



VIEWPOINT:
Dr. Tilak Rawal



INTERVIEW:
Yubaraj Bhusal



FACE TO FACE :
Shoko Noda

New

SPOTLIGHT

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FORTNIGHTLY



Heart Of Darkness

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From The Editor

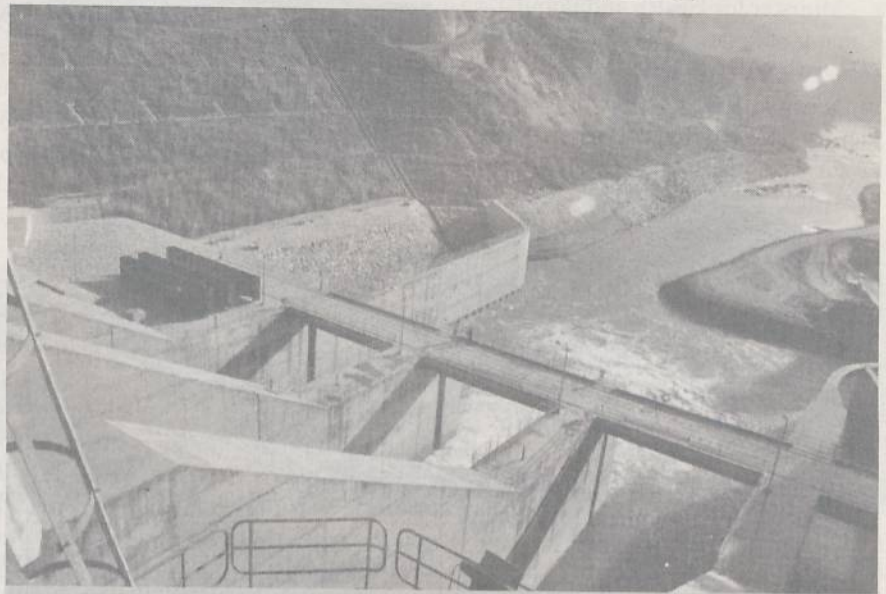
Two recent announcements were worth noting. The NEA announced more power cuts and the opposition parties announced more protests. At a time when normal life in Nepal is getting difficult due to one or the other uncertainty, these events are certainly going to hit the people harder. No political party actually seemed to protest the power cuts although they are paralyzing the industries. Political parties in Nepal have lost almost all of their six years since the 2006 uprising in bickering among themselves, thereby losing a lot of good opportunities to develop the nation. Nepal is known for its enormous potential to generate cheap renewable energy. Unfortunately, that is becoming a non-issue in wake of one after another political crisis. We have decided to look at the power crisis as the lead story for this fortnight. Along with this, we have also covered the present political developments and emerging alliances. Despite the repeated call from the international community, Nepal has failed to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This is definitely going to affect Nepal's image in the international arena. As Nepal is preparing its 3-year interim plan for the period between 2013 and 2016, we have also included its status and purpose in this issue.

Keshab

Keshab Poudel
Editor

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US Support For Seismically Safe Blood Bank

Minister for Health and Population Rajendra Mahato and U.S. Ambassador to Nepal Peter W. Bodde jointly laid the foundation stone of a new blood bank facility, engineered for seismic safety, at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH) in Kathmandu recently. This facility, being constructed by the United States government in partnership with TUTH, will supply the central blood transfusion services to some 75 per cent of the existing medical facilities and hospitals in the city of Kathmandu. The US Army Corps of Engineers, working with the local contractors, will provide the design, construction management, and quality assurance services.

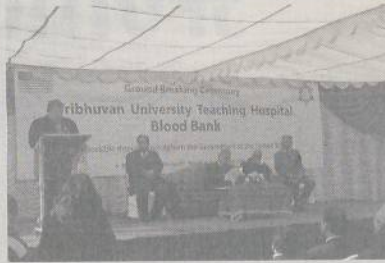
"It is particularly important, a day after the 15th Annual Earthquake Safety Day, to recognize that Nepal ranks at the top end of the countries that are most vulnerable to a catastrophic earthquake, and the Kathmandu Valley with its dense population is particularly vulnerable," a press release issued by the US embassy said. "Seismically resilient buildings, which comply with local building codes and are built to withstand the impact of an earthquake, are an essential step in safeguarding the city's infrastructure and its population in case of a major earthquake."

EU Missions Express Concerns

EU missions (Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, UK, and the EU Delegation), Norway and Switzerland have expressed concerns over the delays in the completion of the peace process, respect for human rights and democracy.

"In recent weeks, we have witnessed a sharp upsurge in political debates. This activism reveals a deep desire for peace, democracy, respect for human rights and rule of law. The EU missions (Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, UK, and the EU Delegation), Norway and Switzerland call on Nepal's political leaders to listen to and act upon these concerns," states a press release issued jointly by EU missions, Norway and Switzerland.

"Whether their focus is violence against women or conflict-era human rights cases, the message is clear: that



Nepal has made progress in recent years in addressing disasters and preparedness planning.

"The US Embassy is committed to supporting these advances and planning efforts. An important part of contingency planning is planning for the continuation of critical medical services. In the event of a catastrophic earthquake, a steady blood supply across the city is key to saving lives," the statement said.

At the ceremony, Ambassador Bodde said: "An important goal for the US government's work in Nepal is to save lives and to preserve the gains Nepal has made in our sixty years of development partnership. We seek to mitigate the impact of a major natural catastrophe and shorten the recovery time through effective disaster risk reduction efforts such as this blood bank. We are committed to working with Nepal to achieve those goals and commend all the good work which has been done so far."

crime must not be condoned; that victims must not be ignored; and that perpetrators must not be shielded from the due process of the law."

Andrew James Appointed Ambassador

Andrew James Sparkes CMG has been appointed as the new British Ambassador



to Nepal in succession to John Tucknott MBE, who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Sparkes will take up his appointment during April/May 2013, states a press release

issued by the British Embassy.

Sparkes has recently finished a secondment to the European Union as Deputy Head of the largest EU civilian mission in the world, the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo. Prior to that he was the British Ambassador to Kosovo, having previously served as British Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo.

On his appointment as the ambassador to Nepal, Sparkes said, "It is a great privilege to be appointed British Ambassador to a country with which we have had such a special relationship for so long. I look forward to playing my part in taking that relationship forward, as Nepal redefines itself as a nation, especially through our development partnership. My goal will be to enhance the peace and prosperity of a people for whom the British have a special affection."

UNICEF and partners breaking ground for children in Nepalgunj

On the 79th anniversary of the massive 1934 earthquake that devastated Kathmandu and other parts of the country, UNICEF recently inaugurated a new office in Nepalgunj where UNICEF will implement its new country programme designed to reach the most inaccessible, neglected children in the region.

Nepalgunj has long been a hub of UNICEF activities in the region but the timing of the new office opening coincides with a ramped up five year long programme. The new office will be staffed by experts in education, WASH, behaviour change, child protection and governance while national programme officers in several satellite offices will spread across the mid and far western regions of the country with some of the most difficult terrain and accessibility to bring new programmes for children. UNICEF staff will work closely with government officials, NGO partners and women and children to make sure that the gap in services that the rich access is also extended to the poorest.

Indian Grants Rs. 54.5 M for school building

Indian Ambassador Jayant Prasad inaugurated the newly constructed school buildings of Shree Pathariya Higher Secondary School and Shree Himali Higher Secondary School, which were built with Indian assistance of Rs. 54.5 million.

“The Donation Terror Should Be Stopped By The Political Parties”

SURAJ VAIDYA

President, FNCCI (Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry)

What is the reaction of the private sector of the donation drive carried out by the Maoists?

The ‘forceful donation drive’ launched by the political parties has worsened the country’s overall business climate. We are already suffering from severe problems like power crisis, labor unrest and political instability. The business community has been paying donations to political parties for a long time. However, the method of collection is aggressive and forceful this time. CPN-Maoist has been intimidating businessmen for increasing the amount. This should be stopped by the government.



As the political parties start the donation drive time and again, what are the major implications of such moves?

The government should introduce laws to restrict donations. The donation terror should be stopped as soon as possible by the political parties. The donation that is given to the political parties should be transparent, otherwise this will only increase corruption. The unfair donation also beats the spirit of the private sector. So, there should be the provision of giving no more than Rs. 25 thousand in donation and if somebody gives more money, then that should be made illegal. That means the government should limit the donation money.

How much has the current political deadlock affected the economy?

Only from the political aspect, a country cannot develop. Political parties should form a political consensus on the economic agenda. The budget should not be hindered and the government should be allowed to bring a full budget. Now also, in the absence of a full budget, the government’s all development works have suffered and are near zero. So to improve the investment environment in the country, political parties should soon form a national consensus government and hold elections.

What should the government do to solve this severe load-shedding problem?

First there should be a high-level taskforce formed to review the country’s hydropower implementation approach and report to the Prime Minister. The taskforce should review all the recent recommendations for hydropower development, assess the progress and prepare an updated implementation program. Industries are likely to accept higher tariff than the inconvenience of load shedding and high cost of their own backup systems

(Based on Vaidya’s recent press conferences and press releases)

Dhakal Re-elected Global IME Bank Chair

The executive committee of the Global IME Bank has reappointed Chandra Prasad Dhakal as the chairman of the bank for the next four years.



Dhakal, who was born in Baglung district, has already established himself as one of the leading entrepreneurs of the country.

Global Bank, IME Finance and Lord Buddha Finance merged to form the Global IME Bank. Under the leadership of Dhakal the bank has made immense progress from its inception and is on the way to becoming one of the major financial institutions of the nation.

Chinese Ambassador met Nepalese Tourism Entrepreneur

Chinese ambassador to Nepal Yang Houlan met with Nepal China Tourism Promotion Society President Liladhar Bhandari, Vice President Shiva Nepal and General Secretary Dilli Ram Giri. Both sides exchanged views on enhancing cooperation in tourism sector between China and Nepal.

President Liladhar Bhandari said Nepal enjoy rich tourism resources and more and more Chinese tourist come to Nepal in recent years. Cooperation in tourism sector between China and Nepal had a bright future. The newly founded Nepal-China Tourism Promotion Society would be committed to expanding the bilateral relations, promoting the healthy development of tourism, and making positive efforts to promote mutual understanding between the two countries and peoples.



Entire Travels and Tours of Nepal signed a partnership agreement with Gold Circule Partner Bet Thomas Cook & Enter travel

Developing Asia And Nepal

By DR. TILAK RAWAL



Global economic scenario is not at all encouraging. The largest economy in the world is still to recover, EU is in recession for the second times in four years and China, second largest economy, and India, another economic power, have both experienced a drop in their growth rates in recent times. It is difficult to predict when the global economy will succeed in regaining, in a durable way, the growth momentum of 2004-2007 when it grew by 4.6 percent in 2005 and 5.4 percent in 2007. World economy started showing some signs of trouble towards the end of 2007 when symptoms of ill health of some financial institutions began to surface in the US, which spread to EU where countries like Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Italy, etc are still facing serious debt crisis. Unlike the belief of some observers, China alone could not arrest the slide into recession of the global economy: side by side with the ailing US economy, world output contracted by 0.6 percent in 2009. Infact, this contraction did affect adversely even countries like China and India, which until then were registering very impressive growth rates. One interesting point to be noted is that Eastern European countries such as Poland are doing quite good even when the entire EU is ailing. It may be mentioned that these countries took advantage of the wind of liberalization that blew across the planet towards the end of 1980s and liberated themselves

There is now no timeline from the President for consensus but people would not like him to remain a silent spectator, letting these leaders inflict more serious injury on the ailing country/economy. Our leaders, however, need not worry much because Nepal would remain a part of economically very powerful Asia of tomorrow and they will also continue to find a country like Somalia, more corrupt and poorer than their own country, to point to and draw solace from.

economically and politically. This wind blew in many Asian countries including Nepal, which succeeded in rehabilitating multi-party parliamentary democracy and opened up the economy in a meaningful way. India also liberalized its economy concretely thereafter. Although political pluralism was introduced and practiced in India ever since the independence from Britain in 1947, China opened its economy to the outside world much before its neighbor. India did away with the low growth rate of 3 to 3.5 percent, known as the Hindu rate of growth, by doing away with quota and licensing regime. China, following visionary Deng's approach, liberalized the economy and achieved on average a growth rate of 10 percent per annum in the last three decades. These two Asian giants, following entirely different political system, managed to get out of the recent recession, helped by strong domestic demand created mainly as a result of their respective fiscal stimulus programs.

It looks like countries practicing pluralism on the political front and openness on the economic front can achieve faster rate of growth than countries without these. Exceptions are countries like China and Vietnam that have liberalized their

economies and achieved commendable progress without opening their political system. China seems to have embarked upon a capitalistic method of abundant wealth creation to have its distribution and consumption in a socialistic fashion. Looking at the progress of countries such as China, India and some Southeast Asian countries, one is tempted to agree with the observations of some analysts from the west that *Asia will be above US and EU economically in about two to three decades time*. Developing Asia, consisting of 27 countries, looks better than other region of the world in that it grew by an encouraging 7.0 percent in 2009 when global output contracted by 0.6 percent. Likewise, this region grew by an impressive 11.4 percent in 2007 when world output grew by 5.4 percent. The case, however, is not the same with each and every country. Another encouraging fact about some Asian countries is that they have agreed not to let ancient rivalry hamper economic cooperation between them. Growing bilateral trade between China and India and recent realization by concerned authorities to increase the currently disappointing level of trade between

India and Pakistan adequately manifest the priority accorded by these countries to economic issues. Rather than on the firepower front, China

and India, it seems, have quietly decided to engage in a healthy competition on the economic front. They are sniffing around the world for resources to propel their growing economies. Likewise, recent border tension between India and Pakistan is not likely to stand as an impediment to boosting bilateral trade between the two countries. Indeed, countries like Pakistan and Sri Lanka did not let their growth rates drop to a disappointing level even in the face continuous instability in case of former and decades long civil war in case of the latter. Moreover, looking at the very encouraging way that economies in Southeast Asia, with a strong natural resource base, have proceeded in recent years, one would not hesitate much to conclude that Asia, with the solid support of 27 developing Asian countries, will emerge as a very strong global economic power in not too distant a future. There are also places like Hongkong, declared the most liberal economy of the world for the nineteenth time in a row, and countries like South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan that have performed very well, despite lack of natural resources. While these countries have done well even when they have to mostly rely on outside resources needed for their economies, there are countries all

over the world that have utterly failed to make use of their strong resource position to pull their people from a state of abject poverty. Oil rich country Sudan, now divided into two after a prolonged civil war is just one of the many African countries whose mineral resources have been used for the betterment of other countries more than their own places and people. In Asia, Nepal could be cited as a case which has failed to achieve anything from growth standpoint, despite having political freedom, liberal economic policies and tremendous potentiality for tourism and hydro power generation, second only to Brazil in terms of potentiality. It may be repeated that this country of mountains and perennial rivers is facing scarcity of both drinking water and electricity and has to beg India, which needs 100,000mw of power if the entire rural area has to be electrified, for electricity. People have started blaming this economic debacle on the vision and integrity less political leaders who are currently divided into two groups, ruling and the opposition, and marching from opposite directions for a head on collusion. President Yadav is sick and tired of the leaders who he could not pursued into forging national consensus, despite repeated extension of the time period, nine times, to do so. In order to calm the disgruntled people, leaders will have to be open to compromises and new ideas. There is now no timeline from the President for consensus but people would not like him to remain a silent spectator, letting these leaders inflict more serious injury on the ailing country/economy. Our leaders, however, need not worry much because Nepal would remain a part of economically very powerful Asia of tomorrow and they will also continue to find a country like Somalia, more corrupt and poorer than their own country, to point to and draw solace from.

Dr. Rawal is a former Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank

POLITICS

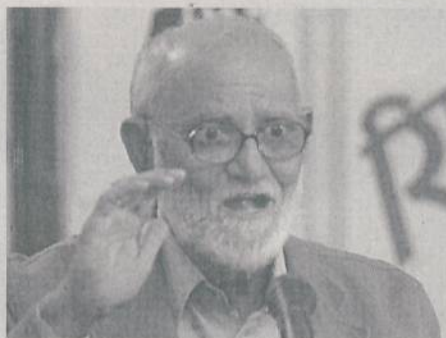
Roaring Rhetoric

Political leaders are not as strong and decisive as they sound in their public speech

By A CORRESPONDENT

"We will throw away all the agreements with the political parties if they did not allow the current government to hold the elections by May-end," threatened UCPN-Maoist leader Prachanda. Although his statement made racy news headlines, it weakened his position from what it used to be. The political implications for Dahal are he will be in a very difficult situation.

"As in the past, Nepali Congress will fight the new tyranny of the Maoists as we have fought all tyrannies since 1950. Nepali Congress



Koirala and Prachanda

is strong enough to launch a decisive agitation," declared Nepali Congress leader Sushil Koirala. In his long political career, Koirala has never been in such a weak position at any time in the past. After being declared a consensus candidate for prime ministership, Koirala has been unable to change the prime minister.

Had Koirala been powerful enough to make and break things, the situation would have been different and Koirala would have become the prime minister now. The reality is different from rhetoric of Congress leader Koirala.

Facing public humiliation one after another, in scandals ensuing out of journalist Dekendra Thapa's case to accumulating hefty commission in power deals, prime minister Baburam Bhattarai has proposed his party chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal as his alternative for the prime ministership. Although there is no substantial ground on Bhattarai's statement, Dahal has responded to him.

As the Maoist sixth general convention is coming closer, Bhattarai's proposal for Dahal as a prime ministerial candidate is politically meaningful. Although Bhattarai has publicly declared that he does not have any intention to contest for the post of party president, Dahal's position is still unsafe.

Words after words, political leaders are deeply into the blame game. Despite their rhetoric, political leaders have failed to find any compromise. The words and statements of

political leaders have virtually done nothing to match with the existing political reality even though their rhetoric goes on.

Even president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav has backtracked from the process of issuing notice seeking a consensus candidate to lead the next government. Although president Dr. Yadav still issues sermons to political leaders, he has decided to stay in the sideline after the current political mess after eight notices.

Future implications

As the common people are yet to show any sign of being ready to join the street protests, the proposed agitation called by CPN-UML and Nepali Congress will have little impact on the government. Similarly, there is

no sign yet of any breaking in the alliance between Samyukta Loktantrik Madheshi Morcha and UCPN-Maoist. As long as the alliance continues, opposition alliance cannot harm the government. Knowing their strength, UCPN-Maoist is playing the political game, to fuel the prolonged political instability.

The agitation announced by ruling and opposition parties can create political chaos and intensify the instability but it cannot bring any solution at all.

Presidential Role

Although the president has decided to stay in the sideline from the government's affairs, President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav is in an important position to change the political equation. By announcing the notice for prime minister, Dr. Yadav has made it clear that the present government is just a care taker government and he can replace this government in case of major political disputes. What president is waiting is a blink from the international community to act.

Nepal's reality does not lie on the rhetoric of political leaders, as they missed is to gauge the reality of the country. Whoever may come to power, Nepal's harsh political reality is continuation of a prolonged political instability. The words of the leaders cannot change the hard reality of the Nepalese politics. Like or unlike it, Nepal is rocking and political leaders are no exception. ■

Doom's Day

By YUBARAJ GHIMIRE



What will be Nepal's politics like without the current political actors in place? What will be their respective parties be like? Naturally, they will think that their absence or exit from the scene will bring about the end of politics, and naturally the political parties. Baburam Bhattarai has said many times that he cannot leave the post by leaving behind the country in crisis. But his statement means nothing except an expression of arrogance and megalomania in him.

President Ram Baran Yadav, in one of his public outbursts, said recently that political parties in Nepal have failed. Taranath Ranabhat, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, told Bhushan Dahal in the fireside that the President was wrong in that conclusion. If there is a failure involved, it is the failure of the individuals or the leadership but not that of the party, he argued.

But what is a party? After all, it is a legally organized and structured body that follows a certain set of principles and believes a country can be run on the basis of those principles and policies if people endorse them. That is why a periodic election becomes so crucially important in running the state. People choose the party and leaders of their choice based on their programmes, policies, preference and conduct. It happens only in a totalitarian



President Dr. Yadav and PM Bhattarai

or an authoritarian regime that a legislature elected for two years extends its tenure at will without facing the electorate. Only a totalitarian thinks his quitting the care-taker Prime Minister's position will push the country towards a deeper crisis. Other parties like the Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist and the Madhesi groups apparently do not seem to differ with the argument that Baburam Bhattarai has advanced. They simply want an amendment to that: that we were part of the 'politics of consensus' that we promised to carry forward in 2006, and that it will still remain valid if we all are included in the government. Of course, the leadership should have a fixed tenure on rotational basis.

It seems Bhattarai's strict adherence to the 'Westminster Model of democracy as he understands it', has come in the way of this arrangement being practiced. He says only the Prime Minister who has ordered the election at the time of dissolution of the legislature can/must hold the election to the legislature, and that he cannot be replaced in between. A Prime Minister cannot die, cannot quit and cannot abdicate under any circumstances without conducting the election. And strangely, Bhattarai sticks to this provision of the Westminster Model (as he understands) only. Owning responsibility for failure to conduct elections on the promised date or treating all equal before law, respecting independence and supremacy of judiciary all are optional. He knows if he or

his wife or both are tried by the Commission of Inquiry Into the Abuse of Authority, or if tomorrow, he is hauled by the Supreme Court on contempt of court cases, or if he is arrested by the state organs for obstructing the course of investigation into the murder case of journalist Dekendra Thapa, the country will plunge into a much deeper crisis. After all, who will know this better than our lal messiah? What is the norm, rule and constitution by the way? Like power comes from the barrel of guns, constitution or the rules or the norms to run the state flow from Dr. Bhattarai's mouth. That is why he or his party do not feel obliged to follow the accords or the rules or the provisions of constitution.

The Comprehensive Peace Accord had a mandatory provision of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission being formed within forty five days of its being signed on November 21, 2006. But the Maoists or their partners, including the NC, UML or the Madhes groups, did not make it an issue because they were part of the government, sharing all powers, privilege and plum posts for themselves and their supporters. This became an issue only when they started falling out, especially after Maoists were able to unconstitutionally remove the monarchy with the support of these parties. When they were

in power, none of these parties were keen to have the TRC formed. They were not bothered to pursue investigation into any HR abuse case in which the Maoists were involved. There is not one instance in the legislature or outside it in which the NC or the UML could say "we will not join the government until and unless Madi massacre or Muktinath Adhikary or Dekendra thapa case are probed". Bhattarai's or Maoists' strength lies in the dual standards of these democratic parties.

So, the debate revolves round one point: have these parties failed or their leaders alone? What was the mandate that these parties had given to their respective leaders? Did the party ever caution these leaders to act as per the directive issued by the party? It was a sheer dereliction of duty or responsibility on the part of all the parties except the Maoist Party which moved decisively forward towards capturing the state. Undoubtedly, this is failure of the party (ies).

Plurality is the core value of democracy and therefore, it cannot be done with. But a party or parties refusing to review their policy and performance and yet insisting they were never wrong have to be declared a failure. Their being discarded as failure will not weaken democracy. If they cannot rejuvenate, new and vibrant parties will be born in place of the deadwoods and defeat the totalitarian's quest to capture power. Their demise will not spell a doom for the country. ■

POLITICS

Unity In Hostility

At a time when Nepal's two major political parties, Nepali Congress and CPN-UML, which ordered Nepal Army to come out against the Maoist insurgency, are launching an agitation against the Maoist-led government, Nepal Army has found the UCPN-Maoist, its former arch enemy, as a new force to defend its case.

By A CORRESPONDENT

UCPN-Maoist and Nepal Army do not have anything in common at the ideological grounds. They do not share any values and ideals. They had fought each other for almost a decade during the insurgency. There was hardly anything that brought them under one embrace until recently. The latest political course, however, has brought the foes together as friends in need.

When the leaders of the country's two major political parties, Nepali Congress and CPN-UML, have done nothing except paying the lip service to support the army, UCPN-Maoist government has sat by the army's side in defending the case of Nepal Army Colonel Kumar Lama, who was detained in England on charge of torturing people during Nepal's insurgency. Maoist stand will help it in its all out battle with its arch rivals, the opposition parties.

UCPN-Maoist coalition partners are blaming the Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav for the fate of Colonel Lama in the foreign land.

"If the president had promulgated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Ordinance, and the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML not scratched the wounds of Dailekha, Nepali security personnel would not have to face detention in the U.K," said UCPN-Maoist chief Prachanda. "They have to take the responsibility for the mess now."

Prachanda's statement is well calculated as he knows the importance of Nepal Army's support in waging his party's last battle with the country's major political forces, including the president.

With its democratic orientation and traditional base, Nepal Army has no preference to associate with the UCPN-Maoist in normal circumstances. Its relationship with the party was limited to being with the UCPN-Maoist-led

government, especially as there was no other option before it.

As such, the relationship between UCPN-Maoist and Nepal Army has never been good since its beginning. UCPN-Maoist cadres humiliated Nepal Army in joining the peace process. The bitterness peaked when the previous Maoist-led government of Prachanda dismissed then army chief Rukmangad Katawal. With the backing from president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, Katawal survived the Maoist design and Prachanda tendered his resignation.

Since they came to power again, UCPN-Maoist leaders have been making every effort to improve their relations with Nepal Army despite the past bitterness.

Organized and professional, Nepal Army understands the situation. The statement issued by Nepal Army following the arrest of Colonel Lama indicated its maturity in performing its role.

The UCPN-Maoist stand on the case was understandable. Colonel Kumar Lama's case was like a Damocles sword hanging over the head of Maoist leaders. It was message to UCPN-Maoist leaders that they were not safe to travel abroad either.

UCPN-Maoist, after joining in the open politics and leading the government, needed international travel for sharing experiences and gaining exposure. They would need to meet political leaders abroad, like the CPN-UML leaders did in the past. Lama's case meant losing their own opportunity to travel and remain within the country's confines.

Whatever its image abroad and its ideology at home, UCPN-Maoist is an organized political force and still the

largest party of Nepal. Its leaders are reportedly implicated in some serious incidents of human rights violation. According to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, out of 13,000 cases of rights violation, 100 are of serious nature.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

After the arrest of Colonel Lama, UCPN-Maoist-led government met the president and urged him to issue the Truth and Reconciliation Ordinance.



However, various European countries expressed reservation over the TRC ordinance, saying that it did not meet the international standards.

UCPN-Maoist assured the international community that the party was committed to forming a "powerful" and "independent" TRC to deal with all the cases of serious human rights violation that took place during the decade-long insurgency.

According to lawyers, the proposed TRC ordinance, which is awaiting approval from president Dr. Yadav, has the provision of giving a blanket amnesty. While referring indirectly to the recent detention of Colonel Lama in London, the UCPN-Maoist has also sought cooperation to address the cases of human rights violation, by maintaining that all issues and cases concerning the decade-long conflict should be dealt in accordance with the spirit of the CPA.

While expressing serious reservation over the proposed TRC, European Missions, along with Norway and Switzerland, in a joint statement, demanded formation of an independent and credible TRC resulting from extensive public consultations and regard for the victims' needs. They also

cautioned that giving the TRC the authority to grant amnesty for serious human rights abuses would not only breach the international law but also fundamentally weaken the foundation for a lasting peace in Nepal.

"It is not a recipe how the TRC should look. But it is an advice that lasting peace needs a broad consensus, which means families of victims have justice," he said. "And that is not referring to one particular case which was blown out of proportion recently. It refers to all the victims of the conflict."

Opposition party leaders as well as human rights activists have said that the proposed TRC should not include the general amnesty provision.

The opposition leaders also asked president Dr. Yadav not to endorse the proposed TRC ordinance as it was deeply flawed and that such a TRC would not help establish a lasting peace.

CPN-UML leader Agni Kharel, who was closely involved in the preparation of the TRC draft bill in the erstwhile parliament, argued that the president should not endorse the TRC ordinance as it includes granting amnesty to even those who are accused of serious human rights offences, such as murder, torture, rape and kidnapping.

Member of National Human Rights Commission Gauri Pradhan said general amnesty to the perpetrators of serious crimes could erode Nepal's credibility. He also said there is no point in forming a TRC that does not meet the international standards and is not accepted by the wider world community.

Pradhan argued that universal justice could be invoked if the issues of human rights violations are not addressed as per Nepal's commitment to human rights in various international human forums. "Such cases should not be construed as international interference," he added.

All these incidents and arguments are pushing the country's major forces towards making and unmaking their alliances. In a strange way, UCPN-Maoist is defending Nepal Army. Intriguingly likely in all this is the fact that Nepal Army's peacekeeping missions are likely to see restrictions, pushing the UCPN-Maoist into isolation. ■

"Rights Issue Universal"

DINESH TRIPATHY

As Nepal has been passing through a critical period of transitional justice **DINESH TRIPATHY**, constitutional lawyer and person having working experiences in transitional justice system spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on various issues. Excerpts:

How do you see the recent state of peace process?

One must understand the fact that Peace Process does not mean the integration of combatants only. Transitional justice system is an integral and very important part of the Peace Process. This involves many humanitarian issues. During the conflict period, there was massive violation of rule of law and human rights.

What is the state of transitional justice system in Nepal?

In the context of Nepal, this process is misunderstood. Even prime minister Baburam Bhattarai is giving a wrong interpretation to the transitional justice system saying punishing those involved in the rights abuse is against the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Without the rule of law and without ensuring human rights, it is impossible to achieve peace. Peace process is itself a process to institutionalize the peace. It is a process to institutionalize the supremacy of rule of law.

What is your observation on the arrest of colonel Kumar Lama?

The arrest of colonel Kumar Lama in United Kingdom speaks volumes about Nepal's situation. Nepal is a signatory to various international conventions. The arrest of Lama is justifiable under the universal jurisdiction. According to universal jurisdiction, the nationality of persons involve in human rights related crime is irrelevant. The nature of crime is what is looked into. Human rights and justice issues are now globalised. This is now legitimate concern of the international law. Universal jurisdiction is going to play a role. The responsibility to protect rights is under universal jurisdiction.

Don't you think colonel Lama's arrest is against sovereignty of Nepal?

Kumar Lama was arrested under universal jurisdiction. This is not related to any sovereignty issue. Universal jurisdiction has given clear mandate to punish anybody who commits crime in any part of the world. If there is no sufficient evidence, Lama will be released. This is just the beginning. Even Nepal's political leaders will face a similar fate. At a time when even former American president George Bush and vice president Dick Cheney and Secretary



of Defense have been canceling their visits to certain countries, Nepal's political leaders cannot remain safe.

Constitution of the TRC will give a sigh of relief?

It is not a panacea at all. Of course, Nepal may get a certain respite in case it establishes a credible TRC. Nepal has to show the political will to establish an independent and credible Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is unfortunate that political leaders have shown no interest to pass the bill on TRC and Disappearance during the four years of the CA. TRC has just been made a hard political bargaining chip. Prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai is cheating the international community, is even lying to them.

How do you see the ordinance presented to the president?

The ordinance presented to the president does not meet the international requirements and international obligations. Nepal is a party of several international human rights conventions. Nepal is a party to the Geneva Convention. The recent ordinance has provisions for blanket amnesty. The current ordinance has so many provisions for amnesty. TRC commission looks like a shadow of political parties.

Does Nepal have time?

Time is not out. We still have time to show our commitments towards universal human rights by following the transitional justice system and respecting the universal declaration of human rights. There is clear resolution on how to give amnesty. This is not a time to discuss on agenda but the time to act to make our justice system credible. Those involved in gross violation of the rights must be punished. You cannot hide them permanently. If Nepal fails to start a credible process, it will create a lot of problems for Nepal. The democratic world can stop the foreign aid. This is just an indicator. Any state or non-state actor can be arrested. ■



Vansittart's *Notes On Nepal*

By BIPIN ADHIKARI

The book of Eden Vansittart *Notes on Nepal* [Calcutta: 1896] was published about 110 years after the publication of Giuseppe de Rovato's account of the conquest of Nepal Valley by Gorkha King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Vansittart was the captain of the 2/5th Gurkha Rifles and had the opportunity to know Nepal and the Nepalese in the perspective of the Gurkhas as well.

By the time the *Notes on Nepal* was written, several literatures on the hidden country of Nepal had already been published – the most significant, in terms of coverage and comparatively more thoroughness, being the researches of British Resident Brian Hodgson. Vansittart had been much benefited by the perspective of all these early authors. At the time this book was written, Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana, the founder of Rana regime, was already dead. Prime Minister Bir Shamsher was running the show after the assassination of Ranodip Singh in 1885 who had succeeded Jung Bahadur upon his death.

Eden Vansittart covers a wide range of topics in the *Notes on Nepal* in fifteen sections that the book has been divided into, giving treatment to a host of diverse issues. The book has been introduced by H. H. Risley, an official of the British Indian civil service at that time. Starting from general descriptions of Nepal and its geography, Vansittart describes the major zones of the country, river basins, population, crops and minerals, and international trade. Both the history of Nepal Valley up to conquest by King Prithvi Narayan Sahi and the subsequent development have been described briefly in the book. The author introduces King Prithvi Narayan as “a person of insatiable ambition, sound judgement, great courage, and unceasing activity” and his Gurkha principality as inhabited entirely by Magars, Gurungs, Thakurs and Khas “with a sprinkling of the menial classes.”

While Eden Vansittart describes the four-year Gorkha conquest with a broad outline (from the first seize of Kirtipur in 1765 till the fall of Bhatgaon in the commencement of 1769), he admits to being “quite ignorant of the details connected with the several sieges and engagements;” and the number of troops engaged either on the Nepal Valley or the Gurkha side during these four years.

He deals with the conquests that continued even after the death of Prithvi Narayan Sahi. Vansittart mentions “the most heroic bravery [of the men of Kirtipur] in the defence of their capital.” He describes King Gainprejas [Jaypakash Malla] as high spirited and heroic. It is no doubt that he is influenced by Giuseppe de Rovato's Account of the Kingdom of Nepal in setting his tone. He mentions the gallantry of the King of Tanahung, a Chaubise principality, without giving his name.

Vansittart states that the population of Nepal is estimated by the Nepalese at around 52,00,000 to 56,00,000. However, he says most writers, whom he presumes are correct, estimate it to be about 40,00,000. Until this time, 1896, it appears Nepalese hills had not started importing salt from India. As Vansittart writes, “the salt is packed in bags forming loads of about 15 Lb each which are brought across the snows fastened to the backs of sheep.”

Captain Vansittart also describes Nepal army as he saw it. He notes that the country has a standing force of 30,000 soldiers. There are soldiers on leave of almost the same numbers, who “enter the ranks and take the place of others who in turn lie by for a year or two.” All regiments are armed with locally manufactured Martini-Henrys or snider or muzzle loading percussion cap Enfield rifles. As regards to their efficiency, he says “there is no doubt that the material is good, and for defensive purposes in their own hills and forest, the soldiers would fight well and be formidable foes.” The weak point in Nepal army is “the officers, who are generally either very old men long past their work, or very young lads.” Notwithstanding this comment, Vansittart also describes the Jung Bahadur-led force which quells the Mutiny in Awadh and the performance of the Nepal army led by Dhir Shamsher in the War with Tibet in 1854. Referring to a parade held in Kathmandu on 6th March 1888, he observes that “108 guns marched past the Prime Minister, and it is therefore only natural to conclude that the Nepalese are strong in this branch.” This certainly indicates that the Army was still a powerful one by the prevailing standards.

Vansittart has separately dealt with the Aboriginal tribes of Nepal, which follows a section on the military tribes.

The first group comprises of the Magars, Gurungs, Newar, Sunuwar, Khambus, Yakkas, Yakthumbas, Murmis (Tamangs/Lamas) and Lepchas. He quotes Brian Hodgson in saying that the “transit from



the north into Nepal was constantly made before the Thibetans had adopted ... the religion and literature of Buddhism.” When he deals with the military tribes, the Khasas come as the first group to be followed by Magar, Gurungs and Thakur. He does not include ‘Thakurs’ in the group of Khasas. Also added are the Limbus, Rais and Sunuwar. Here Vansittart cautions: “the prejudice which existed against them would seem rightly to be dying out rapidly. Nagarkotis and Murmis have also been discussed in the book as military tribes.

About early immigration in Nepal, Vansittart notes: “The most ancient records would seem to prove that Nepal was originally inhabited by Mongolians probably from one of the great waves of Mongolian conquest which spread through the breath of Asia from east to west, some side wave washed over the bleak snows of the mighty Himalayas, into the fertile plains and valleys of Nepal. Finding here a cool and bracing climate and a fertile soil, this mass of Mongolians settled down and adopted the country as their own.” Similarly, he talks about historical evidence of the existence in Nepal, long prior to the advent of Sakia Simha of Hindus from the plains from India, “Daughter of [King] Ashok being married to the descendent of a Chettri, who had settled there centuries before.” Vansittart does not seem to be aware of the Khas people and their pre-Vedic existence – who migrated to the country via the western Thibet and adjoining territories – rather than India he was quick to link them with. It is clear that he has the influence of many earlier writings, which described Khas people according to the story given to them by the ruling elites at that time.

The book is certainly a valuable reading. It covers a wide range of descriptions on Nepal. It is good to study this book along with some other writings of Vansittart to get a complete understanding of his perspective on Gurkhas and their country. Judged by the time it was written, it definitely was an informative work. ■

"NPC At Work On 3-Year Plan"

YUBARAJ BHUSAL

As Nepal's current three-year interim plan is going to expire in June 2013, the National Planning Commission is now working to prepare another three-year interim plan. Secretary at the National Planning Commission YUBARAJ BHUSAL spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excerpts:

How do you look at the development plans in Nepal?

After the first plan of 2013 B.S, Nepal implemented two three-year interim plans following the introduction of Panchayat system. After the proclamation of the republic in 2008, Nepal has already implemented two three-year interim plans and now we are drafting the third one.

Why only three years for the interim plans?

Comparatively, when there is a stable government, the plan mostly is prepared for five years. Since Nepal is in transition under interim constitution and the country is yet to see a government with a long term vision, five-year plan cannot be the right way to go. Once the new constitution is promulgated and new elections is held for a fixed term government, then only the country will require five-year plans.

Why is this so?

An elected government will have long term policies and planning and it wants to translate the long term vision in reality. If the government is elected for a full term, there will be the need of five-year plans. It is required for a long term perspective. The present scenario is that there is uncertainty everywhere, we don't know when the new government will come or go. We are unable to bring the new budget even for the coming fiscal year. Our budget is based on the expenditure of the last year. In this period of uncertainty, a five-year plan is not accepted. This is the temporary budget for temporary government. We are now working for the new interim plan. Considering the fact that long term plan like five years planning will be unacceptable to future government, National Planning Commission is

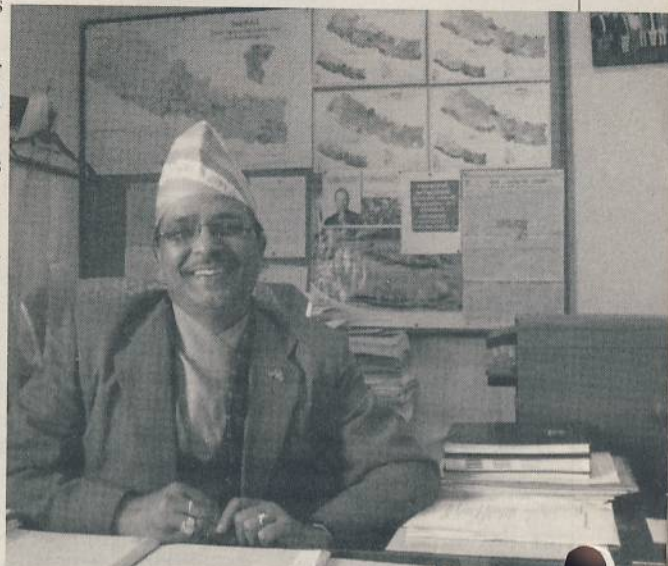
preparing the three years interim plan.

What are the major highlights of the proposed three-year interim plan?

We have proposed various programs and plans. The plan will include 12 to 13 chapters. It will also include the review of previous three years plan, achievement in MDGs and success. There will be review of the challenges faced by us and the efforts made to meet such challenges. There will be the background to it. The chapters include overall economic performance and macro-economic stability, macro economic performance and challenges. The plan will also include the chapter dealing with the maintenance of macroeconomic stability, advancement of works on reform and governance for the stability for financial sector. It will forecast GDP, expenditure, saving and revenue collections, management of loan, foreign aid and foreign direct investment. There will be projections of foreign direct investment. There will also include the monetary policy including micro finance. In the development sectors, there are four actors, which include public sector, including local bodies, private sector, cooperatives and community and non-governmental sector. There are also public enterprises and public institutions.

How will the new interim plan see the issues of poverty alleviation?

Human resource management and poverty alleviation is one of the important components of the coming plan. This is a cross cutting issue. There is a separate chapter for this. This chapter will deal with labor and employment issues, including the foreign employment. This chapter will also deal with poverty alleviation and skills development. Our aim is to bring down poverty by 21 percent by 2015. Now our level of poverty is 25.16 in 2010.



How do you see the sustainable development?

Other cross cutting issue is sustainable development. After the Rio+20, three pillars of development are economic, social and environmental. On the basis of the outcome document of Rio, we will include the agenda of sustainable development. Another important area will be balanced regional development. Since the fourth five years plan, Nepal has been launching balanced regional development by dividing the nation into five development regions. Despite this, disparities continue to exist. This is the reason Nepal government has recently set up Far-western Development Region Development Commission and Karnali Development Commission. The Far-western Development Commission includes seven hilly districts of the region and five districts in Karnali Commission.

How will the coming plan address the Disaster Risk Management issue?

Other important topic will be the Disaster Risk Management. This is also a cross cutting issue and it is one of the important sectors. Since disaster is a multi-dimensional issue, it is not only related to the Ministry of Home Affairs or Forest and Soil Conservation Ministry or Ministry of Energy. Disaster is a multi-dimensional issue, which includes

natural disaster, calamities and so on. The coming three years plan will give priority to the Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Risk Management. It will include agriculture, irrigation and food security, forest and forest protection, land reform and agricultural productivity. There will also be the agenda on environment and climate change. There will also be industry, trade and tourism related issues.

How will the coming plan address the population issue?

Under social development chapter, the forthcoming plan will also include population management. According to census report of 2058, Nepal's population growth was 2.25 percent and now it declined to 1.35 percent in the recent census. Some experts hold the view that this decline is the result of migration of 1.9 youth population. Considering Nepal's total land available, population management is important for the country's development. Nepal consists of 35 percent mountains where 7 percent population lives. Some 42 percent of the population lives in 42 percent of land available in the hill. In 23 percent total available land, 50.3 percent of country's population lives. The high level of migration is taking place in terai. Low land of hills and district headquarters and urbanization is taking place in fertile land of hill. Due to this, our productive land is declining. One of our important chapters will also include how to manage the population. The plan will try to set the number of family members. The plan will give priority to population policy.

How do you see the social agenda?

Along with other issues, education, drinking water and sanitation are other important areas. In the social sector, we want to incorporate the idea of social protection. Talking about social safety, we are proposing alternatives to pension for civil service. Annually, a huge amount of money is spent in pension. The plan will discuss social welfare fund. Other areas include women, children, persons with disability, single women and marginalized community. There will also be a chapter for the adolescent. It will include the employment opportunity. Gender and inclusion will

be other important areas. Madheshis, janjatis and adibasis, women, Muslims and backward regions and issue of third gender will also be dealt with in the plan.

What about the infrastructure development?

Another important area will be infrastructure development. Along with hydro power, we will also give high priority to alternative energy. As we have been celebrating alternative energy week, this will get a priority. In the road sectors, the Hulaki Rajmarg will be completed and mid-hill highway and existing roads and high ways will be maintained. Development of electric rail, metro in Kathmandu and water ways are other programs.

Do you have any plan for rehabilitation and reconstruction?

The other important sector is rehabilitation and reconstruction. The rehabilitation of buildings and infrastructure destroyed during the conflict period will be included. Another important chapter will be Peace and Governance. For the first time, our plan will incorporate it. Our ultimate objective will be to achieve long lasting

peace and address the related issues. We will also include the strategy and plans for administrative aspects and good governance. Legal sector will also be given high priority. Anti-corruption, financial management are other important areas. People's participation, security issue, human rights and human trafficking will also be there. There will also be a chapter for statistics. There will be separate chapter for implementation and formation of plan. This time we will also include research and development chapter. We want to link research with universities. The research will be on any issue.

How will NPC finalize it?

We will discuss these agenda at various stages before preparing the draft. After intensive consultations at various stages, the draft will be prepared. The draft will be presented before experts, former high level officials working in NPC, and ministries. Along with this, the draft will be sent to all five development regions for the intensive discussions. We will prepare the first draft before April. ■

मानवले मानवलाई शोषण गर्ने,
अन्याय-अत्याचार गर्ने कार्य निन्दनीय
कार्य भएको हुँदा नागरिक अधिकार
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नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग

INVESTMENT BANK: 26TH AGM

Healthy Profit

At a time when the nation's economy is suffering and the banks in the country are struggling, Nepal Investment Bank has posted a healthy profit and is distributing the dividends to its shareholders

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

When the Nepalese bankers led by Prithvi Bahadur Pande took the most successful French managed Indo-Suez Bank, many raised their eyebrow as to whether the team would retain its credibility and financial performance. After almost 15 years, Prithvi Bahadur Pande, the son of renowned late Bhim Bahadur Pande, has shown that the Nepalese banks are competent and capable at par with their international counterparts.

In the last five years, Nepal has been passing through a very critical political situation, with prolonged uncertainty and chaos affecting the whole financial situation, Nepal Investment Bank solidly survived all the storms.

Nepal Investment Bank Limited (NIBL), one of the major

financial institutions in Nepal, is distributing five percent cash dividends and 25 percent bonus shares to its shareholders from the profit generated in the last fiscal year that ended in mid-July 2012.

Although Pande has given up his active day to day involvement in the bank, NIBL retains its speed of success that he achieved. After taking over the role as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) from Prithvi Pande some time back, Jyoti Prakash Pandey has also proven his records of success as the chief of NIBL.

According to a decision, approved during the 26th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the bank, it will distribute NRs 150.64 million as cash dividends, along with stock dividends worth of NRs 753.23 million.

The last fiscal year proved to be a real struggle for many banks and many witnessed huge problems, but even in such tough times, Nepal Investment Bank Limited remained nearly free from

problems and achieved decent results.

The profits that Nepal Investment Bank posted has shown that if a bank is run well, it cannot only survive in the most difficult of circumstances, but also thrive by earning profits.

From the initial paid-up capital of NRs 30 million, the Investment Bank now



has a paid up capital of more than NRs 3.76 billion, which includes the proposed bonus shares.

"NIBL has the highest paid up capital among private sector banks in the country and has almost twice the minimum paid up capital prescribed by NRB," said chief executive officer Jyoti Prakash Pandey.

The net profit of the bank, however, declined by 11.7 per cent to NRs 1.03 billion. The decline in profits of the bank are due to losses on realty sector, as the banks of the country are still recovering from the realty disaster, which once engulfed the whole banking sector of the country.

The capital adequacy ratio (CAR) is at 11.1 percent while the credit deposit ratio (LCY deposit with equity) is at 72.4 percent.

The total deposits of the bank increased by 13.7 percent and reached NRs 57.01 billion, while the total lending of the bank increased by 2.4 percent to

NRs 42.9 billion in the last fiscal year.

The bank has not only achieved success commercially but has also been active in fulfilling its corporate social responsibilities. The Investment Bank organizes annual marathon race for some social cause.

Likewise, the bank is also trying to set up a micro finance company subject to the permission from the NRB. "NIBL is awaiting approval from Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) to set up a microfinance company," said Pandey.

An affiliate of Moody's Investor Group, the Investment Bank managed to expand its total assets by 12.7 percent to NRs 65.75 billion.

During the period, it posted a growth of 40.6 per cent to reach NRs 10.64 billion in total investments.

The Investment Bank has some 41 branches and one extension counter. The bank is providing automated services to its customers from its 68 ATMs.

The bank is also rated Nepal (A) for the third consecutive year by Indian Credit Rating Agency. In the past 26 years, the bank has paid around NRs 2.5 billion as dividends to its shareholders.

"The performance showed the credibility of the bank and the bank will always focus on providing quality banking services to its customers," Pandey said. ■

NEW SPOTLIGHT

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POWER CUT

Not Easy To Solve

There is no sign for the construction of major storage power projects, restricting the opportunity to import power from India. Nepalese are sure to face more load shedding for a long time to come. With the reduction of water level in the snow feed rivers and cut of power export by India, the load-shedding hours have increased up to 14 hours. It is almost certain that it may go up to 18 hours in the month of February, March and April. Given the present project scenario, Nepal will have no immediate relief from prolong power cut

By KESHAB POUDEL

Just a few hours after the announcement by India that it cut 30 MW of power supply to Nepal, Nepal Electricity Authority has added two hours of load-shedding, making every home dark for 14 hours a day. This spoke volumes about writing Nepal's overall power scenario.

If a short supply of 30 MW of power to Nepal added two hours load shedding a day, what could be the results in case of reduction of another 30 MW power supply from Indian state of Bihar. With the acceleration of economic growth in Bihar, it requires more electricity for internal consumption. One needs not be surprised by more power cut in coming days.

Nepal Electricity Authority's acting managing director Mahendra Lal Shrestha in his annual report admitted, "considering supply options available, we had predicted restoring to a maximum of 18 hours of load shedding per day per

consumer during the driest months of January, February, March and April.

There is also an irony. At a time when Nepal is in dire needs of power, the country even fails to use the power generated by Independent Power Producers. Although Spring River Hydropower project in Dolkha District has already started generation of commercial power, it does not have power grid to evacuate its energy. With the capacity of 10 MW, Spring River hydro plan is waiting for the construction of grid supply power to national grid.

Although the government has expressed its commitment to construct the grid for power evacuation for the project, the transmission line project is yet to complete. Spring River is now supplying 3 MW power to Upper Tamakoshi and it is wasting 7 MW of energy.

These two incidents spoke volumes about Nepal's overall power scenario.

With the actual demand of electricity at over 1200 MW, Nepal's internal capacity is just over 700 MW in rainy season and it will reduce to half in winter when the rivers go dry. According to estimates, the present demand is a suppressed demand. Actually, there is demand of over 2000 MW.

The overall scenario of power supply is that one needs to bribe million of rupees to connect 150 kilowatt to 1 MW of energy supply. Despite construction of five projects with the capacity of about 700 MW, Nepal's power cut will see no relief at all till the construction of storage project like West Seti, Raughat or Seti River happens.

At a time when there is a growing law and order problems and some parties are receiving the call to rise of political anarchy at local level, possibility of constructing new projects is very rare. All politicians are busy in settling the political and constitutional agenda, and

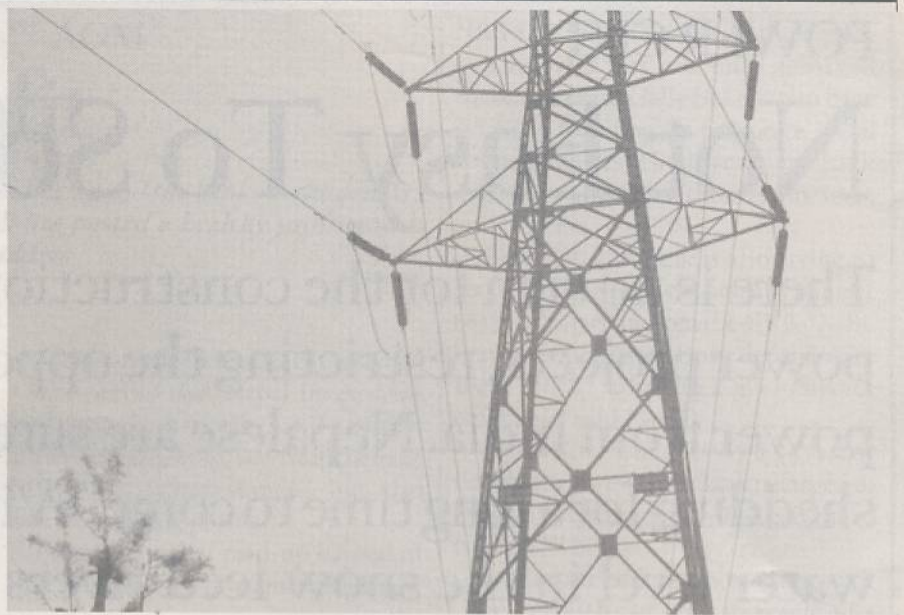
the power sector development has become nobody's priority.

According to NEA, the annual peak demand of the Integrated Nepal Power System in fiscal year 2011/2012 is estimated to be 1,026.65 MW with 448 MW power estimated to have been shed. Out of 578.65 MW of power actual supplied, 349.71 MW was produced by NEA hydro, 5.3 MW by NEA thermal and 102.2 MW by IPP hydro and the rest 121.44 MW was import. The annual peak power demand of the INPS registered growth rate of 8.5 percent.

Energy demand of INPS in fiscal year 2011/2012 is estimated at 5,194.78 GWh, out of which only 4,178.63 (80.4 percent) could be supplied. The rest 1,016.15 GWh (19.6 percent) was restored to load shedding. Of the total supplied energy volume, 3432.56 GWh (82.2 percent) was contributed by domestic generation and 746.07 GWh (17.8 percent) import from India.

The present power crisis is not a result of overnight incident. This is a result of the government's Hydro Power Policy 1992. The policy was drafted during the period of Nepali Congress government. Since the promulgation of policy, the government completely stopped the investment in power sector asking private sector to come to invest.

For instance, the tenth five year plan envisaged generation of 314 MW power; with 214 MW by private sector and 100



MW by public sector. After completion of Middle Marsyangdi, public sector will fulfill 74 MW with delaying in the construction of Chameliya 34 MW. However, the private sector is just able to build the project capacity of just 37 MW with 29 MW by Chilime project, a company promoted by NEA.

As the cost of construction of hydro power in Nepal is very high, the investment is not easy. According to the report presented by Somnath Poudel, per kilowatt generation of power on average is 150 million rupees in Nepal. However, the costs of almost all projects go much beyond this.

Although NEA has signed PPA for 1600 MW with the private sector, the hold of NEA subsidiary like Upper Tamakoshi and Chilime have higher stakes on these. Out of this, two subsidiaries of NEA alone occupies 60/70 percent of power.

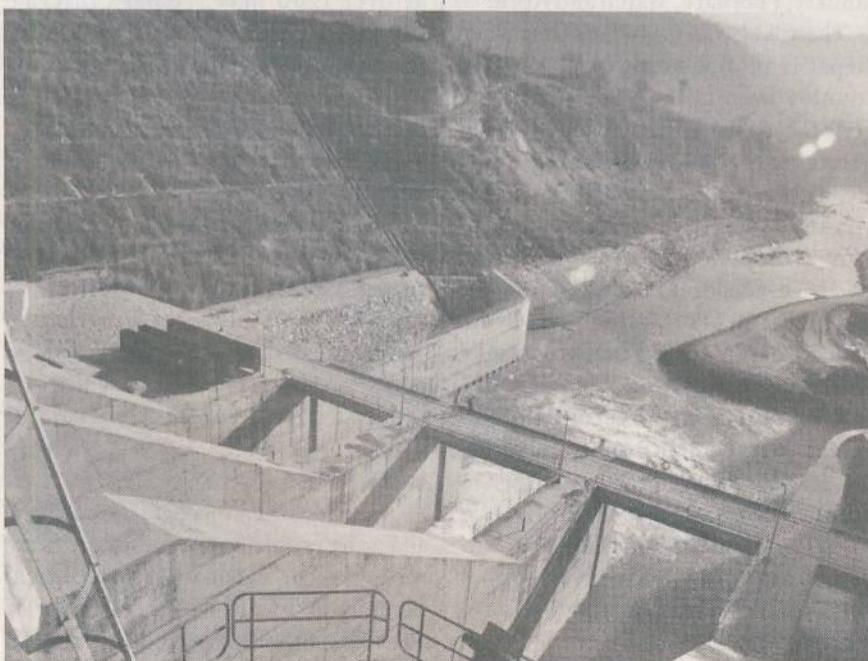
With virtually no financial capability of the private sector and the lack of government finance, Nepal's hydro power sector has suffered all along in reaching the current state of power crisis. In the last two decades, private sector's contribution is over just 150 MW when the demand reached over five folds.

Following controversy, the construction of west seti project is uncertain and even the construction of another storage project Seti is yet to pick up.

Solution

If there is a will, there is a way. Like in equation, health and road sector, the government needs to invest heavily on hydro power sector. If the government allocates Rs. 10 billion a year in the power sector, Nepal can see major changes in the coming ten years.

Given the experiences of looking at the private sector for foreign investment, there is no solution other than investment of the government in coping with the power crisis in the country. At a time when Nepal has been spending over trillion rupees a year to import petroleum products and generating revenues of over 30 billion, the time has come for the government to take a lead.



Kaligandaki A Power Station



Storage Projects Will Solve Power Problem

By BIKASH THAPA

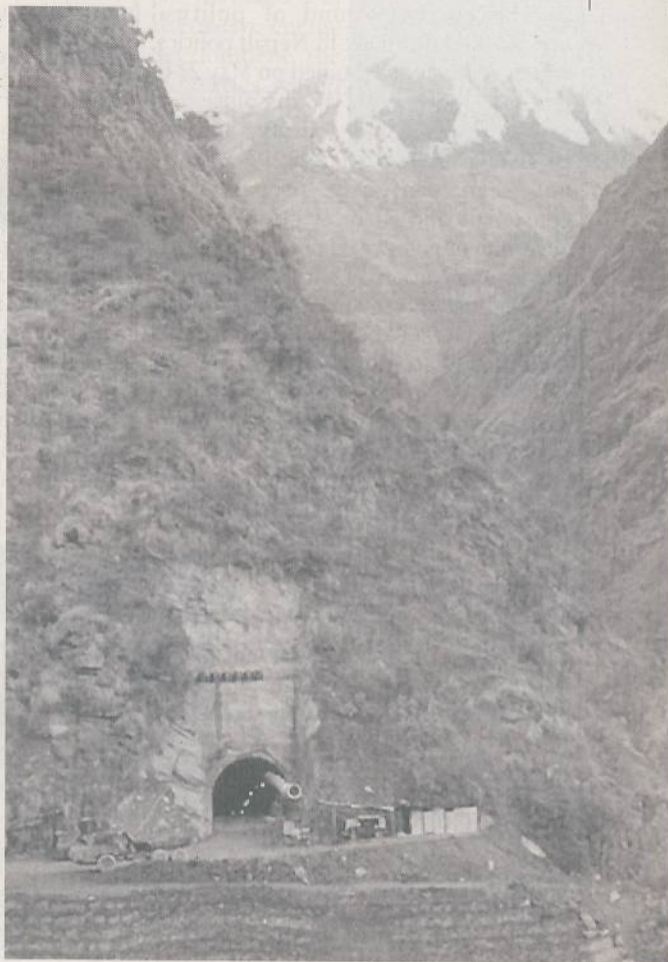
After the recent increase of two hours of load shedding to 14 hours in total every day, worries are there if these dark hours will increase further in the days ahead. Looking at the present state of generation capability and limited options of import of energy, the load-shedding hours are definitely going up to 18 hours in the month of March and April this year. As Nepal's rivers are drying up, power generation capability will further shrink and reduction of import from India will further increase the gap. Bihar government's recent decision to reduce the export of 30 MW power to Nepal is an indication that they will further reduce the supply.

One of the reasons behind the present two hour additional power cut is the result of shortage of 30 MW power in the national grid. One of the important aspects of imported electricity is the firm power. If India cut another 30 MW on the domestic ground, the situation will be horrible. Recent news reports published in Indian state of Bihar showed that Patna based intellectuals are now taking the export of energy to Nepal at their cost tantamount to their interest. Like in the Nepalese intellectuals, there is an upsurge in the nationalistic sentiment in Bihar also. If India reduces the export to Nepal, the hours may go long. Although prime minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has claimed that he has been working to reduce the load shedding hours by increasing the import from neighboring countries, it is not easy at all. At a time when Indian state of Bihar, a state bordering with Nepal, too has been facing power shortage, the prime minister's statement may be not more than a lip service. There is a wide resentment in Bihar over exporting power at the cost of local demand. There is a huge gap in Nepal's current demand and supply situation. As the use of luxuries, such electric house appliances, increases, the households in Kathmandu

may require more power. The present supply of electricity is just over 400 MW out of 700 MW supply in summer. However, the demand is already over 1000 MW.

The present power crisis is not a result of the decision taken in the recent times as it is the implications of last two decades of negligence in the power sector or lack of investment by the government. Although hydro power is cost intensive and risk areas for investment, Nepalese private sector alone cannot do it. According to a study, per MW power generation cost is about 160 million rupees average. As such, the hydro power cannot develop without government investment. If one looks at the government investment in the last one decade, it has virtually allocated nothing in the hydro power sector. This has affected the hydropower construction. For instance, the government's tenth plan targeted to produce 314 MW of power allocating 214 MW by private sector and 100 MW by public sector. However, private sector produces 37 MW whereas public sector produces 74 MW power through Middle Marsyangdi. Public sector undertaken project Chameliya is yet to complete. Our of 37 MW, 20 MW power was produced by Chilime; a subsidiary of NEA. This speaks a grim reality of private sector's capability in Nepal.

The current prolonged power crisis has no immediate solution as the demand of the electricity is much higher than what is generated by power plants. Despite signing the Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA) with several IPPs,



Upper Tamakoshi Project

except Tamakoshi, 456 MW, no other seems to be in a position to supply the electricity. Even Tamakoshi will supply just 100 MW power during winter. It indicated that Nepal's power sector has a long way to go. However, there is a solution as well. Instead of going for expensive diesel Thermal Plants, the country needs to go for storage projects like West Seti, Budhi Gandaki or Seti. For this, there is the need to have involvement of the government. Like in the road sector, government needs to allocate certain amount of money annually to hydro power sector so that country can overcome the power crisis in future.

Thapa is Kathmandu based journalist regularly writes on water resources and energy sector. He has also written a book "Hydropower in Nepal"

Nation In Limbo: High Time For Mediation

By NISHESH DHUNGANA



The current round of political impasse and deadlock in Nepali politics, which virtually heightened on May 27 of last year, along with the dissolution of the constituent assembly, is still persisting on. Major Political Parties do not seem seriously prepared for consensus and early election under a government comprised of major political parties as a National Unity Government.

The lust to remain in power on the part of UCP (Maoists) and its PM Baburam Bhattarai, even after he was relieved of his office, according to Article 38 (7) of the Interim constitution, which in no doubt is one of the major factor that is complicating this situation. To a certain extent, in the beginning it was natural on PM Bhattarai's part to expect NC and UML of joining his government, like the one they had done weeks before the dissolution of the constituent assembly. However, it was absurd on the other hand to stick to power for an indefinite period of time, once he had been convinced that the parties in opposition would in no case do so in the changed context while legislative parliament / constituent assembly was no more in existence.

That is why an observation on how even those who held him with high esteem, till recent past, seem to now be becoming his bitter critics day by day, points out what a great damage he has inflicted upon the peace process and on the nation as a whole by unceremoniously dissolving the constituent assembly; in addition to declining to step down after failure to hold elections for constituent assembly on November 22 as declared before. It indicates to an extent that the Bhattarai led government failed to rally the opposition parties around him and gain their trust, in which they could sit together in the same government as co-partners of the pro-peoples' movement. In trying to do justice to the case, this very logic also applies to Nepali Congress in the sense that, after the passing away of Girija Prasad Koirala, its leadership showed no serious interest in further extending hands of trust to Maoists and step into shoes of Koirala in terms of leading and completing the

remaining tasks of the peace process.

Against such background, it is not much of a surprise to see consensus failing to forge even around the candidacy of Sushil Koirala from NC to head the election government, or agreement not easily reached even on the name of any other candidate from the fringe parties. It reflects over all the extent of how power has been the priority of our political parties at this time, rather than preserving and institutionalizing the achievements of people's movement, in 2006, which should have been their bounden duty in terms of the change - agendas they jointly brought forward and the cause they fought for so far, during the movement and the tenure of



Political Leaders

the constituent assembly.

At the same time it is no less tragic to observe how even President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav's step in the right direction, although belated, on exploring consensus government for election was watered down by these very major political parties. The arrogance of Maoists in power remains worth taking into serious notice as substantiated by the fact that it didn't hesitate even to question the very legitimacy of president's public call for consensus government trying to justify its rational as cabinet decision as reported.

This altogether calls for Nepalese to rise above the party line to see present Nepal's painful transition completed and a new era of stability, democracy and development unfolded soon. However, the fundamental question remains, how to reach to the point of election when political parties are least serious about it and setting silly conditions such as

one party not accepting the government headed by the other. When will people get a sense of governance and a constitution when a transition and the deadlock like the present one continues showing no signs of a light at the tunnel?

In a situation like this, the key to break such impasse and deadlocks, in my opinion, rests solely in political parties' willingness to opt for mediation by some largely fair and relatively independent set of civil society leaders under the overall guidance of the President. Accepting that idea that our political parties are not willing or competent enough to forge consensus in forming a government to hold a constituent assembly election or even for mediation by civil society leaders under the initiative and guidance that should be provided by the President. In such a situation only a natural course of action to break the present impasse and deadlock shall finally be no other than peoples' spontaneous uprising, or friendly outside initiatives for mediation, irrespective of the fact whether our political parties may like it or not.

The nation cannot stay in limbo for an indefinite period of time, waiting for political parties to forge consensus and hold elections as is happening today even several months after the dissolution of the constituent assembly. It is already high time for somebody to break the ongoing stalemate by boldly acting as interlocutor between or among the political parties. In this connection civil society leaders having long experiences and integrity will definitely be the best choice, provided the president feels moved to take initiative and switch to new tools of negotiation when earlier tools fail to give desired results, as the reality remains today. Supposing even such initiative does not work, in such a case, friendly outside mediation will be the only alternative, whether one may like it or not. Nobody will be able to stop this from happening, provided our internal political actors or mediators, official or non official fail to reach at consensus for holding elections at the earliest.

Dhungana is associated with Kathmandu University

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Perennial Power

The recently organized energy week gives a ray of hope to consumers at a time when Nepal has been passing through a severe shortage of electricity

By A CORRESPONDENT

Jeewan Singh Shrestha, director of technology, Danphe Energy Pvt. Ltd, never realized that the common people would rush to an exhibition organized to explore the possibility to switch to alternative energy.

"Hundreds of people came to enquire with us about the products and costs. I am very much encouraged by the response," said Shrestha.



Navaraj Kunwar, managing director of Nepal Energy Development Company Pvt. Ltd, has similar experiences. "There is a huge untapped market in urban areas," said Kunwar.

Amrit Singh Thapa, Managing Director of Energy.Com, is equally enthusiastic. Various entrepreneurs coming to take part in the exhibition have their own experiences to share.

It took almost two decades for the Alternative Energy Promotion Center to disseminate the information that alternative energy sources can provide a constant source of power supply in the urban areas. As an acute power shortage is now an urban reality today, the people have no option other than to go for alternative energy.

With the number of people using alternative energy going up, the demand for the related products has gone up.

"Nepal has a huge potential for solar energy. Around 2.920 GWh of energy

per year can be harnessed by utilizing just 0.01 percent of the total land area of Nepal for solar energy," said Executive Director of AEPC Professor Dr. Govinda Pokharel.

As the demand grows, the issue of quality has also come to the surface. With the initiative of the Executive Director of AEPC, Professor Dr. Pokharel, a set of standards for the use of solar energy has been issued. Although a group of solar appliances opposed the AEPC's move to place the standards, Professor Dr. Pokharel's stand finally prevailed.

As urban households are facing an acute shortage of power, the number of people searching for alternative power has gone up. The presence of huge number of people in the exhibition for alternative energy showed that the people are willing to move to solar, wind or biogas as alternative sources of energy.

At the exhibition, choices were varied, with the stalls full of Rs. 2500.00 solar tukis to solar power 10 A for home appliances, bio gas plants, solar water heaters, wind, briquettes and micro hydro equipment.

Looking at the various alternative energy sources displayed at the two-day-long renewable energy exhibition at Bhrikutimandap, the people of various walks of life have started to think how quickly to move to the alternative energy source. Presently around 12 percent of the population are using electricity from alternative energy.

Despite the high demand, the lack of policy on promoting the alternative energy has been holding back the country's progress. For instance, according to FNCCI, Nepali industrial sector incurs a monthly loss of Rs 5

billion due to power shortage.

"If Rs 25 billion is invested in alternative energy development, the industries would be relieved of power crisis for good," said

Executive Director of Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC) Dr. Govinda Raj Pokharel.

Although the government has done little to encourage the people to use alternative energy, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai has been harping on a populist rhythm.

"Every household in Nepal will have clean energy solutions and indoor air pollution free kitchen by 2017," said Bhattarai. He did not elaborate how that can be made possible.

People involved in the alternative energy sector did not buy prime minister Bhattarai's commitment. "Until and unless the government introduces a policy to attract private sector investment in the renewable energy sector, the country will continue to be plagued by power crisis," said executive director of Nepal Biogas Promotion Association Bishnu Belbase.

"At a time when the people are facing acute power crisis, alternative energy development will bring a huge relief," said Belbase. "If the government is genuinely concerned about the people, it will definitely bring policies to encourage investment in alternative energy development."

Although the initial cost of alternative energy solution is a little high, it will turn out to be cheaper when it is used for a long time. Visitors who came to see the exhibition questioned about the cost.

"Alternative energy solutions are cheaper in the longer term. Of course, it is initially a little bit expensive, but in the long run alternative energy solutions are cheaper than the traditional sources," said Pokharel.

Resha Piya, senior energy officer at AEPC said the exhibition attracted people from all walks of life. "In more than 100 stalls people are getting to learn about renewable energy solutions.

"Some are even buying the products," she said. "The exhibition basically has 3 goals — raising awareness among the public, influencing policy makers and attracting private and banking sector to invest in this field," Piya added. ■



"UNDP Leads The Flagship Area 5 Of Nepal"

SHOKO NODA

Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries of the world in terms of natural disasters. However, Nepal has yet to make any progress in dealing with disasters. As UNDP is one of the major development partners supporting in disaster sector, SHOKO NODA, UNDP Country Director of Nepal spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on disaster related issues.

Excerpts:

UNDP remains a major development partner supporting the disaster sector. How do you see Nepal's disaster preparedness?

UNDP has been supporting the Government of Nepal in the disaster risk management sector on a regular basis since the early 1990s, and even before that on an ad hoc basis. Although there is still a lot to be done, there are signs of progress. For example, there is a coordination mechanism through the National Emergency Operations Center in Kathmandu, which is being expanded to the regional and district levels, and 16 districts already have District Emergency Operations Centers. First responders, including fire fighters and security forces, are better trained and equipped today than ever before. Similarly, national and district level preparedness and response plans have been developed. With UNDP's support, the government has developed and finalized the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in Nepal (NSDRMN), which is a policy document guiding the country in the field of disaster risk management. While these preparations may not be adequate or perfect, I believe that we are heading in the right direction.

In which areas is UNDP supporting Nepal?

The overall strategic guidance on disaster risk reduction is provided by the *National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in Nepal* (NSDRMN). Our role is to support the implementation of the recommendations made in the NSDRMN. In fact, I think that all major stakeholders should formulate their support activities around these recommendations. UNDP leads the Flagship Area 5 of the Nepal Risk

Reduction Consortium (NRRC), which is about the Institutional and Legislative System related to disaster risk management. Hence, a priority area of our support is to ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation. Other priority areas include strengthening disaster preparedness for effective response, reducing the underlying risks, and building a culture of safety and resilience through the use of knowledge, innovation and education. To provide the necessary support, we have been implementing a Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Programme (CDRMP).

Some examples of our work include supporting the National Planning Commission to mainstream Disaster Climate Risk Management (D/CRM) concerns into the upcoming national plan, supporting to develop national disaster response framework, training 25 Armed Police Force first responders on flood and deep water search and rescue, providing equipment to fire services, supporting communities to be safe from water induced disaster, providing trainings to masons, and the reconstruction/repair of school blocks.

How do you see the present capability of Nepal to cope with a major disaster like earthquake?

It is difficult to predict a disaster, but when it occurs, it destroys lives and property as well as reverses development gains of several years. I come from Japan, which lies on a high seismic zone. We have learned very early on that preparedness is the best way to minimize the scale of devastation. Speaking from a personal context, I feel that Nepal still has a long way to be fully prepared for a big disaster. There has been a general lack of sensitization about the impacts of disaster. However, this appears to be changing.

Nepal is certainly much better prepared today than a few years ago. The emergency response system has been strengthened through the establishment of the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC). District Emergency Operations Centres (DEOC) are



currently being established in the high-risk districts. There is active advocacy for and support to response preparedness in schools and hospitals. Preparations for urban search and rescue are being made. In addition, the National Disaster Response Framework has been formulated which outlines the roles and responsibilities of all the involved stakeholders. The government is now taking leadership in disaster preparedness, and a lot of bilateral support is being provided by countries like Australia, the UK and the USA.

However, huge gaps still exist. For example, until now, there are no emergency preparedness or response plans for majority of critical and life-line facilities, such as water supply, electricity, sewage, health, communication and transportation. Similarly, land use planning and bye laws are old and critically need updating. Furthermore, the government ministries and departments lack business continuity plans. The initiatives taken so far have to be expanded rapidly and new initiatives taken where needed.

Nepal lies in the earthquake prone zone, how do you see the level of awareness among the people?

The level of public awareness is slowly improving. People who have been

affected by earthquakes have started demanding earthquake resistant construction technology and capacity building of local masons and builders. New house builders are getting more concerned and involved in their house construction. Building contractors and companies have started to take earthquake risks into consideration in construction projects. Private businesses are talking about earthquake safety and business continuity in their factories.

Yet, as I said before, there are gaps. We are still not able to effectively implement the National Building Code (NBC). Code compliance is still considered a costly affair in construction. Studies show that 90 % of buildings in Nepal are owner/ mason built and most of these house owners and masons are ignorant about earthquake safe construction practices and building code compliance.

Climate change is going to severely affect Nepal in coming days particularly in the areas of natural disasters. How do you see the present level of preparedness to face such situation?

Nepal contributes almost zero in Green House Gas emission, however it is one of the countries hardest hit by the impacts of Climate Change. In 2010, it was ranked one of the most vulnerable countries to the negative impacts of climate change. Nepal has witnessed more than 24 Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), and the present trend of swelling up of glacial lakes is alarming. No rain and too much of rain have aggravated the risk of drought as well as flash floods and landslides thereby increasing the vulnerability of the people having low or no coping capacity. A lot needs to be done to cope with such climate change induced disasters, and efforts need to be made at all levels from local to national.

So far, UNDP had assisted the Government of Nepal to undertake vulnerability assessment and prepare a Vulnerability Map during the preparation of National Adaptation Programme of Activities (NAPA) in 2010, and is further supporting the government in designing targeted programmes to deal with different impacts of climate change.

How do you see the level of support given by Nepal's development

partners in enhancing the capability of Nepal?

A dollar invested in disaster preparedness can save seven times the amount in post-disaster recovery work. Considering this, it is indeed important to increase international aid in the area of disaster preparedness. Globally, only 1% of international aid is spent on disaster preparedness, while just 10% would protect development gains. Nonetheless, Nepal's disaster preparedness is seeing an increasing level of commitment from the development partners. Ten years ago, annual investments in disaster risk reduction were around \$5 million dollars. Now, we are looking to around \$40 million investment in a year. Coordination between the different development partners is also improving today. The Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC) is a very good coordination mechanism between the government, the international community and other concerned authorities to work together on disasters. Through the NRRC all the different actors in disaster risk reduction share a common vision and goals. This is a remarkable feat for Nepal in the global arena. A good example of different actors working together is UNDP providing support to enhance emergency response system in Nepal by establishing emergency operations centres in different districts, and World Bank recently complementing this effort by purchasing search and rescue equipment for the Armed Police Force.

As Nepal is prone to disasters and earthquake, how do you see the importance of commemorating the Earthquake Day on Magh 2 (January 15)?

Events marking the Earthquake Safety Day are very important to raise awareness about both policy inadequacies and implementation challenges. This day has also been instrumental in bringing actors together to discuss the issue of earthquake safety and make commitments. However, we need to ensure that commitments expressed on such occasions are quickly translated into actions. Importantly, awareness raising events should be organized in schools so that awareness and preparedness starts early on in one's life.

How do you visualize the level of devastation in Nepal, particularly

Kathmandu, in case of a disaster over 8 Richter scale?

Nepal is sitting on top of a Fukushima (Japan 2011) sized earthquake with the vulnerability of Port au Prince (Haiti 2012). Experts believe that around 60% of the buildings in Kathmandu will be damaged or destroyed in an 8 Richter scale earthquake and more than 100,000 people will die, with millions made homeless. Sadly, this is the situation. On top of that, unlike Port au Prince, Nepal is landlocked and very far from the coast, and if the roads are damaged, it can be a big challenge for rescue and humanitarian assistance to reach here promptly like it did in Haiti. Without significant preparedness efforts, the impact will be devastating, especially considering that Kathmandu Valley is the economic, political and cultural centre of Nepal. The country may come to a complete standstill, with many decades of development gains lost in a single event. And this major concern should drive all stakeholders into more active preparedness work. UNDP is committed to play its part.

Since Nepal's development partners have been stressing the need to amend the current disaster act, is government taking initiative to tune disaster act making it timely?

Nepal has many pressing development priorities and others have been taking precedence over disaster risk reduction. However, since the development of the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in 2009, the government has been very active in disaster risk reduction. I believe that the government is also taking the disaster risk management (DRM) act quite seriously because several discussions have been taking place between different ministries, departments and local bodies, and the government has taken important steps towards improving the legislative aspects. I hope that this year we will have a new DRM act. However, I would also like to emphasize that that the actors should not wait for the DRM law, or for any other specific event for that matter, in order to do their work. Many priority activities can be, and are being, implemented without the DRM act, and I would like to commend the different ministries and departments of the government for taking this issue seriously and working with development partners to make Nepal disaster-resilient. ■



The Delhi Connection

By **ABIJIT SHARMA**

As soon as I entered Amritsar, the first thing I noticed was its similarity with Old Delhi. Having lived in the older part of Delhi for quite sometime now, I've loved the *gallis*, the typical food and although a bit irritating at times, the bustling crowd. The Golden city shared identical similarities. There were age old shops selling *Lassis*, *Paranthas* and *Haluwa*, food that Punjabis gorge on. The narrow and busy streets reminded me of Chandni Chowk where sometimes even walking becomes a Herculean task. I found a little Delhi inside the Sikh city, so to speak.

History Revived

The Golden Temple is the obvious attraction of Amritsar. But what many don't know is that the city carries a huge baggage of history behind its back. During the time of India - Pakistan partition when Punjab was being divided into two parts, Amritsar became a major issue of conflict. It witnessed bloody riots and huge migration. Ultimately, the city went to the hands of Indians whereas another cultural city of Lahore, just 50 kilometers away, fell on the other side of the border. The city experienced major trauma even before independence. In the light of the freedom movement, the '*Jallianwala Bagh* massacre' as it is famously known, caused the lives of more than 300 innocents when a senior British Army official ordered random firing into a peaceful sit in. Amritsar witnessed tragedy later in 1984 when its holy temple was completely destroyed under a military attack ordered by Indira Gandhi allegedly to capture Sikh 'terrorists'. Visiting the Golden city, with such rich culture and history was high on my wish list.

'Golden' City

Amritsar hasn't received the name 'Golden City' for nothing. Having

reached the city, our first destination was of course its major tourist attraction, the Golden Temple. I had heard a lot about its splendor and exquisiteness. And true to its word; there were very few who weren't bowled over its beauty. With

Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh (The Khalsa belong to God, Victory belongs to God).

The Parade

The *Jallianwala Bagh* was second on our list. As with many other historical sites in India, the site of *Jallianwala Bagh*



The Golden Temple

moonlight above its head, the marvelous temple with its beautiful lighting glowed peacefully in the middle of a small pond, its image marvelously reflected on the water below. The ambience was calm and serene. While Sikh hymns blared out of speaker nearby and people posed in front of the temple, I continued to marvel at the temple's beauty. Not a sprint of dirt or litter was seen anywhere. I was further amazed when I later found out that the responsibility for the maintenance of the temple was not taken by a single authority but by the Sikh people themselves, who volunteered their service, under the practice of 'Seva'. As I went around viewing, one thing I noticed was how respectful the Sikhs were of their God and their religion. This was amply reflected in everyone. No wonder they live by the saying - Waheguru Ji Ka

massacre had also been preserved quite properly. The bullet marks on the walls are still to be seen. A look around the place still sends chills down one's spines. I pondered as to how a brutal act as such could even be thought of. Leaving history behind, the India Pakistan border, or the Wagah border as it is famously known, was the last place on my list. The daily parade/ceremony which was initiated from 1959 as a symbol of friendship has attracted thousands of visitors to the place. But the glorious ceremony took place with such intensity and energy that rather than a symbol of friendship, one might actually mistake it for a beginning of a fresh fight. Given the intensity of *Jawans* and just out of the historical *Jallianwala*, I feared some sort of massacre quite like it could take place anytime. No taking risks, I decided to head straight back home! ■

POWER CRISIS

Heart Of Darkness

The increase in power cut is not only giving the whole nation's economy a horrid time, but it is also frustrating the youths of the nation.

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) recently increased its load shedding hours to 14 per day. The increase in power cut is not only giving the whole nation's economy a horrid time, but it is also frustrating the youths of the nation.

Not to mention other ramifications of load shedding, the youths are having to deal with psychological aspects such as severe frustration because technology has become an integral part of their lives.

Youths who are already frustrated by the overall situation of the nation are getting even more irritated by such long load shedding hours. The ever increasing power crisis is developing more and more negative feeling towards the state of the country.

Youths of the country, especially that of the cities, are mostly addicted to their gadgets like laptops, mobile phones, or even televisions. So an increase in power cut means a time away from their favorite gadgets in the unproductive darkness.

The increased load shedding is just adding to the frustration of the youths of the country.



"I don't want to stay in Nepal, this load shedding is frustrating me. I don't have anything to do apart from sleeping. This is very boring," reads a Facebook status of a college-level student.

Majority of the college going youths of the Kathmandu valley are mainly driven by technology. Be it chatting with a friend, using the social media, listening to songs, or even reading, everything has technology at its heart. And technology has power as its core.

"14-hours load shedding a day. Why the NEA doesn't makes it 24 hours? It will be good when there will be no hope for light," said Sanjeev Karki, a Bachelor-level student.

People now have to pace their life according to the load shedding schedule, which is very much disappointing to the youths who have lot to learn, lot to achieve and lot to gain that also in a short time.

The increased power cut just increases unproductive hours which are wasted waiting for the electricity to come.

"I'm actually ashamed to say we have so much potential for energy. This load shedding is killing every bit of me," said another youth.

The situation of the nation is driving the youths away itself. "I'm so frustrated



living in Nepal, there is no electricity, nothing and I feel so hopeless when it comes to making the country better. I can't do anything to improve it. Politicians have ruined this nation to the last bit," said Bijay Bhandari, an engineering student.

Gone are the days when friends could be found online anytime, thanks to the power cut. The time spent on social medias is also decreasing.

Even when we analyze the Facebook posts of many youths, there is immense criticism of load shedding. But the sad part that is frustrating the youths even more is that the government is doing nothing significant to reduce the load shedding hours.

At a time when the competition is so fierce, can the youths of the nation afford to stay remaining unproductive due to power cuts? The government soon has to find a way to end this load shedding, but sadly the end doesn't look near. A nation cannot afford to put its future in the darkness. ■

Global Coverage



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"THE GLOBE IS IN OUR HAND"



Global Coverage
AWE
COURIER & CARGO

Peace, Love, & Kathmandu

By DANNY GARCIA

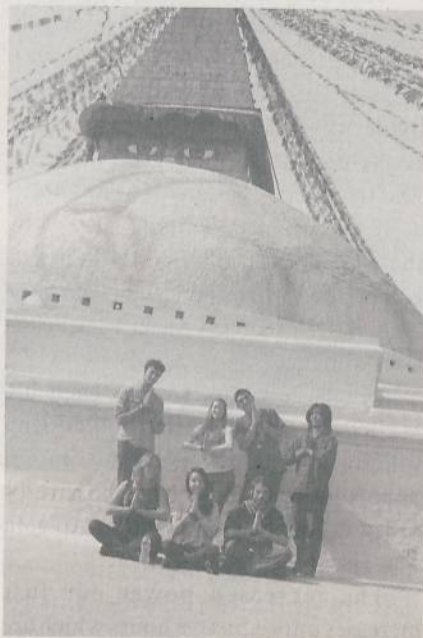


1969 in Kathmandu was truly a unique time and place filled with soul searchers that wore tie dye and long hair, who wanted to find a new way of life. These people saw Kathmandu as a new found sanctuary from the moment they set foot on its beautiful soil, deeming it titles such as “the Mecca of Hippydom,” “the Amsterdam of the East,” and “the capitol of the Aquarian Age.”

Kathmandu and its strange bewildering times became a major influence on most of the western counterculture. Musicians like Cat Stevens visited this city finding great inspiration for songs. Around the late sixties a wave of youth flowed through to Kathmandu, making the average age range of tourism around 16 to 30 years old, which ultimately made Kathmandu a very youthful and prosperous tourism spot. They paraded the streets of Jochne, where they would smoke the legal herbs of the land and explore alternatives to the life that they left behind in the west. This area was then renamed Freak Street for those groovy minded kids of the time. Cannabis being the main drug of choice for the time was being sold in government shops to the tourist. Even shops and cafés specialized in the sales of cannabis, such as Eden Hashish Centre in Freak Street. People found Kathmandu as a place to escape from their lives, given that they can live so cheaply, which at the time could have been a dollar a day. So what has happened to these so-called hippies and the land that they fell so madly in love with?

At a glance, it seems that the hippie-era died out leaving nothing, but memories here and there. Freak Street now has held onto only a handful of cafés from its time and has even been considered to be renamed Old Freak Street or just its former name, Jochne. Now the people that walk through Kathmandu no longer have the tie dye shirts of yesteryear, but instead are geared up with North Face jackets and trekking boots; and rather than going out

to get a puff of a hash, they go out to get their fix of caffeine with an espresso at a near by restaurant. There are no more wild westerners parading around with joints in their hands and psychedelic music on their minds. It's clear that these are not the flower children of the sixties. However, even though this new generation isn't quite as wild as their predecessors, the ideas of peace, love,



and free thinking still live on in each and every one of them.

While befriending a couple of people from VIN (Volunteer Initiative Nepal), it becomes apparent that these young travelers from all around the world still share a part of the mind set as those back in the sixties. Most of these wonderers have their own story and their own philosophy, which somehow ties them with one another. The main key being that they are all open minded and accepting to each other's ideas. Like great philosophers, they would spend the night at a bar or café, having deep intimate discussions about love, life, and the never ending search for peace; all of them chiming in to add on to the conversation, rather than to just be heard. They are hippies at heart and scholars through words.

Most have found their own way of reaching a new state of peace, as Robert Manzano stated, “I feel really good up here. It's like a certain kind of high that I feel... or that might just be because I'm dehydrated,” referring to making his way up the stairs of one of the many temples in Kathmandu, and being able to see the city in all of its majesty. The teachings of counterculture philosophers, such as Timothy Leary, no longer apply to these travelers, for somehow they are able to see and experience life through unfiltered eyes without the need of drug altering substances. They find blissfulness through sightseeing and watching closely ceremonies. They take in the culture and as if they've grown up with it all their lives, they gladly accept what's around them. It goes to show that the torch has been passed down to these new young hippies, who have evolved to embrace the peace and love in its purest form.

It might be the fact that the cost of living has gone up since the sixties or just the steady change of mentality. Nonetheless, it seems that use of Kathmandu, rather using it as a way to escape from western mentality and society, is now an aid that so many people can find peace with themselves when dealt with the troubles of their daily lives. Its clear now that there is a new fond respect for Kathmandu and the wisdom that it posses in its monasteries, temples and streets.

Kathmandu in the late sixties was a unique time and place for someone to experience, but it was not the only time. The clock keeps ticking and time continues to change the world around it, but even though the sixties have passed, its message still lives on through generations to come, allowing everyone to learn from the past and to grow spiritually from the world. So there is always a new and unique experience to have when someone comes to visit this great city with all of its colorful tie dye history. ■

Age-Old Fixes for India's Water

By CHERYL COLOPY

INDIA'S monsoon rains are retreating this week, a delayed end to a yearly wet season that has become ever more unpredictable as a result of global warming. Of all the challenges that face India, few are more pressing than how it manages water. In vast cities like New Delhi, where showers and flush toilets have become necessities for a rapidly expanding middle class, groundwater has been depleted. New Delhi once had many ponds and an open floodplain to absorb the monsoon and replenish aquifers; now the sprawling city has more concrete and asphalt than it has ponds and fields to absorb water.

India's capital has come to rely for half its water on dams in the Himalaya range that capture monsoon runoff. But the dams disrupt the ecology of the Himalaya, South Asia's precious watershed. Much of the waste from New Delhi's overwhelmed sewage treatment system ends up in the Yamuna River, one of the main tributaries of the Ganges, which winds down from the Himalaya and flows 1,500 miles across India to the Bay of Bengal. Combined with under-regulated industrial effluents, urban waste has turned India's mythic and misused rivers into cesspools.

In the countryside, where a vast majority of Indians still live, a combination of free electricity and inadequate regulation has led farmers to deplete untold groundwater supplies. In some places the water table is so low it no longer helps sustain roots, so even more water must be pumped up. In addition, soils have been degraded by chemical fertilizers, so they require even more water.

But in some parts of India, communities are turning to "rainwater harvesting," capturing rainwater in ponds and allowing it to percolate into the ground to feed wells and springs. Such techniques were once commonplace throughout the South Asian subcontinent, where rain falls for only a few months in the summer monsoon, and often not at all for the rest

of the year. Now villagers are returning to these ancient methods to secure the future.

In northwest India, near Almora, a town of 40,000 in the Himalayan foothills, farmers are restoring ponds that have fallen into disuse in order to once again replenish groundwater and feed springs. They are also digging new ponds to use for irrigation and fish culture. In one village near there, I visited a one-room preschool — a *balwadi*, or child's garden — where mothers in brightly colored saris told me that they needed a toilet so that the kids wouldn't have to run to the woods to relieve themselves. I took that to indicate that this area, while still poor, was progressing; the rural villagers expected to have some form of indoor toilet. However, there isn't enough water for full plumbing — and there is barely enough in the town itself, where many people have plumbing, but the river cannot satisfy all the needs of both the town and irrigation systems in farms nearby.

India's challenges — how to keep the economic engine moving while making government more effective and efficient; how to raise hundreds of millions of people out of poverty while protecting the environment — are staggering. Efforts like Almora's hold great promise, and more are needed.

Even though much of the water resource planning in India looks anachronistic given what we now know, a large contingent in government and engineering circles still advocates big, highly engineered, concrete-based solutions: large dams and deep reservoirs to generate electricity, urban water and sewer systems like those in the West. Many of these projects address the needs of industry and city dwellers, but some of the big dams and concrete canals proposed are meant to sustain rural areas, and many Indian water specialists say they'll do more harm than good.

In a region known as Bundelkhand, for example, a drought has driven farmers to desperation: part of the year

they go sleep on the streets of New Delhi by night and build new high-rises there by day. The solution proposed for Bundelkhand is to dam a river to the east and transport its water through a long concrete canal. So far it has not been approved, thanks in part to the opposition of people who say the proposal is foolish, expensive and disruptive. They contend that the region can gain as much or more by going back to its traditional rainwater harvesting: ponds, small dams and an older, more sustainable style of farming.

In the Indian state just west of there, Rajasthan, some villagers have already gone back to the style of rainwater harvesting their ancestors practiced. In the hilly topography of eastern Rajasthan — part of an ancient mountain range that long predates the upthrust of the Himalaya — villagers built small damlike obstructions so that water could be trapped in depressions. Within a short time the groundwater table rose, a dead river became perennial again, and the land was green.

These successes hold lessons even for the megacities. In recent years, environmental groups in New Delhi have advocated the harvesting of rainwater from the roofs of houses and high-rises; the effort has begun, though not yet on a scale large enough to halt the destructive dam building.

For a long time now, centralized solutions for India have appeared to New Delhi's bureaucracy as easier to manage than local initiatives. It would of course be naïve to think a return to indigenous ways is the only answer in a country that is on track to become the world's most populous within a decade or so. But for millenniums, the distinct regions of the subcontinent developed ingenious ways to manage their water, and they prospered. Retrieving those methods, perhaps reinventing them, could give rural Indians some control over their destinies, even in the face of the wrenching changes wrought by globalization and the continued warming of the planet.

Cheryl Colopy is a former broadcast journalist and the author of "Dirty, Sacred Rivers: Confronting South Asia's Water Crisis." New York Times



EARTHQUAKE DAY

Urgency Must

Nepal has developed some capability to cope with disasters like earthquake. However, the level of preparedness is still inadequate to face any major earthquake

By A CORRESPONDENT

Despite Nepal's two decades of experiments in preparing for quakes, last year's earthquake in the eastern region exposed Nepal's weaknesses in disaster management capabilities. Even after more than a year, the government is yet to reach out to all the people affected by the quake and rebuild the school buildings, health posts and other infrastructure it damaged.

Nepal started building its disaster preparedness capabilities less than two decades ago. When executive director Amod Mani Dixit of the National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal (NSET) launched the programs to generate awareness regarding the implications of the earthquake, only a few people knew that there was the need to develop early preparedness capabilities to cope with the quake.

After two decades, Amod's continued efforts have changed the mindset of the people and the policymakers. Despite the continuation of haphazard building constructions, the people are sensitized about the earthquake safety. The introduction of building code has increased the resistance capability of the houses in Kathmandu.

Despite all these developments, Nepal is still a highly risky area. The Kathmandu valley and other parts of the cities will face a devastating situation in case of any major earthquake like that of 1934. As Nepal is celebrating the earthquake day, remembering the great earthquake of 1934, there is still a gap of knowledge to fill.

Since the first recorded earthquake of 1260 AD, Nepal has already faced a number of devastating earthquakes in every 100 years. Nepal had faced a major earthquake, over 8 Richter scale, in 1934. Nepal has seen several smaller earthquakes, including the one of September 29, 2011. One major earthquake, over 8 Richter scale, is said to be waiting.

"Nepal is very vulnerable to a major earthquake, it is just a matter of time," said Dr. Soma Nath Sapkota, chief of

National Seismological Centre in Kathmandu.

The earthquake of 1934 AD (January-February), known as the Great Nepal-Bihar Earthquake, struck Nepal and its surrounding areas around 2 pm on 16th of January. The magnitude of the earthquake was 8.4 on the Richter scale. Its casualty figures were the highest for any recorded earthquake in the history of Nepal. In total, 8,519 people lost their lives in Nepal. A total of 126,355 houses were severely damaged and around 80,893 buildings were completely destroyed.

As Nepal lies in the active earthquake zone, tremors, small and big, are a normal phenomenon. National Seismological Centre records more than 400 hundred tremors a year over 3 Richter scale.

"If Kathmandu is impacted with a shaking of an intensity IX on the Mercalli intensity scale, the aftermath is going to be much worse than in Haiti," said Dixit.

Unlike the Richter scale, which measures the magnitude of an earthquake at its epicenter, the Mercalli scale measures the intensity of shaking in specific locations - basically by measuring the destruction of buildings and natural structures.

Dixit has every reason to be worried. The climax of the collision between tectonic plates that thrust up the Himalayas in Nepal is criss-crossed by geologic fault lines - some of which have been building up pressure for centuries. Even if it happens 300 km away, an earthquake that measures 6 or 7 in magnitude on the Richter scale at its epicenter could generate level VIII, IX or even X level shaking on the Mercalli scale in Kathmandu.

Geologists believe that a major quake in Kathmandu is overdue for more shaking than the IX level disaster that flattened Haiti. The next "big one" could be much worse in the Kathmandu Valley, a bowl that will trap and amplify the wave of energy.



Amod Mani Dixit

At a time when the population of the Kathmandu valley has more doubled from about 1.5 million people to more than 4 million, the casualties will definitely be higher. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Planning, each year, between 10,000 and 20,000 new buildings mushroom, most of them constructed with little more than a wink and a nod to the building code, with higher floors built off the books, concrete watered down to save on material, structural columns eliminated and emergency exits ignored.

"The density of the population is higher in Kathmandu, so the lethal impact of the earthquake will be much higher," said Dixit. "Our estimate (of 10 years ago) of 40,000 dead and 100,000 people injured and requiring hospitalization could easily be doubled - or make it two-and-a-half times or three times."

Nepal is a landlocked country, with high peaks of the Himalayas separating it from neighbors, like India and China, which could aid in relief efforts. The only lifeline for supplies and rescue teams for Kathmandu will likely be the small, single-runway airport. And there are no guarantees that its air traffic control system, or its water, electricity and fuel supply will survive the first wave of tremors.

"There is no emergency response plan for the airport," said Dixit. "There's a plan for emergency landings, but I've not seen or heard any earthquake emergency contingency plan for airport operation."

Although Nepal has been observing January 16 each year as earthquake safety day, it is yet to be able to inject the feeling in the minds of policymakers and common people about the importance or early preparedness to minimize the damage.



PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Under Pressure

The district education offices of the Kathmandu valley had decided not to take registration of new private schools for next academic session

By DEBESH ADHIKARI

The Supreme Court also directed the government to not allow the private schools to increase their prices for the next three years.

These are just a few examples of the government intervention in the operation of private schools. Although private schools provide education to around 30 percent of the school going children, the government is yet to recognize the efforts made by the private sector. In fact, the government is only limiting the operations of private schools by bringing unnecessary rules and regulations.

There are reportedly around 2,500 schools in the Kathmandu Valley of which some 70 percent of them are private. The whole lower level education

of the valley is nearly provided by the private sector.

The government has also time and again called for the help from the private sector to increase the quality of public schools and has stated the importance of private schools, but their actions lead to opposite directions.

Rather than making the public schools more competitive, from the recent scenario, it looks like the government is trying to expand the reach of public schools by hindering the developments of private schools.

"Just because of the directives from the Supreme Court, it is not possible to operate at the same costs. If the government wants us not to increase fees,

Oriental Housing and Builders, Basnet reportedly accumulated about 3 billion rupees from depositors. As Basnet is in custody, over 100 depositors have demonstrated in front of Hanuman Dhoka Police Station demanding the return of their money from Basnet.

Basnet's close ones, however, have blamed the government for his arrest as taking sides with some businessmen who want to take away his airlines property. Along with hundreds of depositors, Basnet also funneled a huge amount of money taken from a dozen of banks to the airlines, real estate and housing sector. "By arresting Basnet, some groups want to capture Basnet's property," said his family members.

"We have arrested Basnet on the basis of

then the state should take the responsibility of the market inflation, increased salaries of the teachers, increasing rents and operating costs. We will increase fees up to 25 percent," said Nabaraj Mahat, Lalitpur chief of Private and Boarding School Organization Nepal (PABSON).

Nobody can undermine the importance of public schools, but the government schools of the country are not just up to the standards. Anybody, provided the resources to choose from, will choose the private schools over the public schools.

In the last few years, some two dozen government owned schools were closed due to low enrollments.

The difference is also clearly visible in the quality of education, students who have studied in the public schools often face difficulties while competing with students who came out private schools and in majority of cases come out second best.

No doubt, there are few private schools which have underperformed, but to keep the whole private school sector at the radar suggests government's lack of respect towards private schools and their contributions.

"Due to increase in students' enrollment in private institutions, the district education offices have decided to reject registration of new schools in the new academic session," said Baikuntha Aryal, the Kathmandu District Education Officer to Republica.

Rather than investing time and efforts in restricting the actions of private schools, government should utilize those efforts in making public schools more competitive. ■

complaints registered by one of the depositors. After his arrest, many others are coming to file similar complaints of fraud against Basnet. After collecting more evidences, the police will file the case in the court," said the Metropolitan Police Department. With the real estate business passing through a recession, Basnet, who heavily invested his depositors' money in real estate, seems to be in real trouble.

The depositors of Oriental Cooperatives have already captured the office demanding refund of their money. Even Kuber Merchant and Finance is now facing financial crisis due to over Rs. 890 million loans given to Basnet, who is also in the board of directors of Kuber Merchant and Finance.

By A CORRESPONDENT

FINANCE

Fraud Holes

Basnet's family has termed the case malicious, but depositors have termed it a fraud. The arrest of Sudhir Basnet, chief of Agni Air and Oriental Housing Company, has exposed how depositors' money is insecure in Nepal. Nepal Rastra Bank sources claim that about a dozen banks and financial institutions are in a crisis due to bad loans given to Basnet. Based on half a dozen complaints from his clients on fraud, Nepal Police took him in custody.

Chairman of Oriental Cooperatives and

Show Off Party

By ADITI ARYAL



Last night she called me all drunk (maybe high on something too) asking for accommodation for the night as she couldn't go home that way. She told her parents she would be staying with her friends to work on a group assignment. This wasn't the first time she called. Well, this wasn't the first time someone drunk and high called me either.

Parties these days simply translate to drinks, smoke, shisha or other drugs. Any kind of celebration seems incomplete without these forms of 'amusements'. Stay-overs for assignments pose just as camouflages to late night parties. Parents are misled. And when people immediately close to you are in darkness about where you are, in case of any unfortunate happening they have no clue where to look for you.

No proper laws govern anything. Kids as young as thirteen are allowed in discotheques, bars or *bhattis* and have unlimited access to alcohol and smoke. Forget the advisory statements about harm to health these are all signs of a deteriorating society. In a society where kids barely in their teens can drink and smoke without threat, all hopes for a nation to improve are almost dead.

Such activities are transmittable and communicable. Young people see other young people involved in certain such activities not at all considered appropriate for their age. So these wrongdoings by some make it acceptable in minds of many young and vulnerable on-looking minds. The next time the innocent passerby turns into the same action doer thinking it is no longer a wrong thing as someone else did the same in the open formerly. This is how the moral police themselves become wrongdoers. And also when someone openly shows their disappointment, the young vigor and hot bloodedness takes it as a provocation to disagree, to get offended, to argue, to fight and to prove their strength. A bit sensible kids ward them off as nosy adults who need to desperately get their own lives.

All this is true; these situations and this attitude. I have seen and heard countless such happenings, and closely experienced them sometimes too. Very well aware about the not-so-applicable legal consequences which can be warded off after paying 'fines' to the police and about the embarrassments brought along to everyone, family in particular, young people waste everything they have, time, money and energy, on such things. As involved from a very young age, this damages all insides for a healthy physical and mental life later on. Not only about health but this will continue as a habit.

Every family knows one who has come down from riches to rags, selling all property to keep up with their amusements. Such stories need to be time and again communicated by family members to the children so they know when to stop while tracking down the wrong path. Kids that communicate to their parents are proved to be less involved in any such acts. They should understand why it is bad for them, why they need to know how to set their limits and why they must be careful about every move they make when close to drinks and drugs.

It all starts with showing off. For some reason, I can never understand drinking, smoking and doing drugs is 'cool'. Doing so makes you place yourself on the top of the table and everyone below you. Slowly this turns into a habit and there are less chances of backing out of getting away. Then some two-three years later, this once very cool habit becomes an embarrassment – for you, for your family and friends. Slowly everyone stops to care or counsel. They try and get as less involved with you as they can. And you're blamed as the anti-social addict. Then you're left alone, and that is the possible end. Recovering is not easy. What is easy is not getting involved into anything that may ruin our lives that could be perfect otherwise. These are issues we need to carefully assess before entering into this realm. It is better to be safe than sorry, and that is the happiest we can make ourselves. ■

Why Kathmandu Couldn't Remain A Good City?

By BIDUSHI ADHIKARI



Two years ago, there were two, *Monkey's Puzzle* trees at our house near Pashupati temple. My father, a constitutional expert, had brought them from a nursery in Godavari, in hopes of more greenery and scaring away the temple monkeys with the needles on the leaves.

As soon as these trees were planted, a stream of disapprovals, the vilest ones from our relatives, headed his way, telling us that the trees brought bad luck to the house, as they were in the front yard, and that their roots would damage the house and the walls once they grew. Tired of these comments, one fine day, after six years, my father got two men to remove the beautiful trees from the house's porch. This event demonstrates the kind of mentality the people of Kathmandu have. Because of such attitude, Kathmandu cannot be a green and good city. This must change.

Most people who inhabit the Valley are not its original inhabitants. In fact, when only the original quarter of today's inhabitants lived in the Valley, it was a proper city – planned well and beautiful. It had a distinct architecture, functioning streets and pavements, well-preserved stupas and temples, surplus amounts of public parks and lands, and an effective waste disposal system. However, as the population grew, the government wasn't able to keep with the growing needs and maintain stability. Once the newcomers arrived from outside the Valley, hoping for better jobs and payments, the orderliness of the city was further destroyed. And today, Kathmandu, the most ancient capital of this region, stands in a worse position as an ancient city.

In Kathmandu, people have the least regards for city life and urban civilization. They are unaware. They are not living and acting like city-dwellers. They are unwilling to pay city taxes. Instead of giving space for more trees and plants, people decide on building bigger houses and bigger garages for bigger cars. No one has the least bit of trouble to throw that plastic outside the window or to spit in the sidewalks. No one has any respect for the city roads, highways, or public properties; people park their cars wherever they like and wouldn't think twice before extending their porches a few meters into public space.

The government, too, has lost control of the city. There are no divisions between residential, educational, commercial, or parking areas around the city. If one has the money, one can build anything, anywhere. People can randomly build factories or start up shops without anyone interfering, as there are no laws that prohibit such acts. Unlike other, well-going cities, Kathmandu doesn't have a proper system of disposing trash either, let alone separating it into recyclable or biodegradable trash. The government hasn't made an effort to emphasize the usage of public vehicles while the number of private vehicles on the streets soars. No funds have been organized to specifically address the needs of the elderly, of little kids, or of women.

In the end, there need not be major changes made for Kathmandu to be a better city. Specific problems need to be addressed, and the state of the city will improve dramatically. Even small things, such as building proper sidewalks, introducing more parks and public spaces that are maintained regularly, or creating a waste disposal system, can significantly improve the conditions we see today around the city. The people, too, need to start acting like citizens who live in the capital of a country, take responsibility for their actions, and be more open-minded. After all, as Shakespeare said, "What is the city but the people?" ■

MOVIE PREVIEW

Parker

Genres: Crime, Thriller
 Director: Taylor Hackford
 Cast : Jason Statham, Jennifer Lopez, Michael Chiklis, Wendell Pierce, Nick Nolte

Parker (Jason Statham) is a professional thief who lives by a personal code of ethics: Don't steal from people who can't afford it and don't hurt people who don't deserve it. But on his latest heist, his crew double crosses him, steals his stash, and leaves him for dead. Determined to make sure they regret it, Parker tracks them to Palm Beach, playground of the rich and famous, where the crew is planning their biggest heist ever. Donning the disguise of a rich Texan, Parker takes on an unlikely partner, Leslie (Jennifer Lopez), a savvy insider, who's short on cash, but big on looks, smarts and ambition. Together, they devise a plan to hijack the score, take everyone down and get away clean. *Release Date: 01-Feb-2013*



Chinese Zodiac-CZ12

Genres: Action, Adventure
 Producer: Stanley Tong, Jackie Chan
 Director: Jackie Chan, Barbie Tong
 Cast : Jackie Chan, Oliver Platt, Kwon Sang Woo, Laura Weissbecker

Chinese Zodiac, also known as Armour of God III: Chinese Zodiac is an upcoming action film produced, written, directed by and starring Jackie Chan. It is the sequel to the 1991 film Armour of God II: Operation Condor, in which Jackie will reprise his role as Asian Hawk. The movie tells about Asian Hawk bringing back the bronze head statues of the 12 Chinese zodiac animals, which were sacked by the French and British armies from the imperial Summer Palace in Beijing in 1860.

Release Date: 25-Jan-2013

Chhadke

Genres: Action, Thriller
 Producer: Madhav Wagle, Narendra Maharjan
 Director: Nigam Shrestha
 Cast : Saugat Malla

Chhadke is an Action/Thriller Nepali Movie Starring Saugat Malla, Robin Tamang, Namrata Shrestha, Arpan Thapa, Dayahang Rai and Bipin Karki. Chhadke is a film by Nigam Shrestha. *Release Date: 22-Feb-2013*

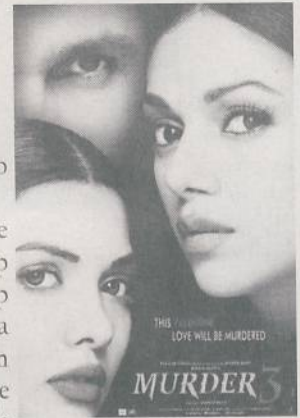


Murder 3

Genres: Thriller
 Producer: Mahesh Bhatt
 Director: Vishesh Bhatt
 Cast : Randeep Hooda, Aditi Rao Hydari, Sara Loren

A hot-shot fashion and wildlife photographer Vikram (Randeep Hooda) gets into a relationship with a waitress from a lounge, Nisha (Sara Loren). She moves in with him in his palatial house outside of the city. The old world house, made decades ago is as beautiful as scary it is. It holds many secrets which Nisha is soon to unearth; of the life of the man who made it and of Vikram, who is dealing with the mysterious disappearance of his former girlfriend Roshni (Aditi Rao).

Release Date: 15-Feb-2013



Japanese Films Festival

The Embassy of Japan was organizing a three-day Japanese Film Festival in Kathmandu from January 24 to 26, 2013. Similarly, a one-day film festival is also being organized in Pokhara on Tuesday, February 5, 2013. The film festivals in Kathmandu and Pokhara are organized as part of introducing and promoting Japanese culture, society and way of life etc. to the friendly people of Nepal, according to a press release issued by the Embassy.

The screening schedule for the film festival is as follows:
 Venue: Nepal Tourism Board, Exhibition Road

24th January (Thursday)

10:45a.m.-1:00p.m. (SHODO GIRLS!!)

1:15p.m.-3:05p.m. (Hachiko)

3:20p.m.-4:10p.m. (Can you see Our Light? First Festival after the Tsunami)

25th January (Friday)

11:00a.m.-12:40p.m. (Water Boys)

1:00p.m.-2:45p.m. (Éclair)

3:00p.m.-3:30p.m. (Light up Nippon)

26th January (Saturday)

11:00a.m.-12:45p.m. (Happy Flight)

1:00p.m.-3:05p.m. (WANKO-The Story of Me, My Family and My Dog)

3:20p.m.-3:50p.m. (Setting Sail from the Ruins)

All the films are in Japanese language with English subtitles and entry passes for all the above-mentioned movie shows are made available at the Japan Resource Center, Embassy of Japan, Panipokhari.

Transient Ischemic Attacks

By **BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD**



In Nepal where infectious diseases are common, for some years now we have been seeing a tremendous rise in non-infectious diseases as well. Besides cardiovascular illnesses like heart attacks which have increased tremendously in the last decade or so in Nepal, the other area of non-infectious disease increase has been neurological illnesses like strokes and brain haemorrhages triggered by uncontrolled hypertension and smoking. The sad part is that these are preventable illnesses. In addition the fact of the matter is that we are not done dealing with infectious diseases. So, it is truly a double whammy situation.

Forty eight year old Ram Bahadur tried to get up from bed to go to the bathroom at night but found, much to his distress, that he had a mild weakness on the right side of his body. There was also some tingling and numbness on that side. He tried to call his wife but could not quite articulate the words. He felt a sense of panic. His wife was fast asleep; so he decided to wait it out. After about three hours he felt his strength return to his right side, and he was also able to talk to his wife and share this frightening experience.

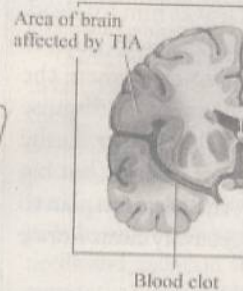
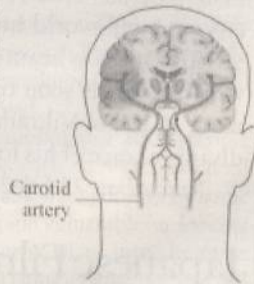
Ram Bahadur had celebrated Dasain with the usual *khasikomasu*, a few drinks, and two or three cigarettes a day during the entire Dasain period. Despite being on blood pressure medicines for years, his pressure had continued to be borderline high, and he had recently told his physician he was not interested in increasing the medicines because he

felt the pressure problem did not cause any symptoms.

Next day his doctor told him he had suffered a transient ischemic attack (TIA), although by this time he felt completely well. TIAs occur when the blood flow to the brain is temporarily blocked. In Ram Bahadur's case it was a relatively brief blockage. TIAs can last from a few minutes to 24 hours. In medical terminology, things that predispose you to a certain disease are called risk factors.

Ram Bahadur's risk factors for TIA were his borderline high blood pressure and his cigarette smoking (yes, even 2 to 3 cigarettes a day). High cholesterol level, diabetes, and lack of exercise (he did morning walks) are other risk factors which he did not have. Doctors in Nepal working in busy emergency rooms see this Ram Bahadur scenario repeat itself with a disconcerting frequency. Because the usual symptoms of high blood pressure may be non-existent, many patients are averse to taking drugs. Or they opt for partial treatment as in Ram Bahadur's case which may eventually lead to a catastrophic outcome regardless of exercise and a normal cholesterol. Poor blood pressure control is an independent risk factor for TIAs.

Because TIAs can significantly increase the risk for stroke, it is important to see the doctor as soon as possible even if the symptoms have abated. There are many useful drugs like aspirin which your doctor may prescribe to prevent a full-fledged stroke.



360 DEGREE EVEREST

Playing with Mountain

Captain Bed Upreti captures the various facts of Mount Everest

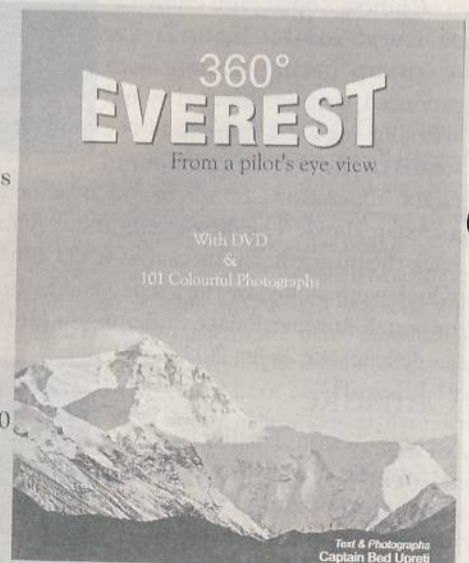
By A CORRESPONDENT

Captain Bed Upreti is not a new name in capturing the mountains. In his two decades of career of flying the plane, Upreti has collected a number of photographs, from Mt. Everest to coastal areas like in Indonesia and India. Captain Bed Upreti has more than flied the plane.

Known for his photographic skills and interest, Upreti also captured the life beneath the ground from air. The recent book 360 Everest from a pilot's eye is one of the most fascinating books published by Upreti. People around the world know the name Mt. Everest. Some like to climb this majestic mountain, some like to see it from up close. However, the photograph collected by Upreti can fulfill the wishes of those who miss to watch Mt. Everest from close by.

Upreti's lens moved from various angles of Everest. From its majestic peaks to the glaciers, the photographs consist of all kinds of faces of Mt. Everest. Not only from Nepalese side of the sky, captain Upreti has also caught the faces of Mt. Everest from the northern side or Tibet. With magnificent

Everest
Pilot's Eye Views
With DVD and
101 Colorful
Photographs
Text and
Photographs
Captain Bed
Upreti
Price: Rs.1000.00



photos, text along with photographs gives the book more informative authority. Along with Mt. Everest, captain Upreti also used the photographs of glaciers, natural lakes.

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