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Commentary
Yubraj Ghimire

Special Report: Nepal's Civil Service

Complimentary Copy



Interview:
Balaram Paudel

SPOTLIGHT

Sept. 03-16, 2010

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From The Editor

We ended our note in these columns in the last issue with a question that had been haunting common men across the country: even if we have a new prime minister, a new government and a new constitution will it make any difference to the present state of the nation? We then concluded that such frustration and loss of faith in future can be dangerous and disturbing. Nothing has changed in the past two weeks. If any, it has changed only for the worse. With the fifth round of prime minister's election predictably failing to produce an outcome, the political crisis has deepened. Even deeper now is the looming economic crisis. With no new budget on time, the government spending is set to come to a grinding halt in a few weeks. That will halt all economic activities - most importantly the monthly pay to the government staff. Revenue will be hard hit at a time when import already far exceeds exports and even the service sector facing a dangerous deficit (see a related story in the inside pages). Clearly, an emergency appears on the cards whether one likes it or not. Political as well as economic emergency. And there is no light at the end of the tunnel yet. We wonder if we are waiting helplessly for the inevitable. Does someone dare to prevent the inevitable? They say, every crisis comes with a solution. We can only hope that that comes true.

Keshab Poudel
Keshab Poudel
Editor

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USAID Extends Remote Area Health Coverage

USAID/Nepal announced the launch of its five-year, \$15.6 million *Ghar Ghar Maa Swasthya* (Healthy Homes) program.

The program will assist the government of Nepal to expand the depth, reach and impact of the private sector in social marketing, by providing low cost supply of maternal child health, family planning and HIV prevention products and services.

USAID's Healthy Homes program comprises two components. Under the first component, USAID is funding the Nepal Contraceptive Retail Sales (CRS) company for social marketing activities, focusing on sustainability and rural, hard-to-reach areas. Under the second component, the Academy for Educational Development (AED), funded by USAID, will assist CRS to achieve increased self-sustainability and to design and implement behavior change communication activities, such as generic campaigns promoting family



planning best practices.

Dr. Kevin A. Rushing, Mission Director of USAID/Nepal, remarked "The Healthy Homes program is designed so that focus remains on the most vulnerable populations living in

the more remote areas of Nepal. It expects to bring about behavioural change in the at-risk and hard-to-reach populations and enhance the sustainability and self-reliance of CRS, Nepal's premier social marketing program. Healthy Homes is also reflective of our commitment to mobilize the ideas, efforts and resources of the private sector by forging alliances to address critical issues, including those in the health sector."

Indian Embassy Concerned Over Media Reports

Following media reports of substandard products produced by Dabur Nepal, an Indian joint venture company, the Indian Embassy has issued a strongly-worded press release.

"The attention of the Embassy has been drawn to reports in certain print and television media against products manufactured by Indian Joint Ventures in Nepal. Past allegations of this nature have been found to be false after thorough investigation by Nepal Government agencies," states the release.

The Embassy also adds that it has been informed by the Indian JVs that they had been 'approached by such media houses for release of advertisements and are being threatened with negative publicity if those requests

are not met.'

The release adds that the JVs maintain the highest standards of quality.

"These companies are the pride of Nepal and a symbol of close relations between India and Nepal. The baseless adverse publicity against the products of such joint ventures will not only hit the Nepalese economy and exports but will also deter new foreign direct investments into Nepal."

"We hope that concerned authorities will take suitable action against such unethical practices," said the statement issued by the Embassy.

Media Houses React

Associations of four media houses jointly issued a statement raising objection over the press statement issued by the Indian Embassy on August 28 in

connection with media reports that questioned the quality of products manufactured by some Indian joint ventures in Nepal. Kailash Shirohia of Nepal Media Society (print), R.K. Manandhar, Television Broadcaster, Bishnuhari Dhakal, Broadcasting Association of Nepal (commercial radio) and Min Bahadur Shahi, Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal (the umbrella organisation for community radio broadcasters) cautioned the Indian Embassy not to "overstep its boundary."

The statement also reminded the embassy that the Nepali media operated under the laws of sovereign Nepal.

"Nepali media are free to choose their content and have fully utilised this right. We caution the embassy to respect diplomatic norms and values of press freedom," the statement read.

The statement accused the embassy of libel. "To make sweeping comments on the Nepali media on the basis of news published about food products with corroboration from the investigation of Nepali government agencies is objectionable," the statement said.

"On behalf of all the media outlets in Nepal, we deplore this objectionable interference of the embassy."

The joint statement has also cautioned the embassy from repeating similar "mistakes" and asked the embassy to issue an apology. The media organisations have also called on the government to issue a rebuttal immediately.

Embassy Response

In response to media queries, spokesperson of the Indian Embassy said the "Embassy was surprised by the reaction by some media associations to genuine concerns expressed by it at attempts to elicit advertising revenue from Indian Joint Ventures by a few media organizations.

"At no point did the Embassy refer to the media in Nepal in general. The reaction by these media associations would have been credible if backed up

by a condemnation of such unethical practices and an offer to discuss how to address the issue with concerned companies," the spokesperson defended.

AWNN: Stop Cruelty Against Animals

Comedian duo Madan Krishna and Hari Bamsha have requested communities such as Khokana to stop cruel blood sacrifices.

"It is ignorance that leads to cruel killings. Therefore let's stop blood sacrifices and restore our dignity," the comedians said.

Rituals such as the one taking place at Khokana festival have a major impact on children, according to the comedians.

"Some children are made to believe that violence is approved of by the society, while other children feel deeply hurt when they see grownups mishandling a living being."

The comedians have joined a campaign led by Animal Welfare Network Nepal (AWNN). The network earlier this week requested the organizing committee and VDC of Khokana to develop an alternative for the cruel ritual involving the biting to death of a she goat in a pond.

During the festival a 4-6 months old she-goat is sacrificed by throwing it into a pond where nine young men, one from each ward, attack it and bite it to death. The one who ultimately kills the goat is named the 'hero' and leads a dance procession. Khokana VDC sponsors the festival by contributing around NRs 100,000.

"Now that the armed conflict has ended Nepal needs peaceful practices that educate the next generation for a harmonious society," AWNN says.

Fund To Restore Pangboche Monastery

The Mountain Institute is this year's recipient of funding from the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), according to the U.S. Embassy.

With a grant totaling \$83,500 USD, (around Nepali Rupees 61 Lakhs) the Mountain Institute will restore the Pangboche Monastery, one of the oldest centers of Sherpa learning and culture in the Solu-Khumbu region.

Specifically, with this grant the Mountain Institute will restore the Pangboche monastery and its environs to preserve its historical importance in order for it to better serve its surrounding communities and their needs.

Pangboche Monastery, located in a small Sherpa village in the Solu-Khumbu district, was established in the 16th century by the Lama Sangwa Dorji, who accompanied early waves of Sherpa migrants from Tibet at that time.

The Lama also established the nearby Tengboche monastery and was a founder of Buddhist learning in the region. A *chorten* near Pangboche monastery contains some of his relics. As the highest permanent settlement on the road to Everest, Pangboche currently serves as a vital center for the surrounding populations, particularly during the observance of annual cultural festivals.

Over the past nine years, the U.S. Government has committed approximately \$1,255,000 dollars to restore and preserve nine cultural sites throughout Nepal. Projects previously supported by the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation include the restoration of Kal Bhairav and Kageshwar Temples in Kathmandu's Durbar Square, renovating ancient Buddhist *chortens* in upper Mustang, and continuing the restoration of Patan Durbar Square in Lalitpur.

Established by Congress in 2001 and administered by the U.S. Department of State, the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation annually provides direct grant support for the preservation of cultural sites, cultural objects and collections, and forms of traditional cultural expression in countries around the world selected through a highly-competitive process. Since its inception, the Fund has demonstrated America's respect for the cultural heritage of other countries by supporting more than 500 cultural preservation projects in more than 100 countries.

Call For Action On Disappearances

On the occasion of the International Day of the Disappeared, Kathmandu based embassies stated that they remembered all those disappeared during the conflict.



"According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, more than 1300 people went missing during the war, victims of the state security forces as well as of the People's Liberation Army," the statement issued by embassies of Australia, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, UK and USA said. "To this day their whereabouts and their fate remain unknown."

The British Embassy stated, "We welcome the draft legislation to establish a Commission of Inquiry on Disappearances, and hope that the required changes can be made and the Commission established as soon as possible. We encourage Parliament to prioritize discussion and amendment of the bill so that it meets Supreme Court rulings and international standards. This will bring hope to the thousands who are still awaiting justice."

They called on the government to demonstrate its commitment to accountability by ensuring the full application of the rule of law to state and non-state personnel involved in disappearances.

The government should also ensure that police and court orders are followed through, and that the Nepal Police acts on outstanding arrest warrants, they said.

"We urge the Nepal Army and the UCPN-Maoist to cooperate fully on cases of disappearances. Their long refusal to do so has prolonged the anguish of relatives, and delayed justice."

Effectively dealing with the legacy of the conflict will allow Nepal's transition to peace to continue on the basis of trust, truth and reconciliation, the statement said. "Although the international community marks today as a special day of remembrance, for the victims and their loved ones the pain continues. For them, every day is a day of the disappeared." ■

Dabur-Nepal's Products Quality Claim

Dabur Nepal has claimed that its products maintain high quality thanks to the utmost care taken by it. Dabur issued this statement when efforts are being made in Nepali market to discredit its products. Saying that Real Juice brand is still popular in Nepali market, Dabur urged Nepali consumers not to believe the misleading news reports that are being spread through various media for the last couple of weeks.

"Rumors against the market are a planned plot to spoil the relations between the company and the consumer," said Dabur-Nepal. The company said that it had already tested its products Real Mango Nectar 200 ml (Batch no NB00713, Mfd 04/10) after preparing its analysis report from Food Technology and Quality Control Department. The company also received letter stating the production was satisfactory in 2067 BS from the department.

According to Dabur-Nepal, the whole process from importing of raw materials to packing the goods are based on ultra-modern technology adding that all the products are produced by the company.

Banks' Lending To Real Estate Sector Over Rs 63 billion

Of the total lending of Rs 462.24 billion by the banks, over Rs 63 billion have been invested in the real estate sector. This is 13.68 percent of the total lending. The banks' lending in Housing sector has reached beyond Rs 35 billion - which is 7.67 percent of total lending. In recent times, the central bank has asked the banks to reduce their lending exposure on real estate sector.

NEA Asked To Produce Leakage Reduction Plan

The Electricity Tariff Fixation Commission (ETFC) has asked the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to produce an action plan on reducing the power leakage. It was asked to produce the plan after it approached the ETFC with a proposal on hiking electricity tariff. The NEA has said that it is losing billions of rupees due to stagnant power price. However, the ETFC has pointed out to NEA's data of 26.58 percent of power leakage and asked to produce a plan to reduce it. The leakage - 17 percent technical loss and 10 percent non-technical loss - has cost NEA about Rs 7 billion annually.

FM Refuses VAT Waiver On Gas

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has refused to waive Value Added tax (VAT) on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). Earlier, a high level government committee headed by Chief Secretary Madhav Ghimire had recommended waiver of VAT on LPG. The committee included Revenue Secretary Krishna Hari Baskota. But Finance Minister Surendra Pandey refused to



agree with its recommendations. Earlier the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) had said that it can bring down the price of cooking gas once the 13 percent VAT is waived by the government. It had said that if the VAT is waived it can reduce the price of LPG by Rs 120 per cylinder. At present, the price of LPG per cylinder is Rs 1250.

Yeti Airlines Donations

Yeti Airlines donates Rs 1.32 million to four non-governmental organisations (NGO) working in the field of health, women and children under its corporate social responsibility (CSR).



The airline supports NGOs from Rs 4 collected from each passenger ticket. Yeti Airlines handed over a cheque of Rs 331,590 to each of the four NGOs -- Itahari-based Helpless Children Welfare Mission, Sewa Kendra Leprosy Relief, Kathmandu, Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre, Sangha, and Women for Human Rights, Kathmandu. Earlier, the airline had supported them with Rs 2.21 million. Overall, the airline had donated Rs 6.13 million to nearly a half a dozen NGOs.

We are serious about our CSR and it is more focused on people, said Bijaya Bahadur Shrestha, Executive Director.

Yeti Airlines, operating in Bhadrapur, Bhairahawa, Biratnagar, Pokhara, Nepalgunj, Dhangarhi and Janakpur, provides 50 per cent discount to disabled people, followed by 25 per cent to senior citizens, and 10 per cent on round trips.

According to a statement, the Airlines has presented a total financial assistance of Rs. 61,38,928 to Tewa, OCCED, Maiti Nepal, Neapl Leprosy Relief, Nepal Glaucoma Eye Clinic (Tilganga) and Sewa Kendra Leprosy, Helpless Children Welfare Mission, Itahari, Sewa Kendra Leprosy Relief, Kathmandu, Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Center, Sanga and Women for Human Rights, Kathmandu.

The Airlines also provides special discounts to disabled people (50%), senior citizens (25%) and to all Nepalese a discount of 10% on round trip in the sectors as Bhadrapur, Bhairahawa, Pokhara, Nepalgunj, Dhangadhi and Janakpur. ■



'Cultural Monarchy'

Members of Nepali intelligentsia who are believed to be in India's good book have lately begun to talk about the perceived threat of India to its internal security and the growing anti-Indianism in Nepal in the monarchy-less Nepal.



This has prompted speculations about the revival of a cultural monarchy. It has been reported that external affairs secretary Nirupama Rao gave ample indications, in formal and informal meetings with the visiting team of Nepal's private and government TV news chiefs in Delhi, that India was in favour of reviving the monarchy. It has been believed that India is concerned that after the abolition of the monarchy, anti-Indianism has intensified and that activism of China has increased. Indian intelligence agencies have also concluded that the establishment of a republic in Nepal has weakened the country's security and rendered all security agencies incompetent. This has led to the heightened security concerns of India in Nepal. This is why the idea of reviving the cultural monarchy in Nepal

elections from the district level to the centre or the economic transactions being done to form one's government, one wonders where did such a huge amount of money come from in the present transitional politics. If it was donation, who may have given it? Yes, it is general

heard that the businessmen do donate money to the parties. But because of the same parties, many industries have been hit hard. Some have even been closed down. Then,

how come that the same businessmen were able to donate money? If it is not them who doled out money, how have the parties and the leaders been surviving? (Babita Basnet in *Ghatna ra Bichar*, Aug 25)

Foreigners' Concerns

It is not only the Nepalese but the foreigner as well who have been deeply embarrassed over the govermentlessness in Nepal. It became evident during the Japanese ambassador Tarsuo Mijuno's meeting with finance minister, Surendra Pandey. Describing Nepal as a country of rich potential, Mijuno said that his country wanted to see stability in Nepal. He said, you guys reconcile yourselves. He said that other countries may have given aid to Nepal on conditions, but Japa is a neutral friend. Referring to the conditions put forward by the European

is gaining currency in India. (*Sanghu*, August 23)

The Mystery Money

Be it the mammoth money being spent by the political parties on their internal

Union nations and the United States on issues like ethnicism, inclusiveness, federalism and human rights, he said that even China wants its condition of one-China regarding Tibet to be considered. But Japan had never put such conditions, according to the ambassador. Russian ambassador is also said to have echoed such sentiments. (*Jana Aastha*, Aug 25)

India's Headache

It is not difficult to understand that the Indian-aided controlled anarchy in



Nepal is going out of New Delhi's control. India may have to pay dearly for weakening the Nepali Congress by using the king, the army, the Maoists, the UML and the Madhesi outfits one after another. But the Maoist-Monarchist coalition to woo the United States or China by antagonizing India further will also not benefit Nepal. (C. K. Lal in *Himal*, Aug 17)

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Media Trends

—DHRUBA ADHIKARY



That the diplomatic mission of a neighbouring country would find it fit to pick a quarrel, and publicly at that, with the host country's press over reports questioning the quality of certain products manufactured locally is considered unusual, if not offending.

Knowledgeable Nepali diplomats familiar with universally accepted norms and practices were naturally taken aback when they read the statement Embassy of India issued on August 27, with unsubstantiated allegations that "certain print and television media" had resorted to negative publicity because their approach for release of advertisements were not entertained by industries concerned. Even if the subject becomes a dispute between manufacturers and consumers—of a particular brand of juice—through media, there are designated agencies and mechanisms in Nepal to resolve such controversies.

Similarly, the industries in question might have used investments from abroad including India, but their products are marketed as "Made in Nepal" commodities, thereby governed by relevant laws of Nepal. And the investments probably came from the private sector. People in the Nepali media are aware of these basic points, that is why they promptly offered their reactions. The joint statement containing the voices of publishers and radio/television broadcasters is actually an indicator of a broader perception of India's increasing interference in Nepali affairs.

Meanwhile, it is an irony that the embassy of the world's largest democracy is encouraging authorities here to take "suitable action" against a free press! And a reference to "unethical practices" herein Nepal has surfaced at a time when the Press Council of India is reporting about an unprecedented challenge emanating from the phenomenon of "paid news", that is advertising in the garb of news. A council report released on 30th of July refers to possible pernicious influence on Indian democracy from "such malpractices". Who, by the way, is the competent authority to decide as to what constitutes an "unethical practice" the embassy is alluding to?

Press releases put out by embassies, missions of the UN and other international agencies based in Kathmandu are usually a good source of information on matters of public interest. With some exceptions, such as a European Union's position on a particular issue relating to a Latin American country. It appears that some of the diplomatic missions spend additional time to make their public announcements more helpful to journalists who work under stressful

deadlines. I have noticed that the British Embassy is one of them. Most of the press releases from this embassy add "Information for Editors" at the end of its main announcement, with background notes and details. The press release of August 9 on a group of Bhutanese refugees being resettled in the United Kingdom can be cited as an example. In addition to the news that 37 Bhutanese leaving Nepal to be integrated into a new host community, the footnote segment of the press release provided background information about the resettlement programme and destination countries together with the number of remaining refugees (77,616) now being sheltered in seven camps located in eastern Nepal.

The one and only flaw that I noticed in the press release was in its tagline which a newspaper could have directly converted into a headline: From Jhapa to Bolton. To the Nepali audience, Jhapa does not need elaboration but Bolton does. And it could have been done by inserting just a one or two more words, isn't it?

* * *

One such perfectionist was Allen Quicke, editor-in-chief of Asia Times Online which is based in Hong Kong with an editorial bureau in Thailand. From what can be derived in the obituary portal posted, this 57-year-old man from South Africa was also a genius at organising journalists.

Perfection is desirable, but not easily achievable. However, there is no dearth of dedicated journalists in this world of ours who are fiercely committed to precision as well as perfection as a part of accuracy. One such perfectionist was Allen Quicke, editor-in-chief of Asia Times Online which is based in Hong Kong with an editorial bureau in Thailand. From what can be derived in the obituary portal posted, this 57-year-old man from South Africa was also a genius at organising journalists. Otherwise it would not have been possible for this Internet version of Asia Times, a print newspaper that ceased publication in 1997, to record a steady growth in preceding years. It now is a vibrant site with daily readership of more than 100,000 enlightened people scattered across the globe. ATOL says it has a policy to look contemporary issues from an Asian perspective. "This distinguishes us from the mainstream English-language media, whose reporting on Asian matters is generally by Westerners, for Westerners", its mission statement says. The Chinese edition of the site too is read widely in China and beyond.

"Nobody likes to be scrutinized by the media, but the existence of the media helps maintain order and transparency." Although a statement of fact, it would not have attracted attention if it had come from a British newspaper or an American television broadcast. It could have been dismissed as a journalistic cliché. Since this was printed in the editorial column of an English language newspaper published in China, journalists with interest in that country's measures towards liberalisation may find it worthwhile to monitor an increasingly assertive character of media outlets there. The quote given above is from the leading article in the Global

Times of August 6. "Without the media there would be dire consequences, and political and financial power would go unchecked," is how the next sentence of the article read. The paper sought public understanding and support for the media which is "on a difficult road of transforming its role." Efforts to enhance media's credibility appear to be in full swing. Reports exposing the ugly parts of public life, ranging from the milk powder scandal, coalmine accidents to corrupt practices in businesses offer examples of recent media initiatives.

* **

Global Times urged the public to reject "bad journalists". As we know, this breed is not confined to China. They can be found everywhere, and Nepal is not an exception. Those who have entered the media without adequate qualification, training and professional commitment are the ones to be blamed for causing palpable erosion of media credibility. Men and women working as journalists but retaining loyalty to a particular political party are also responsible for inflicting damage to the profession that is associated with citizens' constitutional right to be informed on public issues. Clearly, no professional journalist would create a sensational story like the one Surya Bahadur Thapa, a former prime minister, alluded to in an interview published in Nepal Samacharpatra on August 27. According to Thapa, it is true that some elderly leaders including himself did meet each other at a luncheon hosted by Padma Sundar Lawati, a Panchayat-era home minister, but to say that revival of monarchy was discussed there is something like sharing a fairy tale. Obviously, this can be a good example of 'creative writing' but it definitely has no place in journalism as it has to be based on facts only. ■

MONARCHY

The Red 'U-Turn'

By A CORRESPONDENT

P rime ministerial aspirant Maoist chief Prachanda 'admits' that the monarchy should not have been overthrown. He favours the revival of the 240-year old institution as 'cultural monarchy'. So claimed the chief of the royalist RPP-Nepal boss, Kamal Thapa. The claims have not been denied yet.

Although the after days of indiscreet silence, Maoist vice chairman Narayan Kaji Shrestha denied reports of the party's green signal to the revival of monarchy, he did not deny the specific reports attributed to Prachanda.

Shrestha's general denial also came only after the central committee members pressured the leadership to come clean on the issue.

Instead of coming clean, the Maoists have only helped to bolster the claims that they have sought to deny.

Said Shrestha, "we are open to alliance with former royalists" provided they are patriotic and progressive.

Even as the Maoists' reluctant denial for public consumption came, reports started circulating that

Prachanda's comrade-in-arms in the UML, Jhalnath Khanal, has conveyed the same message to an influential individual close to the ousted king Gyanendra. Another prime-ministerial aspirant Khanal is also said to have asked for a favour to deliver his 'olive branch' to Delhi. The report too has not been countered yet.

Amidst these reports caretaker prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal challenged the Maoists to come clean. He raised the issue in a meeting with Prachanda. The latter reportedly kept mum even as his critic, Baburam Bhattarai, responded with a sarcastic smile.

The fresh reports have coincided with series of visits of former king and crown prince to temples and shrines amidst 'huge' crowd. There have also been subsequent interviews by former crown prince Paras. In one interview, he gave ample hints of having met Prachanda – the man who claims to have ushered in a new era



RPP Nepal Leader Thapa: For revival of monarchy

in Nepal's history by forcing a republic.

The UCPN and the UML are the two biggest communist parties. Firebrand republicans Prachanda and Khanal head the red outfits.

If they are taking a u-turn, can the future politics follow a normal turn, wondered analysts.

They wonder if the RPP-N chairman Kamal Thapa is on target when he was reported as saying that the external forces that brought the anti-king forces together to overthrow the monarchy can re-instate it too. ■

POLITICS

The

Money

Power

With the sixth round of voting to elect a new prime minister round the corner money threatens to play a decisively dominant role to influence the outcome

By SAROJ DAHAL

As he began meeting the leaders of the political parties to persuade them for a consensus to end the present political deadlock, president Ram Baran Yadav came across a shocking disclosure last week.

A leader of Madhesi outfit sipped the warm tea and spilled a hot disclosure: he was offered 50 million rupees to in return of the party's vote for the Maoist prime ministerial candidate Prachanda.

Another echoed the claim. "I had also been approached with the offer of

money."

According to them, three Maoist politburo members had camped at a hotel near the CA premises to negotiate the vote for money.

The Maoists have subsequently denied allegations of bribing the CA members into voting for Prachanda.

But sources say, the 'business' is still on. According to a top Maoist leader, "a result is not ruled out in the sixth round due to be held next Monday."

After nearly pulling off a coup of sorts in the third round, the Maoists

have not given up hope yet.

They continue to fix their eyes on the Madhesi parties combine which has 82 CA members.

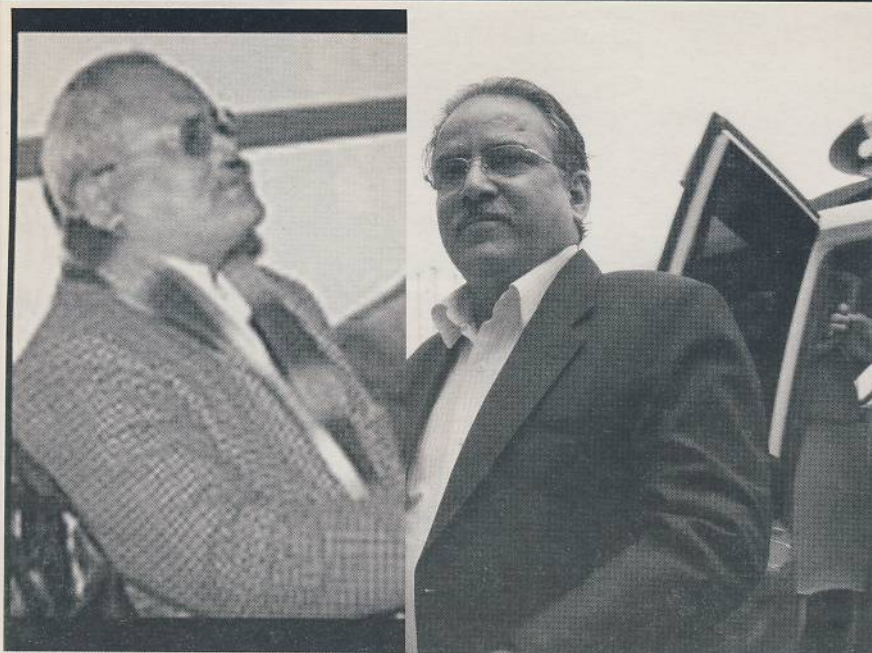
Even without the vote of the "neutral" UML, the Maoists can ride back to power on the shoulder of the Madhesi outfits.

That is advantage Maoist.

Nepali Congress is not foreign to buying votes for the chair. It had excelled in the game during the hung parliament 10 years ago.

Given the opportunity, it would not let it go.

But, right now, it is at disadvantage.



Gachhadar (Left) and Prachanda : New alliance in making

Nepali Congress whose candidate Ram Chandra Poudel must get the adamant UML also on its side to take a real shot at the prime minister's chair.

So, obviously the game is open for the Maoists only.

External forces, read India, have been blamed for preventing Prachanda's victory by helping keep the Madhesi outfits out of the Maoist fold.

But with big money proving too tempting one does not rule out the situation going out of the 'remote' control.

With Madhesi Janadhikar Forum Nepal led by Upendra Yadav already disposed favorably towards it, the Maoist party is now seeking to net Yadav's rival Forum (Loktantrik) led by Bijaya Gachhadar. And the latter is not averse to the idea of joining the Maoist bandwagon, notwithstanding his public postures, said a top source privy to covert negotiations.

The combined votes of the two Forums will put the Maoists in a comfortable position (292) to lure a couple of small parties into voting for Prachanda for the magic number of 301.

Maoist sources the New Spotlight spoke to seemed pretty confident of

making it — this time.

Their source of confidence — sheer money power.

The Maoists are believed to have offered Upendra Yadav and Bijaya Gachhadar deputy prime ministerships with foreign and home portfolios respectively.



Khanal (Left) and Poudel :Negotiating for sixth round

The two Madhesi leaders are however in dispute over who should be the senior deputy PM.

Sources said, the third target is the vice chairman of the Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party, Hridayesh Tripathi, who has been offered the third deputy prime ministership, with, understandably, the commerce and supplies portfolio.

There is one uncertainty, though. The Madhesi outfits' suspicion. They fear that they might be kicked out of the government once Prachanda rides back to power. They suspect that the Maoist party will then take the UML into its fold making the Madhesi outfit a disposable unit.

But the floor-crossing by some of the Forum MPs in the third round of voting has indicated that anything can happen under the heavy weight of money.

Where does such a huge amount of money come from remains a mystery? The mystery money however threatens to become decisively dominant in the "New Nepal" of 27 million sovereign Nepalese people. ■



Deuba, Tamang and Koirala Contesting for NC President: Who will win ?

Buying Office

By A CORRESPONDENT

If the Nepali Congress and the UML had their ways they too would have been at it. Like their Maoist counterpart. In the race to grab the coveted prime minister's chair.

Due to own internal wrangling the UML candidate Jhalnath Khanal 'withdrew' from the race. The NC's Ram Chandra Poudel is still in the race, but is not in a position to 'fix' the contest.

Both had shown tremendous grit and skill in manipulating votes for power during the hung parliament more than ten years ago. With the-then royalist Rastriya Prajatantra Party MPs always "on sale" to swing the balance in one or the other main parties' favour.

Few bothered then to find out where

did the money come from – inside or outside. Even now, the situation has not changed.

If the money power is on full show in the prime minister's election, thanks to the revolutionary party's new zeal, the socialist Nepali Congress is witnessing the vulgar display of the green bucks in the run up to the general convention which is due to elect a new leadership including a president who will formally take the place of the octogenarian Girija Prasad Koirala who passed away earlier this year.

About 30 million rupees have been estimated as the total expenditure for the big event, but party insiders admit that double that amount is being spent to buy one's way into the central committee and the top officer bearers'

body.

Top functionaries Sher Bahadur Deuba and Sushil Koirala are the top contenders for the coveted post of the president, with "honest" veteran Bhim Bahadur Tamang as a poor dark horse

There have been credible reports that millions had been spent at the local and district level elections.

The general convention elections have indeed rejuvenated the party at the grass root level after almost 15 years. The non-violent party had practically been uprooted from its base by the armed Maoist cadres across the country.

New blood has also been inducted in the party in recent elections. All good signs indeed for the oldest democratic party with the most credible international recognition.

But serious concerns run deep if the party can retain its ideals and values amidst the flood of money that has gone into the general convention.

Said a veteran leader, now holding an important official position, "never before I have seen such a vulgar show of money in our party." ■

PEACE PROCESS UNMIN Endgame?

The UNMIN is being pushed out of the picture – with unforeseen consequences

By A CORRESPONDENT

The tempo over UNMIN's ouster call – at least clipping its wings – has reached a crescendo in the past week.

What started with army chief General Chhatraman Singh Gurung knocking at the doors of political leaders – telling exception were the Maoist leaders – culminated with the Prime Minister calling the meeting of all parties – sans the Maoists – to discuss

established four years ago.

Its seventh extension is set to be discussed when the United Nations Security Council meeting on September 7 takes up the Nepal agenda.

Before which the government has to decide what it wants to do with the UNMIN.

All indications suggest that this time around, the government is in no mood to extend the term of UNMIN without reviewing its mandate.

Examples were cited how the armed combatants have been found entering and exiting the cantonments at their will despite the supposed UNMIN monitoring and supervision.

The bottomline was, subsequently, spelled out by PM Nepal's hawkish Defense Minister. "We are willing to extend the term of UNMIN for a couple of months only by cutting its mandate and pulling out Nepali Army from under their supervision," said Defense Minister Bidya Bhandari.

The PM was able to garner support for his line at the all party meeting where most senior leaders suggested him to tread a cautious path by taking the UN into confidence over whatever decision it wants to take.

Aside from his political maneuvering, the PM also let loose the army chief and permitted him to meet with political leaders to lobby in favor of UNMIN's exit or at least its reduced mandate – read keeping NA out of its supervision.

All this has made the other party of the peace process, the Maoists, understandably jittery.

The Maoists who feel insecure at letting the UNMIN go at this juncture have been taken by surprise over army chief's lobbying. In fact, Prachanda and his senior comrades rushed to meet with the PM, in the middle of their ongoing central committee meeting, to discuss the UNMIN issue. They urged the PM to write a letter to UN asking for renewal of UNMIN term – without changing its mandate – for another six months.

Notwithstanding the Maoist request, the writing seems to be on the wall for the UNMIN. The UN body, which is said to have rankled the powerful neighbor who feels its turf is being violated, can no longer hope for smooth sail regarding its term extension.

Equally unclear is what will unfold once this row pushes UNMIN out of the picture. Coming at this crucial juncture when the peace process is faltering, the absence of UNMIN will create a big void. And everyone knows how politics loathes vacuum and void. And how they can lead to unforeseen paths with unforeseen consequences. ■



Army Chief General Gurung (Left) and Unmin Chief : Meeting with purpose

the UNMIN exit plan.

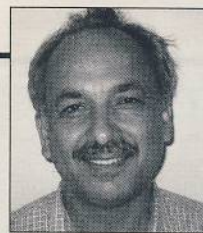
Controversies surrounding the UNMIN have always gained an edge whenever its term comes up for renewal.

The UNMIN's term has been extended six times since it was

In the all party meeting he chaired, PM Madhav Kumar Nepal was uncharacteristically critical of the UNMIN. He pointedly accused it of bias toward Maoists and of ineffective monitoring of Maoist combatants.

The Dream Disintegrates

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE



As prime minister, Madhav Nepal had a dream — initiating the construction of a Republican tower, a Nepali version of the Eiffel tower. He laid the foundation at Ratna Park in the heart of Kathmandu, though the project was yet to be technically endorsed. It was more an expression of intent. Madhav Nepal now continues only as a caretaker prime minister. His vague dream — that of a 25-floor glass tower fitted with lifts and a spiral staircase to the top — has now been rejected by architects who considered the construction neither feasible nor appropriate in the thickly populated city centre, also a seismic zone. If the project ever materialises — its cost, time-frame and design are yet to be finalised — it not be at Ratna Park (named after the former queen mother), but somewhere in the UN park area outside the capital. Almost coinciding with the collapse of that dream project, the former crown prince, Paras declared that the end of monarchy is not what Nepalis wanted, that it was the outcome of a design from outside (he hinted it was India), and the institution would be restored if Nepal wanted. Nobody criticised Paras for his

Ragini Upadhyay, an artist who fearlessly exhibited her paintings during the royal takeover (showing King Gyanendra trying to cage “time”), now likens pro-democracy leaders to ferocious lions. The face of the lion chasing a fleeing cow-symbolizing Nepali people, resembles G.P. Koirala, who took over as prime minister and acting head of the state as well as Congress president when Gyanendra handed over power to the political parties.

utterances. Meanwhile, the constituent assembly, which was expected to promulgate the new constitution institutionalising Nepal's shift to republicanism, secularism and federalism, failed to meet the May 28 deadline, and its moral and constitutional status has been suspect since then. Political parties, especially the big three — the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (UCPN-M), Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), which have led the government by rotation in the last four years of change — are perhaps the most hated.

Ragini Upadhyay, an artist who fearlessly exhibited her paintings during the royal takeover (showing King Gyanendra trying to cage “time”), now likens pro-democracy leaders to ferocious lions. The face of the lion chasing a fleeing cow-symbolizing Nepali people, resembles G.P. Koirala, who took over as prime minister and acting head of the state as well as Congress president when Gyanendra handed over power to the political parties. Koirala was then hailed by Manmohan Singh as the “legendary leader of South Asia” while former US president Jimmy Carter called him “my hero”. No one knows if Dr Singh and President Carter have changed their opinion, but the current uncertainty in Nepal stems largely from Koirala's mishandling of the peace process. He died a failed man last March. And Ragini is not alone in her anger — Madan Krishna and Haribansh Acharya, Nepal's well-known comedians who were active in the pro-republic campaign, recently declared “where will we perform now? The constituent assembly has turned into a venue of jokers where our leaders fight like dogs and cats.” What's more, at least some leaders have noticed this disillusionment and the sense that the monarchy was far more patriotic. UCPN-M chief Prachanda met Kamal Thapa, chief of the pro-monarchist Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal (RPP-N) to solicit support for his prime-ministerial dream. In private, Prachanda admitted that the monarchy's overthrow was a “mistake”, but the RPP-N, with five members in the house, is yet to vote for him in the prime ministerial contest because it wants a public commitment from the Maoists, on the restoration of the monarchy. UML chief Jhala Nath Khanal is believed to have told an aide of Gyanendra the same thing, recently. Kamal Thapa goes a step further and demands that Nepal's Hindu status be restored, as the change four years ago was not for democracy alone, and many anti-Hindu forces from abroad had been involved. “More than a million people have been lured to Christianity since then,” he says. aras blames many NGOs (there are around 165,000 in the country, with 4,000 villages) with their own agenda, “certainly not aimed to promote our interest”. The European Union's pressure on the government to constitutionally recognise the right to conversion and the openly documented “anti-Hindu” agenda of some NGOs has created the idea that Western forces are causing social disharmony in Nepal. This hostility against the outside world has been aided by the failure of the political parties in the past four years. No one knows whether monarchy will return, but the republican dream, like Madhav Nepal's failed project, has come under severe strain.

(*Indian Express*)



NRB: Monitoring service trade

LOSS IN SERVICE TRADE

Under the Radar

Overshadowed by the huge loss in goods trade, the burgeoning hole in service trade has gone unnoticed

By A CORRESPONDENT

In the wake of reports that Nepal's trade deficit – in terms of trades in goods – has reached Rs 287 billion in the last one year, another disturbing trend has caught little attention.

The trades in services – which include country's import and/or export of such services like tourism, travel, banking, insurance, education etc – has registered an astounding loss of Rs 21 billion in the last one year.

This figure is up by two and a half times compared to the figures a year ago.

The latest report of soaring deficit in service trade is in line with the disturbing trend of country's expenditure far outstripping its income.

In fact, even though Nepal has always been suffering from deficit in trades in good, the trades in services was a different matter altogether – at least till

a few years ago when it used to have surplus in service trade.

But now, the tables have turned – for worse.

The difference between the travel income from the incoming tourists and travel expenditure incurred by the Nepalese who go overseas is the most pressing point, according to central bank officials.

Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada has said that this difference is around Rs 10 billion already.

"Though the number of incoming tourists has increased, the income from tourism has decreased. On the other hand, a large number of Nepalese are going overseas for works. This has resulted in net loss in travel. This is an unhealthy trend," he said.

Many say that the loss in service

trade is one of the key reasons why Nepal faced loss in Balance of Payment (BoP) this year.

"Service used to be a sector where Nepal registered profit till a few years ago. Now even this sector is in loss. This is creating frightening situation in BoP," said Deependra Bahadur Chhetri, former governor of NRB.

The loss in service trade jumped from Rs 8 billion last year to Rs 21 billion this year. And one of the primary factors leading to this loss is said to be the money Nepalese students spent in paying foreign educational institutions.

Data show that they have spent over Rs 11 billion in paying foreign education institutions last year alone – up from Rs 10 billion previous year.

So what does this mean for the economy?

"We are heavily dependent on imports. Our manufacturing sector is weak. Our expenditure has not decreased whereas our income has decreased. This is directly threatening the stability of the economy," said economist Tula Raj Basyal.

If the loss in service trade is not corrected soon, the BoP loss which is coming down in recent months could again increase. ■

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Economics In The National Interest



Prof. MADHUKAR SJB RANA

Nepal is blessed by Nature with ample natural resources, which our politicians, systemically, and their planners have failed to harness. This sustained, systemic failure is mainly due to their lack of vision caused by their overarching aid dependency resultant from their neo-colonial mindset, inferiority complexes and the rent benefits accruing to them from aid.

Despite foreign aid's emphasis on good governance Nepal's chronic mal governance is also due to this because of the overarching aid dependency as politicians, planners and policy-bureaucrats are spoon fed with alien ideas, money, material and machinations that go to serve their global interest—not ours.

Let us, today, pay homage to Lord Peter Bauer who first warned us of the pitfalls of foreign aid as early as the 1970's. It was Bauer who had first had argued that central planning, price controls and protectionism perpetuates poverty especially nurtured by foreign aid. His wisdom was recognized even by the World Bank in its 1997 World Development Report when it acknowledged the outdated and naive assumption that good advisers and good technical experts by formulating good policies would lead to good execution and rapid modernization.

They simply forgot that modernization necessitates transformation from within based on indigenous leadership pursuing the concept of organization development and change management over a sustained period. Considering how frequently the World Bank changed its development themes it is no wonder that their enterprise became a self-serving venture with a rapid fire, fit-for-all prescriptions. Never mind the culture of that nation nor its level of institutional development to be able to absorb the recommendations designed externally and expeditiously with very little participants by the stakeholders.

Aid is the primary source of graft and corruption. Let me quote International Alert's Phil Vernon. When asked "Is Aid Working" he said:

"Despite billions of dollars being spent on development assistance over the past 60 years, it is doubtful that aid is really working as intended, i.e. providing sufficient impetus to overcome the strong forces that keep people poor...If asked to project ourselves forward in time to 2030 and imagine whether, looking back, we would call today's aid policy and practice successful, many of us would find it hard to say yes."

"Between 1970 and 1998, when aid flows to Africa were at their peak, poverty in Africa rose from 11% to a staggering 66%" - roughly 600 million of Africa's billion people are now trapped in poverty" says the Zambian economist Dambisa Moyo (Aid, therefore, is part of the problem and not part of the solution for good governance.

To be honest, Nepal is merely a clog in the wheel of development being propelled by the western industrial nations in their mission for universal liberal democracy, human rights

and security (from radical social movements; international migration, terrorism and global warming).

Such is the ideological weapon being unleashed upon the developing countries for the 'end of history' and to maintain their cultural domination— underscored by the savage debt burden unleashed through tied aid.

Aid agencies located in situ (e.g., USAID, DFID, and DANIDA) are glaring symbols of colonization through aid. They bypass, completely, the foreign ministries and are not accountable in any manner or form to national parliaments. Aid bureaucracies, as well as national bureaucracies, must be down sized and right sized by having just a few core ministries that are constructed with the aim to have both strategic and macro-economic impact. For example, the Ministry of Industry, Supplies and Commerce should be appropriately amalgamated into the Ministry of Finance and Economy while the Ministry of Agriculture henceforth should be made responsible for agro-industrialization.

Why merge ministries? For better coordination, communication and control and strategic impact by creating self-contained synergies within related sub sectors to maximize multiplier benefits through backward and forward linkages .

Is this not a parody of democracy and sovereign equality of nations? In the quest for human rights the industrial nations resort to non-governmental organizations, created and funded by them, to protect and promote human rights under the guise of 'civil society' so as to ensure weak, compliant states. Worse, it completely destroys the developing nations' social capital as traditional voluntary organizations are annihilated from the national socio-political scene.

The first act of nationalism, therefore, must be to set limits to foreign aid which is a self-perpetuating institution by: (a) developing one's own development and growth strategies; (b) bringing under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' fold all bilateral and multilateral foreign aid, including those from INGOS, and (c) deepening and opening alternative avenues for international finance massively (remittance, tourism, transit trade, international financial centre, carbon trading and fdi mobilization; and (c) downsizing the bi-lateral international aid bureaucracy in situ and also requiring them to hire national experts especially educated and trained in the countries concerned.

Total debt forgiveness is necessary as aid has robbed Nepal of its competitive advantage through padding of costs and chronic delays mainly in the infrastructure sector. Use the funds released from debt forgiveness to emancipate the people living below the poverty line as their rightful entitlements to micro-credit; sanitation; irrigation; education; health, housing and skill training—no matter what caste, creed and culture or race, religion and region.

(Excerpts of the paper presented by Rana who is South Asian Institute of Management Former Finance Minister)



Presenting NAPA Draft Before PM : Ready for approval

NAPA DRAFT

At Final Stage

The Environment Ministry is sending the NAPA draft to the cabinet for its final approval

By KESHAB POUDEL

The Ministry of Environment is in the process of sending the draft National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) to the cabinet for its final approval after the focal ministry presented the draft at the Climate Change Council meeting last week.

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal chaired the meeting. Purushottam Ghimire, joint secretary, focal point of UNFCCC and National Program Director of National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) Project to Climate Change, presented the draft for discussions at the meeting on August 28.

"NAPA draft identified 243 projects under 6 thematic areas. Among them, 43 projects are identified as urgent and immediate projects needing implementation. For this, US\$ 340 million is required," Ghimire told the meeting. "Out of US\$ 340 million, donors have already committed US\$120 million and major implementing partners include European Union, DFID, Pilot

Project on Climate Resilience through climate investment fund," said Ghimire.

When Ghimire was presenting the highlights of NAPA draft, prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal raised various questions regarding the priorities and projects identified by NAPA.

Appreciating the document, prime minister Nepal suggested that projects should be designed in line with land use patterns of Nepal. "As there is a huge problem of fire in the Terai, fire fighting strategies should be included," prime minister Nepal suggested at the meeting.

Interestingly, all 43 projects identified by the NAPA are national priority projects. They will be implemented through various line agencies with coordination of the Ministry of Environment. "We have proposed to spend 80 percent of the resources at the grass roots level," said Ghimire.

Minister of Environment Thakur Prasad Sharma has already declared that this is the best document prepared in the last one year by his ministry within the

requirement of the country to acquire funds from donor communities.

Thanks to the political backing, Nepal is able to prepare NAPA document within a year. "I am proud to say that Nepal has now the NAPA document through which the country can acquire the necessary funds," said Minister Thakur.

According to the document, very highly vulnerable districts include Kathmandu, Ramechhap, Udayapur, Lamjung, Mugu, Bhaktapur, Dolkha, Saptari and Jajarkot. Similarly, Mahottari, Dhading, Taplejung, Siraha, Gorkha, Solukhumbu, Chitwan, Okhaldhunga, Achham, Manang, Dolpa, Kalikot, Khotang, Dhanusha, Dailekh, Parsa and Salyan.

Moderately vulnerable districts include Sankhuwasabha, Baglung, Sindhuli, Bhojpur, Jumla, Mustang, Rolpa, Bajhang, Rukum, Rautahat, Panchthar, Parbat, Dadeldhura, Sunsari, Doti, Tanahu, Makawanpur, Myagdi, Humla, Bajura, Baitadi, Bara, Rasuwa, Nawalparasi, Sarlahi, Sindhupalchowk, Darchula and Kaski. Least vulnerable districts include Ilam, Jhapa, Banke, Palpa and Rupandehi.

"The overall objective framework of NAPA is to mainstream climate change agenda into national development with poverty reduction, livelihoods improvement/diversification and building resilience," said Ghimire. "Our goal is to enable Nepal to respond strategically to the challenges and opportunities posed by climate change."

After signing NAPA project in November 2008, the inception workshop was concluded in May 2009. Only after the expansion of the cabinet and appointment of Thakur Prasad Sharma as the minister of environment, the NAPA process rolled. In October 2009 the thematic Working Groups were formed and there was transect appraisal exercise for detailed vulnerability assessment in November 2009. In June-July 2010, several regional level consultation meetings were held on draft of NAPA and the draft was finalized in August 2010. Follow up proposal development and submission happened in August 2010.

"This draft is widely circulated and discussed at the grass roots level to make it the draft of Nepal," said Ghimire.



Assam-Gorkha Leader: Establishing right

ASSAM GORKHAS

Gaining Ground

Gorkhas living in Assam are for the first time getting government aid through the Gorkha Development Council

By UMAKANTA KHANAL in Jhapa

The Gorkhas of Assam are now delighted that they will get the government assistance for the first time. Before this, they were regarded as migrants from different parts of Nepal and deprived of any such assistance.

They say the decision of the government of Assam to declare the Gorkha Development Council has given them the feeling that they are also the inhabitants of their country, Assam. The government has announced a budget of Indian Rs. 4 crores per annum for the development of the Gorkhas of Assam.

Assam government has placed the Gorkhali people permanently settled in

the state in the category of other inhabitants. They express dissatisfaction that the government has failed to provide an autonomous status for them in the state.

"GDC will now get just double the budget that the member of legislative assembly of the state gets," Rohit Gautam, the editor of a monthly newsmagazine Sapariwar from Guwahati, said. "Now the Gorkhas of our state will be more responsible for the nationality and overall development of the community."

The Gorkhali people are believed to have settled in Assam even before India launched its struggle for independence. But during the freedom movement, when

the entire country was united, administrators tried to isolate the genuine Indian patriotic Gorkhas by terming them as Nepali nationals.

The administrators used to call them non-Indians or foreigners even though they were born and brought up in different parts of India, editor Rohit said. All know that the Indian Gorkhas have been struggling for the sake of the motherland, India, but there is an identity crisis for Gorkhals of India, he added.

"As the Gorkhals of Assam have been struggling for years for their identity, they claim GDC is the first achievement for them. They say that this is an achievement made through hard labour and honesty," Dr. Shanti Thapa, a Nepali writer from Guwahati said. "This assistance will be the backbone for providing Nepali education."

According to Thapa this is a great slap for those who consider them as foreigners.

However, the Gorkhali organizations, which were demanding a Gorkha autonomous council within the state, are not satisfied with the present achievement.

They are still calling for an autonomous status for the Assam Gorkhas. "We have not lifted the programs of struggle for the autonomous status," said Dil Bahadur Limbu, president of All Assam Gorkha Students' Union, while addressing a meeting in Guwahati recently.

It is estimated that more than 15 lakhs Gorkhali people live in Assam. Gorkhals also reside in Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, among north eastern states. In Sikkim and Darjeeling of west Bengal, a major community is of Indian Gorkhas.

Many Assamese Gorkhas have emphasized that the assistance should be invested in the education of the children of Gorkhas. A resident of Lambing, Assam, K.B. Nepali said, "Nepali education is very poor here. If we invest the assistance in providing good education for our children, our children would know about Nepali culture."

He emphasized that the implementation committee should not be politically biased.



In Deep Waters

By *ABIJIT SHARMA*

Delhi, a city which runs on the fast lane, virtually came to a standstill for several days last month. The reason: the havoc created by heavy downpour.

The city experienced 617mm rainfall this monsoon season. A record 423.1 mm of rainfall was recorded in the month of August alone, making it the wettest August in the last ten years.

The rain did provide a much needed relief from the heat, but it turned out to be disastrous for the Delhites. Right from the road cave-ins to water logging and haphazard traffic, this season's monsoon has ended up being a curse rather than a boon.

People had to crawl their way through to reach their destinations. Crowds in bus stations like Inter State Bus Depot in Kashmere Gate and Delhi Transport Corporation depot in Indraprastha were especially hit hard by the incessant rain. The Metro passengers too suffered as rain water made its way into the stations.

The drainage system went completely haywire and road cave-ins were reported in many places with one youth losing his life in Gurgaon.

Long queues of vehicles on most of the road were a common sight as vehicles moved at a snail's pace. With roads dug up and debris to be cleared out for the

Yamuna due to the rain generated the greatest threat. The water crossed the danger level of 204.83 metres around the third week of the month and continued to flow above the danger level for five consecutive days. Alarm bells of flood were sounded and many were evacuated from low lying areas. Also, with flood from Haryana being let out into Yamuna, even graver dangers were feared. The Old Yamuna Bridge, which connects the north east part of Delhi to the central part, was completely closed due to the obvious risks.

As Delhi prepares itself for the Common Wealth Games and boasts of



Indian Capital New Delhi : Flooded by monsoon rain

Water logging became a major headache in many places in South Delhi. Some parts of the North also experienced knee-high water on the main roads.

Common Wealth Games, the rain made it almost impossible for the commuters as well.

The rising level of water in river

the fast paced development in the city and its world-class infrastructures, loopholes like these definitely showed there is a long way to go for the city. ■

"Act Amendment A Compulsion"

BALANANDA PAUDEL

Along with internal competition, seniority, the recent one is under the clause 24 (d) of Nepal Civil Service Act. Another provision is one layer promotion at the time of retirement.

Secretary BALANANDA PAUDEL joined civil service in 1988 as a section officer. Paudel was promoted to under secretary in 1994. He became a joint secretary in 1995 through an open competition. The young government officer worked his way up to become a secretary four years ago. He served at the Ministry of Education before his transfer to the Ministry of General Administration. As Nepal is celebrating the Civil Service Day, secretary Paudel spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues related to general administration. Excerpts:

As the country has been passing through an unstable political phase, how do you see the role of civil service, which is regarded as the permanent government?

We are feeling the heat of unstable politics too. Civil service is encountering difficulties as the country is in a transition from one system to another. It is natural to see changes in institutions, processes and methods. The civil service faces challenges in internalizing such changes.

How do you see political intervention?

Of course, we also see certain trend among civil servants to invite political interventions. However, the role of civil service is to work within the laws and regulations. There are certain norms and values. Efforts have seldom been made to interpret such laws, regulations and norms to suit the personal interest. It is true that expectation of people is high.

What are the challenges?

At this stage, there is a great challenge in front of civil service. When the country has been going through transition, civil service cannot be an exception. Even in such a difficult stage, civil service is delivering its service. We must take this into account. Had it not worked properly, the situation would have gone much worse. We may not be able to function as expected by the people but civil service is delivering something to them. Despite all hostile situations, bureaucracy has been working. From village development committees to district administration offices, all government institutions are working. This is important to note. We need to change so many things, including behavior, working patterns and procedures. We need to recognize this.

Whatever civil service may have done in this period, nobody is treating it with civility. Instead, political parties, people within civil service, common people, and civil society members criticize it as if it was an evil? How do you look at this?

The role and responsibility of civil service is not just to fulfill the wishes of political parties. Civil service

should not work under influence of political parties. Rather it should work under the policy of the state. Whoever may lead the state, we have to abide and follow their policies and guidelines. In this way, civil service might defy the pressure of political parties. So far as the implementation of the national policy is concerned, I don't think any civil servant can defy it. There are problems related to the enhancement of efficiency, effectiveness, and job, but civil servants have been working properly in their jobs. As human beings, civil servants have certain weaknesses. There used to surface issues related to corruption, transparency, disloyalty to job, and so on. But I don't think there is any justification in looking at civil service as an evil service. If individuals think this way, the civil service will be ruined.

Recently you have decided something on the secretaries system?

It seems that you are pointing to two secretary system. Earlier, it was introduced without any proper study. At the implementation stage, two secretary system created a number of problems. Basically, we have seen a number of problems. When they created a position for secretary without clearly designating corresponding role, conflict of role as well as conflict of goal appeared. This way the position of secretary became defunct as well as weak. Due to this, the secretary was unable to play the leadership role. This is the reason the government has decided to remove the dual secretary system in the bureaucracy.

How many secretaries are there?

Out of 80000 civil servants, there are 64 secretaries right now.

You represent the younger generation as a secretary. How do you balance the seniority versus competitiveness aspects in bureaucracy?

In the promotion of a civil servant, seniority should be a criterion along with competitiveness. Seniority is also something important as a person who is promoted on the basis of seniority is experienced and rich in his own job. A bureaucrat needs to have knowledge, experience and expertise.

How many systems of promotion are there now?

In our promotional systems, there are three or four ladders. Firstly, the later entry point under which a bureaucrat is promoted in the shortest period of time is through open competition. I was promoted to joint secretary through this ladder. Along with internal competition, seniority, the recent one is under the clause 24 (d) of Nepal Civil Service Act. Another provision is one layer promotion at the time of retirement. One can use different ladders for

promotion according to the capability of a person.

Although the new clause 24 (d) of Nepal Civil Service Act, which was added in the 2nd amendment, guarantees the promotion for those who complete 15 years' tenure, this is reportedly creating the problems in civil service as a whole lot of people are promoted to senior posts. How do you look at this?

Many civil servants, who were not promoted to higher positions for a long period, are now promoted to upper position under the clause 24 (d) of Civil Service Act. They are working in

the same position despite promotion. This situation is creating a lot of problems in civil service. The clause introduced to settle the problems has generated other problems. There are more than 15,000 civil servants who are promoted under this provision. If this continues, it will destroy our civil service.

Will you see the change in the present situation?

I am very happy that there is a realization among all of us about this grave situation. Along with promotion, there come four things. A person who is promoted gets new position with a new name. He or she will get a higher pay scale. However, they remain in same position. There is a wide psychological gap between the civil servants who are promoted under clause 24 (d) and promoted through other regular process. In real sense, the employees who are promoted under 24 (d) are yet to feel that they are promoted.

Since the promulgation of the first Civil Service Act in 1957 and Civil Service Regulations 1965 and current civil service act and civil service regulations, almost all amendments are taking place in the clause related to promotion. Why is it so?

I agree with you that such amendment should not have been made on the clause related to promotion. If you see the last 50 years' history, during Panchayat period of 29 years, the clause related to promotion was amendment 34 times. Even after the restoration of democracy, the target is again the clause related to promotion. No one can deny the fact that there is



something wrong before making several of those amendments.

If that is so, why you are proposing amendment to the clause related to promotion again?

This is not our wish but a compulsion. There is no way other than to amend the clause to adjust and rehabilitate the persons who are promoted under the clause 24 (d). Otherwise, it will create a lot of problems in future. We are also proposing new amendment keeping in mind as to how to strengthen hiring and firing system where the right person is appointed and the person who does wrong is penalized. We want to make the system work.

At a time when Nepal's development partners have been stressing the need to have efficient, capable and transparent civil service, how do you see they have played their role in supporting civil service?

You cannot improve the situation in civil service just by accusing the civil servants. Of course, Nepal's donor partners have been providing some support to civil service in the areas of training. Frankly speaking, we are unable to use it systematically and on a timely basis. There are lapses in government's part as well as on part of development partners. One thing is certain that you need to have an efficient, capable and transparent civil service to effectively carry out development works. One must realize this. There is the need to impart program and plan specific training.

There are lapses in government's part as well as on part of development partners. One thing is certain that you need to have an efficient, capable and transparent civil service to effectively carry out development works.

SPECIAL REPORT ON CIVIL SERVICE DAY

Semblance Of Stability

For 54 years since institutionalization, the Nepalese civil service, like politics, has remained in transition all the time. The Civil Service Day celebrations at the backdrop of a defunct political mechanism are a time to brood over its ups and downs. Civil service is under severe criticism. Its performance may have been below par but the situation would have been worse if it was totally non-functional

By KESHAB POUDEL

“Civil service is not supporting us,” said Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal a few months back in an interaction with the senior government officials at his office. “I am not satisfied with the performance of bureaucracy.”

While pointing out the need to take a drastic step to restructure the bureaucracy, UCPN-Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda used this refrain: “There is rampant corruption in the Nepalese bureaucracy and it is not functioning as per the expectations of a New Nepal. We want independent and impartial bureaucracy which can serve the interests of Nepal and the Nepalese people.”

Deputy Prime Minister Bijaya Kumar Gachchhadar’s take on bureaucracy was that it was ‘haunted by the ghosts of the past’ and needed to ‘change its traditional mindset.’

He advised taking necessary steps if it required restructuring and reforms.

These leaders are not the only ones holding such views of the civil service. Other politicians, civil society members and common people are also heard making critical comments on the way Nepali bureaucracy functions below par.

Alright, its service delivery may not be perfect. Nevertheless, it is serving the people at the grassroots by issuing birth and death certificates, and providing recommendation letters and stuff.

Surviving all turmoil, the bureaucracy is visibly present at the policy level as well. Bureaucracy cannot replace political institutions, but in Nepal, it is at least filling some space in a political vacuum created by an unstable situation.

Contradictions

There are many contrasts and contradictions in the service delivery

system. At tax offices, the services are most sophisticated and computerized. Transport management is semi-computerized. Land revenue, district administration and village development committees are in the same mundane manual routine of decades ago. VDC secretaries, for example, still issue handwritten certificates.

Nevertheless, be they automated, semi-automated or non-automated, Nepalese offices are providing services despite their degrees of efficiency and discrimination among the service seekers. **Politicization of Bureaucracy**

Politicization of civil service is not a new phenomenon in Nepal. Like it or not, politics and bureaucracy are twin brothers. What is ideally desired is to limit political intervention in bureaucracy to the tolerable levels.

Political influence always prevails at the time of promotion and transfer of secretaries. Following the establishment of new democracy, the selection of secretaries is happening on the whims of the concerned ministers.

“Despite expectations from the changes, the transition witnessed painful

political turbulence emanating from inter-party conflict and intra-party feuds which have been reflected in the administrative efficiency. Frequent changes in the government and the political instability have had their consequences on the reform endeavors. As a result, the administration could not nurture the democratic administrative culture to overcome the existing governance issues and the task of transforming the civil service from a non-responsive one is, therefore, difficult,” writes Dr. Madhunidhi Tiwari, a renowned administration expert and former member of the Public Service Commission, in an article.

Instead of competence, experience and capability, what counts in civil service so much is political influence.

“This is the tragic part of Nepal’s current bureaucracy, many capable secretaries don’t have work,” a secretary said on condition of anonymity.

Others see political intervention is not new at all. “You cannot separate administration and politics. Frankly speaking, civil service is the helping hand of politicians. You cannot say that



Ministry of General Administration : Challenges ahead

you can make administration hundred percent clean and away from politics. We can only ascertain a tolerable limit to it," said former secretary Chandi Shrestha.

"At present the country has been passing through a transitional phase and the level of political intervention will be more. In many cases, the bureaucracy needs to guide politics because it is a permanent and stable government."

With a strength of 80,000 employees, one of the problems with Nepal's bureaucracy is frequent disturbance in institutional mechanism. Although Nepal Civil Service Act 1956 was scrapped in 1996 without any single amendment, Nepal Civil Service Regulation 1965 was amended 30 times. Interestingly, the only clause amended related to promotion. Similarly Nepal Civil Service Act 1993 was also amended twice but both the times the amendments pertained to promotion.

Even the proposal related to the third amendment, which is still under discussion, is related to promotion. Following the political change of 2006, the act was amended again introducing clause 24 (d) which made any civil servant working 15 years in a position eligible for automatic promotion. Despite their promotion, they were not given the jobs they were promoted for. There are more than 15000 such employees who are going to be chronic problems for Nepal's civil service.

Criticism Against Bureaucracy

When all political machineries are virtually defunct and no improvement in political order is in sight, the civil service, whether one likes or not, is there to provide whatever limited stability. Then why is it under such a severe criticism?

Politicians' criticism is understandable as bureaucracy always creates hurdles when they try to override the rules and regulations and try to impose their own vested interests. In some cases, some officials serve the interests of ministers but they always abide by the decision making process. During the last five decades, Nepal's civil service has seen many ups and downs and crucial phases to the extent of dismantling but it survived all the time.

Nepal's stable and strong bureaucratic system always created hurdle against any forces. Through their own experiences, senior bureaucrats guide politicians on several matters. As bureaucracy always stands for cause and system, nobody likes it.

Two recent examples have shown that Nepal's civil service has certain inbuilt capacities to resist with ministers if there



Civil Servants : Delivery at questions

something goes wrong. The dispute between foreign minister Sujata Koirala and bureaucrats of her ministry over the Machine Readable Passport and Energy Minister Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat's dispute with his senior bureaucrats and other officials at the Ministry of Energy on the appointment of chairman in a project are a testimony of a bureaucracy at work.

Despite strong opposition from deputy prime minister Sujata Koirala, the Foreign Ministry finally signed an agreement for MRP with a French company and minister Dr. Mahat was himself compelled to write the dismissal to one of the appointees after the bureaucrats declined his order to issue dismissal. The disputes are now in Supreme Court.

Nepal's History of Bureaucracy

Nepal's bureaucracy entered the modern era after the revolution of 1951. It started functioning without any basic infrastructure and institutions required to run a modern bureaucracy. It had to wait for five years till 1956 to get recognition by law. Coping with all turmoil and changes, by now, Nepal's civil service, has established itself as an institution.

From the first interim period to the short era of multi-party democracy, then a rigid partyless panchayat to open multiparty democracy and from multiparty to present political system without any values, Nepal's Civil Service has made much progress.

The civil service has seen more time of trouble and instability than stability. Whoever may have come to power, they always tried to shake the very basic foundation in the name of reforms. This happened in all the processes of change:

1950, 1961, 1990, and 2006.

The Nepal Civil Service Act, passed in 1956, classified all civil employees of the government into two categories: gazetted service and non-gazetted service. Gazetted services included all services prescribed by the government by notification in the Nepal Raj Patra, the government gazette.

The bureaucracy is now categorized under several services, education, judicial, health, agricultural, medicine, account and miscellaneous services.

Reforms after Reforms

Started with good objective, Nepal's administrative reforms ended in shaking civil service all the time. Several decisions were made in the name of reforms to make it efficient and competent. In these entire shakeups, what civil service lost was discipline, memory and sense of certainty.

Whenever the reforms were introduced, a couple of thousand employees got retirements. The exit of a large number of employees not only created a sense of instability among civil servants but also caused a loss to state's memory.

"The reform agenda was often introduced without understanding the value, culture and ethos of the country," said former secretary Shreeman Shrestha, who was dismissed in the administrative reforms of 1996 and reinstated by the court later. "What politicians have done is they have shaken the bureaucracy all the time."

With all reforms, jolts and trouble, one of the miracles of Nepal's civil service, which has many lacunas and lapses, is that it survived all major political earthquakes and tsunamis. ■

Organic Apples Can Keep Poverty Away

UMESHLAMA



Jumla is one of the remotest and economically poorest mountain districts in west Nepal. But its climatic conditions are very rich for growing fruits like apple.

Nepal government introduced apples in Jumla in the 1970s. They were brought from the Himachal Pradesh of India.

There are now about 10 varieties being cultivated in the district: they are mostly from the Delicious Group; Red, Royal and Golden Delicious, which make around 70 per cent of the total plantation. Other major varieties found here are Jonathan and Macintosh types, which altogether contribute 10 per cent.

Jumla accounts for the largest apple production (5425 Mt/season) in Nepal followed by western mountain district of Mustang.

The climate of Jumla is considered highly favourable for deciduous fruits such as apple, walnut, pear and plum. Among

China being the biggest import destination for apples in Nepal.

This means that there is a big prospect for earning money if Jumla produces premium quality apples by adopting organic principles to fetch a premium price in the market. Organic apples will ultimately benefit the Jumli farmers and the nation's economy. For this, however, the present apple orchards should be managed better by improving harvesting and post harvesting practices. Improvements also need to be made in terms of appearance and colour of the apples.

Apples produced in Jumla at altitudes in the range of 2200 to 3000 meters are popular in the market. They are considered excellent for their juiciness and crunchiness, compared to currently available Chinese and Indian apples. Further, a little amount of acidic content along with its sweetness is considered an advantage among certain target consumers.

The main apple season at the retail level, in terms of quantity sold, is between the months of September to December. Jumla apples are available for limited number of months whereas apples from China and India are available throughout the year.

In 2008, Jumla was declared as an organic district by the government of Nepal. Further the apple farms of the district are certified by Organic Certification Nepal (OCN), a pioneering certifying body in the country and a member of an international network; the Certification Alliance. The market promotion of Jumla organic apples have been handled by an eco social private enterprise, Organic World and Fair



these fruits, apple is the most important crop in terms of area coverage, production and household economy in the district. In 2007/08 apple was cultivated in around 548 hectares and the total production was estimated at 5,425 metric tonnes.

Thanks to urbanisation and income growth of urban population, apples are in great demand. The commercial demand for apples in Nepal is estimated to be more than 20,000 metric tons, taking stock of possible storage loss and other losses. Presently 90 per cent of the deficit demand for apple in the country is being met from imports, with

Future (OWF).

In view of the significant and potential contribution of apples to the economy of Jumla, the First Five Year Plan introduced a slogan "Employment through Apple and Tourism." This still applies.

Projected as a potential high value product, apples can provide the much needed income-generating avenue for reducing poverty in pursuit of improving the living conditions of the poor people in this remote district.

The author of this article is the chairman of Organic World and Fair Future (OWF) Pvt Ltd and can be reached at ; organicworld@ntc.net.np

AGNI AIR CRASH

Another Probe

The five-member probe commission constituted to look into Agni Air plane crash seems to be just as another ritual

By A CORRESPONDENT

Less than 24 hours after the fatal air crash of Agni Air's Dornier Aircraft, the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation constituted an inquiry commission on it.

Unlike in the past, the ministry included no government attorney in the commission.

The five-member probe committee was formed under the coordination of aviation expert Kumar Prasad Upadhyaya. The probe panel includes Suresh Acharya, Rajan Pokharel, Sarada Bhakta Rajbhandari and Rajendra Man Shakya as the members. The committee has been directed to submit its report within 65 days.

*Any inquiry commission like this



Crashed Site : Deep hole Photo: NA

needs to have the presence of lawyers whose basic duty is to conduct the systematic investigation on such matters," said a senior government official at the Ministry of Law.

Agni Air's Dornier Do 228-101 9N-AHE crashed after the crew decided to return and to divert to Simara Airport

(VNSI) due to poor weather conditions in Kathmandu. The plane was returning from Lukla. Although the cause of the crash is in the process of investigation, news reports indicate that the airplane suffered a generator failure and ATC contact was lost around 7:30 am LT on August 24.

The crash site is located at a hillside near Bastipur (Shikharpur VDC, Narayani Zone of Makwanpur District), about 18nm south-south-west of Kathmandu and at an altitude of 9,000 ft. The German made plane took its flight in 1984. The plane was in approaching phase at the time of crash.

The first air crash in Nepal took place on 7 May 1946 of a Douglas C-47A20 DK Dakota C.3 RAF in Simara Airport and there was no casualty. According to the data base of Air Safety Asia, there are 39 airplane crashes recorded for Nepal.

All of the 14 people traveling on a small Agni Air jet heading for Lukla, a popular trekking spot in eastern Nepal for Mt Everest, were killed on Tuesday when the plane crashed in bad weather near the capital. On board were a British man, a Japanese traveler and 4 Americans, as well as 8 Nepalis - 3 of which were crew. ■

ECONOMIC REFORM

Reform for Improvement

Former finance minister of Poland and professor of economics Grzegorz W. Kolodko holds the view that institutionalization is the key to reform

By A CORRESPONDENT

"Results of economic and political reforms depend on how strong institutional mechanisms the country has. The reform is all about the institutional capabilities. Without institutional back up, the reform is impossible. One must understand the institutional capability of a particular country before deciding on reform," said former Polish deputy prime minister of finance professor Grzegorz W. Kolodko.

Organized by the World Bank in collaboration with the Public Administration Association of Nepal, Polish professor Kolodko highlighted the process of economic and political reforms in a talk program on systematic transformation in East Central Europe: Lessons for Developing Countries.

"I found one major similarity between Nepal and England when I was walking in the street. Like on the roads of England, the cars are moving on the left and there was a presence of traffic as well as the road signs and signals. The reality in Nepal is that no one is following the traffic rules while in driving and people are crossing the road from here and there. Finally, traffic police, who is supposed to regulate the road, too is watching all these helplessly. This kind of a situation is impossible in England where one is subject to penalty in case of such acts," said professor Kolodko.

According to him, there is the need of institutional support to any reform and change. Like on the roads of Kathmandu, where the institution of traffic is too weak,

the situation of traffic is not going to improve any time soon. This also applies to political and economic reforms as well.

"Privatization and liberalization are good in the country where institutional set ups are strong. Otherwise, these reforms will be counter productive," said professor Kolodko. "Despite several pressures from all fronts, we have decided not to go for amendment of Polish

Constitution which was formulated during the power sharing with communists. We don't want to open Pandora's Box in the name of amendment," said professor Kolodko.

Introducing the former Polish Minister, Ms. Susan Goldmark, country director of the World Bank-Nepal, said Professor Grzegorz Kolodko is a person with vast experience. Similarly, general secretary of PAAN Krishna Gyawali highlighted the importance of talks by such a noted person.

President of PAAN Vidyadhar Mallik highlighted Nepal's painful process of economic and political reforms under which, he said, Nepal is heading towards devastation. ■



MIREST-NEPAL

Needed Books

MIREST-Nepal launches a resource book on constitution making

By A COORESSPONDENT

Despite the fact that the constitution making process is virtually stalled due to differences among major political parties, a civil society organization, Media Initiative for Rights, Equity and Social Transformation (MIREST Nepal), is making efforts to support the process.

MIREST-Nepal organized several programs on constitution making and finally launched a resource book to help in the process. The book includes articles by experts.

Constituent Assembly Chairman Subash Chandra Nembang released the book titled "Political Accountability: Resource Book on Constitution Making Processes" published by MIREST Nepal recently.

Chairman Nembang also released another book "Will of the People" published by MIREST Nepal as a public submission to the Constituent Assembly on the same occasion. It has already submitted to the CA thematic committees, 10 public submissions in

book format prior to this.

"The party leaders, who had joined hands to fight regression, are not in the same line anymore. I do not understand why," Nembang said, addressing the book launching programme attended by invitees from diverse groups of Nepali society.

Nembang, however, said there was no alternative to unity among the parties for the sake of peace and new constitution. He elaborated the history of how the unending process of prime minister's election, nowhere else exercised, had begun in Nepal during the succession of late Girija Prasad Koirala as prime minister.

He reiterated that, MIREST Nepal's work will definitely help in galvanizing more efforts in the historic constitution making process in the extended period of the CA. He added that the CA failed to clarify before the people that its functions were not interrupted even when the parliament was disrupted for almost five months earlier. MIREST Nepal has tried clarify the situation in the book.

Addressing the function, CA delegate Pari Thapa said there were conflicts of approach in the constitution-drafting procedures and principles.

Likewise, commenting on the newly released book, CA delegate Khim Lal Devkota emphasized that the book included details of constitution making process held inside the CA as well as outside at public.

Former Country Representative of UNFPA to Sri Lanka and peace expert Dr. Som Pudasaini stressed the need to address issues, including transitional justice, the root cause of conflict and the concerns of victims before finalizing the new constitution.

Similarly, Dr. Bipin Adhikari, a constitution expert, opined that the book released by MIREST-Nepal will play a vital role in providing some of the important information on constitution making process and efforts by Constituent Assembly over the past two years.

While addressing the function from the chair, Suresh Acharya, President of MIREST Nepal, shared his views that such a book on constitution making was the need of the hour not only to scrutinize the works of the CA but also for referral use in the future. He thanked the people who directly and indirectly helped in its publication in its current form. He also called upon the political forces and civil society to put all their efforts to end the deadlock in the prime ministerial election to re-embark upon constitution writing and peace building efforts.

Similarly, while commenting on "Will of the People" released by MIREST Nepal on the issues of women to be addressed in the upcoming constitution, CA delegate and president of Women Caucus in the CA Usha Kala Rai stressed that it was now a high time to include some of the important clauses mentioned in the "Will of the People".

CA delegate Dina Upadaha highlighted the national reach of MIREST Nepal as broadest and deepest in constitution making through communication outreach programmes. Journalist Babita Basnet, president of Sancharika Samuha, highlighted the importance of the book and its relevance in the context of constitution drafting process.



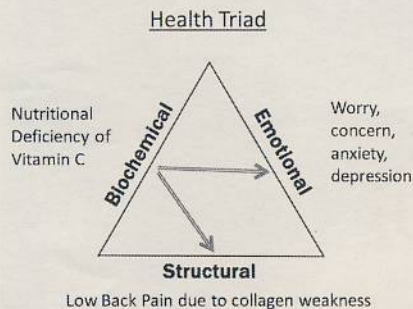
Long Term Relief From Your Aches And Aains With Osteopathy & Applied Kinesiology

DAVID WELLS

There are so many treatment methods available these days it's difficult to know which one to choose. Many of the treatments available however, address only symptoms of pain or ill health instead of root causes; thus symptoms often recur sometime after treatment. For lasting results from treatment, an understanding of the cause through accurate diagnosis is critical.

One of the oldest systems of medicine in the world, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), has been practiced for over 2000yrs. The fundamental principle of TCM is balance in all things. In my approach to medicine; Osteopathy & Applied Kinesiology (AK), this idea of balance is more easily understood by using what is termed the 'Health Triad'.

The three sides of the triangle



represent Bio-Chemical, Structural and Emotional aspects of our health. In every illness or pain we experience, there is an element of all three sides of the triangle. The percentage of each aspect varies from one illness to another, but always all three are involved. Each has an influence on the other two, and is influenced by the other two. To elaborate a little, a nutritional deficiency (bio-chemical) may cause poor ligament tissue quality, resulting in a low back ache (structural), which in turn makes you a little worried or even depressed (emotional) because it's been there for 6 months and won't go away.

So what is the diagnosis in this case; depression, muscle strain, mal-nourishment? In fact the diagnosis is all of these things, and more. Consulting your doctor with vague symptoms such as back ache or worry, is all too often met

with a medical name for your condition and a prescription for pain killers or referral for counseling. Neither of which is likely to solve the problem long term.

Humans have been on the earth in their present form for approximately 200,000 years. Only very recently however, has there been access to modern pharmaceutical medicines. We may conclude from this fact that if we have a healthy diet, we do not need drugs at all. There is much in nature that we do not understand, but what we do know, because we are here, is that nature works exceptionally well, and we cannot do any better than to allow it to function properly. Physicians should therefore strive to restore 'normal' function, in line with our evolution, rather than providing medicines that interfere with it.

Allopathic medicine tends to think of illness in terms of disease processes. Patients love to come away from the doctor with a name for their condition, because mentally it gives them something to hold on to. Sadly, that does very little towards changing the condition. A hacking cough and chest pain, and a diagnosis of bronchitis is not actually very helpful. It's merely another word for the same thing. There are many reasons why we suffer from bronchitis, knowing the reason is key to resolving the condition. Prescribing anti-inflammatory drugs or anti-biotics is only beneficial if a clear diagnosis of bacterial infection has been made, but of course, often it is not made. Time allowed for consultation, plus financial constraints often dictate diagnosis and treatment without clinical tests.

But a diagnosis is not merely naming a set of symptoms and signs with a word that sounds medical, such as rhinitis (runny nose), tendonitis (tendon inflammation) or cephalgia (headache). Diagnosis is identifying an underlying cause.

With Osteopathy and AK, this approach is turned on its head. Rather than naming conditions, we identify where normal function is impaired and work to restore it. In treating the cause, we restore balance and normal bodily

function and the bronchitis goes away naturally.

In 1948 the world health organization defined health in these terms:

'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'

Einstein famously noted, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted". A different approach to diagnosis and treatment, unconstrained by the desire to scientifically prove everything, often highlights problematic areas that can be improved by restoring normal function. If you experience pain, there must be a reason for it. Very often the reasons are far removed from the actual site of pain. They are frequently so obscure that the non-medically trained would not even consider the connections, and often the causes are not gross enough to be measured with standard medical equipment.

The AK diagnostic process looks at many factors that negatively influence our health, such as; infection, nutritional deficiencies, allergies, food intolerances and environmental toxicities. Osteopathy provides a highly specific physical treatment to deal with the structure. Emotional release techniques may be used also, thus allowing the practitioner to deal with all three sides of the Health Triad, for long lasting improvements. Treating only one side of the triad would be a symptom focused approach.

All aspects of a person's lifestyle provide important clues to the causes of pain. With Osteopathy & AK we take time to examine a patient until the cause of pain is found. Only then is treatment given or recommendations made to correct it. Where medication is recommended, everything is tested against the individual for effectiveness and tolerance, thus eliminating the administration of remedies that don't work. This is of course a huge benefit in places where drugs are sometimes in short supply.

The combination of Osteopathy & AK regularly produces good results when

other methods have not worked well. This is simply because we know nature works, and if we work hard to restore it, the outcome can only be better health.

Osteopathy is a physical manipulative discipline which treats mainly muscular aches and pains as well as many common health complaints. The basic principle understands that 'structure governs function'. i.e. normal bodily functions will be compromised if structural stresses are present, which they are in all of us.

When we speak of imbalances, we don't just mean having one leg 1cm longer than the other (a common finding), we are thinking at the cellular level. If we consider the microscopic effects of a leg length discrepancy, and ask how that influences muscle tensions and therefore blood flow, lymphatic (waste) drainage and the conduction of neurological signals, then we can appreciate how all body systems may be negatively affected by them.

Looking at the health triad once again, everything influences everything else. Thus all our health issues may be created by, or worsen with poor posture, poor body use, poor diet and unhappy emotional states. By correcting these structural stresses many health issues can be reversed.

I practice correction is achieved through physical work on specific muscles and soft tissues to encourage the nervous system to release the patterns of imbalance. This process requires a thorough understanding of anatomy and physiology, and a very fine degree of palpation (therapeutic touch). Personally I use AK to compliment Osteopathy, because it looks at the Osteopathic principle the other way around; 'Function governs Structure'. Organ dysfunctions create changes in our postures, resulting in imbalance.

AK is a complex physical diagnostic system that helps identify an individual's health challenges. It can tell us not only which organs are in trouble, but also helps us find out why, and therefore guides the treatment plan.

Using these methods, an individual's health challenges may be assessed rapidly and yet deeply, providing information about the causes of pain, and allowing recommendations for long term improvements.

(David Wells, UK trained practitioner runs Osteopathy Clinic, Osteopathy & performs Applied Kinesiology at the KIST Medical College.)

ART

Bagmati On Oil & Water

Senior Artist Hari Prasad Sharma depicted historical and cultural life of Bagmati on his canvas

By A CORRESPONDENT

Were these paintings or pictures hung on the wall of Nepal Art Council Gallery? These unique works of art were narrating the history and culture of

Bagmati.

Painted by artist Hari Prasad Sharma, the paintings on exhibit at Nepal Art Council showed a Bagmati which was replete with history and culture. Artist Sharma used water and oil medium to narrate his tale of history and culture of Kathmandu.

Divided under three sections history, lifestyle and culture, the paintings were testimony of the lifestyle of the Newar community as well as their culture and

architecture. Organized by Arohan Gurukul and Nepal Heritage Association, there were 58 paintings displayed at the exhibition titled Kathmandu valley down the Ages.

Although artist Sharma is a Brahmin, he was born in a Newar locality where he grew up and lived.

'I am basically a Brahmin by caste but I grew up under the influence of Newari culture, festivals, values and attire,' said artist Sharma, who was born in Gophal tole in Lagan.

Portraying different traditions and rituals, he captured the scenes and various elements appeared in the background. His paintings started from the era of Mandev to golden era of Nepalese history or period of Amsuverma and the other phases. His

paintings of Prithivi Narayan Shaha and Arniko receiving Tika were master works.

One needs to understand the history and culture to know about the country. As Nepal is in a political transition and there is apathy as well as controversy over the various phases of history, artist Sharma wanted to show how much heroes and builders of the history mattered and how culture and feasts united the people.

In the history sections, there were



paintings and portrait of Licchavi Kings, Malla Kings and Shahs. The picture related to Prithivi Narayan Shah's attack on Kathmandu and paintings of Kot massacre exhibited the ups and downs of Nepal's history. Along with depicting the life of old kings, the paintings also showed the architectural beauty of the valley as well as cultural activities.

The cultural sections of the exhibitions were other important parts. He tried to portray all elements involved in the art and culture. At a time when the tradition to study history and culture is on the declining trend, artist Sharma's exhibition gave the message that the theme can be popularized. His painting exhibition lasted for 22 days but the interests of people continued to rise.

DISAPPEARANCE

Unknown Pain

The peace agreement of four years ago has yet to bring a sigh of relief for the families of the disappeared

By A CORRESPONDENT

Family members have been searching for Upendra Guragain, a resident of Parbat district, for the last five years. Where he is remains unknown. He was kidnapped by Maoists at midnight in November 2006.

Like Guragain, hundreds of others disappeared and their whereabouts are unknown. Some disappeared from the government's custody while others disappeared from the Maoists'.

On the International Day of the Disappeared (30 August), the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR-Nepal), urged the Government of Nepal to swiftly implement the landmark Supreme Court's decision of 1 June 2007 which has remained pending for more than three

years. In June 2007, the Supreme Court ordered the Government to enact a law which would criminalize enforced disappearances in line with the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance; establish a high level commission of inquiry on disappearances in compliance with the international criteria on such commissions of inquiry; require investigations and prosecutions of persons responsible for disappearances; and provide for adequate compensation and relief to the victims and their families.

"This Day reminds me those who, year after year, at home, wait to hear about the fate of their loved ones and continue to suffer until this relief comes," said

Anthony Cardon, Officer-In-Charge of OHCHR-Nepal. "Their rights as well as those of the disappeared are fully guaranteed by international human rights law and the respect and protection of these rights should be a priority in any society."

Since 2005, the UN Human Rights Office in Nepal has closely witnessed the painful anguish and anger of conflict victims as well as the consequences for the society of the failure to set up transitional justice mechanisms. The Office continues to believe that clarifying the fate of the victims of enforced disappearances and other human rights and humanitarian law violations lie at the heart of the peace process.

Marking the International Day of the Disappeared, National Human Rights Commission Chairperson Kedarnath Upadhyay, through a press statement, urged the concerned parties of the past conflict to make the status of the disappeared public as soon as possible and help bring the culprits into the framework of justice.

Even so, there is little hope that the families of the disappeared may find out the truth about their beloved people.

SOUTH ASIAN MEET

Sexploitation Online

The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children [CSEC] online is a phenomenon which is occurring in all countries around the World and is rapidly growing in the South Asian countries.

Over 40 participants from Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India representing civil society organizations, international agencies, the private sector and members of ministries of the government of Nepal have been meeting in Kathmandu to discuss the issue of exploitation of children online.

ECPAT International, a global child rights agency focused on combating the sexual exploitation of children, in association with the office of the controller of certification, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Nepal and with the support of ECPAT members groups: Maiti Nepal and Child



Maiti Nepal Volunteers : Checking trafficking

Workers in Nepal Concerned Center [CWIN] had organized a 2 day regional technical forum in Kathmandu from 23-24th of August, to strengthen knowledge of the issues and plan collaborative efforts and programmatic intervention of the

member agencies and partners to ensure a multi-stakeholder approach to combat these online sexual crimes against children.

Ms. Carmen Madrian, the executive director of ECPAT international reminded

the forum participants that the online world "is a labyrinth through which to navigate and the compass, guidance and supports that young people receive to guide them on this journey are weak and inconsistent."

She indicated that "there is no one bullet solution to this problem and a range of different types of interventions by all

concerned stake holders, such as the government, NGO's and the private sector are needed. We all need to work together within a multi-stakeholder framework of protection for children."

By Nitish Bhattarai

Good Health Habits



BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD

The question below is commonly asked in medical examinations for qualified doctors. So, perhaps it is unfair that I am bringing this topic up in a general, lay journal. But this is a pertinent health matter for the readers of the New Spotlight. The question is: Which one preventive intervention leads to the largest average increase in life expectancy in a target population:

- a) A regular exercise programme?
- b) Quitting smoking?
- c) Mammogram (breast cancer prevention screening in women)?
- d) Pap smear (cervical cancer prevention screening in women)?
- e) Prostate gland cancer

quitting smoking and exercising. Does this mean that c, d, and e options are not worth pursuing? Let me explain.

Predicted increases in life expectancy are average numbers that apply to populations and not individuals. For example, mammograms may increase life expectancy overall by only 2 to 3 months, but for the individual at risk of breast cancer (patients with a family history of breast cancer, smoking etc), the screening may add many years by detecting the disease earlier. This same pattern holds true for cervical cancer and prostate cancer in the question above.

Importantly many of us do not know

and b above, one could argue, well, big deal, by exercising or quitting smoking I will add only a few years to my life! Is it worth the trouble of exercising? That line of thought is one way of looking at it. But a more useful angle would be that based on studies of epidemiological illnesses in South Asia, South Asians are probably more prone to cardiovascular illnesses than the western population. In fact (this may come as a surprise to many) some studies have shown that South Asians (rich or poor), are three times more prone to cardiovascular illnesses (heart attacks, for example) than their western counterparts! So indeed quitting smoking and exercising could be even more useful measures to take for us as these are important protective mechanisms for prevention of cardiovascular illnesses in this vulnerable population.

In a country like Nepal where day to day existence is so difficult for so many people, it may be hard to understand the concept of "wellness" which the above medical question evokes. But this idea of wellness is in our interests because prevention is better than cure. And crucially cure is more expensive, and most of us have absolutely no health insurance whatsoever; and certainly most Nepalis don't have the kind of money that is required for the optimal treatment of cardiovascular illnesses or malignancies. Hence not only quitting smoking and exercise, but tests like breast and cervical cancer screening may help a great deal in promoting wellness and good health. ■

In a country like Nepal where day to day existence is so difficult for so many people, it may be hard to understand the concept of "wellness" which the above medical question evokes. But this idea of wellness is in our interests because prevention is better than cure. And crucially cure is more expensive, and most of us have absolutely no health insurance whatsoever; and certainly most Nepalis don't have the kind of money that is required for the optimal treatment of cardiovascular illnesses or malignancies.

screening for men?

The answer is b) quitting smoking. For a targeted population, more than all the other choices listed above, quitting smoking will add 3 to 5 years. A regular exercise programme will add 1 to 2 years and the rest of the others will each add a couple of months. This question illustrates the importance of

if we are at risk for common diseases because this may not be obvious like a family history. So, in carrying out recommended screening tests like the ones in the question above, it is important to assume that we are average Joes (Ram Bahadurs or Sita Maharanis if you wish) who may be at risk.

However even regarding options a


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