

NEW SPOTLIGHT

Nov. 27, Dec.-10, 2009

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NEWSMAGAZINE



Interview: Gauri Pradhan



Child Rights

What's Wrong?

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DARJEELING: No Cheers!
Politics: Too Much of blame
Social Inclusion

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

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

Kathmandu DAO Regd. No. 148/11/063/64, Postal Regd. No. 07/066/067

US Library of Congress Catalogue No. 91-905060



**PM Visited
NA's VVIP Flights**

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal visited Nepal Army's no 11 Brigade and VVIP flight at Gauchar. Chief of Army Staff General Chhatraman Singh Gurung briefed Prime Minister Nepal about the state of VVIP flights. During the visit, defense Minister Bidya Devi Bhandair and finance minister Surendra Pandey and other senior army generals were also there. COAS Gurung also highlighted the role played by Nepal Army's Air Wing at the time of disasters.

**UK Announces \$80 M to Nepal
for Tackling Climate Change**

The UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) will be spending up to £50 million (\$80 million) over the next 10 years to help tackle climate change and improve the lives of poor people in Nepal.

Poor people are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and the money, announced less than a month before the start of the Copenhagen climate change meeting, will be used to help provide a practical response on the ground.

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown has said: "Countries right across the world need to take urgent and radical action to tackle climate change. The poorest and most vulnerable countries need our help to do so."

"That is why we are announcing a £50m (\$80m) package of support to work with Nepal to tackle climate change and deforestation. And with less than one month to go before Copenhagen it is time for the world to step up and make the bold decisions we need to secure a global comprehensive and binding

climate change deal."

A total of £40 million (\$66 million) of the new money will go towards protecting Nepal's forests by supporting a National Forestry Programme with other donors. This will help some of the world's poorest people to earn a living from forests' natural resources (such as thatch, fruits, wood and essential oils) and reduce the forest degradation and deforestation that contribute over 70 per cent of Nepal's green house gas emissions.

Nepal's new National Forest Programme aims to help increase the incomes of around 1.2 million people by 50 per cent and will also capture CO₂, potentially attracting millions of pounds annually through international carbon trading.

A further £10 million (\$16 million) of the UK money will be used to help increase Nepal's resilience to the impacts of climate change. Measures to be taken will include improving emergency warning systems, protecting the vulnerable from floods and landslides and supporting community water schemes to increase their ability to cope with drought.

The money will also go towards supporting Nepal to negotiate on and access global climate funds.

Indian Assistance

Under two separate Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) signed on November 13, between Embassy of India with concerned District Development Committees and the beneficiary organizations, Indian government will provide Rs. 24.7 million.

Shree Durga Higher Secondary School, Alital, Dadeldhura will receive 2.39 crores for construction of a school

building, a toilet block for girls' and boys, boundary wall and provision of furniture, computers and printers. The new infrastructure being created with the assistance of Government of India will provide much needed classroom space to over 850 students who are presently attending classes in a temporary building.

Similarly, Aadikabi Bhanubakta Multiple Campus, Damauli, Tanahun will receive Rs1.08 crores for construction of double storied library building, provision of furniture, Closed Circuit camera with computer network, books and office equipment. Currently these schools are functioning in old buildings and urgently need upgradation of infrastructure. New buildings being created with the assistance of Government of India will help in creating the requisite infrastructure for these schools and enable them to upgrade their capacity in keeping with their educational standards and increasing number of students. These schools are among the important sources of education in their areas and altogether serve the educational needs of over 2200 students.

**Nepalese Students Growing in
Number in U.S. Universities**

The number of Nepali students enrolled in U.S. institutions of higher education increased from 8,936 to 11,581 in 2008/09, a 29.6% increase over the 2007/08 academic year, according to *Open Doors 2009*, the annual report on international academic mobility published by the Institute of International Education (IIE) with support from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State. Nepal ranks 11th among the leading countries of origin of international students, as it did the last year.

According to U.S. Embassy Kathmandu's Counselor for Public Affairs Terry J. White, "America's nearly 3,000 accredited schools of higher education continue to attract new students in what is becoming a highly competitive international 'market' around the world. The U.S. remains the preferred destination for students from Nepal who want to study abroad because of the quality and prestige associated with an American degree.



Far West College Wins British Council's Enterprise Challenge

British Council celebrated Enterprise Challenge during the Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) from 16-20 November 2009. The Enterprise Challenge is a one-day national competition for schools, colleges and training deliverers involved in vocational education or training.

Five best teams representing vocational and technical colleges from Eastern, Central, Western and Far-Western regions came to Kathmandu on 15 November and participated in the final national competition after taking 2 days' training on 16 and 17 November.

The Challenge is designed for students aged 16-21 studying in TEVT institutions and aims to encourage their enterprise capability, communication and planning skills. Through their ideas for finding solutions to a set challenge, students are encouraged to be creative and think outside the box as well as develop their skills of team work, problem solving, communication, financial literacy and leadership.

The team worked for the whole day, brainstorming, researching, and finalising an enterprising idea and submitted its proposal. On 19 November all teams presented their ideas to judges.

On the selection process, one of the judges, Lynne Heslop, Regional Education Strategic Advisor, British Council, said, "They were all amazing. Each team came up with very creative ideas and presented them professionally with a strong belief in themselves and their ability to contribute to their communities. It was a very exciting, nail-biting final."

KOICA Program

The Korea International

Cooperation Agency (KOICA) organized a day long conference on KOICA Volunteers Program for the Representatives of recipient organizations on November 13.

Its prime objective is to review and evaluate KOICA's volunteer program and share the best practice and learning of the representative of the recipient organization. It is expected that the meeting will give a platform to discuss ways to promote a better policy and effective implementation of Volunteer program in the future. The program is also designed to give a glance at the overall KOICA's program and volunteer activities.

Since 1990 KOVs are deployed in various governmental organizations from within and outside the Kathmandu valley according to the demands from Nepalese government. These KOICA volunteers are from various backgrounds like Education, Urban development, Children education, IT, Health and etc. Till date total 216 KOVs have been dispatched in Nepal. At present there are 42 volunteers working in 25 different governmental sectors.

A total of 45 participants attended this Conference from related Ministries and Organizations. South Korean Ambassador Hong Sungmog stated that he is trying his best to put Nepal in Korea's core list for development cooperation, however for this Nepalese side also should work closely with KOICA and Korean volunteers.

Scott H. DeLisi Named US Envoy For Nepal

US President Barack Obama has named Scott H. DeLisi, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, as the American Ambassador to Nepal.

DeLisi has served in US Foreign Service for 28 years. He has been the Ambassador to the State of Eritrea, a Deputy Chief of Mission of the American Embassy in Gaborone, Botswana, Director of Southern African Affairs, Vice-Counsel for the Embassy of India, the Chief of Political Section in Sri Lanka, in addition to other postings in Madagascar and Pakistan.

Currently, DeLisi is the Director of Career Development and Assignments in the State Department's Bureau of Human Resources where he has played a key role in the staffing of embassies. This has included missions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan.

Previously, as the Director for Entry Level Programs, DeLisi was responsible for the training, placement and career development of 600 new entrants and 2500 existing Foreign Service Officers. DeLisi has also served as.

A native of Minnesota, DeLisi holds both a B.A. and J.D. from the University of Minnesota.

Yeti Begins Flight To Dhangadhi

After adding a new aircraft in its fleet, Yeti Airlines begins its new flight to Dhangadhi. Along with adding new flight to Dhangadhi, it also increases flight frequencies to other destinations like in Janakpur. The airline is also adding destinations.

Businessman Rajbhandari In London Business

26 | London Business Matters

Ditya Mani Rajbhandari

WORKING LUNCH

The article discusses Ditya Mani Rajbhandari's business ventures and his perspective on investment opportunities in Nepal. It mentions his role as a businessman and his views on the current economic and political climate in Nepal, particularly regarding the impact of the earthquake and the government's response.

Published from London, the news paper London Business Matter has Published profile of Nepal's eminent business personality Ditya Mani Rajbhanadri. talked about Nepal's potential areas for investment and his own experiences working as a businessman. In his encounter, Rajbhanari argued that Nepal is still favourable place for investment. ■



Prachanda (Centre), Narayan Kaji (Left) and Dr. Baburam (Right) : Eying Baluwater

MAOIST LEADERSHIP

Top Tussle

As it eyes the top executive government job again, the largest party in the constituent assembly sees a race to become the boss

By **SUSHIL SHARMA**
with **SAROJ DAHAL**

The budget has been cleared from the parliament. But the political cloud has not cleared yet.

The passage of the budget has given a much-needed oxygen to the fragile coalition government. But the main opposition Maoists is hell bent on replacing the 22-party dispensation.

It is pinning hope on the much talked-about “middle way” to realize its dream. And on the factions within the key governing parties – the Nepali Congress and the UML.

It is no secret that Nepali Congress president Girija Prasad Koirala and the UML chairman Jhalnath Khanal both want to have truck with the Maoists for “a national government of consensus”.

Even India, who is said to be throwing its weight behind the current government, is not averse to the idea, provided it “tamed” the “unpredictable” Maoists.

But the million dollar question is: who will lead the new coalition if and when it is put in place.

Being the largest party, the Maoists are a natural claimant.

Although their claim is less likely to be fulfilled, a tussle is on within the party for the top job.

Having already assumed the mantle, without much success, chairman Prachanda is out of reckoning, according to some senior leaders.

Vice chairman Baburam Bhattarai is one of such believers.

He has set eye on the Singh Durbar’s

most coveted chair.

“The chairman has, in internal party trainings, ruled himself out becoming the prime minister again. So, I am the natural alternative.”

Seen by his critics as Delhi’s blue-eyed boy, the Jawaharlal Nehru University alumnus is not foreign to the external role in making and breaking the government in Kathmandu.

He acts accordingly. And is confident of making it.

Another vice chairman Narayan Kaji Shrestha has also been nursing the ambition.

Shrestha, who dubiously played a crucial role as a non-Maoist leader, in the 12-point Delhi agreement, sees himself as a dark horse.

But a neo-Maoist, Shrestha has too many hurdles to cross within the former rebels’ party.

His maneuvering for the top executive job, according to many insiders, is unlikely to yield the results.

They see in Shrestha a disguised counter to Bhattarai – posed by none other than Prachanda who hopes to emerge the real beneficiary in the tussle between the former.

A fourth contender is Ram Bahadur Thapa. The former defence minister is favourite among those who do not like former finance minister Bhattarai and the new entrant, Shrestha.

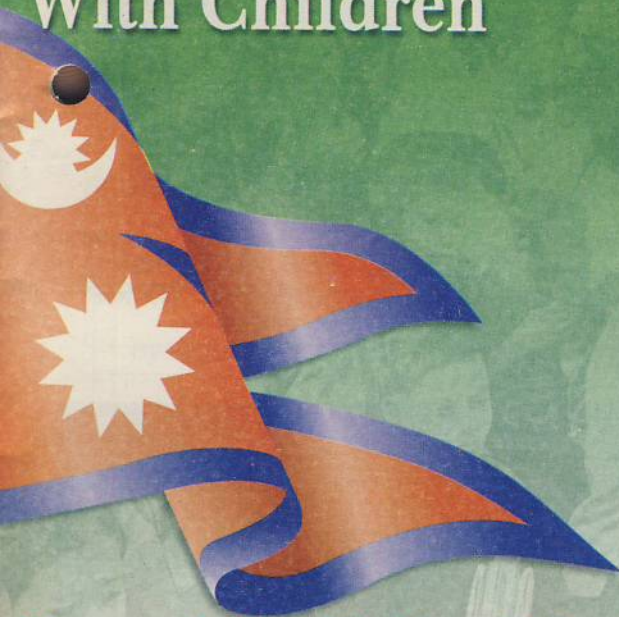
A low-profile Thapa is however only a card that can at best make or the break the case of the others, rather than standing on its own to take a sigh at the prime minister’s chair.

The eventual winner of tussle for the top inside the Maoist party could be someone from outside the party.

Instead of letting a fellow leader to overtake themselves, the failed contenders will be content to let the other parties to head the much talked-about “national consensus government” – something the UN secretary general also mentioned in a recent controversial statement.

With international community, especially India, averse to the Maoists heading the new government again ahead of the new constitution, due in six months, the tussle for the top is bound to be suicidal for the ex-rebels. ■

Let's Build New Nepal With Children



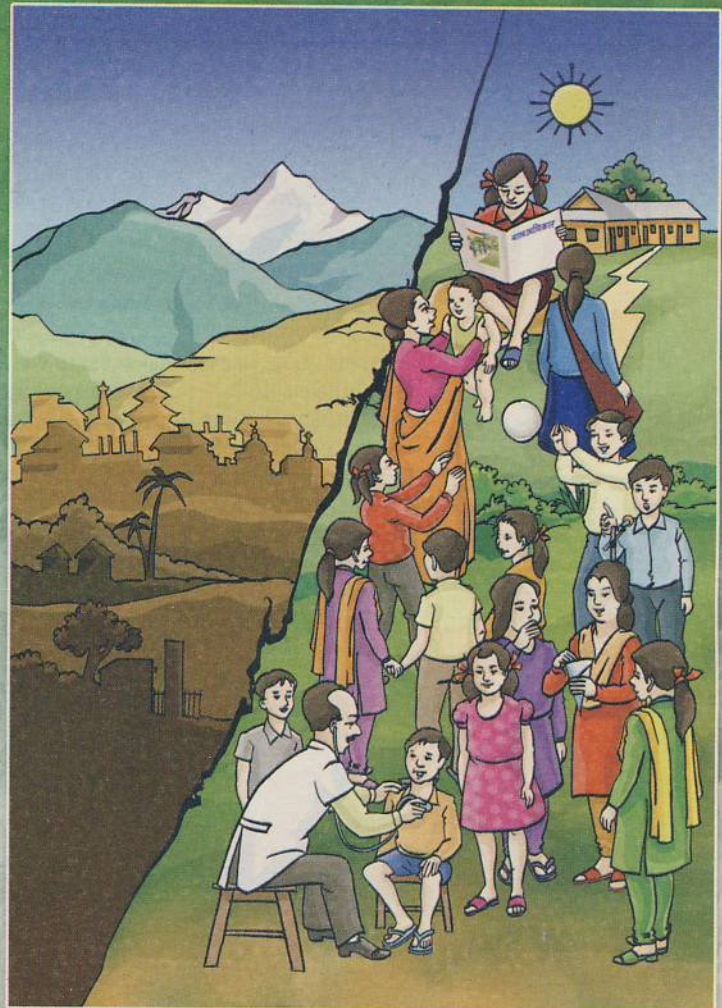
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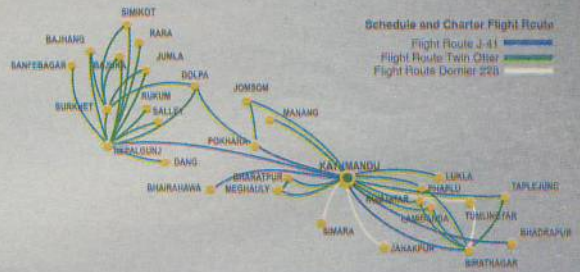
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London Airport : Tight Immigration

File Photo

IMMIGRATION

Hot Potato

With general elections only a few months away, major political parties in the UK spar over the immigration issue

By **BHAGIRATH YOGI** in London

With general elections round the corner, it was but natural for the issue of immigration to return to the centre of political debate in the UK. Sensing the public mood, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced in early November that he will tighten the UK immigration rules by reducing the number of professions that can recruit from outside Europe. Engineers, chefs and care workers could be among those affected.

If the proposal is implemented, one of the sectors that is likely to be adversely affected is South Asian restaurant businesses in the UK, popularly known as curry restaurants. The first curry restaurant was opened in UK in 1809. After 200 years, it is estimated that there are around 10,000 South Asian (mainly Bangladeshi and Indian) restaurants and take aways all over the UK employing around 100,000 people. The turnover of these restaurants is estimated to be around 4.5 billion pound every year.

While the number of Nepali restaurants in the UK is much smaller—only a couple of hundreds—they are seen as an important venue to promote Nepal and Nepali culture. “British

people love Nepali restaurants and we are doing our best to promote Nepal through food, music and other promotional events,” said Dhruva KC, honorary Public Relations Officer of the Nepal Tourism Board, who also runs a restaurant in Wembley, London. “It is not clear as yet how the new immigration rules will affect the restaurant sector, but we are worried,” he added.

Another area that is likely to be affected is overseas students. Speaking in West London in early November, Prime Minister Brown announced that his government will review the granting of student visas. “Visas would be stopped for those seeking to take shorter courses leading to lower-level qualifications, to clamp down on people using these as an excuse to enter the UK before disappearing into illegal work,” he added.

The British Prime Minister’s announcement came amid reports that the number of students coming to the United Kingdom from India, Bangladesh and Nepal has risen sharply since the start of point-based immigration system introduced last year. Information obtained by the BBC under the freedom of information act revealed that three times more visas were issued in Mumbai,

New Delhi and Dakar this summer than during the same period last year. Visas issued between June and August this year rose from just under 7,000 to around 20,000.

Woes of the students

Thousands of Nepali students and their dependants have arrived in UK to pursue higher studies from September/October season. But unlike what they were promised back home, they have come to realise that prospects of finding a part-time job in London was almost nil. “All of you know how many Nepali parents can afford to send money to their children who are studying in a country like UK or USA every month?” asked Dharma Raj Adhikari, a Nepali student at an interaction program organised by the Non-resident Nepali Association (NRNA) UK chapter at Woolwich London, on November 22. “Study alone is not our priority. We must find a job to maintain ourselves,” he declared.

But overseas students including Nepalese students have now realised that finding a job in London and surrounding areas has become next to impossible. As the British economy is still reeling under economic recession, some two million Britons are estimated to have lost their jobs over the last year. The unemployment rate is hovering at around 7.8 percent—the highest since 1997 when the Labour government was elected to the office.

The downturn in the British economy has made the debate over immigration more sensitive. “Immigration is the most contentious of all the challenges confronting today’s high-income countries,” wrote Martin Wolf, a columnist, in the Financial Times—a leading British daily. “The topic is too important to be ignored.”

According to an Ipsos Mori poll conducted in June this year, British people interviewed for the survey regarded immigration and race relations as the second most important issue facing the country today, after crime. This despite the fact that ethnic minorities comprise only around 10 percent of the total population in the UK.

Studies, however, suggest that migrants are more skilled and often more reliable and hardworking than British workers. According to a 2007 study conducted jointly by the British Treasury, Home Office and Department of Work and Pensions, migrant workers contribute around 6 billion pounds a

year to the British economy. “The migrants on average earn more and so pay more tax than UK workers,” the study concluded.

Right-wing think tanks like Migration Watch UK don’t agree to such findings. In a recent report, the organisation claimed that economic benefit from the immigration inflow was very limited. “Immigration adds to the economic growth, but it also adds nearly proportionately to our population so that the benefit to the host community is small. Hence, a major step must be taken to limit the scale and pace of further immigration,” the report concluded.

The main opposition Conservative Party—that is ahead of the ruling Labour party in the opinion polls as a likely winner in the forthcoming general elections due in May 2010—also toes this line. “Our approach will ensure that we admit both the right people for our economy and also the right number of people. A conservative government would also apply transitional controls as a matter of course in the future for all non EU entrants,” the party said.

The third largest party in the House of Commons, Liberal Democrats, says it wants an immigration system that works. “A system that is firm but fair, which plans for the effects of managed legal migration and promotes integration. We believe in the benefits that immigration has brought this country but we do not believe our borders should be a soft touch,” the party said.

Right-wing parties like the British National Party (BNP) see, however, immigration as a threat to what they call the “very British identity.”

“On current demographic trends, we, the native British people, will be an ethnic minority in our own country within sixty years,” reads a policy paper of the BNP. “We will abolish the ‘positive discrimination’ schemes that have made white Briton second-class citizens. We will also clamp down on the flood of ‘asylum seekers,’ all of whom are either bogus or can find refuge much nearer their home countries,” the party said.

While parties like the BNP are still on the fringe of the British political spectrum, it seems that the issue they are championing – that there should be total clampdown on immigration—has started to add pressure on the mainstream political parties in the UK. And, the high-pitched debate is all set to continue.



Prachanda (Left) and Koirala (Right): The deal

POLITICS

The Singapore Deal

Sharing the seat of power remains the centre of “a tripartite deal” in Singapore.

By SAROJ DAHAL

Maoist chief Prachanda has flip-flopped over his meeting with the Nepali Congress boss Girija Prasad Koirala, in Singapore.

On return from the hastily-planned two-day journey to Singapore, he predicted an early fall of the current “unnatural” coalition government and the installation of a new one soon.

After a second round of meeting with the ailing Koirala on the latter’s return from the Singapore hospital, Prachanda, contradicted his earlier remarks and blamed the media for “distortion”.

Koirala also assured an anxious prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal as much.

But, sources said, Koirala and Prachanda have agreed on a package under which a new coalition comprising of the Maoists would replace the present government.

A high level political machinery led by Koirala will guide the government.

The idea is that once such machinery is set up, the present government will fall under the machinery’s weight, clearing the way for a new coalition.

“There has been a tripartite deal between Koirala, Prachanda and representatives of the Indian establishment,” said a Maoist source.

Who will lead the new government is not clear yet. But the Maoists are confident they will regain the coveted chair they left less than a year ago. And eyeing the return to Baluwatar is none other than Prachanda himself.

India is opposed to the idea of the Maoists leading the new government. But the Maoists believe they have the combined support of the EU, the UN and China, which they believe will be enough to persuade India to reconsider its position.

Said a politburo member Lilamani Pokharel, “since India is not happy with the present government, there is a strong hope that it can be persuaded to accept a Maoist-led government.”

This sounds too optimistic. But the fall of the government and the installation of a new one is not.

A senior Nepali Congress leader has hinted as much. Said central committee member Shekhar Koirala, “a new consensus government is inevitable soon, possibly under the leadership someone other than the Maoist.”

Shekhar was privy to the meeting between his uncle leader and Prachanda in Singapore.

The new government could see the light of the day ahead of the nation-wide general strike planned by the Maoists next month.

This at least is what the dealers are hoping. ■



UML Leader Khanal and NC Leader Poudel: Helpless

POLITICAL LEADERS

Too Much of a Blame

It is not the incapability or the capability of the leadership that determines the degree of political stability that Nepal can achieve. It is the country's geo-strategic location that makes all the difference.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Politician bashing is an intellectual ritual practiced by many sectors of the society, including the media people. Irrespective of their own state of mind, intellectuals and journalists find an easy target in the political leaders to blame for the mess in the country.

One only needs to read Nepal's history of the last sixty years to realize, however, that instability and chaos have characterized all periods and leaderships.

But then, the present mess is what matters the most.

"It is unfortunate that our political leaders have never learned to manage the transition. They are mostly responsible for pushing the country into a prolonged course of political instability," said professor Dr. Lok Raj Baral. "After studying their political behavior, I have drawn a conclusion that the democratic system has no future in Nepal."

"Because of non-seriousness among political leaders, we are unable to bring the constitutional process back on the right track," said Constitution Committee chairman Nilamber Acharya, who was also involved in finalizing the constitution of 1990.

"If political leaders seriously work, peace and order will be possible," renowned constitutional lawyer Dr. Surya Dhungel said.

At a program organized by SAARC Law Nepal and Consortium of Constitutional Experts (CONCOE) on the role of the New Constitution in Managing Transition Challenges and Aspirations, speaker after speaker blamed "incapable" political leaders for the present chaos and uncertainty.

Here is another take. Even the most capable leaders of their times like Matrika Prasad Koirala, who competently dealt with Indian leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, and charismatic leader B.P. Koirala ended their career in trying to bring order and stability in the country.

The umpteenth time Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, who served the longest period in office of all democratic Prime Ministers despite being regarded as far too inexperienced than his two brothers, repeatedly failed to bring stability and order. The firebrand Maoist supremo Prachanda, who led the rebellion and became the Prime Minister, exited from office amidst the mess.

Known for his soft spoken and compromising posture, the fate of present Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, who was defeated in two

constituencies, is no different. It is obviously not surprising that Nepal is blamed for the present crisis.

Everyone thinks that their political leaders have the medicine to treat instability. But the reality is much more powerful than the wishes of the people. As a country with lack of modern political institutions and peculiar geo-strategic position, surrounded by two powerful countries with disputed borders, Nepal needs more than the "capability of leaders" to bring the stability. Unless its giant neighbors allow, even the most capable Nepalese leaders can do little to maneuver much on their own. This is the reason most leaders have suffered a setback one after another while the country is being pushed in the quagmire of a never ending transition. Look at India, a housewife-turned-politician has been able to provide stability in the government.

"Only wise political leaders can lead the next transition smoothly. Otherwise, the country has to suffer a lot," said advocate Purna Man Shakya. "We have already suffered a lot because of incapable leaders," said associate professor Ganesh Bhatta.

If one compares Nepal's political leaders with Indian leaders, they are better in terms of capacity and education. The paradox is that Nepal's government is unstable all the time even if it enjoyed the majority. But a coalition government led by Bihar's former chief minister's wife has provided a stable government.

According to a political analyst, because of Nepal's geopolitical situation bring any kind of constitution; it is not going to last long. Despite continuous instability, Nepal will not face Afghanistan like Turmoil. Instability may continue but it will not go to an extreme violent phase as Nepal is liquidated between most sensitive parts of its two neighbors.

As eminent constitutional lawyer Ganesh Raj Sharma writes in his article Monarchy and the Democratic Development in Contemporary Nepal published in 1988: "The country and its problems have to be viewed in correct perspectives in which outsiders often fail. Nepal is in a very precarious position geographically as well as politically. On both sides of the country, there are irreconcilable political systems. Coexisting between the two powerful political systems, it becomes very difficult to resist their pressure... A situation in which even god might fail..." ■

CHILD RIGHTS

What's Wrong?

Over the last two decades, Nepal has made a lot of progress in terms of child rights. While the country's constitution holds out prospects to be a child-friendly one and many children are already benefiting from improved access to health and education, an overwhelming number of rural children in Nepal are still suffering from all forms discriminations and child labor. Worse still, the number of malnourished children has increased. The coming days need more concerted actions to improve the children's lot

By KESHAB POUDEL

Maila Tamang, 14, is working at a Gosaikunda Hotel in Dhunche, the district headquarters of Rasuwa, 100 kilometers north of the capital. The boy wants to go to school, yet he has no choice but to work.

Tamang earns a monthly salary of Rs. 1,500.00, with three meals a day. His earning supports his family back home at Varse Village Development Committee. The family buys foodstuff from the money.

"I want to go to school but who will feed me and my family," said Tamang, who dropped out at class six. "If I go to school, the hoteliers will recruit another boy in my place."

Tamang is not the only child who has to feed his family. There are tens of thousands of other children who are compelled to sacrifice education for a paltry sum of regular income.

Nepal has made a lot of progress in the child rights sector, including child health, in the last two decades. From child mortality to immunization

coverage, there are good progress reports coming out. But a recent survey released by UNICEF-South Asia reveals a grimmer reality.

South Asian Situation

Most of the world's chronically undernourished under fives – 83 million children — are in South Asia, according to a new UNICEF report: 'Improving Child and Maternal Nutrition.'

Global child under nutrition is concentrated to just 24 countries and the top five which carry the bulk of the burden are South Asian countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Nepal, a UNICEF press release said.

"Under nutrition steals a child's strength and makes illnesses that the body might otherwise fight off far more dangerous," said Ann M. Veneman, a UNICEF Executive.

Some 24 countries bear 80 percent of the global burden of under nutrition amongst under fives. South Asian countries with under nutrition rates of more than 40% of their under five population are: Afghanistan 59% or 2.9m under fives moderately or severely

stunted, Nepal 49% or 1.75m, India 48% or 61m, Bangladesh 43% or 7.2m and Pakistan 42% or 9.9m. South Asia makes up nearly 83 million in total. The rest of the world: 72 million.

The report makes a compelling case for the rapid scale-up of successful nutrition programs and interventions. Huge strides have been made in delivering cost-effective solutions such as micronutrients to vulnerable populations worldwide. What is needed is equal attention to proper care and feeding of children between six months and two years. Near universal salt iodization and Vitamin A coverage, infant and child mortality have meant child mortality has significantly decreased.

The report states, "Acting today will prevent problems from escalating tomorrow. This is not just about food. It is about giving the right kinds of food and care at the right age – promoting immediate and exclusive breastfeeding, complementary, age-appropriate food to children from six months to two years of age and targeting teenage girls before they're pregnant."

"Although child under nutrition is a

major obstacle to development in the region, it is not insurmountable - we do know what works and we have seen other emerging economies in South East Asia and Brazil, pull their youngest citizens out of this chronic and dangerous cycle," said UNICEF's Daniel Toole. "What is required now is strong leadership at the highest level. Without strategic investments in nutrition, economic growth alone cannot and will not make a lasting difference. This is an urgent health priority — 83 million children across South Asia are waiting."

Nepal's Case

Nepal has made major progress in the areas like infant mortality. Nepal is ranked 62 in under five mortality rates and Nepal's rank was 142 in 1990. With the total population of over 28 million, annual number of child death under 5 is 44 per thousand.

According to UNICEF-Nepal, primary school enrolment rose to 84 percent between 2000-2007. One can see a lot of progress in immunization and coverage of vitamin A capsules which is almost one hundred percent.

The coverage of immunization has also gone up. Similarly, the coverage of drinking water has increased drastically. The improved sanitation facilities have increased. But, they alone are not enough to make change.

Youth (15-24 years) literacy rate, 2000-2007, for males has gone up to 85 percent. The school enrolment has made a major progress in primary and secondary levels. Despite the high drop out rate, the situation is gradually improving. Child marriage and child labor have also declined. According to the statistics of UNICEF, over the past four decades, UNICEF has contributed towards many of the development strides the country has taken, from the provision of basic services and immunization in the 60s and 70s; early childhood rights, education and protection in the 80s; empowering communities, more so women, to be more self sufficient in the 90s; and an emphasis on protection during the conflict period in the 2000s. The current three-year program is focused on the poorest and most excluded.

Although there have been significant improvements in living conditions for children in Nepal over the past 40 years, challenges still remain. "Nepali children still face poverty and discrimination, lack protection and are still vulnerable to malnutrition," said



Children at work: Over burden

Ms. Gillian Mellsop, UNICEF's Representative in Nepal. "With the opportunity afforded by the development of the new Constitution, Nepal has the potential to give children and young people a chance to build a democratic, peaceful and prosperous country."

On the Right Issue

In the child rights front, achievement of Nepal is tremendous. From making the new constitution child friendly to making new laws, there is adequate legal safeguard to children. Although child labor continues, the worst form of child labor is under control. "We can see a lot of progress in child rights but we are yet to improve the child malnutrition," said Gauri Pradhan, member of National Human Rights Commission and a child rights activist.

UNICEF representative Gillian Mellsop indicated that the new Constitution could become the most child-friendly in the world if it respects the commitments made by Nepal in ratifying the CRC. "But the Constitution is only valuable if its good intentions are converted into real action for all Nepali children," she added.

Role of International Communities

Nepal's donor communities have played a very important role in changing the status of children. INGOs like Save the Children have played a leading role in advocacy. UNICEF too has made important contributions in the areas. Nepalese NGOs have received good support from international agencies to improve the living conditions of the children.

Thanks to the growing involvement

of institutions and their improved capabilities, the life of children has changed drastically.

The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has shown its concern as well. "We have a lot challenges but we have to make progress in the children's sector," said Sarbadev Prasad Ojha, Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare. "The government is considering bringing a long term strategy to cope with the situation."

Although Nepal has celebrated two decades of child rights, Nepal's challenges are enormous. As long as the country remains unable to address the problems of children like Tamang, Nepal's achievements will not be much.

Child Related Data

In 1999, the infant mortality rate was 99 per thousand. Now it is 43. In that year, the child mortality rate was 142 per thousand. Now it is 55. Maternal mortality rate was 850 per 100,000. Now it is 280.

In 2000, the BCG coverage was 86. It was 89 in 2007. Similarly DPT coverage was 76 percent and 82 percent between 2000 and 2007. Likewise vaccine coverage for measles was at 73 while the figure for polio was 70. The coverage increased in 2007 reaching 82 and 81 percent for measles and polio respectively.

In 1990, 50 percent children suffered



School Children : Quality education

from malnutrition and the figure was 49 percent in 2006.

Vitamin A capsule coverage is 100 percent now.

Labor Force

According to labor force survey of 1999, some 41 percent of workforce was aged between 5 and 14. The report of 2008 showed that the figure reduced to 33.9 percent. In 1990, the enrolment of children at the primary level was 46 percent, with the figure for girls being 31 percent. In 2008, the enrolment was at 91.9 percent (the figure being 90.4 percent for girl child).

Released by chairman of National

Human Rights Commission Kedar Nath Upadhyaya and Published by CWIN, the book titled *Two decades of UN Child Rights Convention: Challenges and Achievements in the Context of Nepal* highlighted overall situation of children. According to writer Tarak Dhital of CWIN-Nepal for his book *Two Decades of UN Child Rights Convention: Challenges and Achievements in the Context of Nepal*, children completing primary school rose from 22 percent to 73.4 percent in a decade by 2008. In 2001 pre-primary enrolment of children was 13 percent but it was 63.2 percent in 2008. ■

प्रिमियर बचत योजना

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CWIN : Dedicated to child rights

CWIN

Two Decades For Children

As the world is celebrating two decades of UN Convention on the Rights of Child, CRC, a local organization devoted to children, CWIN, marks its 22nd anniversary to coincide with this

By A CORRESPONDENT

Few imagined 22 years ago that an organization established by a group of Tribhuvan University students will grow into such a noted name in protecting children and raising awareness on their rights. But Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Center (CWIN-Nepal) proved that dedication and commitment can make everything possible.

Under the leadership of Gauri Pradhan, CWIN-Nepal has seen many transformations in the areas of child rights.

At the presence of chief guest and chairman of National Human Rights Commission and member of Commission and child rights activist Gauri Pradhan, CWIN organized a program to mark its 22nd Anniversary coinciding with Two Decades of UN Conventions on the Rights of Child -CRC.

In a packed City Hall with participation of children, rights activists and political leaders, a three-hour long program highlighted the contributions made by CWIN in protection of child rights.

"It is a matter of pride for all us to celebrate the Two Decades of UN Convention on the Rights of Child-CRC

and 22nd anniversary of the organization," said Madhav Pradhan, president of CWIN. "We have seen many ups and downs but we are able to recognize the rights of the child."

CWIN was established by a group of student activists of Tribhuvan University to protect children living and working in conditions of risk and to recognize children as an integral part of an adult dominated society. In its first year,

CWIN initiated activities to support children; it carried out several small research and survey activities on various aspects of child labor in Kathmandu Valley. With the cooperation of Redd Barna-South Asia, CWIN completed a field study in Calcutta looking at young women and children who were initially trafficked into India from Nepal.

In order to exchange thoughts, foster communication and strengthen and empower the child rights movement, CWIN, a pioneer Child Rights Organization working in the rights based approach in Nepal, organizes various programs including the First South Asian Seminar-Workshop on Working Children.

This provided an opportunity to

discuss salient issues like child servitude, socio-economic slavery, the rights of the child, violations of children's human rights and other urgent child-related issues at a regional level. The workshop was concluded with the formation of the South Asian Forum on the Rights of the Child, the first networking group in South Asia of its kind.

It focuses its activities on the issues of child rights, girls' rights, child labor, trafficking, bonded labor, street children, child abuse and children in armed conflict.

CWIN works for the advocacy, protection and promotion of the rights of the child through lobbying, campaigning and social conscientisation. It also directly works with children at risk for their rescue, support, socialization, education, empowerment and social reintegration.

CWIN is a voice for children. It believes that working for children is just not a charitable action but one which can bring about social change. In order to translate the CWIN conception of working "for children, with children" into action, priority is given to promoting and ensuring children's right to participation.

"Of course, we have seen a lot of changes in the child rights sector and we are able to eradicate some worst forms of child labor. We still need to do a lot of work," said Tarak Dhital, general secretary of the CWIN. "I still see a lot of children without access to schools and adequate food," said Dhital.

At the function participated in by representatives of all major political parties, child rights activists, rights activists, children and others, founder president and member of National Human Rights Commission Gauri Pradhan expressed his satisfaction over the progress made in the child rights sector.

"It is the dedication and leadership quality which is necessary for any organization. CWIN has shown this leadership in the areas of child rights," said Kedarnath Upadhyaya and chairman of the National Human Rights Commission.

From running CWIN's Peace Home to taking care of children affected by conflict and protection of rights of child labor, CWIN has made all kinds of contributions in the last twenty two years of its service. ■

“We have met 70 percent of Targets”

-GAURI PRADHAN

When member of National Human Rights Commission GAURI PRADHAN, a well known child rights activist, started Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN-Nepal) in 1987, nobody talked about the child rights as an issue meriting much attention. The situation has drastically changed over the last two decades since then. The Interim Constitution today recognizes child rights as fundamental. The overall status of children has changed over time as well. In all these changes, including the adoption of UN Child Rights Convention, Pradhan has been involved in one way or another. He spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on various areas of child rights. Excerpts:

The weakest part is the failure to improve upon child malnutrition. We are unable to make a major progress on child malnutrition.

How do you look at the situation of child rights in Nepal two decades ago?

If we talked about the rights of children twenty years ago, the child rights issue was a concern for only a small group of people. I had to struggle to register CWIN-Nepal. The situation of children in Nepal was so pathetic that there were rampant child rights violations and child labor exploitation was at its height.

How did you work through the stages of child rights?

In the preliminary stage, we stressed for the right to life, right to development and right to protection. In the next stage, it was the age of participation and universal declaration on child rights was a milestone in this context. The declaration has drastically changed the rights and status of children around the world. In the context of human rights, this child right Convention is one of the well known and widely ratified documents. UN ratified UN Conventions on the Rights of Child – CRC in 1989 and Nepal has also committed itself to the protection of children by ratifying the Child Rights Convention on 14 September 1990.

Why is the UN Convention so important?

The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* often referred to as CRC or UNCRC, is an international *convention* setting out the civil rights to children.

Why is November 20 an important date?

20 November is regarded as the International Child Rights Day. This was the historic day when child rights were established as human rights. This was not limited just to convention. Immediately after the promulgation of UN Convention on Child Rights, programs were announced to implement Child Development activities throughout the 1990s. All the countries of the world have formulated their ten

years' planning for the children. Now the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) too have linked child development in the mainstreaming program. MDGs have incorporated various children related issues.

What is the status of children now?

The reach of children in education has made a jump all over the world, including in Nepal. One can see a lot of progress in such terms as to reduce the infant mortality rate, to prohibit child marriage, to reduce exploitation of child labor and to end the gap between girl child and boy child. Actually, the decade long child development program which was formulated by all the countries of the world has drastically changed the situation.

What is the weakest part?

The weakest part is the failure to improve upon child malnutrition. We are unable to make a major progress on child malnutrition. The situation is as it was twenty five years ago. So far as the participation of children is concerned, there are reasons for satisfaction not only in Nepal but in the whole South Asian region. For instance, there are more than 10,000 children clubs throughout the country including in remote areas. These organizations have been working for children's education, school welfare program, working against child marriage, generating awareness on sanitation and hygiene, move against alcohol and tree plantation.

As a child rights activist having such a long experience, what do you say of the last two decades?

We have set national targets and have met 70 percent of them. Nepal has made improvements in children's health, education, gender equality, reducing child marriage and exploitation of child labor.

Why did Nepal fail to achieve one hundred percent target?

We have reasons: the country has passed through a violent, decade-long insurgency. Despite such insurgency, we were able to achieve the said success. As a member of the Commission and having participated in the mid-term review of various national level programs previously, I found institutional weaknesses in the areas like resource mobilization, functioning of government's machinery and utilization of resources. If the country had not faced the conflict, Nepal would have seen a lot of progress in child rights.

What do you see should be done to continue with the process of change?

Taking mistakes as lessons, we can bring a lot more positive changes in child rights. Children are



the victims of human trafficking, child trafficking and crime against children. This is the result of the decade long conflict. We have seen recruitment of child soldiers. These were very painful incidents. It is said a yearlong conflict may ruin the career of children for a decade. If this logic will be applied, a decade long conflict will impact another one hundred years in children rights. The conflict has left some wounds which will affect decades and decades in the minds of children.

Are children still facing trouble?

The children are suffering from forced disappearances, disappearances, violent incidents, killing of their teachers as well as their mothers and fathers. All these incidents help to create a revenge psychology among the affected children.

What is the message of the International Child Rights Day?

In celebrating the international child rights day on November 20 as a decade of CRC, the UN has brought three key messages: Dignity, Development and Dialogue. If we are able include all the issues related to children in national development, and then only we can improve the children's state. We need to start the process of reconciliation with the children.

What is your impression of the situation of child labor?

We have to see child labor in two angles. We need to stop the worst forms of child labor

immediately but other forms of labor need to be eradicated gradually. Actually, the slogan should be children in schools and adults in labor. It is very unfortunate that Nepal has a unique situation where children are over employed and youths are unemployed. For instance, more than 20,000 children are working as child labor in various restaurants in the valley and they have been working without any time limitation. However, the situation with the youth is that they are paid for extra time. If a poor household makes Rs. 3000 by sending his/ her three children to work, it may make a youth unemployed. A youth can make Rs. 3000 month.

How about crimes against children?

In the past, we launched a program for making schools a peace zone. This was not confined to children. Our argument was that there should not be any conflict, where there were children. By doing so, we tried to save teachers and health workers. In the latest stage, the trend of criminalization grew and the children were being made the target. Children were kidnapped and extorted and some children were even killed. This is a very tragic situation. All assaults directed against children are violation of human rights. We need to start a program to establish all crimes against women and children as violation of human rights. I want to see the coming decade as a decade for those who have been working in child

If this logic will be applied, a decade long conflict will impact another one hundred years in children rights. The conflict has left some wounds which will affect decades and decades in the minds of children.



Agitating Leaders : New agenda

DARJEELING

No Cheers!

The agitating party orders liquor ban in Darjeeling hills to cut the revenue stream to West Bengal government. Tourism becomes a casualty.

By **UMAKANTAKHANAL**,
in Darjeeling, India

If you have plans to go booze in Darjeeling, wait.

The party agitating for a Gorkhaland state, that is, Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM), has ordered a ban on sale of liquors in Darjeeling hills. It aims to stop revenues from going to the West Bengal government.

The principal occupation of the people of Darjeeling is tourism. Many Gorkhas in these hills are engaged in the business of welcoming Indian visitors and tourists from foreign countries when they come here to view the magnificent Kanchanjunga. A generally cool climate lures visitors to Darjeeling. Visitors prefer liquor to warm up their body while staying in the hotels.

However, following the diktat by GJM not to sell liquors, all alcohol ven-

dors in Darjeeling Hills have closed down their shops.

Morcha claims that the West Bengal government earned more than Rs. 50 crore in revenues from liquor-trade during Dashain and Tihar festivals. The central committee member of Gorkha Janamukti Morcha, Dr. Harka Bahadur Chhetri, said, "This is a part of agitation for Gorkhaland."

Dr. Chhetri added that the revenues from Darjeeling didn't help the people of Darjeeling. "No development has been seen yet although the people of Darjeeling contributed crores of rupees to the West Bengal government," he said.

"There is a call from the GJM to close down the shops, so we have done accordingly," acting secretary Dharmendra Poddar of the Darjeeling Bar and

Offshop Owner's Association said.

According to Poddar the party has not initiated any action to open the closed shops.

Due to liquor ban in Darjeeling, tourists from within the country and foreigners hardly stay two nights even if they had a plan to stay there for a week or a fortnight. Poddar said, "The tourists are angry with us. They are asking why the information about liquor ban was not given to them earlier."

He said tourism was hit in the Darjeeling hills. "The tourists quickly rush to Gangtok – the capital of neighbouring state, Sikkim where they can have a choice of liquors."

Because of Morcha's decision to close down all licensed liquor shops, many restaurants and hotels have fallen back on traditional tipple to cater for the needs of tourists. Most bars have worked out a plan to counter the ban.

"We have started selling local liquor made from rhododendrons, oranges, ginger and *chingping*, a type of seed."

The party sources say that Gorkha Janamukti Morcha is trying to implement the home rule as per the principle of Mahatma Gandhi. The central committee member of the party Dr. Harka Chhetri claims, "If the state and the central government do not take initiation regarding our demand, we will continue to stop providing revenues to the state government."

The party had earlier issued diktats to all vehicles in Darjeeling Hills to have GL number plate.

Gorkha Janamukti Morcha has also closed all the offices of Gram Panchayats throughout Darjeeling hills. It has also circulated a diktat to wear the Nepali dress to the government employees during the office time and has also initiated to put signboards stating GORKHALAND in all the shops and the government offices. ■

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NIBL

Banking On Success

Nepal Investment Bank Limited becomes the first Nepali bank to receive the [Nepal] A investment grade rating

By A CORRESPONDENT

The prestigious Indian Credit Rating Agency (ICRA) – an associate of Moody's Investors Service – has honored the NIBL with the [Nepal] A rating.

The rating for issuers in Nepal is assigned on a scale, which ranges from [Nepal] AAA to [Nepal] D.

The grade [Nepal] A marks that the bank enjoys adequate-credit-quality rating relative to other domestic issuers.

The ICRA rates banks based on various performance parameters including the good market position, track record of growing balance sheet while maintaining a stable earning profile and the management team

“Despite stiff competition, NIBL has maintained a healthy market share of about 8% and 10% in terms of deposit and loans and advances respectively,” states a press release issued by the bank.

The bank has posted an impressive growth rate.

“It achieved relatively higher deposit growth of 41% and 36% in 2007-08 and 2008-09. NIBL, which also has the largest credit portfolio of Rs. 36.2 billion among commercial banks in Nepal as of mid-July 2009, has recorded a strong 4-year Cumulative Average Growth Rate (CAGR) of 37.5% in lending from Rs. 10.1 billion mid-July 2005,” states the release.

The ICRA rating is the latest feather in the cap of NIBL team, which has been

delivering quality banking service since a long time.

Formerly known the Nepal Indosuez Bank Limited, the Nepal Investment Bank Limited (NIBL) was established in 1986 as a joint venture between Nepalese and French partners. The French partner (holding 50%), Credit Agricole Indosuez, sold its stake to a group comprising of Nepalese bankers, professionals, industrialists and businessman in April 2002.

The name of the bank was then changed to Nepal Investment Bank Limited. Prithivi Bahadur Pande (Chairman and Chief Executive Director) controls, directly and indirectly, 50% of the voting rights of the bank. Two government institutions namely Rastriya Banijya Bank (RBB) and Rastriya Beema Sansthan (RBS) also hold 15% stake each in the bank and remaining 20% is with the general public.

“NIBL has presence throughout the country through its 32 branches and 60 ATMs (150 ATMs including consortium member ATMs). NIBL is the largest private sector bank in the country and has market share of about 8% in terms of deposit base and 10% of total advances as of mid-July 2009. NIBL reported a net profit of Rs. 0.9 billion in fiscal 2008-09 over an asset base of Rs. 53.0 billion as of mid-July as against a net profit of Rs. 0.7 billion in fiscal 2007-08 over an asset base of Rs. 38.9 billion as of mid-July 2008,” the press release adds. ■

NAC

Spreading Its Wings

The national flag carrier is set to buy two Airbus aircraft

By SANJAYADHAKAL

It's been almost two decades since the Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) purchased any aircraft.

Having been compelled to cut its flights due to lack of aircraft for a long time, the NAC is finally taking steps to buy two brand new aircraft – wide body A330 and narrow body A320.

“We had called tenders and the Airbus fitted our need,” said Raju KC, deputy managing director of NAC.

The NAC chief Sugat Ratna Kansakar formalized the Memorandum of Understanding with the European Airbus company at a recent Dubai Air Show.

“We need to finalize the agreement by November 30,” said KC.

He said that NAC plans to buy six aircraft – three wide bodied and three narrow bodied – within next half a decade.

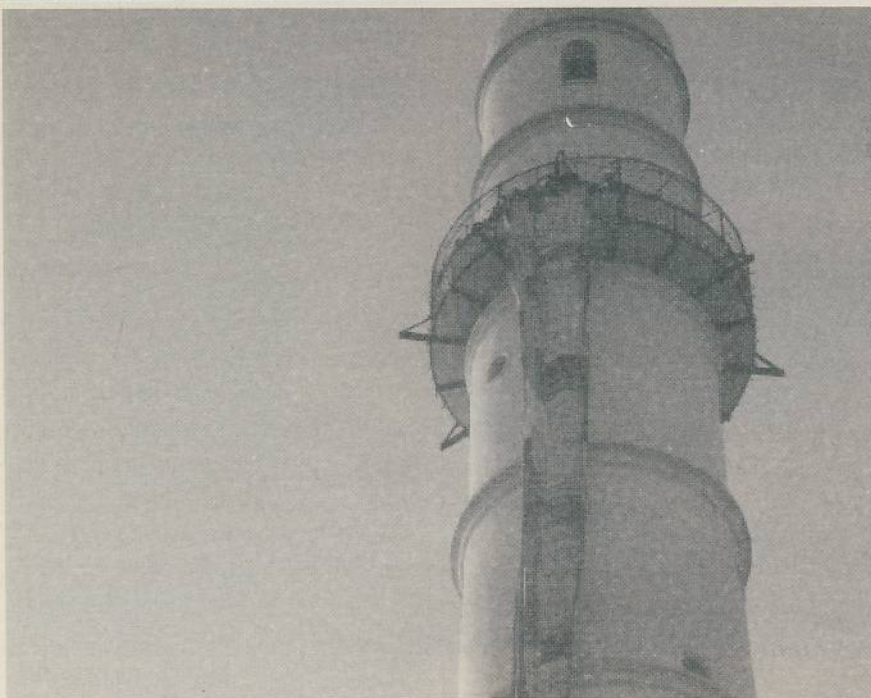
Tourism entrepreneurs have hailed the decision.

“Aviation is the most important part of tourism. This decision was long overdue,” said Prasiddha Bahadur Pandey, president of Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN).

“We hope the aircraft is purchased quickly,” added Basanta Mishra, president of Nepal Association of Tour Operators (NATO).

But KC says that it will take up to two years for the final delivery of both aircraft to take place. The cost of two aircraft is around \$135 million, he said. “Of that, we have paid advance of \$750,000.”

However, the deal may take some time to be finalized as the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee has started inquiring about its financial transparency. ■



THREE YEARS AFTER CPA

A Reminder

Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN) organizes a program to remind everyone of the importance of Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA)

By A CORRESPONDENT

As soon as Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Rakam Chemjong unfurled the Peace Quilt from Dharahara, the historical tower, on Friday (20, November), pedestrians around Dharahara watched the event with surprise. Only a few people knew that this was the third year after the seven party alliance and CPN-Maoist signed the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA), ending ten years of violent insurgency.

"Oh, yes! it did remind me of the day when I was so happy to see the signing of the accord that ended the decade long violent insurgency," said Kasang Tamang, 45, a vendor. "This is the right time to celebrate the event this way since the peace process is in the doldrums."

Like Kasang and many other pedestrians, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Rakam Chemjong too shared similar feelings. "This is an

historic day when we agreed to stop the sound of gun and explosives," said Chemjong. "Although the pace of peace process is too slow, we have made certain progress. I am confident that peace will prevail. Peace and stability are the prerequisite for the overall development of the country," said Chemjong.

Organized by AIN-Peace Working Group, in collaboration with the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction and under active participation of youth-led organizations, the ceremony gave a message that stability and peace had no alternative for sustainable development.

AIN was founded in 1996 by a group of INGOs working in Nepal to promote mutual understanding, exchange information, and share experiences and learning development work in Nepal.

Peace Quilt, which is made by enormous small quilts, sent by more than 60 districts with the message of peace, is a symbol of people's commitment to peace and their reaffirmation of the

peace process. According to AIN, the quilt with peace message was developed in cooperation with the Local Peace Committees.

AIN PWG is a network of 19 INGOs actively involved in peace building program in different parts of the country and national level peace building process.

"One year ago, AIN's Peace Working Group began participation of this Quilt for Peace to be an integral part of this celebration. To make this possible, AIN members and their partner organizations with civil society agreed to organize local representative groups to design and work together on their square for the quilt. So that way, more than 60 districts are represented here today and every district square is unique," said Dale Davis, vice chairperson and member of Peace Working Group. "The quilt is an expression of the people's voices from across the land. It is testimony to the ending of the conflict and its causes. It is acknowledgement of the meaningful, dedicated efforts of many, many people."

"It is a symbol of the extensive possibilities for a future where peace is nurtured, sustained and propagated for the benefit of all," said Dale addressing the gathering.

From implementing the peace accord to bringing the peace process to a logical end, many commitments are yet to be implemented. Ongoing political conflicts between country's major political parties have made the situation worse.

The rise of various armed groups in southern plains and eastern parts of Nepal has further worsened the situation. Such groups are threatening development workers working in those areas supporting the poor people. An appeal issued on behalf of UN, Donors and the Association of International NGOs in Nepal expressed concerns that their staff and projects face challenges such as pressure to provide donations, and financial or in-kind assistance as well as undue interference in tendering process, indicating a bleak scenario.

By organizing the function on the 3rd anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Nepal's National Day of Peace, the AIN Peace Working Group reminded Nepalese about the importance of peace and stability to carry out development projects to contribute to improvements in the quality of life of the people. ■

GADIMAI FESTIVAL

Sacrificing Cruelty

Activists are demanding ban on animal sacrifice in Gadimai but the organizers are unperturbed

By ABIJIT SHARMA

The Gadimai festival will take place at the Gadimai Temple of Bara on the 24th and 25th of November this year. The festival, which sees a mass killing of about half a million animals, is increasingly drawing critics these days. Some media have even termed the shrine as a 'Temple of Doom' as animal welfare organizations all over the world have been raising a voice against the brutal practice of animal sacrifice and urging the concerned authorities to stop it.

The famous Little Buddha incarnate Ram Bahadur Bomjon has joined the chorus and vowed he would work to stop the mass killing. Bomjon will be travelling to Gadimai before the festival and appeal to the people to stop the mass slaughters.

Organizations like animalnepal.org, Anti-sacrifice Alliance and Animal Welfare Network Nepal have been voicing their protests against the ritual sacrifice in Gadimai. A program was organized on 13th November in Patan Durbar Square where animal rights activists along with noted comedians Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bansa Acharya demanded the concerned authorities to discontinue the brutal practice.

"Does killing other living beings, which cannot speak for themselves, make us, the human beings, superior and powerful?" said Pramada Shah of animalnepal.org. "Besides being an inhuman and a barbaric act, the sacrifice should also be stopped because there are high chances of diseases like Swine Flu and Bird Flu spreading through the animals as these animals are smuggled in from India without passing the quarantine tests."

Shah also revealed that a business of 14 crores is made out of the mass

sacrifice. The people involved in the business mainly include professional priests who earn from the sacrifice, the leather companies and the smugglers in India-Nepal border.



Animal Activists : Call against Sacrifice

Animal rights activist Govinda Tandon said that the animal sacrifice has projected Nepal as one of the most barbaric countries. Giving an example of the Sati Pratha, he pointed out that all cultures were not justifiable and they deserve to die out.

"There is completely no logic behind the sacrifice culture. Why sacrifice animals, who have no fault and haven't done any harm to us at all?"

A petition was signed by more than 1000 people, which according to the organizers, would be submitted to the government urging them to stop the sacrifice in Gadimai.

"We say all the living beings are the children of God. So, how can God be happy if we sacrifice His own children

in front of Him?" said comedian Madan Krishna Shrestha. He expressed that the mass killing in Gadimai has portrayed Hinduism as the most violent religion all over the world. He also added that if the priests and concerned religious authorities were well-educated, the mass killings would have ended a long time back. Supporting his view, Hari Bansa Acharya expressed regret over the Government's decision to provide around 52 lakh rupees to the organizers instead of stopping the event.

However, despite pressures from all over the world, the management committee in Gadimai is unperturbed and has shown no signs of stopping the

mass sacrifice. They have argued the sacrifice is a long-running tradition and it cannot be challenged in any way. ■

NEW SPOTLIGHT

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Social Exclusion/ Inclusion: South Asian vis-à-vis Western Discourse

By Mohan Das Manandhar
Rojan Bajracharya¹

Background

“Social Exclusion” – the term by itself originated in France in 1974 - has lineage to the enormous European literatures of 1950's and 60's on social division and inequality which emancipate the severity of the poor or disadvantaged members of then European society who lacked in the adequate resources to achieve the acceptable standards of well being and the participation in the customary activities of society. Nevertheless, the social exclusion that exists in the South Asian societies since the traditional past before the discourse of Europe exhibits in some respects quite distinct feature from many other societies of the world.

South Asian Context

The distinctiveness is on account of the stratificatory system of caste and undergoing socio-political practices of religion that prevailed, in one form or the other, in the South Asian societies for centuries which excluded a community as whole from common facilities or benefits. The religion, caste and ethnicity are the prime politically mobilizing factor and the base of social structure in the South Asian region. The religion, caste and ethnicity has influential role in any sort socio-political activities in the region ranging from: anti-colonial movement against British Rule to hot burning Naxalites and Maoist movement of current days; military take-over to separation of federal state. The crosscutting between the religious caste and ethnic communities gave birth to issues of communal identity politics including regional nationalisms and caste and ethnic based parties.

The South Asian politico and socio structure which has great influence of religion, caste and ethnicity has the social exclusion in two lines – Purity/ Impurity and Enslavable/ Non-Enslavable. Through religious angle, there is enslavement of majority religious group against religious minority group, Indigenous and Tribal. For instance, majority Muslims of Pakistan and Bangladesh dominates the Hindu

minorities; Hindu majorities of India and Nepal dominate Muslims and Indigenous minorities. In term caste, Dalits are regarded as impure and enslaved by high caste group as their manual work (viz. blacksmith, barber, plumber and other) are of low status. The contemporary fact of South Asian state and society is its adaptation of division of labor on the basis of caste with Dalits being lowest in this hierarchy. Dalits are spread in every country of South Asia. The South Asian countries have legally made caste system void but it has limited in word but not in practices. So, in many instance, South Asian politic has observed the rising of caste based political parties against such discrimination – viz. Bahujana Samajbadi Party, the ruling party of Uttar Pradesh of India, had evolved against Dalit discrimination in India. In term of ethnicity, the minority ethnic groups are enslaved by majority viz. Balochistan province, resided by deprived ethnic group of Pakistan, is discriminated and dominated by Sindh and Punjab provinces with majority ethnic group and there are the issues of Naga and Mizo in northern part of India and Bangladesh. In term of Gender, women are discriminated in term of impurity regardless of caste, ethnic and minority. But the women of low caste and ethnic and minority group face double discrimination of enslave and impurity.

Western Context

In contrast to the religious and caste/ ethnic based politico and socio structure of South Asia, the current western social and political structure is based on liberal ideology. The revolutions of different eras gradually phase out the conservative religious practices in west. The religious confrontation in Christianity in early 16th century gave birth to two diverse schools of thought – Catholic as conservative and Protestant as liberal – with most western countries follow liberal protestant school. The 18th century American and French Revolution dejected the rule under absolute monarchy with feudal

privileges for the aristocracy and Catholic clergy. Further, the post 18th century Industrial Revolution era of west adopted competitive capitalist economy discarding religion and caste as political and economic affairs and the raise of 20th century Communism in Eastern Europe adopted the labor/ owner stratification which gradually phase out the division of labor on the basis of caste. These political and social transformations gradually change the west from communal to individualist society. More and more, the individual became the basis of political and social

The religion, caste and ethnicity are the prime politically mobilizing factor and the base of social structure in the South Asian region.

organization in economically advanced countries, the individual's membership on communal, religious, occupational and family units came to matter much less than his individual right issue. So the major social inclusion/ exclusion discourse of west is focused on issues of individual's exclusion viz. Disables, Migration, third sex, elderly and others. The concept of social exclusion that had emerged in France in 1970's and adopted later by the other European countries has focused on the then prevailed European practice of exclusion on individual's right and its social disadvantages and tension.

Conclusion

Adopting Nobel Literate Amartya Sen's word, the concept of social exclusion is evolving and will flourish in days to come as it encompass diverse form of exclusionary practices prevailed in the world's society. Such conceptualization process of social exclusion also implicates the conceptualization of social inclusion as both inclusion and exclusion are two side of the same coin. However, conceptualization process should not

undermine many instances of simultaneous existence of exclusion and inclusion as an individual or a group can be excluded in one domain and included in another, for instance, the society can accept inter-caste marriage but reject the membership of social groups.

Beside individualistic perspective, the social exclusion of caste, ethnicity and religion can be seen, more appropriately, as the institution that has been structuring and maintaining for centuries relations of power among different communities, and seeks to legitimize these power relations: (i) through systematically dispensing various mixes of economic and cultural assets/opportunities and deprivations to different communities and (ii) through endowing religious/ideological sanctification of such dispensations. Evolved over centuries, caste and religion sustained communitarian identities of innumerable groups ethnically, culturally and socially distinct from each other and at the same time, held these communities together in the network of local hierarchies. The communities in different local hierarchies were arranged, normatively and uniformly, in an ascriptively unequal macro-system of graded exclusion, which was politically, economically and epistemically dominated by a few, select communities through ages. The hierarchical structures based on a sacralized system dispensing economic/cultural rewards and punishments, however, did not/could not permanently and fully incorporate or recast the cultural and historical identities of different communities in terms of hierarchical relations. If we were to grasp the special nature of exclusion in the South Asian societies, it is appropriate that the caste and religion is seen in terms of its historical-empirical character: i.e. sacralized power structure—rather than just a hierarchy of statuses—that has been reproducing itself in different contexts and times in the various South Asian societies.

1. Mr. Manandhar and Mr. Bajracharya are engaged with Social Inclusion Research Fund. The view presented are those of writer's own and do not reflect that author's affiliation.

Our Report Emphasizes Inclusion

- BINDA PANDEY

Chairperson of CA's Committee on Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles BINDA PANDEY claims that her committee has made special inclusionary provisions in its report. The committee was assigned to work in areas of fundamental rights, citizenship, fundamental responsibility, principles of state and its responsibilities.

How much effort did your committee make to ensure inclusive provisions in the report?

We made all out efforts to make our report inclusive. In the past, the constitution just talked about equality and fundamental rights. But we proposed not only equality but stressed on inclusion at all levels as we wrote the report to preempt any kind of discriminatory provisions.

Are you sure this constitution will guarantee social inclusion?

There is no doubt about that. Our report emphasizes inclusion. Unlike in the past, our committee proposes fundamental rights discarding exclusionary politics. There are legal remedies also.

There were similar provisions in the past but there were complaints that they were not implemented. How do you look at this?

There are high expectations among the people. Even in summarizing the people's opinions, we have made a list of 119 fundamental rights. After taking the opinions of the people and on other bases, the committee has identified 49 rights as fundamental. We included many clauses under social justice. In the 1990 constitution, there were 12 fundamental rights and in the interim constitution there are 20. Now they are 31.

How do you say your draft is a departure from the past?

We have added economic, social and cultural rights in the constitution. We have included a right to protection of victims of justice. The Interim Constitution has just touched on the issues raised by the people. We have elaborated on all of them.

What are other rights?

Education, language and culture were integrated in a single article. We have separate education, language and culture clauses. Similarly, employment and food security were in a single article. Now, they are separated. Along with economic, cultural and social rights, we have added the right to shelter in a separate article.

Are there any provisions against social discrimination?

We have written some provisions



which will declare discrimination on the basis of cast and untouchability as illegal. We have suggested separate rights for dalit community. Likewise, analyzing social and family structure, we have added the right related to family.

What other rights have you suggested?

We have also proposed equal distribution of parental property to the son and the daughter. We also proposed equal responsibility of the son and the daughter. We want to change the concept of people that the daughter will leave the house and the son will take the responsibility of taking care of parents. Likewise, we have also added a few more things on social justice rights to address different issues.

Any other proposals?

We proposed inclusive participation and proportional representation in terms of opportunities. Along with this, we have also written a separate article for the communities which were oppressed in the past. We have clearly written the rights for those identified oppressed communities. Under social justice rights, we have recommended separate provisions for women, disabled, indigenous, Madheshi backward areas, class and gender and marginalized communities.

Are fundamental rights going to be mandatory?

To ensure implementation of all articles, we have made mandatory provisions for two years. Only after making laws, people can find the right remedy. We have also included the clause for compensation. We have also held long discussions relating to qualifying the articles. We agreed to recommend compensation, not just 'in accordance with law,' but as a genuine compensation. ■



"Panel Member of the Program on Inclusive Business organized by FNCCI, SNV and SIRF"

Inclusive Business for Profit And Equitable Development¹

Business community talk about inclusive business

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepal has more than a decade of experience in liberal economy but the country is still confounded on how its market economy is going to encapsulate the diverse social structure persist in the country. Specifically, in the present context of constitution making and state restructuring process, where every ethnic and caste group is demanding for the empowerment and indigenous right, Nepal should spell out the market mechanism and institution to develop inclusive economy. The private sector, main driver of market system, is cognizant of contemporary socio-political status of country so the approach of inclusive business is gradually evolving. In this regard, the one day workshop on "Inclusive Business: A Business Model in Promoting Social and Economic Inclusion" organized by FNCCI, SNV Nepal and Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) is the step forward on the debate of this contemporary issue. The program dated 12th November 2009 was participated by business communities,

government officials, NGO representatives, media and other stakeholders.

In welcome remark to the program, Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, President of FNCCI, argued that a country cannot attain overall progress if the social progress of country does not complement its economic progress. So business sector, main economic engine of a country, should be socially inclusive and should move forward jointly with low income and deprived group with equal benefit to both. Specifically, he argued that the inclusive business is paramount issues of Nepal as the country has diverse social structure with each caste and ethnic poses generic right on economic affairs. Further, there should be dialogue with private sector on this issue in course of drafting new constitution. He also praised SNV and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) for initiating "Alliance for Inclusive Business" movement and highlighted on FNCCI's joint activities with these two institutions.

Mr. Dirk Elsen, Chief Executive of

SNV Board of Director, argued for inclusive business to pull out the poor populace and deprived communities from poverty and alerted that these communities are first on the row to be hit by recession – viz. the recent global recession which has negative impact on poor country's economy via low FDI flow, low trade and low outsourcing of labor. He highlighted on cross countries experiences on Inclusive business. He shared SNV's initiative in inclusive business in Latin America.

Sanjaya Shah, Inclusive Business Consultant of SNV Nepal, presented on "Market Based Solution for Poverty Reduction". He informed that more than 4000 million populaces who are at the bottom of wealth pyramid have annual income of less than US\$ 1500 per annum and there is a need to develop inclusive business encouraging these populace groups to participate in overall economic affairs. He pinpointed that the low income bracket populace are generally engaged as employee, producers, distributors and consumers and these activities of low populace should be incorporated in value chain mechanism with favorable share in profit.

Willem Bron, Lead Adviser of SNV for Bio-energy in Central America, shared his experience on promoting inclusive business model in Honduras. He highlighted that the small rural nut-pickers were provided technical assistance to improve their productivity with financial scheme of working capital and technological improvement of extraction. The environmental conservation and awareness program and fidelity program were also designed for them. The nut pickers were also equipped on pricing skill and certification of nuts. The new market niche had been developed via strategic alliance with stakeholders so that nut picker could provide diversify vegetable oil of better quality. As the domestic market of country had demand 13 million MT of oil, 64 billion Kw/H of energy and 72 million of activated carbon at viable price, the nut used for oil extraction had great market potential. The SNV initiative linked the nut collected by rural nut-picker with available market opportunity via commercial contract.

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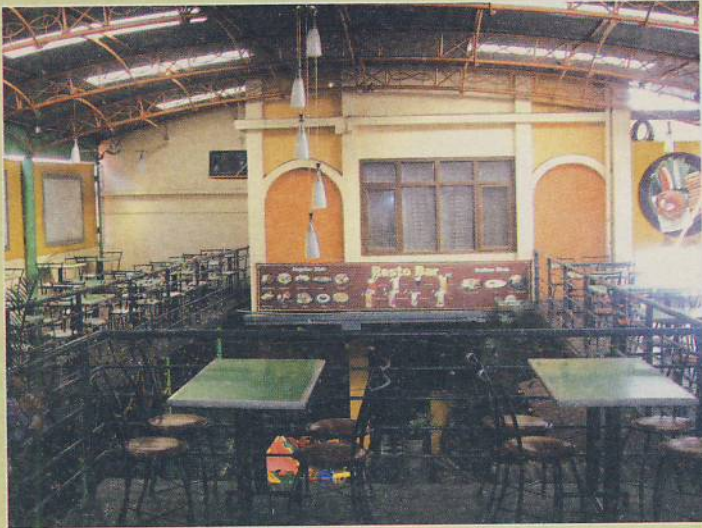
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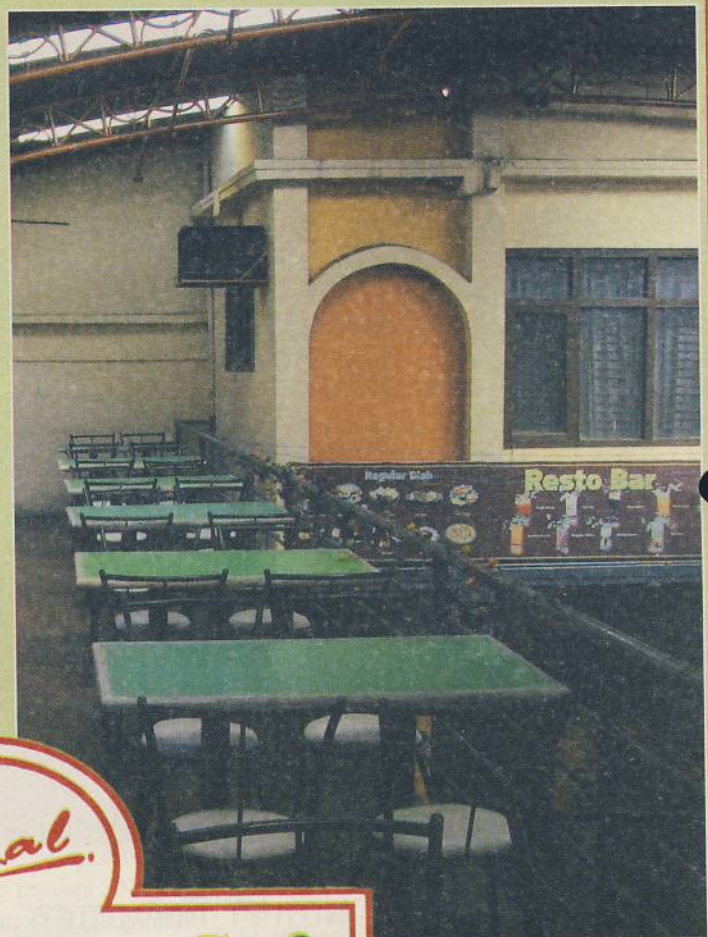
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This results 900 families of nut- picker are directly benefitted with their income increase at 4 US\$ per day in pilot phase and there is potential to develop this business initiative in whole north coast of Honduras. He argued that the initiative was fruitful as the program focus on sharing of profitable business with rural populace. Further, the program was based on Public- Private partnership approach and it also favored strategic alliances between key stakeholders which was important for the development of inclusive business. Mr. Bron expected that this initiative will contribute to develop business model for other countries.

Honorable Constitutional Assembled Member, Rajendra Khetan, started his speech with brief highlight on how the socio- politic of country has after 1990 political transformation where Nepali populaces are equipped with more political and economic power. With 2007 political changes, there is gradual transformation in Nepali politic viz. there is high level representation of diverse caste ethnic group in the recently formed constitutional assemble. He praised the fruitful efforts of SNV on market access of apples and GTZ on market access of oranges and honey. He reminded that FNCCI is lobbying for the promotion of small manufactures and in many instance acted as trading agent between small manufacture and urban market so that the small manufactures of rural area had market access. He also informed that FNCCI has made formidable measure to protect the indigenous knowledge and skill of Nepal under the TRIPS agreement of WTO. He stressed for joint cooperation between Constitutional Assembled members, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders on framing inclusive economic system in current constitutional making process.

Mr. Mohan Das Manandhar, Senior Adviser of SIRF, informed about SIRF's support on social inclusion research of Nepal. He highlighted on exclusion of minority caste and ethnic groups of Nepal from development main stream so they are poor in term of socio economic status. There are also issues of linguistic



Chief Executive of SNV Board of Director, Mr. Dirk Elsen, Giving His Speech on Inclusive Business

minorities and cultural assimilation. Specifically, he highlighted that the minorities have limited access to market and their Indigenous knowledge and skill are not tradable in current market structure so they lag from formal source of income. He informed that the SIRF supported studies has accounted on allied Indigenous Knowledge and Skill in Nepal and such skill and knowledge are neither properly documented nor authentically registered. So he stressed that such knowledge should be properly maintained and should be utilized by business community.

Ms. Monisha Rajbhandari, Value Chain Development Adviser of SNV Nepal, shared SNV's experience on market access of Apple from, Jumla, the remote district of Karnali. She informed that the local cultivators were trained on market access skill so that they were able to sell their product in the urban market. After the initiation of the SNV program in Jumla, she informed, the wastage of apple in Jumla has fallen down significantly. She stressed for further initiative to bring the apples to urban market place which will discourage its import and promote the local production.

In vote of thanks remark, Mr Pradeep Jung Pande, vice- President of FNCCI, highlighted on the relevancy of the program in the current state restructuring and constitutional building process of the country. He stressed for debate on the contemporary issues of

inclusive business for the equitable development of country.

Doing business in Nepal is challenging and attracting foreign private investments is almost impossible as the country is in complicated social, political and economic transformation process. However, in this period of change, the business community has great role by pursuing business that is socially inclusive, ecologically sustainable and of course economically profitable. The inclusive business is a sustainable approach that provides equitable opportunities for the corporate houses as well as deprived and poor communities with equitable progress. It placed the deprived and poor communities in the value chain mechanism providing ample opportunities for them in economic activities. Further, the issue of inclusive business is also important in Nepal's current context of state restructuring and constitutional building because it will address the demand of economic inclusion rose by different caste and ethnic groups. This intellectual interaction workshop is a fruitful insight to the country.

1 Based on the proceeding of one day seminar titled "Inclusive Business: A Business Model in Promoting Social and Economic Inclusion" organized by FNCCI, SNV Nepal and Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF)" on 12th November 2009.

“Every Four Hours a Woman dies Giving Birth in Nepal”

- IAN MCFARLANE

The United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) supports Nepal in its efforts to reduce poverty and improve women's access to health care. New country representative of UNFPA, IAN MCFARLANE, sat down with SHARMINI to discuss some of the issues facing the country and how the UNFPA addresses these issues. EXCERPTS:

You've been the country representative for UNFPA since January. What has your experience in Nepal been like so far?

With UNFPA I've worked in other countries and I've worked in headquarters. And the work of the organization with a mandate like ours is I think very stimulating in itself. Trying to do that anywhere is a complicated and exciting prospect. Trying to do it in Nepal, of course, brings its own particular context. What I find interesting in Nepal is this move out of post-conflict, this search for new democracy, decentralized constitution and political environment.

How does the move from a post-conflict society affect your work?

UNFPA is here to help government deliver what it wants to deliver so we're working very closely with them. When government and ministers are changing or national plans are being developed and then they're changed, it's a challenge to align your actions with the government.

Are the government's plans unclear?

I think fundamentally, government is really clear on what it wants to achieve. But there's a gap between what government says it wants to achieve and the reality on the ground for many citizens.

What is the situation in terms of access to reproductive health care for Nepali women?

The national average is that 18 percent of women do not have access to skilled health care when they give birth. If you're a *dalit* woman its 19/20 doesn't have access. There's an argument that we are on track in some ways to meet the millennium goals, if you look at the overall trend. But the reality for many people is that they are not achieving their own millennium development goals-again a big gap between the headline and the reality.

Part of UNFPA's core work is making sure that women have access to decent health care. What is your approach to ensure that women receive adequate reproductive health care?

We know that to prevent a woman dying giving birth the best possible option is for her to be in a facility that has skilled

attendants that can help when the complications arrive, that that place has the necessary equipment, that the woman is treated with dignity and respect, and given quick service once she gets to the facility.

You mentioned that a woman needs to be treated with dignity and respect in health facilities. Is there discrimination in women's access to health care?

Yes, there is and unless we tackle some of the root issues of discrimination, other efforts won't work. Because you can have the facilities, but if a woman is not allowed to use them or to use them as other women do it's still a problem. Many women in Nepal have access to health services and education only if allowed by their parents-if unmarried-or husbands and parents in law- if married.

Nepal has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in developing countries. UNFPA's goal was to reduce maternal mortality by 75 percent between 1990 and 2015. Is the country on track to meet that goal?

These are Nepal's goals not UNFPA's goals. In Nepal the trend is good; it looks like the country is on target to meet the actual number. But that national average hides a reality for many people.

Besides maternal mortality, what other reproductive health issues do women face?

It's still horrific that every 4 hours a woman dies giving birth in Nepal. But many more women suffer from things like fallen-womb - sometimes called uterine prolapsed. One in ten of women of reproductive age, which is about 600,000, suffer from uterine prolapsed.

What is uterine prolapsed?

Basically the uterus falls out and remains out. And it's embarrassing, uncomfortable, and there's a higher risk of infection. I met a woman who had that for 16 years! How would you feel to have that for 16 years, and how would you be treated by your husband. How would you be treated by the other members of your family? And in this kind of situation human nature shuns people like that. That's 1/10 women of reproductive age between 15 and 49, 1/10 women are suffering from this. That's a lot of women.

This problem paints a very depressing picture of women's health care in rural Nepal.

The facts that you have this for 16 years, what kind of service are you getting from your state? It's really kind of shocking. It's physically shocking, it's psychologically shocking, but it's also shocking from the health system perspective. Clearly more



effort is required by government and its partners to respond.

Another UNFPA goal is to 'make sure every child is wanted', in other words provide access to family planning methods and information. How is the progress in Nepal towards this goal?

It's true that there is progress. One of the ways that we look at progress is to define what we call unmet need. Unmet need means that there are couples who would like to have access to family planning, so they have a need, but that is not met. We know that 25 percent is not met. That means that one in four couples would like to have access but don't. We also know that women do not have access to the full range of contraceptives.

Is that the same average for different social and ethnic groups?

Coming back to this point about differences between people, if you're, for instance, a *dalit* the average is one in three couples that would like to have access but don't. Twenty five percent unmet needs is high, it's even higher for disadvantaged groups. So there's still a long way to go in terms of ensuring equal access for all.

It sounds like you believe there's not been enough work to improve maternal or more general women's health. What more can UNFPA do to address these problems?

I think we have a responsibility to continue the advocacy that we do and that's including talking to the media, that's including publications. We just finished a very powerful publication on gender based violence in two districts, Dang and Surkhet. Doing the research, and making it publicly available already brings about change. Our role is also in helping others-government, NGOs- to advocate and implement the recommendations to improve women's health. ■

A New Theory Of Justice

By BIPINADHIKARI

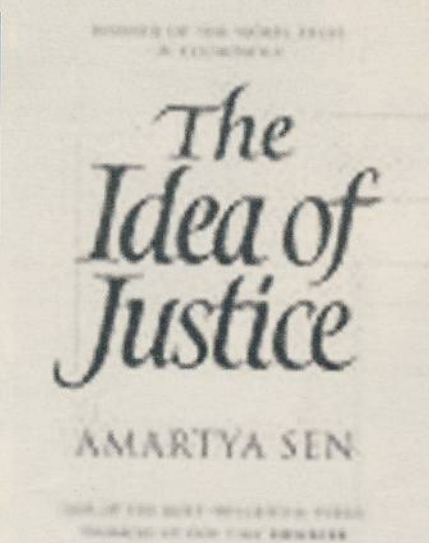
Justice is a moral concept about what is right, fair, appropriate, and deserving. As a concept of righteousness, it builds on ethics, rationality, natural law, equity, fairness and similar principles. This is the reason why justice happens to be a complicated subject. Nevertheless, it is a subject that has been subjected to rigorous philosophical, legal and theological debates throughout the history.

Amartya Sen's new book *The Idea of Justice* (Penguin-Allen Lane, 2009) is a major addition to these debates. A Lamont University Professor at Harvard, Sen presents in this book his theory of justice in a very broad sense. His understanding is based on a positive analysis of already existing general theories in this regard. Its aim, as Sen points out, is to "clarify how we can proceed to address questions of enhancing justice and removing injustice, rather than to offer resolutions of questions about the nature of perfect justice."

Dedicated to John Rawls, who wrote *A Theory of Justice* in 1972, one of the primary texts in political philosophy, the book goes far beyond his concept of justice. In his book, Rawls highlighted the problems of distributive justice at length and offered the concept of justice as fairness to solve the ensuing problems.

From fairness, Rawls derived his theory of justice which contained two important principles: *the liberty principle* and *the difference principle*. He argued for a principled reconciliation between liberty and equality. He also emphasized that "most reasonable principles of justice are those everyone would accept and agree to from a fair position."

John Rawls built on philosophical foundations laid by Kant and Rousseau - the two important predecessors in this area (among many others). He employed a number of thought experiments - including the famous veil of ignorance - to determine what constitutes a fair agreement in which "everyone is



impartially situated as equals," in order to determine principles of social justice.

Amartya Sen who won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1998, explores in this book the ways in which, and the degree to which, justice is a matter of reason, and of different kinds of reason. It is in the nature of human beings that they hardly agree on a final, perfect set of institutions and rules. Disagreements are quite common everywhere. It is because not everything is in principle resolvable. Moreover, different people regard different positions as just. As such, Sen argues that there is no need to overcome disagreement. The search for a perfect set of arrangements can distract theoreticians from tackling injustices that the human society needs to confront.

Sen's work is not grounded in idealised justice. It is grounded in what can be made to work practically in the real world. He argues that a philosophy of justice should require the agreement not just of the community which is making the laws, but of important outsiders also. The whole world has a role in it. It is in the nature of reason, says Sen, that it does not allow all questions to be settled from first principles; But these pluralities are not a shortcoming.

Amartya Sen has divided his book into four parts and eighteen chapters

after sharing with the readers his approach to justice at the outset.

Part I deals with the demands of justice in general. It has four chapters which cover reason and objectivity in the justice discourse; Rawls' theory of justice and beyond: institutions and persons; voice and social choice: impartiality and objectivity; and analysis of closed and open impartiality.

Part II deals with forms of reasoning. It also has four chapters: position, relevance and illusion; rationality and other people; plurality of impartial reasons; realization consequences and agency.

The materials of justice are discussed in Chapter III. It also has detailed explanations on lives, freedoms and capabilities; capabilities and resources; happiness, well-being and capabilities; and equality and liberty.

The last part explains democracy as public reason. Here he also gives his impression about the practice of democracy, human rights and global imperatives, and the place of justice in the world.

Amartya Sen holds that justice has a key role to play in the concept and practice of democracy. But his emphasis is not in terms of the institutions of a democratic state, but in terms of its capacity to enrich reasoned engagement. Democracy allows public argument and debate. It allows public reasoning. "The working of democratic institutions, like that of all other institutions" depends on the activities of human agents. But democracy "has to be judged not just by the institutions that formally exist, but by the extent to which different voices from diverse sections can actively be heard."

At the heart of Sen's argument is a respect for reasoned differences in our understanding of what a "just society" really is. He stands firmly within the traditions of Anglo-American philosophy, but the book is full of philosophical references from the Indian sub-continent and their analysis in view of contemporary problems. He has been able to bring Buddha, Ashoka and Akbar in his theoretical discourse in such a way that nobody ever even tried to do.

The book is long and repetitive at times. But the breadth of Amartya Sen's vision and intellectual keenness make it an outstanding work for every thinking person.

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ART

Simple Tales

Jenifer paints the beauty of a Tamang village on cues that she never felt so at home anywhere else

By PRADIPTIBHATTA

When Jenifer Fuller first came to Nepal in 2004, little did she know how her short visit would end up. She came with her cousin on a volunteer work of five months. As months passed, she realized her growing attachment with Nepal, especially with kids for whom she was working. They grew into five years. Now at the Indigo Gallery, Naxal, Jennifer has put on canvas her "Feelings and Perceptions: Life at a Tamang Village." Jennifer, currently works at one of the Umbrella Foundation Homes at Gurje, Nuwakot.

This exhibition includes her paintings related to the village which she calls her home in Nepal. All the characters in her beautiful paintings are people whom she has been acquainted with in the village and the abstracts simply reflect some aspects of the

Tamang people in Gurje. In the beginning, she started sketching small portraits of the people closest to her in the village, slowly she started sketching more and eventually after her meeting with a French artist in the village itself, she decided to exhibit her creations in Kathmandu. This is her first solo exhibition.

I don't remember ever seeing him ride his horse. But whenever the horse was seen, people knew that this man was around," Jenifer said talking about that particular character in one of her paintings. She further added, "This man also had a suite and whenever there was some kind of a function in the village; he made it a point to wear it. It's a remote village and no other person in the village had a suite, so it was a big thing. On this particular day, I saw him in his suite with his horse so I decided to paint an image of him in his suite with his horse."

Similar to this painting, the rest of her paintings are also related to people and things. Some of them include children laughing, an old woman casually standing and a mill man.

As a whole, "Feelings and Perceptions: Life in a Tamang Village" has indeed been able to express the feelings and perceptions of the people of a small Tamang village. When asked if she would like to come up with another exhibition in Nepal, Jenifer said, "I have never felt so at home in any other country. The village and the people there have become a part of my life. I would certainly love to come up with another exhibition so that I can show other aspects of the people and culture of Nepal." ■

ISRAELI FILM

For A Break

Moviegoers in Kathmandu got a break from the usual Bollywood and Nepali movies, courtesy the Embassy of Israel when it organized the 4th Annual Israeli Film festival. The festival showcased Israeli movies which had represented Israel in International Film festivals and bagged prestigious awards. The main purpose of the annual festival has been to expose the viewers to the fascinating facets of modern Israeli culture.

Israeli movies have been in existence since the 1950s. Over the decades, they have depicted typical Israeli themes and social life. The Israeli culture is very diverse, which has stemmed from the diverse population including Jews from all around the world. This culture is depicted in many of the Israeli cinemas. Since its initiation, the Israeli movies have undergone major developments as well as many ups and downs.

Israel has been nominated in the best foreign language film category for the Academy Award for 8 times, which is the highest among the Middle East countries. Popular topics in Israeli movies include war, holocaust etc.

According to the Israeli Embassy, the Israeli movies are very 'vivid' and showcase the various aspects of life in Israel. "We believe that this kind of cultural activity (the Israeli film festival) will act as a bridge to bring together the people of the two countries culturally closer," said the embassy.

The film festival screened movies such as *The Vulture*, *Dead End Street*, *Yellow Asphalt*, *Kazablan*, *Passover Fever* and *Turn Left at the End of the World*. The *Vulture* and *Dead End Street* have been screened in the Cannes Film Festival and *Passover Fever* has bagged award in the Montreal world Film Festival and has been screened in 40 film festivals worldwide.

Abijit Sharma



Come together with **San Miguel**

My journey into music and recently into acting, has been one that has been both exciting and fulfilling for me. I know that this journey has been as smooth as it has only because of the trust and support of my friends and listeners – and I am grateful for this.

In my personal as well as professional life I seek smoothness – like **San Miguel**, a drink that reminds me of friendship.

- **Nima Rumba**
Singer/Actor



San Miguel BEER

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