

Nepal..... NRs. 50.00
 India..... IRs. 35.00
 Bhutan..... NU 35.00
 Other SAARC Nations..... US\$ 1.00
 Asean Countries..... US\$ 1.00
 Japan..... US\$ 1.00
 Europe..... US\$ 2.00
 USA/Canada..... US\$ 2.00
 China/Korea/Hongkong..... US\$ 2.00
 ME/Israel..... US\$ 1.00
 Australia/New Zealand..... US\$ 2.00
 DAO Kathmandu Regd. No. 148/11/0663/64
 Postal Regd. No. 07/066/067

SPOTLIGHT

NEW

May 21-June 03, 2010

www.nepalnews.com/newspotlight

FORTNIGHTLY

Complimentary Copy



Opinion:
Dipak Gyawali

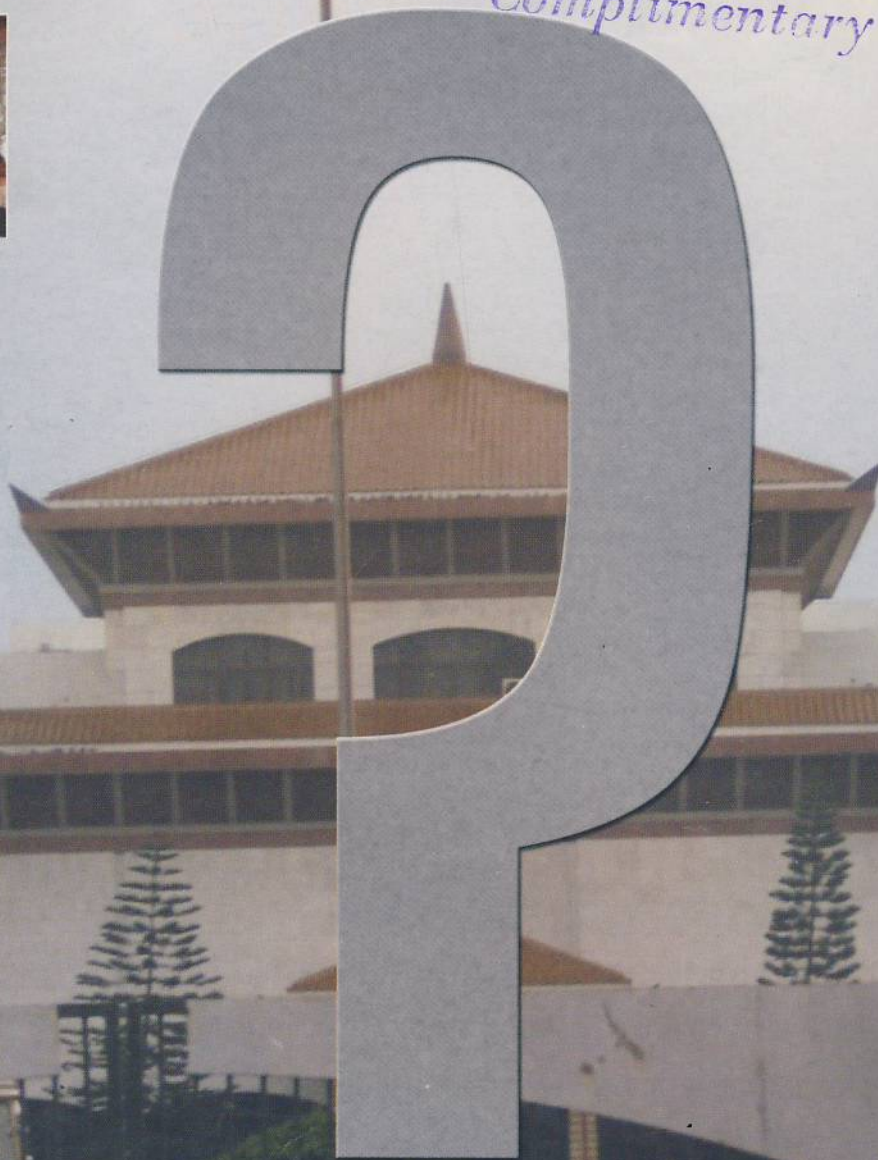


Interview
Prof. Dr. Lok Raj Baral

Constituent Assembly



Focus: Suresh Acharya



NIBL Special Fixed Deposit

Let Your **Earnings** Yield You Even **More.**

NIBL now offers upto 11% interest on **NIBL Special Fixed Deposit**



interest p. a.

This scheme is valid for limited period only

*conditions apply

- Nepal's first bank to receive an investment grade credit rating of [Nepal] "A" by ICRA.
- Highly experienced management and sound corporate governance.
- No. 1 private sector bank in terms of deposits and lending.
- 24 years of stable banking.
- Highest growth rate among banks in Nepal.
- Wide Branch and ATM Network.
- The highest Capital Base.
- High Customer Base.
- 365 Days Banking.

Tel: 4228229, 4242530 www.nibl.com.np

 **नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंक लि.**
NEPAL INVESTMENT BANK LTD.
Truly a Nepali Bank

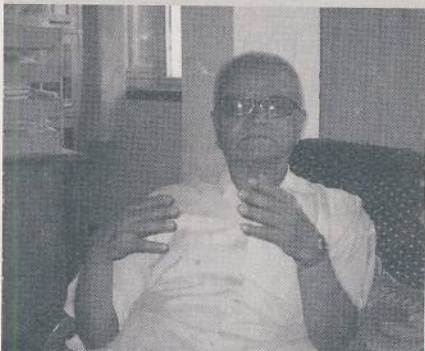




COVER STORY: CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY Extension Of Confusion 10



Tourism: On Way To World's Rooftop 26



INTERVIEW: Prof. Dr. Lok Raj Baral 14

NEWSNOTES

OPINION : —Dipak Gyawali 2

GORKHALAND: Fresh Agitation 4

UNMIN: In A Spot 5

FNCCI: Exercise In Futility 6

NEW UK GOVT: Promises to Keep 7

CONSTITUTION : Sisyphus Myth 8

FORUM: Buddha Basnyat, MD. 9

BIG CAT: In Danger 16

TEK CHANDRA POKHERAL: Excellent Achievement 17

Book 18

ARTICLE: Dr. Tulsi P. Uprety 19

ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL: Unique Facets 20

FOCUS: SURESH ACHARYA 21

FACE TO FACE : MINAR PIMPLE 22

VIEWPOINT: Professor Dr. Bishwombher Pyakuryal 25

28

Editor and Publisher : Keshab Poudel, **Senior Correspondent:** Saroj Dahal, **Reporter:** Pradipti Bhatta, Abijit Sharma, Aditi Pandey
Marketing Manager : Madan Raj Poudel, Tel: 9841320517, **Photographer :** Sandesh Manandhar **Guest writer :** Alvaro Castrillo Schneiter
Cover Design/Layout : Hari Krishna Bastakoti
Editorial Office : Tel: 977-1-4430250 E-mail: spot@mail.com.np, P.O.Box: 7256
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



Made In Pakistan

To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of Nepal Pakistan diplomatic relationship, Embassy of Pakistan is organizing an exhibition named Made in Pakistan Products Exhibition 2010 from 19 to 23 May 2010.

This is the first Pakistani exhibition of its kind in Nepal and is being organized by Pakistan World Trade Expo Center in collaboration with Pakistani Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepalese Embassy in Islamabad, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"We have also the support of Nepal Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Pakistan-Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Pakistan International Airlines," said

Feed the Future Initiative

Nepal has been selected as one of 20 focus countries for United States President Barack Obama's \$3.5 Billion Feed the Future initiative.

Feed the Future is a comprehensive country-owned and agriculture-led approach that aims to significantly and sustainably reduce hunger and poverty in the developing world, the US Embassy in Nepal has announced.

The US government has named food security as a major global priority.

Syed Abrar Hussain Pakistani ambassador to Nepal. Apart from normal stalls, a food court will offer variety of Pakistani dishes while a Pakistani cultural troupe will be there for live performance to entertain the visitors. There will be a large variety of Pakistani items such as wooden furniture, textile products, ladies dresses, leather jackets, ladies bags, footwear, artificial jeweler, cosmetic, gemstones, handicrafts and others. A group of more than 80 Pakistani businessmen is taking part in the program.

"We are confident that this event will greatly help in introducing Pakistani Products to Nepalese Consumers and provide a forum for interaction between businessmen of the two countries. This will in turn result in enhancing the volume of trade between our two nations which is dismally low," said ambassador.

USAID mission director, Dr. Kevin Rushing, met with Nathu Prasad Chaudhary, secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and Dr. Jagadish Chandra Pokharel, the vice chairman of the National Planning Commission to inform them of the news.

"The United States is working closely with the Government of Nepal and the other donors to be sure we can meet President Obama's objectives to reduce chronic hunger and poverty in Nepal," Dr. Rushing stated.

Although more than 80% of Nepal's population works in the agriculture sector, production of staple crops like wheat and barley has steadily declined. Sixty-six percent of Nepali households report food shortages and nearly half of children under five are undernourished.

"One billion people worldwide are hungry," noted USAID administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah when announcing the selections in Washington, D.C. "Each year, inadequate nutrition contributes to 3.5 million deaths among children under five. Undernutrition robs the developing world of critical human capital and capacity, and undermines other development investments in health, education, and economic growth. It also perpetuates the cycle of poverty and hunger by leading to poor health, lower levels of educational attainment, and reduced productivity and lifetime earnings."

Nepal demonstrates potential for rapid and sustainable agriculture-led growth, as well as opportunities for regional coordination through trade and other mechanisms.

Feed the Future will tackle the root causes of global hunger by sustainably increasing agricultural productivity to meet the demand for food, supporting and facilitating access to strong markets, providing employment opportunities, and increasing incomes so the poor can purchase food and reduce undernutrition through development and diplomatic efforts, the statement read.

Indian Support

India and Nepal signed an agreement on the upgradation of 26 km road from Dakshinkali to Kulekhani Dam in Nepal. A Memorandum of Understanding to this effect was signed by Ambassador of India Rakesh Sood and secretary in the Ministry of Finance Rameshwar Prasad Khanal.

Under the agreement, the Indian government shall provide a grant assistance of Nepali Rupees 15 crores to the Nepalese government for the upgradation of the 26 km road to black top standard road from Dakshinkali VDC in Kathmandu to Kulekhani Dam in the district of Makwanpur via Chimale VDC and Sisneri VDC with 6.5 meter roadway,



including construction of retaining structures, side structures, cross drains, culverts, and causeways.

The Department of Roads under the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works of the government of Nepal, will be the implementing agency for the project.

The upgraded road will not only benefit the population of Dakshinkali, Chimale, Sisneri and Kulekhani VDCs but also benefit the inhabitants of Kathmandu and Central Terai region by reducing the travel time from Kathmandu to Terai region, particularly to Birgunj, by almost half and will also considerably reduce the cost of transportation of goods in this sector.

Japanese Aid to Nepal

The Government of Japan has agreed to extend a grant assistance of six hundred million Yen (¥600,000,000), approximately four hundred and fifty one million, and eight hundred thousand Nepalese Rupees (NRs.451,800,000), or



approximately six million, three hundred and eighty-five thousand US dollars (US\$ 6,385,000), to the Government of Nepal for the Forest Preservation Program, in Japan's Fiscal Year 2009.

This grant assistance is to be provided with the objective of enabling the Government of Nepal to address climate change with special emphasis on adaptation to, and the mitigation of climate change as well as on improved access to clean energy.

It is widely known that human activities such as the burning of petrol and fossil fuels inevitably cause the emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂), but also scientifically clear that green plants and forests fulfill a variety of functions of curbing a global warming. For example, forests absorb CO₂ greatly and prevent soil erosion, provide natural resources, preserve the ecosystem, and maintain watersheds.

KOICA Supports Health Projects

KOICA will spend US\$ 1 million for Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI) pilot projects for 3 years (2010–2012). Through this project KOICA will carry out a variety of activities related to community based health insurance such as, census of population and housing, status quo of the delivery and

utilization of medical services, identifying different modalities of existing CBHI schemes in the targeted areas, understanding the availability and capacity of human and social resources in the targeted areas, verifying commitments and insurance strategies among stakeholders: policymakers, academics, NGOs, and providers, evaluate the political will and advocacy of the local government.

KOICA shall provide MOHP with a report of the baseline survey. Following the base line survey, KOICA shall design the project implementation program which will be based on multi-phased models focusing on CBHI.

Health sector has been one of the priority areas in Nepal for KOICA. Other than this KOICA has established a 50-bed Hospital in Madhyapur Thimi Municipality. At present there are 18 Korea Overseas Volunteers (KOVs), including 3 medical doctors, providing their services in the area of health in Nepal.

Gautam Named Citizen Bank Chairman

The Board of Directors of Citizens Bank International, Ltd announced the appointment of Kul Chandra Gautam as its new chairman effective 30 April 2010.



Gautam is a former Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF and Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations. He has extensive experience in international development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, human rights and diplomacy.

Currently, Gautam is informally advising Nepal's senior political and civil society leadership on the peace process, consolidation of democracy and socio-economic development. ■

Deconstructing Anti-Indianism

– Dipak Gyawali

It was a moment to relish at a Track-II talk shop over a decade ago. Nepali media was running purple prose on the Mahakali controversy but the contrasting silence in the Indian press was deafening. A Delhi-based Track-I retiree was waxing eloquent on how “we Indians” wanted Himalayan water development that was to benefit the neighbours but those ungrateful ones opposing it were motivated by pure “anti-Indianism”. At that point, the redoubtable Ashis Nandy jumped up objecting that he was very much an Indian but not part of the “we Indians” that the eminent gentleman was referring to.

This episode captures the cultural schizophrenia that all of India’s neighbours have to live with. Many of us – Nepalis, Bangladeshis, Srilankans and Pakistanis – have Indian friends we collaborate with closely in academia, business, social activism or cultural events. In the earlier decades, such invoking of anti-Indianism by the Babus of Delhi to explain away their failed policies used to be merely embarrassing, and most of our Indian friends used to whisper to us, “Ignore him, he is a jackass!” Today, this “anti-Indianism” has gone worrisomely viral thanks to two mutually reinforcing factors: Delhi Babudom’s interfering in the political affairs of the neighbours above and beyond normal diplomacy, including regime change in Nepal, and the corresponding backlash that is carried not so much by chattering elites as in the past but by mass-based parties at the receiving end of that highhandedness. Interestingly, the most anti-Indian rhetoric is spewed forth by parties that were either the creation of, or based on, Delhi’s munificence. And it is not just the Maoists who are the latest in exhibiting the wrath of the jilted lover: the Madhesh-based parties too are sulking in the corner, unhappy with Hindi imperialism in the Maithili-Awadhi bastion epitomized in the oath-taking flip-flop of Parmananda Jha.

In probing this phenomenon of anti-Indianism, before one lists the litany of neighbourhood grievances, it is important to keep two inter-related

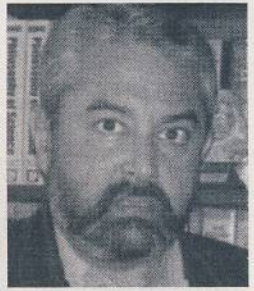
aspects in mind. The first is to understand the “Indianism” that the neighbours are so very against, and the other is to search for more in-depth causes. If being pro-Nepal or pro-Bangladesh is being anti-Indian, then there must logically exist severe problems with Indianism, even when there are many things justifiably Indian that are absolutely loved by the masses on the rims. For example, except for westernized snobs, Bollywood is everyone’s favourite, notwithstanding an occasional Hritik Roshan riot for (mis)perceived utterances by these celluloid celebrities. Indian goods, from *paan* to paints, are in high demand. Nepali youth who can, make a beeline for Indian colleges and those who can’t head for the Indian job market even as their friends back home demonstrate against India for many cross-border grievances.

One of the worst examples of Indianism is the special security check at Kathmandu airport: Nepal was punished with an air blockade for six months for what was obviously an Indian problem (Kashmir) created by an Indian failure to stop in Amritsar the hijackers of the Indian airlines to Kandahar in December 1999. But Nepal was demonized in the 24-hour Indian news channels and forced to accept a humiliating Indian plan that is a constant reminder to all air travellers every day that mutual trust is at rock bottom. Current bout of anti-Indianism going viral in the lower ranks of political parties stems from the Indian support for the regime change of 2006 that apparently came with hidden *quid pro quos* of Indianism. Extending the security plan of 1999, Delhi’s security Babus are pressuring the current Nepali dispensation for a *carte blanche* to arrest and extradite any suspect to Delhi. It would not only violate all international norms but also erase the respectful precedent established in 1965 in the case of chief minister Pratap Singh Kairon’s assassin Sucha Singh. The other “understanding” was to give citizenship to millions of migrants violating due process, with tragic results: many criminal elements in UP

and Bihar took advantage of it, **t h u s** contributing significantly to the current insecurity in the Tarai and across.

It is the third *quid pro quo* item – water resources – that elucidates Indianism and contrasts it in Nepali minds with “Chinese-ism”, if one may invent a non-existent term. Hastily after regime change in 2006, the Seven Party Alliance and the Maoists pushed into place a water resource development policy that was not Nepal-centric but export-led which completely ignored the importance of regulated water. Violating the letter and spirit of the 1990 constitution’s Article 126 (as well as the interim constitution’s Article 156), they awarded plum sites to Indian developers, not for ameliorating Nepal’s crippling power shortage but for export to India. In contrast, the Chinese have offered Nepal \$200 million of soft loan to develop about 110 MW of power for Nepali consumption. Can such incidents of Indianisms – from border encroachments to misplaced efforts to build an artificial Lumbini in UP to lodging comical diplomatic protests when a Bangladeshi millionaire put up money to build a replica of the Taj Mahal near Dhaka – be generalized under some theoretical reasoning to search for deeper causes behind these symptoms?

The roots of anti-Indianism seem to lie in the nature of the Indian state, which is legally the successor state to the colonial British Raj: indeed Delhi and not Islamabad inherited the Raj residency in Lainchaur. This continuity carries with it not just the burden of past colonial history but also its politics as well. As the political economist Samir Amin puts it, unlike Russian development based on a urban-bureaucratic alliance that bled the peasantry white, and the Chinese model equalizing rural peasants over urban workers thus re-shaping Chinese social relations, India’s Nehruvian plan was a “peripheral capitalist” model. It did not end colonialism but merely



changed the driver of the machine from white to brown with the global capitalist philosophy and mission remaining the same. As a result, India's continuing internal colonization has produced, six decades after independence, a raging Naxalite mutiny that has engulfed half its districts. Its external economic colonization efforts – from Farakka to Mahakali to Wullar – have led to bad blood in the neighbourhood. Within and without, the political economy of unfair resource capture enterprises pursued by Delhi's Babudom has produced similar results.

The successor state also inherits, to use terms by Foucault and Edward Said, the hegemon's "master narratives" of knowledge and power used for domination. When the British ruled from Kashmir to Colombo and Khyber to Khasi, calling the jewel in the crown "India" made sense. Upon partition, the new Republic of Indus-stan chose to call itself Pakistan; but Delhi should not have psychologically appropriated the Indus or the Persian name that followed from it. Calling the Republic of Gangastan as "India" was thus a civilizational hijack that constantly puts the rim countries on alert and feeds perennial suspicions of Indian moves and motives in many areas: are Pakistani *ustads* or Nepali Sur Sudha playing "Indian" musical instruments? Are the Vedas and Sanskrit not Nepali? Is Mughal history or Rabindra Sangeet not that of Bangladesh as well?

With Nepal being forced to re-examine its internal identity with the current Loktantrick experiment, it is equally imperative to examine its external, civilizational identity as well. And one must begin with some myth-busting: Nepal-India relations are not "ancient" as official syrupy speeches would have it. They are only six decades old because there was no India of today before that, only the Raj in Mughlan. It is these six decades that need reflecting over so that better development than has occurred in the past – economic, social and cultural – can take place in the region. Just as Germans or Spaniards can call themselves "European", South Asians too need identify themselves as members of what Toynbee labels the "Indic" civilization. Such ecumenical thinking can happen only if, as Foucault and Said warned, a hegemonic hijacking of that identity is ended. ■

GORKHALAND

Fresh Agitation

By UMA KANTAKHANAL in Siliguri

Since the Government of India and the West Bengal Government rejected the proposal for an interim setup in Darjeeling, Gorkha Janamukti Morcha, the party agitating for a separate Gorkhaland state, has again commenced a new agitation 'only for Gorkhaland'.

Last year's tripartite talks in the capital New Delhi had dissolved Darjeeling's internal administrative agency, Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, led by Subash Ghising. Since then, the vacuum has remained.

The Morcha had proposed the interim setup demanding the territory to include

be limited to the hill subdivisions of Kalimpong, Kurseong and Darjeeling.

As soon as the talks failed to get the results, the Morcha has announced a 10-day long general strike in mid-June. Initially, on May 15 and 16, Morcha called a two-day general strike in the proposed Gorkhaland area to pressurize the governments now for the statehood.

Bimal Gurung, the president of Gorkha Janamukti Morcha, has said that his party has pulled out of the talks regarding interim setup and has revived the agitation for the separate statehood now. Gurung said that the 10 days' strike would be enforced in all the areas his party wants to be brought under Gorkhaland. "Everything will remain



Gorkha Agitation : Fresh round

Siliguri Terai and Dooars, which were not included in Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council before. But, in the tripartite meeting among the representatives of the central government, the state government and the agitating Morcha in New Delhi, both the governments denied to talk on Morcha's proposal of the territory.

Harka Bahadur Chhetri, Morcha's Press and Publication Secretary, said, "They were not in the mood to talk about adding Siliguri and Dooars in our proposed interim setup. We also did not want to talk if our proposal could not be accepted."

The central and the state governments seemed more interested in deciding on the powers to be granted to the proposed interim set-up rather than determine its territorial jurisdiction which was proposed by Morcha. They insisted the set-up should

closed, including schools and tea gardens," he added.

Simultaneously, the Gorkhalis also are involved in the relay hunger strike in the different places of Siliguri and Dooars. The government offices except banks and post-offices remained closed.

The fresh political uncertainty is seen in North Bengal after the tripartite talks failed and Morcha commenced the new agitation. The strike on May 15 and 16 paralyzed Darjeeling and the Terai. The demonstrators damaged nearly a dozen vehicles on 31A National Highway which connects India's Himalayan state, Sikkim. All the shops, market and business establishments were closed in the three hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong and vehicles stayed off the roads. ■



UNMIN

In A Spot

Clock has begun to tick for the UN mission to pack up, but will it?

By NAVIN SINGH KHADKA
in London

The mist of uncertainty shrouding the future of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) has further thickened.

More so in the wake of what the mission's officials in Kathmandu have to say.

Earlier this month, the UN Security Council decided to withdraw UNMIN by 15 September this year when the latest extension for the mission expires.

In the resolution it adopted, the council said, "(The SC) underlines that the current arrangements were conceived as temporary measures, rather than long term solutions, and decides that, working with the parties, UNMIN should immediately begin to make the necessary arrangements for its withdrawal, including handing over any residual monitoring responsibilities by 15 September 2010."

No wonder an UN-dated Associated Press report ran its top line

saying the world body had decided to wrap up its Nepal mission after four months.

But a few days after the SC decision, UNMIN chief Karin Landgren had this to say at a press meet, "My briefing, and the report of the Secretary General, described the extensive structured consultations that took place between UNMIN and senior political leaders to review options that would allow for the mission's withdrawal.

"The Security Council reiterated that UNMIN, working with the parties, should begin to make arrangements for this."

Evidently, Landgren's language did not quite echo the even more straight forward message of the SC.

She chose to avoid the date, 15 September 2010, for the withdrawal while the council had mentioned it specifically.

If you read UNMIN chief's statement without referring to the SC resolution, the impression would largely

be that the world body's council was simply making a routine comment.

But it wasn't one. Having extended UNMIN's term for six times since 2007, this was the first time when the security council made such a forthright decision for the mission to pack up.

Left scratching their heads on the "dissimilarity" between what SC and UNMIN had to say, observers were even more nonplussed with the mission's yet another statement.

It says, "UNMIN can conclude its monitoring responsibilities when any residual monitoring responsibilities are handed over, or when the situation of the Maoist army is resolved.

With Maoists and major ruling parties having continued to cross swords on government leadership and new constitution, the knotty issue of Maoist combatants is not even on the table.

In such an atmosphere of deepening mistrust, how can both the sides agree on a body the UN can hand over its residual monitoring responsibilities to?

Perhaps that was why UNMIN was quick to add, "How soon this can be done will depend on how quickly the parties reach agreement."

But, what if the parties do not reach a deal within the 15 September security council deadline set for UNMIN's withdrawal?

Then things might be subject to interpretation by which side you are speaking to.

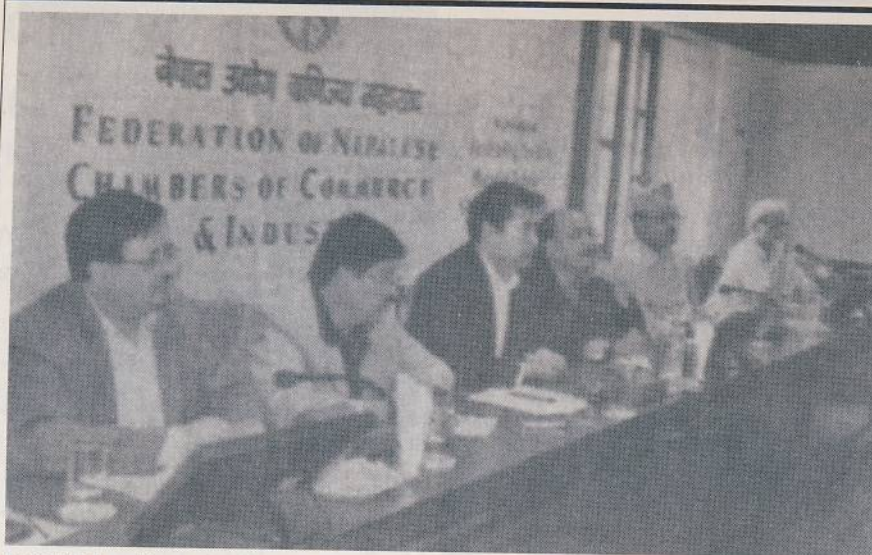
The major ruling parties who have been miffed by the UN mission all along might point at the security council decision.

Much to the rejoice of regional powers that were never happy to have the UNMIN at their backyard.

But Maoist leaders who have smelled rat in "UNMIN-bashing" maintain that the mission must continue.

Amid these conflicting positions and the approaching security council deadline, what move would the UN make eagerly remains to be seen.

All the more, if the political deadlock continued even after UNMIN's extended four-month mandate. ■



FNCCI Leaders : In Controversy

FNCCI

Exercise In Futility

In its attempt to please all, the FNCCI leadership ends up pleasing no one

By A CORRESPONDENT

In the last two weeks, the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)—the umbrella body of private business community—has succeeded to alienate the government as well as the Maoists.

On May 7, the leadership of the FNCCI were on the Cloud Nine.

Following the 'success' of the peace rally they organized, the Maoists were compelled to end the week-long strike that had just about crippled the entire national economy.

But the success was, indeed, bitter sweet.

The Maoists felt that the business community, particularly FNCCI, had acted partially by not demanding resignation of the government even as the peace rally demanded withdrawal of their strike.

Fearing the red backlash, the FNCCI leadership went into an overdrive of diplomacy. They met with the Prime Minister where the FNCCI president dropped hints that they expected his resignation.

The prime minister was quick to

dismiss such demands and, instead, asked the business community to stop feeding milk to snake—a phrase clearly referring to the business community's 'donation' to Maoists.

In a damage control exercise, the FNCCI, on May 15, called an emergency meeting.

Perhaps buoyed by the success of May 7 rally, the over-zealous FNCCI leadership gave 48-hour ultimatum to the political parties to reach consensus.

They threatened to bring masses of tens of thousands all over the country to pressure the parties.

They even went on to declare that if their demands were not met, they would not only stop paying donations to parties but would also suspend paying taxes.

Now that really irked the ruling parties.

Having already registered themselves in the bad books of the Maoists, they now succeeded to alienate the government as well.

The ministers quickly deplored the ultimatum and the threats of non payment of taxes.

Immediately, after the decision, the

FNCCI leaders realized their folly. They first increased the ultimatum to 3 days. And then they said that was not an ultimatum at all.

"We only gave time to the parties to reach consensus because without it the country is doomed," said FNCCI president Kush Kumar Joshi.

But the damage has already been done.

Mounting Pressure

In the run up to their peace rally—in which tens of thousands of people participated calling for end to strikes—the FNCCI leadership was in extreme pressure. The Maoist leadership asked them to cancel or at least postpone the rally by two days.

At one point, they had nearly cancelled it

But they then faced pressure from the other side and went ahead with the peace rally—which turned out to be huge success anyway.

"The events of the last two weeks must serve as a lesson to the FNCCI leadership to refrain from such misadventures as raising political demands instead of limiting itself in favor of peace and constitution," said a former executive member of FNCCI.

However, the success of May 7 rally also suggests that the FNCCI, indeed, has a big following for the cause of strike-free and peaceful environment where the economy can progress.

Losses And Losses

In the six days of Maoist-imposed strike, the country has lost about Rs 13.5 billion in total.

"For each day of strike, the country loses Rs 2.25 billion," said Kush Kumar Joshi, president of FNCCI.

He said the calculations were made on the basis of lost work hours, revenue, import revenue, business turnovers etc.

On the other hand, during the strike, the Maoists are said to have spent as much as Rs 20 million a day for the upkeep of the tens of thousands of their supporters who had been brought to the valley from all over the country to take part in protest demonstrations.

The expenses were made on their fooding and lodging as well as travel.

NEW UK GOVT

Promises to Keep

The Conservative-Lib Dem coalition that has resumed office early this month is expected to increase its international aid commitments. Does Nepal stand to gain?

By BHAGIRATH YOGI in London

Just three days after assuming office, the newly appointed Foreign Secretary of Britain, William Hague, left for Washington DC to meet his US counterpart, Hillary Clinton. "Afghanistan remains the top priority for our government. We discussed about Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and other issues of mutual interest during the meeting," the veteran Conservative leader told reporters emerging after the talks with Mrs Clinton on 14th May.

Britain has committed second highest number of forces in Afghanistan, after the US, and is also an important ally of the US across the Atlantic. British Gurkhas remain an integral part of the British forces who are fighting against the Taliban militants in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan.

After a Hindu religious ritual, friends and family bid adieu to a total of 600 troops of the Royal Gurkha Rifles at Folkestone, UK, on March 31st as they were all set to leave for Afghanistan. Nearly 280 British soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan since 2001 including Gurkha soldiers.

Gurkhas remain the cornerstone of nearly two-centuries-old relationship between Nepal and Britain. They have valiantly fought in World War I and II on behalf of the then British empire as well as in other theatres of war as part of the British forces. Thousands of Gurkhas have laid down their lives in the course of these battles defending the British crown and her subjects.

Of course, there have been long running grievances among the Gurkha soldiers on issues ranging from right to settlement and equal pension and benefits. After a long and high profile campaign supported by British politicians, media and actress Joanna Lumley, British government led by Gordon Brown decided last year to allow right to settlement to all Gurkha soldiers who had served at least for four years in the British Army. But their fight for equal pension continues.

"The results of the General Election have certainly given everyone pause for thought. We will wait with interest to see what happens, but irrespective of the outcome I believe there is and will continue

to be a good awareness within the political community of the issues facing the Gurkhas and the need to rectify the problems they face," said Major (Retd.) Tikendra Dal Dewan, chairman of the British Gurkha Welfare Society (BGWS)—a leading Gurkha organisation based in the UK.

"The BGWS will continue to highlight these problems to both our longstanding supporters in Parliament and the newly elected MPs. We are firmly of the belief that pension equality for Gurkha veterans is not only morally right, but will ultimately prove less costly to the public purse than the current situation under which many Gurkhas are forced to relocate to the UK out of financial desperation," he added.

Development Aid

Another area of immediate concern for Nepal is development aid.

UK remains the largest bilateral donor to Nepal assisting in areas as diverse as drafting constitution, improving policing and raising income and skills of poor families. In the year 2008/09, Department for International Development (DFID) had allocated 85 million pounds to implement its programs in Nepal—up from £ 18.52 million during 2000-01. All eyes are now set on the new coalition government as to how it will redefine its international development priorities.

As the country faces a huge budgetary deficit of around 163 billion pounds, newly appointed Prime Minister David Cameron has made it clear that his government will be slashing spending in almost all areas of the public expenditure. And, it will take a few more months to assess the full impact of cut in different sectors of governance including foreign aid.

"We will have to wait until the new government announces its emergency budget within the next couple of months to assess how much its international aid commitments will be hit," said Murari Raj Sharma, former Nepali ambassador to the UK. "But, I don't think there will be a major change in its overall orientation (towards foreign aid)," he added.

As Nepal is trying to emerge out of the



British PM: Leading a coalition

decade-old armed insurrection—in which over 13,000 people lost their lives—and trying to reshape polity as well as its economy, support and goodwill of international friends like UK matters a lot. But, Nepal's development partners are likely to take time to assess the impact of roller coaster political changes in Nepal over the last few years—and the deepening political instability the country is passing through—on bilateral relations.

"The new Conservative-led administration of UK might feel little uncomfortable towards the new political set up in Nepal leading to changes in their perception. But, I don't think there will be any major ideological shift in the British government's development assistance policy towards developing countries like Nepal," added Sharma, who has also served as the Nepali envoy to the United Nations.

In the wake of global financial crisis and recent fiscal crisis in Eurozone economies including Greece, analysts say countries like Nepal should no more take foreign aid as granted. Donors are likely to be choosy while spending every dollar or pound of their taxpayers money and may hold the recipient more accountable in the days to come.

In their latest election manifestoes, both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties have pledged to achieve the UN target of spending 0.7 percent national income as aid by 2013. "We will move towards results-based aid, where money is handed to governments only when development results have been achieved. We will also empower people in poor countries by giving them more control over how aid is spent—and strengthen public support for aid by giving British people a vote over where and how some of their aid is spent," said the Conservative manifesto.

The message is loud and clear: Nepal will have to restore order as soon as possible and improve governance if she wants to receive increased aid from her international development partners including the UK. ■

CONSTITUTION

Sisyphus Myth

Nepal's current constitution making exercise is ending in a manner of all previous constitutions, like the Myth of Sisyphus

By KESHAB POUDEL

In the last six decades, five constitutions in Nepal faced similar fates. When the constitution reached at the stage of maturity, the process crumbled like the famous Greek legend's of Myth of Sisyphus.

After four years of costly exercise of constitution making through the Constituent Assembly, Nepal is again nowhere with all the dreams to write a model constitution to turn Nepal as a federal, democratic republic getting rude jolts.

The political euphoria, which surfaced following the India-backed 12 point agreement signed between the UCPN-Maoist and the seven political party alliance in New Delhi in 2006, is down and political parties are now harping on their own slogans to start a new journey. UCPN-Maoist has already declared that it will promulgate the New People's constitution.

"If the new understanding is not reached till May 27 with the resignation of the prime minister and agreement on consensual national government, we will declare People's Constitution on May 28 from the open theater," threatened Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. "We will capture the power under the constitution promulgated from the street. We will show our strength in the street and there is no question to extend the tenure of CA without PM's resignation."

Maoist leader Prachanda too has made similar statements threatening to establish the party's own rule in the country in case political parties do not abide by their proposal. However, Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have rejected the Maoist demand and asked them to come to sign a broader package to solve the current crisis including for national government.

"Once Maoist agrees on the package, we will amend the interim



PM Nepal : Where is Constitution ?

constitution. We will agree on the last minute like in the past," said CPN-UML leader Jhalnath Khanal with confidence. "The statement of Maoist is just a rhetoric and they have to come to the ground reality."

Whatever Maoist leaders Prachanda or Dr Baburam Bhattarai wish or CPN-UML leader Jhalnath Khanal thinks, it has little meaning. Wish of Maoist leaders to wage the war cannot materialize until there is guarantee for safe sanctuary and supply of logistic as in the past. Similarly, Khanal's thinking has no meaning if he gets the backing of all like in 2006. Reality and rhetoric are different.

As South Asia is itself unstable, one cannot expect stability in Nepal. In the words of South Asian experts, the hard reality of South Asia is volatile and unstable. "A New Great Game is about at the top of the world. The chain of mountain ranges, plateaus, and valleys that begins in Afghanistan and Kashmir, and then sweeps 2,500 miles across the Indian subcontinent to Burma (now Myanmar) is fast becoming one of the globe's most volatile and dangerous geo-political fault zones," writes journalist Eric S. Margolis in his book *War at the Top of the World*. "South Asia, which contains a full quarter of

humanity, is being shaken by a confluence of strategic, political and economic tensions that threatens to ignite a series of interlocking conflicts whose effects may be felt around the globe."

This hard reality turned last month's Maoist state capturing exercise into a fiasco. Started from the statement of Chinese government spokesperson in Beijing with discussions by Nepalese prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal to foreign diplomats, intervention by the diplomats from European Union,

statement of US assistant secretary and finally a sudden outburst of crowd in the streets of Kathmandu foiled the Maoist big show.

Although Maoist leader Prachanda is threatening with strong words as a face value, he knows where he felt the pinch. No matter what Prachanda or Dr. Baburam

Bhattarai or Jhalnath Khanal want, it is the hard reality which will prevail.

"It is dead sure that the constitution will never work which is unrealistic against the hard realities of the country and that will become a scrap of paper. Only that constitution will prevail which accommodates all conflicting interests of the country and accommodates hard realities of the country," said a political analyst, an eminent constitutional lawyer, in the May 12, 2006 issue of *Spotlight*.

"As long as Nepal's geo-strategic situation is unstable, no constitution and political process will work. Nepal's geostrategic position is a hard reality which will override constitutions. The present instability is also a reflection of this," said the analyst in the last issue of *New Spotlight*. (Read April 30 *New Spotlight*)

Whatever political leaders say or wish, they cannot change the hard reality of Nepal and Nepal's political course or constitutional process are not going to stabilize in the near future. Hard reality is Nepal's geostrategic location and it will determine everything. As long as it settle, Nepal has to repeatedly see Myth of Sisyphus ■

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Extension

Of

Confusion

Born with a two-year lifespan Nepal's first constituent assembly is set to receive artificial oxygen for an extended life as the jumbo body fails, predictably, to give the delivery of a new constitution with major partners that conceived it falling out over the yet-to-born baby

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

With just a week to go before the constituent assembly expires, there had been no agreement yet on extending the CA.

However, in private, both sides have reconciled to the extension as unavoidable.

More so the Maoists, who, said a standing committee member, will stand

to lose the most in the event of a non-extension.

"We are more eager than others to extend it," he confided.

If the CA is not extended the Maoists will lose the constitutionally secured strength and status as the single largest legitimate party despite maintaining a private army.

Three bills are under consideration for what many believe is the inevitable.

One government bill and two private bills.

But both the multi-party governing coalition of prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal and the multi-party alliance led by the main opposition Maoist communist party have been sticking to their guns over the future course of politics.

The Maoists have not given up yet on the resignation of the prime minister



CA Meeting : Will it survive ?

for an extension of the CA.

The governing coalition has ruled that out without settling the vexing issue of the Maoist combatants.

The added precondition of a return to a consensual system from a majority one in the parliament is unlikely to cut ice with the government.

The internal squabble within the Maoist rung and the psychological setback the party suffered due to the miscalculated shut-down has considerably weakened the main opposition.

Nothing illustrates this better than the flood of congratulatory messages one reporter got from a Maoist camp after his hard-hitting piece on Prachanda's demagoguery appeared in a Nepali-language magazine.

According to him, the anti-

Prachanda camp is too tired of the top gun's personal ambition at the cost of the larger interest of the party.

His abortive bid to play China card against India has boom-ranged too.

"His relations with Delhi have worsened beyond repair," said an insider.

This has understandably emboldened the governing coalition and the man who has been leading it against heavy odds at every step.

Diplomatic Turf

Much has been made of the Thimpu boost prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal got during the SAARC summit.

No doubt, he was a changed man — a galvanized man — after a three-day sojourn in the Bhutanese capital.

The reason, according to many, was that the-then beleaguered prime

minister secured all-important pat on the back from his Indian counterpart, Man Mohan Singh.

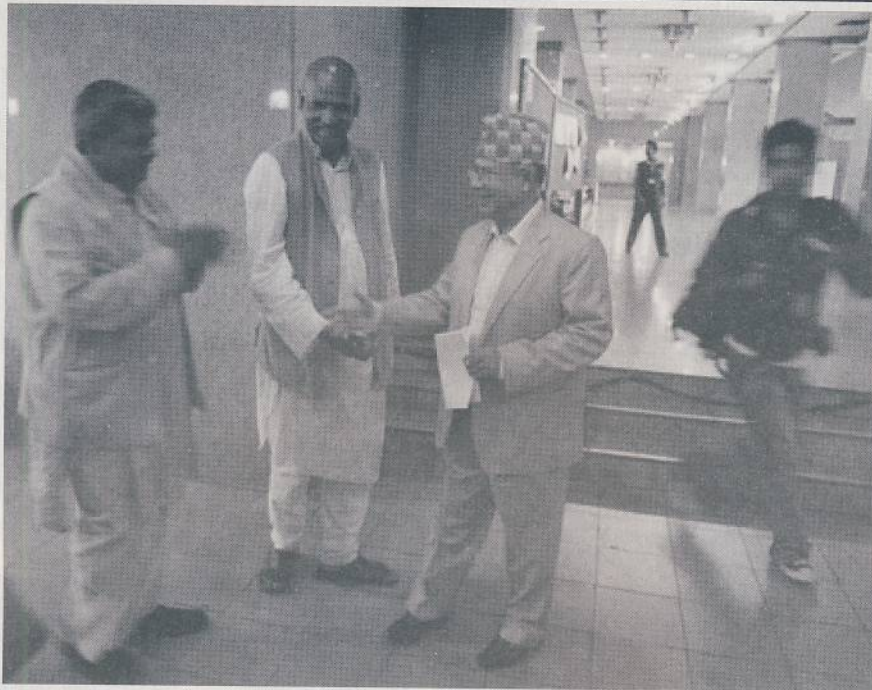
It has turned out that he had the blessings of other South Asian leaders as well.

From Afghanistan to Bangladesh to the tiny Maldives. He was advised to stand firm against moves to topple him from the streets.

The others feared that his stepping down would set 'a bad example' in their countries.

Fresh from 'South Asian' solidarity he was however greeted with a hostile "European" community back at home.

The European Union member countries' mission based in Kathmandu gave "a non-paper" to the prime minister with a 48-hour ultimatum to forge a national consensus to end the political crisis.



PM Nepal with CA Members: Strong stand

In effect, they wanted the prime minister to quit in return of the withdrawal of the indefinite Maoist shutdown.

They repeated the message after the strike was withdrawn.

The prime minister hit back after the Maoists were forced to back out

unilaterally.

In an interview to the Financial Times of London early this week, prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal pulled the socks of Kathmandu-based European diplomats.

Venting anger at them for “interfering” in internal affairs, the prime minister asked the European diplomats to mind their business.

He was apparently miffed at them for ‘poking their nose’ into the PM’s business during a meeting the latter called at his Baluwatar residence.

The prime minister’s outbursts followed neighboring India’s anger at the European community’s growing activism in what it considers its backyard.

India has found the US as its ally in ruling out a consensus government unless the former rebels detach themselves from the armed wing and convert into ‘a civilian party’, to quote the new ambassador Robert De Lesi.

China has not taken a clear line. But by refusing to be seen as sympathetic



Maoist Leaders : Undecided

'CA Extension Without PM's Resignation

One-time Nepali Congress MP, AMARESH KUMAR SINGH, was a key interlocutor between the former communist rebels and the parliamentary parties in bringing the two sides together for the 12-point agreement in Delhi. Known to have penetrated the hearts and the minds of many top Maoist functionaries including the formidable duo – Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai – the former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) alumnus believes that the Maoists have no other choice but to agree to an extension of the constituent assembly without getting the resignation of prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal in return. Excerpts of an interview to BBC Nepali Service:

Will the CA be extended?

If it is not extended, the Maoists will be the biggest loser.

They have ruled out the extension without the resignation of the prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal.

Prime minister Nepal can not resign, he will not resign, and he should not resign until and unless the Maoists are detached from their combatants.

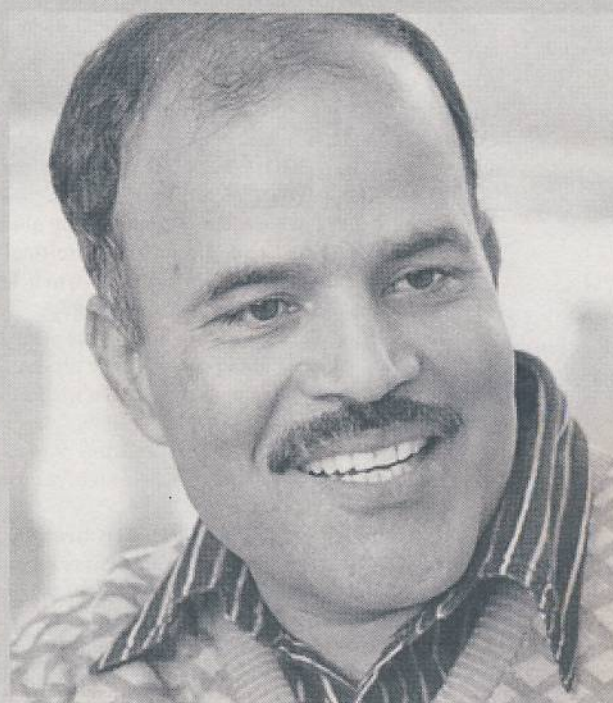
But the Maoists are steadfast on their demand.

If they do not budge, they will have

to pay the price. They must first keep the promise they made to the former prime minister, Girija Prasad Koirala, and Delhi. They said then that only 5000 combatants would be up for integration.

Is there a written record of such a promise?

During the peace process, many things had been said and done in good faith, without keeping a record. Even now, they have been promising many things including the number of combatants to be integrated. All in private. They must now do it in writing, in public. The days of closed-door dealing are gone.



Will the CA's extension resolve the political crisis and clear way for a new constitution in the extended time?

It will only defer the conflict. Unless the Maoists mend their ways the specter of conflict will not end.

But you are still confident about the CA's extension.

Yes, because what the Maoists say they do not do. If the Maoists are saying that they will not let the government extend the CA with the incumbent prime minister still in office, then rest assured they will go for the extension without the PM's resignation. ■

to the Maoists' move to topple the government, it has stuck to its long-standing policy of standing by the incumbent establishment.

No wonder, the US assistant secretary of state for South Asia, Robert Blake, during a visit to China, chose to speak to the Indian news agency PTI, to disclose the "almost similar positions of the three countries on Nepal."

Armed with an international license to rule prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal looks set for a longer innings than expected on the sticky wicket of Nepali politics.

The Maoists will probably continue

to be no-balled with the third umpire, the Europeans, getting no referral from the field.

But the former rebels are not in a position to walk off the field notwithstanding the oft-repeated revolt threat. If they did that will be a walkover to the other side – the governing coalition.

The CA extension appears inevitable. But a solution to the political crisis does not appear on the cards yet.

Reluctant agreement or understanding can not produce a solution. It can only defer an imminent conflict. ■

Are You In a Hurry for Suiting ?

GOPAL TAILORS

Is at your Doorstep
Specialist in Suit, Shirt and Safari

For All Kinds of Clothing materials
and Supplier of School Dress and
Office Uniform

Khichapokhari, Kathmandu Nepal
(Opposite to Everest Bank)
Contact: Gopal Upadhyay
Phone: 977-1-4423412
Mobile: 9841330970

“Blaming India Is A Good Excuse”

Professor Dr. LOK RAJ BARAL

Professor Dr. LOK RAJ BARAL is a well known Nepali political scientist. Having taught at Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, for more than three decades, Professor Baral has a number of books on Nepali contemporary politics and foreign policy issues to his credit. Professor Baral, who is also executive chairman of Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies (NCCS), spoke to KESHAB POUDEL on a wide range of issue. Excerpts:

All political parties, including ruling parties and main opposition UCPN-Maoist, have been talking about the need to have consensus to end the current political deadlock. Why do they fail to agree on the issue when less than 10 days remain before the CA term expires?

The situation is like shadow boxing on petty disputes. If they are really serious about making constitution, they could have already forged a kind of unity to move ahead in accordance with the spirit of People's Movement 2006. I don't think there is any serious problem about it and the parties are really committed to the process. There is no point for prolonging this for a long time.

At a time when UCPN-Maoist has been insisting that the present government is a puppet government and they don't want to talk with this foreign backed government. How do you look at this?

These are just gimmicks. Blaming each other and terming others anti-national and pro of some countries is just gimmicks. This is not the actual thing. Even the prime minister seems to be very aggressive against the main opposition. This should not happen. These all are temporary things. Maoists may have temporary setbacks and they will come back. They should not drag a particular country. I have not seen any point of disagreement between them on the package issues.

If prime minister resign on the package agreement, that is going to be a good way out to bring the process on the right track.

They have been doing such an exercise for a long period. Why do they fail to produce the results?

The threat perception is more responsible for this rather than anything. Maoist and other political parties are looking at each other as enemies. The threat perception is responsible for the present situation.

But Maoist are accusing that Nepal did not resign because he received blessings in Bhutan from Indian prime minister and India is creating hurdles to the peace process. What do you say on this?

Left forces and monarchists always raise anti-Indian slogans as a tool to prove themselves nationalist. I don't think anybody can claim to be nationalist just by harping anti-Indian hymns. As leftist forces, Maoists too are raising the issues as anti-Indians to prove they are nationalists. I don't think they will get any mileage from this. King Mahendra and King Birendra even divided communist parties on the basis of anti-India feeling. There is polarization in communist party. Communists and monarchists used the card of playing China against India for a long time.

You mean Maoists are harping on anti-Indian slogans just for the sake of proving their nationalist credentials?

Whenever anybody meets a difficult situation, blaming India is a good excuse. Not only have the Maoists, all the political

leaders done it. Even Nepali Congress leader like Krishna Prasad Bhattarai criticized India in his elections campaign saying that he could not allow Nepal become Sikkim. Compared to other political parties, Nepali Congress is soft but it is like in the fashion for communist to harp anti-Indian slogans. Their expressions were just opposite to their actions. For instance, all the communist parties raise the question of 1950, and Gurkha recruitment when they are in the opposition. Once they are in power they do the opposite. This trend continued from Man Mohan Adhikari to Prachanda.

Don't you think there is something wrong with India as well? If there is nothing wrong, why have Maoist leaders been pointing fingers at it?

There is not only one India as there are various lobbies and groups. In the context of Nepal, there works perceptions. When communists or Maoists go to China, some may consider the act against the Indian interest and closer to China. For us, India is our closest neighbor and China also a closest neighbor having borders with us. We cannot ignore this fact also as China is our next door neighbor. India has to realize it. Had India realized it, it would not have allowed developing Nepal's relations with China. Initially, India expressed objection on construction of Kodari Highway but they allowed continuing it. We have established our diplomatic relations with Pakistan and Israel in 1960. When India's vital security stake comes, India is not going to compromise with anybody. In terms of security perception, India suspects somebody on the basis of their linkage to China.

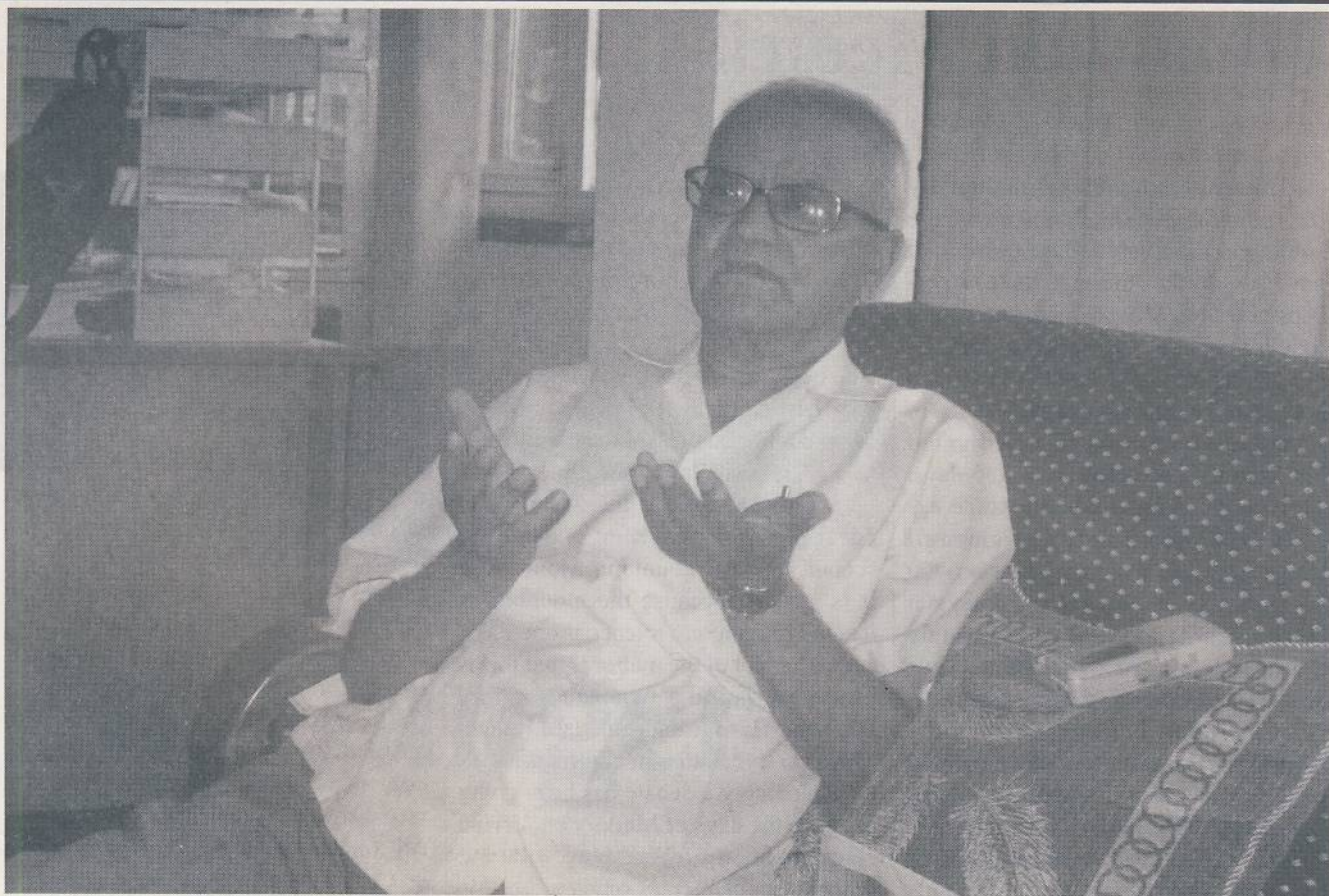
Since last one year Maoist leaders have been making anti-Indian statements accusing that India conspired to pull down their government. How do you look at this?

The Maoists can internally assess the situation. They might have their own information sources from where they can get the information. India has influence in some of anti-Maoist activities in Nepal. In case of the question of removal of Army Chief, India's involvement was there which is well known to all. I cannot blame India for all that is happening here. Our leaders are responsible for them. They go to India for lobbying to secure the position. Instead of blaming them, we have to improve our character. We have so much dependency syndrome that we can see. In some cases, one cannot deny the situation. Maoist might have strong capacity to assess the situation. I have not seen such assessment done by any political parties.

If political parties do not agree to extend the CA tenure, what will be consequences?

If they don't agree on this, the tenure of CA will come to an end. There is no question who is going to be prime minister and who is going to be ministers. Some ministers are saying that they will put it under the suspended animation. The government is talking very irresponsibly. The government failed in all fronts

Blaming each other and terming others anti-national and pro of some countries is just gimmicks. This is not the actual thing. Even the prime minister seems to be very aggressive against the main opposition. This should not happen.



including corruption.

Maoist leaders including Prachanda and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai accused that Madhav Nepal took his stand following his meeting with Indian prime minister in Bhutan. How do you look at this?

Maoists have made Bhutan from a small to big thing. It is diplomatic practice to Nepalese prime minister to make courtesy call to Indian prime minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh. Nothing will happen there.

Is there any possibility to build the consensus?

I have not seen any point of disagreement. It is the crisis of leadership. Leaders failed to go for execution of the decision taken by them. That is the most ugly part of the system. We have party system but not political parties. Political parties have to implement the decision. Major issues are on one side but the political leaders are fighting for the post of prime ministership.

Don't you think that main opposition UCPN-Maoist needs to do something?

Maoists too have to show some flexibility. The constitutional provision is not going to create any hurdles in case there is agreement among the political leaders.

How do you see the possibility to have agreement again?

Although they have not indicated anything about what is happening, something is cooking beneath the political process. Political parties do not have any alternative to the consensus.

What is the prominent issue now?

The prominent issue is not a government but a constitution making. But, political parties are focusing

their attention on government. All of them have been saying that they want to do a deal in package. I don't understand what is blocking the package.

There is no process in the country. Everything is topsy turvy. I describe Nepal's politics based on jump theory or frog jump. There is no sequential development.

Who needs to play the most important role in the present context?

I have requested Madhav Kumar Nepal to resign if there is necessary. He too repeatedly says that he is not going to be hurdle in the course of political settlement.

Don't you think that Maoists also need to fulfill their commitments by converting themselves to civilian party?

The time has come for the Maoist also to disassociate from their combatants. Like all other political parties, they too are preparing to work as a civilian party without army and militants. Maoists must be flexible on this ground.

At a time when RPP-Nepal leader Kamal Thapa is taking the issue of revival of monarchy and Hindu state, how do you see the possibility of revival of monarchy in Nepal?

I am almost hundred percent certain that Monarchy is not going to revive again in Nepal since there is no reason to bring monarchy. So far as the Hindu state is concerned, person like Kamal Thapa can play politics. Since secularism is a fundamental thing of democracy, I don't see the democratic countries Nepal can revive it. There is no utility of monarchy in Nepal now.

What do you foresee in the political process?

I don't think anybody can predict it. Our leaders may sign agreement at midnight and make unpredictable things. We cannot even assume. There is no alternative to compromise. There is the need to carry Maoists together. Maoists cannot go for destruction like in the past. ■

I am almost hundred percent certain that Monarchy is not going to revive again in Nepal

Mountain Medicine: Climbing Everest

Buddha Basnyat, MD.

Everest summit fever is raging. By the end of May most climbers who are waiting at the Everest Base Camp will have summited the mountain or perhaps given up. Most climbers take their time for about 6 to 8 weeks acclimatizing at high altitude (sauntering around base camp, climbing up and down from camp 2 or 3) and then go for the summit bid from the base camp in 3 to 5 days. As Peter Hackett, a noted altitude expert and an Everest summiteer himself says people can live for months at 6000 m, weeks at 7000m but only days at 8000m; that is why 8000m is certainly the death zone. At that altitude your body is unable to acclimatize any more. Acclimatizing basically means the body's physiological functions coming to terms with the decreased oxygen level (hypoxia) of the high altitude terrain.

It is the acclimatization period which may take about 2 months and demands patience, waiting it out in the inhospitable Everest Base Camp or higher. Gone are the days when climbing was limited to the likes of Eric Shipton, Hillary, Doug Scott, and Tenzing Sherpa. Now many climbers are office workers who may be affluent enough to use the services of a commercial guide to go up the mountain. These office workers may not have adequate time. Indeed some years ago an elderly Japanese team (all the members were > 55 years and were senior board members) decided that they wanted to climb Everest as fast as possible without acclimatizing properly. So they brought plenty of oxygen cylinders and they continually breathed supplemental oxygen right from base camp onwards and successfully climbed the mountain in just over 3 weeks. Then they reported to work in Japan the week after. In Nepal, known for its "bundh" (strikes) and public holidays, the shocker was not so much that all the elderly Japanese succeeded but the Japanese work ethics!! Hopefully the Japanese took the oxygen cylinders off the mountains!!

Delving into the psychology of these climbers is also fun. Many new

climbers climb for fun and a sense of excitement. Some of these new converts in climbing may also suffer from a midlife crisis and may want to prove that they are still capable of doing great things. They may have peaked in their profession but may feel that physically in their life they have not achieved as much. What could be better for the morale than an Everest feather in your cap!!

Have you noticed there are vastly fewer people who attempt to climb the second highest mountain, Mount K2? It is not just because the mountain is located in remote, violence prone Pakistan. The fact of the matter is that this is just too technical a mountain for Tom Dick and Harry (and Jane and Kanchi Maya) to try to attempt climbing.

Amazingly a debate has been going on since the days of Mallory and Irvine about the ethics of climbing with and without supplemental oxygen. To this day there are many famous climbers who say that climbing with supplemental oxygen is tantamount to cheating. However medical literature is supportive of studies which show a negative long term impact in the brain and other organs in climbers who survive a non supplemental oxygen usage climb.

What all Everest climbers know is that they have to descend from the sum-



mit. Many climbers forget this important information in their relentless passion to get to the top. Many prudent climbers have a turn around time, that is if they have not reached the top at a certain time, they turn around to be safe. But this can all be lost in the heat of battle, so to speak. You are so excited to get to the top that the equally arduous descent is all but forgotten. Indeed a recent article in the British Medical Journal concluded that profound fatigue and late times in reaching the summit are features associated with subsequent death. Everest climbers who do not heed the turn around time have successfully reached the top but failed to descend. "That does not count," is what the great Sir Ed replied when someone said that Mallory may have been up there before the famous duo.

(Basnyat is president, UIAA (Union Internationale Des Associations D'Alpinism), Medical Commission)

अब नेपाल टेलिकमबाट अन्तराष्ट्रिय कल भन्ने सस्तो

एक्सेस कोड	देशहरू	शुल्क प्रति मिनेट रु.
इजी कल १४२४ एक्सेस कोड	अमेरिका(१), क्यानाडा(१)	४
	भारत(९१), चीन(८६), सिङ्गापुर(६५), हङ्कङ(८५२), थाइल्याण्ड(६६)	५
बजेट कल १४२५/१४४५ एक्सेस कोड	मलेसिया(६०), दक्षिण कोरिया(८२)	६
	बङ्गलादेश(८८०), पाकिस्तान(९२), ताइवान(८८६)	८
०० एक्सेस कोड	भारत(९१)	६
	अमेरिका(१), क्यानाडा(१), मलेसिया(६०), चीन(८६), हङ्कङ(८५२)	८
	जापान(८१), दक्षिण कोरिया(८२), थाइल्याण्ड(६६)	१२
	साउदी अरब(९६६), यूएई(९७१), कतार(९७४), बहराइन(९७३), इराक(९७२), अस्ट्रेलिया(६१)	२०
	अन्य मुलुक*	२४
०० एक्सेस कोड	भारत(९१), पाकिस्तान(९२), श्रीलंका(९४), बङ्गलादेश(८८०),	१२
	माल्दिभ्स(९६०), सुटान(९७५)	१५
	अफगानिस्तान(९३)	२४
	सार्व मुलुक बाहेक*	३०



NEPAL TELECOM
www.ntc.net.np



BIG CAT

In Danger

Degrading natural habitat and increasing poaching have threatened the Royal Bengal Tiger population

By ADITIPANDEY

“**B**agh aayo, bagh aayo,” a shepherd screams in a fairy tale which takes tigers roaming about pastures as quite common. Villagers come to his rescue several times only to find that he was fooling them. One day, the tiger appears there for real but the villagers do not turn up despite his call for help.

If a foolish shepherd were to use the trick now, nobody would take him seriously — for tigers are so rare these days. With poachers waiting on every corner, tigers have to fear for life, not the shepherds.

Due to loss of habitat, the number of Royal Bengal Tigers has dropped sharply. Poachers killed three rhinos in Chitwan National Park only recently.

Although actions are being taken for the protection of tigers, threats remain. According to World Wildlife Fund (WWF), a campaign launched on February 14 aims to double the tiger

population by 2022.

WWF has been promoting a slogan, “Double or nothing: Save the wild tigers and save so much more!” as it marks 2010 as the year of the tiger.

“Nepal has been working with the global community to protect tigers. Nepal celebrated the beginning of the Global Tiger Forum in March of 1994 along with ten other tiger range states that included India, Bhutan and Bangladesh. We are working to double the adult tiger population from 121 to 242 by 2022 through intensified conservation efforts. Experts are positive that the current breeding population of 121 is enough to increase tiger populace to this target,” said an official.

“The total number of tigers in Nepal is estimated to be 300,” said Anil Manandhar, country director of WWF Nepal, during a press meet organized to launch the ‘save tiger’ campaign.

However, last year alone, four tigers were killed by local people owing to

animal-human conflict, which indicates serious lapse in the park management tasks. In February, skins of three tigers were recovered from poachers exposing serious drawbacks in conservation efforts. In addition, poachers in Nepal have a market advantage as there is very high demand of tiger parts in both India and China.

“Nepal is sandwiched between India (with large tiger population) and China (where tiger parts are in high demand) and it has become a major crossroad for illegal trade in tiger parts,” according to WWF.

There are unavoidable aspects to the protection and conservation of tigers in Nepal — the proper management of tiger habitat; which can be managed only through planned human settlement; preservation of tigers’ prey animals; the ecological food chain proves that every animal is dependent on the other for its survival; the tiger needs to feed on other animals to live.

Controlling illegal poaching is another challenge. With high demand of tiger parts, especially in the neighboring countries, tigers of Nepal have become a source of ‘easy money’ for some people. However, the rate at which humans hunt tigers is higher than the total time taken for the tiger population to regenerate.

As a result, the Big Cat has landed in the top five of the list of ‘most endangered species.’ ■

NEW SPOTLIGHT NEWSMAGAZINE

Available at the following stands

1. Bhatbhateni Supermarket: Bhatbhateni
2. Bhatbhateni Store: Maharajgunj
3. Mandala Book Point: Kantipath, Ph: 4227711
4. Vajra Book Store, Jyatha Ph.:4220562
6. Book Paradise, Jamal
7. Namaste Supermarket, Narayani Complex Pulchowk
8. Namaste Supermarket, Maharajgunj (Opposite to American Embassy)
9. Himalayan Book, Bagbazar.
10. Bhaktapur Stationery, Nyatapaul
11. Utsav Books and Stationers, Putalisada Telephone:4220882

TEK CHANDRA POKHERAL

Excellent Achievement

Tek Chandra Pokharel shares his life and experience of success and happiness

By SHRADHA GYAWALI

“No one ever attains great success by simply doing what is required of him, it is the pursuit of excellence, what is over and above the required, that determines the greatness of ultimate destination.”

Tek Chandra Pokharel, a very well known travel trade entrepreneur in Nepal and around the world, was born on 16 March 1934 in a remote village of Saptari. He grew up and lived in Biratnagar during his childhood. While in Saptari, he was educated at home. He spent seven years in a Catholic school in Banaras and later joined the Banaras Hindu University. Although he doesn't visit Banaras often, the memories of his time there brings instant happiness and smiles to this 76-year old inspiration to the younger generation.

After completing his Bachelors (BA) from Banaras Hindu University, he went to Lucknow University to pursue his Masters. As he was called back to take up arms against the Ranas and join the democratic movement, he could not complete his Masters. Hunting during those days was his passion and hence

he had detailed knowledge on the arms and ammunition available during the time. This made him qualified to take up arms. However, politics was not his passion and this did not become an obstacle to his entrepreneur zeal.

“God gives every bird a worm, but does not throw it into the nest,” he says.

Tek Chandra Pokharel was blessed with a good family as well as good education and he also made the best use of his opportunities to rise to the level where he stands today.

He first came to Kathmandu at the age of twenty two. He had to keep moving between Simara, Biratnagar, Bhairawa and Katmandu to take care of his ancestral properties which made it difficult for him to continue his MA degree.

Married to a professor at Padma Kanya College, education, discipline and self-motivation had been a way of life in his entire career. His wife and he were wonderful parents who have imparted the best of education to their children. They are no less successful today. There are three ingredients in good life – learning, earning and yearning. Tek Chandra Pokharel has it

all and he enjoys motivating the younger generation to this way of life.

His first business venture was setting up a modern furniture factory in Balaju which he sold off after a few years when he felt that he was not fit to run an industry. His source of change in profession was a Japanese national Mr. Taka Shimiyahara, who was in Nepal as a consultant to the then cottage industry department. This Japanese friend of his acted as a catalyst in his life.

After stints of teaching in Morang College, Biratnagar and farming in Simara and running a modern furniture factory in Katmandu, he finally settled down in the tourism industry where he has spent usefully for more than forty years.

In the forty years that he has spent with the tourism industry, he has been the president of Nepal Association of Travel Agents, Trekking Agents Association of Nepal, Himalayan Rescue Association, Nepal Mountaineering Association, member of the board of directors of Royal Nepal Association. Along with his business associations, he also served in various positions of Rotary Club in his various capacities.

Since 1999 he is the vice chairman of the Nepal National Polio plus Committee and is the Honorary Consul for Mexico in Nepal since 1994.

Desire is the key to motivation, but it is the determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of our goal – a commitment to excellence – that enables us to attain the success we seek, he says. ■

“Work Not Just For Money”

Tek Chandra Pokharel also shares his views with Shrada Gyawali. Excerpts:

Who had the greatest influence on you during your childhood?

My grandmother had the greatest influence as my mother died when I was really small. My grandmother took the pain to bring me all the way from Patna to Nepal during those times when there was no proper transportation. If she had not been there I would have died as well.

If you could change one thing in your past, what might that be?

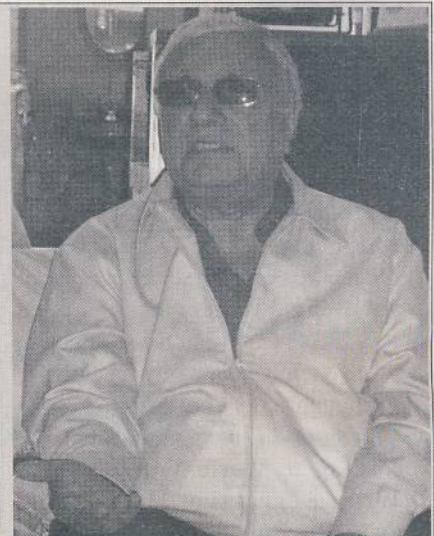
I would not like to change anything in the past. I am fully satisfied with what I

am and what I have today. If I were to have a rebirth, I would start all that I have a little earlier.

How busy is your typical day and what does it involve?

Now a days I try not to be very busy as I am already 76 and don't want to stress myself too much. Rather I want to take things easy, some people even feel I am the most relaxed person which I feel is good enough at my age.

We have learnt that you enjoy web surfing and email communication at the same time. We also understand that you have several businesses, please tell us



how you manage your time?

I have given up looking after my business. My son and nephew look after it. I go to office and surf the net and this is something that interests me a lot. Sometimes I spend hours on the computer. There is no substitute for knowledge. To this day, I read a few newspapers a day. It is impossible to read a paper without being exposed to ideas. And ideas, more than money, are the real currency for success.

What do you suggest for the younger generations in terms of time management?

We were brought up in a circumstance where we had much time and no work to do, so I did not learn time management. With internet, TV and other available gadgets the younger generation are not making the most of their time and technology. Today's generation is stressed so I think they should not stress themselves. Happiness, I think, should be the first priority and I don't think people should make a lot of money, more than they need and stress themselves in anyway.

How do you look at the present political situation and what impact does it have on the tourism industry you are so passionate about?

It has been very bad on tourism. The tourists who had come for a long stay here had to face miserable conditions.

When we have irresponsible politicians who shut down the country for six days I don't think we can spend much on tourism industry. I don't think the country is good for developing any industry in this condition, leave alone the tourism industry.

I have been told that rotary is your passion, what are the advantages of joining these organizations, especially to the youth of today?

When you join an organization you don't think of getting any benefit out of this, rather you think in terms of giving out something to others who are in need of such help. We have done a lot through Rotary and I feel really satisfied as I have been able to make difference in many people's lives. So I am happy and satisfaction is the greatest asset that one can have.

Do you have any suggestion to the youth of today?

I would not say the youth should study hard rather would ask them not to think a lot about making money because money does not give you happiness rather I would ask them to serve people selflessly. ■

Nepal-Japan Relations**Time for Strategic Partnership****By Jan Sharma****Published by Shree-****Bashudev Guthi****Price: Undisclosed****Pages: 270****Nepal - Japan Relations**

Time for Strategic Partnership



Jan Sharma

Book**On Nepal Japan Relations**

Senior journalist Jan Sharma's book approaches Nepal-Japan relations from several different perspectives

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although Nepal and Japan are geographically far away, the two share important commonalities. This is one reason why Japan has offered a generous support to Nepal's overall development in the last four decades. Japan is Nepal's major development partner.

Nepal and Japan are close in terms of culture and values.

Japanese have always shown interest in Nepal as the birthplace of Buddha and a country with lofty Himalayas. Rana Prime Minister Dev Shum Sher chose Japan as a model for Nepal's development and sent Nepalese students to acquire knowledge there.

Several books have been written on Nepal-Japan relations but Jan Sharma's is the first of its kind as it takes up a gamut of aspects to discuss cultural relations, political relations, economic relations and strategic partnership and cooperation.

Based on his Ph. D dissertation, Sharma's book covers Nepal-Japan relations extensively and widely. Sharma has had a long experience in journalism – a chief reporter of Rastriya Samachar Samiti, or the National News Agency, founder editor of the Independent, a weekly tabloid and a contributor to various newspapers outside Nepal,

including Asian Wall Street Journal, Kahleej Times, Depthnews and Gemini News Service.

He is known as a person with extensive knowledge on political, development and foreign affairs.

One can see this in the book where he suggests a new pattern of relations with Japan for the coming days.

"Nepal Japan relations have always been marked by mutual understanding, deepening friendship and expanding cooperation. In order to realize the full potentials of the bilateral relations, political dialogue should be launched for exploring the prospects of establishing strategic partnership between Nepal and Japan," writes Sharma.

Nepal has learnt so many things from Japan over the years. Yet, "Nepal has definitely refused to learn lessons from the Japanese political and economic history, and its strategic approach, especially in the context of Nepal's foreign policy in general and Nepal-Japan bilateral relations in particular are most lacking," writes Sharma.

From Nepal's geo-strategic perspective to development perspectives, Sharma discusses Nepal-Japan relations in various ways suggesting strategic partnership in the changing context. Sharma's treatment of the topic is extensive, informative and objective. ■

Road map Prescribed to “Nepalese political leaders” to unlock the political deadlock

Dr. Tulsi P. Uprety

It was not an easy task for Chairman Prachanda to publicly apologize for his remarks and to admit that the indefinite strike was a mistake, which was supposed to be their signature political event to topple the government. Furthermore, he publicly outlined how to disintegrate the existing organization of the People Liberation Army (PLA) and integrate some members into the Nepal Army or in some Security Forces and the remaining PLA members be rehabilitated into the society by providing training on jobs/skills. Other party members, especially the Nepali Congress and Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) have been publicly expressing doubts about the verbal commitment made by Prachanda since his party did not carry out the past agreements, which has threatened the peace process and the finalizing of the new constitution of the country. At the same time, the Unified CPM (Maoist) has been demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister. In this process Nepal and the Nepali people have virtually been taken hostage by this political deadlock. Following are my step by step suggestions to all stake holders for unlocking the political deadlock. This is possible **if only they are sincere and honest to the Nepali people and their country.** If this is too much to ask of political leaders then they are not fit to be leaders and govern the country.

Road Map for Solving the Present Political Issues:

1. The government of Nepal should immediately direct the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction to sort out the PLA members into two groups: i those who are willing to join the security force and ii. those who are willing to go back to the society. While the government is trying to carry out this task by coordinating with the United Nation's office, Unified CPN (Maoist) should give a sincere and complete cooperation to make this happen. **This task should be carried out within the month of June.**

2. While the above task is going on, Prachanda should dismantle the Young Communist League's (YCL) organization by publicly ordering them to not get involved in extortion, threats, and to force people to participate in political rallies as well as all the other unlawful activities. I believe this can be **accomplished within the 2nd week of June.** Private property occupied by the Maoists should also be returned to their rightful owners within this time frame.

3. Simultaneously, political parties should start shorting out the details of the formation of a new National Unity Government, which can be done **within the month of June.** However, during this period, it is strongly advised to all political parties that they must not focus their energy and time for the post of Prime Minister.

At the same time, the Unified CPM (Maoist) has been demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister. In this process Nepal and the Nepali people have virtually been taken hostage by this political deadlock. Following are my step by step suggestions to all stake holders for unlocking the political deadlock.

4. The tenure of the present parliament should be extended for about **six to nine months**, which should be done before it expires. However, that all the parliament members should have a road map with a clear vision and reasons for extending the term of the parliament.

5. By the end of July, parliament should complete the final draft of the constitution.

6. Placement of the PLA members, who are willing to join the security forces should start at the beginning of the **month of July and it should be completed by the end of September.**

7. Rehabilitation to those PLA members who are interested to be integrated into the society should begin by the first week of **July and this process should take somewhere from six months to a year.** Perhaps, vocational trainings

such as carpentry, machine operators, electrician, plumbing, computer training, i.e. word processing, receptionists, and so on. Trainee should be provided an attractive financial incentive for completing the training.

8. By the end of the 1st week of August, Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal should resign and the National Unity Government should be put in place. However, this has to be understood and agreed by all stake holders **prior to the extension of the term of the parliament. Only then, which means that around the last week of July or the 1st week of August**, the political parties should engage in selecting/electing the new Prime Minister whoever that may be. A new, vibrant or a young face might be refreshing to give a meaning to New

Nepal.

9. Nepal's new constitution should be completed and approved by the parliament by **the 3rd week of August.**

onest desire and willingness among political parties is required to implement the above simple and easy road map, and it will be impossible if they only consider the petty interest of their party. National interest should be the guiding principle behind their actions for bringing a political stability and economic prosperity, which are the need and the basic right of the Nepali people. Let us work not just talk.

Dr. Tulsi P. Uprety has a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley in economic development and has been working in various fields in U.S. and abroad for the last thirty five years.



ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL

Unique Facets

Nepalese audiences get to see Israeli films, rather different from the commercial western movies, thanks to the Israeli Embassy as it marked the establishment of diplomatic relations with Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

Five decades have already passed since Nepal and Israel established their diplomatic relations. The relations are stable and in many ways, Israeli government has supported Nepal in its process of transformation.

The Embassy of Israel is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Nepal and Israel with various programmes in 2010. The 5th Israeli Film Festival is one of the major events planned for the celebration.

Screening for general public was arranged at the Russian Cultural Center from 11-13 May 2010.

Dr. Minendra Rijal, Minister for Federal Affairs, Constituent Assembly, Parliamantary Affairs and Culture inaugurated the function.

Israel is a country, small in size, a modern society built on ancient roots, with a culturally active, heterogeneous population. Four thousand years of Jewish heritage, over a century of Zionism, and more than half a century of modern statehood have contributed

to a culture which has already established an identity of its own, while preserving the uniqueness of 70 different communities.

The first film related to the year 2000 approaches in Jerusalem's Jewish Orthodox "Mea Shearim" quarter, where the women work, keep house, and have children so the men can study the Religious Scripts (Torah and the Talmud). Rivka is happily and passionately married to Meir, but they remain childless. The yeshiva's rabbi, who is Meir's father, wants Meir to divorce Rivka: "a barren woman is no woman." Rivka's sister, Malka, is in love with Yakov, a Jew shunned by the yeshiva as too secular. The rabbi arranges Malka's marriage to Yossef, whose agitation

when fulfilling religious duties approaches the grotesque. Can the sisters sort out their hearts' desires within this patriarchal world? If not, have they any other options?

Haifa, June 1979 is a film related to the story that takes place in Israel during the three days leading up to Shabbat (Saturday). Once again, Viviane is on the point of leaving Eliahu, her husband. Once again, her brothers convince her that her place is next to her husband, her children and her family. The relationship between Vivian and Eliahoo gets even worse in the later days as Eliahoo continues to cling to the traditions of Moroccan culture, while Vivian is eager to explore the possibilities of living in a new culture with different values.

Worn out by an existence that denies her dreams and her rights, weary of a husband who privileges tradition to the detriment of their life together, Viviane stays, but she's at the end of her tether. It's just then that, Albert, a man she once loved, and who was able, for a brief moment, to offer her the freedom to be herself, once again turns up in her life.

हामी थोपा थोपाको
महत्व बुझ्दछौं
र दिन्छौं

दैनिक मौज्दातमा
११%
ब्याज

प्रिमियर
प्लस
सेभिङ्ग

प्रिमियर फिनान्स कम्पनी लि.
मानमवन, ललितपुर, पोस्ट बक्स नं. १३७७
फोन नं. ५-५२१२२३, ५-५२१४०२
फ्याक्स नं. ९७७-१-५५०४१२
URL: www.premierfinance.com.np

ISO 9001:2008
शुद्धता र विश्वसनीयता

“People’s Mandate Must”

SURESH ACHARYA,

As the two-year tenure of the Constituent Assembly is nearing its end, various legal, constitutional and political questions have come to the surface. **SURESH ACHARYA**, the president of Media Initiative for Rights, Equity and Social Transformation-Nepal (MIREST NEPAL) - an NGO with a nationwide network, shares the implications of the expiry of May 28 deadline for the country. Acharya, whose NGO has been actively working to generate awareness among the people on the need to develop Nepal into a peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and democratic nation, has widely traveled across the country, interacting with people in an attempt to find out the agenda of ordinary citizens in far-flung districts that they want addressed in the new constitution. Acharya spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on various issues regarding the CA. Excerpts:

You have learnt and helped create nationwide opinion through your interaction programs that the constitution made through the CA will be the people’s constitution. With the political leaders’ recent remarks that the new constitution will not be promulgated by May 28, what will be the public’s reactions?

MIREST Nepal has been involved enhancing public participation in the historic constitution making process for the last four years. In the first two years we worked in the villages to generate awareness about the process of Constituent Assembly and after the CA elections, MIREST Nepal got involved in the constitution making process. Our aim is to generate awareness among the people that it is the right of the sovereign people to write the constitution for themselves through the CA. We were able to encourage people to take part in the constitution making process by organizing public dialogues and interactive programs. We have played a very important role in informing the people that they need to contribute their share in the constitution making



process. In the initial phase, particularly at the time of CA elections, there was enormous enthusiasm among the people about constitution making. Now, when the two years’ tenure of the CA is closer to expiration, there is frustration and anger among the people.

How people see it?

People express anger over the CA members for their failure to promulgate the new constitution in the stipulated time. While people have begun to doubt the competence of CA members, they also feel that the growing dissensions among the top leaders of major political parties are also much responsible for the worsening the situation of the country and derailment of constitution making process. One has to blame top-notch political leaders, who significantly contributed in the April 2006 people’s movement for their inability to complete the task. General perception is that these leaders have ridiculed the mandate of the people and failed to steer the country from the morass of crisis of confidence.

How do you look at the provisions of the Interim Constitution in this context?

The vision envisaged by the Interim

Constitution about the CA was itself faulty. The role given to the Constituent Assembly as a Legislature-Parliament was itself wrong. This opened the door for making and breaking governments inside the CA. Had the Interim Constitution made the provision that the Constituent Assembly was for constitution making and Legislature-Parliament for government making, the present situation would have been prevented.

For how many days were the Constituent Assembly and the Legislature-Parliament disrupted?

From the initial days to now, the Legislature-Parliament was disrupted for 135 business days. However, the CA has not been disrupted. The effects of the Legislature Parliament’s disturbance are there in the CA. The CA meeting was held 101 times since May 28, 2008. The other factor is CA could not stride its way in constitution making to its capacity due to regular absence of senior leaders in the proceedings of the CA. Interim Constitution had never thought of such situation of ‘absenteeism’ in the CA, but, there is provision for maintaining discipline

through CA by-laws, however, that has never been invoked.

Have CA members utilised?

The CA members have not also fully utilized their collective capacity in constitution writing. Although they had total of 10.53 million man-hours available for the job, they had utilized only about 15 percent of the available time. Interestingly, out of 11 thematic committee reports, only three reports of three thematic committees have been forwarded to the Constitutional Committee headed by Nilamber Acharya for the preparation of initial draft of the new constitution.

You have made various efforts to bring the people and the CA members together through MIREST Nepal's media outreach program. What results have they yielded?

We have taken part in various stages of democratic dialogues and opinion building including the stages of opinion collection conducted by CA members. More than, 110 CA members and 55 academic/experts have contributed in MIREST Nepal's programs related to the constitution making process in the last 18 months. Also, about 150000 people have participated in such interactive forums. It helped the CA members to understand the gaps in constitution making, both content-wise and process-wise. Secondly, they had opportunities to meet their constituencies through such communication outreach programs, thereby generating sense of ownership of the new constitution they would craft. But, that's still a long way to go; it all depends on the final outcome of the new constitution.

Do you think that the CA has incorporated the public opinion, whether collected by themselves or through organizations like MIREST Nepal?

I am confident, that on the broader perspectives, the CA has been successful in incorporating public opinion with its limited resources, scientific data analysis skills, equipment and technology. But, they have not been able to incorporate some of the pertinent issues raised by the people during the CA's first phase public opinion

collection campaign in the thematic drafts. It is unfortunate that the CA does not use professionals on analyzing and synthesizing the questionnaires causing chances of some voices and opinions

left-out. Whereas, MIREST Nepal has tried to fill the gaps. It has summarized the public opinion collected through its interactive forums and submitted these, namely the series of the "Will of the People" in printed formats to the respective CA Thematic Committees for inclusion in their concept papers as well as in the initial draft constitution of the Constitutional Committee.

How MIREST Nepal has been actually contributing in the historic constitution making process as of this date?

I am especially happy as the president of the organization that MIREST Nepal's initiative has helped ordinary citizens to access the CA members and political leaders/experts at their constituencies. Secondly, the consistent flow of first-hand information through the communication outreach programs have helped to pool and collate public opinion, and identify and diversify opportunities in supporting constitution making processes. Third, in the context of absence of elected bodies at grassroots and local levels of governance since more than a decade, it has also been able to fill the vacuum between the ordinary citizens and the decision-makers. Fourth, we have been supportive in deepening the understanding and awareness amongst grassroots women and men about the National Agenda, and finally generating contents and facilitating the process.

Do you think that the extension of the tenure of CA is a good idea?

Well, it depends on the mandate of



the people. Political parties have expressed their commitment during the election that they will formulate the new constitution within two years. Even the Interim Constitution set the tenure of CA for two years. There is a clear-cut provision on that. The third important aspect is the Calendar of Operation of the CA which was amended 10 times unanimously in the CA. However, it has not amended the final deadline and repeatedly vowed to promulgate it by the stipulated date. They amended other matters but they always committed that the new constitution will be promulgated by May 28. The Calendar of Operation was amended two months ago last time but one has not seen any major differences in circumstances, content and matter.

What will MIREST Nepal, which has generated a massive level of awareness about the CA, say to the people now?

Of course, we have landed now in a very awkward situation. Hence, we have to disseminate to the people the information regarding the failure of the CA and its political leaders. But now onwards, we might have to defend their unwarranted interests in other matters, but our mission will be no other than to support participatory constitution making. This is really ridiculous situation for us. What we want now is that the CA must decide its tenure, as I said, with confession of their mistakes. In this case, we can back them. The reason must be logical and legitimate and agreeable by the people.



How much resources have been spent in the last two years for constitution making?

In addition to 100 billion rupees loss during a 10 plus year long conflict in infrastructural damages, within two-year period after the elections of the CA, about 100 billion rupees have been spent in the peace and constitution making processes.

How much do they spend?

This makes, spending of about Rs 3650 per Nepali children, women and men, as of now. People do not care about spending the money for a new constitution as an outcome. In case, if the people don't get peace and constitution, CA members and political leaders need to justify the misuse of the money before the people. Some people are taking the waste of money as a crime against humanity. If we cannot deliver a sustainable peace and inclusive constitution this will be a waste of resources. In the history of Nepal, this is the first time people have ever paid such a high price in the constitution making.

Is there other factors that have impact in constitution making process in Nepal?

Foremost, the political parties represented in the CA must agree on certain conditions. Moreover, the new constitution will have to be binding to various agreements that the government has signed with national and international actors. A total of 20 such agreements that have total of 219 clauses been signed with various groups

within Nepal such as NCP-Maoists and seven parties, Monitoring of Armies, Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum, Samyukta Madhes Morcha, Limbuwan Rajya Parishad, Indigenous people, Tharuhat etc. International treatise can easily be reflected in the constitution but the agreements that have been made with national actors have to be given a high priority also as those actors will not accept the new constitution if their points are not included. These cannot be ignored, and I do see complexities ahead.

How can one expect some major contribution when the top leaders of political parties have not shown any interest?

Our studies have shown that directly elected members are not active in the CA. Overwhelming number of CA members is interested in the business of Legislature-Parliament rather than the CA. Even top leaders are not interested in the deliberations of the CA. For instance, Late GP Koirala never attended the CA proceedings officially. In 101 meetings held so far, Sher Bahadur Deuba's attendance was 4, Prachanda's 4, Madhav Nepal's 12, Maoist leader Ram Bahadur Thapa's 7 and Maoist leader Kiran Vaidya resigned. No top leaders have participated in any constitutional debate in the plenary sessions as of now. This is outrageous.

What do you say about the extension?

Political parties have been trying to resolve the upcoming constitutional crisis by amending the Interim

Constitution. The recent decision of the division bench of Supreme Court has also interpreted the constitution saying that CA can amend any articles of the constitution except Republic and federalism.

What is the verdict?

That verdict has also raised questions whether amendment can be possible in the fundamental structure of the constitution- in our context, core issues related the institution of the CA, fixed-term tenure, pluralism, adult-franchise, people's mandate and human rights. I think, interpretation of the Supreme Court's has opened the door for political parties and government to bring any amendment. After the verdict of Supreme Court, political parties are already on their knees to extend the tenure.

Do you foresee any change in the status of the CA then ?

Not much in regards to its functions, but there might be some sort of changes in the perception of the people. People might see the CA after May 28, as an extended body. There is a threat that it might lose the sanctity it upholds until then, of being an elected body.

What will be the position in case political parties do not agree on amendment by May 28?

In that case, the CA will be defunct and will die. All the thematic committees will be rendered inactive and there will be a gap of Legislature-Parliament. The present CA has two functions: to form the government and to write the constitution. If CA neither give a stable government nor can produce a constitution, then there will be pressure to change the composition of the CA. This might raise a need to change the equations inside the CA through popular verdict.

What role MIREST Nepal will be playing now?

If the tenure of the CA is extended, we will put our efforts to further improvement in the draft constitution and incorporation of public opinion. At the later stage, if the CA promulgates the new constitution, we will go to the people to build their ownership of the constitution. In all circumstances, MIREST Nepal aims to be amongst the people. ■

“There is also a strong support for Nepal”

MINAR PIMPLE

MINAR PIMPLE, Regional director for Asia and the Pacific United Nations Millennium Campaign, recently visited Nepal. After visiting some parts of Nepal and meeting high government officials, community workers, Pimple spoke to and **New Spotlight**. Excerpts;

How do you find Nepal's overall progress on MDGs?

Nepal has recently brought out a draft of Millennium Development Goals progress report for 2010. That report has pointed out a few very interesting things. One is that there is a very strong attempt to look at the data in a disaggregated fashion. It means data by region, social groups, by gender and that part is a good part in the report.

What is your impression about the report on MDGs?

The report outlines a number of goals Nepal is on track. There are issues whether the data and reality are matching or not and one of the issues we need to look at on the report perspective is bridging the gap. Because the reality may be completely different than the way it is reported. For example, the issue of hunger where you have fifty percent children with growth stunted. In my opinion the issue of hunger should be one of the top priorities. The issue is access to water. The report talks about 80 percent access to water which if you look a little bit deeply it means having 80 percent coverage into the pipe. But the issue is whether there is water in pipe are the issues that are the challenges we need to look at. Those are the things progress report need to address.

What are other important parts?

Other important parts in the progress report are the analysis whether the environment is conducive or not for each of the course. On the basis of that they outlined challenges and outlined recommendation which basically means whether there is a serious effort to address the gap for next five years.

Because of Millennium Development Goals deadline is 2015 and from that perspective the critical part is not only to assess what does work and what does not work but also to see what things have worked in Nepal, why they have worked and how to scale them. They are the very critical components to make in the next five years. Your cycle of planning will start in 2010 to July 2013. So you have very significant period of the next plan covering the last five years of the MDGs. So that another opportunity to Nepal is some of the subsistence period for monitoring for tracking the real time data on the achievements on the ground.

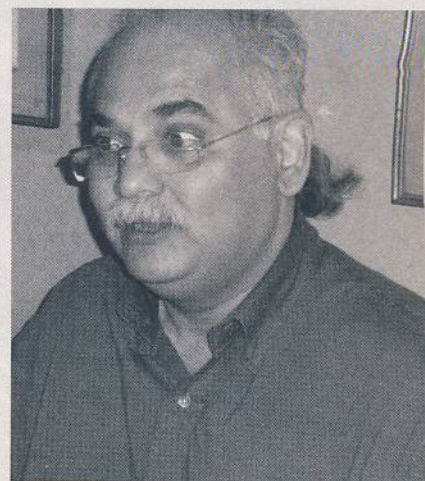
What progress in MDGs did you find on your visit?

In terms of the Stand Up process and my visit to Nepal, there are few general comments. One is that a lot of positive images exist, in spite of certain level of uncertainty where the country really wants to go. But there is a political energy within people and citizens. There are a lot of hopes and aspirations which one sees. This is the very positive thing. If that energy is channelised in a proper way in achieving MDGs, I would say it could be a very strong force to accelerate the achievement of MDGs.

Where did you visit?

When I visited a small farmer community in Kanchanpur, I found very enthusiastic results. Although the average income of laborers is about Rs. 150, out of 105 children 95 are going to school and they are enrolling the remaining 10 this year. Despite the low level of income, the enrolment is hundred percent. This shows the commitment the community and families have towards achieving the level of goals for their children. There is a lot of hope and pride for the change for next generation. That is visible in Nepal—when one sees the level of commitment.

How was your meeting with officials?



I also met prime minister, finance minister, national planning commission's vice chair, members and a number of CA members. After my meetings what I can say now is that the MDG's is one of the top priorities in Nepal. This is a good sign. There is a strong political commitment towards achieving the MDGs. The issue needs to be tackled is the capacity to deliver good quality services: education, health, infrastructures and etc. The second issue is correcting the linkages in the system of delivery. So basically making the system of delivery much more transparent and efficient. The third issue is the issue of corruption and accountability. How do we make everybody, of government body, accountable towards the delivery of goods? That is the critical area that we look at. I found openness is the first step to achieve things. In many parts, the governments are denying more.

How important is the coming summit for Nepal?

There are two important things for Nepal this year as Nepal is the leader of the Least Developed Group. This is a huge opportunity to present the agenda of least developed country in the summit. Second opportunity will be while reviewing ten years where you are 2010-2015. There is also a strong international community support for Nepal in achieving MDGs. ■



Rescue Mission : Flying rubbish

On Way To World's Rooftop

By ALVARO CASTRILLO SCHNEITER, in Everest based camp

Just 40 minutes took me from Kathmandu to Lukla by plane. Four companions and four Sherpas were waiting for me in Khumbu. We were to set out on an expedition to the Himalayas for the next 17 days.

I took this trip to assess the worth of the political initiative that aimed to turn Nepal into a Switzerland.

In no time, leaving the hang of Kathmandu's chaotic vehicular traffic behind, we were trekking in the midst of peace and natural harmony of the mountains. They rose before us, walls of rock and forests in the background, below the snowy peaks of the highest mountains in the world. The vegetation stood the rigors of the height up to Namche Bazaar where we would begin acclimatization, both physical and mental.

I knew about the Alps from my childhood in Switzerland. The Himalayas had nothing much in

common with the Swiss Alps- they are idyllic, the traveler has the feeling of going through a story. However, the wild and rugged Himalayas: gorges going down hundreds of feet, violent mountain rivers that carved stones in their path and yaks crossing paths, a few meters separating the villages. No cars, no roads, only the noise of rescue helicopters hovering in the sky two or three times each day. The traveler soon realizes that he is not just sightseeing but is living an adventure.

The town of Khumjum welcomed us for our bodies to adjust to almost 5,000 meters from the sea level. The view of sunrise over Khumjum is unrepeatably spectacle that is repeated each morning: a light gray, sieved, drawing the outline of Amadablam, on the other side of the picture stand two giants, the Everest and Lohtse. A mist fills the lower zones allowing you to see the mountains from the foothills. The image on light and dark tones represent an Olympus apparently

closed to the foot of man, stone titans as stoic guards.

A week into the expedition, we completed the acclimatization stage to lead us through the valley of Thame, a Lungden where we expected the first of two steps that would cross before reaching the same base camp of Everest, the Renjoo Pass.

As you ascend the Pass Renjoo, altitude exceeds the highest point of the Alps: Mont Blanc, 4810 m, and you still have a long way to the pass, and then to one of the jewels of the Sagarmatha National Park: Gokio and the homonymous lake. The beauty of the place brought me to mind the Swiss alpine lakes, their blue color, depth, an experience that is only amenable to observation rather than retelling. What really brought me back to the Himalayas was a glacier, slow and powerful, the meadow where the village was located. On leaving, we had to cross Gokio glacier as we heard the same as rolling



stones on the sides or the crunch of huge blocks of ice that moved unnoticed beneath our feet. Across the river of ice, Tagnak, was the last station before the Chola Pass, the last of the steps that separated us from the route to Everest.

Such was the cumulative effort that one of my companions succumbed to an infection and had to be airlifted to Kathmandu from Dzhongla. Of the five Westerners and four Sherpas, we were three and three. It was in that place where with another French traveler and I made an observation that it would be vital to my assessment if Nepal could be Switzerland.

As the helicopter rose, propellers made all the garbage that was abundant in the ground fly about. As the helicopter flew away, the French told me to think: "If you drink a Coke at the lodge, it will end roll anywhere, what's the eco-trek?"

After watching the highway, that reflection of tourists (we got up there a little traveled route) that was the route that led to the Everest, began to shape my idea of SwissNepal. The next day we wanted to reach the town of Gorashep and Everest Base Camp. Just 30 minutes to get to Gorashep, another of my colleagues fell under altitude sickness. We decided we would go down to Lobuche, at least. My teammates wanted to give me the gift to reach the Everest base camp and be able to look at it from Kalapatthar.

Not to be disappointed, I arrived the

same day to base camp at dawn, after sleeping in Gorashep, climbed Kalapatthar to see how the sun rose behind the mother goddess of Earth, Sagarmatha (Everest), the highest point of land, the closest point to heaven.

I came alone, now have to lower only until Tyamboche, where I waited for my companions. During this decline many think if you really could become Nepal-Switzerland, or even if Nepal needed to become Swiss.

Nepal is a mountainous country with a unique potential and a nascent tourism, especially in the mountains, you can take a pay enough to stand as the engine of development of the country however is a task infinitely more complex than just show a number of more tourists, is that and that the environment and can also mountain bear. Make a trek in the Himalayas is a lifetime adventure. But the region's strength lies mainly in its natural beauty and this depends directly on its conservation. The reflection I made affected the French traveler: If you want to make a serious tourism project to promote eco-tourism, quality not only requires that the profile of tourists be educated, educated tourists also require trained hoteliers. The tourists, in solidarity with the preservation of this unique environment, keep their trash or even collect it if they find it along the way, will feel betrayed when they see the garbage from the lodge piled up on the slopes nearby. With the environment it is the same, the task of tourism development in the mountains of Nepal is both an ecological project of the same magnitude.

On one day, I came from Kalapatthar to Tyamboche, on two days back to Lukla. It took three days down which cost us up to two weeks. Download is easy. Upload difficult.

Nepal can be set in Switzerland or in any other country, project or idea that may be useful to develop tourism in an area with a differential value to the height of mountains of which I have been talking so far. Especially in conservation. Switzerland is a good example of developed mountainous country but a much more ambitious goal is to make Nepal a global benchmark of quality tourism. Stop trying to be Switzerland and that Switzerland wants to be Nepal. ■

Pay Respect For Creation

By **SANTOSH SHARMA**,

We set up the Copy Right Society in 1997 with an aim to protect the rights of creative industries and creation of the people. When we formed the society, we had five objectives:



new copy rights act, regulations, protection of Nepalese creation internationally, urging joining Bern convention and requirement of an independent cell to look after copy rights.

Despite all instability, we have got everything done by 2007. This is a happy moment. We also set up a royalty society. In terms of infrastructure, we have got everything but it is unfortunate that they all are in paper only. We have done many things. There is a provision that one has to pay royalty for using the music but even the government agencies like Radio Nepal and Nepal Television are yet to pay any single penny. Except music industry, no one pays royalty to creators. Nobody wants to pay royalty. No FM pays any royalty. Royalty Collection Confederation has their own system about the collections of royalty. The provisions of act are yet to be enforced. It is not a priority of the government. We talk with everyone but they ignore it. Nobody wants to share it. Nobody has a will do to it. We celebrate copy rights day but it is just a ritual. Universal copy rights convention is implemented by UNESCO.

When we are celebrating the international copy rights day next week, we have many things to boast but we have to go a long way before realizing all goals. Everyone knows what is a copy right all about. This year we are celebrating international copy rights day jointly with Copy Rights Society and Book Publishers Association. Big television stations are reluctant to talk with us. In other words, there are tendencies not to pay money.

Our state mechanism is so lengthy that it takes years and years to get any compensation even if someone files the case.

Don't talk about FM stations and TV channels. Although there are more than 300 FM stations and dozens of TV channels, they don't pay us. How long can we go for free cost? There is the need of money to encourage creators. If nobody pays anything for creation, no one will find a new creation. Our society is yet to recognize the creation of individual. We talk tall things but nobody pays any attention to recognizing these kinds of things.

Sharma is secretary general of Copyright Protection Society of Nepal

Economic Downslide

Professor Dr. Bishwombher Pyakuryal

Non-economic factors are responsible for the present economic stalemate. The present economic scenario is the reflection of the stress faced by the country. Political instability and uncertainty are two key non-economic factors. One of the prides of Nepal is that she has developed prudential micro-economic fundamentals and it has always been stable. Unfortunately, it has been shaken badly in the last eight months. For instance, the liquidity of the commercial banks is in a declining trend and the deposits of commercial banks with the central banks are also declining. The deposit-credit ratio is also in higher edge and the credit is higher than deposit. The ratio is between 90 to 91 percent. This is pretty much alarming. After several decades, the foreign currency reserve has significantly declined. Our price level and inflation are still in double digits. The damage is that earlier when there was a raise in India's wholesale price index by 10 percent, there used to be increment of four percent in Nepal's food price. However, India has maintained the zero inflation in the first quarter of 2009. There were no changes in Nepal's price level. This means Nepal has double digit inflation throughout the period. What it indicates is the fluctuation in the wholesale price index in India and it is elastic to the price behavior in Nepal. India's economic growth rate is expected to be 9 percent in the year 2010-11. Even the credit access to farmers has been dramatically increased. India has announced several packages to encourage the small and cottage industry products by reducing two percent in pre and post shipment costs. This will directly affect Nepal's third country export..

Our expectation is that there will be trickle down effects in Nepal due to sustainable economic growth of two giant neighbors India and China. Because of open border, Nepal's hard earned foreign currency reserve is drawn out instead of coming to prosperity. If you look at the statistics of first eight months, Nepal spent US\$

1.4 billion to purchase 64 billion Indian currency in India's capital market. There has been decline in the foreign exchange reserve, there is massive deficit of balance of payment. Nepal's trade deficit with India in February and March exceeded 58 percent. The situation is that we spent our hard foreign currency to purchase Indian currency. This is the reason Nepal has not gained the benefit in normalcy in India's price. Nepal's situation is really going to be bad and Nepal's foreign currency reserve now is just enough to meet six month's import of goods and services. The way Nepal's capital erodes and flies, we imported gold and exported it to India but we did not get Indian currency to Nepal's banking net. Data reveals that in one month there was a decline of 2 billion rupees in deposit rate of the commercial banks. There is missing money. The investment rate in Nepal has not increased.

Band has and General Strike

On top of that the general strikes, bandhas and political instability are pushing Nepal's economy further behind. Although various organizations come out with different figures regarding the loss due to bandha in a day, such acts definitely create a very bad situation to the country. The cost of bandha is very high for economy. According to Federation of Nepalese Chamber and Commerce Industry (FNCCI), the country loses 3 billion rupees per day in bandha. However, Association of Morang Industry and Trade, eastern sector alone saw a loss of Rs.1 billion a day for bandha in eastern belt. Bandha has impact from top to bottom. For instance, from a taxi driver to daily wage labor, all of them will lose their wages during bandha. Such people are the worst sufferers who either have to sacrifice their one day meal or have to take loan in an exorbitant interest rate. There is a huge loss of bandha. Nepal already has some kinds of nutritional deficit and there is only a small number of population who can feed their family by taking loan. Service sector has also badly been affected by bandhas. Tourism industry

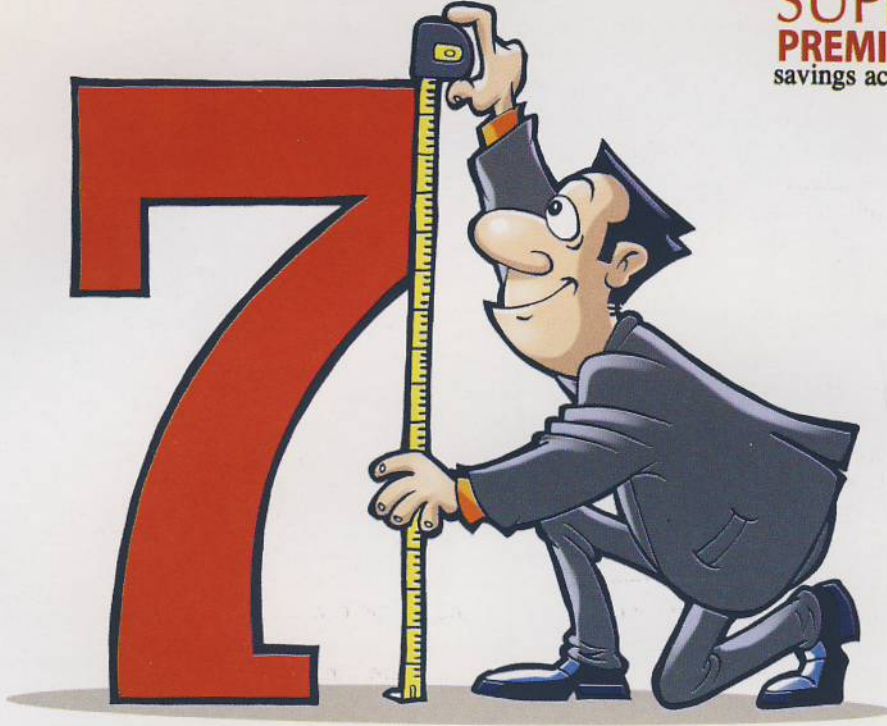


has suffered badly. As reported by Hotel Association Nepal and government of Nepal, hotels are receiving huge numbers of cancellations. Inflow of tourism is decreasing. In the last three months, the inflow of Indian tourists also declined. Tourism, manufacturing and service sectors are major parts of economy and bandha has badly affected all of them. Although there was a multi-party agreement on December 2009 that there will not be any call of bandha or strike at least for six months, we saw more than one hundred various sizes of bandha in less than a week. The factories in eastern Nepal are gradually closing up. No one is complying with their statement. Political parties often regret for what they have done calling bandhas but they follow the similar tactic once they get the opportunity. Nepal's economy is in contraction. The government has already changed its forecast for the growth from 5.5 percent. The government acknowledges now that it can hardly achieve 3.5 percent of growth. Two percent decline makes huge differences. The contribution made by the movement of the people or remittances is also declining. Only one percent of remittance earning from India is coming through official channel. According to the study of Nepal Rastra Bank, ninety nine percent of the money is coming from unofficial sources. The growth of remittances declined from 68-70 percent to close to 12 percent growth. It is decelerating. If these kinds of transition will prolong for indefinite period of time, the country's economy will suffer. This will invite destruction, violence and conflict.

As told to KESHAB POUDEL



**SUPER
PREMIUM**
savings account



BUSINESS ADVANTAGE-III-2010

सुपर प्रिमियम बचत खाता

आफ्नो अपेक्षाअनुरूपको आकर्षक प्रतिफल प्राप्त गर्नुहोस्

खाताका विशेषताहरु

- वार्षिक ब्याजदर : ७.०%
- न्यूनतम मौज्जात : रु. १००,०००/-
- जति पनि रकम राख्न वा फिक्न मिल्ने
- सबै बैंकिङ्ग सेवा शुल्कमा ५०%** छुट
- रु. ५००,०००/- सम्मको दुर्घटना मृत्यु विमा
- निःशुल्क एस.एम.एस. बैंकिङ्ग
- निःशुल्क कुनैपनि शाखाबाट बैंकिङ्ग सुविधा
- निःशुल्क इन्टरनेट बैंकिङ्ग
- विशेष काउन्टरबाट सरल तथा छिटो बैंकिङ्ग सेवा



हिमालयन बैंक लिमिटेड
Himalayan Bank Limited

(A Joint Venture with Habib Bank Limited - Pakistan)

The Power to Lead

Corporate Office and Thamel Branch

Thamel, Phone No: 4250201, Fax: 977-1-4222800

E-mail: hbl@himalayanbank.com

Website : www.himalayanbank.com

विस्तृत जानकारीका लागि हाम्रो शाखाहरुमा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला

* सर्तहरु लागु हुनेछन्

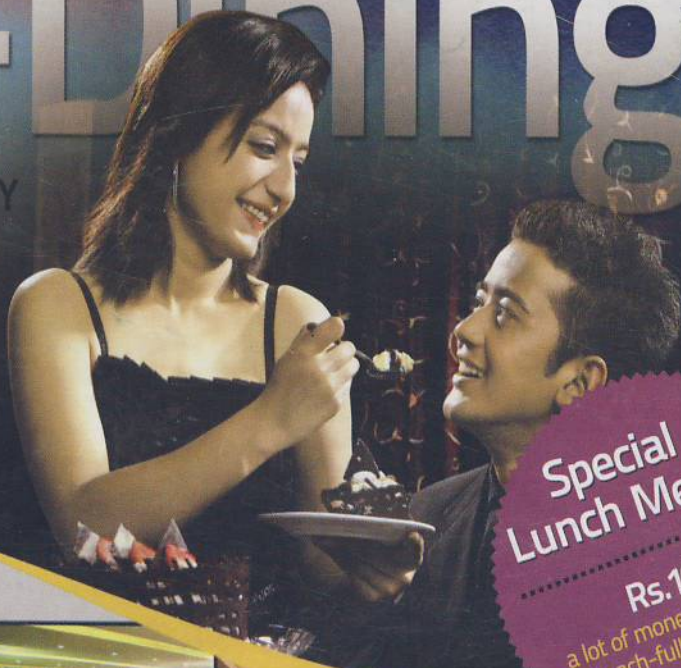
** लकर, फन्ड ट्रान्सफर, टि.सी., ड्राफ्ट, स्टेटमेन्ट, चेकबुक, कर्जा सेवा शुल्क र अन्य सेवाहरु

INTRODUCING

AN ULTIMATE DESTINATION FOR

Fine-Dining

WITHIN THE HEART OF THE CITY



Special Lunch Menu

Rs. 100 is a lot of money for a stomach-full lunch*

Contact: 4784 518 to know more... *Conditions apply.



The Square / F-000

- 1. Sunaulo Indreni Saving & Credit Co-operative Ltd.
- 2. Indreni Chinese Room: Luxurious Cozy Room (Capacity: 10 pax)
- 3. Indreni Food Land (Indian - Continental Restaurant)
- 4. Umanga Hall: Occasional / Birthday Party (Capacity: 50 pax)
- 5. Kailash Hall: Wedding Party Hall (Capacity: 600 pax)
- 6. Indreni Chinese Room: Best Chinese Menu Offered in Town
- 7. Maithi Hall: Well Equipped, Air-Conditioned Seminar Hall (Capacity: 150 pax)
- 8. Shish Mahal: Celebrations Party Hall (Capacity: 400 pax)
- 9. Lounge Bar: Best Drinks from Experienced Bartender
- 10. Kailash Hall: for Wedding / Celebration Party Hall (Capacity: 600 pax)
- 11. Aava - Mega: Air-Conditioned Room for Corporate Meetings / Private Gatherings (Capacity: 10 - 20 pax)

With an experience of almost three decades in the restaurant business, we know that you look for a perfect combination of taste and ambience when you eat out. We ensure fresh and the best ingredients, professional service with a personal touch and comfortable seating in a reinvigorating atmosphere - all within your budget.

Enjoy the moment.

