



OPINION
DIPAK GYAWALI



INTERVIEW
VERENA GRAFIN VON ROEDER



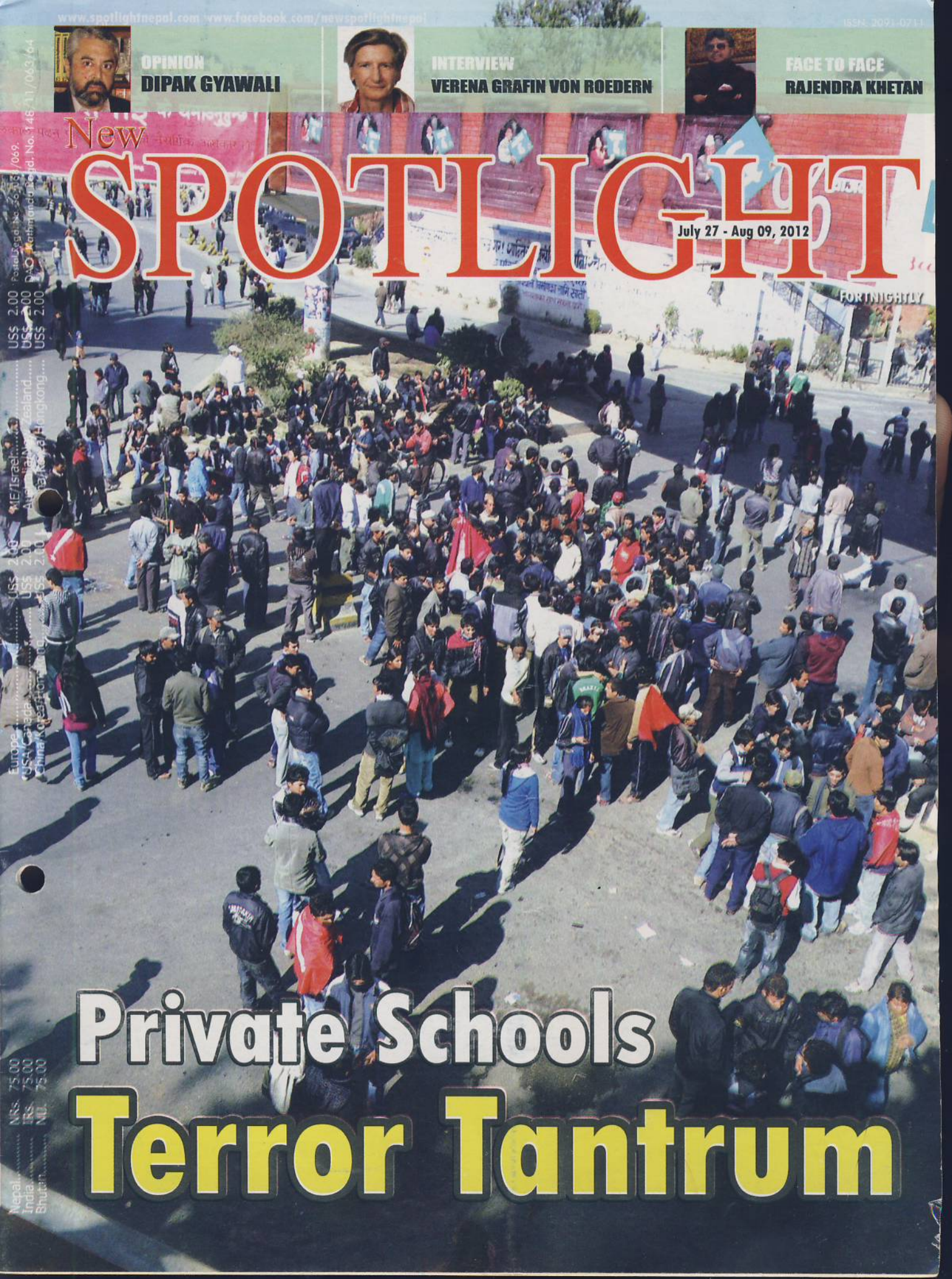
FACE TO FACE
RAJENDRA KHETAN

New SPOTLIGHT

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Editorial

At a time when some student unions are vandalizing schools and buses, sending terror inside the classroom, the entire society is helplessly watching as if it is justifiable in a civilized world. The concerned political parties are yet to denounce the acts of vandalism. Is Nepal's politics heading towards criminalization? This week's edition looks into the state of school education as the cover story. As the world economy is heading towards a major recession, Nepal will also have to face serious economic repercussions. Nepalese political leaders are, however, busy to settle the political differences. If the global economy continues to decline, the countries like Nepal will have to face a severe crisis. Since Nepal's economy depends upon remittances, the slow economic growth will badly affect the demand of the Nepalese workers. Along with political disputes, Nepal's political leadership also needs to look at the economic agenda as global economy will definitely hit the Nepalese economy. Despite several efforts, however, they have yet to find a consensus on the political deadlock. Nearly after two months, political parties have finally decided to postpone the elections of Constituent Assembly on November 22. This is neither surprising nor a big issue. Nepal's political parties have preferred to run the government under the process of selection. Given Nepal's political scenario, Nepal will have to go for a government without any basis for its accountability to the people. As in the past, Nepal's future government will be a national consensus government or a government without any accountability. We have also covered the tourism sector, particularly the government's decision not to renew the resorts and hotels inside the Chitwan National Park. This decision will badly affect Nepal's tourism sector.



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Japan Extends Grant Assistance to Nepal

The Government of Japan has agreed to extend a grant up to four billion, nine hundred and ninety-seven million Japanese Yen (¥4,997,000,000), equivalent to five billion, five hundred and ninety-six million Nepalese Rupees (NRs.5,596,000,000), or approximately sixty-two million, seven hundred and seventy-seven thousand US Dollars (US\$62,777,000) to the Government of Nepal for the implementation of two different projects, namely, the Project for Construction of Sindhuli Road Section III and the Project for Countermeasure Construction against the Landslides on Sindhuli Road Section II.

Kunio TAKAHASHI, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, and Krishna Hari



Baskota, Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, have signed and exchanged two different sets of Notes on behalf of their respective governments for the implementation of the aforementioned two projects. In the meantime, Satoshi FUJII, Senior Representative of JICA, and Lal Shanker Ghimire, Joint Secretary of the Foreign Aid Coordination Division of the Ministry of Finance, also signed and exchanged two separate Grant Agreements for the implementation of the said two Projects.

British Ambassador Opens UK Visa Center

John Tucknott MBE, the UK's Ambassador to Nepal, opened the new UK visa application centre in Kathmandu. He was joined by Simon Dadd, Regional Manager, UK Border Agency - South Asia, and Ms Kathryn Lefevre, General Manager, UK Operations - South Asia, VFS Global.

"Migration and people to people contact are important strands of the UK-Nepal relationship. Our UK visa operation supports this. It therefore gives me great pleasure to formally open this new visa application centre. One that is bigger, brighter and better for everyone who wishes to apply for a UK visa," said ambassador John Tucknott.

"We are pleased to be working closely with VFS Global, our commercial partner, to ensure an efficient visa service for all customers," said Simon Dadd

In 2011 the UK Border Agency processed in the region of 12,500 visas made in Nepal, of which about 80% of applications were successful. According to British Embassy press release, the UK government has made significant changes to study, work and settlement visas in 2011 and 2012.

British Council English & Education Initiatives

British council Nepal launched a portfolio of English and Education initiatives on 16th July 2012 at Hotel Radisson.

The initiatives are developed under a new strategy and will focus on the learning and teaching of English in formats that are not only convenient, interesting and innovative but also affordable, according to a press release issued by the British Council.

A three year schools program 'Connecting Classroom' in partnership with DFID (Department for International Development) is central to these initiatives, states the press release.

"We want to benefit everybody who wants to learn English in Nepal," said Dr. Robert Monro, Country Director of the British Council Nepal.

Indian Grant To Nawalparasi School

The Embassy of India and District Development Committee, Nawalparasi and Shree Bhimsen Adarsha Higher Secondary Signed a memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for providing Indian grant assistance of NRs. 28.90 millions for construction of a three-storied school building under Nepal-India Economic Cooperation Programme. This is the eighth development project in the Nawalparasi District being undertaken with the Indian assistance under Small Development Projects.

Chinese Ambassador At Siddhartha Vanasthali

Chinese ambassador to Nepal Yang Houlan attended a program at Siddhartha Vanasthali Institute (SVI)

on "Experiencing China". Ten SVI students shared their experiences of visiting China last year. Madan Regmi, Chairman of China Study Centre, also attended interaction program with the students and teachers.

Chinese ambassador Yang also donated a series of books about China to SVI on behalf of the Chinese Embassy in Nepal. According to Chinese Embassy website, Laxman Rajbanshi,



Founder Principal of SVI and Rupak Rajbanshi, Principal of SVI gave their speech respectively.

13 INGOs Take Part In Aid Management Platform

Representatives of 13 INGOs, all of whom are members of the Association of International NGOs (AIN), took part in a three-hour training on Aid Management Platform (AMP) at Hotel Everest on 18th of July. The AMP is an online web-based information system set up at the Ministry of Finance to keep track of bilateral, multilateral and I/ NGO aid coming to Nepal.

Organized by Ministry of Finance, Foreign Aid Coordination Division, the training oriented the participants on the technicalities of information system and on entering the data into the system. The 13 INGOs will enter key information on the amount of resources they bring in Nepal into the information system in coming weeks.



Vice President Parmananda Jha attending National Day of Republic of France

BOK Branches In Maharajgunj & Battisputali

As a means to provide banking facilities to a larger Nepali mass, Bank of Kathmandu Ltd. opened its 2 new branches in Kathmandu: Maharajgunj and Old Baneshwor, Battisputali. The Maharajgunj branch was inaugurated by Chairman of the Bank Narendra Kumar Basnyat and the Old Baneshwor branch by Director of the Bank Satya Narayan Manandhar. With the addition of two new branches, Bank of Kathmandu now has a total of 45 branches and 7 counters throughout the country. Apart from this, the customers can utilize the facility of its network in 54 ATM counters.

The branches were opened with the motive to provide banking facilities to people residing in these areas who have yet to experience banking activities and its advantages. The bank has taken the policy of expanding its branches throughout the country focusing on all 3 major areas; Urban, Semi-urban & Rural communities.

The Bank has been successful in providing services to various customers from Dhangadi in Western Region to Birtamod in the eastern as well as Jumla in the remote areas. The Bank now has its presence in 13 zones and 27 districts of the country and will soon be opening a Branch in the Sagarmatha Zone and henceforth will be covering all the 14 zones of the country.

According to a press release, addressing the inauguration function Chairman of the Bank Narendra Kumar Basnyat stated that the Bank is always keen to provide its services to maximum number of people serving customers from both urban and rural areas. Likewise, Director Mr. Satya Narayan Manandhar quoted that Customer Satisfaction has always been Bank's priority.

The newly opened branches in Maharajgunj and Old Baneshwor will provide service of deposit, loan, ATM, remittance and several other facilities offered by the Bank.

Mega Bank Celebrates 2nd Anniversary

Mega Bank Nepal Limited, which according to its CEO Anil Shah, came into existence with the vision of becoming the Bank for every Nepali, celebrated its 2nd Anniversary to mark the successful completion of two years of its operation recently.

In the path of achieving its goal, the Bank has accumulated numerous achievements since its commencement of operations on 7th Shrawan 2067. The Bank has been successful in opening 28 branches, ranging from the East to the West of Nepal while continuing its activities to extend hi-tech banking services to cater to the rural populace of the country.

"The fact that we have a customer base of around 73 thousand within 2 years, among which around 43 thousand was added during the past fiscal year, is a clear demonstration of the Bank's commitment to growing business and as well as the trust the Bank has earned across the nation," said Anil Keshary Shah, Chief Executive Officer of the Bank.



During the fiscal year 2011/12 the Bank has grown its deposit base by around Rs. 4 billion to reach Rs. 9.2 billion, and enhanced its loans & advances by Rs. 3.2 billion to reach Rs. 8 billion, according to Shah.

"We have been successful in generating profit since the initial year of inception," stated the Chairman of the Bank Prof. Dr. Madan Kumar Dahal.

Nepal Gets Finnish Support

Finland's Chargé d' Affaires a.i. to Nepal Kari Leppänen signed an agreement with NGO Federation of Nepal for support of NPR 16 348 254. The Embassy supports NGO Federation of Nepal to implement project on Promoting NGOs' Governance and Management in Nepal. The project will be implemented in close collaboration with the concerned Government agencies and stakeholders. The total budget of the project is NPR 18 184 254.

NGO Federation of Nepal will implement the project "Promoting NGOs' Governance and Management in Nepal" between July 2012 and July 2015. The project will be implemented in seven districts (Parvat, Baglung, Kaski, Bhaktapur, Kavre, Dailekh and Doti) of Nepal and about 600 NGOs/CSOs working in these particular districts and entire network of NGO.

Korea-Nepal Institute Of Technology Opened

President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav inaugurated the Korea Nepal Institute of Technology in Tamnagar Butwal. During the ceremony, Dina Nath Sharma, Education Minister, Park Dae Won, KOICA President, Kim Il Doo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Kishor Thapa, Education Secretary, Vice Chairman of CTEVT, Resident Representative of KOICA Nepal Office and other dignitaries were present.

The government of the Republic of Korea spent US\$ 5.68 million for the Establishment of the Korea-Nepal Institute of Technology (KNIT) in Butwal. The objective of this project is to enhance and upgrade the quality of technical education and vocational training in Nepal. ■



Nishchal N. Pandey talking with Indian PM Dr. Man Mohan Singh after the inauguration of Madanjeet Institute of South Asian Studies, at Pondicherry University on June 29

Water Undercurrents

By DIPAK GYAWALI



Reliable water and energy supplies are a *sine qua non* for any self-respecting country hoping to achieve economic prosperity. Unfortunately, in Nepal thanks to myopic political leadership within each major party that cannot think beyond the welfare of its coterie, both these sectors are in a dismal state. To expect the current dispensation to improve utility supplies, when it could not carry out the main task of drafting a new constitution, would be naïveté. But some reflection is due so as to understand the undercurrent dynamics that will roil the water sector in the years to come from the inactions or mal-actions of Nepal's new political masters.

For a country with no parliament, no constitution and no legitimate government either national or local, it is strange that things do run. No one has really died of thirst as yet, nor is it impossible to charge mobiles and inverters in the hours the utility does provide electricity. The fact that a total breakdown has not occurred is a tribute to the middle and lower ranks of Nepal's bureaucracy that plods on tinkering and muddling through with the basic minimum they are authorized to handle. At the higher echelons, however, the vacuum left by political dysfunction is being filled, unfortunately, one must add, by international busybodies. Fortunately this intrusion is being countered by an assertive younger bureaucracy in quite a few instances. The machine-readable passport case was one positive example. Another has been the Nepali hydrocracy's reaction to the World Bank's Ganges Basin Strategic Assessment report.

The Ganga basin, shared by Bangladesh, India, Nepal and China, has a long history of well-meaning attempts to foster regional cooperation with an equally long list of studies littering the landscape as graveyard tombstones. The first was Harvard University's attempt in the early 1960s followed by UK's then ODA in the Kosi basin. They collapsed due to Mrs Indira Gandhi's paranoia in the wake of the 1965 Tashkent agreement. Ford Foundation was next with its Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna attempt that produced a few books bemoaning the lack of regional cooperation to harness the basin's massive potential. The ADB's "growth quadrangle" too went nowhere, and neither did the Canadian/World Bank/Bechtel 18-volume, 15 million dollar study on the Karnali-Chisapani in the late 1980s. The latest addition to the graveyard is the World Bank's Strategic Assessment. All have crashed against an immovable mass: Delhi hydrocracy's strict bilateralism that does not allow any regional cooperation in water, its ludicrous data secrecy and its refusal to even admit that regulated water from dams in Nepal has massive multipurpose, non-power downstream benefits, leave aside

trying to share those benefits equitably.

The Strategic Assessment was done under the aegis of what is called South Asia Water Initiative (SAWI), a consortium of donors led by the World Bank with well-meaning UK, Norwegians and Australians in tow. It was supposed to have been "owned" by what is called the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD), a process begun in 2006 primarily by UK's International Institute for Strategic Studies but later taken over by the World Bank. It involved senior members of government and opinion makers of countries sharing rivers of the Greater Himalaya engaging in dialogue to promote cooperation in developing the region's waters. Five dialogues were held till 2010 but somewhere along the way, the Bank decided to morph it all into a Track 1 process keeping even the ADD members in the dark, and simultaneously doing a 'strategic assessment', all the while neither informing the government (at least of Nepal)



nor opinion makers in the country. A presentation was made after the assessment's completion where the study was criticized severely by government and non-government experts for untenable assumptions; but these criticisms were totally ignored and the report disseminated in Sweden and later to the government. (ADD members have not been given this report by the Bank, nor were they consulted as Bank experts unilaterally went about doing their work)

It is this strategic report that has recently been torn to shreds by the younger hydrocrats in Nepal. A meeting called by the Ministry of Irrigation on 1st July fired the first official salvo, and another meeting, on 20th July that was chaired by the doyen of Nepal's retired water officials Karna Dhoj Adhikari, saw Nepal's present and past officials as well as water experts united in their rejection of the Strategic Assessment.

What was so bad in the report? But before that, what so good that the advisor to PM Baburam, the colourful Mr Rameshwar Khanal, was seduced into praising it publicly, even though he is no water expert? It is indeed so lucidly well written busy policy makers can easily succumb to its charms. Unfortunately, that does not hide its flaws when experts look at it, which is what happened when Nepali hydrocrats started going through it with a fine comb. On the technical side, its models use Nepal's open data, fail to get any Indian data, and project mountain hydrological conditions onto the overall basin plains right down to Bangladesh, without assessing the plains at all. It ignores major studies of the past such as that funded by the Bank itself on Karnali, incorrectly assesses the status of groundwater and its hydrology, fails on sediments completely, whether for storage or in the embanked plains, and ignores the very basics of integrated water resources management that was

promoted by the Bank in the past. It then jumps to conclusions that are questionable, especially from a political-economic angle.

It concludes that building dams in Nepal (drowning Nepali villages) has negligible flood control benefits for the basin as a whole claiming also that all of Bihar and UP have been embanked, ignoring the fact that in the immediate riparian downstream the medium-term benefits are big. It also downplays the massive irrigation, navigation and other benefits from doubling or even quadrupling downstream dry season flow by the contradictory argument that agriculture productivity in UP and Bihar are low and hence there are no irrigation benefits. Any undergraduate agriculture economist would have argued to the contrary, that in a land-rich and water scarce region such as the northern Gangaic plains, providing double dry season flow would double irrigated area and even cropping intensity! Nepal's Agriculture Perspective Plan funded by donors like ADB says that 27% of overall irrigated agriculture's productivity is due to water availability, and in India's Tehri dam, power is only 40% of the benefits while irrigation accounts for 60%. The World Bank's study ignores it all. It thus overvalues hydropower export, ignoring the fact that projects like SMEC's West Seti collapsed after some 14 years of effort because Delhi hydrocracy was forcing the price of electricity from Nepal to below market rates, levying import surcharge and raking in billions in rent while Nepal would get measly millions from royalties.

Hence the primary conclusion of the Strategic Assessment – that Nepal forget about multipurpose projects (and the irrigation, flood control, navigation as well as other benefits associated with them) and go immediately for agreements with India on hydropower export only – had our young hydrocrats and experts all riled up. In their minds the World Bank had surrendered to Delhi hydrocracy's neo-colonial resource exploitation model and was no longer the reliable partner it once was. It was a sad day hearing it; but to be fair to the World Bank, if our own political masters a la S. D. Muni's latest exposé have long so surrendered, why blame the Bank for following their lead? ■

POLITICS

Unaccountable Rule

With no sign to hold the elections of representatives to make the law and govern anytime soon, Nepal seems to be heading towards a situation when either political consensus or other non-elected government will continue to rule

By **KESHAB POUDEL**

After holding a meeting with election commissioners, leaders of major political parties unanimously expressed their view that it is impossible to hold the election on November 23 in the existing political scenario.

The leaders of three major political parties Prachanda of UCPN-Maoist, Jhalnath Khanal of CPN-UML, and Ram Chandra Poudel of Nepali Congress drew the conclusion that the election is impossible as scheduled for November.

The meeting between EC officials



and top leaders of major political parties ended inconclusively as the leaders remained divided over the extension of the deadline set by the EC to remove legal and constitutional hurdles to facilitate the conduct of the new elections.

Earlier, the EC had set third week of July for amending the electoral regulations and the interim constitution, saying it needs at least 120 days to prepare for the Constituent Assembly polls declared by the caretaker government.

This is neither surprising nor new in Nepal's context. In 60 years of democratic experiments, Nepal has seen fewer than 15 years under elected and unaccountable governments. Nepal's history is such that there have been more nominated governments than elected and accountable ones.

After the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1951, Nepal waited till 1959 for the

elections. The first popularly elected government was dismissed just after its one and a half years in power. Nepal was under a one party system for another thirty years with periodic elections for local bodies and national assembly.

After the political change of 1990, there was drastic change in the political process with constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy with periodic elections. From 1990 to 2001, Nepal experienced absolutely a free experiment of multi-party democracy.

But in five years of the experiment, Nepal's multi-party pluralistic system came under the violent attack of Maoist. Despite this, it lasted another five years and finally the parliament was dissolved with the recommendation of

prime minister in 2002.

After dismissal of the government by the king in 2002, the country came under the direct rule of the king till 2006. King Gyanendra reinstated the parliament. After 2006, the country came under the joint rule of seven parties and Maoist alliance till holding the elections for CA in 2008. With the demise of the Constituent Assembly in 2012, Nepal is again under the rule of non-elected government.

Although prime minister and other parties knew that elections will be impossible following the demise of the Constituent Assembly on May 27, they were not in a position to prevent the demise of CA.

In the history of modern Nepal, Nepalese have been ruled by popularly elected governments less often than by non-elected government. Given the present political scenario, it is unlikely any new elected government will be there any time soon. ■

PM Will Quit On Political Consensus



- PRACHANDA

After completion of the UCPN-Maoist plenum, party chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda Spoke to the media. Excerpts:

How do you see the possibility of holding the elections?

Our party has already decided to hold the elections. We will work now to make them successful.

Do you think the other parties will agree?

There is no alternative before us. It was a decision taken under the compulsion of circumstances. Our party will now go to villages to make the coming elections successful. This is the message of our plenum.

What about the decision of other parties?

It is necessary to find a political consensus to hold the elections. We are going to hold a series of meetings to make the CA elections possible. We need to develop understanding and consensus. We will be more flexible towards this end.

What other alternatives do you see?

All political parties need to settle the issue like identity based federalism, promulgation of new constitution from Constituent Assembly and formation of an all party government. These will be a part of the new road map.

Do you believe the elections will be held?

Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and other parties are also coming closer to an agreement on the elections. This is a good sign. The process to hold the elections for CA is in the final stage. We can hold the elections for the CA and later on the CA will be transformed to a parliament with a five years' tenure.

How do you see the possibility of CA revival?

At a time when all political parties are gradually heading to hold the elections for CA, there is no sense to talk about the revival of CA. It is an outdated idea now. We will promulgate the new ordinance and amend the constitution through consensus. This will help us hold the elections.

Other political parties are demanding the resignation of prime minister Baburam Bhattarai as a prerequisite to hold the elections. What do you have to say on this?

I don't think the resignation of prime minister can settle any problem of the country. Resignation cannot bring any solution but it will create more problems. After the consensus among political parties, we are ready to form an all party national government under the leadership of Nepali Congress.'

After such a long dispute, what future do you see for the UCPN-Maoist?

Our party has united now and we have decided to hold the national convention. There are no more internal differences among Dr. Baburam Bhattarai and Narayankazi Shrestha and I. ■

MAOIST PLENUM

Prachanda Slides

Despite hurling physical assaults against one another, UCPN-Maoist leaders temporarily buried their hatchets of political differences

By A CORRESPONDENT

Until a year ago, UCPN-Maoist leader Prachanda was regarded as a strong political personality who was said to have the ability to guide the political course of the nation. However, his status has changed so much now. After the plenum of the party, Maoist supremo Prachanda is nowhere near what he was then. Even his personal privileges, including house and cars, have been stripped.

After the split of the UCPN-Maoist, it was Prachanda who was weakened so much that he is now in no position to say anything against prime minister Baburam Bhattarai. "Demanding the resignation of prime minister is nonsense," Prachanda said in a press conference. "There is no question to replace prime minister Bhattarai at this moment."

The sudden shift in the tone of Maoist leader Prachanda has a certain reason. In the three-day long party plenum, UCPN-Maoist leaders used hate and abusive words against one another. The second day meeting was so tense that police rescued their leaders when followers of UCPN-Maoist leader Prachanda and the prime minister threw stones in the crowd.

The acts of Prachanda's followers strengthened the prime minister. At the end, aggressive



Prachanda had to bow down before Bhattarai, accepting to form a probe commission for the misuse of party funds, return of current residence and end his luxurious lifestyle.

Although Maoist leaders Prachanda and Baburam came out at a press conference shaking hands, hugging and sharing dais as if nothing unusual had taken place a day earlier, prime minister Baburam Bhattarai made a political gain out of the chaos.

Split just a month ago, UCPN-Maoist is, in real terms, under a process of the third split. Although senior leaders agreed on a compromise, inner party disputes have already intensified and nobody needs to be surprised in case of the party's third split.

"UCPN-Maoist is now united and we have buried all the differences for the sake of the country and the people," said prime minister Baburam Bhattarai, who is now in dominant position in the party against Prachanda. "We don't have any groups now and we have only one line of thought."

As Prachanda was badly humiliated in the plenum, as he was compelled to accept all the demands by the prime minister, now everyone is waiting to see another battle in the next convention unfolding. It will remain to be seen how the crack will further intensify or narrow in the UCPN-Maoist party. The recently concluded plenum has gone to strengthen the prime minister for sure. ■

Prez Can Act As Nation's Conscience

DINESH TRIPATHI

DINESH TRIPATHI is a well known name in the legal sector. As an advocate, Tripathi has taken part in land mark constitutional issues at the Supreme Court. Tripathi, executive member of South Asian Human Rights Watch, spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excerpts:

How do you see the political and constitutional state of Nepal following the expiry of the deadline of the Constituent Assembly?

It was a dream project of Nepal to write a new constitution through the Constituent Assembly and it was a long cherished goal. Writing a constitution through the CA is the transformation of sovereignty to the people in real terms. This is a process of transfer of sovereignty to the people. This is the way to reassure the sovereignty of the people. This is the way to express the feeling of 'we the people' or to assure the sovereignty. That dream has now been hijacked.

How do you view the elections process?

Although the date for the elections has already been announced, there is a constitutional vacuum for lack of a clear legal and constitutional basis to hold them. The election was announced not for holding it but with an intention to capture the state powers. It is a well calculated strategy of Maoists to capture the power.

Some former CA members have been saying that it was dissolved by the prime minister. How do you look at this?

As just a member of the CA, the prime minister does not have the right to dissolve the CA as the CA is not a legislature parliament. Dissolution of legislature is the prerogative of the prime minister but the CA does not have periodical elections and it is one time event in the life time of any nation. The CA is not under the ambit of prime minister for its dissolution.

If that is so, why did the prime minister recommend fresh elections?

As the prime minister does not have the right to dissolve the CA, he does not have the right to fix the date for elections. In a parliamentary democracy, the prime minister has the right to recommend the dissolution and he or she can call the date for elections. However, the CA is guided entirely by different jurisprudence. CA is not a legislature but a Constituent Assembly and legislature is a part of Constituent Assembly.

Why are so many people concerned about all this?

A wrong propaganda is created about the dissolution of CA. Actually, CA died naturally after completion of its tenure. According to Interim Constitution, the tenure of CA was just two years. However, the tenure was extended up to four years. It is finally the intervention of the Supreme Court which set the tenure. In its order, the Court made it clear that the CA needs to produce either the new constitution or go for other alternatives. Otherwise it would cease to exist. As per the decision, the CA ceased to exist at 12 PM of May 27, 2012. Nobody recommended for the death of CA, neither the prime minister nor the cabinet.

What constitutional ways do you suggest?

At the heart and soul of the present interim constitution are Articles 38 and 43. These two articles recognize political parties as the main forces of the constitution. Article 38 says

that the prime minister shall be selected by the political consensus. According to article 43.1, the conduct of the business of government of Nepal shall be carried out consistently with the aspirations of the united people's movement, political consensus and culture of mutual cooperation. It has also specifically laid down groups for preparing the government program through mutual agreements.

How do you see the possibility of revival of Constituent Assembly?

Within the existing provision of the Interim Constitution, there is no provision for the revival of the CA. If we agree that the CA will be revived, we need to accept the proposition that prime minister has the right to dissolve it. If we agree on this proposition, we have to accept the fact that it was not a CA but a legislature parliament.

Some people are arguing that there is a possibility for the revival of the Legislature Parliament. How do you look at it?

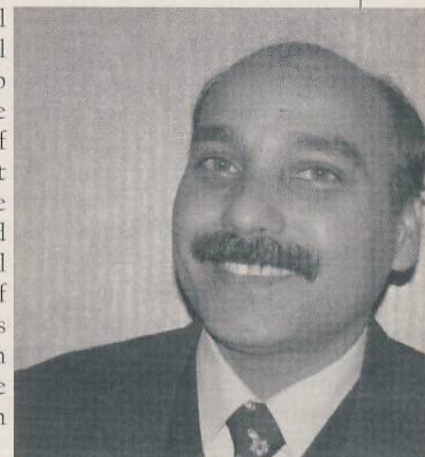
There is no independent status for the Legislature Parliament as it was just a shadow of the CA. We held the elections for the CA and the Legislature is a part of CA with limited rights. The constitution clearly said that the tenure of CA is two years and the Supreme Court under its ruling fixed the tenure of CA.

How about the resignation of the Prime Minister?

Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai has to resign as the country has to fulfill several agenda including writing constitution, holding the elections for local bodies and national parliament. I don't think this government can do these. Even the Interim Constitution has made it clear that no person can be prime minister without being a member of the Legislature Parliament. Since he is just a care taker government leader, his role will be now to pave the way for formation of new government. Care taker government cannot fulfill major obligations. There is the need to form an all-party government with a broad base.

What is the role of the president?

The President has three powers in the context of Nepal. Renowned British constitutionalist Begat said head of the state has three powers: right to warn, right to encourage and right to suggest. He can suggest to political parties and the government. If political parties and the government work against the nation, the president can also warn them publicly. The President is the first citizen of the nation and he is the first public opinion maker. What he speaks is the conscience of the nation. In the present context when the country's constitutional process is defunct, the president can work as a facilitator and help to find out solutions. ■



The Role To Say Something

By JEEVA RAJ BUDHATHOKI



Although the Constituent Assembly (CA) is no longer there now, some facts and inside stories are interesting to discuss. Of them, speaking in the House is an important and compulsory factor and procedure of the Parliamentary Practice. It can be conceived by other themes that the speeches delivered by the members are income sources of the parliament system. However, it is a very important matter that a query may arise how it is compulsory to speak as a member in the House and whether there is any clear cut legal provision or not.

This topic is referential to CA but because of undertaking the responsibility of Parliamentary affairs by CA here is using the word 'House' in common sense either it be a CA or Parliament. A House is a composition of people's representatives. It means that they have to put the people's notions and views in the House for what they got the mandate from their voters. With this viewpoint, parliamentarians must speak in the Parliament House by moral obligation. However, there is no hard and fast rule whether a parliamentarian should speak or not. It depends

on personal interest of a parliamentarian. However, sometimes, there are so many factors to make a parliamentarian speak or not. But, speaking or not speaking in the House or Committee meetings, plays some important role publicly or in the personal political life of a parliamentarian.

During the four years of CA, 122 meetings were convened, except those of the 11 thematic committees. Throughout that period, among the then members, only one member Gopal Thakur had spoken 13 times, which was the highest number. In the second position, 11 members had spoken for 12 times. In the third position, 12 members had spoken for 11 times. Similarly, 93 members had spoken only one time and remaining others had spoken two times

to ten times. But 94 members had not spoken at all in that sense. Among the non-speakers, most had spoken in 11 Thematic Committee meetings and or at the CA only at the time of discussion on State Restructuring Commission's Report. But 19 members hadn't spoken anywhere.

Why such large number of parliamentarians didn't speak raises some queries. There are at least 5 factors behind it. The first, after setting the agenda to be discussed in the House, the fixed time is allocated by consensus of major political parties. Generally, the time is allocated as per the party's strength in the House. The sharing time among the parties again, is shared inside each party that they can share to some members or one or two members can consume the whole as per the subject



CA Building

matter. Second, according to the weight of the subject matter, senior leaders are always in priorities over the junior members as they don't take it as their responsibility to speak. Third, the Presiding legislators like the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Prime Minister and ministers do not take part in discussions. Fourth, due to not having interesting subject matter or MP's personal conditions related to one's physical as well as mental condition, he may not speak. Last, not having ideas and lacking proper knowledge about subject they may not speak.

To speak or not in House can be seen in two ways. Not speaking in House is, not making the voice of people who elected a person as their representative heard by others. Second, if a member

speaks more he is highlighted in the media and such persons become popular publicly and inside related political parties. They are also evaluated as capable members. By this, such member's political future is relatively safe than that of others. So, the first matter relates to moral values of democracy and the latter one is about unequal development of members' personality and political career.

In conclusion, with a view to respecting the democratic norms, every member should speak in the house and take part compulsorily to put the voter's views in the House. For example, the 94 members of the dissolved CA who had not spoken in the house that they had their millions of people deprived to put their voices in the House. At that time, 1 member had represented 42 thousand people. So 94 times of 42 thousand of people were not heard in the House. So, it is not democratic way under democratic system.

Similarly, political parties also should have encouraged all members to put their views. Those members who were unknown to the rules, regulations and process and other related matters of this field should have been given instructions and coaching by their own parties. Some NGOs and INGOs were massively involved in this field and they also had them

visit abroad but there was less chance to get such opportunities besides the elite group. Even if, some got somewhere, a lesser chance of their instructing was very high of their learning capacities. The laymen also hadn't tried to practice and learn more. Voters also should re-think for coming days on electing such members not speaking or expressing views about such invaluable matter of writing constitution. Likewise, presiding also should put public views in the house as a representative. For this purpose, whatever practice may have been there in the past Laws and Rules, they should be changed to make them friendly for coming days.

Budhathoki is undersecretary at Constituent Assembly Secretariat



Bringing Nepal's Politics Back On Track

Restarting The Journey To Peace, Prosperity And Democracy

By DR. SHAMBHU RAM SIMKHADA*

Which way is Nepal's politics heading? Recent developments including fears of Nepal becoming a failed state after the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (CA) remind me of a seminar in 2004, in which presenting the theme paper I had written "The challenge in Nepal is to make the inevitable process of change peaceful, democratic and progressive" (See Challenges to leadership, the Kathmandu Post 2005-4-19). Commenting on it, a foreign scholar warned "Nepal is the next Rwanda".

Thanking her for the concern, I explained that the nature of Nepali society and Nepal's conflict are different. To recollect, Maoists were waging their people's war and monarchists were trying to consolidate their rule by saying "support us or the Maoists will take over"; mainstream political parties had shot themselves in the foot; civil society was asking in exasperation "who wants peace here?" Conflict experts were preparing for the long haul. Meanwhile Nepalis were killing each other.

Back from the brink: Then, an idea, a peaceful national democratic progressive political centre isolating extremists of all sides became the rallying point against violence and autocracy. Many have forgotten the days of the insurgency and others are busy claiming credit or assigning blame for the peace process that has brought Nepal from there to here. Various stages of negotiations had started and failed. Only a combination of intellectual audacity, political will and deft diplomacy created the national/international convergence in support of peace and democracy. The Five Step Path to Peace and Democracy leading to the Twelve Point Understanding, successful People's Movement, reinstatement of the House of Representatives, Interim Government, Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) and the CA election are all results of this creative convergence.

The CA made Nepal a Republic; inheritor of a long history left his palace peacefully bidding *adieu* in a press conference; a citizen's son became President and the rebel leader the executive Prime Minister. So, politics of consensus produced some miracles, Nepalis felt proud for bringing Nepal back from the brink and Nepal's friends cheered.

Towards the brink again: Since those momentous changes, few new (or not so new) individuals have reached



positions of power but people are only suffering the agonies of this never ending transition and misrule instead of enjoying the fruits of change. More critically, *power at any price, for any purpose* is turning consensus to confrontation and crisis. Rather than focusing on *healing the wounds and wiping the tears* of the victims of old injustices and recent violence Nepal's politics is being pushed towards ethnic and regional conflicts. The dilemma between the politics of identity which is by nature conflict prone, divisive and disruptive and politics of better livelihood which needs cohesion, stability and peace is best reconciled by balancing power, the instrument, with justice, the goal, of politics. Failure of the CA and its ultimate demise is creating further confusion and crisis with deep divisions on the way forward.

Complicating domestic politics are the effects of globalization. Present generation of Nepali elites have surpassed all their predecessors in

entangling their lust for personal power and privilege with the complexities of international power politics so much that society is "over-exposed", the elite divided and politics polarized. In such a situation the role of the state, the central institution responsible for domestic politics, economic policy, national security and foreign relations is crucial. But Nepal is like a stateless state. Danger signs are everywhere-in the street, scholarship, media, political parties and government. Diversity of caste, ethnicity, language, region, religion, division of ideologies with communists against democrats, communists against communists, democrats against democrats, Maoists against Maoists, NC against NC, UML against UML, monarchists against republicans, Hindu against secular, unitary against federal state, tussle between the judiciary and the executive and confusion in the security sector-what are they if not signs of the classic

Hobbesian war of all against all scenario?

Perplexing as it seems, despite poverty, illiteracy, injustice and exploitation of the past and chaos and confusion of today, culture of co-existence and tradition of tolerance is keeping Nepal together. Infect the ethnic, linguistic, religious and regional diversities with extremism of ideologies, fundamentalism of religions, psyche of intolerance and tools of violence, add people's hunger/anger, multiply them with egos, ignorance, arrogance, greed for power and conflicts of interests, mix them with regional/global complexities and how long will it take for Nepal to tear itself apart?

Promise denied: Everyone invokes "the people" to justify their individual, ethnic, regional and party agenda. But what is being done may have little to do with the people who want to enjoy the fruits of their hard work in peace and security, came out in the millions for the promise of a sovereign, independent,

democratic, peaceful and prosperous Nepal for all Nepalis. Is such a Nepal in the making? The first step in the journey towards such a Nepal is a realization that the real conflict here today is about political culture; what comes first, personal, community/regional/party or national interest? And the choices are simple between right and wrong, justice and injustice, peace and violence, selfish power grab and honesty, compromise and sacrifice more than ideology, class, caste, ethnicity, region or religion on which politics is focused.

Amidst the confusion the genuine demands of better recognition and livelihoods, the real national agenda of durable peace, new constitution, free and fair election and good governance under a new political dispensation with fresh mandate of the people is getting lost. Have any political party or leader shared their vision of where they want to take

the new government should work on the following:

- Resolve the problem of the Maoist Army Combatants with commitment of all major political actors on peaceful competition for power
- Institutionalize parts of the constitution agreed by the CA
- Agreement on remaining parts with transitional arrangements on areas that need more work
- Hold free and fair elections and hand over power to the new political dispensation
- Until then, run the day to day administration, maintain law and order with strict enforcement of the rule of law
- Effective governance, zero tolerance on corruption and inefficiency
- Short term relief measures for *wiping the tears-healing the wounds* of those most affected by old injustices and recent

division, economic stagnation, social decay and national decline internally creating distrust with friends and well wishers externally. Then problems turn into real crises.

Many people may not know or may have forgotten about Rwanda, a nation of 10 million people in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, also known as Tropical Switzerland. In 1994 within 100 days 800,000 people were killed there in the conflict between two ethnic groups. Nepalese can be proud that they are different. They have ended the decade long internal conflict and brought Nepal back from the brink. But, if not careful, the Maoist class war could turn into the *classic Hobbesian war of all against all*. If that happens Nepal could make Rwanda look like a sideshow. This will, of course, be catastrophic for Nepal but it will also be unfortunate for our friends and neighbors.

Power obsession of politicians is mainly responsible for the failure and eventual demise of the CA recently, democracy remaining fragile, worsening people's livelihoods, the state threatened by violence internally and weakened externally since long. People are so alienated from politics that understandably there are calls for new leadership and a non-political government. But realistically cooperation among the major political forces is still the only way out of the crisis. A national consensus government and leadership of wisdom and courage can still bring Nepal's politics back on track, restarting the journey towards peace, prosperity and democracy.

After the last NC national convention I wrote about *the Mother of All Challenges* facing Nepal and the NC (Spotlight Oct. 29 Nov. 18, 2010). Time has come for all, particularly the Maoists, champions of republicanism, to show wisdom; the first citizen's son elected President of the Republic, to show courage and the NC leaders, torch-bearers of the democratic awakening, maturity to collectively demonstrate that Nepal's republican rulers can meet the challenges facing the country.

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The first step in the journey towards such a Nepal is a realization that the real conflict here today is about political culture; what comes first, personal, community/regional/party or national interest?

Nepal collectively as a society-country-nation-state in the next five, ten or twenty years and how? Without a minimum consensus on such a vision how could the CA agree and promulgate the Constitution? The ray of hope created by the successful regrouping of the Maoist Army Combatants, handover of their weapons and cantonments to the State has now been bungled with the whole exercise in the risk of unraveling. Any wonder, leaders on whom people reposed so much faith and received so much international support are losing credibility?

Bringing Politics Back on Track: Nepal faces multiple problems but the *distrust* among the main political actors is the key. Restoring trust is now possible only with a new national consensus government. Only such a government can bring the main political forces together for restarting the journey towards peace, democracy and prosperity. Specifically,

violence

- Prepare the groundwork for the longer term prosperity of the people
- Restore the faith of the people in democracy
- Strengthen good relations with the international community and restore relations of trust and confidence with the two immediate neighbors

Leadership: Ultimately, politics is about values and leadership. Exercising state power by ignoring right and wrong, compromising with vital national interests makes society unjust, nation-state weak. When they see this happening people begin to lose faith in the system and those running it. Lack of "values consensus" increases violence paralyzing the state. Effective governance can smooth the twists and turns of transition arresting violence and crime, improving justice and order. But a dysfunctional state under incompetent leadership exacerbates political



Bleak Growth Prospects

By PROF. DR. BISHWOMBHER PYAKURYAL

One of the alarming states of the Nepalese economy is that the inflations are rising high. Transport prices were hiked due to the rise in the prices of petroleum products. Rise of prices in petroleum products gets reflected in the transport fares. The monitoring by the government is not good. By declaring the Year for Foreign Investment, the government is implementing an ambitious FDI project with a target to double foreign investment in Nepal. Between 8-9 billion rupees were committed last year. I don't understand how such ambitious plan to double foreign investment materializes. The flow of money is running in higher speed in the market due to the government's policy to accept foreign investment even in small projects. It is very unfortunate that 46 percent of the foreign aid in Nepal is out of the control of the government. Our economy has been passing through an inflationary period. This kind of money spending in the project will increase the circulation of money.

One of the major problems of the country right now is the soaring unemployment. We are encouraging young people to go for remittances. This type of economy which is based on remittances is always vulnerable. On the one hand we don't invest money to build our human capital. On the other hand we fail to lure the youth back in home. Annually, the government recruits only 1000 youths in civil service. Private sector has not generated any employment opportunity in the last five years. Nepal's trade deficit is huge. Out of Nepal's total trade, eighty percent is with India. We are exporting vegetable ghee to India. The money generated from export of such item is much different from what Nepal pays for the import of raw materials. Readymade garments and pashmina have picked up a little bit. Given the weak market in the developed economies, including the Euro zone, Nepal has had a very little opportunity to expand export. There is over Rs. 250 billion trade deficit. Along with huge trade deficit, the government has failed to achieve the target of ambitious plans

like fast track road and hydropower projects. At the same time, in the name of attracting foreign aid, we have been accepting everything. This increases inflation in the country. Nepal has increased foreign currency, with certain amount coming through remittances and certain amount through tourism. Due to rise in the value of dollar against Nepalese currency, Nepal's debt service charge too has gone up. Due to growing remittances, Nepalese currency has strong command now. It helps families



NRB

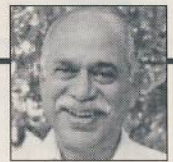
of remittance earners. Can we bypass manufacturing sector in the case of positive results from the service sector? For a sustainable and long term growth, the manufacturing sector has an important role to play. Manufacturing sector will support employment, long sustainable growth and others. Only after a strong performance of the manufacturing sector, the country can grow. However, Nepal's manufacturing sector is so poor that it is not in a position to sustain economic growth. Foreign investment in the service sector is very risky. This is the reason one has to think about the foreign investment in the service sector. If we ignore the manufacturing sector, looking at the service sector, it will hamper Nepal's economic development in the long run. Country's higher priority areas like hydro, information technology, health and education need to get the boost. For all this, there is the need to have an inter-party consensus on the economic agenda. Without political consensus, Nepal cannot implement even the international agreement. Nepal has to decide how many projects will be

launched under the public private partnership and how many projects will be launched under cooperatives. There is no record of spending of cooperatives. Even Nepal Rastra Bank has just recently included the money spent by financial institutions in calculating inflation. At a time when there is no institution to collect the savings and cooperatives, no body knows how much influence is there in increasing the inflation due to spending of these institutions. There is the need to have separate institutions doing separate things. In the present context, Nepal's left oriented parties are now in power and their main agenda is to encourage the cooperatives. According to this philosophy, they want to establish a cooperative in each and every organization. How the government can positively involve cooperatives in financial transactions remains to be seen. Nepal needs to encourage institutional investors from foreign countries. There are only individual

investors who are coming to Nepal. Although we have signed BIPPA agreement with India, we are unable to protect the interest of our manufacturing sector. We have not identified our fault lines in manufacturing sector and other areas. Our competitiveness is low not only in other parts of the world but even in Indian state of Bihar and UP with regards to the cost of production. Nepal's total labor factor productivity is lower than that of Bihar, UP and West Bengal. Even if they provide us free access to the market, we are unable to compete. Nepal has a huge trade deficit with India and China. Our concerns must be now on how to reduce the trade deficit. The government needs to introduce the plan. Nepal's inflation has gone up from 7.5 percent to 8.5 and growth estimation is also going down. As this year's monsoon is delayed and fertilizer supply has badly affected the farmers, it would definitely have negative impacts on the next year's GDP. Despite some positive signs in micro-level economy, Nepal's overall economic prospect is not encouraging.

(As told to New Spotlight)

Standstill In Kathmandu



By P. K. HORMIS THARAKAN

The procession of the Rain God of Nepal, Rato Machchindranath, is taken out in the month of Baisakh (April-May) in the Kathmandu valley. In May 2009, the chariot of the god toppled in Patan, one of the three major towns in the valley. Old timers said this was a bad sign.

That year turned out to be full of misery for Nepal. The then prime minister Pushpa Kumar Dahal (Prachanda) sought to dismiss R. Katawal, the then army chief, but was forced to resign himself, setting the clock back by at least three years in Nepal's quest to give itself a democratic constitution.

This year's chariot festival went off without any major mishap. But still there are many who wonder if the rain clouds hovering over Kathmandu signal something sinister. While the festival was on, the term of the Constituent Assembly (CA) expired, on May 28. With the supreme court refusing to countenance another extension of its term, the CA was dissolved automatically, without having completed the task for which it was set up — drafting the constitution. The opposition called Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai's bid to hold fresh elections on November 22 undemocratic and unconstitutional. Bhattarai claims this was the sole option open to him, since it was the only course of action approved by the supreme court in its judgment of November 25, 2011.

The prime minister had obviously calculated that his party could come back to power if fresh elections were held, enjoying as it did the support of the Janjatis and the Madhesis. However, his party, the United Nepal Communist Party-Maoist (UNCP-M), split on June 22 in a development that was not totally unexpected. A faction led by Mohan Baidya and C.P. Gajurel walked out of the parent party, alleging that the line followed by Prachanda and Bhattarai since 2005 was wrong. Both Baidya and Gajurel were in Indian jails back then and unable to take part in the internal party discussions that led to the historic decision of the Maoists to revert to multi-party democracy. Ironically, one of the primary conditions reportedly laid down by Prachanda and Bhattarai for reconciliation with the democratic forces in Nepal in those days was that they help secure the release of Baidya and Gajurel.

Not surprisingly, the Baidya-led

breakaway party, which calls itself the Nepal Communist Party-Maoist, has been loud in its denunciation of India. It is against fresh elections, it does not see the need for a CA and would rather have a constitutional commission representing all parties that would sit around a table and draft a new constitution. There have been suggestions that they have fallen into the trap of the royalists. The Nepal Congress and the Nepal Congress Party (Unified Marxist-Leninist) must be embarrassed to find themselves on the same side as the hardline faction of the Maoists on some of the contentious issues facing the nation.

It is too early to assess the breakaway faction's strength. Yet there is no doubt that the split will affect the UNCP-M's prospects at the hustings. Chances are that the UNCP-M will still be the single largest party, but its ability to dictate

The prime minister had obviously calculated that his party could come back to power if fresh elections were held, enjoying as it did the support of the Janjatis and the Madhesis.

terms in the new legislature would certainly be diminished. The party would be able to count on the support of the Madhesis and the Janjatis, but the propensity of the Madhesi parties to keep splitting does not help the process of an alliance. The leadership of the UNCP-M faced a tough time at its plenum, which concluded on July 22. Ex-militant cadres of the party demanded action against ex-commanders who were alleged to have misappropriated funds meant for the former. Prachanda was criticised for moving into a posh residence, prompting him to announce that he would vacate it. However, Prachanda and Bhattarai continue to be well in control of the party.

After the split in his party, the prime minister has declared that he does not rule out the revival of the CA. The election commission (EC) has pointed out that in order to overcome practical difficulties in conducting the parliamentary elections, amendments to the interim constitution (IC), the Election Commission Act and the Constituent Assembly Member Election Act are required. The EC had given the government time till July 22 to make

clarifications on this, since amendments to the IC can only be effected by the CA, which stands dissolved. This is probably another reason why the prime minister has said that he is not totally averse to the revival of the CA. However, the UCPN-M and its allies want contentious issues involving the names, number and boundaries of the provinces to be resolved to their satisfaction as a precondition for the revival of the CA. Since these were the issues that led to the impasse in the first place, it remains to be seen whether any early solution will be possible. The alliance has also put set the obvious condition that the supreme court must approve of the revival of the CA.

July 22 has come and gone, and the government has not been able to give the clarifications. The EC might give it some more time but since the political parties are no closer to an agreement than they were when the CA was dissolved, the dates for the elections are almost certain to be postponed.

In a bizarre turn of events, a certain Gyanendra Shah has let it be known that he does not mind getting his old job back. Since the job in question is that of constitutional monarch, the major political parties were quick to close ranks against him. It would be amusing, although good for Nepal, if the former king managed, by raising the spectre of a royal return, to bring all the feuding political parties together.

Political parties in Nepal have shown in the past that they are capable of overcoming impossible roadblocks. As they seek a way out of the deadlock, we in India need to analyse recent events. Most importantly, we need to examine whether we failed at crucial junctures to assess political personalities properly. There was a time when Prachanda was perceived as anti-Indian. But recent events show that he stood firmly with Baburam Bhattarai as a bulwark against anti-India forces in their party. As chairman of UCPN-M, Prachanda was even willing to face the threat of a split in the party rather than give up a line criticised as pro-India. This does not mean that Bhattarai and Prachanda are votaries of India, but it is important that we do not allow traditional mindsets to cloud our judgement as the prophets of doom hasten to write off the democratic experiment in Nepal.

The writer is a former chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (Courtesy Indian Express)



Nepal: A Journey into the Mythical Past

By BIPIN ADHIKARI

Originally published in 1877, the book *Nepal: History of the Country and People*, translated by Munshi Shew Shunker Singh and Pandit Shri Gunanand, is one of the earliest accounts of the country. The book is the translation of *Vansavali* or Genealogical History of Nepal.

The original manuscript of the book, according to editor Daniel Wright, was written in Parbate with an admixture of Sanskrit and Newari and was in the possession of Professor Cowell, a scholar of Sanskrit, at Cambridge. Wright also mentions about another draft, "or at all events a similar work, recognized by the Gorkhas and the Hindu races of the country, and its copies were in the British Museum and the University Library of Cambridge."

The history of Nepal, as covered by the book, is basically the history of the valley of Kathmandu. It is a mix of myths, stories handed down from the past, and some truths and realities. Beginning with the mythological period of the history and extending through the Satya, Treta and Dwapar ages, the book contains numerous curious legends regarding the temples, towns, and holy places of the country.

Editor Daniel Wright, who had the opportunity to spend ten years in Kathmandu Valley, has topped up the book with his Introductory Sketch. In its preface, he has pointed out that the translator Shew Shunker Singh, who was the Mir Munshi attached to the British Residency in Kathmandu at that time, had lived in Nepal for nearly thirty years. The Munshi was assisted, when necessary, by Pandit Shri Gunanand, a native of Nepal, residing at Patan, and whose ancestors, for many generations, according to Daniel Wright, have been compilers of this history. Wright has admitted that he himself was not an oriental scholar and had nothing to do with the translation beyond revisiting it for publication and adding a few notes regarding the customs and places mentioned. According to him, the illustrations in the book are copies of drawings. These drawings were made for him by a native and the portraits photographs taken by a friend.

The book makes an interesting read. It states that even though the country is small in its size, it possess a great variety

of races in its population, the principals being Gorkhas, decidedly the best-dressed part of the population, Newars, Magars, Gurungs, Limbus, Kirats, Bhotelis and Lepchas. The Khas and Magar castes have been described as those who came to the Valley with King Mukunda Sen, a brave and powerful monarch. They introduced 'sinki' and 'hakuwa' rice in the valley. All Nepalese, according to the book, consume a large quantity of tea, which is imported from Tibet, as much as possible. Hinting at absence of educational provisions, it has been pointed out that the subject of schools and colleges may be treated in Nepal as briefly as that of "snakes in Ireland." Commenting on the sanitary situation, Daniel Wright speaks aloud: "Kathmandu may be said to be built on a dunghill in the middle of latrines."

This is probably the only book based on Nepal that explains why Nepal has been traditionally described as the country cursed by a 'sati.' As the story is given, King Laxmi Narsinha Malla of Kantipur was served by a Kaji named Bhima Malla, who was his great well-wisher. He established thirty-two shops in the city and also sent Nepalese traders to Bhot. He visited Lhasa and sent back to Kantipur a large quantity of gold and silver. He also negotiated with Lhasa authority to return the property of Nepalese subjects dying there to the Nepalese government. Kaji Bhim Malla also brought Kuti, a Tibetan village, under the jurisdiction of Nepal. His services to the King were thus immense. He was even desirous of extending the rule of Laxmi Narsinha Malla, the 16th century King who is attributed of building the Kasthmandap (Maru Sattal) in 1595, over the whole country. However, some people behind the scene persuaded the King that Bhima Malla was aiming at making himself King, and hence, the King put him to death. His wife became a sati and uttered the curse, "May there never be 'bibeka' (sound judgment) in this durbar." The authors of this 1877 book quickly acknowledge in the foot note below: "And her curse seems to have stuck to the country to the present time." The year 1877 was also the year when Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana, who has been frequently referred to in the book, died, creating another

Munshi Shew Shunker Singh & Pandit Shri Gunanand, *Nepal: History of the Country and the People* (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1983) (Originally

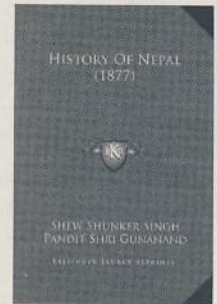
London: Cambridge University Press, 1877) (Edited by Daniel Wright)

wave of instabilities in the country.

Daniel Wright points out in the Introductory Sketch that Nepalese lawyers are not held in much estimation in the country. As the chief justice got a very meager salary of some two hundred rupees a month, the inducements for bribery and corruption were great. As a point of solace, Wright mentions that making an appeal to the Council, which practically means Sir Jung Bahadur, "justice is on the whole pretty fairly administered." To Jung Bahadur's credit, Wright clarifies that the old savage code of punishments, which involved mutilations and stripes among other methods, was abolished.

"Though the poor, people in general are contented [in Nepal] they have few taxes to pay, and their customs and prejudices are not interfered with. Justice is fairly administered, and the 'law's delays' are by no means so great as in more civilized regions. There are no legal harpies to foment litigation, no municipal corporations, no road-funds, no educational taxes, nor any of the thousand and one innovations that so exasperate the subjects of British India ...In extradition cases, unless the Nepalese are utterly indifferent in the matter, it is almost impossible to obtain the arrest of a criminal."

In the Appendix, Daniel Wright has pulled together the list of his great collection of Sanskrit manuscripts bought through the Pandits residing at Bhatgaon and Kathmandu. Some of them are believed to be among the oldest, if not the very oldest, Sanskrit manuscripts in Europe. The book has immense historical value. In the end, the worth of the book must be judged by what it has captured from the mythological or the real history of Nepal. ■



“Now Consensus Among Nepal’s Major Stakeholders Is Important”

VERENA GRAFIN VON ROEDERN

VERENA GRAFIN VON ROEDERN, ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany to Nepal, is close to complete her four years tenure to Nepal. Ambassador VERENA GRAFIN VON RODERN in her written interview to NEW SPOTLIGHT discuss various issues of Nepal-German relations.

You have spent in Nepal the very critical time of Nepal’s history. How do you see the overall situation of Nepal during your stay?

I share your opinion that my posting to Kathmandu coincided with very interesting and critical times in Nepal. The peace process was shaping up, election for the Constituent Assembly had just taken place, and the president and vice president were being elected the very day of my arrival in Nepal. The first government under the leadership of the Maoist party was formed a month later and little did I know that I would witness during my assignment to Nepal five different prime ministers from three different parties. Having extended my tenure by a year beyond the first three years, I hoped to see the promulgation of a new constitution, which unfortunately did not happen, though. The integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist ex-combatants made considerable progress, but time and again it was running into difficult waters. Out of the twin tasks present before Nepal, namely taking the peace process to its logical conclusion and writing an inclusive democratic constitution based on the rule of law, only the peace process has reached an irreversible stage. But a lot remains to be done on the constitution drafting front. Now consensus among the major stakeholders is important for preserving the achievements made by the past Constituent Assembly beyond its dissolution in order to move forward and find a solution to the remaining disputed issues including the future roadmap for overcoming the current political stalemate.

What is the state of relations between Nepal and Germany?

The diplomatic relations between our two countries were already established in 1958. Development cooperation started in 1961 and we have remained committed development partners ever since. Looking back, we have seen numerous high level visits, people to people contacts, a thriving NRN community in Germany, and a growing interest of Nepalese students to go for further studies to German universities. Over all, it is a very satisfying partnership which gets stronger by the day.

Germany has been supporting Nepal’s overall development programs. How do you look at the programs implemented in Nepal under German support?

Germany has been one of Nepal’s most reliable development partners for over 50 years. Since the start of its activities in 1961, the German Federal Government has provided more than half a billion Euro in the bilateral development cooperation. Our support has been targeted to more specific sectors jointly agreed with the Government of Nepal. In doing so, we have been especially conscious of Germany’s distinctive expertise in providing for Nepal development needs. Supported by both technical cooperation/assistance through GIZ and financial cooperation/assistance through KfW Development Bank, our development cooperation has achieved remarkable results. Still it does not do well to be complacent but, all in

all, the results have been quite encouraging. This is not to say that all goals have been reached and there is nothing more to be done, for development is a permanent process and the more you work for it the more new areas open up. There is no reason why our development programs should not be even more successful with continued cooperation from our partner organizations which include government institutions and non-governmental bodies. These partners are sometimes big and have a wide reach like, say, the FNCCI and its regional affiliates, but there are also smaller organizations with limited local reach but nevertheless seeking to develop models, which can be replicated for use in a wider area.

How do you see German assistance to Nepal?

To that end, the core of our assistance is focused on enhancing the capacity of the staff of our partners in the various projects.

For example, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) gives long-term support to the development of the health sector in Nepal, which is very important. This is done in full alignment with Nepal’s Sector Wide Approach (SWAp). Several donors have signed a joint financing agreement and pooled their funds, so that the massive task can be tackled from several angles and in a more coordinated manner.

The focuses in the health sector are on supporting decentralization and quality improvement, and on providing all people, especially those living in remote areas, with better access to improved health services. The concept of what is basic and essential has also changed with time. For example, the project “Promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health” emphasizes offering adolescent-friendly advice on family planning and contraception, and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, such as HIV.

How do you see Germany’s support in local governance?

In the sector of Local Governance and Civil Society Germany has a long history of support to Nepal. Several integrated rural development projects and the highly prestigious Bhaktapur Renewal and Development Project were implemented as early as the 1970s and 1980s. The current Sub-national Governance Program (SUNAG) builds on the experience of the previous programs. Its key objectives are to strengthen local self-governance, improve service delivery and extend local infrastructure in selected program areas.

The German Government has also contributed to the expansion of power generation capacity by the construction of hydro-power plants, both Lower and Middle Marsyangdi. These hydro-power plants represent 20% of the energy generation in Nepal. We have also supported NEA with the construction and equipment for the Load Dispatch Center which today facilitates proper distribution of the power generated. Further, we have promoted another part of the energy sector; biogas plants and solar home systems. These projects have been highly successful with around 280,000 biogas installations and over 300,000 solar home systems including 68,000 installed under the German support in the country up to now. The establishment and on-going support to Town Development Fund (TDF) is yet another remarkable initiative involving both German Financial and Technical Cooperation Agencies. Through TDF quite a number of

municipalities and urban centers have been able to finance their social and commercial projects to improve urban infrastructures.

How Germany has been supporting Nepal's Peace Process?

Since 2006, Germany has also been a contributor to Nepal's Peace Process by supporting the Nepal Peace Trust Fund and support to the betterment of the combatants who lived in the cantonments and surrounding neighbourhoods.

Overall, we are quite satisfied with our development partnership with Nepal. In the recently held bilateral consultations between the Government of Germany and the Government of Nepal it has been agreed to focus on sustainable economic development & trade as one of the three priority sectors of cooperation besides health and renewable energy & energy efficiency.

Nepal's developments needs are huge, and development partners need to harmonize among themselves to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of aid.

Recently, there is wider criticism about the role of Nepal's development partners, particularly on the issues of their support to inclusion process under which Nepal's donor partners are reportedly blamed for their role in creating hatred among communities. How do you look at it?

Germany's aid commitment is to complement the state's avowed goal of inclusiveness and has nothing to do with internal differences of opinion among political parties or other groupings. We make sure that our programs benefit the stakeholders and not any vested interests claiming to work for them.

German government is one of the key supporters of Nepal's hydro power development. However, recently no such projects are in the line after completion of Middle Marsyangdi. Is there any possibility to see Germany's support to power project?

Yes, Germany has been supporting Nepal in the hydro-power generation for the last two and half decades with financial assistance to the construction of Lower Marsyangdi (69 MW) in the early 1990s and Middle Marsyangdi (72 MW) in years 2008-09. With the opening up of the sector, the private equity, both domestic and foreign, has started to flow into the generation sector, and the construction of bigger plants is also being supported by the multilateral development agencies. With these developments in the power sector, Germany now sees the need to enhance the quality of power transmission and consumption through energy efficiency. Hence, our involvement will continue in the power sector albeit in the transmission of generated power and efficiency in energy consumption. We have vast experience in the efficient use of energy in appliances, buildings and industries, and we are currently working with various stakeholders in Nepal to apply this knowledge here. One should remember that 1 unit of power saved is equivalent to over 1.25 units generated here in Nepal. Being a highly energy efficient country, Germany believes that energy efficiency goes a long way in a country's development, particularly at times when the entire world is looking for options to minimize climate change impacts.

How do you see GIZ's role in Nepal's peace building and development process?

Germany has made a significant and noticeable contribution to the peace building process in Nepal. Right from 2004 to 2010 GIZ was active in the districts of Rukum and

Rolpa in the heartland of the Maoist insurgency.

These days, as mentioned before, the German government through GIZ gives support to the Nepal Peace Trust Fund, which was set up after the Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed in 2006. Unlike the six other donors contributing to the Fund, Germany follows a two-pronged approach, combining financial contribution with strengthening institutional



capacity. This leads to an essential improvement in the way the Peace Fund Secretariat administers the Fund.

Since 2007, GIZ has been implementing the project "Support of Measures to Strengthen the Peace Process" (STPP) in order to improve the living conditions in the cantonments and their surrounding communities. Its successes include provision of safe drinking water and better health services. Furthermore, with the various skills training courses the project arranged, altogether 16,000 former combatants can look forward to a future with more opportunities opening up. There are several other ways in which the project facilitates the reintegration process of the former combatants.

Local infrastructure has been improved under the project "Improvement of Livelihoods in Rural Areas (ILRA)", implemented in districts in the Far West through food and cash for work activities, a project which I was able to see with my own eyes. Conditions to achieve further economic development have also been created. For example, supply of better seeds and improved agricultural techniques have enhanced agricultural productivity in extremely poor areas, contributing to food security.

Advisors from the Civil Peace Service Program train partners in methods of non-violent conflict transformation like mediation, forum theatre, dialogue.

How do you see Nepal's overall situation following the dissolution of Constituent Assembly?

I, as many others, was rather disappointed when the Constituent Assembly elapsed without adopting a new constitution within the foreseen time frame. Political parties will now have to work hard towards preserving the achievements made so far and try to overcome the current political stalemate as soon as possible. Meaningful dialogue among stakeholders is an important measure towards that goal. More recently, such dialogues among political parties have been scarce, partly because both sides ask for conflicting preconditions. What is particularly worrying is that the constitutional and legislative vacuum combined with the political instability will have a negative effect on the economy. Absence of legislative oversight but also vacancies in important bodies like the Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority, the Election Commission or even the Supreme Court increases



Nagarkot Monsoon Blues

By ABIJIT SHARMA

chances of corruption, possibly leading into a governance crisis. Take, for example, the absence of elected local governments which has resulted into widely reported misuse of local development funds. Establishing transitional justice mechanism in accordance with international law and making outstanding appointments in constitutional bodies are important matters the parties can not afford to delay forever. Most importantly, the issue of federalism should not lead to dividing the country along caste and ethnic lines.

What is the volume of German support to Nepal and what are the areas of priority in Nepal?

In 2010/11 Germany's aid to Nepal amounted to EUR 32.7 million.

Recently, "Sustainable Economic Development and Trade" has been adopted as a priority area, in addition to "Health" and "Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency" which have been priority areas for many years already. We have already worked in the economic sector, but making it a priority area adds strength to the planned activities.

The ongoing SUNAG program in the previous priority area of Promotion of Local Governance and Civil Society will phase out in mid 2014, but some activities may very well continue within the current priority areas.

Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change and the country has to face severe consequences reportedly. How do you look at it?

The negative effects of climate change at local, national, regional and global levels are there for all to see. We are well aware that both the economy and ecology of Nepal are highly vulnerable to climate change. One response to this is the promotion of renewable energy sources, a field in which German development cooperation has been remarkably successful. As a result, many households, especially in rural areas, have changed to using biogas and/or improved cooking stoves, thus contributing to the mitigation of climate change as well as creating better health conditions for the family.

Further, on behalf of the German government GIZ supports the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and other implementing partners in Nepal, India and China in the "Kailash Sacred Landscape Initiative". This aims to sustain and protect the local biodiversity and ecosystems and to improve the livelihoods of the predominantly poor population in the region, which is considered sacred by Hindus, Buddhists and also others. ■

Nagarkot is one of the best places to unwind for the Kathmanduites. To beat the heat and the busy weekday-life, a family trip of ours had been arranged to the picturesque getaway last weekend. However, the scenic hill station did not turn out to be as expected. The first jolt came as soon as we set out for our journey. Grubby, muddy and to top it all the rainfall from the previous day had completely ruined the way to our much hyped resort, famous for hosting high profile

anytime soon. As the demolition of houses continue, the mud and rubble mixed with rain water has created a crazy cocktail. Pedestrians, in particular have been the worst victims. It is impossible to walk about without stepping in a big load of slush or being splashed by one! Being a monsoon lover, I love the sight of rainfall but when it comes to taking a stroll, it's a big No No for now!

No cats and Dogs



personalities. After much effort we managed to reach where we were struck with a second blow — the pathetic service. The view next morning wasn't something to write home about either. The beautiful mountain range normally visible was masked by the mist and smog. The family get-together in itself turned out to be a fun event, but Nagarkot, we understood, was not meant for monsoons!

Kathmandu Roads

Speaking about monsoon, travelling in the streets of Kathmandu in this season has now started to become a nightmare. It has been quite sometime that the road extension had started but it shows no signs of ending

Someway or the other I end up comparing Kathmandu and Delhi in many of my columns. Well, this time its about the rain. As I mentioned earlier, I am quite a monsoon person. I love the rain. But once you're in Delhi, rain turns out to be more of a terror than something calming or romantic. When it rains in the Indian capital, it literally rains cats and dogs. Sometimes, the streets are filled with waist length water and you end up being stuck in huge traffic snarls. Kathmandu's rain on the other hand is something I enjoy. The weather especially after the rainfall has the power to soothe you no matter what. There is no cats and dogs here!

“Budget Has Become A National Fairytale”

- RAJENDRA KUMAR KHETAN

RAJENDRA KUMAR KHETAN is a well known industrialist of Nepal. Chairman of Khetan Group, Khetan has keenly watched the economic development of Nepal. Khetan spoke to DEBESH ADHIKARI on various issues regarding the on-going state of the economy. Excerpts:

The government brought partial budget against the demands of the private sector. What are your thoughts on the budget and how should the private sector look at it?

There are no reasons for the private sector not to be happy. We as a private sector should not link ourselves with the budget. In fact, if will you go to the origin of budget, basically it is the income and expenditure of the government and we the private sector will look for stability and should not allow the budget to be more fairytale. Budget hardly affects us and private sector should compete in the market rather than chasing and discussing about the budget. Let budget mainly be the priority of the nation on the development side and sources of the fund by which development could be addressed from revenue, aid and foreign support and other local mobilization. I think budget should be limited to that. It has become a national fairy tale story, which I disagree to.

The recent surveys show that the performance of the manufacturing sector has been declining for some time now and Nepal has to mainly depend on the agriculture for national output. What are the main reasons?

Nepalese economy is not competitive because of lack of market, lack of raw materials, because of the size of the market, because the sea port is very far and the backward-forward linkages are difficult, so we cannot be competitive. Hence we have to diversify into area of comparative advantage and there are differences between competitiveness and comparative advantage sector. Probably if we add value on it, it may grow. But, in the mid-term and long term I don't see the possibility of the manufacturing industry growing much except for those whose raw materials are locally available or for those there is the size of economy which is the domestic size of the market.

Where is the economy actually heading from here?

It is more heading towards the service industry. Manufacturing will stand still, it won't seize the opportunity, it will not grow, but whatever the growth will be, it will maintain the pie for which there is the raw materials or the local demands.

Is Khetan group also moving towards service industry?

We have already decided that and we have already started that.

In the context of political instability, how do you see the coming days for the Nepalese economy?

It is going to be very difficult. There is anarchism, the bureaucrats are taking a lot of benefits of these political disturbances and exploiting the private sector and it is getting more and more difficult.

What is the state of labor act and the labor act amendment process?

I don't blame the labor act. It is more or less within the standard. What we need to understand is the weightage should be linked with productivity and that will enable us to be more competent, by paying and by getting the best out of labors,

both sides. More production, more benefit to the service men, and more production, more economic growth to the private sector. I think this is the way and for that probably some social security arrangement should be done, but in case there is a company which is not paying the minimum wages, then the labor department should take action.

Given the present state of labor unrest in Nepal, is there the possibility of getting foreign investment?

Forget about foreign investment, there is difficulty even in getting local investment. Foreign investment is basically discouraged in Nepal because the foreign investors cannot pay bribe and without bribe it is very difficult to work in Nepal so foreign companies are discouraged and the demands for bribe is going up every day. For the next 7-10 years, it is very difficult.

You are the president of Nepal-Britain Chamber of commerce. How is Nepal benefiting from this partnership?

We are trying to convince people, they came as a big delegation last year; we are trying to convince them. We are due to go to London and we will soon be doing that, probably either before or early next year. It is very difficult to convince them, but there is growing interest for Nepal, there is opportunity but there is unrest and the climate is not favorable.

Being a member of former of Constituent Assembly (CA), how do you foresee the political scenario in the coming days?

Everybody wants to become the prime minister and there is only one chair, until these issues are resolved, the political stability is not going to be in a very good form.

You did a lot of work during the tenure of CA. How do you think of the documents should be used now?

I think somebody should take the ownership and use it further. Probably the best way is to have an election for the parliament and that parliament should own that document and make a national consensus on that document. A 601 team cannot do this again. ■



PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Terror Tantrum

No sooner admissions open for school graduates to pursue higher secondary education than the student unions affiliated to various political parties announce programs to disrupt classes. Barely a month has passed since the announcement of the SLC results; but the private schools are already facing threats. Despite their contributions in upgrading the quality of education and preventing the money from going to foreign countries, private schools have been fighting a lonely battle against terror tactics by various groups

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

Students affiliated to the All Nepal Independent Students Union (Revolutionary), ANNISU-R, the student wing of the CPN-Maoist, torched a school bus belonging to the Delhi Public School near Seutipul in Dharan on July 24. The bus was carrying students when cadres of the ANNISU-R stopped it on the road inside the Charkosejhadi forest and torched it. It was taking students to school in Dharan from Biratnagar.

Similarly, Rato Bangla School's bus was set on fire as it was on its way to pick up kids in Kathmandu on July 16. Had the bus carried students, the situation could have been horrible. Attacks destroyed the buses in these incidents, indicating how terror is gripping the private schools.

An institution known for providing quality education in affordable prices at home, Rato Bangala, however, is always the target of terror from student wings, particularly affiliated to the Maoists. In the recent campaign that sees so much in a name, Rato Bangala should not merit attention as a target. The name is Nepali and the fees charged by the school are affordable.

So, the incidents prove the people right when they say quality education is under attack. Commoners, journalists, politicians and businessmen have been sending their kids to Rato Bangala School. Yet, when the school faced attacks, only a few people dared to speak against this.

Now Delhi Public School of Dharan, which is also known for quality education in affordable price in eastern Nepal, was targeted by radicals who don't want to see quality education in the country.

Since the campaign against the private schools launched by ANNISU-R began a week ago, it has already mounted assaults on a number of private colleges and schools, damaging their vehicles and properties worth millions of rupees and creating a state of fear in the schools. Instead of becoming a Zone of Peace, schools look like they are becoming a Zone of Terror.

Along with ANNISU-Revolutionary, students belonging to other student unions, including Nepal Students Union of Nepali Congress, All Nepal National Independent Free Students Union of CPN-UML and ANNISU of UCPN-Maoist have been launching physical assaults against private schools. They say that their agitation is against schools which use foreign names and charge high fees.

In the week-long mayhem, student groups also vandalized or shut down South Western State College (SWSC) in Basundhara and Everest Florida Higher Secondary School at Minbhawan, and White House International College, among others. The two days of general strike called by the students has already harmed the private schools.

"Private and boarding schools have been providing education to one third of

the total students. It is very sad that private and boarding schools continue to live under terror. Bomb and arson are becoming common in the schools. Even the government is indifferent about such things in a sense," said Dr. Baburam Pokharel, president of Private and Boarding Schools Association of Nepal (PABSON).

"Along with the students, even the Ministry of Education is asking us to change the names of schools which are in English. This is another sheer nonsense. Instead of talking about the quality of education offered by private and boarding schools, the ministry is concerned about foreign names. If the minister wants Nepalisation of the names, he must start by changing the name of his own party," said Dr. Pokharel.

According to PABSON, there are 9,000 private boarding schools with 1.5 million children enrolled in them as against 29,000 public schools with 6.6 million students.

Vice-principal of SWSC Hari Singh KC said a group of about seven students forcibly entered the college and smashed the glass of the main gate, computers, television set and an aquarium at the reception. Principal of Everest Florida College Dr Manoj Kumar Jha said a group of over 30 people on motorcycle entered the college and smashed window panes and a chandelier kept in the reception.

At a time when such a terror continues



against private and boarding schools, student groups, which commit the acts, are openly justifying these as their bravery. However, the civil society members, rights activists, leaders of political parties and the government are just silent spectators to the act of vandalism.

The question is how long the state allows such impunity. "Those who are involved in vandalism need to be brought before the law. There is no place for such acts in a civilized society," said advocate Madhav Basnet. "Since the government itself is composed of criminals involved or indicted in various cases, they don't have any moral guts," said Basnet.

The ANNISU-R strike has affected tens of thousands of students of private

higher secondary schools across the country. Even the media which generate a fair amount of their revenues from school advertisements remain silent spectators.

When state of vandalism and act of terror are going on, coordinator of Baidya affiliated ANNISU-R Sharad Rasaily, acknowledging the responsibility, termed the attacks symbolic and warned of more "destructive and serious" repercussions.

"Our demands include free education up to grade 12, and an egalitarian and scientific fee structure in private schools. All the schools using foreign names will be punished if they do not change their names," thundered Rasaily.

The timing of launching the terror

tantrum against the private boarding schools and publication of advertisements for admissions in private schools of foreign countries has always coincided. Although Nepal's student unions launched the agitation with a good intention, their actions, however, helped the foreign schools which came to attract the Nepalese students.

Milking cows

For the political parties and student unions, private schools are the milking cows as they can extort money from them at any time. In the recent attacks, many schools owners believe, the issue is money. Jha, chairman of Everest Florida School, said a group of ANNISU-R students had visited its CEO Binod Joshi a week ago demanding "donations". They returned after Joshi asked them to come back again in a week's time.

However, the student leaders dismiss this. "This has been an old ploy to defame us. We are doing all this for educational reforms and not for extortion," Rasaily stated. Coordinator of Baidya affiliated ANNISU-R Rasaily said Everest Florida School was attacked not for extortion but because it used small letters for the Nepali name and displayed the foreign names in bigger fonts.

Although political parties, including Maoists, are divided among themselves, their student unions have shown a common stand so far as terrorizing the schools is concerned. "ANNISU-R will coordinate with Nepali Congress affiliated Nepal Students Union (NSU), CPN-UML affiliated All Nepal National Free Student Union (ANNFSU) and others — who recently smeared soot on the hoarding boards of Everest Florida, NASA college, White House College and Columbus College for using foreign names-to bring about education reforms," said Rasaily.

As long as civil society, rights based organizations, media, political leaders see the acts of terror against private schools like Rato Bangala, Himalayan White House and others as purely individual matters and do not condemn the acts in public, Nepal's whole education system will collapse or live under the reign of terror of radicals. The time has come to stand against violence to justify everything. ■

UN Express Concern over attack on schools

The UN System expresses its deep concern at the increasing number of attacks on schools by some youth activists that are endangering the lives of children and jeopardising their right to education.

In their joint statement Robert Piper, UN Resident Coordinator, Hanaa Singer, UNICEF Representative and Axel Plathe, UNESCO Representative said, "In May 2011 the Government of Nepal endorsed a directive declaring all schools, (including school buses) as Zones of Peace. This Schools as Zones of Peace (SZOP) directive was issued to ensure that schools remain a safe haven for children and where teaching and learning could continue unhindered in an atmosphere free of violence and interference.

Nepal is also a signatory to the Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and should therefore ensure that every child be provided their basic rights to grow, to learn and to play in peace. Fear and stress fills children's hearts with misgivings and makes them doubt their own future.

The reports of arson and vandalism in schools and school buses go against the spirit of SZOP. While the incidents of the past weeks damaged school property, the most recent attacks on school buses, some with children still inside them, could have had disastrous consequences. Such acts of violence go against the basic principles of children's right to education in a protective environment free from fear.

Tanks: Less To Think, More To Politick

By PARAS KHAREL



News reports have it that the government plans to establish two think tank organizations to carry out researches and provide inputs to the government on strategic, foreign affairs, governance and economic development. Top incumbent and former bureaucrats have also proposed the creation of six advisory groups on security, foreign policy, governance, infrastructure, economic development and social security.

The creation of an autonomous strategic affairs think tank had been suggested by some patriots way back in the early 1990s, but the proposal apparently did not appeal to “democratic” governments as they thought their foreign patrons would not take such an initiative favorably. Such think tanks in other countries, for example in India and Sri Lanka, have considerable autonomy and appear to be staffed by competent people as opposed to political party activists, and have been providing valuable inputs to the government (e.g., in international trade negotiations or national economic policy making). The research and analysis of autonomous think tanks, which receive core funding from the government but can also pull in financial resources from national and foreign donors in a transparent manner, will equip policymakers and other interested stakeholders to assess and respond to the research and analysis churned out by all sorts of organizations that do the bidding of vested foreign interests.

Post-1990, political interference paralyzed pre-existing research centres like CEDA and CNAS such that they are now a pathetic shadow of their former selves. Given such a track record, the current caretaker government’s plan to establish two new think tanks raises pointed questions: Will the organizations be independent? Will political interference be the order of the day in these to-be-formed think tanks just as in other public agencies, even if they are autonomous in paper? Will they be yet another recruiting ground for political activists masquerading as researchers and buddhijivis?

It is reported that the Prime Minister’s Office will maintain a roster of former bureaucrats who will be roped in to conduct studies on policy and governance issues. There is a tendency among ex-bureaucrats in Nepal to speak from all sides of their mouth and assume the moral high ground, pretending to be “experts”, spewing out hackneyed suggestions on policy and governance, thinking that all readers and listeners are naïve and do not know about their past omissions and commissions when they were at the helm in Singha Durbar. While it would be unfair to say that there is not a single competent ex-bureaucrat around, the point is that there are too many nincompoops of ex-bureaucrats, who peddle agendas of petty personal, factional, party and, even more dangerously, foreign, interests, and they should not be rewarded for their failings as bureaucrats by offering them consultancies in their

post-retirement years with tax payers’ money.

Will strict apolitical criteria be set and adhered to while recruiting consultants, or will the manner in which the super-jumbo economic advisory council of the prime minister was constituted be followed? Will the practice of doling out consultancies, including on economic issues, to people who do not even meet the minimum educational criteria be discontinued (eg, allowing people who do not even have a Master’s degree to, hold your breath, write policy papers and provide policy “inputs”)? Given the experience so far, it is most likely that a Kangressi government will rope in “prajatantrabadi” ex-bureaucrats, a UML government “pragatisheel” ones, and a Maoist government “krantikari” ones.

Will political parties and party-affiliated buddhijivis allow the existing Institute of Foreign Affairs to function autonomously and conduct serious studies on foreign policy matters? Will they make any effort to restore the past glory of CEDA and CNAS? If not, what is one to expect from the new think tanks except providing jobs to political party activists,

It is reported that Prime Minister’s Office will maintain a roster of former bureaucrats who will be roped in to conduct studies on policy and governance issues. There is a tendency among ex-bureaucrats in Nepal to speak from all sides of their mouth and assume the moral high ground, pretending to be “experts”, spewing out hackneyed suggestions on policy and governance, thinking that all readers and listeners are naïve and do not know about their past omissions and commissions when they were at the helm in Singha Durbar.

intellectitutes and overrated ex-bureaucrats (and we have quite a few of them barking in the popular press)?

Besides, there is only so much that a think tank can do. Assuming that the

think tanks are allowed to function without political interference, the question remains whether the government will have the guts to heed the recommendations flowing from the researches, especially those that may ruffle the feathers of foreign patrons. The first order requirement is a political class (whether in or out of government) that takes national interests to heart—not a PM that signs a controversial investment promotion and protection agreement with a neighbour without due consultations at home and has the audacity to say he had taken a “gamble” on such a sensitive issue, not a political class that sees nothing wrong with a criminal export-orientation of hydropower policy in practice.

We live in a society where a top-ranking ex-bureaucrat who could not institute a mechanism to prevent salary and allowance from being distributed to “missing” combatants, who had the cheek to say that nowhere in the world are the names of tax evaders (who cheat the government of revenue by producing fake bills) made public, and who is given to defending decisions to make choice hydropower projects export-oriented even as the country is reeling under crippling load-shedding with the childish argument that if there is domestic demand for the electricity generated from such projects the agreements can be easily revised to sell the power to the internal market, is felicitated as if he were the greatest man alive in Nepal. And such people are likely to be calling the shots in the advisory groups and think tanks—help!■

Chitwan National Park Problem Of Park Hotels

The government decision to remove hotels from Chitwan National Park badly damages Nepal's tourism sector

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

Temple Tigers, a jungle lodge inside Chitwan National Park, has popularized Nepal as a destination for conservation tourism. Similarly, Tiger Tops Jungle Resorts has its long history of popularizing Nepal in the global market.

Hotels inside Chitwan National Park have not only contributed to conserve endangered species but also introduced Nepal as a different tourism zone but the government has decided not to renew the lease agreement of the hotels and resorts inside the park. They have been



Basant Raj Mishra

operating inside the park for nearly half a century.

Hotels Association of Nepal (HAN) president Shyam Lal Kakshapati has openly come in support of hoteliers inside the park and according to him, government should renew the leases without further delay.

Ram Prasad Lamsal, spokesperson at Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, said to media persons that the final deadline has expired and the agreement has not been renewed. As per an agreement with the government, the hoteliers will still get five more months to relocate their hotels.

According to HAN, the closure of the hotels and resorts would mean loss of investments worth NRs 2 billion and the jobs of 3,000 people and annual tax loss of some NRs 200 million for the government. "The government should consider all the benefits and should

renew the contracts, and should not just act on false rumors of environmental degradation, which the hoteliers are not ready to accept," said Kakshapati.

Kakshapati is not the only one who is criticizing the government's decision. FNCCI president Suraj Vaidya believes forceful removal of the resorts would spread a negative message among future potential investors.

"Hotels should not be closed as this will send a negative message to the potential foreign investors regarding Nepal and will adversely affect the plans for both Nepal Investment year and Visit Lumbini year," said Vaidya.

According to the agreement reached between the government and the resort operators in 2010, the leases of the resorts inside the national parks expired by mid-July 2012. And the government is mainly citing the reasons of ecological imbalances which may cause environmental degradation and wildlife habitat disturbances as the main reasons for not renewal of leases.

Out of the seven hotels inside the national park, six were still in operation. Gainda Wildlife Camp had been shut down about two years ago due to labor issues. The other hotels include Tiger Tops, Narayani Safari, Chitwan Jungle Lodge, Machan Wildlife Resort, Island Jungle Resort and Temple Tiger.

Binod Chaudhary, president of the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI), has also joined in to voice against the decision.

"In Africa and America among other countries, hoteliers are allowed to operate resorts inside national parks along with the responsibility for the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources," said Binod Chaudhary to media persons. "In 50 years of history of these resorts, neither we have heard nor read that these



Shyam Lal Kakshapati

hotels have degraded the natural habitat of wild animals as well as the environment, rather these hotels should be handed with the responsibility of conservation of the park," he added.

Despite continuous pressure from private sectors, the government has still remained firm in its stance not to extend the contract.

CNI senior vice-president Narendra Basnet also has the similar opinions regarding the government's harsh stance. He believes millions of rupees invested to build the resorts would be a waste and that also at a time when the country is struggling for investments if the government doesn't reconsider its decision.

According to tourism entrepreneurs, Chitwan National Park is the second most popular safari destination in the world after Africa and about 30 percent of all the tourists who visit Nepal go on jungle safari in Chitwan.

"Such decisions of the government have very bad effect on the private sector and the question of security of investment has been raised again," said Prasiddh Bahadur Pandey, former president of HAN.

Hoteliers like Basant Raj Mishra who have been operating hotels inside the national parks have challenged openly to the government to prove that hotels are causing environmental imbalances and said if found guilty, they are ready to accept any government decisions.

At a time when the investment has been declining and when the overall economy is suffering, this decision by the government will hurt the tourism sector badly which was recovering after the NTY 2011, believe tourism experts. ■

Elinor Ostrom

Elinor Ostrom, defender of the commons, died on June 12th, aged 78

IT SEEMED to Elinor Ostrom that the world contained a large body of common sense. People, left to themselves, would sort out rational ways of surviving and getting along. Although the world's arable lands, forests, fresh water and fisheries were all finite, it was possible to share them without depleting them and to care for them without fighting. While others wrote gloomily of the tragedy of the commons, seeing only overfishing and overfarming in a free-for-all of greed, Mrs Ostrom, with her loud laugh and louder tops, cut a cheery and contrarian figure.

Years of fieldwork, by herself and others, had shown her that humans were not trapped and helpless amid diminishing supplies. She had looked at forests in Nepal, irrigation systems in Spain, mountain villages in Switzerland and Japan, fisheries in Maine and Indonesia. She had even, as part of her PhD at the University of California, Los Angeles, studied the water wars and pumping races going on in the 1950s in her own dry backyard.

All these cases had taught her that, over time, human beings tended to draw up sensible rules for the use of common-pool resources. Neighbours set boundaries and assigned shares, with each individual taking it in turn to use water, or to graze cows on a certain meadow. Common tasks, such as clearing canals or cutting timber, were done together at a certain time. Monitors watched out for rule-breakers, fining or eventually excluding them. The schemes were mutual and reciprocal, and many had worked well for centuries.

Best of all, they were not imposed from above. Mrs Ostrom put no faith in governments, nor in large conservation schemes paid for with aid money and crawling with concrete-bearing engineers. "Polycentrism" was her ideal. Caring for the commons had to be a multiple task, organised from the ground up and shaped to cultural norms. It had to be discussed face to face, and based on trust. Mrs Ostrom, besides poring over

satellite data and quizzing lobstermen herself, enjoyed employing game theory to try to predict the behaviour of people faced with limited resources. In her Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at the University of Indiana—set up with her husband Vincent, a political scientist, in 1973—her students were given shares in a notional commons. When they simply discussed what they should do before they did it, their rate of return from their "investments" more than doubled.



"Small is beautiful" sometimes seemed to be her creed. Her workshop looked somewhat like a large, cluttered cottage, reflecting her and Vincent's idea that science was a form of artisanship. When the vogue in America was all for consolidation of public services, she ran against it. For some years she compared police forces in the town of Speedway and the city of Indianapolis, finding that forces of 25-50 officers performed better by almost every measure than 100-strong metropolitan teams. But smaller institutions, she cautioned, might not work better in every case. As she travelled the world, giving out good and sharp advice, "No panaceas!" was her cry.

Scarves for the troops

Rather than littleness, collaboration was her watchword. Neighbours thrived if they worked together. The best-laid communal schemes would fall apart once

people began to act only as individuals, or formed elites. Born poor herself, to a jobless film-set-maker in Los Angeles who soon left her mother alone, she despaired of people who wanted only a grand house or a fancy car. Her childhood world was coloured by digging a wartime "victory" vegetable garden, knitting scarves for the troops, buying her clothes in a charity store: mutual efforts to a mutual end.

The same approach was valuable in academia, too. Her own field, institutional economics (or "the study of social dilemmas", as she thought of it), straddled political science, ecology, psychology and anthropology. She liked to learn from all of them, marching boldly across the demarcation lines to hammer out good policy, and she welcomed workshop-partners from any discipline, singing folk songs with them, too, if anyone had a guitar. They were family. Pure economists looked askance at this perky, untidy figure, especially when she became the first woman to win a shared Nobel prize for economics in 2009. She was not put out; it was the workshop's prize, anyway, she said, and the money would go for scholarships.

Yet the incident shed a keen light on one particular sort of collaboration: that between men and women. Lin (as everyone called her) and Vincent, both much-honoured professors, were joint stars of their university in old age. But she had been dissuaded from studying economics at UCLA because, being a girl, she had been steered away from maths at high school; and she was dissuaded from doing political science because, being a girl, she could not hope for a good university post. As a graduate, she had been offered only secretarial jobs; and her first post at Indiana involved teaching a 7.30 am class in government that no one else would take.

There was, she believed, a great common fund of sense and wisdom in the world. But it had been an uphill struggle to show that it reposed in both women and men; and that humanity would do best if it could exploit it to the full.

(The Economist)

Tattooing And Piercing

BY ADITIARYAL



Tattooing is an art that has been around the world for ages now. Some studies have shown evidences of tattoos as existing from the time two thousand years before the Egyptian Pyramids. The Mayans, Aztecs, Incas and Polynesians all have proved the existence of this ancient body art relating to reasons of their own, like denoting the belonging of a group, spiritual healing, marking criminals, and symbols with some other meanings. This art exists even today in its modern version and is very popular, not without criticisms though.

In today's precise terms, tattooing is an increasing trend among the youths, especially young adults. Tattoos today describe people's feelings of individuality, passion for something, expression or rebellion. Men and women of very young ages can be seen flaunting their tattoos. Some religions see tattooing with maturity, like the Ancient Catholic. And others consider it to be mutilation of the body and, therefore, a sin.

Likewise is the art of piercing, which has been around for years now. Human kind has always seen a need to mutilate their bodies, and piercing has been the next best alternative. Piercing, like tattoos, has stuck around for thousands of years and still exists in both modern and ancient forms. Many tribes from around the world practice the ancient form of piercing: Cuna Indians of Panama, Nepalese and Indians, to name some. Side by side, non-tribal people around the world have modified this art to make it their own. There has now emerged a classified stratification of kinds of piercing, but people still can have their own unique one.

However, our minds have not completely broadened up to these arts. Most of the people immediately link tattoos to deviance and see tattoo makers as inculcating this trend for the worsening of the society. Also the people with tattoos are seen as deviants and immediately judged as deviants too. Our preoccupations have led us to believe that this trend is linked with the wrong category of people, disregarding people's wishes to express themselves, to be different, or simply to rebel for a change. Ditto is the case with piercings.

At times, we mistreat or misjudge such people, giving way to the adage that says 'being different is to be condemned by the society'. Often people with these arts are denied jobs in institutions, posed as scarecrows but to threaten kids, and ostracized, ridiculed and mocked. While we make fun of people with a passion for arts, we tend to not realize our ignorance of the significance of such arts, dating back to thousands of years.

Most families, as I know, in our society are not much supportive of their members getting tattoos or piercings. Let me cite an example of this person I know of. She wanted very badly to get a tattoo. And one day, she managed to get one. While her kids saw it as an accomplishment and were very proud of having a 'cool mum', her husband and in-laws were absolutely against it. There she was in a dilemma, not knowing to what new identity to choose. She simply saw it as getting what she desired from years ago, her kids found it great and other family members just treated her as if she had committed a sin.

If it is *our* mentality that prevents people from getting what *they* want, isn't it for the best of all that we change it now? Why should the people be held back at doing what they want because it is wrong in our eyes? If this is what change and metamorphosis is all about, it is high time we bring it about. Not just for people's wishes and desires but for the respect and appreciation such arts deserve.



Youths want better leaders, a better Nepal

By BIDUSHI ADHIKARI

I have been reminded several times, through experiences and encounters, that Nepal is a third-world country. Development is slow. Progress is slow. The everyday life of the average person does not seem to change at all, even after the democratic parties and the revolutionary Maoists overthrew the monarchy and established their own rule.

Friends have recounted the amazement of their countries and described the variety of resources they have available at their disposal. However, when it comes to the topic of my beloved country, people have asked me if there exists a mall or if we use spoons at all. Sure, to their faces, I express my anger and highlight their ignorance of the world. I tell them that Nepal is as beautiful and respectable country as any other. However, behind the curtain of these words, I wonder to myself if all I said is true. How proud can I be of my country?

In order for a country to succeed, in all socio-economic and political fronts, it needs proper leadership and leaders who genuinely care about the interests of the people. These leaders need to be educated, learned, and knowledgeable about what changes are absolutely necessary in a country like ours. These leaders should have the drive to pull the country out of the grips of what binds us to the ground. As of recently, I have seen some changes brought around by our current leaders: the latest being the areas for roads are being reclaimed and expanded, and the common person is grateful towards the government. However, it seems to have stopped at that small things.

Personally, I feel like the government is quite detached from the people of Nepal, specifically from the younger generations. It does not care about their nationalist feelings. What I feel is that the politicians and government officials are so busy with electing positions and fighting over who gets to do what, that little thought is given to the people. Honestly, what are the things that the government has specifically done for, and only for, the people? What has the government done for us, the youth, the future of the country?

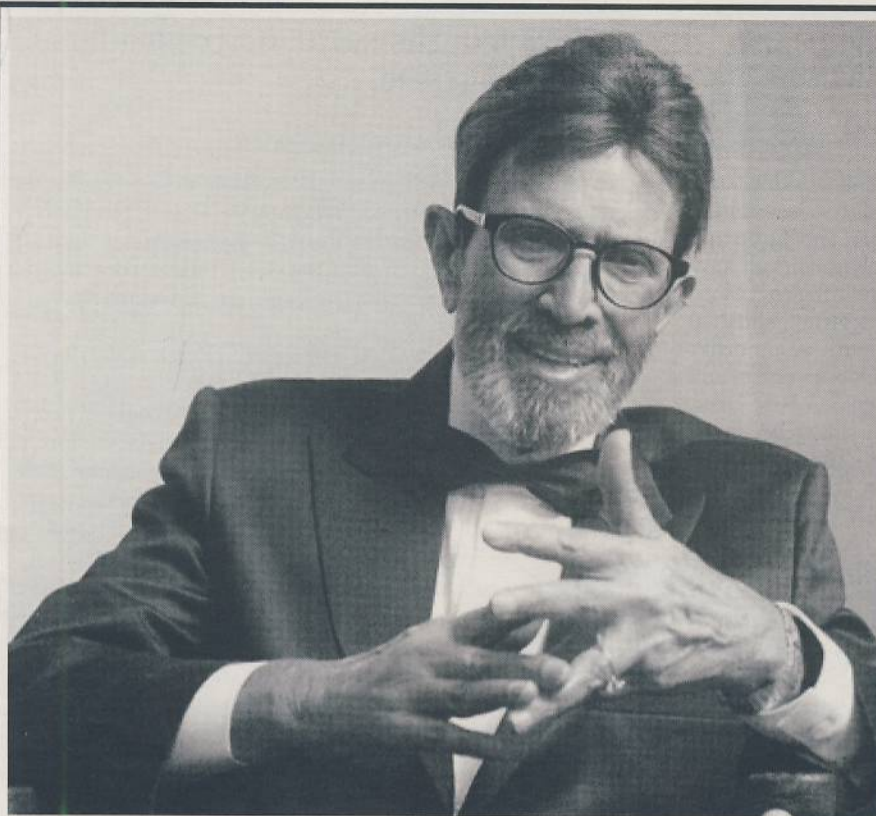
Isn't the government responsible for, say, sending funds over to victims of landslides across the country? Isn't that the purpose of a government, to help the common people, people who have to turn to the government because they have no other means of support?

Not only the government, but 'we, the common people', are also to be blamed for the slow progress of the country. We are careless and busy. Nobody has any time for anybody else. Everyone is too entangled in the realms of their busy lives to give the victims of that landslide a second thought. Kathmandu seems to be the center point of the country, and while enjoying the richness it has to offer, those residing inside the valley seem to forget about those outside. They are part of Nepal too, and they are as much a Nepali citizen as any other person walking down the paved roads of the valley. Sure, Kathmandu is the capital city, but that does not mean we, its residents, or the government should focus on the city and forget about those who do not get to feel its comfort and take advantage of its resources, resources which we seem to take granted for, like water and electricity.

Moreover, it becomes a responsibility of a city-dweller to leave the premises of the valley and stretch out to help those who seem to be out of reach of the capital.

My arguments boil down to this: we need a better government and some better groups of enthusiastic leaders at all fronts who indisputably want to bring change to our country. We need leaders who know what they're doing. We need leaders who understand the state of the country and what needs to be done. We need leaders who have enough confidence to know that they can bring change.

(Bidushi Adhikari is a Grade XII student).



Rajesh Khanna, a Star of '60s and '70s Bollywood, Dies at 69

Death of A star

Rajesh Khanna, whose success as a romantic lead in scores of Indian movies during the 1960s and '70s made him one of the first superstars of Bollywood, died in Mumbai. He was 69.

Mr. Khanna, a rakishly handsome actor from a well-to-do Punjabi family, played leading roles in many films that tapped the broad social tensions emerging in Indian society during the second generation after independence.

In "NamakHaraam" (1973), he played a labor leader fighting the rich mill owners of Mumbai. In "Amar Prem" (1972), he played a man who falls in love with a prostitute. He achieved stardom in the 1969 film, "Aradhana," playing a dashing pilot who dies in a crash, leaving behind the woman he secretly married to live as an outcast, their child an orphan.

Mr. Khanna played mainly romantic roles, which by Bollywood convention often required him to perform his most passionate scenes while lip-syncing long, operatic passages of Hindi songs, all of it actually sung by someone else. But among the leading actors of his day, he was considered courageous for choosing a number of roles as a bad guy, or at least a troubled one.

He played an alcoholic truck driver

who accidentally runs over and kills a man in "Dushman" (1971), a jealous husband who abandons his pregnant wife in "Aap Ki Kasam" (1974) and a serial killer in "Red Rose" (1980).

Mr. Khanna was a top star for almost a decade, until the rise of the Bollywood action-hero genre of the late 1970s. Between 1969 and 1972, he starred in 15 consecutive hits. "Khanna witnessed unbelievable popularity, such that no one had ever seen or imagined," JavedAkhtar, a screenwriter and poet, told The Times of India. "In fact, from 1969 to 1973 it was a one-horse race." To his fans he was always known as "kaka," a term of endearment that means "uncle,"

"brother" or "baby" in some parts of India. In his heyday as a heartthrob fans followed Mr. Khanna everywhere, mobbing his public appearances. Women planted kisses on any limousine he had ridden in. He was said to have received marriage proposals written in blood.

After his movie stardom subsided, Mr. Khanna was a member of Parliament for the Congress Party from 1991 to 1996. He remained active in politics until illness began to slow him down last year.

In a 1990 television interview, Mr. Khanna said he had been unprepared for stardom. "I never thought I'd be such a success," he said. "Somewhere along the way I was a superstar." The sudden end of his stardom disoriented him, he said. But, he added: "Of course, the show has to go on. Trends are changing. People are looking for something new."

JatinKhanna, who later took the name Rajesh, was born in Amritsar, Punjab, on Dec. 29, 1942, and was adopted by a wealthy couple. He made his film debut with "AakhriKhat" ("The Last Letter"), India's entry for best foreign-language film at the 1967 Oscars. (It was not nominated.)

In 1973 he married a 16-year-old actress, Dimple Kapadia. Though they were separated in 1984, the couple never divorced. She survives him along with their two daughters, Rinke and Twinkle Khanna.

In 1999 Mr. Khanna began an acting comeback, playing elderly father roles in a series of movies. He had recently announced plans to be a celebrity judge on a television talent contest.

In the 1990 interview, Mr. Khanna said the fickleness of film stardom never caused him regret.

"If on my deathbed I am asked, I shall say that I have had the best of everything," he said. "A king dies a king. He might not have a following. He might be dying alone, lost in a desert, but he will still be a king."

(Courtesy: The New York Times)

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M O V I E R E V I E W

The Dark Knight Rises

The Dark Knight Rises' brings trilogy to a satisfying close



The chief question to be answered regarding "The Dark Knight Rises," Christopher Nolan's deliriously anticipated third and final installation of his Batman films, isn't "Is it any good?" or even, as has been bandied about since it went into production, "Is it a Best Picture contender?"

The question, rather, is, does "The Dark Knight Rises" soar to the thematic and stylistic heights reached by its predecessor, the adored (some of us would argue overpraised) "The Dark Knight"? Does it clear a bar set by Nolan and his star, Christian Bale, who have infused the franchise with vigor, visual depth and solemnity (some of us would argue ludicrous self-seriousness) heretofore unseen in mere comic-book movies?

Most important, does "The Dark Knight Rises" achieve the impossible, which is to bring a cherished cinematic chapter to a close, yet manage to leave fans feeling not desolate but cheered? To that all-important question, the answer is an unequivocal yes. Nolan, together with the team he has been working with so profitably since 2005's "Batman Begins," has made a completely satisfying movie with "The Dark Knight Rises," one steeped enough in self-contained mythology to reward hard-core fans while giving less invested viewers a rousing, adroitly executed piece of popcorn entertainment.

What's more, Nolan has heroically resisted the siren call of 3-D, that odious gimmick that has done nothing more for cinema than separate people from their money for no added

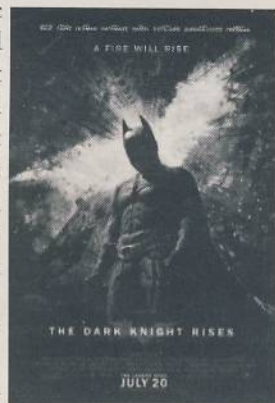
visual or narrative value. Instead, he has thrown in with IMAX, whose bold detail and boxy framing are just right for this big-shouldered production. "The Dark Knight Rises" looks terrific, from its handsome, uncluttered production design and subtle costumes to impressively staged stunts that unfold with taut lucidity.

In fact, "The Dark Knight Rises" starts off with just such a set piece, a nifty piece of mid-air showmanship in which the movie's villain, a terrorist thug named Bane (Tom Hardy), hijacks a CIA plane. Masked and alarmingly well-muscled, Bane makes almost immediately for Gotham City, where Bruce Wayne (Bale) has been living in wounded seclusion for the past eight years, since he took the rap for killing a city hero named Harvey Dent.

Of course, there's more to the story than that, a buried truth glancingly referred to in a weary speech delivered by police commissioner Jim Gordon (Gary Oldman), who is attending a charity event on the grounds of Wayne Manor. Also in attendance: a mysterious brunette named Selina Kyle, who slinks around the guests with the silky, feline assurance of a woman who knows she has at least seven or eight lives to go.

Like one of most hotly pursued MacGuffins of "The Dark Knight Rises," Nolan leaves a clean slate by the end of the movie, keeping a door open for Bale's successors. A generous gesture, to be sure, but for now, it's difficult to imagine anyone else with such a perfect scowl for the cowl.

(Excerpts of the review from Washington post)



Indian Ocean an Indian rock band performing live in Kathmandu. The band is considered to be pioneers of fusion rock genre in India.

Bill Made to Amend the Act Related to Voter Registration List (2063), 2068

1. Whatever else is written in Article 5(b1) section B of the proposed bill, [an individual] must have completed 18 years of age as per paragraph 3 A to be eligible for voting.

Suggestion: Must have Nepali citizenship certificate and have completed 18 years of age.

2. In Article 33 C (1) of the proposed bill, if the name and details [of an individual] are missed by the name registration team, or if an individual becomes qualified to vote after the name registration team has finished its work, such individuals can file a request at the District Election Office to add their name in the voter registration list, as per the prescribed manner.

Suggestion: If an individual's name and details are missed by the voter registration team or if an individual becomes qualified for voting after the voter registration team has finished its work, such an individual who is interested in including his/

her name in the District Election Office may do so by requesting for such in the prescribed manner mandatorily including a certified copy of the individuals Nepali citizenship certificate.

3. In Article 33 E (3) of the proposed bill, it is stated that if the initial voter list is received for publication from the District Election Office the related VDC or Municipality should also publish the list in its notice board.

Suggestion: If the initial voter name list and the photographs of the related individuals are received for publication from the District Election Office, the related VDC and Municipality should also

publish the voter name list along with the respective photographs.

4. In Article 33 E (4) of the proposed bill while publishing the initial voter list as per this Article, the photograph and the finger print of the individual may not be included.

Suggestion: while publishing the initial voter name list finger prints of the voter may not be included.

5. In Article 33 F (6) of the proposed bill, if the District Election Officer finds the same voters name in two or more than two places while conducting the technical test, only one name shall be kept. While doing so a notice shall be published asking the said individual to come and verify and confirm [from which place the individual would like to vote from] within seven days. One copy of the notice shall be sent to the respective VDC or municipality which shall publish the notice in its notice board.

Suggestion: While conducting technical tests if the

While conducting technical tests if the District Election Officer finds that if an individual's name has occurred in two or more than two places, the individual may only be allowed to have his/her name in one areas voting list. To do so a notice will be published asking the individual to come and clarify within seven days, and a copy of the notice will be sent to the respective VDC or Municipality. The VDC and Municipality will publish the notice in its notice board as well as in a national Nepali daily newspaper.

District Election Officer finds that if an individual's name has occurred in two or more than two places, the individual may only be allowed to have his/her name in one areas voting list. To do so a notice will be

published asking the individual to come and clarify within seven days, and a copy of the notice will be sent to the respective VDC or Municipality. The VDC and Municipality will publish the notice in its notice board as well as in a national Nepali daily newspaper.

6. In Article 33 G (1) of the proposed bill, if the voters of a concerned ward of a related VDC or Municipality feel that if any individual whose name has been published in the initial voter name list should not have been included they can register a protest along

with proof, with the District Election Officer as per the prescribed manner within 15 days.

Suggestion: If the voters of a ward of a related VDC or Municipality feel that an individual's name whose name has been published in initial voter name list of the area should not be included, they may register a protest [in the prescribed manner] along with proof within seven days at the District Election Office or through the concerned VDC or Municipality

To be added in Article 33 G (2) of the proposed bill: As per Sub section 1 if a concerned VDC or municipality receives a request, it must be forwarded to the District Election Office within 15 days.

7. In Article 33 H (2) the photograph and the finger print of the voter shall not be published and without the permission of the Commission the voter list with the finger prints shall not be made available to anyone.

Suggestion: The photograph of the voter and the finger print shall not be published. Without the decision of the Commission the voter list with the finger print shall not be made available to anyone but the concerned individual.

To be amended in the main Act

1. Article 11 of the main Act to be amended : In Article 11, sub-section 1, 2, and 3 instead of the prohibitory sentence the following prohibitory sentence has been added

Whatever else is written in Sub section 1,2, and 3, an individual wishing to register in the voter name list must mandatorily present a Nepali citizenship certificate. If there is any confusion regarding any details mentioned in the Nepali citizenship certificate, the verifying officer may refer to other above mentioned documents besides the citizenship certificate to verify the information.

Article 25 of the main Act to be

amended: Instead of "prohibited from raising the issue in the Court" as stated in Article 25 of the main Act the following provision has been added: The Election Commission will have the authority to make the final decision in the said matter. Article 25 (a) and (b) should be kept as it is.

The final form of this investigation and suggestion report has been prepared by Advocate Pradip Ghimire for the Nepal Constitution Foundation with inputs from women, Janajati, Dalit, Madhesi, youth and other related pressure groups. The Foundation is thankful to Madhusudan Tamang, Dr. Ayodhyaprasad Yadav, Sushma Chaudhary, Ram Kapali, Gopi Biswakarma, Manbahadur Ale, Ranbahadur Thebe, Nirupama Yadav, Sapana Shahi (Lama), Subodh Pyakhurel, Charan Prasai, Basanti Shrestha, Gobinda Thapa, Kapil Shrestha, Sachin Karmacharya, Narayan Prasad Regmi, Rishi Ram Ghimire, Abhishek Adhikari, Shirshak Ghimire, Phurpa Tamang, and Dr Bipin Adhikari.

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नेपाल सरकार
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
सूचना विभाग

Hepatitis E Vaccine



By **BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD**

Hepatitis E is probably the commonest cause of adult jaundice in Nepal. Outbreaks are common in the summer in Nepal. This viral disease is transmitted through the fecal-oral route. In Kathmandu this act is not difficult to envision. Vegetables washed in the Bishnumatiriver are brought to wedding parties and restaurants and served up as fresh green salad. If they were properly cooked or soaked in adequately iodinated water for at least 20 minutes, there would be less of a problem; but uncooked, these vegetables pose a threat of acquiring hepatitis E and other interesting organisms. Most people that suffer from this disease eventually recover, but if you are pregnant and acquire hepatitis E, things could easily be life threatening (see below).

A potentially life-saving vaccine for our part of the world has just recently been approved by China's State Food and Drug Administration. The world's first commercial hepatitis E vaccine (Hecolin) is now available in China, and the Chinese are targeting the vaccine on their vulnerable population (women of child-bearing age and patients with chronic liver disease) who, if affected by

hepatitis E often suffer life-threatening complications of this viral disease.

Hepatitis E like typhoid fever is a water-borne infection that has caused epidemics in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Central America. According to the WHO, one third of the global population may have been infected by the virus, and an annually estimated 14 million people have the symptomatic disease with 300,000 deaths and 5200 stillbirths. Doctors who look after pregnant women in Nepal know full well the possibly tragic outcome (by some estimates 30%) in pregnant women who are affected by this virus who may go on to suffer fulminant hepatic failure and death. Hence the drive in certain parts of China to vaccinate women of child-bearing age. The other well-known group predisposed to suffering from severe hepatitis E are patients with chronic liver disease. Often a patient with cirrhosis (an example of a chronic liver disease) who has been stable will suddenly take a turn for the worse and succumb to their illness when infected by this virus.

Chinese vaccines have been used in Nepal with excellent success. The administration of the Japanese

encephalitis (JE) vaccine which is made in Chengdu, China has been instrumental in decreasing Japanese encephalitis rates in Nepal, especially in the Terai region. Unlike its Western counterpart, the Chinese JE vaccine is very cost-effective, and importantly side-effects have been minimal.

The Chinese don't do things in small numbers. The hepatitis E vaccine trial which was published in the prestigious medical journal *Lancet* in 2010 revealed that a total of 112,604 healthy adults participated in the trial with 100% effectiveness and good tolerance to the vaccine. Even women who became pregnant during the course of the trial had no adverse effects of the vaccine. The US Army working together with the Nepal Army and GlaxoSmithKline did work on another effective hepatitis E vaccine almost eight years ago, but unfortunately this vaccine is unavailable. An exercise in futility.

As they did with the successful use of the Japanese Encephalitis vaccine, Nepal's health ministry will hopefully strongly consider making this vaccine available to the vulnerable population in Nepal. ■

Millennium Development Goals Beyond 2015

As the deadline to achieve the millennium development goals (MDGs) is coming closer, people have already started talking about the post 2015 scenario. South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE) organized a validation workshop recently on 'Nepal case study for European Report on Development 2013', where experts shared the post 2015 situation and Nepal's progress on MDGs.

After around a decade of millennium goals, the development has been tremendous on the MDGs front and Nepal is among the countries that are on course to achieving most of the goals. Nepal is



on track on achieving all the other MDGs except for employment and climate change goals, according to Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, executive chairman of SAWTEE.

"There is the need to debate the post-2015 scenario. What next is a big question," said Dr. James Mackie, Senior Adviser, EU Development Policy and lead author, European Report on

Development 2013. He also stressed that countries should learn from the experience and use that experience for the post 2015 development agenda.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada opined that Nepal needs to include a broader target and it is fundamental to discuss broader human security issues after 2015. He also stressed the need to work in partnership with international community for better development. "Our resources, market and technologies are not sufficient. So, we need international support," he said.

"Beyond 2015, economic growth and social policy should move together and complement each other," he added. "Nepal is on track on achieving most of the MDGs at aggregate level, but at disaggregated level, we find various variations on the results." ■



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