

NEW SPOTLIGHT

July 16-31, 2009

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NEWSMAGAZINE



BUDGET 2009/2010

Futile Ritual

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NEPAL LAW SOCIETY: In Constitution Making

Primary Level Dropout: A Threat to Social Inclusion in Education

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अब... १* रु. १ मै बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्वेस्टमेन्ट बैंक बढी भन्दा बढी
नागरिकहरूमा बैंकिङ्ग सेवाको पहिलो अनुभव
एवं बानी बस्न सकोस भन्नाका लागि सजोरब
प्रस्तुत गर्दछ...

“आफ्नै बचत खाता”

सम्पूर्ण अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय स्तरको सेवा सुविधा सहित ।



जीवनका पहिला पलका लागि दैनिकी बचतको बानी
सुसंक्षिप्त अधिकारको बानी



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Editor and Publisher : Keshab Poudel, **Copy Editor:** Ben Peterson, **Correspondent:** Saroj Dahal, Pradipti Bhatta

Marketing Manager : Madan Raj Poudel, **Photographer :** Sandesh Manandhar

Cover Design/Layout : Hari Krishna Bastakoti

Editorial Office : Phone/Fax : 977-1-4602807, E-mail: newsspotlight@gmail.com, keshab42@gmail.com

Office : Kamal Pokhari, Thir Bom Marg, House No. 559/144 (Opposite to Himal Hospital), Tel: 98510 79535

Printers : Pioneer Offset Printers (P.) Ltd., Dillibazar, Kathmandu. Ph: 4415687

CDO Regd. No. 148/063/64

“If a prime minister elected with votes of 362 Constituent Assembly members is a puppet, then allow me to ask what to call a leader of a party with 236 votes.”

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, responding to the allegations made by Maoist leader Prachanda that he is a puppet leader, in the parliament.

“We decided to let the Parliament resume as we knew the designs of reactionaries to hijack the Loktantra under this pretext.”

Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda,’ giving reasons for breaking the parliament deadlock, addressing the House.

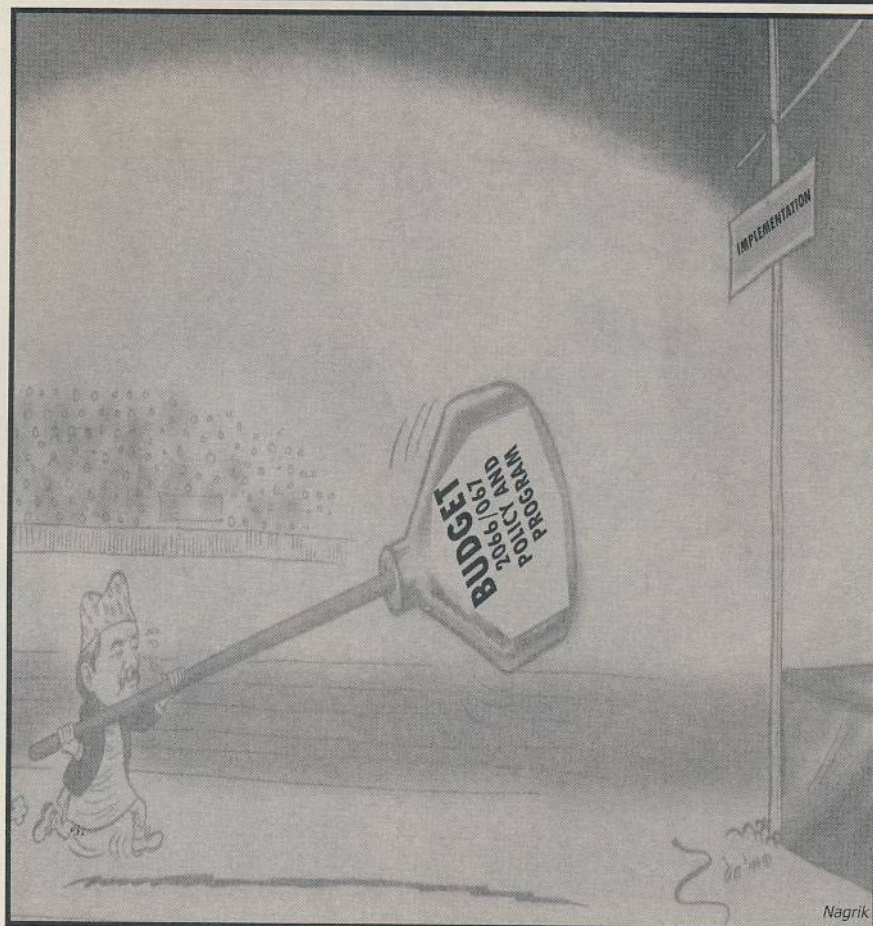
“The policies of the illegitimate government does not merit a comment.”

Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader, when asked to react to the government’s policies.

“Two-thirds of the armed groups active in Terai are criminal gangs.”

Shankar Pokharel, Minister for Information and Communication and government spokesperson, at a press meet.

“The peace process and



constitution making cannot proceed without taking the Maoists on board.”

Sushil Koirala, acting president of Nepali Congress (NC), urging the Maoists to join the government.

“Political protection to criminals has created difficulty in maintaining law and order in the country.”

Bhim Rawal, Home Minister,

speaking at the UML parliamentary party meeting.

“The government does need to come up with separate thought on how to deal with diarrhea in the coming years.”

Dr. Dirgha Singh Bam, Secretary at the Ministry of Health, conceding that the recurrent epidemic of diarrhea needs serious intervention.

TRANSITION

APPOINTED: Vijaya Chalise as the editor in chief of the state-owned national daily Gorkhapatar and Sambhu Shrestha its General Manager, by the government.

Kundan Aryal, as the General Manager of Nepal Television, Bal Krishna Chapagain, as the General

Manager of Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS), Amar Giri, as the chairman of Cine Development Board and Narayan Prasad Acharya, as the administrator of Nepal Guthi Sansthan, by the government

WROTE: Nepal Rastra Bank requested the Home Ministry to take action against Nepal Development Bank (NDB)’s patron Uttam Pun and

chairman Amar Gurung as well as other senior management members for embezzlement of public funds.

INCREASED: The number of persons in Nepal contracting Swine Flu (AHIN1) virus, to nine.

RETURNED: Pawan Kumar Bansal, Minister for Water Resources and Parliamentary Affairs, of India, after two-day visit to Nepal.



President Dr. Rambaran Yadav Addressing Legislature Parliament

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB) has decided to donate Rs 2 Billion for the rehabilitation of the Koshi victims of Sunsari district. Sunsari district Local Development Officer Guru Prasad Subedi informed that the bank will donate the sum of money for the rehabilitation of some 42,000 villagers of three VDC's in the district who were displaced and rendered homeless after floods in Koshi River breached the embankment and inundated several VDC's last year in August. He said that agreement has already reached between the Nepal government and the ADB regarding the support and added that the amount would soon be distributed to the victims. According to Subedi, education, highways, irrigation, agriculture and other sectors that had been affected by the floods would be benefited by the support. The Finance Ministry has distributed Rs 0.8 billion to the flood victims though the Nepal government had pledged to provide a support of Rs 1.65 billion.

NEPAL RASTRA BANK has requested the Home Ministry to take action against Nepal Development Bank (NDB)'s patron Uttam Pun and chairman Amar Gurung as well as other senior management members. They have been charged of misusing NDB assets worth Rs. 1.08 billion. Earlier, the Patan Appellate Court froze all assets belonging to Nepal Development Bank (NDB). The single bench of judge Devendra Gopal Shrestha issued an interim order prohibiting the bank to hand over, sell or put up its property as collateral. The Appellate Court also ordered the troubled bank to submit a written clarification within seven days why it should not be liquidated. The court gave the order in response to an application filed by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) seeking permission to liquidate the bank. The court has ordered the bank to produce itself before the court on July 8 and has also fixed the hearing for July 15. If the court gives the order to liquidate NDB, the company registrar office will appoint a liquidator. NRB

had on June 3 decided to liquidate Nepal's first private sector development bank after its long effort to revive the latter's deteriorating financial health failed. The central bank took this step on finding NDB's reply to its letter seeking clarification unsatisfactory. The central bank had declared NDB a problematic bank in October 2007. Its accumulated losses had reached Rs 678.6 million by the end of mid-March 2009.

THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED prohibitory orders on all kinds of demonstration in the country that is targeted against the Chinese rule in Tibet. Issuing a notice, the Home Ministry said activities against China's Tibet autonomous region is prohibited and asked all to refrain from engaging in any such activities. The government's move came on the eve of birth anniversary of Tibetan religious leader the Dalai Lama. Nepal has always stood in favor of 'One China policy', which recognizes Tibet as an integral part of China. ■



Former King's Birthday

Unlike previous years, there were no anti-Gyanendra demonstrations by Maoist youth force YCL nor from any other political parties but there were unprecedented calm at Nirmal Niwas when ex-King Gyanendra was celebrating his 64 birthday. A year after abdication, ex-King Gyanendra seems to be in relaxed mood taking boquet from well wishers. Just a few kilometers away from office of Nepal's first president, King Gyanendra's birthday celebration was given wide coverage by all main stream media. What has brought such change in the behavior of Nepalese media, intellectuals and political parties is itself a mystry.

The Carter Center Continues Support To Nepal's Peace Process

The Carter Center commends the significant progress that Nepal has made on the path to peace and stability during the last three years, but notes with concern that the breakdown in consensus politics following the 2008 Constituent Assembly elections, as well as the delay in implementing previous commitments, threatens to derail the progress made thus far.

"In the interest of Nepali citizens, I encourage all political actors to build on the historic achievements of the past few years and work together in good faith," said former U.S. President and Carter Center Co-Founder Jimmy Carter. "This is essential for Nepal to overcome the challenges that undermine progress toward a genuine and lasting peace and the drafting of a democratic and inclusive constitution."

YCL To Check Anti-China Activities

Amid reports of increased 'anti-China' activities in Mustang district of Nepal, the Unified CPN-Maoist's sister organization Young Communist

League (YCL) has organized a 'march past' from Manang to Mustang against such activities. The YCL held the program in 10 VDCs of Manang and 16 VDCs of Mustang. According to YCL-Mustang, the YCL cadres reached the villages and asked people to stop any such activity. According to Dipak Koirala, in charge of Tamuwan State Committee and a central member of YCL, the campaign is aimed at raising awareness among the people of Mustang. He said the campaign had to be launched since anti-China activities from Nepalese soil could hurt the nationality of Nepal. *Janadisha daily reports*

NA's Health Camp

Nepal Army personals are running a medical camp in remote parts of Rukum offering medicine to the victims of diarrhoea. Nepal Army has sent a special medial teams to the areas affected by the diseases. According to Minsitry of Health, more than 200 people have already died due to diarrhoea.



OHCHR Objects To Promotion Of NA General

OHCHR-Nepal, Representative, Richard Bennett, met with Defense Minister, Bidhya Bhandari and expressed concern about the recommended promotion of Major General Toran Jung Bahadur Singh to Lieutenant General. "The OHCHR acknowledges and appreciates the important contribution made by the Nepal Army on various UN peace keeping missions which obligate peace keepers to maintain highest standard of human rights compliance," states a press release by the OHCHR-Nepal. "On 26 May 2006, OHCHR released a report of it's investigation into arbitrary detention, torture and disappearance at Maharajgunj Barracks which was under the control of the Bhairabnath Battalion. Singh was reportedly the commander of the 10th Brigade in 2003-2004 during which period, these human rights violations occurred. In its the conclusion the report stated that "the commander also knew or ought to have known about these actions by the battalions under the command of the 10th Brigade". The report recommended that "those potentially implicated directly or through command responsibility for units involved should be suspended from any official duties pending the investigation, and should not be proposed for participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions." "Given these serious and credible allegations, the Government should investigate General Singh's involvement before taking a

decision on his promotion" said Richard Bennett. *Compiled from reports*

Indian Minister's Visit

At a time when there is uncertainty over under whose purviews Kosi fall following the breaking of Ministry of Water Resources, Indian water resources



minister paid two day official visit to Nepal. Irrigation minister Bal Krishna Khand welcomed Indian minister. However, given the present legal status, no body has right to look after the water resources affairs but prime minister said to have assigned minister Khand to welcome Indian water resources minister.

Experts Want Water Resource Ministry Reinstated

Water resource experts and government officials involved in water resource planning, management and execution have said that the government's decision to bifurcate the Ministry of Water Resources into Ministry of Energy (MoE) and Ministry of Irrigation (MoI) is against the National Water Plan prepared from a long-drawn water resource strategy. Such a strategy (25-Year Plan) was prepared in consultation with all major political parties that had accepted the plan in principle and the legislature parliament endorsed it. At an interaction organized by the Jalsrot Vikas Sanstha (JVS) Nepal, the secretary of Ministry of Irrigation (MoI), Umakant Jha, said that the government decided to divide the ministry without prior consultation or survey. "The government's decision is against the country's water planning and strategy which were formulated in agreement of all political parties," Jha said. He added that the decision has brought practical and functional problems for the government. The JVS has claimed that the government's decision is not justified at all as this has halted the ministry's negotiations with India and brought to a complete standstill the license issuing process for new projects. The JVS last week

submitted a memorandum to the prime minister claiming that the ministry of water resources must be reinstated. "The prime minister suggested that the water resource may be included in the irrigation ministry. It may be renamed as ministry for irrigation and water resources," Suryanath

Upadhyaya, general secretary of JVS and former secretary of MoWR said.

"The decision to dissolve the ministry has come at a time when we were just strengthening the legal and institutional regime in this sector," adding, "This happened because the political leaders do not understand the importance of the water resource." The participants opined that the political leaders cannot make such decisions for the sake of political compromise and political convenience. *Compiled from reports*

Maoists Trash Govt Policies

The main opposition Maoists have trashed the policies and programs of the government. "The government's policies and programs is a bad mixture," said Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. "This cannot bring about qualitative change for the country and the people." He said that "since the government itself is illegitimate, one cannot expect anything from it." Leader of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (Upendra Yadav group) Jaya Prakash Gupta said the government's policies have tried to undermine the achievements of Madhes movement. "These programs are not in the interest of Madhes. First time they have stressed on mid-hill Lokmarga (highway), which is regressive for Madhes development," Gupta said.

Even the major coalition ally Nepali Congress (NC) has expressed dissatisfaction over the government policies. "It does not include programs we recommended," said NC leader Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat.

"The government has said that they will now include them in the budget," he said. *Kantipur daily reports*

Peace Process Will End Amicably Within Six Months: PM Nepal

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal has said that the peace process will be given a logical conclusion within six months at the most. During the meeting with the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) chief Karin Landgren at his official residence in Baluwatar, PM Nepal said the government is making necessary preparations to see to it that the peace process concludes amicably and that the time period needed for it doesn't exceed six months, according to his foreign affairs advisor Rajan Bhattarai. Landgren expressed her concern about the latest political situation in the country, but at the same time hoped that the consensus the political parties reached on Monday may steer the country towards the right path. The discussion with PM Nepal is one of series of high-level meetings Landgren has made prior to leaving this week for New York to help UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon prepare his quarterly report on Nepal, which will be submitted to the Security Council.

Compiled from reports

CONCOE'S Program

Consortum of Constitutional Experts (CONCOE) organized half day interaction on Civilian Supremacy in Democracy. Chaired by convenor of CONCOE Dr. Surya Dhungel, former speaker of House of Representatives, Damannath Dhungana, journalist Kanakmani Dixit and retired Lieutenant General Sadip Shaha discussed the role



role of military under civilian control. In a program, journalist and civil society member Kanakmani Dixit stressed the need to put Nepal army under civilian control. Opening the discussions, Dr. Surya Dhungel said there is necessary to search modalities for civilian supremacy. General Sadip Shaha said Nepal army has a long tradition to abide by law and constitution and the institution is committed to go under civilian control. He said due to incompetent political leadership the country has been facing serious problems of order. Former speaker Damannath Dhungana gave international experiences of civilian control.

Three Accused Of Kidnapping Attempt Beaten To Death

Three of the four persons severely beaten up by locals of Chapacho, Bhaktapur, who claimed they were trying to kidnap a child, have died while undergoing treatment at B & B Hospital, Lalitpur. Locals of Chapacho chased and severely beat up four young men at Chapacho area in Bhaktapur alleging them of trying to kidnap kids. Of the seven persons chased by the locals, three managed to flee the scene. Police later intervened and rescued the remaining four from the mob fury. The four were taken to B & B Hospital for treatment where two of them succumbed to injuries immediately while the third youth died a few days later. The incident is latest in a series of mob attacks on alleged kidnappers in different parts of the country.

Compiled from reports

CA Committee Proposes To Keep Govt Decisions Above Judicial Review

If the Constituent Assembly endorses what has been decided by the CA Committee on Determination of the Form of Government, without amendment, the government decisions would not come under judicial review. The parties during the discussion on draft of the constitution at the committee agreed to include a provision in the new constitution where the judiciary will have no authority to raise

questions on any decisions made by the government holding executive powers. The parties have also reached an understanding to give executive power to provincial governments as well. As per the CA committee's recommendation, the state governments, to be headed by chief minister, will be formed through consensus among political parties at the centre or by the big party emerging in the state elections. The chief minister has to receive vote of confidence from the state parliament within 35 days of taking up the responsibility. *Compiled from reports*

Scrap Tax To Go; Single Rate VAT To Stay

In view of the longstanding demands by the private sector, the government could do away with scrap tax (Kabadi Kar) from this budget. But their demand for introduction of multiple rate VAT system is not likely to be met. "Nobody is feeling convenient about the Kabadi Kar. This budget will address this matter," Keshab Acharya, senior economic advisor at the Ministry of Finance, said. On the VAT, he said, "Though this is something which is decided at last minute, I see very less possibility of introducing multiple rate of VAT this year." He said that the budget will introduce system for three-year contract for big projects. "The current system of re-doing contract every year has led to many problems," he said. Acharya indicated that the budget would introduce subsidy on fertilizers and focus on small and medium irrigation projects. *Kantipur daily reports*

Govt Employees Want Pay Hike

Nepal Civil Servants Association (NCSA) has demanded hefty

increase in salary of government employees. In a press statement, NCSA said minimum salary of lowest ranking government employees must be Rs 12,000. The association also proposed Rs 45,000 salary for highest ranking government officers. The association also urged the government to review rural allowances, disbursement on leave and cancellation of revenue groups besides reduction in salary differences among the officials. The revenue group enjoys 200 percent additional allowances to their normal salary. Finance Minister Surendra Pandey had earlier assured some increase in the basic pay of the government officials. *Compiled from reports*

Army Man Dies While Rescuing A Boy

A Nepal Army soldier lost his life while trying to rescue a boy who had fell into a well at Dhalko, Kathmandu. Army jawan Dinesh Shrestha, who worked at the Mahabir Battallion, died while trying to pull the boy, Samir Poda, 14, out of the well. Shrestha, who was on his way home on vacation, readily went inside the deep well to pull out the boy after hearing the locals crying for help. Sadly, both of them could not survive. *Compiled from reports*

SAWTEE On Budget

Organized by South Asia Watch of Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), various speakers spoke on the need to have a people friendly budget. Chaired Posh Raj Pandey, Chairman of SAWTEE, economists and government officials took part in the discussions. ■



PRIME MINISTER

The Foreign Factor

As he goes for his first foreign outing, can Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal make a departure from the past?

BY SUSHIL SHARMA

Amidst persistent doubts about the future of the government, Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal finally managed to get the government's annual policies and programmes through.

Soon after, he left for Cairo for his first foreign jaunt as the head of government.

But, as doubt about the longevity of the government refuse to go away, the prime minister's first away-destination will only add to it. If the past is any indication.

He leads a shaky 22-party coalition which faces an uncertain future in the face of the main opposition Maoists' one-month deadline "to settle the civilian supremacy issue".

Add to it, there have been calculatedly fuelled speculations about the military supremacy. "The specter of an army-backed rightwing outfit at the helm with the international support" has lately made big headlines.

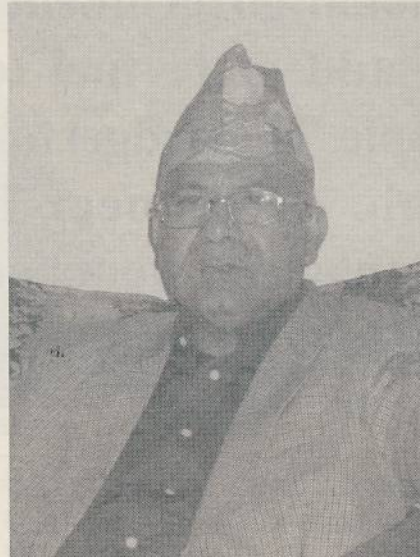
Few have taken pains, if at all, to look beyond such headlines.

Coincidentally, Prime Minister Nepal's first foreign outing has a striking similarity with his communist predecessors who led short-lived governments.

Nepal is the third communist prime minister. Like his predecessors, circumstances have led him to visit a country other than the influential neighbor, India, for the first foreign outing.

The first communist prime minister, Man Mohan Adhikary, who came from own party — the UML — went to Denmark in connection with a UN social summit, in 1955.

The second communist prime minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' happened to first touch down at the Beijing airport in China first, in connection with the Olympics



PM Nepal: New move

games inaugural ceremony.

Now, the third communist Prime Minister, Nepal, is going to Egypt to attend the Non-aligned summit. Although, he was tentatively scheduled to go to the southern neighbor first, the circumstances did not allow it to happen.

Like his predecessors, Madhav Nepal does not have a majority on his own. He depends on the support of other parties.

He is set to tour Delhi weeks after the return from Cairo. His predecessors did the same. But they could not survive beyond nine months in office.

Will Nepal's future be different? The past is not on his side, nor is the present with the Maoist Damocles' sword hanging over his head. ■

POLITICS

The Losing Game

Camaraderie without a common goal and strategy can not ensure a win

BY A CORRESPONDENT

The politicians and the artistes were unanimous in hailing the football match between the politicians' team and the television comedian team.

They said, the match gave a good message: "of the importance of unity, understanding and cooperation."

According to them, Prachanda, Jhahnath Khanal and Ram Chandra Poudel playing from the same team showed the spirit of camaraderie. "If extended to the political stage, this camaraderie will pull the country through the present crisis to a better future."

Far from the truth. The result is there to see. The politicians' team lost to the comedian team by four goals to one.

The message is clear. The spirit of "the unity, understanding and cooperation" has to come from within, not imposed from the outside. In the absence of coordination, heart-to-heart consultations, commonality in strategy and goal the politicians' team was bound to lose.

This is reflected in the national political scene as well. A look what happened over the past three years of the parties' camaraderie that presided over the country's major political transformation tells it all.

The constituent assembly elections have been held. The monarchy has been abolished. A republic has been set up.

But, today, there is a near-unanimity that the country is losing today despite the major parties coming together as a team under the 12-point agreement.

The politicians admit themselves that the country is facing an unprecedented crisis. Many have been warning of an imminent disaster.

The reason: like in the football match, the "camaraderie did not come from within but was imposed from the outside." ■

BUDGET ANALYSIS

Futile Ritual

By Binod Bhattarai

Yet another transitional government has just made yet another attempt to add more fuel to the already high aspirations of the people. The budget for 2009/10 once again repeats the chronic disconnect between those in Singadurbar and the man and woman on the street. Here's what some people had to say on different television channels after the budget speech:

Budgetma bhashan matra sunauncha, kaam gardaina sarkar le" (The government only makes speeches, does nothing

-*"Budget lagu bhaye ta ramro ho"* (It would be a good budget if implemented)

-*"Sabaithok garna khojda khichadi bhayeko cha budget"* (While trying to do everything the budget has become like a multi-grain meal).

The gap between what successive governments have said they will do and what they actually get done has widened with almost every budget. It is likely that it will widen further in 2009/10, given the political instability that has marked the transition towards a new republic.

Last year, when Baburam Bhattarai announced a budget of Rs236 billion, the Maoist finance minister perhaps had a basis for trying something that was never attempted before in terms of budget size. After all, his party had emerged as the largest party in the

Constituent Assembly election after spending 10 years in hiding, and therefore the public may have thought they deserved a chance because they were different.

But the all-too-familiar outcome was repeated once again. The Economic Survey released on July 13 reveals that the Maoists were no better than previous governments where revitalizing the economy was concerned. It has therefore been proven beyond reasonable doubt, again, that it is useless to promise and plan for what is unattainable.

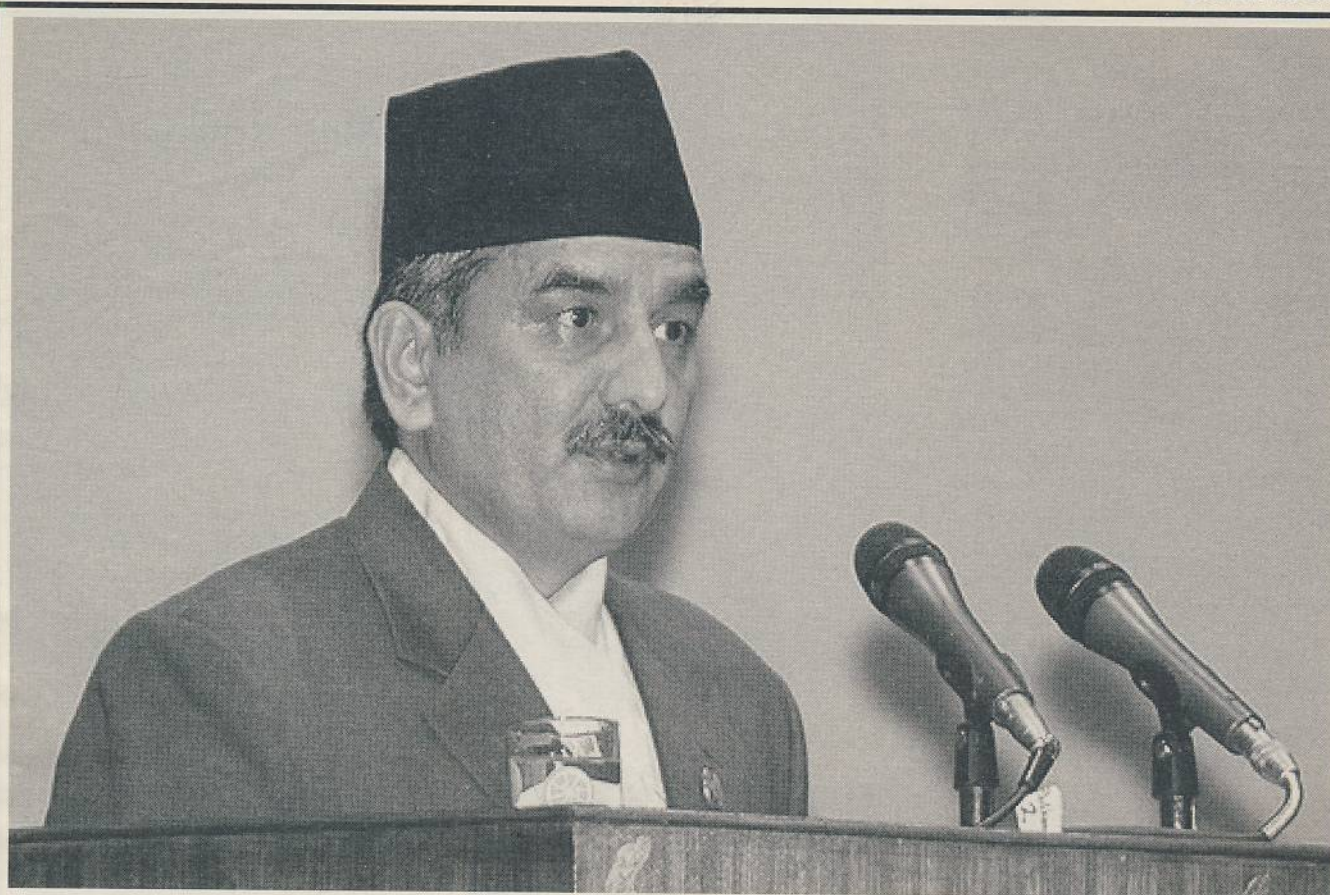
Finance Minister Surendra Panday's explained why Nepal is projected to attain only 3.8 percent growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the 7 percent that was targeted. He blamed it on the "energy crisis, unfavorable weather, decline in capital expenditure, disturbed industrial sector, absence of elected local representatives and global economic crisis."

These were almost exactly the same

reasons past governments gave to explain their spending failures. What Mr. Pandey has failed to acknowledge that these are the very reasons why he should have been more realistic and why he should have produced a budget that was implementable within the given constraints, which have not changed.

But it has not been the case. The government has planned to spend 285.9 billion in 2009/10 – a whopping 33 percent over the revised budget of 2008/09. Of this, 56 percent is to be spent on recurrent expenses – salaries, pensions and allowances for government officials and perks for politicians, among others. This is money that tends to get used up every year. In 2009/10 the budget for recurrent expenses was Rs128.5 billion of which around Rs122 billion is likely to be used up (95%).

The money for capital expenditure has been estimated at Rs106.3 billion (37% of the total). Last fiscal year the government had allotted Rs91.3 billion



Finance Minister Pandey Presenting Budget : Populist slogan

but it was able to use only Rs73.3 billion (80%).

Since the general political environment has not improved dramatically it would be difficult for the government, if not unlikely, to be able to spend as much on capital expenditures (see: table 1 for budget details)

The budget for 2009/10 therefore

only reinforces the adage that “Nepali politicians never learn”. It is expansionary and could push inflation – estimated at around 12 percent in mid-July 2009 and highest in 17 years – further, while spending is likely to remain constrained owing to the fragile politics in the centre, continuing lawlessness, and the resultant deterioration of investor confidence.

“The people want to see results on the ground, I don’t see signs that there will be many,” an economist at a development agency said.

Not unlike every government of the past, the UML-led coalition has tried to spice up the budget with a little bit here and a little bit there and increased allocation to the Afno Gau Afai Banau (Make your village yourself) program, first introduced in 1995. It has brought some well-focused programs that aim to quicken inclusion such as IDs for the poor, low-cost housing for Dalits, cash grants for inter-caste marriages of Dalits and non-Dalits, remarriage of widows, and compensation for kin of road accidents.

These programs are well-intentioned but lack the basis for implementation owing to questions such as the identification of the poor – which can be a massive exercise in itself – and the issue of tracking implementation in the absence of functional local government units. Without effective spending and monitoring mechanisms at the local

Table 1: Budget summary (Rs 000)

Sources/expenses	Actual 2007/08	Revised budget 2008/09	Budget 2009/10
Total revenue	127,943,208	176,781,762	233,459,326
Foreign grants	20,320,727	34,570,432	56,955,576
Other sources	107,622,481	142,211,330	176,503,750
Total expenditure	161,349,894	213,578,374	285,930,000
Recurrent	91,446,861	122,079,524	160,632,361
Capital	53,516,101	73,309,549	106,284,793
Principal repayment	16,386,932	18,189,301	19,012,846
Balance (-)	-33,406,686	-36,796,612	-52,470,674
Borrowing	29,476,276	35,405,414	52,470,674
Foreign loans	8,979,876	10,405,414	21,560,674
Domestic loans	20,496,400	25,000,000	30,910,000
Cash balance (-)	-3,930,410	-1,391,198	

Source: Budget speech 2009



Nepal Bandha : Affecting economy

level, it is not unlikely that these grants could either remained unused or be grossly misused – something, that political parties are very good at doing. The idea about compensating road accident victims – possibly aimed and ending instant chakka-jams – could set off a spending spiral because now there is an added incentive for using the roadways for things other than driving.

The budget fails to address the issue of capital formation, which is vital for economic growth. Much of the capital budget is transferred to local governments and essentially ends up as slush funds for the local elites – more so, in the present state of statelessness. A positive note in the budget is the attempt to take a multi-year approach to budgeting, which can help reign the ever-expanding size in the coming years. The multi-year approach can also simplify contracting processes and help towards completing projects on time, and within the estimated costs.

What is novel with the budget is paragraph 297, which provides 36 indicators for monitoring the implementation of the plan. This will be a valuable basis for measuring the performance of Finance Minister Pandey and holding the government accountable.

These indicators in Annex-11 include raising agricultural production by 36,000 metric tons, expanding black-topped roads by 550 kilometers, adding 12 megawatts of electricity to the grid, expanding literacy by 12 percentage points and reducing maternal mortality by 31 per 100,000, among others. Now it is up to every representative of the people to adopt the list and use to make the government accountable. An opposition scorecard on how the government has done on the indicators next year will be an indication of democracy and governance at work in Nepal.

(Bhattarai is a freelance journalist)

THE ANALYSTS: Who said what?

“Achieving 5 percent economic growth and reducing inflation to 7 percent will not be possible if the state of lawlessness continues”.

-Bishwomber Pyakuryal

Economist

“It seems the budget is marginalising the private sector’s role.”

Binod Chaudhary

CA member and business leader

“It is mum on revitalizing the state-owned enterprises and does not pledge judicious distribution of services.”

-Sri Ram Poudel, Senior economic advisor to former Finance Minister Baburam Bhattarai

“The budget is mum on revitalizing the industrial sector and does not spell a word on new industrial policy.”

-Pradeep Jung Pandey, vice president Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries

“The budget has introduced multi-year programs but what happens if it is not continued in the next year’s budget?”

- Rajendra Khetan, CA member and business leader

“... positive side of the budget is it has acknowledged the fact that monitoring and implementation is poor.”

Shankar Sharma, economist (former Vice-Chairman of the



OUTBREAK IN MIDWEST

Devastated By Diarrhea

The government bungles as over 100 people die of diarrhea in Midwest. More worryingly, the parties and NGOs remain silent spectators

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The three months of epidemic in the Midwestern hills have exposed how thoroughly dysfunctional the state system has become in dealing with such crises.

Hurting from one political crisis to another, Nepal seemingly is losing its capacity at all levels. In all those months, it was not only the government that bungled; equally conspicuous were the political parties and the NGOs, by their absence.

It had been three months since diarrhea started raising its head in Jajarkot district.

As Kathmandu was gripped in a nasty politicking – starting from the army chief sacking episode to installation of a new government and the continuous parliament blockade for months – the building epidemic in the hills of the Midwest were out of everybody's radar.

The poorly equipped and even poorly manned health outposts in the

remote regions were hardly any match for the deadly epidemic that slowly engulfed neighboring Rukum and even Dailekh districts.

It was only after the body count surged with media reports stating deaths of over 100 – only half the number has been confirmed by the government officials though – that the situation attracted any attention.

The Ministry of Health was caught with its pants down.

However, the senior officials claim that they have done everything possible to bring the situation under control.

“We are not resting. We have been mobilizing manpower and medicines. We have also started mobilizing Nepali Army personnel for the purpose,” said Dr. Dirgha Singh Bam, Secretary at the Ministry of Health.

Where Were They?

While the government was ineffective, as usual, the problem of this magnitude called for massive intervention by the political parties and

the NGOs working at the field level.

The big political parties who use their tens of thousands of youth workers to block the road or organize a strike at the drop of a hat and at a lightening speed, were nowhere near the affected area.

It was only after media reports complained of paralyzed political machinery that some of them began to make noise saying they are mobilizing their cadres to help deal with the situation there.

“It was a shame that none of the political bigwigs including Maoist chieftain Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ who likes to call himself a messiah of the poor made a single visit to the affected region in the entire three month period,” a local health official complained.

Equally worryingly, the NGOs were also very slow to respond to the challenges. “Arguably, there are thousands of NGOs that work in the health field. One would assume that they would have taken up the mantle once the local government health posts failed to contain the outbreak. That, alas, didn't happen and thousands of people suffered from the disease,” added the official.

Belatedly, Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal took over the charge of deploying government machinery to contain the outbreak. In recent days, a number of helicopters were flown in with medical reinforcements.

In what could be called as a silver lining in the dark cloud, some good Samaritans, too, have emerged from this episode. Apart from the local health workers – who are working beyond their means round the clock – one Rajiv Bikram Shah chartered a helicopter by himself and sent medicines to the area.

At the end of the day, it is a big jolt to the senior government officials that despite huge investments and massive campaigns raising health awareness, people are still dying by hundreds of simple and easily preventable diseases like diarrhea.

“We do need a separate policy to deal with diarrhea. This is a lesson we have learnt,” said Dr. Bam. ■

'We Can Seek India's Support To Form Our Government'

-C.P.GAJUREL

Foreign interference has become part of Nepal's politics since long time but it was covered up during the period of monarchy.

With the fall of Unified Communist Party of Nepal Maoist (UCPNM) government, Maoist leaders have been accusing external forces for the downfall of the government. Senior leader **C.P. GAJUREL** is one of the many who have been vocal in raising the foreign factor. He is the head of the party's International Affairs Department. Gajurel spoke to **KESHAB POUDEL** on the subject and the party's international perspectives. Excerpts:

So, you have not overcome yet the foreign master (bideshi prabhu) theory behind the fall of your party's government?

When our government took a nationalist stand and pursued nationalist policy, expansionist, revisionist and colonial powers and feudal reactionary forces joined together to pull down the government. We saw the open interference of the US and India.

There was no interference in the past?

In the last few years, our southern neighbour Indian has been openly interfering in internal affairs of Nepal. Along with interfering in our internal politics, they too encroached our border. In a country like Nepal, this kind of foreign interference will continue for long time to come.

Why?

Foreign interference has become part of Nepal's politics since long time but it was covered up during the period of monarchy. During that period, it was confined to selected elites in power. Following the abolition of monarchy, it is open at the people's level also.

Then what is the status all CA members whom your party also claims are elected representatives of sovereign Nepali people?

What we can say for sure is that this government was constituted with the blessings of foreign government. Even Indian newspapers termed this government pro-Indian.

When your leader and former prime minister Prachanda was in the final stage of paying official visit to Nepal's northern neighbour China, what had prompted him to remove the army chief. The resignation of your prime minister led to the postponement of the prime minister's visit to China for indefinite period. Is not it against Nepal's interest?

Of course, prime minister Dahal had completed all his home work to pay official visit to China. Had the Prime minister visited, there were so many agenda and proposals to discuss. Nepal would have gained a lot from signing various agreements and treaties.

If that is show why did not he wait a week to take such a sensitive decision?

After the series of violation of order of the government by army chief General Katuwal, a situation

was created which compelled us to remove him.

Was it the only reason to cancel the visit?

If prime minister had not cancelled the visit, there were possibilities of a military government or a military coup. He cancelled the visit to prevent a military coup.

How did your party visualize that threat?

It was leaked through various channels including the media. The situation was created in such a way that prime minister was compelled to cancel the visit. It is very unfortunate.

When your party decided to take action against General Katawal, all the coalition partners were behind you. Do you see the sudden withdrawal of their support to your government and cancellation of the visit?

Not only the ruling coalition but even a faction of Nepali Congress supported our proposal to remove General Katuwal. However, all withdrew their support at the last minute. Given the situation, I can say that it was a well planned conspiracy to pull down the Maoist government hence the cancellation of the China visit of the prime minister.

At a time when your party leaders are accusing foreign element particularly India, Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai in his recent interview to Indian newspaper requested the Indian government for support to form Maoist government.

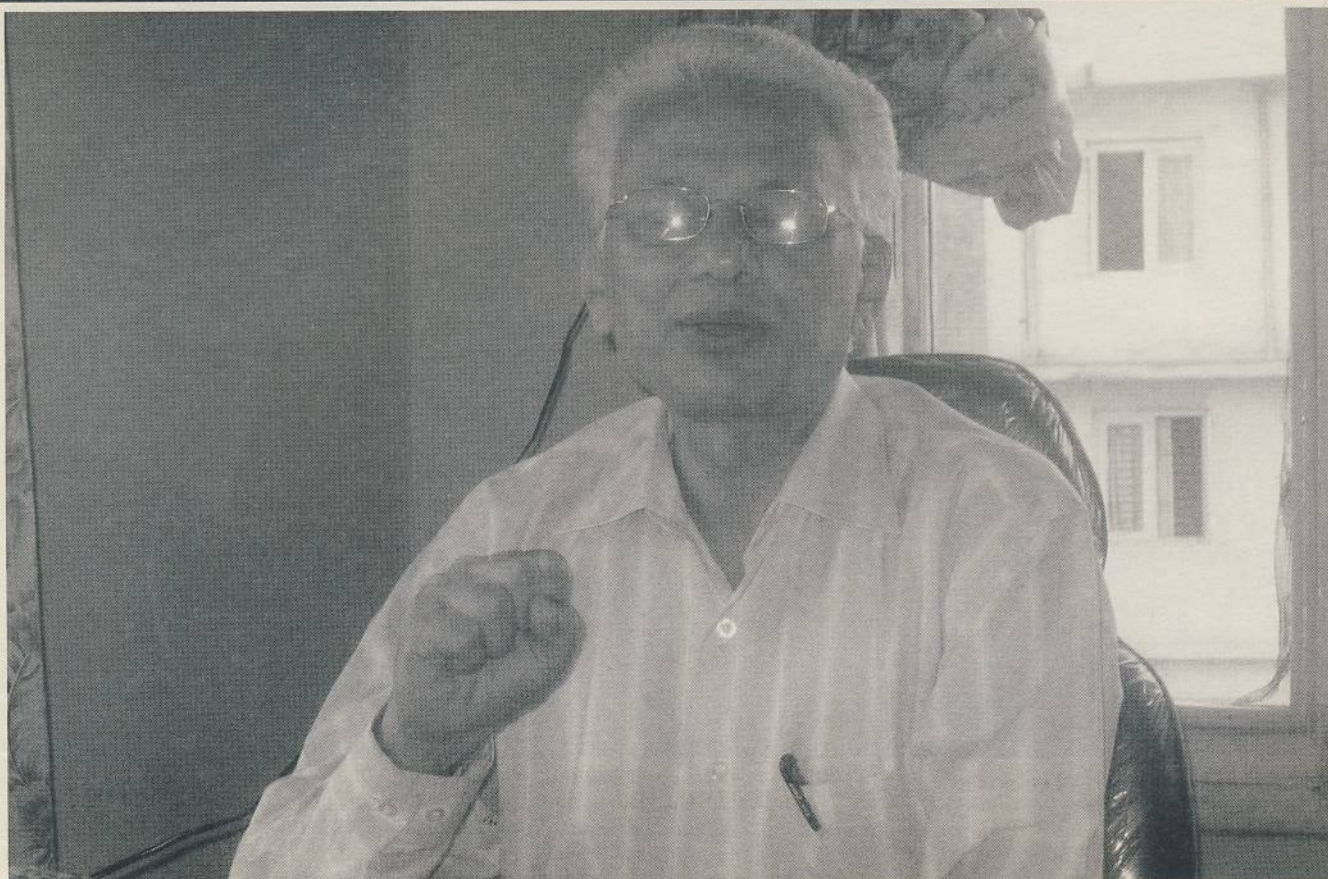
Diplomatically, we can ask Indians for support since India is our neighboring country like China. As a neighboring country, it is natural to seek support. In diplomatic language, it is alright. But it does not mean that we can support their interference.

Is there any change in your party's foreign policy after the fall of the government led by your party?

Our foreign policy remains the same. When we are in the government, we shall have to respect certain diplomatic norms. Thus, the statements given by our minister were little different. So far as our party's foreign policy is concerned, it remains unchanged. Even during the period of our government in power, we took our stand firmly. After the fall of the government, we don't have any diplomatic compulsion.

What is the foreign policy of your party vis-a-vis Nepal's two neighbours?

Our party wants to have equi-distant relations with two neighbours India and China. We want good and friendly relations with them. Our aim



is to protect the national interest. On the basis of national interest, we can establish our international relations. Situated between two big neighbors, Nepal has a very unique geostrategic position and our party has a clear vision.

What about the relations with the rest of the world?

We want friendly relations with other countries also. By paying an official visit to European countries and United States, Prachanda has shown that our party wants cordial relations with all the powers of the world. But our relations are based on Panchasila.

How do you improve your relations with India where most of your party workers reportedly spent their time during insurgency?

We have very good relations with the people of India but we have certain misunderstandings at official level.

People also say that the Maoists harp on the nationalist stands but the result turns out to be anti-national.

It is merely a propaganda. Our party has a clear stand on Nepal's national interest. We oppose the hegemonic and expansionist policy of any power of the world including India.

How do you see the recent activities of pro-Dalai Lama elements in Nepal?

It is very unfortunate event. We need to respect the sensitivity of Nepal's both neighbours. If we allow Dalai Lama's illegal act, it will create more

trouble to us. We must stick to one China policy and our party oppose any move to use Nepal's soil against Nepal's neighbour.

A few MPs met exiled spiritual leader of Tibet, Dalai Lama. Does not make it difference?

Meeting with Dalai Lama is not just a religious matter but it is very much political. With the support from the United States, India and many other western countries have been backing Dalai Lama. Although his posture seems to be that of a religious leader, Dalai Lama is mainly a leader of Free Tibet Movement. As a member of Constituent Assembly, they knew all these factors. Interestingly, those who visited Dharmasala to meet Dalai Lama are not even Buddhists but all of them are Hindus from Nepal's southern plains. The visit is guided by political mission. This will create suspicion in China.

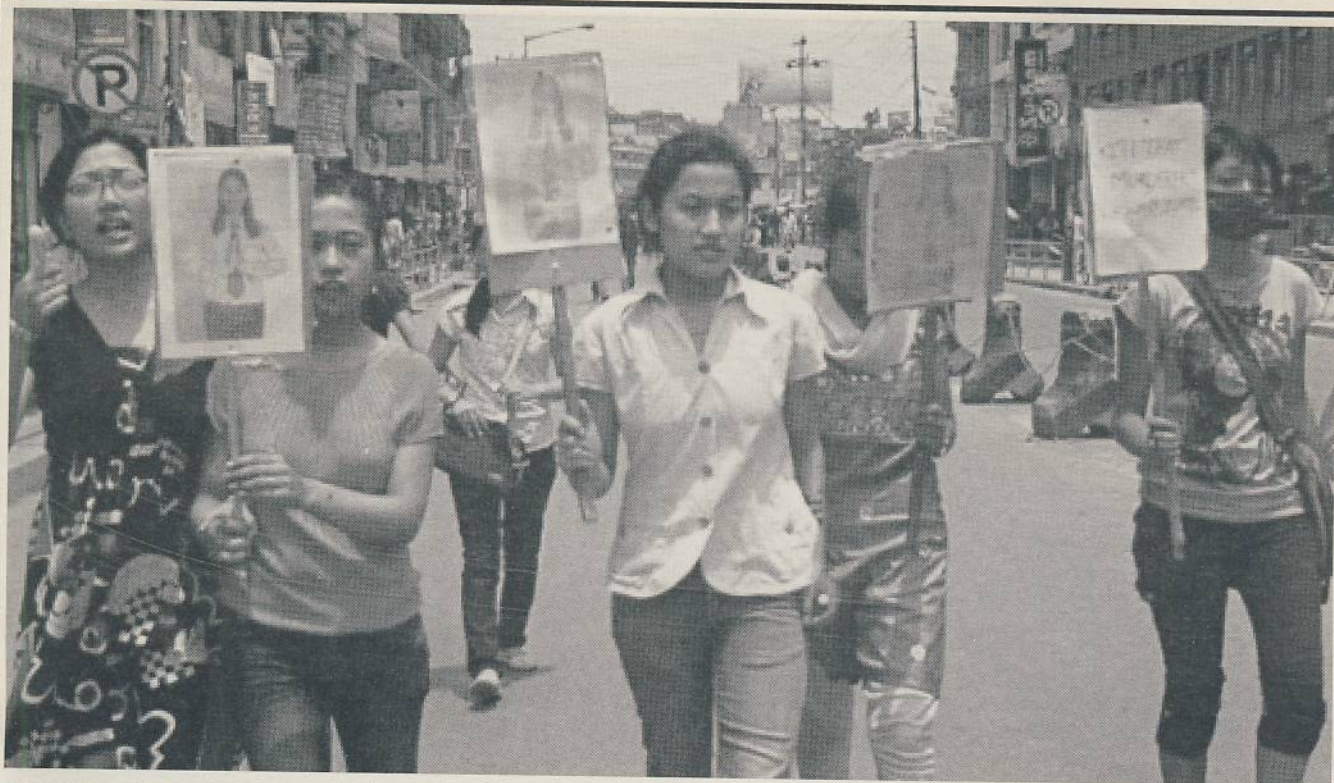
Your party is also raising the issue of border encroachment by India when Indian foreign secretary in his recent visit to Nepal said that 98 percent of border disputes between Nepal and India have already settled.

I also met Indian foreign secretary Menon during his recent visit. I put these views in front him saying that the issues of border encroachment are not a Maoist agenda but an issue raised by common people of Nepal. I have requested Indian foreign secretary to investigate such kinds of provocative incidents. I said that India can benefits a lot from getting goodwill of Nepalese people.

What was his reply?

He said that the Indian government does not have any intention to indulge in Nepal's internal matters. On border issues, he said that India is ready to negotiate with Nepal. ■

Meeting with Dalai Lama is not just a religious matter but it is very much political.



Agitating Students : Voice against crime

CRIME

Breaking Open

Even as abduction and extortion hit the headlines, burglary remains a big concern for the Kathmanduites

By BHAGIRATH YOGI with SAROJ DAHAL

Ngamindra Dahal, who lives in a rented flat at New Baneswore, also has similar story to tell. When he visited New Baneswore police post to report about the incident of burglary in his flat, he was asked to report to the Crime branch of Nepal Police at Hanumandhoka, Kathmandu.

But the policemen at Hanumandhoka tried to send him back to New Baneswore police. A frustrated Dahal then told them that the owner of the house he was renting was a member of the Constituent Assembly.

Police then registered his complaint and visited the site of the incident twice but so far nobody has been arrested. Burglars took away cash and jewellery worth Rs 400,000 by cutting padlock in the main gate at around mid-day.

Dahal quoted a police officer as

saying that he should have been more careful since the area itself was more prone to burglary.

Burglary tops among the incidences of crime in the capital.

Police say they receive complaints about burglary almost every day.

According to the data compiled by Police Headquarters, 227 incidences of burglary had been registered in the capital in the last fiscal year while the number had reached 174 in the first nine months of this fiscal year.

Police, however, say incidences of armed robbery have declined significantly this year.

Last year, 50 such incidences were recorded while this year only around 20 incidences of armed robbery have been registered, according to the police.

Kathmandu residents complain that police is not paying due attention to

incidences of burglary. Said Dahal, "Police tend to pay attention only if the crime involves murder or abduction. They seem to undermine incidences of burglary."

Many feel that there is growing lawlessness. The attitude of police in the Nepali capital is increasingly coming under criticism

Spokesperson of Nepal Police, Binod Singh, however, claims that rise in incidences of burglary should not be linked directly with the overall situation of law and order. "It is up to households themselves to take good care of their house and property. How can police totally stop burglary?"

He however agreed that people's trust on police seemed declining.

But he says, "we have to deal with crime in accordance with law," said Singh. ■

Whither Bijulee Adda – 2

Safety from Power Blackouts

-SB Pun

Writer's Note: This article appeared in the Bulletin of the Society of Electrical Engineers Nepal (SEEN) on Chaitra 26, 2058 (March, 2001) – the day SEEN annually celebrates Safety Day. This Safety from Power Blackouts is a sequel to Safety Last, Safety First Always and Safety of the Plants and Civil Structures. In this article this Safety concept has been stretched a little to discuss the Blackouts of America as well as ours. Nepal faced blackouts in the latter part of the 1990s. This improved in the earlier half of 2000 to deteriorate to the present 16 hours of load shedding per day. There are more difficult days ahead and some serious thinking is required from all of us.

The recent ongoing Californian blackout received little or no attention at all by our media in Nepal. California, home to the Silicon Valley and one of the richest States in America, has always been dubbed as the global doyen of the reform process. It was one of the first American States to espouse the principle of free market in its power sector in 1996. The icons of deregulation made grand promises of lower electricity tariff, more secure supply and bigger businesses for all in the power sector. Just five years down that deregulated road that is from the 17th of January 2001 a one hour rolling blackout has hit the consumers of Northern California. The only time the Californians ever had power blackouts were in the 1940s during the time of the Second World War. The two major utilities, Southern California Edison (SCE) and Pacific Gas & Electric (PGE), that supply two thirds of California are literally bankrupt with debts exceeding US\$ 10 billion. The ultimate sufferers are, like in Nepal, the consumers who do not know where they are hit, whether legally above the belt or illegally below the belt. Power sector analysts in California merely shake their heads and say 'do not make the mistakes we made.'

The Californian Governor, Mr. Gray Davis, in typical politician style rants that deregulation is a 'colossal' failure, the Independent Power Producers are all 'state criminals' and the out of state profiteers can not hold Californians 'hostage'. These are very strong words indeed, emanating from the Chief Executive of the State. They are, however, no different from the outbursts of our legislators regarding our Khimti and Bhote Koshi power purchases. Even the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Mr. James Hoecker, somberly admits that the muddled power sector will require fixing 'on several fronts over a period of time – in California's case three

to five years.' We, in the Society of Electrical Engineers and particularly our Chief Executives and policy makers in Nepal, need to mull over this thoroughly and learn lessons from this classic Californian debacle. America can afford to make mistakes whereas we in Nepal can not and must not. From the little information that we can get in this part of our world, an attempt has been made to analyze this blackout.

The Californian regulator put a 'cap' on the retail prices that the utilities charge to the consumers but gave a complete free hand to the wholesale price so that utilities had to purchase on the spot market at the rate that the IPPs bid. The Silicon Valley boom meant an insatiable appetite for power that resulted in a whopping load growth of 8% per annum (2% is the thumb rule in developed countries) in a system of 55,000 MW. This was quite contrary to the pundits' forecast that there would be a fall in the consumption of electricity. With gloomy forecasts like that and the fact that the government brought in tough environmental laws plus the classic 'not in my backyard' syndrome, the utilities were in no mood to install new power plants. So when the supply could not meet the demand, the market forces pushed the wholesale price for peak power from three to six times, the utilities naturally asked for a raise of 30% in their retail tariff. The legislators, as in any part of the world mindful of their

The Californian regulator put a 'cap' on the retail prices that the utilities charge to the consumers

voters, approved only 10% only for three months and that even subject to reversal! It is hoped our policy makers in Nepal read and reread this previous sentence carefully, bearing in mind that such tariff increase reluctance is a normal affair even in one of the richest States of the one and only superpower, America. So the utilities started to bleed red and were forced to borrow heavily from the financial institutions to solve their liquidity crunch. When the credit rating agencies lowered the credit worthiness of the utilities, none of the financial institutions came forward with the loans. The IPPs, when payment is not made for the power already sold, naturally halted their generation to put the 'squeeze' on the utilities. This is the reason for the IPPs being branded 'criminals' by the Californian Governor. Temporary power relief from California's eastern

neighbouring States was restricted by the transmission lines' incapability to wheel more power. The irony was, after deregulation, no IPPs or the utilities wanted to risk investment in transmission lines for this kind of probable eventuality.

Politicians, whether in America or Nepal, are a weird lot. The Governor wanted to circumvent the utilities' credit worthiness issue. So legislation was passed in the State that permitted California's credit worthy Water Resources Department to directly buy additional power under long term contracts and sell it to the utilities at a fraction of the current spot market rates. This very much brought deregulation back to square one, that is, the State re-regulating again. Power trading by the Water Resources Department may be a short term remedy. This could give a breathing space to the Californian government to rethink on its deregulation and carry out the necessary fixing. On the billions of dollars of loans, the utilities are expected to be given more time to pay off their debts. But the ultimate sufferers of this bungled deregulation are certainly the hapless Californian consumers and the utilities' shareholders, the former to be burdened with higher tariffs and the latter with the liquidation sword hanging precariously over their heads. Hence the promise of lower tariff, more secure supply and bigger businesses through deregulation is apparently going to the operation theatre for necessary 'fixing' even in the richest State of America, a State considered the 'mother of all deregulation.'

It is in the above context that our government needs to proceed more cautiously with deregulation. I refer particularly to the government's fundamentalist belief that the bulbs in the Nepalese homes and factories will continue to glow even brighter once the power sector reforms as prescribed by the multilateral agencies are religiously implemented as the Fatwa/edict. The government's white paper as outlined by the National Planning Commission calls for the restructuring of the power sector, with some pundits wanting this to be done and be finished with in an incredible time frame of two to three years. The white paper puts in a heavy stress on the involvement of the private sector particularly in generation, thus implying that the backbone in the generation field will be the private sector with the public sector playing the secondary role. If this prescription does not work, it will be the nation and the Nepalese who will have to bear the burden. Hence, as far as Nepal is concerned, a more cautious approach to deregulation ensuring Safety from Blackouts is the first and foremost call of the hour! ■

Primary Level Dropout: A Threat to Social Inclusion in Education

By: Binay Kumar Kushiyait (Yadav)¹

Introduction: Education is the key of human development and the primary education is the foundation of learning so the primary education is a catalyst of social change and empowerment. Specifically, education helps to overcome the traditional inequalities in gender, caste, ethnicity and class so the socially and economically disadvantaged group perceive education as the most promising means for their children's up-liftment. So, United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights has asserted that "Everyone has a right to education".

Context of Nepal: In this context, the socially and economic deprived groups of Nepal - Dalit, Janjati, Madhesi, Indigenous people and women - are found more deprived from basic education which basically results due the exclusion of these group in socio-economic, political and cultural processes of country. Against the social exclusionary practices in education sector of Nepal, the country become signatory of Dakar Framework for Action (DFA) 2000 and adopted the Education for All National Action Plan 2001-2015 funded by major donor agencies in 2003. The most crucial and important goal of DFA is Universal Primary Education (UPE) which ensures that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to primary education. Further, UN's Millennium Development Goal further ratified the Universal Primary Education (UPE). Specifically, the concept of UPE has three key implications:

-All boys and girls of primary school age group should be brought into the school system to assure universal and equitable access;

-All those who are enrolled should be able to complete the primary education cycle; and

-Those who complete the cycle should have gained useful and relevant

knowledge and skills.

In Nepal's context, the attainment of UPE has posed many formidable challenges. The major among them are high dropout and repetition. Besides, there are also issues of access and equity, quality degeneration, lack of school community relationship, public-private dichotomy and under-financing.

Recently, in 2006, the DOE has announced the liberal promotion policy to enhance the appearance of all children in the final examination and gradually implementation such promotion in all primary grades in the next five years. This will only solve one aspect of inefficiency i.e. it will reduce repetition. But, the UPE will not be achieved unless the dropout is controlled. Therefore the goal of UPE should aim to check the dropout of the enrolled children. In order to control dropout, an in-depth study is required that identifies the problem associated with the causes of dropout. A study supported by SIRF has been conducted in Doti and Rautahat districts that deal on primary school dropouts in Terai and Hill Districts of Nepal. This study work is therefore my humble attempt to investigate the different parameters of primary school dropouts of Nepal.

Finding of Study: The magnitude of dropout in the community primary schools of Doti and Rautahat districts are alarming. The incidence of dropout is spectacularly high among the poor and disadvantaged children. There exists disparity in dropout across gender, grades, and social and economic strata. Girls and children of the poor and disadvantaged families are more victimized by the tendency of dropout.

Dropout Situation in Doti and Rautahat

	Doti	Rautahat
Sex		
Boys	7.2	12.5
Girls	7	15.2
Rural/ Urban Settlement		
Rural	9.1	13.2

Urban	5.1	14.1
Caste/ Ethnic Group		
Dalits	40.6	18.7
Janajati	5.9	8.3
Others	53.5	73
Poverty Status		
Household		
below Poverty	77.1	68.2
Household		
above Poverty	22.9	31.8

(Source: Survey Conducted by Author in 2007/ 08)

The causes of student dropout are diverse. There are economic and social reasons which compel students to drop out from school. Meanwhile, there are also school, family and student related causes of dropout.

The major school-related factors which results dropout are: teachers' absenteeism, irregular operation of school, lack of child-friendly environment and de-motivating school environment. It has also been observed that there exists convincing relationship between the quality of school and the magnitude of dropout or retention in primary education. The dropout is low in good quality and vice versa. The school related factor that check dropout are: better physical facilities; trained, motivated and committed teachers and head teacher; the high proportionate of female teacher; teaching in local teaching materials; and well managed School Management Committee and Parent Teacher Association.

It has also been observed that the household poverty and economic hardships are important reasons behind the high dropout and low retention of children in primary education. The economic characteristics of the households of dropout children clearly show that those unfortunate children are generally from the poor families. The parents of dropout children are either landless or small land holding farmers. Their income sources are low and insecure and they even have to sometime borrow in order to meet the bare needs of survival. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that

the amount of money spent on the education of children is quite low which eventually result dropout of the children from poor household.

Specifically, the economic hardships of the families have made it difficult for them to meet expenditures associated with the schooling of children. This affects the quality of learning on the one hand and motivation of children on the other hand which lead to poor performance of irregular attendance in school and eventually to dropout from school. Moreover, the children are more needed at home to assist their parents in income generation activities or to take charge of housework. The survival is always the first priority and schooling always loses in trade-off between education and work which is further justified by the high existence of child labor. Further it has been found that many parents are not worried of the school dropout of their children. It is only the teachers and education officers who are found unanimously anxious about the problem of dropout in primary education. It appears that the problem of primary school dropout and retention has been able to attract the attention of the supply side of the equation. But, the demand side – the children and their parents – have not yet been either able to afford to release their children totally from household chores due to economic hardships or are not yet fully aware to be more committed towards the enrolment and retention of their children at school.

There are also child-related reasons for dropout. The major of them are: lack of interest in study, irregular attendance and late entry into school. The children's association with bad company at school or neighborhood is also a responsible factor for student dropout in primary education. But, most of the child-related causes of dropout are either related with the quality of school or the environment at home.

Suggestion to Control high Dropout: If the problem of dropout in primary education is to be controlled then there should remedial actions against causes of dropout through all the stakeholders of the primary education system. The wisdom is to act in concerted spirit by all – parents,

teachers, head teachers, SMCs, and education officers and the government.

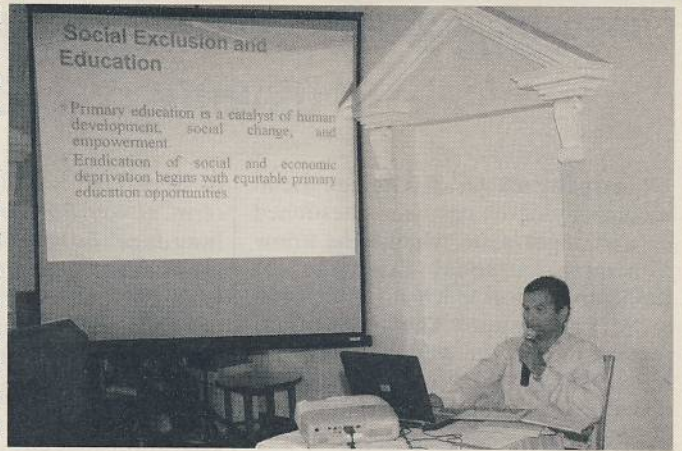
The study suggest following measures for various stakeholders to address the problem of high dropout and low retention in primary education.

Suggestions for Government: On the basis of field observations, the following remedial measures are suggested for the Government:

- Make provision for full scholarships (covering all school-related expenses) to the poor and disadvantaged children;
- Additional funding for ensuring the supply of basic physical facilities and educational materials in school;
- Enhance teacher quality through recurrent school-based training in child-friendly teaching methods;
- Provide incentives to poor and disadvantaged parents for the retention of their children in school;
- Introduce flexible school schedule & hours;
- Provide textbooks on time;
- Introduce alternative education provisions for dropout children;
- Train head teachers in effective primary school management;
- Provision of using two languages (including mother tongue) as medium of instruction;
- Review teacher recruitment policy to encourage recruitment of local and female teachers.

Suggestions for School Management Committee/Schools: On the basis of field observations, the following remedial measures are suggested for the School Management Committee/Schools:

- Establish a system of regular teacher-parent interaction;
- Introduce the follow-up of dropout children and parental counseling;
- Supply stationery free of cost to poor children;
- Make school uniform optional for children;



- Introduce child-friendly teaching method;
- Maintain discipline at school;
- Remove admission fee;
- Give social recognition to parents sacrificing for children's education;
- Pay individual attention to student performance;
- Make provision of extra-curricular activities in school;
- Depoliticize school environment;
- Maintain violence-free school environment;
- Make Provision of midday meal/ Tiffin for poor students;
- Provide extra coaching for weak students;
- Introduce flexible school hours according to the need of the community;
- Monitor school activities, teacher performance and behavior by SMC.

Suggestions for Parents: On the basis of field observations, the following remedial measures are suggested for parents:

- Pay adequate attention to children both at home and school;
- Participate in school activities;
- Reduce involvement of children in housework and earning activities;
- Ensure admission of children in school at the correct age;

Suggestions for Community: On the basis of field observations, the following remedial measures are suggested for the community:

- Enhance community support to school for controlling dropouts;
- Monitor school activities, teacher performance and behavior;
- Assist to conduct literacy campaigns and ECD classes;
- Take interest in school activities.

1 Mr. Kushiyait is Research Fellow of SIRF for 2007.

Language: A Cornerstone of Identification and Knowledge Conservation

By Mohan Das Manandhar
Rojan Bajracharya¹

In a party reception, a foreign friend accompanying us has been questioned by a stranger as to whether he know *Newari* - a local language of Kathmandu - of which my friend has basic knowledge. That individual remarked that he had guessed my friend's dialect from his posture, (even if the he - a foreigner is from a very different culture, religion and tradition) is influenced by his childhood growth-up in the *Newar* dominated society where he converse in *Newari* with his friends. The dialect that individual speaks also reflects in his attitude and behavior and will remain as an individual identity forever. Thus language generally refers as means of communication and the identity of social group, also represents an unseen process of civilization which again is the livelihood philosophy for the overall development. Borrowing Emile Durkheim's word, the Social Fact of a language associates not only with the group identity but it also associates with individual identity which lies in his/her knowledge. In term of social process, a language originates as knowledge flourishes in the group of people ingeminating their human nature and gets enriched as the knowledge of its speakers get enriched. Therefore, the one who learn the language also enhance the philosophy on which that language is attached. Further, if the language gets extinct the livelihood of its origin also dies with the language resulting extinct of associated indigenous knowledge and skill and the livelihood method.

In this regard, linguistic diversity, one of the foremost characteristic features of Nepal makes this country an ample knowledge center of human civilization. Prof. Yogendra Yadav of Tribhuvan University as well as researcher of Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF), account 105 languages from 4 different language families are dialect in this tiny country which has populace of mere two and half billion. However, the discriminatory linguistic system of the country which has been practiced in the country since ancient past has suppressed the natural multilingual status of country. *Nepali* is legitimized as the official language by the formal rulers (Rana and Saha)

of Nepal and it is defined in broadest term as the *Bazaar* and/or civilized language by the Nepali speaking populaces. The hegemony of this language is strong in the country and it persists in the present state structure of the country despite the Government of Nepal's recognition on the linguistic diversity. The other minority speakers complain Nepal has *De Facto* domination of one language. Specifically, Padma Ratna Tuladhar - a foremost human right activist of Nepal- opine his experience of sentencing to jail as he objected the 2036's public poll election because of the use of Nepali as the official dialect which subjectively could not verdict the opinion of minority speaking peoples. This human right activist has so many things to share but the heart touching among them is the Sindupalchock prison incident during which he was even restricted to talk with his mother in his mother tongue - *Newari*- by the then autocratic ruler. This later one is

In a SIRF supported research of Dev Narayan Yadav, the researcher argues that Maithali - the local language of Eastern Terai - has an influence on the traditional Mathali art and tradition which is the identity and status of this community.

evidence of not only underestimating the philosophical knowledge of language but it also try to brutally curse the mother-son relationship. There are not any words to define this tragic movement.

In a SIRF supported research of Dev Narayan Yadav, the researcher argues that *Maithali* - the local language of Eastern Terai - has an influence on the traditional *Mathali* art and tradition which is the identity and status of this community. However the practices of one language in Nepal's socio politico system has kept *Mathali* language, it's associated Art and Tradition and the entire *Maithali* community in the verge of extinct. The account of suppression against multilingualism is also documented in another SIRF supported research of Lal Rapacha. Mr. Rapacha claims that *Kirati-Bayung* - minority language of *Bayung* - has rich

vocabulary of Kirati indigenous culture and technology which is in the verge of extinct due to suppressed linguistic practice of the country. The study further highlights that around 900 populace from Okhaldhunga and Solukhumbu districts have the knowledge of this language.

The viciousness of *De Facto* one language system is also observed in education. Specifically, the education system of Nepal has marginally supported the multilingual study and focuses only on Nepali language which seriously impair the knowledge of non Nepali speaking children as he/she completely overlook the traditional knowledge in the classrooms. Government has started to publish text books in mother tongue languages since present decade and such mother tongues currently number 17 but the implementation of mother tongue education is far from prefect. Specifically, the supply of mother tongue text book is not regular; the minority language teachers are not sufficiently appointed; and the minority language teacher are not well trained. In a SIRF supported study of Amar Jung, he argues that the education in mother tongue has positive impact on the enrollment of children from minority communities. Defending on the common communicable language, the education system of Nepal has often underestimated the minority language and the knowledge associated with such language so the program and policies to promote the minority language are not effective. The international education practices claim that the children have the capacity to learn different language and the children with knowledge on various language are more competent and intellect but the education system of Nepal seems to favor this notion only in word but not practices.

The diversity of language in Nepal needs to be preserved because the language is not only a mean of communication but also the cornerstone of identification and knowledge conservation. So the concern stakeholder should pressurize the government to preserve multilingual diversity not only in word but also in work.

¹ Mr. Manandhar is associated with Social Inclusion Research Fund and Mr. Bajracharya is a freelancer.

ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES, FY 2009/2010

- by Suresh Acharya

A. FOR

1. **Prioritized:** The GPP has prioritized (i) drafting of the new constitution, (ii) conclusion of the peace process, (iii) expediting economic development as its main agenda, (iv) Also, the GPP declares management, integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants prior to the constitution drafting, which is a good sign of resolving the most controversial issue of Nepali political milieu following the fall of Monarchy.
2. **People-oriented:** The GPP seems to be people-oriented with stints of socialistic design because it has reintroduced many of the populist programmes of UML-led minority government of 1994 which were acclaimed very successful in spreading development expenditures to the grassroots level. Such programmes include: *Cooperatives in Villages and Cities; Employment at Every Household; One Village, One Product policy; Bright Nepal Campaign (i.e. rural electrification) etc.*
3. **Constitutional Supremacy:** The GPP vows to establish much needed rule of law and constitutional supremacy (whereas; Maoist call for people's supremacy), in an attempt eliminating widespread anarchism, insecurity and impunity to attract foreign direct investments and private sector in overall economic development and industrialization.
4. **Ambitious Programmes:** An 'Employment Guarantee Program' will be carried out in accordance with the GPP to ensure at least 100 days of employment each year to 31% people (90,00,000 persons) living below the poverty line. If 50 percent is to be given 100 days of employment at the rate of NRs 50/per day, the government needs to inject in the economy additional fund equivalent to NRs. 22.50 billion. Likewise, *Janata Housing* for marginalized community, and distribution of identity cards to 31% of population under the absolute poverty line has been regarded as very ambitious. *The GPP has reiterated to initiate this FY, the construction works of Fast Track (KTM to Hetauda), Modern international Airport at Nijgad Bara, East-West Railway and Hulaki Road in Terai-Madhes.*
5. **Emphasis on hydro-power:** The GPP has claimed hydro-power will be the basis of national development in Nepal.

B. AGAINST

1. **Ideological confusion:** Silence over parliamentary democracy and multi-party system in the GPP, intending to put parliamentary system in danger and paving the way for the establishment of a totalitarian regime.
 2. **Short term, not long term:** GPP unduly projecting long-term visions building large infrastructures such as heavy infrastructure projects. However, the current government was entrusted for only short-term targets of providing relief packages to flood and conflict-displaced peoples, controlling inflationary pressures, completing peace process with rehabilitation of Maoist combatants, ensuring law and order, and making a new constitution.
 3. **Loosing sights on state restructuring:** The GPP has not clarified about federalism and formation of commission to work on it, which is very essential in constitution making process. Instead the government has tried to over-step the jurisdiction of Constituent Assembly by entrusting the job of state restructuring to a newly formed Ministry of State Restructuring. This might unleash tug-of-war between the executive and the parliament over their prerogatives.
 4. **Not sincere:** The government is not sincere in addressing the agreement reached with Madhesi, Tamsaling and other groups.
 5. **Over border issues:** The GPP was silent on the encroachment of Nepali territory by India, and also found to uninterested to resolve thorny issues with India, like Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty of 1950, occupation of Kalapani by India military and harnessing Nepal's water resources for common interest of both the countries.
- ## C INFERENCE
1. **Uphold the spirit of coalition culture:** The policies and programmes came against the coalition culture, thus, PM has to make under-table dealings with coalition parties frequently, making the time ahead for the government much tougher.
 2. **Ease inflationary pressures:** The GPP has outlined its plans to ease people by controlling price rise of daily necessities such as food and fuel, and has reiterated to abolish syndicate and cartel systems, especially in essential commodities and transport sectors.
 3. **Fortify performance position:** The UCPN and MJF (Yadav) parties are expected to create chaotic conditions for

PM politically, thereby weakening the government's performance and stability, ultimately which will lead a political polarization against the CPN (UML)-led government.

4. **Beware with unpredictable move/s of UCPN (Maoist):** The recent strategies adopted by Maoist seem to be inconsistent and un-parliamentary but highly un-predictable. Within 36 hours of the parliamentary proceedings, they had boycotted the proceedings on the GPP, again they put their views through Dr. Baburam Bhattarai and finally they voted against the GPP.
5. **Ease implementation at local level:** Since, the UCPN (Maoist) has rejected the GPP, it will be very difficult for the government to implement its policies and programmes at local levels.
6. **Restructure remittance-oriented economy:** Too much dependency on remittance will turn Nepal into a remittance economy, making future growth not sustainable and un-productive.
7. **Attract Investments:** There is a little chance of attracting investments with no financial incentives, and in the absence of prospects of peace and security.
8. **Revamp implementing machineries:** The lack of programmes in revamping government's administrative and development bodies will delay the implementation.
9. **Maintain good neighborly-hood:** The GPP has stated strengthening ties with neighboring countries India and China. The Chinese news agency *Xinhua* has highlighted the government's position, that it will not allow Nepalese territory to be used against it's neighbors and friendly countries. On the other-hand, India has offered to construct a high dam at Koshi River Basin.
10. **Don't over play with Nepal Army:** The government unilateral decision to integrate the Maoist combatants into Nepal Army before the drafting of the new constitution, but without consultation with Nepal Army and 22 coalition parties including Nepali Congress, would unleash new debate and conflict among decisive groups.
11. **Success and failure:** of Madhav Nepal government is dependent on its successful implementation of its **four-point prioritized** agenda, however, the other issues have lesser or no relevance at this juncture when Nepal is passing through the Constitution Making Process. (*Acharya is the president of MIREST Nepal*)

NEPAL LAW SOCIETY

Supporting The Constitution Making

At a time when there is uncertainty over whether the new constitution will be formulated in time or not, various national and international organizations have been supporting the constitution drafting process generating hope among the people. From the very beginning of election to the Constituent Assembly until now, Nepal Law Society (NLS) has shown its visible presence. Having a long experience in constitution drafting with strong inputs from constitutional lawyers, jurists and experts, Nepal Law Society has conducted various programs, workshops and seminars for CA members, media and staff of CA secretariat to enhance their capability and skills

By A CORRESPONDENT

As the deadline for drafting a new constitution is approaching nearer, there are worries among donors, political leaders and civil society members: whether the new constitution will be promulgated by May 2010 or not?

Given the political deadlock and lack of trust among the major political parties, many people are sceptical about the future of the new constitution. But at the end of the tunnel, there are some hopeful signs as well. Especially encouraging is enthusiasm and support being extended by various international agencies to the country's constitution drafting process.

Talking to New Spotlight magazine, Secretary General at the Constituent Assembly, Manohar P. Bhattarai, expressed confidence that the new constitution will be promulgated in time. "CA will finalise the constitution by May 2010," he asserted.

Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Subas Nembang, too expressed confidence about formulation of the constitution in time. "Though we are running behind schedule, I am confident that all political parties will come together to promulgate the new constitution in time," said Nembang.

Organisations like Nepal Law Society (NLS) and International IDEA have been supporting various actors to enhance their capabilities and share national and international experiences.

Said Manohar Bhattarai, Secretary General of the CA, "The support and cooperation from the international community towards strengthening CA Secretariat and in facilitating the constitution drafting process has been fantastic. They have supported our endeavours so as to make the constitution drafting process inclusive and participatory."

NLS Involvement

After the promulgation of the Interim Constitution, Nepal began the process of drafting a new constitution through process of Constituent Assembly.

Based on the Society's past experience and rich pool of human resources, the CA Secretariat requested the Society for technical help in constitution making.

The Society then approached the Stockholm-based International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) for joint partnership in helping in the process of constitution making. The Society wanted to cash in on the international resources and expertise of the IDEA.

"The IDEA includes members from all continents of the world and has been prominently working in the areas of democratic strengthening and electoral



NLS Workshop on Constitution : Debates going on

reforms. It is a renowned international organization particularly in the areas of electoral reform. International IDEA has made its presence in Nepal by supporting democracy and electoral system. As such, the partnership with IDEA was but inevitable," said Krishna Man Pradhan, executive director of NLS.

Supported by International IDEA, the NLS has been implementing different programs for constitution making process in partnership with CA Secretariat for the last one and half years. The project now is in the stage of providing support to the 11 thematic committees of the CA. This support will continue until the committees prepare their draft and CA discusses them before promulgating the new constitution.

Supporting the Constitution Making

NLS supported the CA during the period of collection of public opinion from across the country regarding the feature of the new constitution. NLS provided feedback to the teams from the level of civil society, independent observers and intellectuals.

The NLS prepared a 12-point checklist including vital points about the structure of new government under new constitution, election system, fundamental rights, guiding principles, approaches to federalism and so on. Based on this checklist, focus group discussions were held by inviting local level stakeholders in 28 districts. In each district, the focus group discussions were held in three different places.

After submission of preliminary drafts by the Thematic Committees, Constitutional Committee will prepare the draft constitution and present it in the Constituent Assembly.

At this moment it is necessary to provide knowledge on drafting skills to CA members. Moreover, the thematic committee members are busy in preparing initial drafts. However, most of the CA members do not have technical skills of drafting a constitution.

The Society has experience and expertise on constitution drafting at the national level while International IDEA

brings with it unrivalled international expertise. The CA Secretariat, International IDEA and Nepal Law Society jointly organized skill development orientation for CA members and officials on Constitution Drafting from 3 to 9 May 2009 in Kathmandu.

The participants were selected from CA Members who have legal background and are influential in their respective parties. Similarly CA staff who are contributing in the constitution drafting were also involved in the training program

Nepal Law Society (NLS) has been active in legal sector reforms and studies ever since its inception in 1982. The Society was established by legal professionals including judges, lawyers, law professors, and law academicians. The Society, with its network spread all over Nepal, has continuously engaged in studies, campaigns and exercises in partnership with various national and international organisations to promote rule of law and constitutionalism in Nepal.

The Society was involved in providing expert inputs while drafting the constitution of 1990 and interim constitution of 2006. In 1990, the Society collected public views from around the world and brought foreign experts to provide technical inputs to the Constitution Drafting Commission of Nepal. In 2006, the Society organized public programs to discuss about the features of the interim constitution and provided feedback to the authorities.

Despite the determination of the calendar and working procedure, the parties still need to reach understanding on many key issues for timely writing of constitution. Otherwise, the trend of revising some timelines will continue and could ultimately, affect the date of promulgation of constitution.

It is, therefore, apparent that Nepali stakeholders require support on post conflict negotiation regarding the constitutional choices ahead. Such assistance, however, need to be offered in a very low key manner respecting the national process and timelines.

The range of assistance include the need to educate and train all 601 members of the CA - of whom the overwhelming numbers are young, new and inexperienced. On the other hand, the expectation among the people is very high. There is also a big challenge of ensuring that the new constitution will be inclusive and consensus-based.

All these challenges have assumed greater significance given the constitutional deadline since the new constitution has to be written by the CA within one year at the most.

Therefore, International IDEA and the Nepal Law Society, in close consultation with the Constituent Assembly Secretariat, have come up with a program "Making a new Constitution through the Constitution Assembly." This program aims at facilitating the overcoming of aforementioned challenges and ensuring the drafting of new constitution on time.

At a time when there is growing distrust between the major political parties possibly affecting the constitution making process, activities of non-governmental organization like NLS and INGOs like International IDEA are giving hopeful signs. ■

"We stand ready to support CA in the Constitution Making Process"

-*Krishna Man Pradhan*

Executive Director of Nepal Law Society, **KRISHNA MAN PRADHAN**, has been working in the areas of promoting rule of law, legal education and constitutionalism for a long time. He spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on issues related to the Society's support to the on-going constitution making process. Excerpts:

As the first phase of the constitution making process is closer to end, what future plan does the NLS have?

As you know, this year is very important for drafting a new constitution and the CA process. The Assembly needs strong support from experts and organisations to move ahead as per the working calendar and meet the deadline. Hence, we have devised our future activities so as to assist the CA in meeting its objectives.

Do you think there still is need of orientation for CA Members?

The planning workshop has proposed 4-5 orientation programs for the members in near future. For the orientation programs, we hope to discuss and finalise participants' numbers, program days, program issues, resource persons and discussion issues at the steering committee meetings during July-August 2009.

Why did you set up a Steering Committee?

To make the constitution making process effective, the Society constituted a Steering Committee under the leadership of Chairperson of Nepal Law Society (NLS) including representatives from five major political parties, CA Secretariat and International IDEA with the objective of supporting the constitution making process.

What is its objective?

Major objectives of the steering committee include facilitating the CA secretariat staff for formulating and implementing new programs, review of the ongoing activities and propose future activities. The Society nominated two representatives from its executive committee for the steering committee to monitor and review the progress of the project.

Had it held its meeting?

The steering committee has already

met for four times under the chairmanship of senior lawyer Kusum Shrestha, who is also the chairperson of NLS. About 14 representatives from different political parties and partner organizations participated in the meetings. Member- secretary of the steering committee and Chief of Mission of International IDEA highlighted the project objectives and proposed different activities for implementation. The steering committee members discussed in detail and provided feedback about the proposed activities. Nepal Law Society updated the proposed activities based on their feedback and continues to implement programs as per their advice.

How do you evaluate the skill development program for CA members?

The seven-day skill development program has already been held with the objective of enhancing the drafting skills of the concerned CA members. It is necessary to have impact assessment of this program to tailor the future skill development programs on need basis.

How is the NLS supporting the constitution drafting process?

After finalizing the concept paper by 11 different thematic committees, the Constitution Committee will start drafting of the constitution during which period the project will hire five constitution experts to support the process. Experts will be identified in consultation with International IDEA and CA Secretariat. The detailed support methodology will be identified by the steering committee meeting. Once the CA readies the concept paper and starts the drafting process, we plan to provide expert help in the process.

How many programs has NLS completed so far?

We have completed a number of programs between April 2008 and May 2009. The planning workshop was held on 28 January this year in Kathmandu. About 22 members participated in the planning workshop. Two representatives from each major political parties participated in the planning workshop. Leena Rikkila Tamang, Head of Mission, International IDEA, highlighted the

completed activities and proposed activities for future. CA members Khim Lal Devkota and Ek Raj Bhandari from UCPN Maoist, CA member Puspa Bhusal from NC, CA member Agni Kharel from UML, CA members Sarat Singh Bhandari and Nilam Verma from Madhesi Janadhikar Forum and Manohar Prasad Bhattarai, Krishna Prasad Pandey, and Mukunda Sharma from CA Secretariat took part in the workshop.

What other programs you have conducted so far?

Nepal Law Society conducted training cum orientation for CA officials after it was endorsed by the steering committee. The program was held on 1-3 October 2008 in Lalitpur. The first orientation cum training program for CA officials targeted primarily the office holders in the CA Secretariat and other key actors with a direct role in defining rules of procedure. About 45 officials of the CA, Ministry of Law and Justice, Prime Minister's Office and Attorney General's office participated in the program.

Have you invited any foreign experts?

A total of eight resource persons participated in the program. Out of eight, two resource persons were invited from South Africa and Kenya. International IDEA managed the international resource persons from South Africa and Kenya. The reference materials were also provided by the International IDEA for the participants.

Are you also targeting the media?

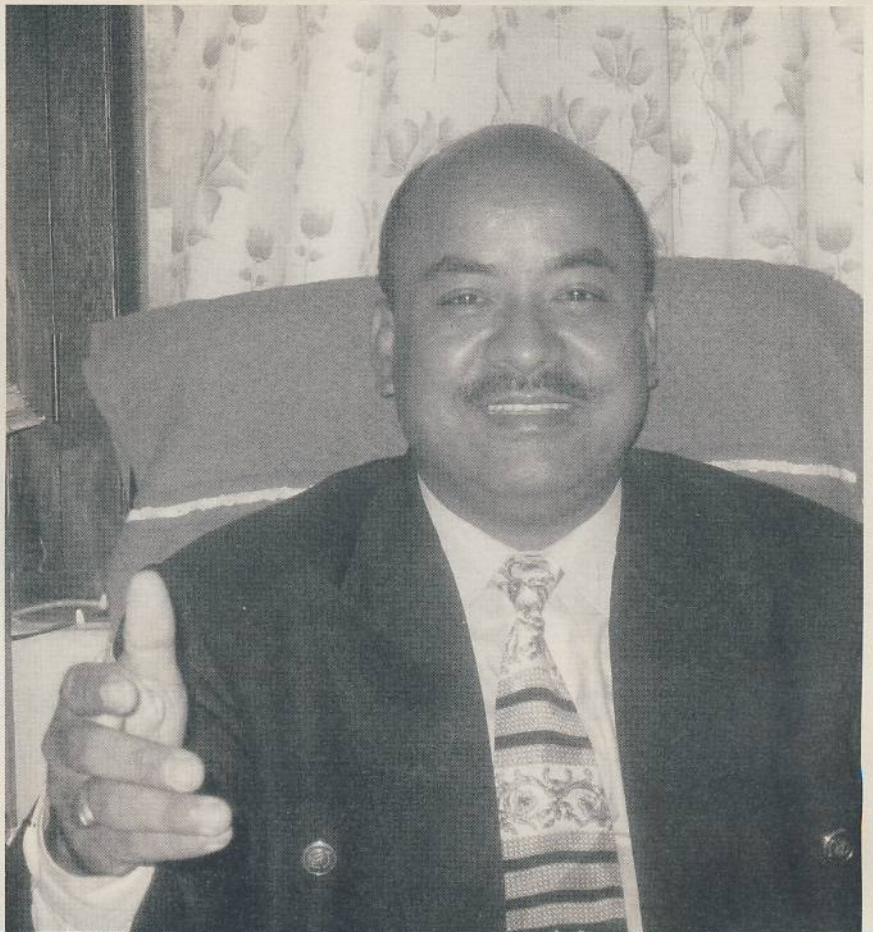
The orientation cum training for media was conducted jointly by Nepal Law Society, CA Secretariat, Parliament Media Society and International IDEA. About 140 media personnel and CA officials participated in the program on 17 December 2008 at Kathmandu.

Have you conducted orientation for CA Members?

We have also conducted orientating program for CA after the formation of 14 different committees comprising all 601 members. We are planning for 4-5 programs in near future.

Have you provided any assistance to support CA working procedures?

Nepal Law Society has published CA working rules, Legislative - Parliament rules and CA working calendar in Nepali. About 10,000 copies were published and distributed to all CA members, media, officials, different political parties and



objectives of the planning workshop, members of civil societies. The English version was distributed jointly by CA secretariat and International IDEA to international community, donor community and other Nepali stakeholders. CA Secretariat, International IDEA and Nepal Law Society jointly organized the skill development orientation for CA members and officials from 3 to 9 May 2009 in Kathmandu.

What role NLS played during public opinion collection?

About 70 pages long questionnaires were prepared by the CA and printed for public opinion collection. The Society translated it into English for the benefit of international community, donors and other stakeholders.

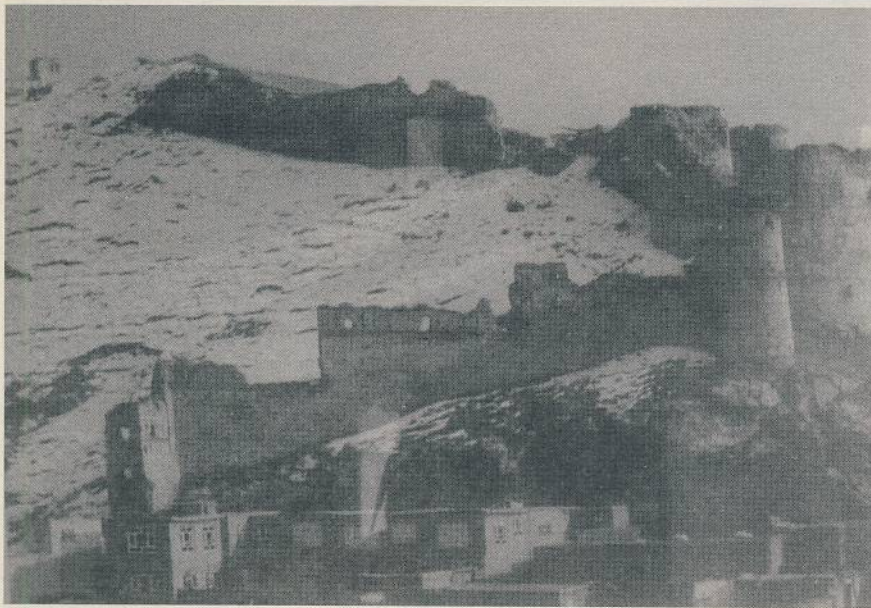
Why did you make some changes in the questionnaires?

Based on the CA Check list/questionnaires and NLS expert's feedback, the Society prepared shorter questionnaires/checklist for NLS public opinion collection workshops conducted in 28 different districts. The questionnaires (in Nepali language) were printed and distributed during the workshop. About

4,500 local level stakeholders including political party leaders, civil society leaders, community development leaders, teachers, women, dalit, Janajati, Madhesis, civil society leaders and members of the media participated in the workshops. NLS has conducted 84 workshops in 28 districts and about 4500 local level stakeholders including political party leaders, civil society leaders, community development leaders, teachers, women, dalits, Janjatis, Madheshis, civil society leaders, media persons participated in the workshops.

Do you organize skill development Program for CA Members?

The project conducted skill development orientation program for CA members from May 3 to 9, 2009 in Kathmandu. It was meant to share drafting skills, concept and principles, share international experiences and build consensus on the constitution drafting process between the parties and CA members. Now, the Society has also planned to prepare and publish commentary note on 11 different CA committee's concept papers for CA members and stakeholders. ■



ART

The Artistic Side of Ambassadors

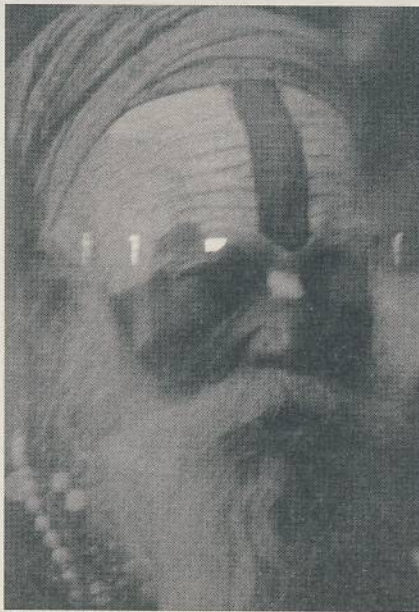
In diplomacy, it is rare but it is possible in the art exhibition where three ambassadors jointly inaugurated the exhibition

BY PRADIPTI BHATTA

A photo exhibition is being held at Indigo Gallery, Naxal. The photographers of this exhibition named, 'More than Ambassadors' are three Ambassadors to Nepal, Nancy J. Powell, Finn Thilsted and Rakesh Sood ambassadors of The United States of America, Denmark and India respectively. The exhibition which had its opening on July 4 will be showcased till July 19.

When the initial idea of this exhibition came up, the present US Ambassador Nancy J. Powell was approached by the director of Indigo Gallery, James Giambrone. The idea of including two other former ambassadors to Nepal, H.E. Finn Thilsted and H.E. Rakesh Sood was her proposal. The main attraction in this exhibition is indeed the photographers.

The photographs displayed in this exhibition are related to the cultural and natural beauties of three countries, Nepal, Kenya and Afghanistan. The pictures taken by Nancy J. Powell are all related to Nepal, the ones taken by James Giambrone are related to Kenya and those taken by Rakesh Sood are



from Afghanistan. All the photographs are exceptionally eye catching.

Nancy J. Powell has captured colorful photographs from different places in Kathmandu and some from Mustang. Her photographs seem uncomplicated yet very deep. A few pictures she has taken in Pashupatinath temple, Bouddhanath stupa and Hanumandhoka are very colorful which

makes them really beautiful. She has also taken pictures of some brilliant landscapes in Mustang which are worth looking for.

Finn Thilsted's photographs are attractive as well. His snaps include wildlife, culture and sceneries. He has shown parts of Kenya through his snaps. One of his best pictures shows three children collecting water. The Flamingos in Lake Nakuru, a Man from Samburu and Aberdare Mountains are also exceptionally stunning photographs.

Finally, the pictures taken by Rakesh Sood are also very attractive. Just like Nancy Powell and Finn Thilsted, he has also captured nature as well as culture in his photographs. 'Dusty Winds of Wakhan' is one of the finest photos in the exhibition. 'Grazing on the Edge' and an old Afghan man are also outstandingly beautiful photographs.

When asked about the response towards the exhibition, Rabindra Shakya, the manager of Indigo Gallery says there has been a good response and a lot of interested people have been coming to see the display. He further adds that the people coming to see the exhibit have been pleased about the photographs. He also gives further details and says that nineteen photographs have been sold till now among which 11 of them are Nancy J. Powell's work.

As a whole, this exhibit has shown the artistic side of three Ambassadors. Not only does it show their creative side, it also shows their dedication towards their work as Ambassadors. ■

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