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Commentary:
Yubaraj Ghimire

Special Report : Civil Service

Poverty Reduction: Japan, ADB Team Up



Face to face:
Shyam Prasad Mainali

SPOTLIGHT

Sept. 09-29, 2011

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FORTNIGHTLY



MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Gird Loins

PM Bhattarai how comfortable?



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From The Editor

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us ... in short, the period was so far like the present period....for good or for evil..."

What Charles Dickens wrote in his famous novel *The Tale of Two Cities* rings true for today's Nepal. In a cycle of prolonged political instability and despair, there are signs of hope. Despite political instability and pervasive gloom surrounding it, Nepal has made impressive progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. According to a recent MDG report, Nepal is likely to actually achieve some of these goals by 2015. This is definitely a sign of hope for the country. From the health sector to education, drinking water supply and roads, there are positive aspects we can count on as progress towards the ultimate: the poverty reduction. At a time when every Ram, Shyam, Sita and Gita are expressing anger and frustration over the pointless political circus of the last three plus years, the recently released Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment for Nepal 2010 report challenges the 'nothing happens here' notion. However, like all his three predecessors, new prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has also failed to inject a sense of hope for a more stable politics in the minds of the people. Nepal has experimented with a variety of dispensations. All these systems and governments engaged in the rhetoric to bring good results for the nation and the people until the hard reality dawned on them that they could actually do nothing. If all previous experiments failed, how can Dr. Bhattarai be the exception? So, instead of writing about the known political game of despair, we decided to focus on hope, giving Nepal's achievements a major coverage for this issue.

Keshab Poudel

Keshab Poudel
Editor

NEW SPOTLIGHT FORTNIGHTLY

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Presentation on "Humanitarian Operation – Factual Analysis"

The humanitarian Operation – Factual Analysis Report published by the Government of Sri Lanka in order to address various allegations levelled against the Government and the Armed Forces of Sri Lanka the way in which the humanitarian operation carried out during the last stage of fighting terrorism in the North of Sri Lanka. According to press release of Embassy of Sri Lanka, this report is responding to those unsubstantiated war crime allegations directed at Sri Lanka mentioned in the controversial "Dharusman Report" and "Sri Lanka's killing fields".

The Dharushman Report is a horrendous distortion of the truth. In terms of the procedural issues concerning the status and legitimacy of the Panel appointment by the UN Secretary General as well as the manner in which the Panel has gathered information and presented them will

British Army Announces Redundancies

As a part of British defence restructuring and following a thorough review, the British Army announced today the measures necessary to reduce its strength by 7000 to 93000 by 2015. This will include over 5000 redundancies from across the whole Army.

In the first of four tranches, some 140 Gurkhas have been told today that they have been selected for redundancy. The Brigade of Gurkhas has grown in size since terms and conditions were amended in 2007 to allow soldiers to serve for a longer period. According to press release of British Embassy, this adjustment to its strength has therefore been anticipated for some time. All redundees will be given 12 months notice and a period of resettlement into civilian life. Even though older soldiers are being made redundant, the Brigade continues to recruit new soldiers in Nepal.

India, China, U.S, France Congratulate PM Bhattarai

India pledges support: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh congratulated Baburam Bhattarai on his election to the top post in Nepal, saying he looked forward to working with him to "strengthen and deepen" the ties between the two countries.

Stating that India is committed to



Sri Lanka Ambassador Thosapala Hewage presenting report

undermine the process of post war reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The report is biased towards LTTE. Most of the information in the report were either collected from Tamil Net (LTTE media web site) or from some of the International Communities who supported LTTE cause. All sources of information on the allegations are kept confidential and this lack of transparency made it difficult for the government to respond to some of the allegations.

providing all assistance in building a more stable and democratic Nepal, which will add to the security and prosperity of the region, Singh, in his letter to the newly-elected Nepalese Prime Minister, wished him all success in consolidating the democratic gains made by his country.

"India attaches the highest priority to its relations with Nepal. Our relations are special and characterized by intense people-to-people interactions and an open border," Singh said, according to an External Affairs Ministry release.

China for the long run: Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao congratulated Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai on taking office.

"China and Nepal are friendly neighbors linked by mountains and waters and the friendship between the two peoples has a long history," Wen said in a congratulatory message.

Bilateral relations have witnessed healthy development since the two countries established formal ties more than half a century ago, serving as an excellent example of how the two countries of different size could treat each other as equals, coexist peacefully and carry out mutually beneficial cooperation, said Wen.

US hopes vigorous work: The Embassy of the United States of America also congratulated Dr. Bhattarai on his

election as Prime Minister of Nepal.

"We are hopeful that he and his team will vigorously pursue the priority goals he has spoken of: the completion of the peace process and the drafting of Nepal's new constitution. We look forward to working with the new government, particularly on the serious economic and developmental challenges facing Nepal in an effort to create an environment of growth and achievement from which all Nepalis can benefit."

France reiterates support: Similarly, France welcomed the election of Dr. Bhattarai as Prime Minister of Nepal.

"France, through its action within the UN and the European Union stands with the Republic of Nepal," it said reiterated its strong support to this process.

Keys handover hailed: Meanwhile, foreign friends welcomed the Maoist decision to hand over the keys to arms containers to the monitoring teams of the Special Committee. "We welcome the decision by the Maoist party to hand over the keys to the arms containers to the Special Committee. This is a promising step and we hope it signals the commitment of the UCPN-M to continue moving forward to complete the peace process.

Thai Martial, Cultural Performances Held

The Royal Thai Embassy in cooperation with the Thai Airways International Public Co., Ltd. organized Thai Contemporary Martial Arts and Cultural Performances by Sbn-Nga Cultural Troupe at Nepal Academy Hall, Kathmandu on Saturday, 3 September, 2011. The Program was supported by Nepal-Thailand Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NTCCI), Nepal-Thailand Trade Cooperation (NTTC) and Muay Thai Association, Nepal.

"Sbn-Nga" is a widely acclaimed cultural troupe from Chiang Mai province in the north of Thailand which is well known for colorful presentation of contemporary Thai culture.

According to a press release, the troupe has frequently performed at various international festivals as well as special organized tours in more than 30 countries around the world with three international best performance awards from Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. ■

POVERTY REDUCTION: Japan, ADB Team Up

Even as Japan is struggling economically in the aftermath of an unprecedented earthquake and Tsunami, it has decided to fund three projects with grants totaling \$ 7.7 million from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR).

"It is easily supposed that a huge amount of government budget will be inevitably required for the reconstruction and recovery of the country as a whole, and the affected area in particular. In spite of this, Japan is firmly determined to continue providing all possible assistance for the welfare of the people of Nepal, through poverty reduction, and the implementation of the already committed projects," said ambassador of Japan to Nepal, Tatsuo MIZUNO.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Japan have teamed up with the government of Nepal to help reduce child malnutrition, develop new livelihood opportunities for the poor, and promote greater access to clean energy for—poor rural women.

"ADB is very pleased to work with the Government of Nepal and Japan on these projects which are targeted at benefiting the most vulnerable and often excluded groups in Nepali society – women, children and the extreme poor," said Barry J. Hitchcock, ADB's Country Director for Nepal, during the launch ceremony.

The government of Japan, through JFPR, has been supporting high-impact projects to reduce poverty in developing countries in Asia and the Pacific.

The Reducing Child Malnutrition Through Social Protection project will help Nepal improve planning and delivery of its social protection programs. Its goal is to promote more efficiency in the delivery of the recently introduced child grant, which is intended to contribute to reduce high level of child malnutrition.

Similarly, Support for Targeted and Sustainable Development Program for Highly Marginalized Groups project will provide assistance to develop new livelihood opportunities and improve income in some of Nepal's poorest and most disadvantaged communities.

Likewise, Improving Gender-Inclusive Access to Clean and Renewable Energy in Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka project will promote greater access to clean energy for the poor rural women in South Asia.

"We are all aware that poverty is multi faced and deep rooted and needs our attention. These projects will provide direct relief to the poorest and most vulnerable society," said Krishna Hari Baskota, Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

"This synergy will help people's living condition and I hope JFPR projects will reach out to highly marginalized groups," he added.

The government of Nepal has already received 10 JFPR projects for the agriculture, governance, and social sectors worth more than \$17.05 million from 2001 to August 2011.

Meanwhile, Government of Japan has recently completed upgrading the Kathmandu- Bhaktapur road from previous two lanes to four lanes, under Japan's Grant Aid (ODA). Japan is also conducting the construction of Sindhuli road that covers 160 KM and supporting the development of Lumbini.

-By DEBESH ADHIKARI

Telecom To Introduce Pin-less Recharge Cards

Nepal telecom is preparing to send balance into pre-paid mobiles without recharge cards and pin-numbers. Telecom, through its various distributors, is planning to send balance without pin numbers after various problems surfaced with the recharge cards.

For Global System Mobile (GSM) pre-paid mobile, Telecom will start the pin-less recharge.



Telecom is preparing for pin-less recharge equivalent to notes above NRs.10. Pre-paid mobile users can recharge NRs.10, 20, 25, 50, 100, 500 and 1000. "Customers want to recharge less amount lots of time so this system is appropriate," said Dinesh Dev Panta, deputy manager at Nepal Telecom. "Pin-less recharge will be far more reliable than current recharge cards," he added. (Karobar)

China Agrees To Invest In West Seti

China has agreed to invest in the 750 MW West-Seti Hydropower Project. China has agreed to provide a loan of US \$1.6 billion through Export-Import Bank of China (EXIM Bank).

China has informed Nepal government that half of US \$1.6 billion will be soft loan and half will be commercial loan.

Nepal government has requested to provide the entire amount as soft loan. The payback period for the loan will be around 28 years. (Naya Patrika)

New Criteria To Send Workers To Israel

The government will make new criteria before sending workers to Israel. After Israeli government announced to take Nepali workers on 'care giver' jobs, new criteria will be made to send workers to Israel.

Israel is an attractive destination for Nepali female workers, so new workers will be sent according to new criteria, said Purna Chandra Bhattarai, spokesperson at the Ministry of Labor and Transport Management. "Within a few days, discussions will be held with the concerned departments," he said, "New criteria will be made without repeating mistakes as in the past."

The new criteria are planned so that workers won't have difficulty in Israel. (Karobar)

Labor Ministry Requests Effective MRPs Distribution

The Ministry of Labor and Transport Management has requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ease the distribution of MRPs (Machine Readable Passports). For people who are going to South Korea after passing the language test under the employment permit system (EPS), the Labour Ministry has requested to make the MRP distribution easy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs distributes MRPs one month after the time of submission of application.

Some 15 thousand, 2 hundred and 98 have passed the language test. (Karobar)



Preparations To Oust Army From Ngarajun

Although final preparations to remove the dual security of army and police, which was provided to the previous royal family, was completed, however, the decision was stayed put.

There was an immediate need of nearly NRS 1.5 crore to oust the army which was providing security to the royal family. So, army which was ready to leave Nirmal Niwas, Nagarjun Durbar, will remain there for at least a few more weeks. Only after the



Former King Gyanendra

government provides police NRS 1.25 crore, police will start preparations to provide sole security. The decision was to provide immediate security by army to former king Gyanendra Shah, Queen Komal, former crown prince Paras, former Crown Princess Himani, former princess Prerana Shah, Gyanendra's mother Ratna Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah and later after making police capable for the security, army will hand over the responsibility to the police. According to that decision, the responsibility was going to be handed over to the police. (*Jana Aastha*)

Baburam's 'Core Team'

After being elected prime minister, Baburam Bhattarai has started taking advice to give responsibilities to his core team. He has kept a few leaders after appointment and a few without appointment in his team.

Standing Committee member Top Bahadur Rayamajhi, politburo members Devendra Poudel, Ram Karki, Hisila Yami, Bhim Prakash Sharma, Navaraj Subedi, central committee members Bam Dev Chhetri, Ganga Shrestha, Khaga Raj Bhatta, Dor Prasad Upadhyay, Nirmal Kumar, Kumar Poudel, and Prabhu Shah are the members of Bhattarai's core team.

It's possible that prime minister Bhattarai will appoint

politburo members Poudel and Karki as chief political advisor and foreign affairs advisor respectively. It's yet to be decided on economic and press advisors.

Prachanda Active Till 2 AM

"Baburam is supported by others but stopped by Prachanda." That is what was believed in the Nepali political context. If Baburam was the prime ministerial candidate it was assumed that Congress and CPN UML would support his candidacy, but they went against him and Prachanda, who was supposedly assumed to go against Baburam, worked day and night to support him. Prachanda worked till 2 AM to support his fellow comrade Baburam.



Prachanda

After the resignation by Jhahnath Khanal, Prachanda worked 10 days to form the consensus government under Baburam's leadership. And when it was clear that there will be no consensus government, Maoist central committee meeting decided to make Baburam the party's prime ministerial candidate. Then Prachanda worked hard to make Baburam prime minister even under the majority government. But, when it was clear that CPN-UML would go against Maoist, Prachanda was involved in the decisive meeting on Saturday evening.

After CPN-UML's meeting decided to support Congress candidate Ram Chandra Poudel, Prachanda did not even try to meet UML leaders. Prachanda waited full day for Emaley's decision and made Baburam talk with small parties. Bhattarai met leaders from small parties all day and went to the residence of Prachanda in Nayabazar three times on that day for briefing about the meeting.

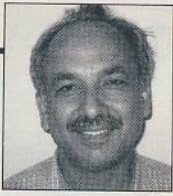
After CPN-UML made the decision that they won't support Baburam, Prachanda started talking with Madhes based political parties and left his home at around 6 P.M for the meeting. He spent his whole Saturday night in various meetings. (*Naya Patrika*)

NEW SPOTLIGHT

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Alliance: Holy Or Unholy?

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

Some leaders of the Nepali Congress have said that the recent alliance between the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (UCPN-M) and the United Democratic Madhesi Front (UMDF), which catapulted Maoist Vice-Chairman Baburam Bhattarai to the highest seat of executive power, was based on an 'unholy' political alliance. But so far, there has been no discussion in the Nepali politics about what makes an alliance holy or unholy. Almost all the leaders suffer from what can be called a partial dementia: forgetting what one said in the past blissfully.

Not long ago, Baburam Bhattarai said the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) needs to disclose its 'gender'. He was being sarcastic and what he meant to convey was that UML lacks guts and characters to take major decisions this way or that way but he said that at the cost of a sexual minority largely boycotted by the society. But today, Bhattarai, in company of his Party Chief Prachanda, keeps visiting the UML leaders as if they are the high priests of Maoists' political pilgrimage.

During the elections to the constituent assembly, Prachanda told the masses time and again that Nepali Congress deserved a big kick on their 'ass'. "They cannot be our allies, they came to us after King Gyanendra kicked them, and had nowhere to go."

Sushil Koirala, the leader of the Party that deserved the 'kick' is another high priest of Nepali politics that Bhattarai and Prachanda keep regularly prostrating before. The frequency of their visits to Koirala and UML leaders has increased after Bhattarai entered into the so-called unholy alliance with the UDMF on the basis of a secret pact on power sharing.

Apparently, the Maoist attempt to rope in Nepali Congress is the first serious attempt to get their support after the Party gave a decisively mortal blow to G P Koirala's ambition to become the first President of Republic Nepal four years ago. Koirala died a dejected man with his ambition unfulfilled. The UCPN-M had clearly ditched him, especially in the context of a 'gentlemen's agreement' that they would support Koirala's candidature for the President's post in lieu of Nepali Congress endorsing the 'pro-republic agenda' which Koirala did in 'good faith' but with his eye and ambition firmly set on Shital Niwas.

Clearly, that was an unholy alliance which was buried with equal unholy by the Maoists. What constitutes holiness in politics? Clearly, supremacy of people's and national interests over individual and partisan interests. It needs to be transparent, pursued in the best interest of the nation and its people, and that who leads should be decided after the agenda in the interest of the nation or decided, again openly and transparently.

But how many times has this criteria been met in our

context. The 12-point agreement was signed, and left for the Maoists to make its interpretation. Making promises and getting concessions from the people, but not implementing them with the desired seriousness is another example of 'unholiness' in Nepali politics.

It was agreed to have the fate of the 'Monarchy decided' by the first meeting of the constituent assembly, but the parliament that King Gyanendra had revived invoking the doctrine of necessity—a condition to end the 2006 April agitation under which King would hand over power to the Political parties—amended the constitution illegally, and the CA's first meeting took that dictate and acted in haste and unconstitutionally. The 'unholiness' of intent behind the 12-point agreement was exposed especially after the mediators and the other actors like the Nepali Congress and the UML accepted Maoist interpretation in totality.



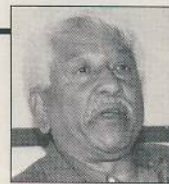
Madhesi Leaders with Maoist Leaders

There are also too many other sides of the 'unholiness' in the manner and content of Nepali Politics. Let's take the example of the 4-point agreement that says that Bhattarai government will withdraw all cases against Maoist leaders and actors during the years of conflict, along with those labeled against Madhesi activists during the Terai agitation. But Prime Minister Bhattarai 'misinterpreted' it saying that the government will simply investigate the circumstances under which such cases were lodged, and will consider withdrawing if they were implicated falsely. Prachanda, who signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with G P Koirala, who was the Prime Minister at the time, later told his combatants in Shaktikhor that they were free to buy arms and prepare to capture state powers without having to follow the spirit and manner as specified in the peace process.

The constituent assembly that was elected with a holy mission—to deliver the first ever constitution prepared by the body elected by the People by May 2010—exists with an 'unholy tag' way beyond its expired date. The House has already consumed 16 months more than its tenure as stipulated in the interim constitution. There are moves afoot to give the Bhattarai government an extended tenure to run the government and hold another election to the CA if necessary. But are the leaders and parties as well as some civil society leaders who are moving in that direction the sole 'architect' or judge to decide what constitutes fair, just, proper, moral and holy in politics?

One side calling another may not absolve any side of being an unholy actor in the current scenario. All the parties in the CA, which came with a promise and failed the people, will be lumped together and branded as 'unholy partners' pursuing their unholy politics while playing a fraudulent game on the national stage. ■

Peace Before Constitution



By ARJUN NARSINGH KC

This government has been formed under the parliamentary process and procedure. Thus, we take this in a usual way. Our party has already made it clear that we will play the role of a constructive opposition. We want consensus on the main agenda but not on particular issues. There must be an agreement on peace process and constitution making.

The process of handing over the keys of Maoist containers is just an initial process. In the past, when Maoist leader Prachanda was the prime minister, he even invited all the foreign dignitaries and declared that Maoist combatants and weapons were no longer with his party. In practice, he continued to play a political role. We want the process of integration in a package. It includes management, rehabilitation, retirement, rank determination and numbers of combatants. As long as Maoists do not agree on this whole process in a package, I don't think the peace process will be completed. We hope that Maoists will complete the present peace process within 45 days.

Our party has already welcomed it. So far as peace process is concerned, it must be done under the agreed agendas of past. From twelve points agreement to comprehensive peace agreement and agreement of armed management and interim constitution, we have signed several agreements regarding the peace process. What is lacking in Maoist leadership is the will power. We firmly believe that the peace process must complete before the promulgation of the new constitution.

We are ready to support the Maoist-led government on its every move to logically end the peace process. We will not take any step that will harm the stability of this government. We wish even Maoists can unite to give stability to the government.

The constitution should be based on basic constitutional principles and there must be democracy in context. It is unacceptable for us if the constitution violates the basic principles of democracy. We cannot compromise on fundamental contents of democracy. As all the parties have accepted the content of interim constitution, we can agree if the new constitution is made following the principles laid down in the interim constitution. We firmly believe that parliamentary form is the best form of government in a heterogenous society like ours. If Maoists accept the basic process of liberalism, we will be flexible on the forms of government. So far as state restructuring is concerned, any restructuring must be based on national unity, national integration and harmony. We want provinces not only on the basis of identity but they must have capabilities. We can declare special administrative region, and special autonomous region for various ethnic groups.

Handing over the keys to the Integration Committee is a positive step. However, it is not alone enough to say that Nepal's peace process is heading towards the process of completion. The key issues like modality for integration, regrouping and numbers are yet to be settled. Comprehensive Peace Agreement has clearly mentioned that Maoist combatants

will be integrated in security agencies as it is clear that Maoist combatants will be integrated in various security agencies including Nepal Police, Nepal Armed Police or any new security agency created by the government.

Nepali Congress has already made its stand clear on the number of combatants to be integrated in the security agencies. Our bottom-line is 5,000. We also have a clear stand that the combatants need to fulfill basic requirements to enter Nepal's security agencies. We cannot accept mass entry without fulfilling any criteria. The mass entry of politically indoctrinated Maoist combatants will affect the neutrality of Nepali Army and other security agencies. Nepali Congress has also its own stand regarding the compensation for those who want to leave the camps. There are several issues needing to be addressed before integration.

The process of integration is one of the major components of the peace process. It is also very tricky. Had Maoist leadership honestly supported the process, it would have been completed a long time back. However, they half heartedly supported it in the past. I don't think they are honestly working this time also. Since the Maoists have already betrayed twice in the past, I am not sure they will honestly follow this time. The example is so-called differences in the party. This is just an orchestrated design of Maoist to fool the people. Kiran Vaidya and Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai have been



High Level Integration Commission Meeting

harping the same political line.

Nepali Congress will always support any move taken by any party to carry the peace process to a logical end. In this context, Nepali Congress will support the move of Dr. Baburam Bhattarai led government in this regard. We will play a role of responsible opposition and our support to the government will be issue based. In the last three years, the constitution writing process and peace process could not move because of the insistence of Maoist party. Nepali Congress even supported the first Maoist government led by Dr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda. Nepali Congress also supported the previous CPN-UML and Maoist government when it took steps to conclude the peace process.

As the Maoists have betrayed several times in the past, I don't think the Maoist-led government will sincerely work to conclude the peace process. The five point agreement signed between Madheshi Front and Maoists is against the spirit of peace process as they agreed to release all the prisoners in criminal cases. Nepali Congress has already expressed its own opinion against the pact. Similarly, Nepali Congress has already opposed the Maoist and Madheshi agreement to form the expert committee to decide the issue of state restructuring. Nepali Congress wants to constitute a state restructuring commission as propounded by the Interim Constitution. Our party firmly believes that only such constitutional commission can settle the issue of state restructuring. We want to see meaningful and sustainable federal structure in Nepal and that is possible only through the constitution of the commission.

(KC is Nepali Congress leader. As told to New Spotlight.)



Keys Handover A Betrayal

By NETRA BIKRAM CHAND BIPLAB

Our party leaders, particularly Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai and party chairman Prachanda, betrayed the contribution made by People's Army by handing over the keys to the Integration Committee. This is unacceptable to us. Our leader Mohan Vaidya Kiran has already issued a statement opposing the decision of Dr. Bhattarai led government to take keys of arms stored in the cantonments. I consider the move of the government humiliated our People's Army who fought ten years' long People's War against Royal Nepalese Army and reactionary forces. Thanks to their contribution, we were able to overthrow the unitary monarchical system and turn Nepal into a federal republic.

We are not against the peace and integration processes. What we want is the integration and peace processes should be based on equal footing or at par with Nepal Army. However, Dr. Bhattarai took the decision to hand over the keys of cantonment to integration committee against the spirit of peace process. The decision of our central committee and standing committee is that there is the need to make an honorable integration. The modality should not be discriminatory. Our party's stand is that the handing over of the keys of arms and ammunition stored in the

cantonment should take place only after an agreement on the number and modality and numbers of cantonment. Our key demand is that the People's Army integration and promulgation of the constitution should be taken side by side.

It is very unfortunate that party chairman Prachanda and prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai agreed to hand over the keys of arms and ammunition stored in containers without even thinking of the process. This is the breach of trust. I think our party leaders sold out the contribution, blood and sacrifice of our People's Army. After handing over the keys of containers, we don't have any instruments to bargain. This is how we see it as the betrayal against People's Army.

I don't understand why our party leaders are so hurried in taking such a major decision. The integration package also includes the democratization of Nepal Army. The party leaders have taken the decision without getting any commitments from Nepal Army. This is also a mistake of the leadership. Prime minister Dr. Bhattarai and party chairman Prachanda should clarify this matter to our party workers. Similarly, the keys of containers were handed over without determining the number of peoples' army and modality for their integration. This is very objectionable.

We have announced our protest programs against the decision to hand over the keys just on the basis of the decision taken by the Special Committee. This is what we considered the humiliation to our People's Army. Other objection regarding the decision is that such a major decision was taken without discussing it in the party's central committee and

standing committee. Our main objection is that the party president and the prime minister should have taken permission from the both the committees before taking this decision.

There is anger among party's cadres over the decision. There are dissensions in the cantonment. One cannot rule out the possibility of rebellion in the cantonment. Our young revolutionary comrades have already expressed their support to the cause raised by our leader Mohan Vaidya Kiran. They are preparing to wage another People's War if necessary. No one has the right to play with the future of our People's Army. If somebody wants to play with it, they will naturally retaliate.

The protest against the decision was spontaneous response of our party workers. We have not issued any statements to do so. As a revolutionary party, it is natural for its party workers to express resentment when their party leaders took decision

against the interest of the party.

Our People's Army sacrificed their lives not to make somebody president and prime minister. Our aim is to transform the society and country and to write the People's Constitution. This is our bottom line. Our party is not the personal property of party president and vice president but it is the party of the people of oppressed, excluded, workers and peasants.



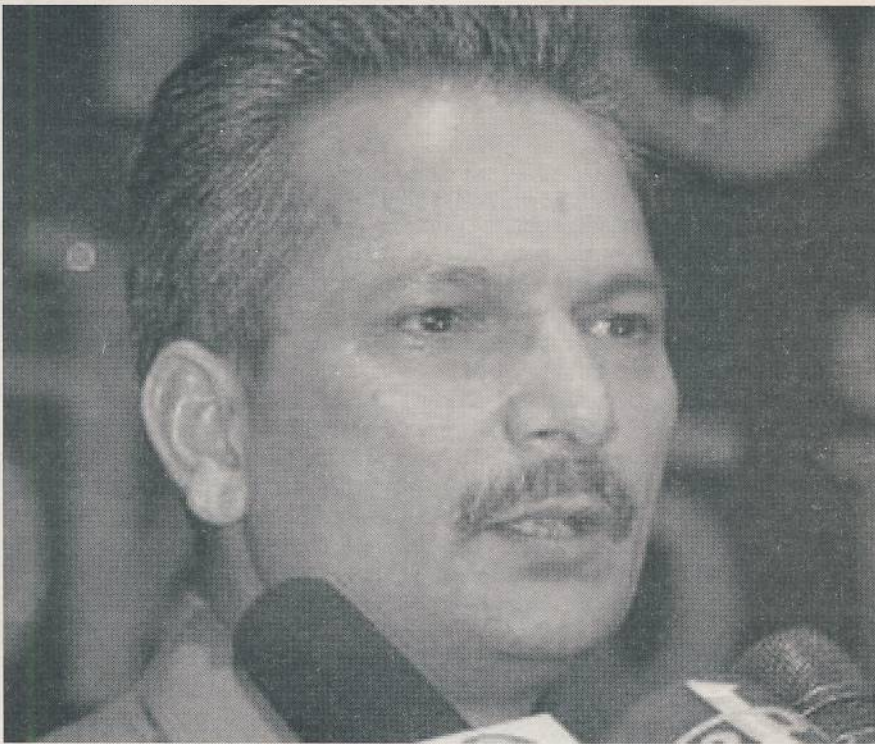
Maoist Combatant

Party leader Mohan Vaidya Kiran, CP Gajurel, and Dev Gurung have raised this issue in the meeting of party's standing committee where they asked the party president Prachanda and prime minister Dr. Bhattarai to clarify this. It is the duty of loyal party workers to defy the decision if that is taken against the spirit of the party and interest of the party. We cannot sacrifice our interest just for the sake of international committees and other parties. We have our own ideology and belief.

The recent resentment against the party is just a curtain raiser. If they continue to undermine central committee and standing committee decisions, party leaders will have to take the responsibility for any incident. This is not our threat but what I am speaking is the mind of our tens of thousands of party workers and cadres who sacrificed their lives for the sake of people's revolution. I don't mind raising arms against the regressive and reactionary forces if required. We have already spent our lives in chanting the revolution.

As dedicated and disciplined workers of the party, we cannot defy our leadership. This is the reason our party leaders took this decision in the party's formal forum like in Standing Committee. The message of the recent opposition is to warn the party leaders that the decision related to the party's future and its cadres must be taken with wider consultation in the party. Otherwise, party workers take the necessary actions against those who betrayed the party's ideology.

(Chand is Maoist Standing Committee Member As told to New Spotlight)



PRIME MINISTER BHATTARAI

The Enemy Within

The bubbles over the “popular” fourth prime minister in less than four years may burst soon, with none other than his own boss having the last laugh

By SAROJ DAHAL

More euphoria and less skepticism greeted the election of Baburam Bhattarai to the hot seat of Singh Durbar through an unlikely alliance of a party that once threatened to wage “a tunnel war” against India and a hotchpotch of four regional parties which the former still sees as “a stooge” of the southern neighbor.

The prime minister seem to realize the price of the euphoria he will have to pay if he is found wanting in the long-coveted job.

Making a departure from his predecessors, he has decided to go for a cheap “assembled in Nepal” jeep and immediately ordered a check on the doling out of the state fund to the

“needy”.

A populist relief package is what he is working on to sustain the momentum of the euphoria.

The true test will however lie in how far, if at all, will he be able to push the peace process forward and prepare credible grounds for a democratic constitution.

He has apparently full backing of his wily boss. Having engineered the elevation of his deputy to the country’s top executive job, Prachanda has thrown his full weight behind Bhattarai and boasted that the Maoist-led government would do a miracle in the next three months.

But many suspect such a miracle without Chairman Prachanda himself giving up his ambition of “taking the peace process (that he says he started

along with the late Girija Prasad Koirala of the Nepali Congress) to a logical conclusion.”

Insiders say, Prachanda is just waiting for the right moment to reduce his junior to yet another figure that has its photo hung on the Singh Durbar walls.

Bhattarai will have to race against time but walk cautiously. Doing both will indeed require a miracle.

He did not become prime minister. He was made prime minister. Like former prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, he is neither the chief of the party nor the parliamentary party leader. Yet, in the very first bid he was able to pip Prachanda who, despite holding both positions, had lost seven rounds of polls last time around.

Understandably, Prachanda has taken Bhattarai’s success with a pinch of salt, although he had no choice after Bhattarai ganged up with other vice chairmen, Mohan Baidya and Narayan Kaji Shrestha and mysterious general secretary Ram Bahadur Thapa for what is famously called Dhobighat alliance.

Because prime minister Bhattarai does not have full control over the party, he will have hard time selling his plans and actions, howsoever popular they may be, without the full support of Prachanda.

The ambitious chairman who is said to be jealous of “the popularity” of his deputy would surely not want to write what he suspects to be own political obituary.

It was not for nothing that he worked extra hard to rally the ever-unreliable hotchpotch of the “pro-Indian” Madhesi parties behind Bhattarai. The infighting in the Madhesi parties over plum ministries and the tainted face the parties sent to join the government have already given a bad name to the Bhattarai government notwithstanding his pledge for “zero tolerance” for corruption.

Said an insider, “the chairman wants to give the dog a bad name and hang it.” That’s why, according to him, Prachanda is not keen to have the two big parties, the Nepali Congress and the UML, on board irrespective of public postures. ■



Horrible Decision To Ruin Sunkosi-Terai Project

By Dr. AB THAPA

Sunkosi-Terai Project has been identified based on the detailed UNDP-FAO supported prefeasibility study as well as other subsequent studies to be the lifeline project for the whole country to combat against the widening gap between the rapidly growing demand and sluggish increase in production of the food grains. It has also been recognized as the most important project for the overall development of the entire Eastern Terai to the west of the Kosi.

Shockingly, it is no other but our own government instead of supporting the cause of the greater use of our water resources in our own country, is itself now going to ruin the potential of the Sunkosi River to irrigate the vast area of the Eastern Terai by allowing a private foreign company to implement the Dudhkosi Storage Hydropower Project that would be discharging a substantial proportion of the Sunkosi River flow far further downstream to a point out of the reach of the UNDP-FAO proposed Sunkosi-Terai Project tunnel intake. The irrigation area would thus be substantially reduced as a result of such extremely harmful government decision.

Revision of Treaty

Nepal had succeeded in 1966 to perform the herculean task to secure revision of the Kosi River Treaty signed several years earlier with India to open the door to full scale irrigation development in the Eastern Terai. Now, according to the revised Treaty India has fully recognized Nepal's absolute right to implement the Sunkosi Project allowing to withdraw the entire flow of the Sunkosi River needed to irrigate the greater part of the Eastern Terai. The relevant text of the Kosi Treaty has been presented hereinafter:

"Use of Water and Power- HMG shall have every right to withdraw for irrigation and for any other purpose in Nepal water from the Kosi River and from the Sun-Kosi River or within the Kosi basin from any other tributaries of the Kosi River as may be required from time to time. The Union (India) shall have the right to regulate all the balance of supplies in the Kosi River at the barrage site thus available from time to time and generate power in the Eastern Canal"

Terrible News

Everybody even slightly knowledgeable about our country's water resources might have been stunned by the news published in the daily newspaper "Kantipur" on Shrawan 26, 2068 that our government is going to

decide to invite an American company to implement the Dudhkosi Storage Project. Implementation of the Dudhkosi storage project would not only considerably limit the capacity of the proposed Sun-Kosi Project to irrigate the vast area of Nepal's Eastern Terai but at the same time would also preclude the viability of the Kosi High Dam Project considered indispensable for the safety of millions living in Nepal and India. It should be further explained that the viable Kosi Dam Project and the Lower Arun Project considered to be handed over to a foreign private company for implementation are also mutually exclusive. The Dudhkosi hydropower as well as the Lower Arun hydropower would be completely submerged into the Kosi reservoir if and when the

At present our government is interested to grant a private foreign company to build the Tamar Storage Project. We should bear in mind the dire consequences of such decision.

Kosi dam project would be implemented. Tamar Storage and Downstream Benefits

At present our government is interested to grant a private foreign company to build the Tamar Storage Project. We should bear in mind the dire consequences of such decision. The studies of the Kosi and its tributaries conducted since the time of the British rule in India help to come to the conclusion that our country as a whole in general and the local people in particular would certainly stand to gain even more from the large downstream benefits accruing as a result of flood control, irrigation and power generated by other hydropower stations built on the lower reaches of the river in future rather than the benefit accruing solely from the electricity generation of the Tamar Storage Project.

Disastrous Future Plans

It is a good sign that very recently the government is trying to show that it is hard on those who are responsible for the financial losses of the NEA. However, such simple actions alone would not be sufficient to pull through our water resources sector from the present extremely precarious situation. Apart from the bizarre case of wrong planning adversely affecting the Kosi and its tributaries projects, as described above, our

government's decisions to select the following other three storage projects also would be totally wrong and at the same time could be even disastrous.

West Seti Project- At present certain sector of the media and various local INGOs & NGOs are striking a chord with the government to implement the West Seti Project that will have a very cheap type of 195 meters high cfrd dam going to be the highest in the world among this type of dams built so far. Our government is totally ignoring the fact that in a recent article published in the *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF WATER POWER AND DAM CONSTRUCTION* even the Chairman of the Seismic Aspect Committee of the ICOLD (International Commission of Large Dams) Dr. Martin Wieland has clearly explained that this type of dam would be vulnerable in high seismic region like ours. Risk of building such dam in the seismic region has been pointed out in the World Bank supported Karnali (Chisapani) Project feasibility study report also.

Andhi Khola Storage Project - It has been clearly explained in the UNDP supported Gandak basin master plan study that this project was not favoured for implementation because the flooded valley is very large in area. The valley is intensively cultivated and also densely populated. Even in 1970s the population to be displaced was 22,000.

Upper Seti Storage Project - Two high dams had been considered for the development of the Upper Seti. The upstream Upper Seti Project would have a very large storage reservoir. The densely populated Madi Khola valley would be submerged. According to 1970s reporting about 18000 people would be displaced. The reservoir would flood 10 km stretch of the Pokhara-Kathmandu highway and also the Madi Khola bridge. The reconstructed highway would be 38 km long. This project was not favoured because of these environmental problems.

The downstream Upper Seti Project will only then be feasible if and when the upstream Upper Seti Storage Project would be implemented.

In Conclusion

It is hoped that the government, parliamentary committees and also the civil society will not turn deaf ears to above described highly sensitive high dams related technical and environmental issues. Needles to say that the wrong decision on above described matters could be extremely disastrous for the whole country. ■

US SUPPORT

Focus Economy

US ambassador to Nepal Scott H. DeLisi stresses the need for economic development

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

As Nepal has been passing through a series of political instability, economic progress and agenda are on backburner. Due to lack of jobs, a large number of youth are leaving the country in search of better prospects.

Although Nepal has made certain progress in peace process and constitution writing, the major agenda of economic development, under which Nepal can generate employment opportunities for the youth, is yet to get the needed priority.

This is what one could gather from a function, organized jointly by US Embassy and Economic Journalists of Nepal (EJON), where US ambassador to Nepal Scott H. DeLisi suggested Nepal should focus on economic agenda.

"There is an urgent need to find a real message of hope founded on values that matter. A message that has at its core a truly inclusive democracy in which there is real opportunity for all citizens, in which the public good comes before personal privilege, and in which corruption, impunity, and the disregard of basic human rights are an exception to be condemned rather than a norm to be tolerated," said the US ambassador DeLisi.

For more than a couple of years now, country's political leaders have been giving the topmost priority to concluding the peace process and successfully drafting the constitution, leaving the economy of the nation at bay and sidelining the need of economic development.

US ambassador DeLisi differed from the political leaders. "I believe that Nepal's toughest challenge is not concluding the peace process or drafting the constitution, but rather building an economic future for the young people of Nepal."

Nepal is sandwiched between two of the fastest growing economies of the world—India and China. But, despite the

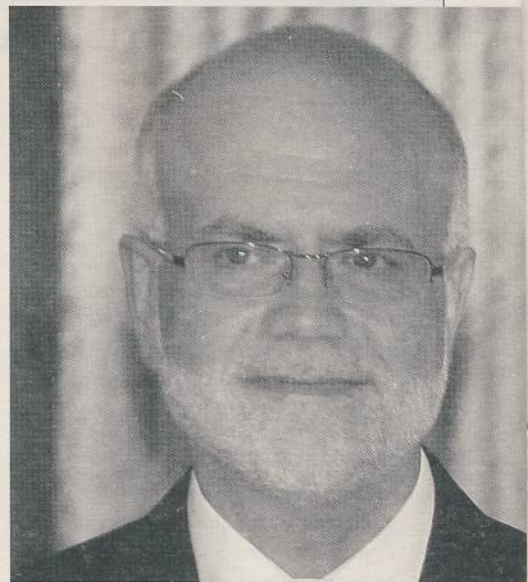
neighboring nations' economic growth rates touching the sky, Nepal's economy is likely to grow by an insipid 3.5% this year. "Just the spillover effects from these two countries should create thousands of jobs and expand trade," said the ambassador.

Although Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS III) reports the improvement in the Nepalese lifestyle and consumption level, this has been possible only on the grounds of increased remittance. "Like an addictive drug that feels good today but causes devastation in the long run, remittances provide a short term boost to the economy but only forestall the need to make tough economic choices – which are even harder to accommodate, the longer the government waits," said the US ambassador.

Currently, 73% of Nepal's population is under 35 years and 50% is under 18. But, daily more than 1000 Nepalese are fleeing to foreign countries seeking opportunities, giving up hopes in their own nation. The privileged ones are going to America and other European countries, while the less privileged ones are set for the Middle East and Malaysia. "I fear that the nation has not been giving its youth reason to believe—the country may be squandering its future," said DeLisi.

Nepal has been struggling to lure foreign investments and domestic business houses have not been able to capitalize on vast resources of the country amidst political instability, labor problems and power shortages.

It's been just over a month when the high level trade delegation from the American Chamber of Commerce left the country on a very positive note – raising hopes for the much needed foreign investment to boost the economy of the nation. However, the recent closure of Surya Nepal garment factory due to various labor issues – in which more 2000 people lost their jobs— has sent a negative message to potential foreign



US Ambassador DeLisi

investors.

"The closure was a setback for the country's economic development and diminishes our efforts to convince foreign investors that Nepal is open for business," said the US ambassador to Nepal.

Short-term profit-minded, businessmen who seek to avoid paying taxes and maneuver to sneak their money out of the country and some political leaders' view of business as a source of funding for their parties or as targets to be exploited for their personal gain – have stalled the economic growth, said the US ambassador.

IT outsourcing, tourism sector like trekking, adventure travel, eco-tourism, religious tourism and birding tours, hydropower and agriculture sector offer vast potential and opportunities, said DeLisi succinctly.

United Nations and Nepal recently signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) to facilitate trade and resolve disputes. Similarly, USAID program is focused on helping the economy of Nepal. Along with those projects, US embassy is also organizing various other projects for the economic growth of Nepal. DeLisi assured that US would invest in Nepal and would remain focused on economic issues. "We want to work with leaders from business community, civil society, labor, even politicians, who are committed to promoting the economic growth. We want to work with young entrepreneurs who can drive the economy. When they thrive, big businesses and even investors would follow," he added. ■



LONDON RIOTS

Nothing to Lose?

Last month's riots in English cities expose huge inequalities in the British society. What can we learn?

By BHAGIRATH YOGI in London

On 4th August, officers from the Metropolitan Police of London shot dead Mark Duggan, a 29-year-old young man from local Black community, while he was evading arrest. Two days later, a group of over a hundred people marched peacefully at the local police station at Tottenham demanding justice for the family. An aggressive crowd joined them later in front of the police station. Within hours, London was burning with reports of arson, looting and violence from different parts of the city.

Over the next few days, looting and violence was seen in cities including Birmingham, Nottingham and Bristol. In what was described as copycat looting, groups of youths would exchange messages over their Blackberry, then assemble in front of posh department stores, vandalise and loot the objects of their choice. "These are criminal activities, pure and simple," said Prime Minister David Cameron, who rushed to London cutting short his summer holidays in Italy.

As thousands of extra policemen were deployed in the streets of London and hundreds of arrests were made, the rioting came under control within few days, but it exposed deep divisions within the British society.

"The recent riots have exposed the

'underclass' in the British society who feel excluded from the whole society. Most of them are angry and frustrated youths and think that they have nothing to lose," said Dr Krishna Adhikari, an anthropologist affiliated with the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Oxford University.

Prime Minister Cameron summoned a special session of the parliament that was in recess. Leaders from across the political spectrum condemned the violence and demanded more powers to police. They also insisted that the riots should be viewed in the backdrop of huge budget cuts introduced by the Conservatives-led coalition government.

"If there is one lesson we should all learn from the riots, it is that it was crucial to have our police bravely standing between homes and shops on the one hand - and lawlessness on the other," said Ed Miliband, leader of the opposition Labour party. "The Conservatives are talking tough but their words are hollow," he added.

While political parties continue to exchange blows, analysts say lessons from London riots could be of interest for countries far or near. "Now, police have to find 'flash mobs' who use social media to gather and grab loot in one place, disperse, then meet somewhere else," Martin Innes of the Cardiff University told *The Economist* magazine. "You have

to follow them, harry them and channel them away."

Despite following a welfare model where state commits to take care of sick, poor and unemployed people, gap between rich and poor continues to become wider in the United Kingdom. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the UK remained a more unequal society than three-quarters of OECD countries, with the richest 10 percent earning nine times more than the poorest 10 percent.

As university education becomes unaffordable for most of the young people, prospects for better life look dim for many. According to the Department for Education of the UK, the proportion of 18 to 24-year-olds in England not in employment, education or training (NEET) has risen to over 18 percent. Nearly a million young people between 16 and 24 years were not in employment, education or training between April and June this year.

A spokesman of The Prince's Trust, a British charity working with the young people, told the BBC, "We know that unemployment can have a brutal impact on young people, with thousands suffering from mental health problems, feelings of self-loathing and panic attacks."

Bringing the Culprits to Book

While the role of parenting and teachers in inculcating good values among the children is being discussed in the aftermath of riots, swift prosecution of those arrested on the allegations of involving in riots presents lessons for countries like Nepal. Magistrates' offices and County Courts opened overnight to hear cases against mostly young men and women who were allegedly involved in looting, and even in arson. "At a time when impunity is rampant in Nepal, we should learn lessons from the UK where wrongdoers were brought to book while ensuring fair trial to the accused," said Harihar Birahi, a senior journalist who was visiting London during the riots.

Rule of law is considered cornerstone of any civilised society. While English riots exposed the weakest link in the British society, it also brought to fore people's overwhelming response towards the victims of the riots and strong condemnation of the violent behaviour. In times of global economic uncertainties, ensuring better prospects for the population, especially youths, would be a tough challenge for UK, or any other country for that matter, as the recent riots have shown. ■

Domestic Violence Act and its Implication on Society

By REENA PATHAK BASHYAL



Domestic Violence Act defines "Domestic Violence" as any form of physical, mental, sexual and economic harm perpetrated by person to a person with whom he/she has a family relationship and this word also includes any acts of reprimand or emotional harm. The Act further defines "Domestic relationship" as a relationship between two or more persons who are living together in a shared household and are related by descent (consanguinity), marriage, and adoption or are family.

Domestic violence is a manifestation of the historically unequal power dynamic between men and women, which has led to the domination and discrimination against women by men to prevent women from fully advancing in society. It is based in cultural, social and religious patterns, which enforce and justify the lower status of women in the family and society at large. It is one of the forms of gender based violence.

In the context of Nepal, dowry demands and dowry related crimes, i.e. abuse and even murder, are increasing day by day in our society, especially in the terai region. Our social norms have taught women to bear every humiliation, beating, molestation, even burnings. Women do not speak out because of their fear of losing honour. Thus, because of the culture of silence, women become more vulnerable to violence. Wife beating and battering is the most common form of abuse. A husband slapping or delivering a blow to his wife is regarded as routine husband-like behaviour. A preference for a son leads to female foeticide, which is another example of where women are victimized.

If we look closely at the present Act on Domestic Violence, we can find several lacunas and challenges. As such, there is a provision for lodging a written or oral complaint, setting out the details thereof with the Police Office, National Women Commission, Local Body, and the Court. However there are problems with the reporting and filing of the cases since there are several instances where oral complaints were not registered or filed. Even with written complaint there is a lack of coordination amongst the complaint receiving bodies and in the procedures followed by them.

The Act remains symbolic due to the

absence of effective measures regarding prosecution when complaints are filed directly to the court by the complainant, the lack of powers of the police to detain the perpetrator until the issuance of an interim order, and the lack of prescribed measures for coordinating the actions of various agencies to support the victim. Also lodging cases to the Women Commission is a difficult task as there is only one women commission at the central level. It would be almost impossible for rural women to approach before it. Also the regulation of the Women Commission is contradictory to the regulation of the Domestic Violence Act.



Rallying Against Domestic Violence

While the Act talks about the establishment of the Service Centre and Service Fund for the purpose of immediate protection of the victim, it has not yet been established. Also there is no separate court to look after cases involving domestic violence. The law contains no additional provision that facilitates the filing of a complaint directly with the court, nor procedures to be followed in collecting evidence and prosecuting the perpetrator. In the absence of the necessary legal provision, rule or guideline, women shall continue to be unable to directly access the court thereby defeating the very purpose of providing protection from domestic violence.

The provisions that prevents the detention of the perpetrator either in police or judicial custody until such time that a settlement is reached or an interim order is issued by the court has threatened the very basis of access to justice for women because they may be rendered further vulnerable to violence upon having lodged a complaint.

Serious forms of domestic violence needs to be recognized as a crime against state, and police should have the power to detain them for investigation in domestic violence cases. There is a need

to establish the Family Courts in order to enable women to report cases of domestic violence, to address these types of cases with better understanding and to quickly settle family dispute. There should be a provision for voluntary and compulsory counseling for the victims of domestic violence to address their problem and also facilitates in reintegrating family members. Domestic violence cases needs to be put under the Annex-I of the State Cases Act, 1992, and should defend by the Government Attorney.

Looking internationally, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women is the first international human rights instrument which exclusively and explicitly addresses the issue of violence against women. It affirms that this phenomenon violates, impairs and nullifies women's human rights and their ability to exercise their fundamental freedoms. The Declaration provides a definition of gender-based abuse, describing it as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".

CEDAW provides a working forum for the process of eradicating gender-based violence and promoting gender equity in the international community and at every level of national life. Further more, General Recommendation No. 19 of CEDAW Committee places an obligation on State Parties to take all legal and other measures that are necessary "to provide effective protection to women against gender based violence, including an effective legal measures, preventive measures and the protective measures including rehabilitation and support services for women victim of violence."

To review, a State should take every legal measure necessary to protect women from all forms of abuse, including domestic violence, which inhibits women's ability to enjoy their rights and freedoms on an equal basis with men. The society needs is to internalize domestic violence as gross human rights violation against women, which requires action from every sphere of the society, including the Legislature, Judiciary, Executive, civil society organizations, and the people generally. ■



For Clean, Sustainable Development

By MADHAV PRASAD GHIMIRE

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to welcome you all, the delegates and resource persons representing over 70 countries, to Nepal, which is the land of Mount Everest and the birthplace of Lord Buddha. At the outset, on behalf of the Government of Nepal, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, particularly the Stakeholder Collaboration Team, for giving us the opportunity to host this Stakeholder Consultation on Standardised Baselines under the Clean Development Mechanism. I believe that in addition to this global consultation programme, the CDM workshop and DNA Forum of the Clean Development Mechanism for Asia and the Pacific will provide additional benefits to the participants to share knowledge and experiences on best practices, identify the barriers to replicate them, and also develop a common understanding to make the most out of the Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol.

In our understanding, CDM is an additional opportunity to promote sustainable development in developing countries. However, low level of knowledge on CDM benefits, and inadequate technical capacity and complex process affecting CDM registration, validation, verification and issuance of certified emission reductions

(CERs) are the major barriers to promote CDM in countries like Nepal. We initiated country level efforts by developing some bundled CDM projects in 2005. The Nepal DNA has so far approved 12 CDM projects with potential CERs of about 0.44 million tons CO₂ equivalent. We are pleased to share with you that one of our biogas projects has recently received CERs from the CDM Executive Board. This also indicates how complex the process is and also how countries lacking capacity on CDM are disappointingly left behind to get benefits from the CDM.

You are well aware of the fact that climate change has greatly impacted the Himalayas and its resources. The level of efforts made at the international, regional and national level to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions do not quite match with the scale and the magnitude of the problem. So, we are concerned that this adverse impact of climate change on the mountains, its resources and people will be much more pronounced in the days to come. The global leaders have reaffirmed their commitments to address the impacts of climate change, individually or jointly, but measures such as climate financing, capacity building and technology transfer are too insufficient to tackle the increasing threats of climate change. It is to be acknowledged that countries like Nepal may have no or very little contribution for climate change, but still the impacts are gravely felt. So, unless the developed countries address the root cause of global warming, our efforts will be like a drop in the ocean. This is the ground reality we all need to heed.

Now, let me take this opportunity to share some of our initiatives and preparedness to 'live with the increasing threats' of climate change. The Government and people of Nepal have realized the urgency of addressing the challenges the climate

change has posed to us. Our efforts are inadequate, but I think we are on the right track. Broadly speaking, the Government of Nepal is engaged in strengthening institutional capacity and coordination mechanism, developing programs and projects, and enhancing the understanding about climate change and its impact at different levels. Climate adaptation has been a prime development agenda for Nepal. Climate change has received greater attention at the political level as the Right Honourable Prime minister chairs the climate change council for overall coordination and guidance. The Multi-stakeholder Climate Change Initiatives Coordination Committee has been an effective platform at the functional level to discuss climate issues, share information and experiences, avoid duplication, and develop activities on climate change. The Government of Nepal has placed the Climate Change Management Division and CDM section within the Ministry of Environment, which is also the UNFCCC focal point for Nepal.

The year 2009, mainly because of the Copenhagen Climate Conference, was largely successful for generating and widening awareness on climate change at different levels and sectors. The 2010 and the first half of the 2011 have been the 'building block' to enhance climate change activities in Nepal as the National Adaptation



Participants at workshop

Program of Action (NAPA) was prepared and approved in September 2010; a framework for LAPA (Local Adaption Plan of Action) has been developed to guide the implementation of adaptation options at the local and community levels; the Climate Change Policy, 2011 has been issued promoting, among others, the CDM; and efforts in securing seed funds from LDC Fund for NAPA implementation, and concessional resources from other sources to make our development programs and projects climate-resilient have been materialised. We have also accessed funding for scaling up renewable energies. Implementation of these national initiatives will provide us information to know what worked and what did not, and guide us to change the gear or the direction on climate change activities in the future.

Climate change is apparently an inevitable phenomenon due to various factors, and we take this phenomenon as an opportunity to protect the mountains, its resources, peoples and their livelihoods. We have initiated a process to raise the issues and priorities of the mountains. We are planning to host the International Conference of Mountain Countries on Climate Change in early 2012. We need to preserve and promote the collective voices. The proverb, "United we stand, divided we fall" urges us to work together, to make our voice prominent, and to inform the developed countries to realize their obligations on climate change. It is with that vision that the public, private, academe and civil society have actively been engaged in climate change activities in the recent years. Our collective efforts might help us to make climate change an opportunity for economic development by ensuring the environmental integrity, and also for reducing poverty.

Ghimire is chief secretary of Government of Nepal. Excerpts of the statement delivered at Workshop on Standardized Baseline, and CDM and Regional DNA Forum)

A Roaring Silence

By ABIJIT SHARMA



While almost the whole of India was caught in 'the Anna fever' last month, a North Eastern state, Manipur, remained aloof from the Anna movement. Like any other Indian state Manipur too suffers from corruption. It is one of the major concerns of the state, along with the long-running insurgency. The spokesperson of the main opposition BJP, Prakas Javadekar, recently said that corruption in this highly insurgency-ridden state deserves a place in the Guinness book of world record. Then, why did Manipuris hold back their support to the anti corruption 'crusader' Hazare?

The reason was a lesser-known crusader Irom Sharmila. The name might not ring bells in the minds of many. Let alone people from abroad, many Indians themselves are unaware of what many dubbed the 'iron lady of Manipur'.

A native of Manipur, Irom Sharmila, is credited for holding the world's longest ever fast. She began her fast from the 2nd of November, 2000 at the age of 27 after security forces gunned down 10 innocent villagers in a village in the state. The shooting took



Sarmila In fasting (Left) Anna Right

place under a hugely controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which allows security forces to shoot at sight and arrest anybody without a warrant in areas that are declared 'disturbed'. This activist started the fast-unto-death for the repeal of the same AFSPA act which is in force, mostly in the North Eastern states like Nagaland, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. She was, however, arrested three days after the fast on charges of 'attempted suicide'. Being force-fed through nasal tube since then, Sharmila has been released and re-arrested a number of times.

A stark distinction is clearly visible in the response received by the two activists, both of whom had adopted Gandhian method of non-violent protest. On one hand is Hazare, who was relatively unknown before his first fast in Delhi in April but has now become a cult figure. On the other hand, there is Sharmila, who despite 11 years of fast, is yet to garner a mass following and attract the national attention. One of the main culprits to blame for this difference is the media. While Hazare was the face of every news channels and his Jan Lokpal Bill, the talk of every talk show, Sharmila's fast from the beginning hasn't received the coverage as it richly deserved.

Hazare's campaign received a massive boost from the Indian news media, the coverage ranging from the activist's health updates to the activities at the Ram Lila ground. In contrast, news of the iron lady of Manipur does rarely find a slot in news channels, they go completely unnoticed. As Anil Dharker rightly remarked in the *Outlook*, "In covering Anna, TV seems to have shed its critical faculties".

The question now is: When the media can even shed its ethics by becoming highly un-balanced and un-objective (views that challenged Hazare's were hardly given air time and space), why can't it focus on the simple issue of Sharmila, who has been protesting with such immense will-power for the last eleven years?

Another possible reason for the Manipuri activist's issue receiving a lukewarm response is the isolation of the North East and its issues from the rest of India. A constant complaint against the central government is that it has always been indifferent to the problems of North East. This is also cited as a reason

for the rise of armed struggle in the region. It is quite understandable when Irom Singhajit, brother of Irom Sharmila, says that it is time people spared time for seemingly isolated silent agitation like Sharmila's and made it a mainstream movement. Since the AFSPA has been in force only in the north eastern states and Kashmir, the rest of states and the people there are not bothered by it. But explaining his sister's fight, Singhajit says, "my sister is fighting for every Indian who might some day face a gun for disagreeing with the Government'. With the aim of reaching out to more people, Sharmila even did a Hazare (a Maharashtra) in 2006. But when she reached Jantar Mantar in Delhi to protest she was arrested. Unfortunately, even that could not gather the much needed support from the other parts of India. Let alone the mainstream national media.

The issue is not the comparison between the crusades of the two activists. While Hazare's agitation against corruption was very vital and came at the right time, Sharmila's fight is no less important. But the iron lady needs much more than sympathy and occasional coverage. ■

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Gird Loins, Score More

Despite continued political instability throughout the last one plus decade with the beginning of violent insurgency and its end, Nepal has made a tremendous progress in meeting some Millennium Development Goals. Given that Nepal suffers resource gaps, policy lapses and lack of strong political commitment, the fact that it has been able to maintain the pace in achieving the MDGs is a matter worthy of note. Cognizant to this, the recently released Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment for Nepal 2010 emphasizes the need for a strong national commitment for the implementation of development interventions identified to achieve all MDGs by 2015

By KESHAB POUDEL

The maternal mortality rate has drastically declined in Nepal. The number of school going children has increased. Take the recently released third National Living Standards Survey, Nepal has made a major progress in poverty reduction.

Although the country has been passing through an unstable political situation with frequent changes in the government, one of its visible and noticeable successes is that it is on the way to achieving most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

The country has made significant efforts to increase the enrolment in primary level education. As a result, the net enrolment rate has risen to 93.7 percent in 2010 from 86.8 percent in 2005. The survival rate to completing a full cycle was reportedly 80.6 percent. Similarly, the literacy rate has risen to 86.5 percent in 2010 among 15-24 years

old. Similarly, under five mortality rate was at 41 deaths per 1000 in 2009, neonatal mortality rate has also been reduced from 39 deaths per 1000 lives in 2001 to 20 in 2009. The proportion of children immunized against measles has also increased.

According to a recently released report, Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment for Nepal 2010, the country is on the track to achieve most of its targets by 2015.

The Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment for Nepal 2010 is a joint initiative taken by National Planning Commission and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to estimate the resources needed and to identify gaps towards achieving Nepal's MDG targets within the next five years (2011-2015).

The analysis suggests that there is a need for considerable increase in

resource allocation, particularly for achieving Goals 1, 2 and 7. The report also suggests that the government needs to mobilize both internal and external resources to help address the gaps.

"Most of the MDG targets set for 2015 are likely to be met, as the government is committed to taking ownership of the proposed strategic interventions. While some targets have already been met, others related to employment, survival rate of grade 5, ratio of girls to boys at tertiary levels of education and of literate women to men aged 15-24 years, percentage of birth attended by a skilled birth attendant and universal access to reproductive health and environment will be difficult to meet," according to Millennium Development Goals: Needs Assessment for Nepal 2010.

The report stresses some strategic interventions. As meeting MDGs targets is a shared responsibility of the



Launching MDGs Needs Assessment For Nepal 2010 Report

concerned government and development partners, internal as well as external resources should be channeled to fulfill the identified resource gaps.

"This report is another step in the right direction. It tells us what interventions are needed to achieve the MDGs by 2015 and how much resources are needed per year between 2011 and 2015. The total resources needed are calculated to be 19.7 billion US\$ out of which 6.4 billion US\$ or about one third is yet to be identified. A massive task that requires strong leadership from the government," said Robert Piper, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator. (see box)

Government's Commitment

The government is trying to show that it is committed to the MDGs.

"The Commission is strengthening the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to monitor MDG related outcomes," said Dr. Dinesh Chandra Devkota, former vice-chair of the

National Planning Commission. Although I have already resigned, the new government will fully take the ownership and leadership of development strategies."

In the context of shifting global priorities towards fighting global recession and climate change implications, it is difficult to manage the much needed resources. Nepal has established goodwill among Nepal's development partners. Despite economic recession, many countries have been generously supporting Nepal.

"As it discusses issues related to health, education, infrastructures and budgets, the report will provide guidelines to the government for formulating policies and development projects in the coming days. The government is committed to MDGs," said Chief Secretary Madhav Prasad Ghimire. "Nepal's development partners will come to support us."

Nepal is on track to achieve the

millennium development goals (MDGs) set for 2015 becoming a low-income country on the way to reaching its targets. MDGs report prepared by the National Planning Commission in September 2010 had also shown significant progress in most of the MDGs.

There are eight goals and 21 quantifiable targets which are measured by 60 indicators under the MDGs. The eight goals are eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing global partnership for development.

According to the report Nepal is close to achieving the goal of universal primary education and reducing maternal mortality. Nepal is also on track to achieve the target of gender parity in primary and secondary education as well as the target of

bringing down under-five child mortality.

"The main reason behind the substantial progress in achieving the MDGs is multiple actors including the state and non-government organizations working to help achieve these goals," said Jagadish Chandra Pokharel, former vice-chairman of the National Planning Commission (NPC).

Challenges and Disparity

Despite these achievements, Pokharel said that there was wide disparity in progress in terms of geography and ethnicity. "People of the Mid-Western and Far Western regions and some communities in the Tarai are under-achievers," he said.

As the road infrastructure has potential to contribute towards achievements of MDGs, it is added now. The MDG Needs Assessment Report for Nepal 2010 stated that the total resource needs for providing road connectivity is estimated at Rs.264.3 billion.

Donors have invested significantly in the social sector over the last one decade with their support soaring to 67.94 percent in the fiscal year 2008-09 from 32.57 percent in 2001-02, according to the MDG report. While investing heavily in the social sector, aid is shrinking in other areas including agriculture, infrastructure and trade and industry, according to the MDG report of Nepal.

Of late, there has been growing concern over the increasing interest of donors in the social sector and dwindling interest in the infrastructure sector. The MDG progress report said, "the share of foreign aid for the infrastructure sector has declined over the period, and such neglect of infrastructure may create risks of lopsided social sector development, making it unsustainable in the long term."

Former Vice Chairman of NPC Dr. Devkota stressed on the need of mobilizing the national capital and promoting the administrative capacity to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year 2015.

The report recommends that all program-implementing partners should focus on small holder farmers, food security, employment centric interventions, nutrition, reproductive

See If Positive Changes Are Equitable



By ROBERT PIPER

The Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment Report for Nepal 2010 comes out at a critical time, with less than four and a half years to the MDG finish line in 2015. Last year, we launched the third MDG Progress Report and this launch is yet another reflection of Nepal's commitment to achieving the MDG targets by 2015.

I am very pleased to see the government of Nepal taking the MDGs so seriously. We note, the MDGs are prominently featured in Three-year Plan Approach and the current Three Year Plan (2010-2013). The findings and recommendations of the MDG Progress Report 2010 have helped the preparation of both documents. This is clear from the fact that many of the indicators selected for the Three Year Plan's targets are in fact MDG indicators as well.

I was also pleased that the exercise behind preparing this Report that involved identifying appropriate interventions to meet the MDG goals across sectors and calculating the associated costs, has also contributed to the development of the Three-Year Plan 2010/11-2012/2013.

As we saw from the MDG progress report last year, Nepal has made significant progress on a number of the Millennium Development Goals over the past years. Nepal is on the track to achieve many of the targets, except those related to full and sustained employment, hunger, education and environment. The preliminary results of the third National Living Standard Survey have also, we understand, shown that Nepal has significantly improved in many areas including average household income and per capita income. We look forward to seeing those results in more detail in due course. This achievement is nothing short of extraordinary given the country's post-conflict status and the country's difficult political and economic environment.

While the progress in the indicators

at the national, aggregated level are impressive, as always, we cannot lose sight of what lies beneath. We need to continue to dig deeper to see if these positive changes are equitable across regions, ethnic groups, and gender. We are yet to see if the significant rise in average household income has also gone to reduce inequality. In other words, is the gap between the rich and the poor getting bigger or is it narrowing?

There are goals and targets that will only be reached with an increased, sustained effort from all involved. Does Nepal have what it takes to successfully reach the MDG 2015 finish line? We know what is needed to have actions translated into results: sound policies that are given continuity from one year to the next, resources directed to the right interventions and communities, and effective coordination between all concerned agencies and development actors.

This report is another step in the right direction. It tells us that interventions are needed to achieve the MDGs by 2015 and how much resources are needed per year between 2011 and 2015. The total resources needed is calculated to be 19.7 billion US\$ out of which 6.4 billion US\$ or about one third is yet to be identified. A massive task that requires strong leadership from the government.

I hope that this report will be utilized by the government to ensure that annual plans and budgets are designed with a focus on the milestones we need to achieve yearly to reach the MDGs by 2015. And that it will be utilized to re-energize the global debate and efforts towards the MDGs. It stands as a powerful reminder to development partners of their commitment to support the MDGs and to support Nepal.

(Robert Piper is UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator. This is the excerpt of the statement delivered by Piper at the launch of the MDG Needs Assessment For Nepal 2010.)

health, economic empowerment and universal education, particularly for hard to reach groups of children, women and the communities.

"We have not been able to effectively use the resources provided by donors, and there are also chances to attract more aid increasing result-oriented work performance," said Pushpa Lal Shakya, joint secretary at the National Planning Commission. "There are possibilities of fulfilling or narrowing the gap by increasing investments through public-private partnership, foreign direct investment in the road sector and best utilizing the foreign aid received."

According to the report, during the next five-year period, 565 km of the strategic road network has to be improved or widened, 5,125 km of roads have to be completed with surface dressing or sealing, 10,066 km of roads have to be maintained routinely, 5,755.6 km of roads have to be upgraded and 1,860 km of roads have to be graveled. Similarly, 2,943 km of local roads have to be constructed, 4,830 km of roads have to be upgraded from dirt to gravel, 16,611 km of roads need to be maintained based on the targets expected by the end of the MDG period.

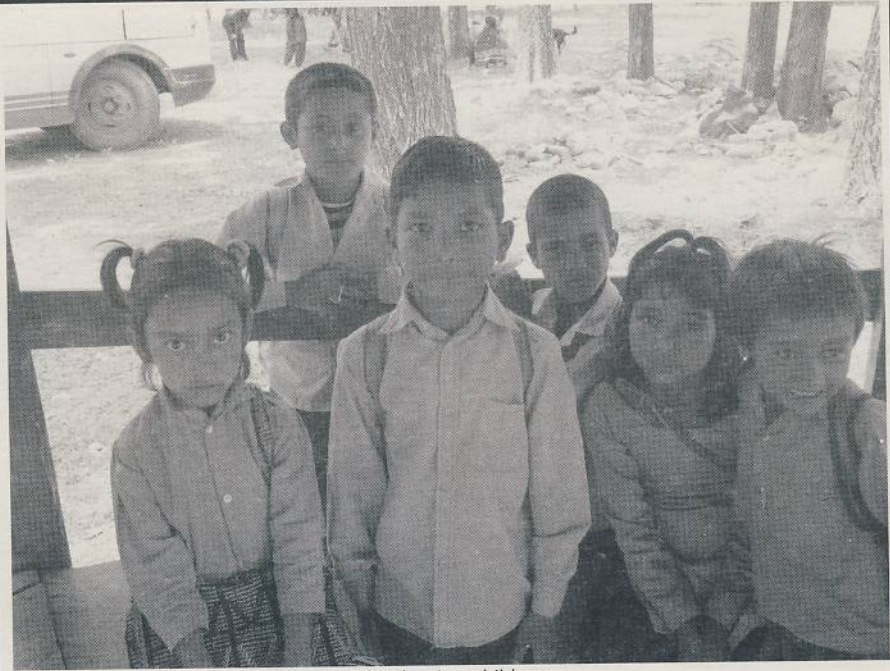
Nepal has a 19,758-km road network including 7,500 km of district roads and 71 out of the 75 districts have been connected to the strategic road network. Of the entire road network, maintainable local roads total 14,293 km.

Lapses in MDGs

Targets that Nepal is likely to miss, according to the report of NPC and UNDP, include the ones like halving the population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption, proportion of underweight children (aged between 6-59 months) and proportion of stunted children (aged 6-69 months).

"We made impressive progress on crucial social sectors like health and education. However, given the resource gap and low absorption capacity, it will be challenging to achieve targets like hunger reduction, gender balance and universal access to reproductive health, among others," said Dr Devkota, former vice-Chairman of National Planning Commission (NPC).

Presenting the report, Dr Govinda



School going children

Nepal, leader of the team that prepared the report, stressed on the need to focus on small farmers, food security, employment creation, nutrition, maternal health and environment.

"It is important to ensure an enabling environment and capacity enhancement for better implementation of projects and programs as well as provisioning for the required level of budget," Nepal said.

Experts pointed out that in the context of shifting global priorities towards fighting global recession and climate change implications, the government has to make greater efforts to manage resources for meeting the MDG targets by the year 2015. Therefore Nepal will have to show higher development aid effectiveness to attract global funds.

What are MDGs?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

Nepal is one of the 189 countries committed to the MDGs, a pledge renewed in its Three-Year Plan 2010-2013. The data from MDG Progress Report for

Nepal 2010, prepared in partnership between the Government of Nepal and the UN Country Team, indicates that potentially Nepal will be able to achieve most of its MDG targets by 2015, except for the full employment and climate change.

The 2010 report suggests that despite the decade-long conflict and political instability, Nepal's progress has been remarkable in a number of areas, for example, people living below the national poverty line has gone down to 25%, net enrollment rate has increased to 93.7%, gender parity has been achieved in enrolment for primary education, under five mortality reduced to 50 per 1000 live births and maternal mortality has reduced to 229 per 100,000 live births, which is almost a reduction by half in 10 years. Moreover, Nepal has succeeded to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS.

While the progress has not been sufficient to meet the targets on hunger, achieving universal primary education, eliminating gender disparity in secondary education and tertiary level of education, achieving universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it, with additional efforts Nepal is likely to achieve 2015 targets. However, the progress has not been fairly distributed from the perspective of social, economic and geographical

dimensions. Income inequality is continuously increasing.

Nepalese have the lowest life expectancy in Asia, the largest share of undernourished children, and most importantly, development has been significantly unequal across social groups – an aspect that is not reflected through MDG indicators that measure national averages. Ensuring equitable growth is one of the key challenges at this point.

The limited growth in agricultural output needs to be addressed through increased irrigation facilities, improved market access and better use of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, as well as giving due attention to climate change and deforestation.

Poverty incidence is the highest in Mid- and Far-Western regions, 45 and 41 percent respectively. While in urban Kathmandu, poverty incidence is only at 3 percent, but in the Mid-Western district of Rolpa, for example, 59 percent of the population live under the poverty line

Challenges and Opportunities

According to the report, some of targets that are very difficult to achieve by 2015 are proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption, proportion of underweight children aged 6-59 months, proportion of stunted children aged 6-59 months, survival rate of grade 5, literacy rate for 15-24 year olds, proportion of birth attended by skilled birth attendant, universal access to reproductive health, and proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility.

The Government's Three-Year Interim Plan 2008-10 and the proposed upcoming National Development Strategy (postponed) renews Nepal's commitment to the MDGs. While progress on the MDGs has generally been good, it is clear that major development issues remain in Nepal, as well as issues to be resolved in relation to all the MDGs.

Almost half of Nepalese children under five are chronically malnourished (stunted). Although there has been some development on the hunger indicators

Nepal On Right Track

By ATMA RAM PANDEY



The report indicated that Nepal is on right track to achieve most of MDGs targets by 2015 even in a very difficult situation. This report has also helped to prepare the Three Year Plan Approach Paper of the Government of Nepal targeting the MDGs.

In the preparation of the report, nine thematic working groups were formed. In these working groups more than 50 agencies were involved and nine thematic consultants provided their technical inputs. Various consultations were made with a number of concerned stakeholders in the process of preparation of this report.

Nepal is one of the signatory of the Millennium Declaration. The government of Nepal is committed to achieve the MDGs by 2015. The MDGs have broad and quantified targets that require strategic development interventions addressing barriers in many areas like poverty, agriculture development, health and environment sustainability. Implementation of these intervention requires estimates of the resources needed to achieve the targeted results.

In 2005, the first MDG Needs Assessment Report was published which presented in detail the human, financial and institutional resources requirement to meet the MDGs by 2015. The present Report presents the results of the MDG needs assessment and costing exercise

for Nepal which was conducted under the guidance and initiative of the NPC and with the technical support of the UNDP. The present report has emphasized the need for a strong national commitment for the implementation of development interventions identified to meet the MDGs. Moreover, it suggests that there is a need for considerable increase in resources allocations, particularly for achieving goals 1,2 and 7. The present government revenue size and the available foreign resources are not sufficient to achieve the MDGs. Therefore, the government of Nepal will need to mobilize more resources both the domestic and foreign to help address the resources gap for achieving MDGs by stipulated time.

National Planning Commission believes that this report will help to focus the attention of both the government of Nepal and its development partners on the critical issue of policy interventions in various areas and resources gaps that needs to achieve the MDGs by 2015. However, the efficient and effective use of the available resources is also important to reduce the poverty level and achieve high broad based inclusive growth. This will also help to achieve the MDGs by 2015. (Pandey is Joint Secretary at National Planning Commission. This is excerpts of his statement delivered at the launching ceremony)

in the past, the recent rapid rise in food prices and the consequences of climate change pose the main challenges in achieving the target.

Urbanization, remittances, and higher wages have resulted in a decline of poverty incidence by over a percentage point per year since the mid-nineties, from 42 to 31 percent. It has further declined in the recent report. However, the gains for the most excluded groups have been modest and inequality has grown.

The major challenge is addressing mortality among newborns, now

accounting for 54 percent of all deaths among under-five children. Community based interventions addressing major causes of neonatal deaths should be expanded as quickly as possible.

An effective quota-system in 2008 elections brought in over 33 percent of women in the Constituent Assembly. The Civil Service Act 2008 also calls for larger representation of excluded groups, including women. However, women's low status in the control of resources and political decision making remains, as does high incidence of violence against women (including early marriage and sex selective abortions).

Maternal mortality has fallen by about 50 percent from the mid-nineties, from 539 to 281 cases per 100,000 births. In January 2009, the government made delivery and management of obstetric complications free of cost in all public health facilities. However, the fact remains that only 1 out of 5 births are attended by a skilled birth attendant, linking also clearly to the high mortality rates of newborns.

There is a need to increase the coverage of HIV prevention activities for risk groups and develop appropriate strategies to reach high-risk Nepali migrants, in particular to India. Also, further measures should be taken to ensure access to treatment and psychosocial support for those living with HIV, not least to children.

MDG 8 targets trade, stepping up aid (especially to LDCs), debt relief, ensuring decent work for all, and the mobilization of international organizations and the private sector to find global solutions to common problems and to apply them locally.

Nepal relies heavily on official development assistance (ODA) to implement its development programs and to reach the MDGs. In the past years, the government and the donor community have engaged in a regular dialogue through the Nepal Development Forum mechanism, and ODA to Nepal has steadily increased, from about USD 430 million in 2004 to about USD 640 million in 2008.

Strategic Intervention

The report proposes certain strategic interventions to accelerate efforts to achieve the targets of the MDGs by 2015. Sensitization on rights, mobilization of local resources and cooperatives, and priority for small scale climate-resilient interventions are the strategic approaches proposed for enhancing sustainable access to and quality of services.

It proposes the key strategic interventions for improving each MDG. The report proposes increased income, employment and social protection, and improved soil fertility, raising practices, community storage facilities, mobilization of local resources and cooperatives and research goals to meet

the Goal 1 relating to poverty, employment and agriculture sector.

Likewise, the report suggests increased access to school for out-of-school children and build capacity of teachers for quality education and promote literacy and market oriented skills training to meet the goal 2. Similarly, increased awareness, sensitization and capability of right-holders to know about their rights, scaled up targeted interventions, developed targeted programs for single women, widow, Dalit women and marginalized communities, and ensure gender mainstreaming in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to goal 3.

For goals 4.5 and 6 Health sector, the report proposes for strengthening immunization program, strengthening integrated management of child illnesses, reproductive and women's health and control of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, expand health insurance, and initiate effort for universal health coverage. Under Goal 7A water and sanitation sector, the report proposes improved quality and regular supply of drinking water and the report suggested reduced exposure to environmental health impacts and increased investments on climate change under 7B environment sector. In energy sector, the report proposes to provide enabling environment for small and medium hydropower projects with high potential to supply rural areas and local industries and encourage micro-hydro generation with amendment in existing subsidy policy.

Millennium Development Goals

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

CLIMATE CHANGE

Livelihood At Risk

Stating that climate change has adversely affected the biodiversity of Churia region, experts recommended formulation of extensive program for conservation of this region.

The interaction program on Climate Change, Chure Conservation and Livelihood organized by Women in Environment (WE), Leaders Nepal and Women in Good Governance (WIGG) saw experts stressing the need of an integrated program seeking intergovernmental agency coordination for the conservation of Churia region.



In the program, conservationist Dr. Prem Poudel indicated that the Churia region comprises about 76 percent of total forest in Nepal, but is vulnerable to encroachment, deforestation and illegal extraction of non-timber forest products.

Conservationist Dr. Binod Bhatta highlighted the importance of Churia region in terms of biological as well as cultural diversity and mentioned that there have been some programs for conservation of this region but they have suffered from lack of coordination and repetition while unscientific land management and overexploitation of resources to meet livelihood needs have increased the threat to the Churia region.

The program was chaired by Secretary of Ministry of Environment Krishna Gyawali. At the program, Dr. Santosh Nepal and CA member Ang Dawa Sherpa gave their comments and feedback on the thematic papers presented by Dr. Prem Poudel and Dr. Binod Bhatta.

Chairperson of Leaders Nepal Professor Dr. Binod Shrestha highlighted the objectives of the program. Likewise, chairperson of Women in Environment Kamala Dhungel along with other non-governmental conservation experts, senior government officials discussed the issues of climate change, conservation of Churia region and livelihood. ■

CIVIL SERVICE DAY

Morale Question

Civil servants are celebrating the civil service day in the midst of new uncertainties following the formation of the new Maoist and Madheshi coalition government

By KESHAB POUDEL

With an aim to appease his coalition partners, Maoist ideologue, prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, who is projected as 'Mr. Clean', reportedly agreed to split two ministries into four.

Agriculture and Cooperatives Ministry will be split into two and Housing and Physical Planning will be separated into Ministries of Urban Development and Physical Planning.

"Prime minister Dr. Bhattarai has already agreed to split these two ministries to accommodate coalition partners," said Laxman Lal Karna, leader of Nepal Sadbhvana Party.

This is the indication about the extent to which the new government led by Maoist ideologue Dr. Bhattarai will go to please its partners.

His logical next move will be to transfer senior bureaucrats up to joint secretary level as per the demands of the ministers.

Dr. Bhattarai is not alone in taking such a decision. This is the practice in Nepal that the bureaucracy is shaken up by every new government and the ministers that it brings to power. In the past, these things were done with certain level of secrecy and this time the intervention might be naked.

Although there are institutional mechanisms, laws and regulations to manage the civil service, politicians often ignore values when the issues of transferring the civil servants come before them. Politicized within through various party affiliated civil service unions, civil service often sees ministers and other politicians getting involved in further destabilizing it.

If Public Service Commission, chief secretary and Ministry of General Administration are given their institutional role in matters related to transfer, posting and promotion of civil servants, Nepal's civil service would have maintained its neutrality and impartiality.

Although there is a legally binding provision about civil service jobs, nobody knows when he or she will be transferred. In just over two months, the government had badly shaken the civil service by

transferring large numbers of employees.

Although the Civil Service Act and Civil Service Regulation lay down the criteria and conditions for transfer of civil servants, this is rarely abided by the ministers. "The era of rule of law seems to have gone," said a senior retired secretary on condition of anonymity.

Role of Public Service Commission

At a time when the bureaucracy has been politicized too much due to the failure of other institutions like Ministry of General Administration, the constitutional body like the Public Service Commission can play its role more effectively. Although it cannot intervene in the day to day administrative matters of the executive, it can suggest measures to improve the state of affairs for the government.

Established in Nepal on 15 June 1951 A.D, the Commission is involved in selecting meritorious candidates required by Government of Nepal for various vacant posts of the civil service. The continuity of PSC has never been hindered since its establishment. Present Constitution of Nepal 2007 (2063 BS) has designated the Public Service Commission as an independent constitutional body.

There are several functions, duties and powers of PSC for which the government of Nepal is required to consult it. They pertain to the following subjects such as matters concerning the laws relating to the conditions of service of the civil servants, matters concerning the suitability of any candidate for transfer or promotion from one service to another within the civil service or any other government service to the civil

service; matters concerning the permanent transfer or promotion of any employee, and matters relating to departmental actions proposed against any civil servant.

With the strength of about 80,000, Nepal's civil service has been delivering the service to the public. Of course, there are certain weaknesses but the civil service has continued to remain as an important constant in all kinds of political changes.

"External dividing factors have also done some harms to the civil service. The civil service act permits formation of trade unions. Though it is a democratic practice, the privilege is limited to



Singha Durbar Secretariat

position holders from lower up to third class levels. On the surface, the provision is politically neutral but it has divided the civil servants in different ideological factions. Political parties encourage civil servants to form unions close to them and the unions, in return, seek to advance their affiliation with the political parties. Forming unions is only helping to divide people. As a result, in posting, transfer and nomination, personnel are favored or excluded on the basis of their political loyalties," said former member of Public Service Commission Madhunidhi Tiwari.

Along with bringing political turmoil, the democratic movements of 1990 and 2006 continued to rock Nepal's civil service. "The transition witnessed painful political turbulence emanating from inter-party conflicts and intra-party feuds which has been reflective in the administrative efficiency. Frequent changes in the government and the political instability have affected the reform endeavors," said Tiwari.

Since the political change of 1990, Nepal's civil service has been passing through a painful and prolonged political transition. It seems that it will continue to do so for a long while. ■

'PSC Has Maintained Trust Even In Transition'

SHYAM PRASAD MAINALI

Among the environmental factors, political stability is the most significant. An organization cannot accelerate its productivity to the desired extent when it lacks amicable political surroundings.

Having served in Nepal's Civil Service for more than three decades, secretary of Public Service Commission SHYAM PRASAD MAINALI is a known expert in the sector. As the nation is celebrating the Civil Service Day, secretary Mainali took time out from his busy schedule to talk to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excerpts:

How do you take the Civil Service Day in relation to enhancing the effectiveness of Civil Service in Nepal?

The convention of celebrating the Civil Service Day has strongly stressed the identity of the Civil Service in the country. On the auspicious occasion of this day, every year, some of the civil servants, showing outstanding performance, are honored with Civil Service Awards as provisioned in the Civil Service Rules. Likewise, this celebration not only motivates but also inspires the civil servants to perform their duties and responsibilities better. This is also the Day, when every civil servant re-internalizes his/her promises for serving the people efficiently and honestly. In addition, this is the Day when the civil employees enjoy the opportunities to display their talents, and interests in various disciplines and fields, that are always directly or indirectly contributing in enriching their professional capabilities.

It is often reported that political interventions in Civil Service is making the Civil Service unstable. What measures do you suggest for making it a more stable institution?

It is a well known truism that for the effective operation of any organization, it requires visionary leadership, professionalism, well motivated employees, harmonious relationship with its customers and work-friendly environment. Among the environmental factors, political stability is the most significant. An organization cannot accelerate its productivity to the desired extent when it lacks amicable political surroundings. Various dimensions of the Nepalese Civil Service have been affected by political instability. For reducing political interference in the Civil Service, there must be political consensus among all the major political parties to allow the Civil Service to run in accordance with the legal provisions by accepting the neutrality and fairness of the Civil Service. All the steps of the career development of the employees must be determined by the legally defined indicators. The prevailing environment of searching for the political support by an employee

for any dimension of his / her career development must be eliminated in practical scenario too.

Having served in the Civil Service for such a long time, what shortcomings do you see in it?

As mentioned earlier, political interference in the process of administrative decision making is the most de-motivating factor for employees, especially working in higher echelons. Likewise, low opportunity for developing professionalism, lack of measuring indicators for assessing the performance of the employees, low salary, etc, are the major shortcomings of our Civil Service.

What is the state of Civil Service after introduction of 24 (gha)? Do you think this kind of system is justifiable?

In order to raise the level of motivation and uplift the morale of the employees, the present provision of the article 24 (gha-1) should be amended and simultaneously an enabling environment must be created.

When there is politicization at all the levels, what role can the Public Service Commission play to shield Civil Service from influences of politics?

Since the Public Service Commission has been a reliable guardian of the civil servants and it has been successful to win the trust of the people till now, civil servants expect its significant role in making the Civil Service politically neutral.

How do you see the scenario developing in the process of making Civil Service more inclusive in terms of ethnicity, gender and caste?

Various laws related to the Civil Service have made various provisions to make the Civil Service inclusive. Due to these provisions, the representation of the women, ethnic groups and the people from socially and economically backward areas is increasing in the Civil Service. However, some more provisions and arrangements seem necessary to make it more inclusive and functional. For example, it would be much more effective if the affirmative action in the Civil Service be defined on the basis of human development index, and other equitable measures be added for enabling the youths, especially belonging to the ultra poor of concerned groups as mentioned above.

What are the major challenges in the Civil Service now?

Professionalism, political neutrality, higher level of motivation and morale, effective service delivery and gaining the trust of the people are the



major prevailing challenges of the Civil Service. Moreover, satisfying the rising expectations of the people with limited resources is another big challenge. Likewise, achieving international standards and global competitiveness is also an alarming challenge.

What is needed to make Civil Service an apolitical institution?

A higher level political consensus is the utmost need of the hour for making Civil Service apolitical. The trade unions of the civil servants should focus on developing professionalism and ensuring civil servants for their overall career development on the basis of their level of performance. I think these are the basic measures to make the Civil Service an apolitical institution.

Are you satisfied with the role of the Public Service Commission?

We must be proud of the success of the Public Service Commission in maintaining people's trust even in the state of transition. Nevertheless, it has to make much more efforts to develop it into an apolitical institution. Following

the spirit of the current constitution, the Government of Nepal is making vigorous efforts to ensure inclusive governance. In this context, some affirmative action has been provisioned in the Civil Service Act too. To materialize the spirit of inclusive governance, the Public Service Commission is making a study to broaden its mechanism so that the candidates, especially from the remote places, can have a convenient place for appearing in competitions conducted by the Public Service Commission near their home-towns.

Do you think amendment to the Civil Service Act is necessary now?

It is a popular saying that law is never perfect. Considering this fact, there are many avenues for amendments in the Civil Service Act also. But before amending the Act, there must be an intensive study and homework as well as effective interaction among the stakeholders so that it can be much more functional and effective in the changed context. ■

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INTERNATIONAL GATHERING

For Clean Development Mechanism

As Nepal is yet to develop the CDM guidelines, three international workshops recently held here may help the nation to figure out what it can and should do

By A CORRESPONDENT

A big gathering of representatives from more than 70 countries around the world was talking about the most important issues concerning the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Yet only a few people seemed to have noticed what was going on. The issues they debated for four days in three different workshops sounded serious and significant, especially for the least developed countries like Nepal. The organizers spent less time in formalities than holding discussions.

Chief Secretary Madhav Prasad Ghimire opened the first one and a half day's workshop on the Standardized Baselines. This session discussed rather esoteric sounding issues, including the understanding of the new guidelines on standardized baselines, the challenges and ways forward, guidelines for the development of standardized baselines, and held panel discussions on guidelines for establishment of sector specific standardized baselines, building capacity and enhancing understanding.

The workshop also discussed procedures for submission of standardized baselines and reviewed their suitability. Similarly, cases studies on standardized baselines were presented and reviewed for their

suitability and adequacy of procedures and guidelines.

In another DNA Regional Forum, representatives from Asia and the Pacific Region discussed the guidelines for demonstrating additional aspects of micro-scale project activities. They also discussed regulatory framework development with respect to the guidelines for demonstrative additional micro scale project activities and DNA perspective on the implementation of the guidelines. They also discussed modalities of DNA interaction with an executive board update on modalities of communication of the board with DNAs.

Program of activities (PoAS) and updated regulatory framework development and multi-country PoAS included cooking stoves program in Asia.

Representatives from Asia and the Pacific also discussed CDM issues in the regional workshop. The papers were presented on development of standardized baseline. Panels discussed pilot cases on SB- waste management, compost project, biomass gasification, bur, and rapid transport replacement of energy efficient boilers. They also addressed challenges in CDM project development and management, common reasons for delays and rejections of CDM projects. They also made analysis of projects to identify reasons for the delay

in the validation and issuance stage as well as identifying practical solutions and proposals to the CDM EB efforts initiated to remove the bottlenecks.

Inaugurating the workshop, chief secretary Madhav Prasad Ghimire expressed his appreciation to the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, particularly the Stakeholder Collaboration Team, for giving the opportunity to host the Stakeholder Consultation on Standardized Baselines under the Clean Development Mechanism.

"I believe that in addition to this global consultation program, the CDM workshop and DNA Forum of the Clean Development Mechanism for Asia and the Pacific will provide additional benefits to the participants to share knowledge and experiences on best practices, identify the barriers to replicate them, and also develop a common understanding to make the most out of the Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol," said Ghimire.

"This workshop will help understand the standardized baselines and CDM and Regional DNA forum," said Robert Piper, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Nepal.

Although Nepal has several possibilities to get the benefits from the CDM, it is yet to reap them. Nepal's hydropower projects can be suitable for CDM. Nepal has not been benefiting from the CDM provisions to the desired extent. It might have been due to adoption of clean energy which reduces opportunities to replace the fossil fuel based energy.

"This baseline should not be a barrier to promote CDM projects," said Krishna Gyawali, secretary to Ministry of Environment. "At this point, I would like to urge the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to advise a special mechanism that supports the Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing countries and mountainous countries to benefit from CDM projects taking into consideration their climate vulnerabilities and baseline as well."

At the event organized by the Ministry of Environment and UNFCC, Batu Krishna Uprety, joint secretary (Technical) Climate Change Management Division, welcomed the participants. Similarly Massamba Thioye, Manger, of Sustainable Development Mechanisms, UNFCC also highlighted the importance of the workshop. ■



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'Nepal And Indonesia Have Gone A Long History Of Bilateral Cooperation'

ZET MIRZAL ZAINUDDIN

Having served in Indonesian foreign service during a long career, ZET MIRZAL ZAINUDDIN, ambassador of Indonesia to Nepal and Bangladesh, recently visited the capital. Ambassador Zet held various official positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, and also served in Tunisia, Madagascar and Surinam. At a time when Nepal and Indonesia are working to increase trade and other bilateral cooperation, Zet spoke to KESHAB POUDEL on various issues. After the opening up of the consular office and the appointment of Chandra Dhakal as an honorary consul general of Indonesia to Nepal, a lot of progress is seen in the ties between the two countries. Excerpts:

Nepal and Indonesia have a long history of establishment of relationship. How do you look at the present state?

Nepal and Indonesia have gone a long way in terms of bilateral cooperation. They have passed the 50 years mark of diplomatic relationship since 1960. The bilateral relations have grown stronger. For the last two years, after the establishment of honorary consul office in Nepal, we have seen a lot of progress in enhancing the bilateral relations. There is a progress and improvement in the bilateral cooperation between the two countries. I firmly believe that it should continue to strengthen the bilateral relations and to put emphasis in enhancing the economic engagement between Nepal and Indonesia.

What is the state of bilateral trade between Nepal and Indonesia?

The bilateral trade between the two countries has grown steadily every year. In the January-April 2011 period, the total trade value reached a new height with US\$ 12,656,821.00. This is an increase of 167 percent compared to the same period in 2010 with US\$ 4,736,859.00. I hope that by the end of 2011, we will be able to reach another milestone in trade between the two

countries. Although the present trade is in favor of Indonesia, I would like to invite more Nepalese businessmen to come to Indonesia and establish strong business relations for the prosperity of the two countries. Indonesia has a very attractive and friendly foreign investment policy.

Is there any possibility to enhance the political level relations?

The President of Indonesia invited the Nepalese president and prime minister to join the Bali Democracy process. Nepal sent a higher level delegation to the meeting. Similarly, high level officials from Indonesia visited Nepal to attend international conferences. This should be encouraged more and more. Just a few days before resignation, Nepalese prime minister even invited our president to visit Nepal. I think it was a good start.

Some of the goods made in Indonesia are very popular in Nepal. What do you say about this?

I can see that more and more Indonesian products are coming to Nepal and similarly, Nepalese products are also going to Indonesia. In remittance, the Global Bank-Nepal is very active and the remittance from and to Indonesia is much more. It is huge. It is also supported by the same culture.

What other sectors can benefit Nepal and Indonesia?

Tourism is another sector which will benefit both our countries. Nepal and Indonesia are similarly blessed with spectacular landscape and diversity complemented by exotic cultures which hold a considerable potential for tourism



in the two countries. Frankly speaking, Nepal and Indonesia actually share many cultural similarities like Hindu/Buddhist influence. Bali, the most famous tourist island in Indonesia, is famous for its picturesque nature and exotic culture with many Hindu festivals. Nepal could help Indonesia in promoting this splendid island and Indonesia could assist Nepal in developing its tourism industry promoting Himalayas.

At a time when there is no direct flight between the two countries, do you see any possibility of connecting the countries by air?

I am hopeful that the time will come soon when the airline from Nepal or Indonesia will start direct flights connecting Kathmandu and Jakarta or Kathmandu and Bali. Direct flights will increase people to people contacts and benefit the two countries.

What Nepal can learn from Indonesia?

Indonesia is now the world's third largest democratic country. We have set an example in transparency in dealing and harmony in living together between different ethnic, religious and cultural

groups. We can see our diversity as our beauty. Our unity is strength. We need to unite for the sake of the country. This is asset of Indonesia. Nepal too has so many groups living in harmony. Our country has born-in differences. For us independence of our country is dearer. For us independence is not just to get free but how to feel this independence together. We want this independence could create a peaceful world. We got our independence on 17 August 1945. We are celebrating this with our achievement as a stable, democratic and multicultural society with a strong and competitive economy from years ago and we continue to unite together in differences. Our unity is with diversity. I will praise this should be held and managed. We must not forget the fact that united we are strong and separated we are weak. We need to find out the point of compromise and harmony. If we always see point of differences, we cannot prosper.

What are the priorities of Indonesia?

Indonesia has a strong commitment for education. We believe that the future of a country is in the hands of its youth and education. We believe that education is the key to unlock the potential in our youth for the advancement of the nation.

How do you look at Nepal's tourism sector?

Nepal too has well developed tourism infrastructure and you too have knowledge. Indonesia annually attracts 7 million tourists, against less than a million by Nepal. We have to share our knowledge. You promote the mountains and we promote the sea. We also promote the mountains. We can learn from Nepal and Nepalese can also learn from Indonesia. We need to work for mutual benefits.

Is your country supporting Nepal in education sector?

Every year Indonesia provides the Nepalese youth with scholarship programs which consist of Darmasiswa RI Scholarship for 1 year non-degree program and developing countries partnership scholarship for a 3 years' Master's Degree Program. ■

BOOK

On Electoral Violence

Dhruba Kumar, a well known political scientist, explains how systematic violence mars the elections in Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

Free and fair elections are one of the integral parts of democracy as people exercise their sovereign rights through the elections and choose their own representatives to rule. This is the reason ensuring free and fair elections is regarded as important.

However, like in all developing countries around the world, Nepal's elections process is not free at all. After an intense research and empirical study, political scientist Professor Dhruba Kumar elaborates how violence dominates Nepal's elections process.

"Representatives to public office are chosen through voting in a competitive election. Voting, in this context, is seen as an expression of a commitment of a person to the ideals that a group is formed with an advocates," writes Kumar in his book.

The study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is introduction followed by second chapter which reviews what elections foretell and how elections are held. The third chapter succinctly narrates the historicity of the electoral politics under democratic dispensations in Nepal. The fourth chapter deals with the election malpractices and violence. Professor Dhruba Kumar narrates how Nepal's elections are dominated by violence. The fifth chapter deals with People's Perspectives: Duality of Perception and sixth chapter is about elections and state building. The last chapter, by way of conclusion, critiques as features of democratic exercise and on the state building problematic in post-CA elections in Nepal.

Although several books were written in the last many years about the elections process of Nepal, this is the first of its kind book which analyzes all the elections processes of Nepal. Based on the facts and intense research, Professor Kumar's book details all the elections held in Nepal, including the



Electoral Violence and
Volatility in Nepal
By Dhruba Kumar
Published by Vajra Publication
Jyatha Phone 4246536
Price: Rs. 750.00
Pages: 251

last CA elections held in 2008.

The book also discusses the role of political parties and state machinery in holding the elections. He draws the conclusion that Nepal's elections are often held to win them and ruling parties always make efforts to rig them by using all kinds of means, including violence.

"Along with this, it also deliberates on the lessons learned from the elections held in the 1990s period and their implications in the future. The fundamental issue it delves on is the declining state capacity to curb electoral violence," writes Dhruba Kumar.

The book is full of accounts of elections process in Nepal and how it helps to democratize the process. Professor Kumar held the view that country's capability to hold free and fair elections will determine the whole course of the democratization process.

This book is very useful to those who are interested in the political development and evolutionary process of Nepal as professor Kumar explains the elections process as a way to determine the legitimacy of political process. ■

Typhoid Treatment

-By **BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD**



Typhoid is like an old enemy that has been around and we underestimate the problems caused by this disease. About 24 million people are affected by this disease on an annual basis, and around 400,000 succumb to this illness. And guess where most of the illness is seen? In the Indian subcontinent. In the Western world the people that generally are afflicted with typhoid fever are citizens from the West that travel to the Indian subcontinent. Only a minority of patients from the West suffer from these diseases without a travel history. Amongst these travellers there is a special group called VFRs which stands for visiting friends and relatives.

This group comprises of people, for example Indian origin who live in the US and do not take hygienic precautions when they return to India for a visit. Treatment of typhoid fever is an important topic for us, and the rest of the article discusses this.

In the latest online issue of the Lancet Infectious Disease, our team from Patan Hospital working together with Oxford University published an important article based on the findings

of a randomized controlled trial of two drugs in typhoid fever. Typhoid fever which is spread by fecal oral transmission is rampant in the developing world, and there is an ongoing problem with drug resistance. This study was the largest clinical trial (844 patients were recruited over a period of 3 years) on typhoid fever to date.

Appropriate dosage of Gatifloxacin was administered for seven days in a once day dosing for patients suspected to have typhoid fever. Gatifloxacin in the study was compared with the oldest drug used in the treatment of typhoid fever, chloramphenicol. There was no difference in the efficacy of these two drugs in the time taken (four days) to bring the fever down. However, unlike chloramphenicol which needs to be taken four times per day for fourteen days, gatifloxacin needs to be taken only once a day for seven days. Clearly most people will favour taking a drug once a day for 7 days rather than four times a day for fourteen days. Our conclusion was that gatifloxacin should be the preferred drug in the treatment of typhoid fever in the developing world.

Gatifloxacin attracted attention several years ago when in an elderly (> 75 years of age) Canadian population, who were administered the drug for an infection, it was shown to increase or decrease the blood glucose, thus causing some patients to have symptoms of diabetes or low blood sugar (hypoglycaemia). As a result in North America, this drug was removed from the market. However in our Nepal study the average age of our patients was sixteen, and unlike the elderly Canadian population our patients did not have any co morbidities (that is, accompanying medical problems like kidney disease). Furthermore we tracked the blood sugar very closely in our population cohort; and there was no obvious blood sugar problem as noted in the elderly Canadian population.

This story of Gatifloxacin is a good example of how a useful and affordable drug should not be discarded just because it is found to have side effects in a completely different patient population in another part of the world. Indeed we are running out of antibiotics to treat life threatening infections like typhoid fever in tropical countries.

'Increase Flights To Get More Tourists'

- **JULIE CHENG**

Tourism entrepreneur from Macau **JULIE CHENG** is currently promoting Nepal among the Chinese tourists. Julie Cheng is the president of Nepal Development Center in Macau, which regularly organizes discussions program on Nepal. Cheng, currently in Nepal with a group of fifty Chinese tourists, spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on various issues. Excerpts:

How do you look at the tourism prospects of Nepal?

As a resident of Macau, I have seen a lot of tourism potential in Nepal. This is a beautiful country with a lot of beautiful mountain peaks. Kathmandu valley is also beautiful, as there are lots of culturally interesting places.

What does your agency do?

Our tourism agency is planning to bring Chinese tourists to Nepal through Hong Kong and Macau. We have also our office in mainland China. As the number of outbound Chinese tourists continues to increase, Nepal may get a lot of benefits from attracting Chinese tourists.

What do you suggest to boost Chinese tourists in Nepal?

First of all, Nepal Airlines needs to increase the number of flights to Hong Kong and other Chinese cities. Due to fewer flights and irregularities, despite their willingness, tourists from Hong Kong, Macau and Mainland China are unable to visit Nepal. My suggestion would be to increase regular flights.

Which airline did you take?

I took Nepal Airlines flight. It has a good service. However, the problem with it is uncertainty in its flight time. If Nepal Airlines increases the number of flights, it will find a lot of Chinese tourists.

Although there are many other cities around the world and countries which can offer a lot of facilities to Chinese tourists, what are the main reasons Chinese would come to visit Nepal?

First of all, Nepal is their neighboring country. The other reason is that Nepal has a greater diversity in terms of culture, religion and natural environment. We are selling all of these

things to Chinese tourists. In future, the number will definitely increase. Nepalese hotels are offering best services in reasonable prices. There are facilities from recreation centers like casinos, and national parks here.

What is the objective of Nepal Development Center?

One of the aims is to promote Nepal in the Macau, Hong Kong and mainland China. This is the reason we have been organizing various kinds of discussion programs about cultural and other assets of Nepal.

What is your impression about Nepal?

What I can say is that Nepal is a beautiful country with a lot of potentials for economic development. Nepal can earn a lot of money by bringing the tourists. ■



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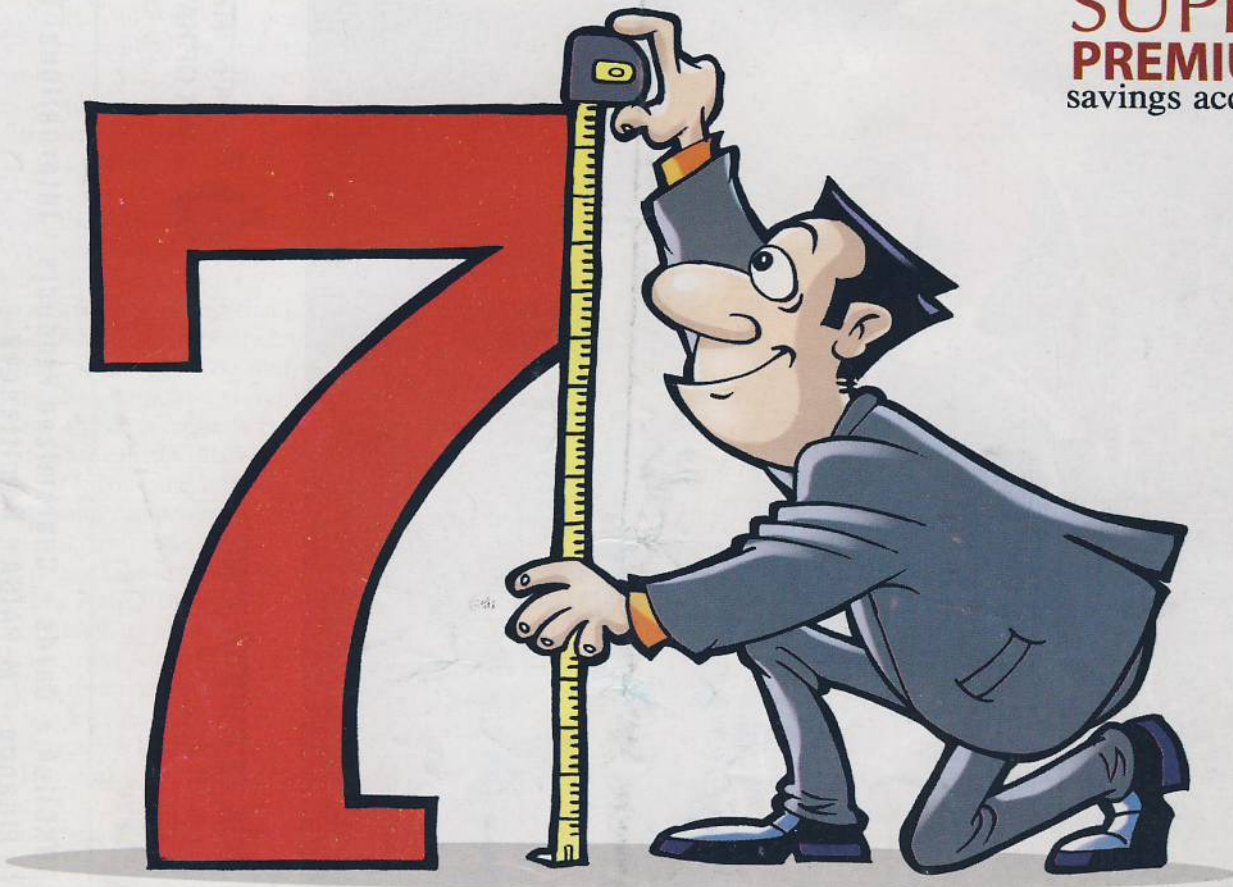
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