernacular weekly.

He has been closely associated with the PM for the past seven years and in the process edited a book on him.

He reaches the PM's official residence early in the morning. By that time, the PM is almost through with major daily newspapers. But Rijal's job is not.

He discusses controversial stories with the prime minister."Besides being the PM's press advisor, I also do assist him in many other areas," he says.

He is not however oblivious of the criticism. Many say Rijal is too junior and inexperienced for the job.

Sources say, the PM is not unaware of the criticisms. He did confess as much to the UML general secretary Iswor Pokharel but he has stuck to his decision and does not seem to have any regret.

Rajan Bhattarai is the PM's foreign affairs advisor. He normally does not go to Baluwatar except on occasions where foreign dignitaries meet the PM there.

The assistant minister-ranked advisor makes it a point to attend the PM's Singh Durbar office regularly.

A former secretary of the UML foreign relations department, Bhattarai has a degree in international relations from Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University.

He briefs the PM about the visiting foreign dignitaries and the issues likely to be taken up during talks with them.

Says he, "the PM does attach big importance to the meeting with foreign

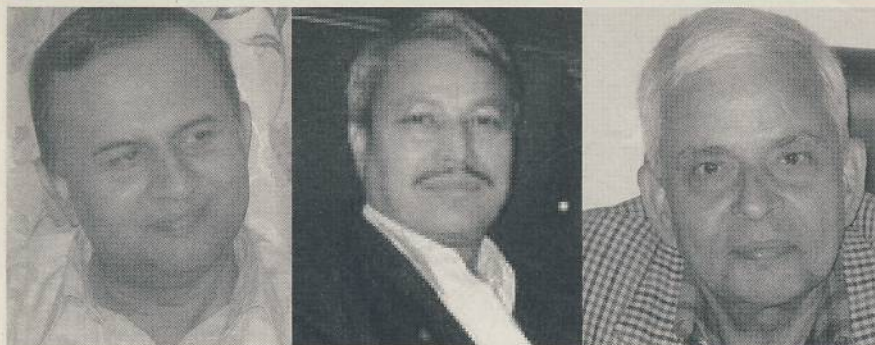
diplomats. He takes my advice whenever he feels it needed. We discuss the issues at great length."

Personal secretary Yadav Sharma is a key aide of the prime minister. Unlike other advisors, he has a different kind of relations with the PM. He has been with his boss since the latter became the general secretary of the UML 15 years ago.

Sharma was with him even after he quit as general secretary after the poll debacle last year. Understandably, he has the easiest and maximum access to the PM.

He looks after the PM's daily schedule, appointments with the visitors and even the food that the PM takes. While working out the daily schedule, he consults with the other advisors. The PM's instructions to the government secretaries are mostly relayed through him, as does the former's consultations with senior government officials.

Unlike others, he lives in Baluwatar in a separate apartment set aside for the private secretariat of the PM. It was the same apartment where Iswor Pokharel as political advisor to the then-UML prime minister, Man Mohan Adhikary, used to live.



Minister Pokharel (Left) Rawal and Adhikari: Insider

The latest entry into the aides' list is former student leader, Rajendra Rai.

Inducted as a senior expert, he has not got an office room yet. He was with Madhav Kumar Nepal during the internal tussle with K.P.Oli. He actively lobbied for making Nepal the chairman in the recently concluded party convention in Butwal.

However he failed to get himself elected as a convention delegate in the face of a campaign by pro-Jhahnath Khanal youth leaders like Yogesh Bhattarai.

He now acts as a bridge between the PM and the number of delegations that come up with different demands and grievances.

He also has the responsibility of liaising with top security officials.

Says he, "It is my duty to see to it that the prime minister does not keep a distance from the common people. I also make it sure that the people's grievances are directly heard by the Prime Minister."

He is little known but Nitish Poudel has a big role as a close aide of the PM.

He has been a personal secretary at the PM's private Koteshwor residence for many years.

He is mainly in charge of the family appointments of the prime minister. Naturally, he has a close access to him.

The Prime minister can appoint up to 46 persons as his advisors, experts and staff but so far appointed only one cabinet-ranked political advisor, Raghu Pant.

He roped in Yadav Sharma as special class-ranked private secretary, but the state minister-ranked principal private secretary remains vacant.

According to press advisor Rijal, "Madhav Nepal wants to keep all options open. That's why the principal private secretary has not been filled yet."

No Coordination

All the advisors and secretaries are supposed to give advice to the PM whenever he wants and needs it but the five key aides that he has appointed do not coordinate among themselves.

They do not hesitate in admitting this. They are not clear who should have easy and better access to the PM.

The newly appointed aide, Rajendra Rai, once jokingly wondered with another aide, Rajan Bhattarai, if they have any specific place to meet the PM and give advice to him. "If they bump into the PM on the stairs of the Singh Durbar, should they offer advice right there?"

All aides agree that principal political advisor Raghu Pant is the focal point. Being a politburo member, he can lead all the PM's aides.

But, one aide asked, "If we are to consult with him, we will be left wondering if we are advisors of the PM or Pant?"



JN Khanal : Lone voice

Being new to the office has also confused the aides. Says Bhattarai, "I am still learning. I feel that I am not aware of what I am supposed to do. I don't think that much has been achieved over the past month."

Pant does not see a big problem. He says, "we decide on the advice to the PM after consultations among ourselves. It's not a big issue."

Having served as a political advisor to the then-prime minister Man Mohan Adhikari, the present party general secretary Iswor Pokharel says that the



Pokharel (Left) and Oli : Inner strategists

advisors should always be asking themselves whether they are in a position to offer advice to the PM.

They must maintain the dignity of the office.

Party Leaders

The PM banks on a number of leaders from own party while making key decisions. But ironically the party chairman Jhalnath Khanal is not among them.

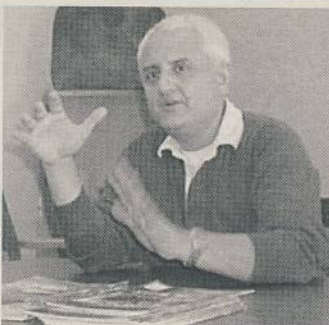
Except on a couple of occasions to take part in formal meetings, Khanal has not even gone to see Nepal at the latter's Baluwatar residence to give advice or suggestion.

Nepal has occasionally called Khanal up for consultations but this is very rare.

Reasoned Rijal, "being the Chairman of the party he might have felt uncomfortable visiting the Prime Minister."

But leaders considered close to chairman Khanal are also rarely seen at Singh Durbar or Baluwatar.

Another senior leader, K.P. Oli, was frequently seen at Baluwatar until recently. But not lately. Nepal who owes a lot to him for fulfilling his dream in becoming the Prime Minister. But, sources say, Oli appears a little upset now.



"Civil Society": Outside insiders

He is said to be not happy with Nepal for ignoring his advice to make Bidya Bhandari home minister and keeping pro-Jhalnath Khanal Surendra Pandey as finance minister.

He is also angry that Nepal nodded Khanal's division of responsibilities to the party leaders when he was out, in Delhi.

Press advisor Rijal says, it is not that the communication between Nepal and Oli has broken. But he admits that it is confined to phone. Direct meetings are rare.

The party General Secretary Iswor Pokharel who was seen as Khanal camp member in the recently concluded Butwal convention, is in constant touch with the prime minister.

The consultations between the two

are quite frequent and intense. Rijal attributes it to Pokharel being the general secretary and former advisor to the ex-prime minister Adhikary.

Pokharel admits that Nepal does regularly consult with him both over the phone and in direct meetings.

Other frequenters at Baluwatar are party secretary and former water resources minister Bishnu Poudel and senior leader Bharat Mohan Adhikary. Nepal banks heavily on Adhikary.

Ministers Shanker Pokharel and Bhim Rawal are other leaders the prime minister looks upon for advice.

The Outside Insiders

The prime minister is seriously considering to put together a group of professionals for necessary advice and suggestions. He wants to have regular interaction with professionals such as journalists, lawyers, doctors, business leaders, according to Rijal.

Already, one can see the likes of journalist Kanak Dixit, pro-UML rights activist Sushil Pyakuryal and lawyer Shambhu Thapa frequenting Baluwatar at the call of PM who is said to highly value their advice. ■



From Top of the Left Panta, Bhattarai, Rai, Rijal and Sharma: Yes Prime Minister

We Want To Restore Faith In The Government'

-Shanker Pokharel

I don't want to read into what their public statements say, what I want to see is good gestures.

Minister of Information and Communications, **SHANKER POKHAREL** is powerful second generation leader of the CPN-UML. Pokharel was appointed as a minister in the second expansion of the cabinet by Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal. While the country is passing through a serious crisis, the Maoists continue to block the parliamentary session and the law and order situation has further deteriorated. The spokesman of the government, Pokharel, spoke to **KESHAB POUDEL** and **SAROJ DAHAL** on challenges before the government at his office in Singha Durbar. Excerpts:

How does the government plan to meet the challenges?

We have two main priorities now. The first priority is to end the political deadlock with the Maoist and second priority is to maintain law and order and assure the people that there is a state to protect their interests. Maintaining law and order is the responsibility of all civil society members, political parties and common people as well.

When abductions, extortion and other crimes are rampant should not the security situation be the top priority of the government?

I am not saying that law and order is not our priority. What I mean is that there needs to be an end to the political deadlock with Maoist to accelerate the drive against criminal elements. Of course, impunity is growing and people have lost the faith in state, we want to restore that faith.

As the Maoists are in the opposition and have already made it clear that they intend to capture the street, parliament and state, how do you seek their support?

Had they intended to do so, they would not have started dialogue with the prime minister. I don't want to read into what their public statements say, what I want to see is good gestures. If the law and order situation breaks down and criminals are allowed a free reign, nobody will be safe. I don't think the Maoists will oppose any move of this government to restore the law and order situation.

But one has not seen any visible change so far, that your government has made a difference?

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal has already directed the concerned authorities to take the necessary actions to reduce the crime rate and punish those who are involved in such activities. You may be aware that even during the time when our party held the Home Ministry in the last government we were demanding strict actions against criminals. Since our party is leading the government now, we will definitely improve the law and order situation.

Nepalese have heard such verbal assurances in

the past but nothing has changed. If I were to believe you, how long would I have to wait?

You cannot bring the situation back to normal overnight. It will take time but I assure you that there will be a definite change in a certain period. The Home Minister is making all out efforts to bring back normalcy in the country. We cannot write a constitution without bringing normalcy to the country.

It is often reported that most of the persons involved in the criminal activities are in some way backed by political parties and the police are pressured to release such criminals.

After twelve year- long bloody insurgency, we are finally in the peace process. There is not unusual to see some cadres from certain political parties involved in violent crime. Generally, no political party will dare back criminals. Since our common minimum program also gives the highest priority to law and order, Maoists will too support us in this regard.

How can expect their support when all the top ranking Maoist leaders including Prachanda have been accusing Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal of being a puppet of external forces. ?

First of all, this is a very regrettable statement that undermines the sovereign will of people and the Constituent Assembly. Everyone knows that this government has the support of CA members of 22 political parties and that Nepal was elected unopposed following the resignation of Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda from the post of Prime Minister. The Maoists' statements have minimized their own position and the will of the people.

If that is the case, why few are criticizing the Maoists?

No sane people go with such statements of the Maoists. What I can say is that the Maoists have been exposing themselves by chanting such a cheap slogan.

How can you expect the Maoists to start a dialogue with 'a puppet'?

In political terms, there is no way other than to start negotiations to end the deadlock. This is the reason Maoist leader Prachanda and the Prime Minister met recently at Godavari. They are in close contact.

You are hopeful that political the deadlock will end soon?

If they continue to obstruct the session of the Legislature Parliament, it will invite another major political deadlock. If the situation gets out of hand, even the Maoists will lose. I am hopeful



that Maoist leaders will work to end any political deadlock.

How do you see the recent statements of your party leaders particularly President Jhalnath Khanal against this government?

I don't believe what has been reported in the media. So far as party president Jhalnath Khanal is concerned, he is the person who opposed the Maoist move against the Nepal Army and supported the process to get Nepal appointed as prime minister.

If there is no dispute, why are statements of your leaders reported in the newspapers?

I believe in the actions of our leaders not their statements reported here and there. I want to reiterate that the party president Khanal and all party leaders are solidly backing Prime Minister Nepal. After the intervention by the Maoists in the Nepal Army, there was a clear possibility of division in the army. At that crucial time party president Khanal himself requested president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav to stop the Maoist move.

If that is the case, why is your party president reportedly saying that some elements don't want to see the CPN-UML and Maoist coming together?

All of us know, Khanal initiated whole process to prevent the Maoist move and save the country from going to the brink. I don't see that our leaders would make any immature statements. If you look

at our party's formal position and party President's role, party has not changed its stand.

Will the prime minister resign if the situation goes out of his control?

That is a hypothetical question I would not want to answer. I am confident that Prime Minister Nepal will restore normal situation through persuasion and accommodation.

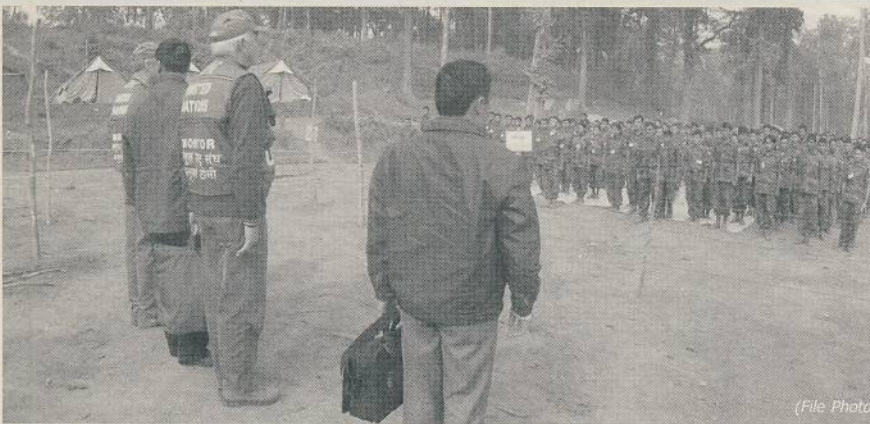
One month has already passed since the formation of the government, how do you see the performance of last one month?

This government was formed after CPN-Maoist had made efforts to derail the country. The foremost important job of this government was to overcome the major political setback for democracy. After the formation of this government, there is reason to be assured that there will be no reversal in the democratic system. With the decisions of the Maoist to try and undermine the Nepal Army the peace process was also under a threat. Maoist leadership's efforts to attack the sensitivity of Nepal Army threatened the peace process. In this sense, we have been able to rescue the peace process from going to the brink.

You just admitted that the cabinet is still incomplete. To add to the problem and the support given by political parties seems very shaky.

This is a complete government. Of course, we still want to accommodate all political parties. The Maoists too are gradually showing flexibility. ■

I am confident that Prime Minister Nepal will restore normal situation through persuasion and accommodation.



Maoist Combatants: Uncertain future

UNMIN

Extending Uncertainty

Despite the extension of tenure of UNMIN for another six months, the issue of integration and rehabilitation of ex-Maoist combatants remains as thorny as ever

By BHAGIRATH YOGI

The six month - extension of tenure of the United Mission to Nepal (UNMIN) by the Madhav Kumar Nepal-led government reflects the complexities Nepali polity is passing through at the moment.

This is the fourth time that UNMIN's tenure was extended since it was set up to facilitate Nepal's peace process in January 2007.

One of the mandates of the UNMIN is to monitor the management of arms and armed personnel of the Nepal Army and the Maoist army, which the UN agency is undertaking in line with the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed between the Nepal government and CPN (Maoist) in November 2006.

But it is the proposed integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants that is proving a hard nut to crack as crisis of confidence prevails among the major political actors in Nepal.

Nearly a year after the elections to the Constituent Assembly and nearly seven months after the formation of the Maoist-led coalition, an eight member Army Integration Special Committee (AISC) was constituted under the chairmanship of premier Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda.' A separate eight-member Army Integration Technical Committee (AITC) was also formed to assist the AISC in its job. But the AISC remains defunct after the sudden downfall of the Maoist-led coalition last month.

As Nepal's peace process reaches arguably one of the most critical junctures yet, international community—that was quite upbeat when the CPA was signed—has started pressurizing both the government and the Maoists to set aside their differences and find a common ground for the integration of the Maoist combatants.

While visiting Kathmandu in early June, the newly appointed US assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs, Robert Blake, warned that the international community did not have unlimited patience. He urged rival parties to work together to achieve peace in Nepal.

"In diplomatic speak, this is a veiled warning to Maoists as they seem to be buying time in the past," said Dipak Gajurel, a political analyst and assistant professor at the Tribhuvan University. "Now, the Maoists and the government need to put their cards on the table."

Soon after the visit of Indian Foreign Secretary, Shiva Shanker Menon to Kathmandu, Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal first put his cards on the table. He told Reuters news agency that only up to 5,000 former combatants who fulfilled criteria for enrollment in the national army could be absorbed in the Nepal Army and that the remainder must be given alternative jobs. "The future of Maoist fighters must be settled before the new constitution is written. The rehabilitation of combatants would be complete by the end of the year," he added.

What prompted premier Nepal to stick to the magic figure of 5,000—which is just one-fourth of nearly 20,000 Maoist combatants verified by the UNMIN—is not known but it comes close to assertion by Maoist supremo Prachanda—while addressing his combatants more than one and half years ago that the real strength of his party's fighters was around 7,000-8,000 only. After the controversial video was made public, the Maoist chairman tried to downplay it saying that he had said it in a different context.

Prime minister Nepal too has tried to downplay the remarks that he purportedly made in the Reuters interview. His office has denied the remarks attributed to the prime minister. The office said that the PM's remarks have been distorted and put out of context.

But the controversy has not died down. The Maoists leaders suspect that the fresh proposal by the premier has been put forth to divert their major demands like 'maintaining civilian supremacy over the army' and correction of President's move. "We are not ready to discuss the modalities of (army) integration unless our major demands are addressed," said Barsha Man Pun 'Anant,' a senior Maoist leader.

Whatever Maoist leaders may say, it is but obvious that they are under tremendous pressure to fulfill their promises as stated in various agreements and understandings that they had signed in recent past. Analysts, however, say precondition for any progress towards integration or rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants would be return to power for the former rebels. Whether they would agree to join the so-called 'national government' or insist that they head the new coalition remains to be seen.

But, changing geo-politics may not be helpful for the Maoists. The routing of LTTE in Sri Lanka and the Indian government's decision to ban Indian Maoists may have limited the options for Nepali Maoists. But as the single largest party in the 601-member Constituent Assembly and a nationwide network of militant cadres, they still hold the key to success or otherwise of the peace process. Dialogue and encouragement, rather than isolation, may help the process, say analysts.

But, many people believe that the present coalition is too fragile to push through a major agenda like army integration—that too within the next six months. Stakes may never have been so high for the Nepali political actors as well as for the international community.



Rice Planting : Little water

FOOD CRISIS

Hunger Strike

The erratic rainfall has hit the agriculture triggering fear of widespread food shortage

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Last week when Finance Secretary Rameshwore Khanal spoke before the press, he was unusually candid about the government's failure to address what he called as 'consequences of climate change.'

"For a long time, we had not paid attention to climate change. But sometimes our paddy production was hit and sometimes wheat production was hit. This year we assume our paddy production will decline (due to delayed monsoon)," he said.

"We have, therefore, decided to give high priority to addressing the consequences of climate change in this year's budget.

In fact, in the last one year alone, Nepal had witnessed extreme fluctuations in weather pattern.

The massive Kosi inundation in the east and flash flood in west had rendered thousands of people homeless while the prolonged drought in the winter severely hampered agriculture.

The effect of the delayed monsoon this year – which came some 15 days late than

normal – is yet to be ascertained.

Officials at the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives have not been able to come up with actual estimations of the effect of delayed monsoon.

They have, however, calculated the consequences of winter drought.

According to a joint assessment by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoAC), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN World Food Program (WFP), winter drought has led to a severe drop in crop production, placing more than two million people at high risk of food insecurity.

The 2008/2009 winter drought – said to be one of the worst in the country's history - has destroyed crops across Nepal, with wheat and barley production reduced by 14 and 17 percent respectively.

The assessment report states that crop yields in some districts in Mid- and Far-Western Nepal – which received less than 50 percent of average rainfall during the period from November 2008 to February 2009 - have dropped by more than half.

Severity of Impact

The assessment report has warned that 40 out of the 75 districts in the country are currently food deficit because of the drought.

Its effect on the nutrition situation is harsher. "Half of children under the age of five in these districts are stunted, while 39 percent of children are underweight and 13 percent are severely malnourished," the report says.

As a consequence of the fall in crop production, the number of people the WFP is assisting in the country has increased from 1.5 million to 2.2 million in the recent times.

WFP has said it will provide food assistance for an additional 700,000 persons while helping drought-affected communities build assets through a variety of Food for Work and Food for Training projects. Likewise, FAO plans to work with local communities to expand irrigation networks while distributing seeds for the next harvest.

"We are extremely concerned with the present food supply situation," said Bui Thi Lan, FAO Country Representative.

"We urge more efforts from the Government of Nepal and the international community to provide immediate support for the next season crop to farmers in Far and Mid –Western regions where 75 percent of the cultivated land is un-irrigated," Lan said, adding that timely support in terms of agricultural inputs, especially seeds, fertilizers and repair of small irrigation schemes will help needed farmers in these areas get a better harvest for their own food security.

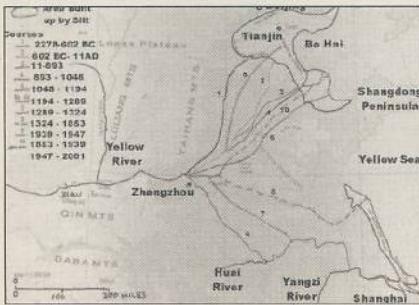
The WFP officials have said that the humanitarian disaster emanating from food insecurity is already unfolding in the country. "We are already noticing that people have started to sell their assets, migrate for work and in some cases skip meals," said Richard Ragan, WFP Representative in Nepal.

"This is very worrying. We are also concerned about the impact that road blockades and increased food and fuel prices are having on mountain and hill markets. The supply of food stocks in local markets is insufficient and in some cases depleted," he said, adding that farmers – who make up more than 60 percent of Nepal's population – depend upon the country's winter crop production to tide them over until the main crop is harvested in September/October.

The farmers have no alternative to hoping for good rainfall because only ten percent of the fields in the country enjoy irrigation facility. ■

WORLD CLOSE TO DEADLIEST CATASTROPHE TRIGGERED BY KOSI EMBANKMENT BREACH

-Dr. A.B. Thapa



Shifting Courses of the Yellow River

The Yellow River of China known as “the Sorrow of China” resembles to a considerable extent the Kosi River similarly known as “the Sorrow of Bihar”. The killer Yellow River has already been tamed after the completion of the construction of several storage dams and it has completely relinquished its aggressive character, whereas the greatly feared Kosi River held back by side embankments and now flowing well above the adjoining surrounding lands remains a great danger to life and property of millions of our region. Judging from the angle of similarity between these two rivers the way they roamed rampaging their vast floodplain quite often completely changing their course, it appears, the world might be very close to the deadliest catastrophe triggered by the failure of the Kosi embankments.

World's Worst Natural Disasters

Among the world's top five worst natural disasters are the 1931 Yellow River flood in China, the 1887 Yellow River flood, the 1938 Yellow River flood, the Bhola Cyclone of 1970 in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and the 1556 Shaanxi earthquake in China. The next five in order of severity are the 1839 Cyclone in Coringa India, the 1642 Kaifeng flood in Henan province China, the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami in various nations, and the 1138 Aleppo Earthquake in Syria.

The 1931 Yellow River flood devastated the China in summer. It took the lives of people numbering between one to four millions. It is the worst natural disaster ever to have been recorded of any time. The 1887 Yellow River flood resulted from a long period of rains which caused the river water to rise above the man made dikes. When that happened, it resulted in the worst natural disaster ever recorded prior to the 1931 flood. It is believed that between 900,000-2,000,000 people had lost their lives in that horrible disaster. The 1938 Yellow River flood disaster claimed the lives of people numbering between 500,000 and 900,000.

A Hanging River

The Kosi embankment had been designed for a maximum flood discharge of 9.5 lakh cusecs. The annual rate of the sedimentation upstream barrage based on observations as of the early 1980s is about 5 cm per annum. It implies that within the last 50 years after the commissioning of the barrage a layer of 2.5 meters thick sediments might have already deposited on the river bed. Now the Kosi also, as said about the Yellow River, truly looks like a hanging river. At present the capacity of the barrage to discharge safely the maximum flood could be only about 5 lakh cusecs, which is further decreasing year by year due to continued bed level rise. It is pretty obvious that in future the breaching of the Kosi embankments even during minor floods would be a regular phenomenon.

Monstrous Kosi

Very recently the Kosi burst the eastern embankment unleashing a reign of terror and shifted its course headed to south when the flood discharge was only about one lakh and eighty thousand cusecs. This flood discharge is quite insignificant compared to the flood discharge of around nine lakh cusecs, which had already been recorded twice within the last fifty years. In spite of it the Bihar and Nepal suffered very heavy losses. The whole world was badly shaken by the news of this disaster.

It is frightening even to think of the horrors if the Kosi would suddenly burst the embankment at a time when the flood discharge is close to nine lakh cusecs. Needless to say that there would be a total devastation of the whole north-east Bihar. The flooding could have disastrous consequences for regions far beyond Bihar. The railways and roadways linking India's north-east states with the rest of the country could be severed. Even the distant West Bengal and Bangladesh lying on the old course of the Kosi might not be completely out of the Kosi flood danger.

There is little doubt that the last year's flood disaster is only the precursor of the deadliest catastrophe to be triggered off by the Kosi embankment failure in very near future. Many renowned top scholars, like Schilling Feld, had been forecasting since a long time the extreme severity of the fast approaching Kosi flood disaster.

The Present Day Yellow River

Since 1949 some eight dams have been built and four more are under construction along its 4,674-kilometre course to control the Yellow River flooding. Among the dams built a long time ago are the dams Liujaxia, Sanmenxia, Longyangxia which were constructed in the years 1968, 1979 and 1988 respectively.

Now the Yellow River flood problems have been completely solved. Xlong Lel writes in *CHINA DAILY* dated October 16, 1998 that keeping the Yellow River at bay has saved China US \$ 50 billion.

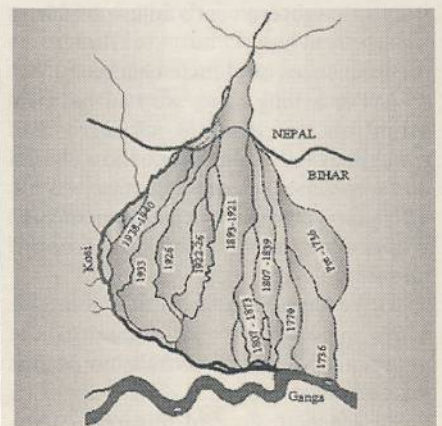
Taming the Kosi

It would be a big mistake to opt to implement at the very beginning the mammoth Kosi dam project to resolve the rapidly worsening flood situation. It will take a very long time to complete the detailed study and construction of the optimum sized Kosi dam project, that might have a dam perhaps the highest in the world and a hydropower plant capable to generate about 16,000 MW in accordance with further studies based on more correct recent data and well tested evaluation procedures recently applied in the Karnali project study.

Fortunately for us, there is a quick and easy solution. The implementation of relatively small Sun-Kosi Project and Tamar-I Project would suffice to resolve the Kosi flood problems at least for a period of next 50 to 60 years.

Bihar Deeply Concerned

People of Bihar are often heard complaining that the Government of India is not doing enough to develop their state. Voicing the concern of the Bihar people Mr. Nikhilesh Jha, Joint Secretary CSIR has alleged in one of his published articles that the Bihar state was getting raw deal from the central government in allocation of resources. As a result Bihar being among the top three states of the country in terms of per capita income and administration in



Shifting Courses of the Kosi River

the early '50s has now languished at the bottom of ladder for decades.

It is certain that the Government of India would not leave the Bihar people in lurch in their efforts to protect themselves against the Kosi flood disasters. The projects earmarked to save the life and property of millions of Bihar people would be a top priority. ■

Book

On Personal Diary

Former Indian bureaucrats and politician, K. Natwar Singh's book discusses his own experiences working at India's foreign office in different position

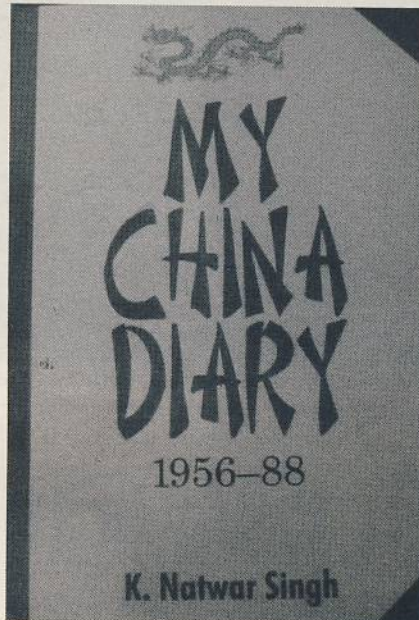
By KESHAB POUDEL

Once an Indian civil servant, security personel or such person retires, what they first do is to write a book on their own experiences enriching nation's literature as well as polls of materials relate to state affairs.

Despite close border and several other links, it is very unfortunate to say that this practice is very rare in Nepal. Only a few former bureaucrats or politicians have shown courage to write the book on their past experiences.

Singh's book highlighted many things about India's foreing office and his appointments at various mission abroad. There are also passing refrences about Nepal's political development. For instances, when Singh was stationed in China in 1950s, Nepalese prime minister Tanka Prasad Acharya was visiting China. In his diary on 1956, 26 September, he mentioned the visit of Nepalese prime minister Acharya.

The worst is yet to be. Drove to the airport to receive the Nepali pirme minister Tanka Prasad Ahcarya. The Chinese gave him a welcome, which I would call, an organized spontaneous one. The right number of girls, the right number to give bouquets to the right people. Diplomats were allowed on the tarmac, no confusion about photographers, no noise, band played lively music, goose step by the gaurd of honour. Chou En-lai handsome chariming and fresh as ever. The Nepali national dress is a sartorial monstrosity, Even the smartest of them looks as if he is either got out of bed or is just about to do so. Some even resemble coat hangers.



**My China Diary
1956-88**

K. Natwar Singh

Price:

Rs.632

Published by Rupa.

**Co 7/16 Ansari Road,
Daryaganj**

Distributor in Kathmandu:

**Mandala Book Point,
Kantipath
New Delhi, 110002**

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOOK

28 Septmebr

Banquet in the evening for the Nepali prime minister – a total fiasco. The Nepali PM gave the impression of

being in a state of continuous confusion. The guests went away most distrustled, 1988

26 December

Meeting on Nepal in the PM's room. He and I opted for tough line with the king. Heat to be put on, his not so Majestic Majesty, I asked if I could be execused attending the noon meeting. Rajiv Gandhi said I should be present. What a grind. -page 138.

Former Indian minister and diplomat, Singh spent a lot of time in various mission but his specialization is in China where he started his carrier when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as a prime minister.

My China Diary 1956-88 recounts the events which occurred when the author served as a diplomat in Beijing, and what transpired during Premier Chou En-lai's ill-fated visit to Indian in April 1960. The book concludes with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's path-breaking passage to China. It offers new insights about the complexities of India-China bilateral relations between 1956 and 1988.

"This book is divided into thee sections. The first covers the years 1956-58. The second deals with Prime Minister Chou En-lai's visit to India in April 1960. The third describes Rajiv Gandhi's path-breaking passage to China in December 1988. He succeeded where his grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru faltered and failed," writes Singh in his preface.

The book describes various phases of India-China relations and the many ups and downs which occurred during the period. As an eye-witness of the events, former renowned diplomat Singh writes what he encountered during his various tenures.

He joined the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 1953 and Singh entered politics after his retirement and he became External Affairs Minister (2004-05). He has written many books in the past, and this book has its own interesting stories. ■



Releasing book by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sujata Koirala: Inclusion matter

Seminar On Social Inclusion Policies in South Asian States

A three day seminar on social inclusion and South Asian States' policies highlights various aspects of the process of social inclusion in South Asian countries

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when there is growing demands for social inclusion in Nepal due to the process of writing a new Constitution for the country through the Constituent Assembly, the nation's scholars got together for the opportunity to share views with various experts from elsewhere in the region.

Organized by the Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) in collaboration with the Center for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS) and Tribhuvan University, the participants discussed social exclusion. Discussion of South Asia predates the 1970s discourse of Europe which conceptualizes social exclusion.

The social exclusion discourse of South Asia is a result of stratification. Stratification based on caste, ethnicity and racism has prevailed, in one form or other, in the region for centuries. This unique discourse of South Asia was the main course of debate during the South Asian regional seminar on "Social Inclusion Policies of the State."

According to experts, the social exclusion concept that originated in France in mid 1970's, existed in the South Asian societies before the discourse in Europe and is quite distinct from that seen in many other societies. South Asia evolved as the result of stratification based on caste, ethnicity and racism that the region for centuries

and developed the social and cultural systems that excluded the certain communities from common facilities or benefits.

South Asian societies comprise innumerable caste, ethnic, racial and cultural groups that are diverse and were (and are) mixed up through local hierarchy networks, structural state processes and the hegemony of superior social groups. Since the ancient past, the communities were arranged and structured normatively and uniformly in an unequal system of graded exclusion which again was supported by the political, economical and knowledge-based domination of a few communities.

The hierarchical structures based on a religion/class give the economic and cultural rewards only to elite communities and groups in South Asia. Social scientists also opine the social exclusion as a political agenda. Specifically, South Asia accounts for many political movements against the social exclusionary practices, the latest of them the 10 year armed struggle of Nepal. Exclusion was a major part of the political and tactical agenda of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

which launched an armed insurgency in Nepal in 1996 and continued it for 10 years. It culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Accord in November 2006, following which a new Interim Constitution was enacted.

From 25-27 June, the three day seminar was as in part to honor the auspicious occasion of Golden Jubilee celebration of Tribhuvan University. The seminar aimed to provide the platform for South Asian social scientists to exchange their experiences and to initiate a discourse on social inclusion and state policies of the SAARC states.

The three days seminar was full of exchanges of views and experiences on social inclusion issues among the participants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, the USA and the immense pool of social scientists from Nepal.

Inaugurated by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sujata Koirala, it also launched the book titled "Identity and Society" published jointly by SIRD and Mandala Book Point. In her inaugural statement, she opined that the topic of the seminar is highly relevant for Nepal in the present context of constitution building and the peace process. She thanked the international communities for their support and cooperation in the peace process and developing democracy in Nepal.

Likewise, other guest of the program Minister of Local Development, Purna Kumar Serma – praised the effortful work of SIRD and CNAS, gave his warm regards and wished for the success of program.

Mohan Das Manadhar, Senior Adviser of SIRD highlighted the objectives of the program, activities of SIRD and brief synopsis of the inaugurated book. Madhav Prasad Sharma, Vice Chancellor of TU thanked the SIRD and CNAS for organizing the seminar on such a highly relevant theme on the occasion of golden Jubilee of TU.

Han Heijdra, Director of SNV Nepal, explained the social inclusion discourse of Nepal and assured further support to Nepal in order to reduce exclusion particularly in the current



South Asian Scholars : Discussing on inclusion

phase of Nepal's constitution building. The chairman of the National Inclusion Commission Narsingh Chaudhary considered the program a good lesson to the commission for its future course of action.

Highlighting on the activities of CNAS, executive director of CNAS, Yagya Prasad Adhikari said that this program was highly relevant in the current constitution building phase of the country. Nirmal Man Tuladhar, coordinator of the program gave a welcome speech and Mrigendra Bahadur Karki expressed his thanks.

Delivering a key note speech, Professor T. K. Oommen of Jawaharlal Nehru University argued that the discourse of exclusion and inclusion is gradually evolving in South Asia. The conceptualization of social exclusion has three major problems, namely: i) conceptual expansionism and exclusivism; ii) qualitative attributes on social exclusion; and iii) inequality in opportunity due to incompetence and lack of motivation. Professor Oommen stressed that inclusion is not a single package that can deal with all the excluded social categories and communities as some have single deprivations and other have many. "So the phenomenon of cumulative exclusion should be recognized. In a multi ethnic, multi caste and multi social country like Nepal," he added. "The socially inclusive constitution is the corner stone for the country's success."

Four Nepali scholars presented four

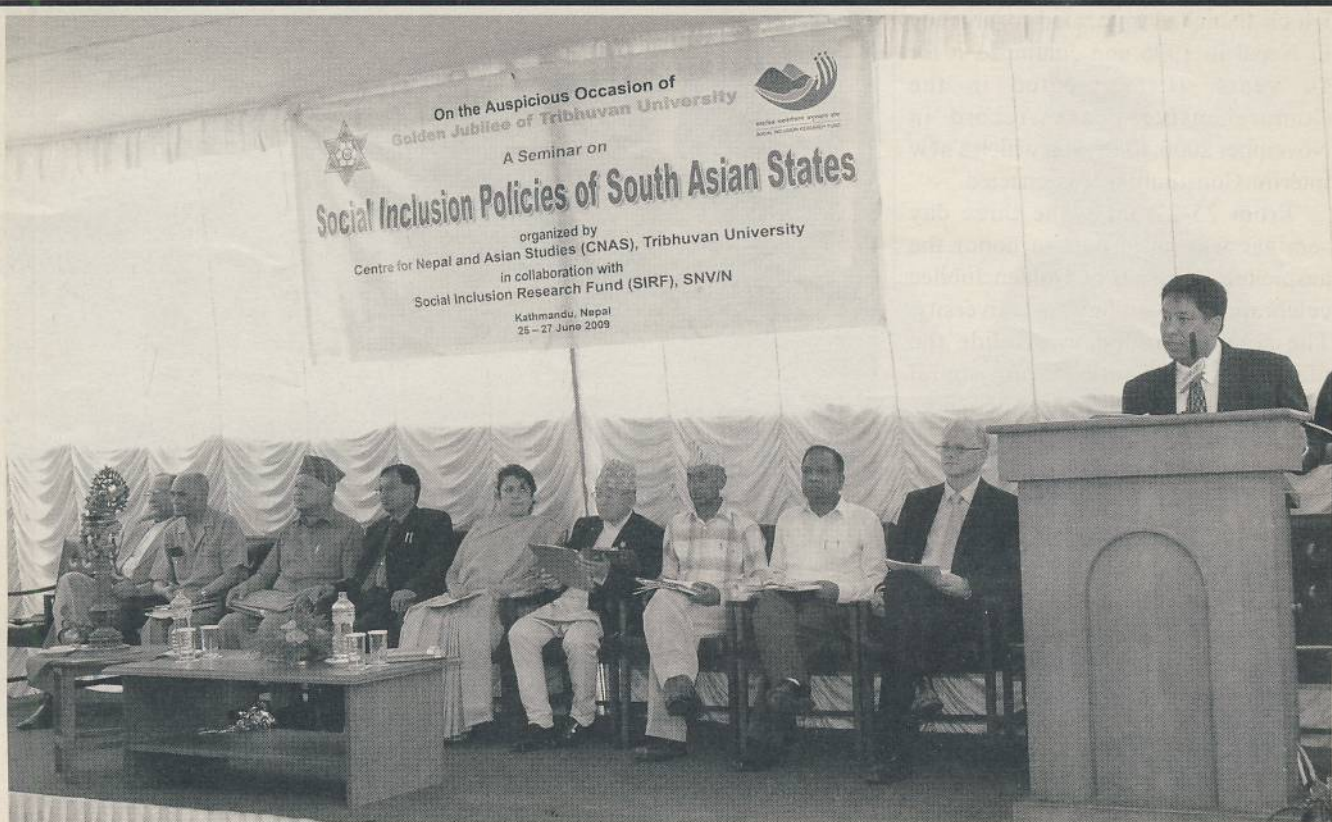
papers on Nepal during the seminar. The paper titled "Contemporary Nepalese Politics" by Krishna Hachhethu of CNAS deals on the political parties of Nepal and identified the paradoxical convocation of two major political parties, namely Nepali Congress and Nepal Communist Party (United Marxist Liniest).

Bijaya Subba, leader of Nepal Communist Party (United Marxist Leninist) commented on the paper saying it is an explanatory insight of Nepal's contemporary politics. Other senior leader of CPN-UML Sahana Pradhan, who chaired the session, talked on the political movement since Rana regime.

Ramesh Kumar Dhungel's paper titled "Revisiting the History of the Formation of the Nepali Society in the Context of New Nepali Discourse of Inclusive Democracy" discussed Nepali history since the process of unification of Nepal.

Dhungel remarked that the historical events of Nepal were inclusive in nature. Pratyoush Onta of Martin Chautari commented on the paper's limited insight on the Panchayat and Rana regime. Prof Tri Ratna Manandhar of TU who had chaired the session suggested a revision of the paper in consistence to social inclusion/exclusion theme.

A paper was presented by Govinda Tumbahang of TU titled "Marginalization of Indigenous Languages and their Inclusion in the



Inauguration Ceremony : Diverse views

Restructuring of the State”, the paper accounted the details of marginalized indigenous language and their inclusion in the current state restructuring process.

Commenting on paper, Chaitanya Subba, former member of National Planning Commission Nepal, said that the paper has informative accounts of various indigenous languages but it is lacking in analysis of the language policy of the government. Prof. Dr. Novel Kishor Rai of CNAS urged parliamentary debate on the inclusion of indigenous language.

Presenting the fourth paper of Nepal titled “Reserved Seats for Women in Politics: Right Way for Inclusion,” Prabha Devi Kaini argued that the reservation policy for women in Nepal should be complemented by capacity building measures for women to increase fruitful inclusion. Renowned anthropologist, Hikmat Bishta stressed the need to restructure the paper to be consistent with the title. Former member of the National Planning Commission, Prof Dr. Pushpa Shrestha highlighted the limited participation of women in Nepal.

P K Chaubey, the participant from India, presented a paper on Social Inclusion through the Exclusive Provision of India. He highlighted the macro social inclusion policies of India and there implications. Specifically, in his paper, he explained unemployment growth to job-loss growth; in formalization with low productivity; restructuring the economy, redistribution of work and liberal education. As a commentator, professor Krishna Khanal of TU said that the paper is an analytical work. “The paper’s findings will be useful to Nepal in the current state restructuring process,” said Khanal.

Keshab Man Shakya, leader of Newa Rastriya Party – Nepa, praised the paper for raising the social inclusion issues at vertical as well as horizontal domain.

Nazima Praveen, another participant of India, presented paper titled “Understanding Exclusion(S): A Study of a “Muslim Ghetto” in which she highlighted the micro level study of Ghettos in Chadani Chock parliamentary constituency of Delhi.

In her paper, she remarked for

relocating the Sachar Commission (high level commission formed by Prime minister of India) report’s finding. The two commentators of the paper – P K Chaubay and TK Oommen argued that the paper had tried to generalize the findings of the study conducted in a small area to all of India. Shree Krishna Yadav suggested that there is a need to incorporate the comments expressed by various speakers.

Along with India, Afghanistan too has similar kinds of situation. Zuhra Bahman, the participant from Afghanistan, presented a paper on the impact of Afghan governmental policy on the inclusion of women. The paper accounted the changes in government’s prospects toward women in pre and post Taliban era. The paper highlighted that the liberal policy of post Taliban Karzai government had limited impact on women’s inclusion because of the prevalent exclusionary practices and customs in Afghanistan.

Chaired by National Inclusion Commission Nepal, Narshingh Chaudhari, professor Dilli Ram Dahal of TU said that the paper was

informative.

Pakistan's case of social inclusion is different than other countries of the region. Ayaz Muhammad Rana and Miah Ghulam Yasin, participant from Pakistan – presented the paper titled “Social Exclusion Causes, Therapies and Suggestions: Experiences of Pakistan” in which they highlighted the exclusionary practices in local government in Pakistan.

Commenting on paper, Ferdous Jahan argued that the paper has not touched on the overall experience of Pakistan and exclusion. Sagar Sumsher Junga Bahadur Rana said that there need to work more to make the paper analytical.

Along with South Asian scholar, Henry M Vyner, the participant of USA, also presented paper on “Healthy Identity and Healthy Identity Politics.” He highlighted that the ego of person in favor of his caste, ethnicity and race is the main cause of social exclusion practices.

Commenting on paper, Saubhagya Shah of TU said that the paper tries to address the unique feature of exclusion. From the chair, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation Sharat Singh Bhandari opined that Vyner's paper has analyzed psychological approach to social inclusion/ exclusion discourse.

Although there is no participation from Japan, a paper titled “Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Japan: Policy Challenge for a More Inclusive Civil Society” is distributed. Written jointly by three Japanese scholars – Kiyoshi Abe, Akria Furukawa and Kenji Kosaka, the paper stated the social inclusion case in Japan.

The seminar was divided in various sessions. After the presentation of papers, there was a session for panel discussion. Chaired by T K Oommen, other panel members included Ferdous Jahan from Bangladesh, Anjoo Saran Upadhaya from India, Miah Ghulam Yasin from Pakistan and Chitralkha Yadav and Mohan Das Manandhar from Nepal.

The chair concluded that that the seminar had papers from a wide range of categories capturing macro as well as micro perspectives of social exclusion. On behalf of organizer, Mr.



Scholars in debate : South Asian Case

Manandhar made comments on all the presented papers.

Ms. Jhahan held the view that identities occupy an uneasy place in political structure and some of the South Asian states have suppressed the cultural identities of minorities. He added that some states have incorporated reservation policies for the suppressed communities which have enhanced the participation of these communities in politics.

However, scholars from India Ms Upadhaya stated that the seminar had focused on a confined theme. She added that the social inclusion and exclusion discourse should address the individuals, as well as group's rights. She expressed the hope that the identity of Nepal has a positive future due to the forthcoming constitution which is presently in the process of being drafted. “The experiences of India will be a valuable input for Nepal,” said Upadhaya.

Summing up the seminar paper, Yasin argued that all South Asian countries face conflict with suppressed communities, which sometimes may take a violence form. “Nepal and Pakistan are two South Asian States which are presently in the course of a political transition as Nepal is in the course of building a new constitution and Pakistan is in course of institutionalizing its democracy,” said Yasin. “So the social inclusion discourse which had been identified by the seminar will be insightful contribution

to both countries.

Former deputy speaker of parliament, Chitralkha Yadav thanked the organizer for the seminar and stressed for the proper implementation of seminar findings by working together for inclusive Nepal.

Summing up the seminar, the panels drew the conclusion that social exclusion in South Asia is condoned and supported by the exclusionary state ideologies and stratification based on caste, ethnicity and racism. Domestic discovery, everyday resistance and global contention against social exclusion place an immense pressure on the South Asian countries to review their policies to address social exclusion issues.

“This context is more relevant for the country like Nepal with its historical and geopolitical location and as a country which is in the process of making a new constitution through an elected constitutional assembly,” said the panel.

The seminar gave a good platform for South Asian as well as international social scientists and intellectuals to debate on the prevailing socially exclusionary practices of South Asia. At a time when all the countries of South Asia are in the process of restructuring, the panel expressed the hope that South Asian countries will incorporate the seminar's findings to craft inclusive state policies. For Nepal, the workshop can be very helpful in its constitution writing process ■

“If local autonomy is a goal, you need to attain it step by Step”

-Professor REI SHIRATORI

Japanese Professor REI SHIRATORI, who is president of the Institute for Political Studies in Japan, is well known Japanese political scientist. As Nepal is in a constitution making process, the Japanese professor discussed the constitution drafting progress with CA's chairman Subhas Chandra Nembang, CA members and others such as constitutional experts like Dr. Surya Dhungel, lawyers and civil society members at the office of Consortium of Constitutional Experts (CONCOE). Before leaving Nepal, professor Rio spoke to KESHAB POUDEL at Hotel Himalaya. Excerpts of half an hour meeting:

How do you see the viability of federal system in the country like Nepal?

For a small country like Nepal with a poor economy, it is very difficult to prove its viability. In Japan, we have been practicing local self government very effectively. Whether one likes it or not, the federalism includes the concept of some kinds of disintegration.

How do you see the local autonomy?

Local autonomy is important aspect of power devolution. It is impossible to achieve one hundred percent local autonomy or a one hundred percent federal state. If you pursue complete federalism with right to self determination, your country will split into many countries and then you cannot remain as an independent entity. If local autonomy is a goal, you need to attain it step by step.

What is the system of governance in Japan?

We have parliamentary system at national level and presidential system in prefecture level, city, and town and village levels.

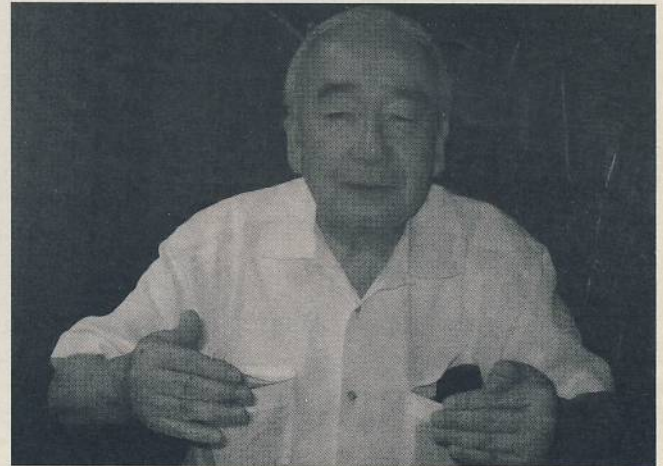
At a time when Nepalese politicians and civil society members have been saying federalism is panacea to all the problems, how do you see the concept of devolution of power?

The general trend of devolution of power is different in different countries. There is a growing demand to have more devolution of power in developing countries like Nepal due to them being multi-linguistic, multi-cultural, multi ethnic and multi-religious. But devolution of power may create problems if mishandled. In order to protect the minority interest and identities, there should be two chambers- one open to minorities. Minorities and different ethnic groups want a federalist structure.

How do you define federalist elements?

When I say federalist elements, it does not necessarily mean the complete federalism. Federalism means division of the country into states or provinces and each state or province has some kind of independence from the central government. In Nepal along with establishing political power structures, one of the most serious problems is how to achieve economic development. In order to accelerate and push forward economic development, there needs to be one integrated economic plan. In many states, these kinds of federalist elements are not one hundred percent federalist. It is more of a separation of powers between local, state or provincial government.

Why have so many countries have been pursuing federal structures?



In developed countries, we see the phenomenon of devolution in different ways as they have very different situations to developing countries. In developed countries, almost all of their fundamental policies involve the welfare state. When we consider the nature of welfare state, we are dealing with human beings.

What are most important characteristics of Japanese constitution?

One of the characteristics of Japanese constitution, which was not in the constitution drafted by Japanese intellectuals, is that there is separate chapter for local self government. Japan is a small country which was established on the concept of centralized power, but gradually it accepted the need to have decentralized elements and some autonomy at local level. Japan has a long tradition of a centralized and integrated political system.

Do you have separate chapter for local government in the constitution?

Yes, we have a separate chapter for local self government. In this chapter, it states that the role of local government is in regulation concerning the organization and operation of local entities in principle of local autonomy. All local administration is in accordance with the law decided by the Diet (Lower House), the national parliament. We have tried to keep the principle of local autonomy and the integrity of the nation.

How do you see the role of prime minister and head of local bodies?

As the Prime Minister is elected by the members of parliament, he cannot ignore members of the assembly. The prime minister always has to consider the voice of the majority in parliament. However, the local government mayor sometime neglects the local assembly members. They are strong and the local assembly can impeach the mayor. Japan has parliamentary or Westminster systems at national level and presidential system at local level. ■

“CA will finalize the constitution by May 2010”

-Manohar Prasad Bhattarai

Having served for more than 30 years in the parliament, **MANOHAR PRASAD BHATTARAI** is now heading the Parliamentary Secretariat as an acting Secretary General of the Constituent Assembly and Legislature Parliament. Since the country is in the process of constitution making, Bhattarai is shouldered with a huge responsibility. Secretary General Bhattarai spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** at his office about his responsibilities. Excerpts:

As Secretary General of the Constituent Assembly, how do you see the progress of the constitution making process?

The constitution making process is moving as per the schedules fixed by Constituent Assembly. In accordance with the schedule, the committees are now in the process of finalization of concept papers and four of the committees have already presented their concept paper in the CA.

The schedule of Constituent Assembly has amended several times in the last few months. How can you assure people that the schedule will not be amended again?

Frankly speaking, the schedule has already been changed six times. The Legislative role of the Constituent Assembly hampered the constitution writing process. Since the legislative function of CA has been obstructed several times in the past, it has disrupted the functions of the Constituent Assembly. Given the present progress, CA will finalize the constitution by May 2010.

Don't you think amending the schedule has been a negative sign for Nepal's future?

If we promulgate the constitution in time, then no body will blame us. So far as the amendments of dates are concerned, they were done for internal adjustments to make the constitution making process smooth. Nobody needs to worry about these kinds of simple changes.

Is the CA secretariat responsible for such amendment?

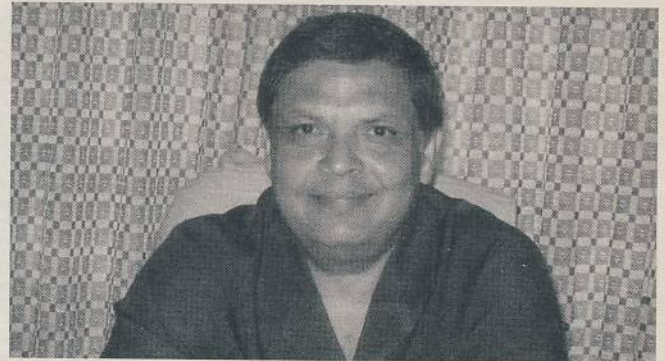
So far as the responsibility of the schedule is concerned, it is not a responsibility of the Secretariat but that of the political actors. The Secretariat does not influence the making of the schedule as that is a political decision.

How is the Secretariat supporting the Constitution writing process?

The Secretariat is providing all kinds of logistic support and expertise. For instances, in the **process** of constitution writing, we have distributed more than 4 million questionnaires for opinion collection. We received more than half a million filled questionnaires in return. Our staffs supported concerned committees to process and analyzed the questionnaires.

Since the session of Legislature Parliament has been frequently disrupted, don't you think this will hamper the constitution drafting process?

All of us need to keep one thing in mind, that if we fail to fulfill our historical responsibility to draft a new constitution on schedule, history will portray us as irresponsible citizens. If we want to fulfill our historical responsibility to write the constitution, nobody should do anything to disrupt the Constitution writing process. We must fulfill our obligation by writing the constitution on time. If we fail to do so, it will be a very unfortunate event in history and the country will be pushed into darkness. I am confident that the change of government



and the disturbance in the Legislature-Parliament will not obstruct the constitution writing process.

While Nepal is in the process of writing constitution, has there been support from the international community?

The support of the international community has been generous. Since Nepal is drafting the new constitution for itself, we should have sense of ownership over the document. So far as the support and cooperation of international communities in this process is concerned, they are offering us logistic and technical support as required. Donor communities also want to see a settlement. This has been an issue for 60 years, writing a constitution by Nepalese themselves.

Do donors have put conditions for their support?

Although they have been providing all kinds of support, they haven't interfered in our affairs. As all of us know that Nepal is a country with constraints in resources, Nepal's government alone is unable to provide necessary services. Donor communities are now filling the gap. Their support is making us more efficient. Although there are some negative views regarding their support, I don't think we should be negative and biased towards the kind of generous help given by the international communities.

As a General Secretary of the Constituent Assembly, how difficult is it to achieve effective coordination among your staff and CA members?

We have very strong, dedicated and self motivated team including experts and other employees. Our employees are very much enthusiastic and they have been working very hard. We are fortunate enough to work in an organization which is working to complete a historical task. We have also assigned our employees to support the Parliamentary Party Offices of the 24 political parties with much needed logistics.

How are your experiences in working for such a long period of time in the legislature and now the CA?

We are very fortunate, whether the CA or previously the parliament, because we have very wise and competent political leadership that has knowledge of constitution and constitutional law and is experienced in working in a parliamentary system. I have not faced any difficulty in working with them. I too have no difficulty working with my colleagues in the secretariat with whom I have worked for such a long period. Even I found complete support and backing when we moved the CA from Singha Durbar to the International Convention Center. I am very proud to say that, despite so many difficulties, the staffs working in the parliament secretariat handled it very efficiently. ■

Steady progress in the peace process is Important

- By Tatsuo MIZUNO

It is my great pleasure to sign and exchange a set of Notes with Mr. Khanal, Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, on the Project for Construction of Sindhuli Road Section III, amounting to four billion, three hundred and thirty-three million Japanese Yen (¥4,333,000,000) or approximately three billion, four hundred and eighty-three million, seven hundred and thirty-two thousand Nepalese Rupees (NRs.3,483,732,000).

The Grant being extended today is to be utilized to procure the products and services necessary for the construction of Sindhuli Road Section III, which stretches from Khurkot – Nepalthok for approximately 37km.

In consideration of the aspirations of the people of Nepal, the Government of Japan has been responding to Nepal's requests to achieve sustainable socio-economic development for poverty alleviation, which will ultimately facilitate peace building and human security in Nepal. In this regard, Japan has been extending grant assistance for the Sindhuli Road Project since 1996. This Road is about 160km in length, stretching from Bardibas to Dhulikhel, and is divided into four sections.

The Sindhuli Road is one of the most promising projects being implemented under Japan's ODA. It is one of the world's largest Grant Aid Projects being implemented under Japan's ODA, so far, in terms of aid volume.

For the construction of Section I, Section II, Section IV, emergency rehabilitation of Section IV and the detailed design of Section III, Japan has already extended a total sum of fifteen billion, eight hundred and sixty-nine million Japanese Yen (¥15,869,000,000) for this Project.

I am sure you know that Phase III of Section II was successfully completed on April 27, this year. I am very happy that I could attend the completion ceremony at Sindhuli Bazaar together with former Prime Minister, Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal. The highway was very beautiful and was in harmony with the fresh green of the mountains, and one can enjoy splendid panoramic views. It is a wonderful new sight-seeing spot.



On the other hand, there were a huge number of hardships and accidents. I was shocked to learn that one of the Japanese experts, Minoru MORISAWA, died on September 24, 2006 after falling from a steep slope in the course of construction work. I would like to share my sincere condolences for his demise with all of you here.

Once this Section III (Khurkot – Nepalthok) is completed, this Sindhuli Road will be ready to play the role of main corridor between the capital city Kathmandu and the Mahendra Highway (the East-West Highway) in the Terai via Kavrepalanchok, Ramechhap, Sindhuli and Maohttari Districts, reducing travelling distances significantly.

Incidentally, on the route between Bhaktapur and Kathmandu, road-widening construction work is now in progress, as another one of Japan's ODA projects. When all the road projects are completed in some years' time, we will be able to say that the road-route from Kathmandu to Bardibas via Bhaktapur and Dhulikhel shall be totally connected into one line, and thus, long awaited dreams of the local people will come true.

Now, let me reiterate my proposal on the naming. I heard the concept of Sindhuli does not cover the whole route up to Bardibas, and this Road symbolizes the friendship between two countries. Taking these points into consideration, I would like to propose a new naming, for example, 'Nepal-Japan Friendship Road'. But if you feel this name is too long, the next option is 'Sakura Road', Sakura means 'cherry-blossom' in Japanese and

representing the heart of the Japanese people. Or perhaps the road could be called the 'JaNep Road'.

The Sindhuli Road has already brought about great benefits to the local people in the field of public services such as health and education. For example, I heard that, in the past, even emergency patients were forced to be transported for several hours by car along bumpy and narrow mountain paths. But, now those emergency patients can be transported very rapidly to medical facilities, such as to the Dhulikhel Medical Institute (DMI), which is well known as a high class hospital. Just for your reference, its hostel building and some of the medical equipment at the DMI has been provided by Japan through its ODA funding.

Nepal is on the path to peace and prosperity. In order to accomplish the national development targets, steady progress in the peace process without violence is vitally important. I would like to salute the spirit of tolerance and harmony that brings the Nepalese people together and united regardless of their political and ethnic differences. Japan is determined to continue to provide all possible assistance as long as the Nepali peace process moves ahead in a democratic manner without threats and intimidation.

I believe the Sindhuli Road is a symbolic road that will lead to peace and prosperity for a new Nepal, and a road that will further connect the hearts of the people of Japan and Nepal.

Remarks by HE Mr. Tatsuo MIZUNO, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal on the Occasion of E/N Signing Ceremony of the Project for the Construction of the Sindhuli Road (Section III: Khurkot – Nepalthok Section).



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