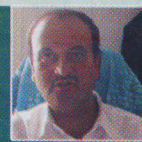




OPINION:
Dipak Gyawali



INTERVIEW:
Govinda Raj Joshi



VIEWPOINT:
Dr. Som Lal Subedi

New SPOTLIGHT

June 28 July-11, 2013

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From The Editor

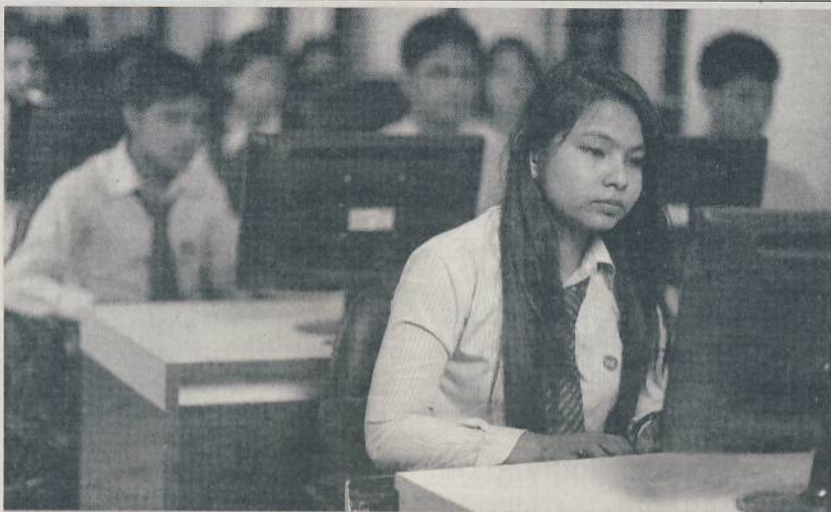
Even as the government led by chief justice Khil Raj Regmi completed its hundred days in office, it is still uncertain whether the elections will be held or not. With the announcement of the election date, the government needs a stable civil service. But the transfer of dozens of secretaries has rocked the bureaucracy. This is the third transfer in a row in just a matter of one hundred days. As there is a strong political force under the CPN-Maoist which is opposing the elections for CA, the hostile civil service will likely create a more unfavorable situation for the government. Since the government's legitimacy and stability based on the 11-point political agreement, there is no threat to the government even if there is no election in November. As the political scenario remains bleak, we have decided to look at the poor results of the School Leaving Certificate exams for our cover story. Politicized in all fronts, public education system, which receives a large chunk of the annual budget, is on the verge of collapse. Despite severe criticism, the private sector has done much better to maintain Nepal's quality of education. Along with education, disaster management is another highlight for this week. Given Nepal's geography and ecology, disaster is not new to Nepal, what is new is our failure to on the disaster risk management and ignorance of people about disasters.

Keshab

Keshab Poudel
Editor

NEW SPOTLIGHT FORTNIGHTLY

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Israeli Ambassador Hanan Goder Visited Shivapuri

Hanan Goder, Ambassador of Israel, visited Shivapuri. He met Mukunda Raj Prakash Ghimire, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Gopal Bhattarai, Chief Warden of Shivapuri National Park, Botanists and a team of people of the National Park.

Similarly, Israeli ambassador to Nepal Hanan Goder visited Madhavbesi, Dhading to inspect chimneys that are installed in some of the houses in Madhavbesi by Tevelb'zedeck, an Israeli Organization working in Nepal.



According to Embassy of Israel, the chimneys are installed in order to improve quality of life of villagers and to reduce smoke and air pollution. Ambassador Hanan Goder also visited an agricultural farm in Madhavbesi and was delighted to see it.

India Supports Kapilvastu School

The District Development Committee, Kapilvastu, and Shree Higher Secondary School and the Embassy of India have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for an Indian grant assistance of NRs. 41.49 million for the construction of a three-storied school building under Nepal-India Economic Cooperation Program.

Established in 1979 as a Primary School and subsequently upgraded to Higher Secondary level in 2009, Shree Higher Secondary School is situated at Barkalpur VDC -2, Imiliya in Kapilvastu District. Its existing infrastructure is dilapidated and inadequate to meet the growing requirements of the students as well as faculty members.

International Meet On Child Friendly Cities

The Ministry of Federal Affairs & Local Development (MoFALD), UNICEF Nepal and Child Friendly Asia Pacific Network were jointly organizing the 3rd International Conference on Child Friendly Cities (CFC) in Kathmandu on 27-29 June.

The South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), the SAARC Apex for child protection related issues, is also supporting the local organizers which include Nepal School of Social Work,

Kadambari Memorial College of Science and Management, and Nepal College of Development Studies and ENGAGE.

Int'l Meet Of Environmental Practitioners

A three-day meet of one hundred sixty Policy Makers and Environmental Practitioners began in Kathmandu on June 18. The aim of the program was to boost sustainable development across Asia.

Addressing the opening session of the networking event, Ambassador Alexander Spachis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal, said that the EU had always been at the forefront to tackle the problems related to excessive energy consumption, environmental degradation, and finally impacts of climate change.

Ambassador Spachis added that the SWITCH-Asia Program is one of the most successful initiatives undertaken by the EU to promote sustainable production and consumption in Asia.

UK Boosts Support For Nepal Election

The British government has agreed to provide additional support to the forthcoming elections for Constituent Assembly. In a ceremony at the Ministry of Finance, British ambassador to Nepal Andy Sparkes unveiled this.

"As a longstanding friend of Nepal,

the UK is determined to do all it can to support Nepal in its preparations for free, credible, democratic and inclusive elections this November. For this purpose, the UK has already provided a total of £3.5m through the Nepal Peace Trust Fund and £5m through UNDP," said ambassador Sparkes.

"I am pleased to announce ... that we are gearing up our support. Through the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), we are looking to provide an additional £4m to the Nepal Peace Trust Fund. And DFID will support women's participation, election observation and training for journalists through projects worth up to £2m," said the ambassador

Conflict Management & Mitigation Projects

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has launched two new conflict management and mitigation projects: Community Initiatives for Common Understanding, and Inclusive Resource Management Initiative. The projects will focus on the Mid- and Far-Western regions of Nepal and address the root causes of conflict by bringing together representatives of conflicting groups to seek solutions in a safe space.

KOICA Volunteers Feed Slum Children

The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Volunteers participated in a feeding program for the poor slum children residing near Manohara River. With



an aim of supporting "Nepal Dial Community" which is a Korean NGO supporting for the health hygiene, food and education program for the slum children, KOICA volunteers participated in this program. ■

'Private Sector Engine Of Growth'

NARENDRA KUMAR BASNYAT
President of Confederation of Nepalese Industries

What kind of budget do you envision?

The new budget should be a visionary document for Nepal's economy. It should increase investment, promote export and reduce import. The budget should be balanced and should be distributed based on the basic of needs of the region, especially in the far and mid western region's development and productivity.

How do you look at the role of the private sector?

The private sector wants to work with the government. The budget should address the problem faced by the private sector. The private sector is the key to economic development and engine of high growth. The new budget needs to recognize this. The budget needs to be investment friendly. The budget should not be revenue-oriented but it should encourage private investment to reduce import.

How do you see the state of the economy?

The country has already suffered from political instability. The development and economic sectors have badly suffered. Nepal's economy and development suffered because of non-seriousness of political leadership on the economic agenda. The presentation of the budget was delayed in the last few years, disrupting the development activities. The political leadership also failed to pass the acts on a timely basis. All these pushed the Nepalese economy on the brink of collapse.

BoK launches 'Mahila Udhyaushil Karja'

Bank of Kathmandu (BoK) on Monday launched a new loan product called 'Mahila Udhyaushil Karja', under which women can get loans of Rs 300,000 for a period of to three years. The product was launched by BoK CEO Ajay Shrestha amidst a function held in Kathmandu.

"The product was introduced with the target of providing loans to all those who are keen on starting their own businesses," says a statement issued by the bank. "The loan comes with free insurance policies that cover accidental death and permanent disability." BoK currently provides banking services through 50 branch offices, 56 ATMs and 8 extension counters

Merged NIC Asia Bank to start operation

NIC Bank and Bank of Asia will complete their merger process and commence operation as NIC Asia Bank from Sunday. This is the first ever merger between two commercial banks in the country's banking history.

NIC CEO Sashin Joshi said the merged bank will come into operation from June 30 as a single entity. He said

assimilation of two balance sheets has been completed and a single balance sheet will be published at the end of the fiscal year. "We have already received approval from the Nepal Rastra Bank for suspension of transactions on Friday," he said.

In the merger process, 13 branches of the bank s at same locations have been amalgamated.

"Same number of branches will be expanded in other areas within the next year," said Joshi.

After the merger, the merged entity will have a paid-up capital of Rs 2.31 billion, but its reserves will make the actual capital size just double of the figure. Its deposit size will be Rs 39 billion and credit Rs 33 billion, making it the fifth largest commercial bank of the country, according to Joshi.

Honda releases the Amaze

The domestic sedan market is likely to witness new excitement with Japanese auto major Honda announcing the launch of its entry level sedan Honda Amaze. Honda's local distributor Syakar Trading Company (STC) announced the car's roll-out amid a programme in the capital city on Monday.

Padma Jyoti, chairman of the Jyoti Group, the parent company of STC, STC chairman Saurabh Jyoti, STC vice-chairman Suhrid Jyoti and Shigeru Yamazaki, director and senior vice-president - sales and marketing at Honda Cars India Limited, took the wraps off the vehicle. The company has initially introduced the car in three variants, the Honda Amaze EMT, EXMT and SMT.

What makes the new car from Honda's stable a delight for sedan seekers is its price. Despite incorporating numerous class leading features, the EMT variant costs Rs 2.55 million, the EXMT Rs 2.65 million and the SMT Rs 2.85 million. The new Honda is likely to give stiff competition to the Ford Fiesta Classic and the Maruti Suzuki Dzire, the popular entry level sedan variants available in the country currently.

"The Honda Amaze is powerful yet, fuel efficient, comfortable yet spacious and stylish yet affordable. We are aiming to sell around 320 units of the car in the first year," said STC chairman Jyoti. "We have been receiving many queries about the vehicle ever since its launch in the Indian market; and now since the vehicle has been launched here, we are expecting to see a very good sales volume." ■



Nepal's Descent From Shangri-la To Embarrassment

By DIPAK GYAWALI



Traveling across EuroAmerica these days one encounters two types familiar with Nepal. The vast majority are well-meaning people who have either been to Nepal or known someone who has. They had heard that things were bad in that erstwhile hippie heaven, but now that Nepal has fallen off Western media's radar, they assume everything is fine. One only wishes it were true but explaining to this group Nepal's political mess, which is now beyond surreal, is an impossible task and one gets away by mumbling something and quickly moving on to discuss the brawl on Mt Everest.

It is the other lot, a knowledgeable minority, whose reactions are more interesting because they point to Nepal's losing its Shangri-La status and becoming a shame to friends abroad. These are often people who actively participated in helping forge a New Nepal, as diplomats, aid agency workers or academics. They seem to have hoped that Nepal's revolutionary epiphany would cool their consciences since they have singularly failed to prevent their own countries going almost fascist right. This lot is currently embarrassed by Nepal and while curious, would avoid discussing deeper issues with critics of Loktantra like me. They despise the current crop of Nepali politicians they hoped so much from, and are angry with India for its double standards and for letting them down. But Nepal is not that important for them to stick their necks out: there are newer patches they can move on to – the new Shangri-La darling being Myanmar – for their next step on the career ladder.

The gap between rhetoric and reality is best illustrated within the aid industry regarding Nepal's having achieved MDG goals. Her poverty level has reduced quite dramatically, and education, nutrition and health indicators have shown impressive improvements. In one study, she has done well even in the electricity sector, with more people having access to it

than before. Given that Nepal "enjoys" the highest hours of power cuts per day than it ever did previously, that overly optimistic assessment should alert critical observers to the incongruity of the chest-thumping bravado one hears so often these days.

The truth of the matter is that, yes, Nepal has achieved impressive gains in many development indicators; but unfortunately, none of that has even the faintest causal link with any Nepal government or donor agency policy or efforts. The former has effectively not existed since 2006, and the latter were too preoccupied this last decade with conflict resolution and supporting the failed CA for nation restructuring to invest meaningfully in development, especially in infrastructure. These



Flood in Mahakali

gains, on the contrary, happened because of the humble and faceless Nepali toiling masses out-migrating *en masse* to the Gulf or East Asia in numbers unprecedented in its history and sending back remittances to their families in amounts orders of magnitude more than they would have if they had found a job within Nepal.

If any causal link to policy is to be sought, it can probably be traced to a 1998 policy reaction by the foreign ministry (led then if I remember correctly by Dr Prakash Lohani) to the just-started Maoist insurgency. That single decision allowed for passports to be issued in the districts, dramatically reducing transaction costs for an average rural Nepali and pleasing every mother there anxious to get her son or daughter out of the clutches of Maoist forced recruitment. (The Maoists had then called that outmigration phenomenon just

"feudal exploiters fleeing the villages from their revolutionary actions"!) One will, however, no doubt see and hear of comical acrobatics by incestuously selected "policy impact evaluators" linking questionable donor efforts to the achievements of MDG goals, if for no other reason than the well-funded nature of the effort.

I can personally reflect on the electricity figure. It was in early 2003 when I was chairing the NEA ex-officio as water resources minister that the incongruity surfaced with the release of the official household survey results. Till then, the official figure for access to electricity in Nepal was eighteen percent of Nepal's population. The new survey figure said it was double, thirty-six percent. The first reaction in the NEA to this surprising discrepancy was: who is stealing our electricity?

It was later when cooler heads prevailed that we spotted the methodological discrepancy: NEA knew the number of electricity meters it had provided and simply multiplied that by the average number of persons per household to get the eighteen per cent figure. On the other hand, the household survey had simply asked: "Do you have electricity?" without clarifying whether it was stolen, generated from private diesel, solar, peltric or microhydro, or sublet from village "big men" who had it because they could afford the upfront deposit NEA demanded. It was no MDG achievement, but merely miscounting. That and the absence of any government policy to quickly shift away from fossil fuels to renewables, which has resulted in an estimated 520 MW of diesel electricity in every guest house and shopping complex to offset the official power cuts. The figure rivals the NEA's installed capacity of about 700 MW, proving that lack of money is not how Nepal's electricity

development dilemma should be defined: it is lack of confidence in government and its policies.

Absence of meaningful government is seen everyday in Nepali society's responses to emergencies. With the massive cloudburst in Far West Nepal and India's Uttarakhand, unilateral Indian developments on the border river Mahakali is again in the news. The town of Darchula was devastated by the Mahakali, for which the local officials and politicians blame the Indian side. The Indian embassy came out with an unusually quick statement clarifying that the Dhauliganga hydro project on the Indian side was not responsible for the floods. For once, they could be partly right and also wholly wrong, together with their Nepali accusers, regarding the cause of the flood devastation. Partly right because Dhauliganga is a small run-of-river hydroelectric project with a small pondage (compared to the magnitude of the floods) that could exacerbate, but not cause, an already bad situation. Opening the barrage gates to save the power plant is quite justified, and the Indians would not be that crazy to do so if they knew it could have washed away their own army camp below, which did happen.

The real reason for the devastation in Darchula, as also along the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi in Uttarakhand, is the massive cloudburst, the landslides and lake outbursts it triggered from the side of Mother Nature. From the more significant side of human stupidity the real culprits were houses and hotels built on the flood path with poor planning as well as massive populist road-building in the fragile hills without a thought of extreme event drainage. In the case of Darchula, it seems the Indian side had gone ahead and unilaterally built river protection works on its side (in violation of an agreement between Pithoragadh's district magistrate and Darchula's CDO office to do river training works jointly on both sides of the border) that diverted the surge on the Dhauliganga to houses and structures on the Nepali side, wiping them away. That, and the humanitarian failure to warn the Nepali side that dam gates were being opened even when repeatedly requested by our local officials, is what should have been protested by Kathmandu as a violation of the letter and spirit of the Mahakali treaty. For that, however, one needs a government, a real one and not a phantom that looks like one but is manipulated by others as a puppet on strings.

The embarrassed puppet masters hope an election – any election, any how, for anything, by anybody, with anyone voting – would salvage their “democratic” credentials, and they could then wash their hands off the embarrassment that New Nepal has become. Just as Mahakali treaty was to save them the embarrassment of Tanakpur. Unfortunately, just as with Mahakali treaty, elections within a political vacuum will probably create an ever bigger impasse down the road, but that is not something our dear foreign well-wishers are worried about right now. ■

APEX COURT

Constitutional Row

The decision of acting chief justice Damodar Prasad Sharma to form a nine-member full bench has raised heckles in the courts

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when all political parties are gearing for elections, a division bench of acting chief justice Damodar Prasad Sharma sent a petition to form a nine-member full bench to look at the constitutionality of the formation of the present government and the order issued by the president.

Soon after the formation, a group of constitutional lawyers questioned the constitutionality of the bench saying that seven judges included in the bench had clashes of interest. According to a constitutional lawyer and former attorney general, acting chief justice Damodar Prasad Sharma and senior judge Ram Kumar Shah are both members of judicial council and judicial council is a party in the petition. Similarly, temporary judges Prakash Wasti, Vaidya Nath Upadhaya, Dr. Bharat Bahadur Karki, Gyandendra Bahadur and Tarka Raj Bhatta are beneficiaries of the order. Five temporary judges were appointed following the removal of parliament hearing from the constitution.



Acting Chief Justice Sharma

According to the Interim Constitution, there is a provision of hearing for the appointment of persons in constitutional bodies. However, it was removed following the order, which the petitioners are demanding as unconstitutional.

Nepal Bar Association and lawyers involved in the petition discussed this constitutional matter on June 23. There are only three Judges Kalyan Shrestha, Sushila Karki and Girish Chandra Lal Das who can hear the petition. This new controversy will delay the hearing of the petitions which demanded the formation of the government was itself unconstitutional. ■

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GOVERNMENT'S HONEYMOON

Retired, Not Tired

Constituted under a political pact among the four parties, the retired secretaries-dominated government led by chief justice Khil Raj Regmi has completed its honeymoon days

By KESHAB POUDEL

Elections or no elections, order or no order, there seems to be no alternative to Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi's government of retired secretaries. The government, which was constituted with the single agenda of holding the elections, has now presented a 65-point agenda of achievements in its hundred days in office.

As the legitimacy of this government lies on the 11-point agreement signed by the four major parties, Nepali Congress, UCPN-Maoist, CPN-UML and Samyukta Loktantrik Mukti Morcha (SLMM), it does not have to face any crisis even if it fails to hold the elections.

After the announcement of the election date of November 19, 2013 for the second Constituent Assembly, the election government led by Regmi also engaged in the transfer of civil servants. In its first hundred days, it has already transferred high level civil servants three times, that is, every 33 days, shaming the civil service which is supposed to hold the CA elections in November.

Transfer of Secretaries

In its third major overhaul in the bureaucracy, the government transferred six secretaries. Secretary at the Ministry of Science Technology and Environment Keshab Prasad Bhattarai has been transferred to secretary at the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority. Secretary at the Ministry of Education Som Lal Subedi has been transferred to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment.

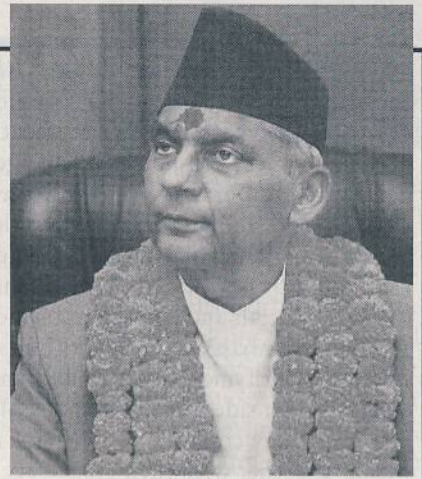
The secretary at the Election Commission (EC) Narayan Gopal Malego has been transferred to the MoE. Atmaram Pandey, previously the

Mid-Western Regional administrator, has been transferred to the Ministry of Defense (MoD). Likewise, Secretary at the Auditor General's Office (AGO), Narendra Dahal, has been transferred to the EC. The Central Regional administrator, Uddav Banskota, has been transferred to the AGO. A week ago, the government transferred seven secretaries and 10 DIGs of the Nepal Police.

"I don't understand how this government can hold the elections when it is busy in transferring the secretaries and other civil servants. The government should focus its attention on holding elections rather than transferring the employees," said CPN-UML leader Shanker Pokharel.

Elections Tempo

With the announcement of the elections date and publication of the elections program by the Election Commission, four major political parties have already kicked off their election campaigns. The mood is yet to grip the nation since 33 political parties under the leadership of CPN-Maoist are still staying away from the elections process. It is not clear whether the election will be held or not. CPN-Maoist leader Mohan Vaidya revealed that his front is likely to hold talks only after the government postpones the Election Day schedule targeting November polls. Leader of Madheshi Janadhikar Forum Upendra Yadav and leader of Federal Socialist Party Ashok Rai back Maoist leader Mohan Vaidya's stand. Even some powerful leaders of Nepali Congress and CPN-UML are saying that holding the elections is meaningless without the participation of three major parties CPN-Maoist, Madheshi Janaadhikar Forum and Federal Socialist Party.



Khil Raj Regmi

After his visit to India, former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is holding talks with CPN-Maoist Vaidya, Yadav and Rai urging them to take part in the elections. Chief election commissioner Nil Kantha Uprety warned that postponement of the election date is likely to cause a huge financial and logistic loss, indicating the possibility of postponement of elections at the last minute.

Former King's Visit

At a time when republican Nepal's first president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav is lying in a hospital bed of Tokyo and Madhesh based parties are claiming that they are the messiah of the Madhesh, former King Gyanendra completed his trip to eight districts of in the heartland of the southern plains. Although the gathering of the people was reportedly large, it was unlikely to create certain political implication in the national politics.

Likely Scenario

Given the current political scenario and negotiations with CPN-Maoist and other two parties, it is likely that the elections may be postponed at the last minute. As there is uncertainty, election campaigns won't reach the grass root level. As there is no provision to change the present government without amending the 11-point agreement, there is no immediate threat to the incumbent government. The transfer of the secretaries and joint secretaries, however, is likely to destabilize the civil service and land the government in a political controversy. ■

“Proposed Polls Meaningless”



MOHAN VAIDYA KIRAN, chairman of CPN-Maoist, holds the view that his party will boycott the elections held without fulfilling their demand.

How do you see the possibility of holding the elections?

A majority of people are against it. I don't think it is possible to hold the elections. You can hold the elections like the fake one Gyanendra held for local bodies. You cannot hold genuine elections in the present circumstances.

Why not?

Since people do not want the elections under the present political circumstances, they will boycott it. This is not a country of four political parties.

What are your conditions to hold the elections?

First of all, the government needs to postpone the date of elections. Second, the present government needs to resign from the chair paving the way for an all-party government.

Do you think other parties will agree on your demand?

They have to agree. Our demand is simple and clear. We want resignation of this government to start any meaningful dialogue.

That means there will no elections?

In present circumstances, we will not allow elections at any cost.

If the state uses the force, what would you do?

Our party workers will resist it. We will start another struggle in case of oppression.

Don't you think your statement is anti-people?

We are protecting the interest and sovereign rights of the people. Anti-people are those four parties which are trying to control the state power.

It is also said that your party is boycotting the elections because your party does not have a base. How do you look at this?

You can see the strength of our party if free and fair elections are held. Our party is genuinely committed to the rights of the people and all the revolutionaries like our party.

Don't you think your party will be isolated in case of boycotting the elections?

There is no question of isolation. Our party will be in the mainstream. When we launched the people's war in 1996, reactionaries and progressive forces used similar terms. After ten years of struggle, we proved that ultimately the revolutionaries will win the war.

So, what do you want to say?

I have already made it clear that there is no meaning to hold the elections at this juncture. Resignation of Regmi's government is the first step towards the positive direction. I am hopeful that all parties will agree with us and postpone the elections in November. ■

“Polls Inevitable”



Leader of Nepali Congress SUJATA KOIRALA spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues regarding elections. Excerpts:

Do you see the possibility of holding the CA elections?

There is no alternative before us. We have to hold the elections at any cost. I am sure the elections for the CA will be held in November.

Some leaders are demanding the resignation of the chairman of the interim council of ministers. How do you look at this?

It is a sheer nonsense. This is not a time to ask for the resignation of the chairman of council of ministers. Demanding resignation will hamper the elections.

At a time when so many parties are opposing the elections, how can they be held?

I don't think they will boycott the elections. CPN-Maoist leader Mohan Vaidya has already said that he is ready to hold dialogue. This means they will participate in the election in the last minute. The Election Commission has already announced the election program and parties have already kicked off their election campaign.

Do you mean elections will not be postponed this time?

Yes. I am hundred percent sure that there will be elections.

Even without participation of CPN-Maoist?

We will hold talks with Vaidyaji. I know he is a very sincere person and he will not take any decision hostile to elections.

If these Maoists sincerely boycott the elections, do you think the elections are possible?

As people are eagerly waiting to cast their votes, no force can stop the elections. On the basis of my own experience, I can say that there will be the elections.

Political parties are yet to agree on the form of governance and structure of state. Why do you need elections for CA?

We need elections to draft the new constitution. You cannot run the country for a long period of time with interim orders. Whatever the stand political parties are taking now, they will not repeat the mistakes this time. I am pretty sure that they will promulgate the new constitution.

UCPN-Maoist and CPN-UML are also claiming that they will secure the majority. How do you look at this?

People have already seen their rule. UCPN-Maoist has already been exposed among the people. I am sure that people will vote Nepali Congress this time. ■



Chinese Leader Yang Jiechie

YANG'S VISIT

Writing On Great Wall

Despite facing difficulties in implementing Chinese projects, visiting leader Yang Jiechie has pledged more support to Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although a number of Chinese projects, including 60 MW Trishuli 3 A hydropower project, regional airport in Pokhara and purchasing Chinese aircraft are mired in controversies, the visiting Chinese delegation has signed two new agreements to provide support to Nepal.

Before leaving for home, Chinese state councilor Yang Jiechie, who came to Nepal following the postponement of his visit earlier, laid down the stone for the expansion of the 10-kilometer section of the ring road from Koteshwor to Kalanki, showing their concern in Nepal.

When Nepal's overall scenario is not much encouraging for Chinese investment, Nepal's higher officials including the chairman of the interim council of ministers Khil Raj Regmi, requested more economic support from China.

Meeting with visiting State Councilor of the State Council of the

People's Republic of China, Yang Jiechi, and chairman Khil Raj Regmi requested for more investment in hydropower sector, including West Seti and support to extend the ring road.

In the presence of Chinese leader Yang and Nepalese foreign minister Madhav Prasad Ghimire, officials from both the countries signed two agreements. The agreements cover the construction of a well-equipped Armed Police Force Training Academy at Matatirtha, Kathmandu, and electoral support for the Election Commission. China is providing Rs. 150 million as election support and a grant of Rs 3.06 billion for the construction of the APF Academy.

"By signing the agreements, the Chinese have shown that China continues to support Nepal whatever hostile the situation it has to face. It is just immature to think that Chinese will pull out from Nepal creating

difficulties for it," said a former diplomat on condition of anonymity.

According to a press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MofA), during the meeting, matters relating to bilateral relations, political process, including the upcoming elections in Nepal and other issues of mutual interest were discussed.

During the meeting, State Councilor Yang expressed that China would like to see peace and development in Nepal and is happy to know that the election is taking place in Nepal in November this year. On the occasion, Yang also pledged full support on behalf of Chinese government to the government for the elections.

"Election would pave the way for political stability in the Nepal and political parties will work towards that direction to fulfill the aspiration and expectation of the Nepalese people," Yang reportedly told meeting.

"China has responded positively to Nepal's request for investment in hydropower and tourism development in Nepal," said Home minister and foreign minister Madhav Prasad Ghimire.

Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Arjun Bahadur Thapa, who was present at the meeting, said Yang appreciated the one-China policy and security cooperation that Nepal has extended especially in regards to curbing untoward incidents along the Nepal-China border.

In the last one month, half a dozen India's high level security officials, including Chief of Army Staff and chief of Assam Rifle, chief of Indian Army's military intelligence, visited. As Nepal's southern neighbor, Nepal's northern neighbor China also came out with a package to strengthen Nepal's security institution. Knowing Nepal's limitations, the Chinese conveyed their message in a typical mandarin style. ■



Climate Negotiations At Peril

By BATU UPRETY

The World Bank published a report in November 2012 on 'Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C Warmer World Must be Avoided' to inform about the impacts and vulnerabilities from a 4°C rise in temperature and called for urgent action to safeguard the people and resources from the adverse impacts of climate change. Recently, a report discussed the impacts of such temperature rise on South Asian food and energy security. Similarly, the World Energy Outlook 2012 indicated that global-mean warming above the pre-industrial period would reach to 3.8°C by 2100 thereby, severely threatening the existence of human beings and other support systems in this planet.

Recent studies predict a 40% probability of world temperature rise exceeding 4°C and a 10% likelihood of temperature change exceeding 5°C above the pre-industrial period by 2100. If that happens, climate vulnerable poor people will be greatly affected and their existence will be at peril. In a 2.5°C warmer world, Nepal will face reductions in water availability for food production as early as 2050s. It might be due to a process of deglaciation and increased rate of snow melts. Nepal's NAPA in 2010 estimated that about 1.9 million people are vulnerable from climate-induced disasters. In addition, increasing variability and long-term decrease in water flows will directly affect hydropower generation thereby, accelerating energy insecurity. This predicted vulnerability calls upon Nepal to seriously adapt to climate change.

As I have been mentioning in my previous article in this magazine, 49 LDCs emit about 4 percent of the total GHGs emissions with Nepal's share at less than 0.025 percent. Hence, we should be ready for adaptation, which is equally difficult as is evident from the recent climate-induced disaster in Darchula district.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol (KP) – the international legally-binding instruments – entered into force to

reduce GHGs emissions and adapt to climate change impacts. The meetings of the Subsidiary Body (SB) for Implementation (SB) and SB for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) were held in Bonn, Germany from 3 to 14 June 2013. The SBI deals with aspects related to the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol and SBSTA provides scientific and technological advice to implement them. The SBSTA meeting also drafted conclusions and decisions on issues related to REDD+, Nairobi Work Programme and Agriculture for COP 19. But SBI could not negotiate on issues important to us such as climate adaptation, LDC matters, finance etc as Belarus, Russian Federation, and Ukraine did not agree to adopt the agenda. The two weeks' period was, therefore, a waste of time in the climate negotiation. If SBI agenda item is adopted at Warsaw, it will be difficult to have comprehensive decisions for the benefit of the LDCs. If SBI agenda is not adopted at Warsaw, there is a high possibility that it will affect the preparation of the legally binding instrument by 2015.

Nepal used the June meeting from two approaches: (i) chairing the LDC group of 49 countries; and (ii) sharing what Nepal has done on climate adaptation. The chair of the LDC Group was engaged in coordination, meeting with negotiating blocs, and making statements on behalf of 49 LDCs in plenary sessions. I was engaged in sharing Nepal's efforts on climate adaptation through presentations.

Presentations were made on: (i) NAPA and EbA (Ecosystem-based Adaptation) Projects in Nepal in a special session on Integrating EbA Options into Urban Responses in Asia during the 4th Global Forum on Urban Resilience and Adaptation; (ii) UNFCCC Secretariat organized Durban Forum on Capacity Building workshop on building climate resilience in Nepal: integrating climate change into poverty

reduction with focus on building capacity for adaptation taking a case of Nepal Climate Change Support Programme, funded by DFID and EU; (iii) enhancing knowledge on EbA at decision making level in the Adaptation Knowledge Day IV, organized by UNEP; and (iv) GIZ organised side-event on National Adaptation Plan (NAP), adaptation costs, and climate finance readiness. In the last event, I highlighted NAP process and LEG developed Technical Guidelines; and Nepal's initiatives on climate change including the NAP process. I urged the developed country Parties to provide adequate funds to replenish the LDC Fund which support NAPA implementation, including the need for linking cities and climate change



by promoting EbA to enjoy from ecosystem services.

The LDC Expert Group organized a NAP Expo: Launching of the NAP Process in LDCs on 9 June 2013 at Bonn. The NAP Expo was also addressed by Prakash Mathema, Chair of the LDC Group. I moderated two sessions – country presentation by 4 LDCs, and support to the NAP Process from developed countries, GEF, UN and its specialized agencies.

This June meeting was a new experience for me. The Government of Nepal may wish to strengthen communications, encourage enhanced participation of Asian LDCs, engage more Nepalese, and further promote in-country coordination on climate change negotiations. In a nutshell, Bonn meeting was not productive as SBI could not adopt its agenda and it will have significant impact to COP 19 scheduled at Warsaw, Poland in November 2013. ■

EDUCATION

Growing Disparity

Although the role of private schools is highly criticized, recent results have shown that they are enhancing Nepal's quality of education. However, disparity of education in private and public school is growing.

By ARYAA RAJOURIA

Sanjana Wagle, 15, a student of Shanti Barsha Private English Boarding High School of Damayli, 150 Kilometer of west of capital of Kathmandu, secured 93.37 percentage in SLC education. She is reportedly second topper among girls.

With hundred percent results in the SLC, Wagle's school showed the difference between private and public schools. Although 41.57 percent passed out in SLC 2069, the percentage of government schools dismal.

"This year's SLC results were very unfortunate. Out of 100 students enrolled in government primary schools, only 3 students passed out SLC. The dropout at class five is 50 and there remain just 13 at tenth grades. This indicates that there is just 27 percent pass out in government schools. This year's pass percentage of private school is 87 percent," said Dr. Baburam Pokharel, president of PABSON.

According to a recent study, out of 100 students, who are enrolled in government schools, only 17 students

reached in class 10. Out of them, only 3 students passed School Leaving Certification (SLC Exam. This year's SLC results raised the questions about the government investment in education sector where the government invests over 37 billion rupees annually.

"We are spending about Rs.12000.00 for a primary school children. How can we expect a quality education in such a low investment? We need to develop minimum standard of management committee and performance of the teachers. There is the need of a huge cost for improvement of quality," said Dr. Som Lal Subedi, outgoing secretary at Ministry of Education and now secretary at Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment.

Around this time of year, the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination results are the epicenter of every current Nepali 10th grader's life. If a student cannot pass this exam, they will not be qualified for further studies. In Nepal, high school ends at

10th grade, thus making the final exam immensely important and giving it the cognomen 'the Iron Gate'.

There are different exam-boards available that can substitute for the SLC. However, Nepal's national education board exam is the 10th grade SLC test. Krishna Sharma, a parent says, 'The SLC is well known in Nepal. Almost all generations have taken it, and there is pride in a student getting good marks. SLC exams are important.'

Students are required to take 7 core classes and examinations, with a few more optional classes offered. The grades fall into 5 categories, with the highest one being Distinction (above 80%) and the lowest being 3rd division (32%). If any student does not score above 40 points (less than 32%), it is acknowledged that they failed.

According to the SLC administrators, the exam was first taken in 1934. Since then, many changes have taken place. For example, previously the exam covered the syllabuses of grades 9 and 10.

Currently, only the 10th grade curriculum is taken into account within the exam. Hitherto, once a student fails in the SLC, he would have to wait a whole year before being permitted to take it again. That rule has changed. If a student fails 2 or less subjects, he or she is allowed re-take the exam in a few months. This year, all failed students can repeat the assessment from the 4th of August to the 11th of August.

The Office of the Controller of Examinations is under the Ministry of Education, and its main function is to manage and control the SLC examinations. They have currently passed a rule, which states that any student failing because of 5 or less marks, they will be eligible to receive grace marks in order to pass.

Even with the simplification of the SLC board exam rules and regulations, many students have failed to pass in the recent years. In the last 4 years, the percentage of students that have passed has declined enormously.

In 2009, out of 342,632 examinees, 69% passed. This year, 547,165 individuals applied to take the exam, with 20,105 leaving because they were illegible to take the exam. In April, 511,165 students appeared ready to take the exam, and only 176,253 passed. In the recent years, the insufficiencies of the results have become blatant to the public eye. For example, in the Sankhuwasabha district, in all 9 schools, not even one student passed the SLC.

Why are so many students suddenly failing? Does it have to do with the immense amount of pressure put upon them? Are the exams getting harder? A current SLC student, who would like to remain unknown, says, "Most people did not do well this year because it is hard. The exam is hard and there is so much pressure, and we can not focus."

When a person fails the SLC, society either considers them incompetent or lazy. This type of attitude gives many failed students



Students in Private School

anxiety and self-disappointment. The Nepalese society considers the SLC exam with a lot of importance. So, what does a student do when he or she fail the so-called most important exam of their life? Most students that completely fail the exam wait anxiously till the next year to re-take it. However, some take it a little further. This year, after the SLC results came out, 7 girls from different Nepali towns and cities committed suicide. They had all failed.

There are many things that the society and the parent of SLC taking students need to be careful of. A little more pressure or a malicious quip about grades could be the reason for these students committing such a crime. The stress and anxiety that comes with exams triple when you fail. Anish, a student, says, "Yes, the SLC is stressful. Yes, it's a lot of work. Yes, if you fail it will be horrible; however, it's no reason to kill yourself. We need to prevent these suicides that aren't even necessary."

Even after the results come, students are frazzled and stressed because now they will have to apply and then get into another school or 'college for higher studies. They have many choices ranging from +2 to the

A levels to the IB board. However, most Nepali students attend +2 schools. Thus, it is extremely important to improve the quality and the curriculum of these schools. Currently, they are not fit to compete internationally.

Also, a problem for SLC students is getting into a school. Schools have begun to advertise their college through the newspaper and other such forms. The number of +2 colleges is growing annually.

From, Trinity to Whitehouse, students has a large array of choices. How do students choose? Mr. Sharma, as a parent says, "There are a lot of choices, but everybody wants to send their child to a school with a good reputation. For example, St. Xavier's college." In a well-known college, like St. Xavier's, the competition is fierce. A lot of students have a hard time securing a seat. Some students don't even get into one college causing them to either work, or look for a higher-level education substitute.

Once a student manages to get into a school, they must choose their stream. They have a choice between humanities, science, or commerce. An abundance of students still are not sure of what subject to choose and this

'We Need Digital Board'

DR. BABURAM POKHAREL

DR. BABURAM POKHAREL, president of the Private and Boarding Schools Organization, Nepal (PABSON) and founder principle of VS Niketan College, spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on various issues. Excerpts:

Despite an immense contribution of private schools in the country, why is there always criticism directed against them?

There is no doubt that private boarding schools have been making an immense contribution in Nepal's education system in terms of providing the quality education. This is matter of pride for all of us. There are about 8,000 private schools.

How do you make sense of the investment pattern?

There are 1.8 million students with 150,000 teachers and employees who are directly getting the employment opportunity. According to the government statistics, the government is spending over 65 billion rupees for 6.8 million students. The government needs to spend over 15 billion for 1.8 million students. It shows that the private sector is saving 15 billion rupees for the government's coffers. Along with this, we have established education institutions within the country to provide quality education, thereby, stopping the money from going to foreign countries. Despite all these achievements, the civil society, guardians and government are yet to accept the contributions of the private sector. We don't get the due recognition. As a president of PABSON, my goal is now to make people realize our contribution and get the recognition and prestige in the society. My whole thrust is to establish a separate identity of the private sector education.

What are your views on SLC results?

leads to a lot of difficulties. Anish commented, "It's hard as students to choose subjects to study that we're not even sure we want. What if we change our minds?"

In the last couple of years, there has

This year's SLC results were very unfortunate. Out of 100 students enrolled in government primary schools, only 3 students passed out SLC. The dropout at class five is 50 and there remain just 13 at tenth grades. This indicates that there is just 27 percent pass out in government schools. This years' pass percentage of private school is 87 percent. If one analyzes the performance of government schools, comparing them with private schools, the scenario is pathetic. Instead of looking at the failure of the government schools, civil society, guardians and government should stop spending their time in criticizing the private schools which have done much better. Out of 365 days, there is only one day when all different stakeholders hail the private schools. The day of bringing out SLC results is the day to hail private schools.

What is the student versus expenditure ratio?

The government spends Rs.1500 a month for a student in government schools in Kathmandu. Per student expenditure in Lalitpur district is Rs. 1900 per month. There are many private schools which are teaching students in much lower prices of Rs. 800.00 or 1000.00. This is a direct payment and government expenditure is indirect expense which is invisible. Despite such big investments, there is nobody to complain about the government schools.

How do you look at the situation in 10+12?

Due to lower number of students passing out SLC, many higher secondary schools in remote parts of Nepal will be shut down. Government is now randomly giving permission without any mapping. There are schools everywhere. There are schools

been talk about either changing the SLC board to a more student friendly one, or cutting it out of Nepal's education system all together. Anish says, "The SLC shouldn't be cut off because that's the climax of a person's



in all nooks and corners. I am pretty sure that many higher secondary schools will be shut down. Even private schools will have to face a tough time. Many 10+12 schools will be shut down.

How do you define the role of PABSON?

PABSON is now 23 years old and it is going towards maturity. We will have a general convention in the coming January. What I can say is that during my tenure as the president, I have made all out efforts to enhance the prestige of PABSON as well as the private schools. As a person having a keen interest in the academy, I am making efforts to establish a different identity of the private schools. I am persuading the private and boarding schools to move to Information Communication Technology ICT. The traditional education system needs to change. Community schools have already learnt our technique. Many schools have already started ICT. We want to give online education using the multi-media. We need to introduce the digital board. ■

education in Nepal. Abroad, graduating from 12th grade is a big thing, in Nepal, graduating 10th grade is." Sharma agrees, "They could make the board student friendly, but the SLC should stay."

"The Situation Is Very Complex In Education Sector"

DR. SOM LAL SUBEDI

At a time Nepal's education system is facing several challenges, Dr. SOMLAL SUBEDI, who has been transferred this week from secretary at Ministry of Education to secretary at Ministry of Science Technology and Environment, spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excerpts

How do you see the level of investment in schools?

For instance, the investment in primary level is lower in terms of international standards. We are spending about Rs.12000.00 for a primary school children. How can we expect a quality education in such a low investment. We need to develop minimum standard of management committee and performance of the teachers. There is the need of a huge cost for improvement of quality. The easiest way to make the change and improve the quality is through empowering the community with accountability.

Does the Ministry follow norms to allocate funds for schools?

In developed countries, there are civil registration system, which includes the number of families in each households. Under this norm, the schools and teachers are allocated particular areas. However, there is no adequate linkage between schools, local bodies and vital registration data. In our country, the situation is different as the quota of schools and teachers are allocated without long term plan and vision. We need to develop downward accountability measures to improve the situation.

What is the number of schools?

There are 34298 schools. Out of 29,000 schools, there are 8416 government high schools, 14447 middle schools and remaining are primary schools. There are 5298 private schools.

What is the number of school teachers?

There are 107,000 permanent

teachers. Now, 13,000 permanent teachers will be added. There are 14 different kinds of teachers. The teachers recruited and supported by local bodies are not included. If we want to improve the quality of education, we need to have further 20,000 teachers.

We have provided all kinds of facilities to the teachers as per with civil servants but we are yet to use the teachers properly. There involves a lot of political pressure even in the transfer of primary teachers.

Is there any difference in per student costs?

Yes, it varies from district to district, and it depends upon the student teacher ratio and cost index. If there are more private schools, the number of students is lower in comparable government schools. Higher the numbers of private schools, lesser the pressure of students in government schools. However, in remote parts of Nepal, the numbers of private schools are lower and students in government schools are higher.

On what basis the number of schools added annually?

The numbers of schools increase on the incremental basis. Now we are making efforts to rationalize the process.

What is your impression about education system in Nepal?

The situation is very complex in education sector. We do a lot of policy intervention at the center but we rarely look at the implementation side. Instead of bringing new policies, there is the need to build a strong mechanism to monitor the implementation. We have increased the number of schools on incremental basis and now we are rationalizing it. It is very difficult task.

Don't you think the investment in education needs to increase?

Our per capita investment in school education is lower in comparison to international standards. The investment in private schools is



comparatively higher than the government schools. Only after the increment of investment, government schools may also compete with private schools. Per student investment in private school is much higher than government schools. Average investment for the student in going to private school is 400 dollars.

How much money is the government spending annually in education sector?

Ministry proposes additional Rs.26 billion coming budget. There is annual increment of education budget at an average 15 percent per annum. Ministry has requested 20 percent increase this year. Out of the total budget, most of the money goes for salary, pension and other things. There is very nominal budget for infrastructure development and training. More than Rs. 5 billion goes for teachers pension annually and it is increasing trend.

How much budget Ministry require?

The government needs to double the annual budget to improve the quality of education. To improve the quality of education, there is the need to increase quality of teachers, logistic and others. There also need to define standards as well as bringing new teaching method. ■

“Education Should Meet 21st Century Needs”

GOVINDA RAJ JOSHI

With 25 years of experience in the education sector, beginning his stint as a school teacher and working his way up to become the Minister for Education, Nepali Congress leader **GOVINDA RAJ JOSHI**, a liberal democrat, is a known name in the field. He was a key person to change Nepal's education system by encouraging public-private partnership. At a time when there are growing debates over the quality of education, Joshi spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on various issues regarding private investment in education.

How do you look at the state of Nepalese education?

Nepal's education system has been passing through a very critical time. The recent performance in the School Leaving Certificate exams indicated how the government investment in education was being wasted. The positive side is that the private schools have done really well, showing the success of private investment.

At a time when everyone is criticizing the private sector and calling for nationalizing education, what do you say?

I am not saying that all private schools are doing everything right.

What do you suggest for the improvement of Nepal's education sector?

We need to develop our education sector to meet the aspirations of the 21st century people. The education in 21st century is going to be different than what we have been pursuing right now. The government and policy makers must come up with a new vision and policy for education.

What were your experiences as the minister?

When I took charge as the Minister for Education in 1994, the education system was in a mess and the government was allocating a very

nominal budget in the education sector. There was no policy. The curriculum in the Tribhuvan University had not changed much since 2028 and the same was the case with primary and higher secondary education. There was only one university and the government was unable to provide the budget to the education sector. The option before me was to invite the private sector in education.

Why did you want such a change?

Because of the lack of budget, the Tribhuvan University and the Ministry of Education were unable to increase the budget to extend the schools and campuses. It is an international norm that the government usually spends more budget in the primary level of education. However, the situation here was different. The university got a higher chunk of the budget. There is still the demand for more budget in higher education. The government needs to spend more money in primary education. At a time when the government schools and campuses were unable to provide education to all, we decided to open the private investment in education.

How did you manage the change?

It was a team effort. I had persons like Dr. Tirtha Khaniya and education secretary Ishwori Prasad Upadhyaya. Without their support and help, Nepal's education system could not have changed. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, people had high aspirations. However, Nepal's education system was in a mess, without requisite policy and budget. In that context the need was there find more budget, but the government did not have the money to meet the demand. So, I had no option other than

to look support from the private sector. To provide quality education to at all levels, I realized that there was the need to develop a public-private partnership. We introduced a policy inviting the private sector from primary to university level and up providing technical education. When I was the education minister, we had just one engineering college and one medical college.

What changes did your policy bring?

After SLC, parents were compelled to send their children abroad for education, spending a huge amount of foreign currency. We needed to stop this trend. There was a trend that people used to send their children abroad. With an aim to develop education institution in the country to provide quality education, we opened education sector to private investment. Actually, our decision has been paying off. Today, there are half a dozen of universities and a number of medical colleges, engineering colleges, nursing colleges and other schools for higher education to provide quality education. This is a big achievement. There are bad sides also. But the Nepalese need not go abroad for any kind of study, including technical and social. Nepal can be made the center for excellence in education and health sector.

Why are you insisting on the private sector?

The government alone cannot do anything in any part of the world. There is the need of private involvement. Nepal is not an exception. It is a wrong mentality to think that the private sector is the enemy of the people. Actually, the private sector is the friend of the society. No country in the world develops without the private sector involvement. In liberal democratic

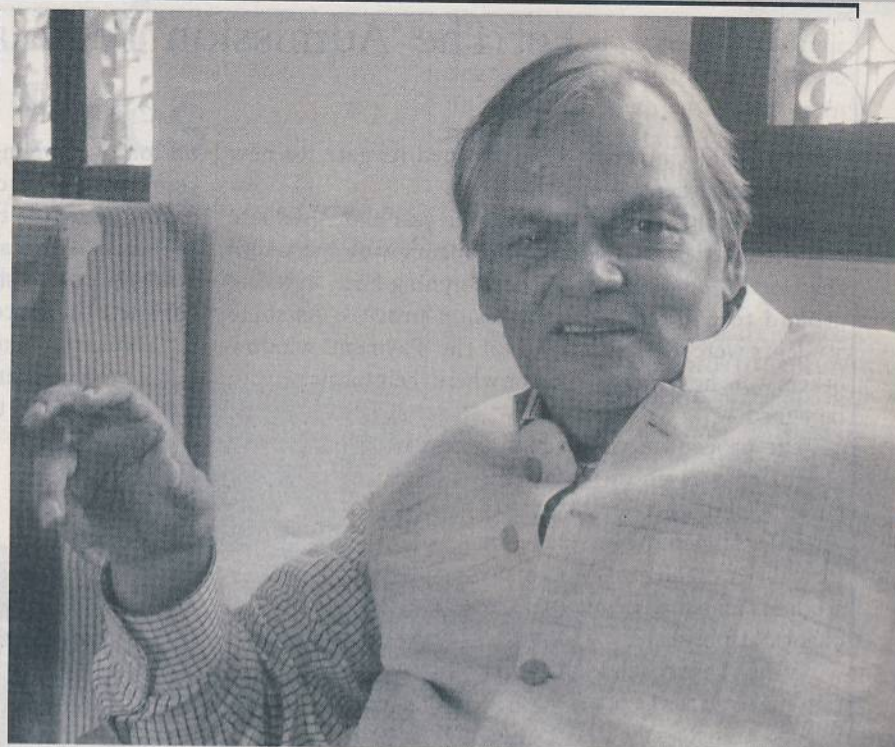
countries like the United States of America and Japan, the government cannot run businesses. For instance, America's top universities and colleges are run by the private sector. The concept of communist forces seeking government investment in education, health and other sectors is very wrong. The government's role is just that of a facilitator and it can build infrastructure. It is the government's job to decide the policy.

What should be the other roles of the government?

The government needs to be aware as to how to maintain quality and monitor and regulate the private sector. The government must ensure quality services. Policy, management, monitoring and evaluation are most important in the education sector. We introduced the multi-university concept, university grant commission, and public private partnership in education sector. Nothing has changed in the policy propounded by us. Private sectors are also contributing to improve the quality of education. Private boarding schools are doing extremely well. Even in the recent SLC results, out of 41.57, an overwhelming number students who secured top marks are from the private schools. It is unfortunate that the results of public schools are less than 20 percent. Where has our huge investment gone?

How do you view the government investment in education?

What is the utility to invest money in education sector? Private schools secured the results between 80 and 90 percent. Government investment in education sector is a waste. Only a marginal percentage of students who are studying in the government schools complete the university education. There are less than five percent who pass the 10+12. The enrolment of students from government schools in medical, engineering and other sector is negligible. It is unfortunate that these people work for parties or remain



unemployed. Private schools are maintaining quality education. Our students have to compete with international students. It is due to the private schools, the Nepalese students are competing in all sectors. It is the weakness of the policy of the government. Our educationists normally visit the education institutions in different parts of the world. However, they try to copy the education. We cannot transplant education system of other countries.

What was the scenario when you introduced 10+2?

When we introduced 10+2 with an aim to phase out the proficiency certificate level from TU affiliated campuses, no private or government schools agreed to run it. Thus, we decided to start the 10+2 from Budhanilkantha School in early days. The culture of tuition is so rampant that a parent of Pokhara went to Mumbai for work to send his children to tuition. It was shared by education secretary with me just a few days ago. This means: where has our government investment gone? Actually, we have made our high school free.

How did you get involved in the education sector?

I joined the education sector with the inspiration from B.P. Koirala, who always believed that education is the key to all kinds of transformation, including opening the mind of the people. Because of B.P.'s inspiration, I jumped to the education sector. He suggested I go to villages. I have run a school on my own investment. I have established two high schools and four colleges in Tanahu. I am the founder of Adikabi Bhanubhakta Campus.

How did you join education sector?

We opened the college during the Panchayat time. I also taught there for two years voluntarily. I was even detained for running the schools and was transferred to far west. Some of my students are MPs and some of them are ministers. During my five years as a minister, I had changed the education policy with the help of my experience as a teacher. When I was the education minister, there were 92 question papers and I reduced them to 9. I had totally changed the curriculum, making it more timely. ■

Let The 'Admission' Begin

By ABIJIT SHARMA



The Delhi University (DU) opened its gate for new admissions earlier this month.

As the admissions for the new four-year undergraduate course kicked off, thousands of students were spotted in the North Campus area in the scorching heat, loitering around to complete the admission process. As some students were looking around for the 'Payment' window others were hovering to find out where their forms were to be signed.

The procedure which had always been hectic and confusing was no different this time. Although the University officials claimed to have made the formalities simpler this year, many students remained bemused in the chaotic atmosphere.

'When I approach an officer he tells me to go to the other one. He, in turn, transfers me to the other. It's so frustrating', complains one young aspirant. 'It becomes very aggravating when you are ordered to move around so much in this heat', adds another. Un-cooperative staffs add to the students' woes. 'The officers do not provide adequate information and when we ask questions they get annoyed', says a student. Students did get a sense of relief compared to the previous years, however, because of volunteers who were there to help students.

Delhi University has begun its admission at a time when it has faced flaks from all angles for its Four Year Undergraduate Program (FYUP). DU has been criticized for implementing the new structure in a haste and without enough debate. Although protests were observed before the admissions began the situation has remained relatively calmer thereafter. The students, nevertheless, remain perplexed. They are clueless on what to expect and how to prepare for the new program.

It would be unfair, however, to put all the blame on the University. In its bid to facilitate the students, it introduced the

option of applying online from this year. But students complain that the new savvy University website hasn't catered exactly to their needs as the University had promised. It contains little information. There is therefore no option other than to go to the college physically and complete the process.

Foreign students including Nepali aspirants are facing equal problem. 'Since our admission process requires us to get in touch with the Nepalese embassy first and then the Foreign Students Office, the process becomes even more puzzling for us' says one Nepali student who had come to Delhi. 'I expected the embassy officials to be co-operative but they were not', he adds. Along with the tardy formalities, foreign students face the burden of securing a hostel seat for themselves or finding other means of accommodation.

With a new Four Year program and a slowly modernizing system, there is some hope that in the coming years the admission process in University will become easier and students will not have to endure all those old troubles. ■



देशमा शान्ति-सुव्यवस्था र विकास
सबै नेपालीको चाहना हो । यसमा
प्रतिबद्ध हुनु नेपालीको
कर्तव्य हो ।



नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग

DR. SINGHA BAHADUR BASNYAT

The Jureli Eyes

Career diplomat Dr. Singha Bahadur Basnyat, who retired from his job in 2003 after serving as the Nepalese ambassador to United Kingdom, depicts an image of Nepal through the Jureli eyes

By A CORRESPONDENT

Having served for a long time in Nepal's foreign ministry, former ambassador to United Kingdom Dr. Singha Bahadur Basnyat retired from the civil service, but his love and passion for Nepal's geographical, religious and cultural diversity is in his heart and mind.

Dr. Basnyat showed his talent by singing the song Jureli recently at the height of Shivapuri Mountain at a program organized by Israeli ambassador to Nepal Hanan Goder. In the presence of dozens of foreign diplomats based in Kathmandu and Nepalese from different walks of life,



Dr. Basnyat presented his song Jureli, narrating Nepal's hill, mountain, river and terai plain.

Dr. Basnyat earned his academic degrees from world's renowned universities, such as a Master in International Affairs (MIA) from University of Columbia, New York, USA and a Master in Philosophy (M.Phil) and a Ph.D in political science from George Washington University, Washington D.C., USA. So, ambassador Dr. Basnyat had the tact

to use words to explain the nature, particularly the diversity of Nepal. At a time when Nepal has been passing through a very critical period with growing chaos and political uncertainty, Dr. Basnyat's songs and words emitted hope. Chairman of Columbia University Alumni Association-Nepal, vice

chairman of Jayanti Memorial Trust, Dr. Basnyat is now chairman of Yeti Travels Pvt. Ltd. ■

Bird Inspired Flight Of Imagination

By SINGHA B. BASNYAT

"The poet, the lover and the lunatic are of one imagination compact" — Shakespeare

Since retirement in 2003, more or less every day I have woken up to have the luxury of nowhere to go and almost nothing to do, I sort of question: What I am living for? What inspired me, what surprised me, what touched me and what had moved me yesterday? So I try to figure out what could be the challenges for me and what my next adventures should be, one morning at a time every day.

New Year ushered in January first in 2013. What touched me one night was watching a television interview in which Nepal's legendary expert on Nepalese Culture Satya Mohan Joshi was reflecting on his many interesting findings decades back while travelling in the remote villages of the country. He mentioned about how some villagers had pondered about the beautiful Jureli

bird in one sentence preserved for generation in their oral tradition, thus I wonder what kind of food the Jureli bird might have eaten and what kind of clothes she might have worn. It reflected their own pain, sorrow and shortage of bare minimum needs like food and clothes due to abject poverty.

Last April, I met Satya Mohan ji and he was kind to let me have that one liner "deep philosophy".

It is the same Jureli bird of the ancient times (I imagined), which had serenaded sages, seers' ordinary folks, emperors and clowns.

And I realized Jureli in small flocks were delighting me with friendly and flirting gestures every morning, every evening visiting trees in my garden to enjoy the small palm tree nuts during the fall and the winter seasons.

The next morning when I woke up I thought there was a job to do this time. I told myself everything I do I will do it for the Jureli bird. I felt like I would join the Jureli birds, fly with them on the "viewless wings of poesy" and "leave the world unseen, to fade far away into the forest dim" with the wishful idea to

"forget the weariness the fever and the fret" so common among human beings which the Jureli bird living" amongst the leaves hast never known".

A few days later on, while the author was pondering about a few lines to further amplify the one liner mentioned by Satya Mohan ji, Ambassador Hanan had invited me for dinner to meet some Nepalese painters and artists. When I explained about some initial thoughts on Jureli, Hanan seemed delighted with the idea, got the book on birds, showed the picture of Jureli and invited me to join his guests for picnic at Nagarjuna top and present the Jureli lyrics and music composition in violin.

On February 2013, the first draft was presented as per an attached copy at the Nagarjuna picnic. On February 14, 2013, Hanan wrote to me the attached letter which inspired me to compose the full text.

Since then my flight of imagination got me into a dialogue with the Jureli at my garden. With Hanan's words "Nepal's gifted with rich natural beauty" in the back of my mind, I felt the bird wrote literally the rest of the text. ■

Gimlette's Account of Nepal

By BIPIN ADHIKARI



Lieutenant Colonel George Hart Desmond Gimlette's *Nepal and the Nepalese* (London: H. F. & G. Witherbyn, 1927) was published at a time when the Prime Minister of Nepal was Chandra Shamsher JBR.

The book came into its present shape after sixteen years of the visit of the British King George V and six years after the visit of Prince of Wales—the future Edward VIII. It was just four years before the signing of the Anglo-Nepalese Treaty of Friendship, and a year before the abolition of slavery in Nepal. Gimlette was yet another surgeon working at British residency in Kathmandu—the other famous notable surgeons who served there being Daniel Wright and H. A. Oldfield. Even though the book was published in 1927, many of the facts and figures referred in it were mostly from his experience in Nepal four decade earlier. Gimlette lived in Nepal from November 1883 to June 9, 1887.

The book starts with a brief geographical sketch of the Nepal, its towns and villages. This is followed by description of the various races that live here. The third chapter highlights the religious festivals, temples, etc. It is here that the author asserts that “the form of Hinduism almost universally followed is Shaivism, the temples dedicated to and worshippers of Vishnu being very few.” The next chapter deals with the economy of Nepal (agriculture, trade and revenue)—agriculture being generally followed by all classes, except, of course, traders and soldiers actually serving in the army. The book attempts to deal with constitution and laws of Nepal also. Discussion about the history of what the author describes as the Rajput dynasties of Nepal valley has been lumped in the sixth chapter. The seventh chapter deals with the origin and history of the Khas race and the House of Gorkha. The eighth chapter explains the history of the Rana family. This follows the author's personal recollections of some of the events that transpired at the time when

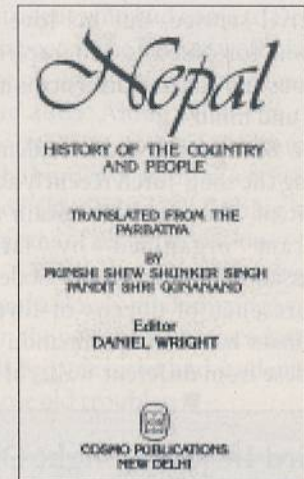
he was in Kathmandu.

George Hart Desmond Gimlette writes about many things that his predecessors writing on Nepal did not mention or elaborate. He describes the 22 November, 1885, coup of Bir Shamsher and his brothers against their uncle *Ranaudip* Singh, who was the prime minister of Nepal at that time. But he refers to the coup as a revolution and does not explain the circumstances leading to it. He notes the Newar merchant population in Lhasa to be three thousand, but it was probably less. “The bulk of such articles of European manufacture as reach *Thibet* from India, passes from Nepal. And attempts to divert this trade to the Darjeeling route have hitherto met with but scanty success.” He mentions *Taklakar* or *Yari*, *Mestang*, *Kerong*, *Kuti*, *Hatia* and *Wallang* as principal passes in the Himalayas. “But only *Kerong* and *Kuti* passes are the nearest to Lhasa and hence the most frequented.” However, the *Kuti* pass has been described as the principal trade route from where the most of the interstate traffic has been carried on.

The author describes Nepal as a country rich in iron and copper. In his description about Nepalese agriculture, he refers to two kinds of local rice: viz, the *Gaya* or upland rice, and the *Puya* or lowland rice. The transplantation of the lowland rice takes place in June and upland rice in the middle of May. The other Nepalese products are Indian corn, the red and yellow pepper, wheat, and potatoes, radishes and other vegetables. “Besides the celebrated pepper, another Nepal specialty is the large cardamom, which is grown in extensive gardens in different parts of the valley, near the foot of the hills, in shady, well-watered corners.”

Gimlette states that King Ran Bahadur Shah had made large offerings at shrines of Devi for the long life of his *Brahmini* queen to whom he was greatly attached. Unfortunately, when the lady died, the King was so upset that “he revenged himself by

desecrating the temples and images of the goddess *Talleju*, some small temples near *Simbanath*, and others near *Pashpati*, were defiled and worship in them forbidden.” Prime Minister Bhim Shamsher has been described as having suffered from phthisis (the disease causing the wasting of the body, especially pulmonary tuberculosis). Correcting the existing misconception, he clarifies that the



Khas tribe of Nepal is not always the people who have fallen from their existing caste, as the offspring of the union of high caste Hindus (father) and lower caste (mother), but also that “it was a tribe [that existed in Nepal] since days yore.” He mentions the system of the “*Mana Chawal*” in Nepal. This has been described as “the piece of land given by the government to the nearest relative of an extinct Raja family.” The system allowed the heir to enjoy the produce of the land as long as he lived. “There is a life pension on the jagir system. No tax is paid to government. After the death of the holder the land lapses to Government.”

There is also an account of the horror of cholera epidemic that erupted in Kathmandu and the adjoining districts in 1985. It started in the month of June and continued till the end of August claiming many lives every day. There is a reference that it spread to Hanuman Dhoka palace as well, where 23 people, most of them



Obsessed With Internet

By ADITI ARYAL

Ketis, died. "As soon as the symptoms had declared themselves, the sufferer was hurried off to the *ghats* on the banks of the *Baghmati*, and laid in some *pati* (veranah), often on the ground with no bedding or covering of any kind; his friends generally sat by him, sleeping, cooking, and caring their food until death appeared near, when the moribund would be taken to the edge of the water, and his legs to the knees, placed in the stream." At times, the watchers left these sick people to die. At one the author says: "I frequently saw people still breathing who had been lying thus partly immersed for perhaps an hour. In one case, which had promised well, the patient was found to have been placed in the water and was taken out of it by my hospital assistant; she lived for three days afterwards, but eventually died from the effects of the exposure." He also refers to a pathetic situation when the dead people were burned in the *ghats* in full view of the sick lying there. Many corpses, thrown out in the river without burning them, were brought back to the banks by dogs and jackals. "The register [of Gimlette's hospital] shows a total of nine hundred nine persons treated, or to whom medicines were sent from the dispensary; but superstition, ignorance and indifference, were all combined against the sick."

This sad story apart, there are other interesting events mentioned in the book. Gimlette writes about an exhibition that he observed, with some other Nepalese generals, some very good-looking girls. "Though perfectly demure and proper in their behaviour, [they] did not seem in the least to disapprove of the admiration their appearance evoked from those on our elephant. The two generals thought it no end of a joke, every now and then giving me a nudge and nearly choking with laughter. I asked who the young ladies were, rather a useless question, as I knew perfectly well they were not real ladies. [General] Ranbir Jang said, with another laugh and a sly dog expression, that they were "maids of Honour," this is the euphemism generally employed to describe court slave girls."

There are some errors and inconsistencies in the book, which have been clearly indicated by T. R. Vaidya in his 1993 introduction to the book. In 1927, Gimlette also published *A Postscript to the Records of the Indian Mutiny: An Attempt to Trace the Subsequent Careers and Fate of the Rebel Bengal Regiments, 1857-1858*. That is another interesting book to the credit of this important writer.

In today's world people are very obsessed with the internet and its amazing outreach and flexibility. We try and access the internet from every sphere possible such as smart phones, PCs, multimedia gadgets like iPods, iPads and other tablets. We lock our devices but forget to run security checks periodically. Furthermore, we access the internet at all places from all kinds of network and forget to check if it is secured or unsecured. In this crazy world of information technology development there are so many easy ways for people to steal our private information and use them against us.

We try and secure our emails, social networking accounts, blogs and other personal items but we

The virtual world is not as nice as it seems to be. It is in fact instilled with many shortcomings, threats and lies.

forget how insecure the network we use can be. For example, connecting our devices to any unknown wireless connections can lead to all our personal data being reached out to unwanted people trying to take advantage of our credit card numbers or passwords to various accounts.

As much as technology is developing with it, so are the cybercriminals. Ranging from hackers, spammers to stalkers and blackmailers these people have found ways to duplicate the real life crimes like fraud, theft, harassment and intimidation online. Spammers trick us by sending emails, texts or phone calls about visiting a certain place or website. This place or website will surely have malicious content that can be harmful to you or your computer. Likewise, frauds fake identities and trick you into giving them money. There have also been cases where the frauds have

impersonated other people such as celebrities, other famous people or even lay men just for merriment, revenge or even to keep themselves busy. Moreover, stalkers follow your every move and admission into our lives is not difficult. Then there are cases of bullying, harassment and blackmail over the internet like by posting obscene and explicit pictures, texts and threats. Many people have suffered damage owing to cybercrimes.

People who fall prey to these crimes usually plunge into series of crude damage. Some may end up bankrupt with their credit card number stolen and others may find unnecessary emails being sent and received without their knowledge and consent. Minors that get blackmailed and threatened face

tough situations and mental fear in their real life. Cases of complete deception have been sighted and people have been blamed for instances they did not commit with digital evidence which is far beyond our reach of verification. The extent of cybercrime nature and harm is quite senile than what we as normal people can perceive because as much as the virus invented 25 years ago advanced, so have the originators.

The virtual world is not as nice as it seems to be. It is in fact instilled with many shortcomings, threats and lies. What seems real on the screen may not be so beyond that. Moreover there are not many laws that seem to govern our security on the web. Furthermore, the technology experts never seem to warn us enough about what we need to know to safeguard our personal issues. Therefore, we ourselves need to be careful and try and make safe what has to be. It is best never to share any personal information over the internet, especially 'nice strangers'. ■

On Health & Education

By HEMANG DIXIT



After democracy was ushered in Nepal in 1950, it was felt that a local MP could realistically ask roads for his constituency and then education and health facilities. All this was for improving the lot of the people. Translating this into reality meant either a primary or secondary school in one case and a health post or a district hospital in another. Asking for a hydropower project seemed incomprehensible and impossible.

Now the times have changed. The district hospitals and PHC centres have come up in almost all the districts and all constituencies. Even the requests for medical colleges have reached almost twenty and are increasing. What is the limit? No one seems to have an answer. The health of the people has definitely improved, but not because of the government input. It is due to involvement of the private sector. As we glance at the pages of our daily newspapers, we read of health institutions without doctors, nurses or other paramedical staff, equipment lying idle or out of order or even leaking roofs and falling walls of health institutions. Then there is the question of drugs which are either expired or not available at all!

One reads from time to time about the aggressiveness of the patient's parties towards health care personnel. All this is taking place when our new constitution

is going to embody Health Rights as a basic right of the Nepali people.

Similar is the case with education. During King Mahendra's reign, the slogan 'Education for All' was printed on stamps and circulated widely in Nepal and abroad. That utterance is still to be realised and though considerable contribution has been made by the private sector, there is still a lot amiss. Ripping the gullible public by way of annual admission fees in the same school or by selling 'compulsory' overpriced textbooks which are hardly ever used are just two examples of rampant malpractices. In the public sector schools without walls, non-existent schools where deputed teachers collect pay regularly are also news that one reads about in our daily papers.

In this second millennium, some fortunate districts of Nepal were chosen for hydropower projects. The interparty bickering, which always occurs, has deprived the country of substantial electrical energy that would have been generated by now. We, the common folks, continue to suffer load-shedding and are likely to do so for some years to come. The future is indeed bleak as our major parties which clandestinely seem to be playing musical chairs are ever true to form – agree to everything, and then deny all or part to backtrack. Hurrah for such leaders.

The CIAA has warned government officials of the

Ministry of Education and also those of the Ministry of Health and Population to be ready to face action if they do not comply with the directives of the anti-graft constitutional body. All this brings to one's mind a letter written on 16th April 2013 by an Under Secretary of the CIAA prior to the appointment of Lok Man Karki taking charge of the institution. This letter was sent to the Nepal Medical Council, Medical Colleges, Universities, Education Ministry and Health Ministry. This missive, which dwells on the standards being followed, has raised many questions about the functioning that need to be rectified. The Nepal Medical Council Act is in dire need of revision but who is going to bell the cat. Another example for correction too is the functioning of the CTEVT, an institution responsible for the production of health and other technical manpower below the level of graduates.

All this simply means that both the Education and the Health Ministry are in major need of overhaul. The Nepal Medical Association called a meeting recently trying to whip up enthusiasm and support for lobbying Nepal Government

to revise the Nepal Medical Council Act which needs to be thoroughly revised.

The Ministry of Health and Population in terms of numbers is still the largest ministry and needs to

be organised if it is to function effectively and serve the interests of the people. Though not a realistic slogan, the Health For All 2000 is now a forgotten dream!

It has still to put its own house in order. The Nepal Health Act, though it has been amended a number of times has still to be implemented. Acts pertaining to the various councils relating to various aspects of health delivery have still to be updated and functioning properly.

Coming to the Education Ministry we have been hearing about an Open University for over two decades. Even the setting up of other universities by the passing of the "Umbrella Act" would solve some problems but this is not being allowed to be implemented by way of Act or Ordinance. This interim government of Khil Raj Regmi could do a great deal by passing this Umbrella Act by an ordinance and regulating this sector. Then we could have single or multiple subjects/sciences university, on a localised, regional or country-wide basis. A Medical University, encompassing the different aspects of health, in both the Public and Private sectors, could be thought about. Even a Deemed University should be allowed to the private sector and should not be restricted to the public only. Steps such as this will improve the status of education and health and save a lot of the foreign exchange that is going out of the country. ■

This interim government of Khil Raj Regmi could do a great deal by passing this Umbrella Act by an ordinance and regulating this sector. Then we could have single or multiple subjects/sciences university, on a localised, regional or country-wide basis.



Chapters: Reflection Of An Anguished Heart

PROF. DR. SHREEDHAR GAUTAM

Amod Dev Bhattarai is an established writer in Nepali literature. He is comparatively a young writer, but his writing reflects his rich experience of life and deep understanding about people across the universe. Post graduate students in Tribhuvan University have conducted research on his works to fulfill the partial requirement for the degree of M.A. in Nepali subject, which is a testimony of the recognition of Amod's artistic genius. He is a widely published writer also in newspaper, journals and magazines ever since his higher secondary school days.

The Chapters is a collection of his short stories written over the last three decades that shaped his mind further and propelled him to the wider realm of literature. Though a translation from Nepali, the beauty of original write-up has been maintained meticulously by the translator. As an **accomplished writer**, Amod takes his readers to distant lands inhabited by strange people, not visited by himself just on the strength of his imaginative power. He reminds us of the writing of Nired C. Chaudhary, who takes his readers to England in his **Autobiography of an Unknown Indian** without ever visiting England himself. Like Chaudhary, Amod also gives no room to doubt that he has not visited the places described in his works. It is the miracle of imaginative power of accomplished writers like Amod and Chaudhary.

Amod's stories touch upon all issues and themes, including sex and love mainly focusing upon the real experience of pain and betrayal in everyday life of common people, again testifying the sensitive heart of the writer. Great writers do not confine themselves to the boundaries of nation and race, and Amod too has transcended all such limitations and tells the tales of people of all places across the globe to suggest that all people have identical feelings on

fundamental question of life. It is why Amod's narrative shows plethora of characters reflecting the life style of people in different countries. It is the greatness of the writer that the characters seem quite convincing and real to readers. The first story in the book tells us a story a Nepali man, who is in a fix after coming to Nepal regarding whether to accept his past in Russia or not because of the cultural constraints that bar him from marrying a foreign girl with different culture and race.

The second story portrays the possible consequences of an irrational life style of members in a family if they

Amod Dev Bhattarai is an established writer in Nepali literature. He is comparatively a young writer, but his writing reflects his rich experience of life and deep understanding about people across the universe.

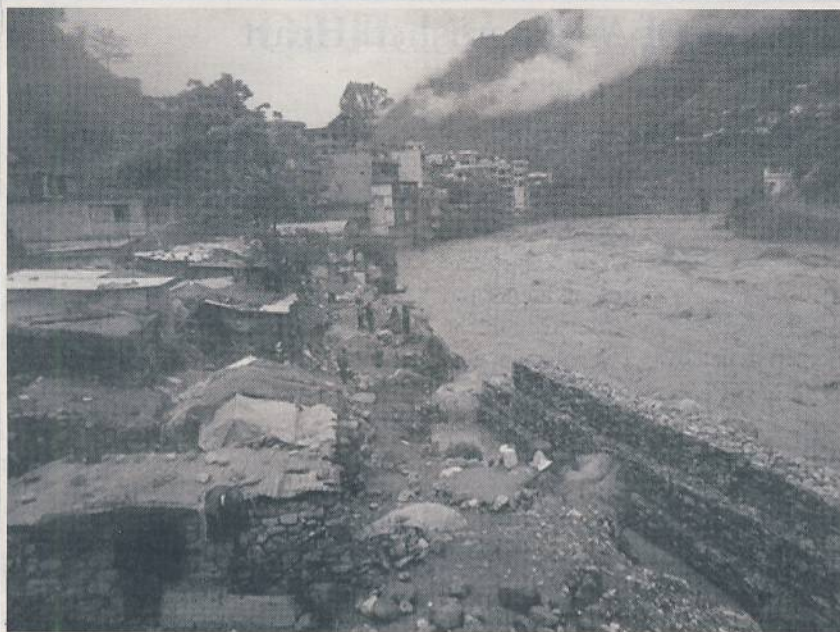
do not adhere to the code of morality and economy to preserve the foundation structure of their family. We have seen in our own country how many families take the path of disintegration and destruction because of lack of harmony among elders and youngsters. This story helps us understand the tragic story of the once well to do families in Nepali society too. The writer frequently takes us to the foreign land, especially the war torn countries like Cambodia, Afghanistan and the victims of Second World War like Vietnam and Japan by giving an impression that he has visited these countries, experienced their pains and shared their sorrow as an intimate friend of them. Luckily Nepal has not had the bitter experiences of sectarian and communal war as seen in countries like Iraq, Nigeria and Afghanistan. Moreover, these countries have suffered from the wars perpetuated by colonial and imperialists. In Amod's stories, one can feel the pain of a person who is forced to hide his actual age

because of the ugly and inhuman war especially in war torn countries. Similarly, in another story, Amod gives an account of the rescue of prisoners though a well planned diplomatic mission without the volunteers getting involved in the mission, evoking hearty admiration. Amod's deep insight into the causes and effects of war is reflected here and that in the book. Sometime, he takes readers to Germany where many people still suffer from the harrowing memory of the Second World War that snatched away their dear and near ones. Some stories resemble the quality of science fiction, again a testimony that Amod's

artistic style has several aspects. However, Amod's style of writing does not put readers in confusion and gives no sense of complexity and complication.

No poets and writers can be aloof from the socio political situation of their countries. Amod is not exception to it, though he is not an overtly propagandist. Amod touches upon the political reality and history of Nepal. Writers cannot ignore the harsh political reality of their countries, and Amod has done that too. His stories have become powerful also because of his use of devices like irony and paradox too. "And this is not a story" is one of such stories which actually narrates story of man and woman, who is much younger than the former.

Written between the periods 1999 to 2012, these stories in a sense are testimonial of Amod's intellectual growth as an individual. However, a literary account like this book also speaks about the growing familiarity of Nepali writers to the creative writing in other countries. Amod's personal acquaintance with writers and people of global community has also helped a lot to make his characters representative, who, in his own words, constantly appear in the vicissitudes of real life. ■



EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Curbing Damage

After the implementation of the Early Warning System by the Practical Action, human casualties and loss of movable property have drastically declined in the mid-western and central regions

By A CORRESPONDENT

Timely information about the state of rivers can save the life of hundreds of people and property worth of billions rupees annually. This is what Practical Action's Early Warning System showed in the far-western and mid-western regions.

Unlike in the past, farmers of Banke and Bardiya districts avoided the damage of movable property and human casualties this year. Although floods in Karnali River and West Rapti smashed farmlands, people and their property were safe. However, the rain and flood in Mahakali River and its tributaries devastated life of people and damaged property worth millions of rupees.

The rain and flood of June 17 and 18 caused heavy losses in far western and mid western regions. Six hundred and seventy one families of six districts of far-west have been

completely displaced by the recent floods and landslides.

Although the scale of project and program is small, the early warning system introduced by Practical Action has contained the damage of movable property and saved the life of the people. Despite record floods in Karnali River, there was no casualty in Bardiya district.

"The flood in Karnali River was record high on 15 and 16 June or highest in the last 35 years. Since we provided information about the level of water and alerted people through our system, there was no human casualty and loss of movable property," said Dina Nath Bhandari, program coordinator for DRR and Climate Change.

With support from Practical Action, local people installed early warning system in Karnali, Babai,

West Rapti, Narayani and Eastern Rapti. "I am happy to say that the ownership is now taken by local government and community. Proper use of Early Warning System can reduce human casualty and movable property. Even last year, there was nominal damage in Banke despite heavy flood in western Rapti."

With support from Practical Action, a web based telemetry system for real time monitoring of water levels and rainfalls and community based warning dissemination and an immediate response mechanism have also been set up in East Rapti, Narayani, West Rapti and Karnali basins.

To alert the concerned officials, an automated alert system has been set up at the office of the District Disaster Relief Committee of West Rapti basin which triggers the siren attached to the electronic display board automatically when the river level reaches the warning mark. The inundation maps prepared for different flood levels are used to issue warning to the specific location. These maps have also been used to identify the safe areas for shelter and the escape route. The flood danger level information could also be used for land use planning at the town and village level. This approach of flood warning has been found simple, fast, reliable and cost effective.

Experts argue that generating the level of awareness and providing proper information through right channel is the way for Nepal's longer term solution. "Although the early warning system is just limited in a few selected areas, it can be expanded as the cost involved in it is much lower than the cost involved in rescue and rehabilitation," said Bhandari

Although the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology monitors the water level in 18 major rivers, only five rivers have an effective early warning system. Once the river

water crosses the water level, warning is issued through various channels.

"Flood is natural and we cannot save the crops, but we can save the people," said Bhandari.

As the system links with National Emergency Operation Center at Ministry of Home, it can coordinate between districts and center on flood related disasters. Once the warning is communicated to the center, it directs concerned officials to take necessary action.

Home Ministry officials are now focusing their attention on early warning system to prevent the loss from disaster. "The government will replicate the successful model of early warning system in other places also," Home Minister Madhav Prasad Ghimire told New Spotlight. "This is much cheaper than rescue and rehabilitation."

Community based flood early warning system has been set up in the Divyapuri and Pragatinagar, Nawalparasi, Narayani and East Rapti, Meghauri, Chitwan, Patihani, Chitwan, West Rapti in Banke and Bardia. For the Flood Early Warning Dissemination System, and Community based System for effectively disseminating flood warning information to the communities, various agencies are responsible for disaster management and district level authorities. The system has been set up in collaboration with District Disaster Relief Committee with technical and financial support from Practical Action.

Although annually government and Nepal's major international donor agencies spend a huge amount of money for rescue and rehabilitation, the experiences of Practical Action have shown that nominal amount of money can change the situation. ■



Talks Take Up Nepal-Britain Ties

By PRATIMA PANDE

The Nepal Britain Society has played an important role in fostering ties between Nepal and Great Britain by promoting cultural and social programs and strengthening harmony and understanding between the two countries.

Over the last two years, the Nepal Britain Society has conducted many talk programs. One of the most fascinating speakers the Nepal Britain Society were lucky to listen to was Sir Ranulph Fiennes. According to the

Edinburgh at the Sidhartha Art Gallery and Dr. Mark Watson gave a wonderful lecture at the Stirling Club. On July 20th 2012 the Nepal Britain Society together with the Himalayan Nature Trust organized a special program to honour leading Tiger Expert and Conservationist Chuck McDougal with the Brian Hodgson Award for nature conservation 2012.

Our last program was a joint lecture between the Nepal Britain Society and the Nepal Heritage Society in which we

We also supported a print/photographic exhibition brought over by the Royal Botanical Garden in Edinburgh at the Sidhartha Art Gallery and Dr. Mark Watson gave a wonderful lecture at the Stirling Club.

Guinness Book of Records, he has become the world's Greatest Living Explorer, having climbed Everest and walked across Antarctica, among so many other valiant and noble feats.

He gave a slide presentation and lecture at Baber Mahal Revisited Courtyard and said at the opening of the 'Kobold Revisited Courtyard' that its owner was 'a great mentor and friend of my friend' Mr. Michael Kobold.

We also celebrated Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee in a grand manner and gave a cheque for Rs. 2 lakhs for burn victims to the organization. The amount raised was from our own drama/theater groups – the new Shakespeare Wallahs, and the children of the British School and which was performed at the British School called the Winter Revue. Mrs. Greta Rana has played a very instrumental role to bring all the fabulous plays that we have put on over the years in the Stirling Club, the Yak and Yeti Hotel and the Soaltee Hotel.

We also supported a print/photographic exhibition brought over by the Royal Botanical Garden in

had nearly sixty people from the Department of Archaeology and the

Heritage Society and Nepal Britain Society who came to listen to Dr. Poonam Rana, lecturer at Tribhuvan University also Deputy General Secretary of the Nepal Heritage Society and life member of Nepal Britain Society. Her subject was on development of Nepal on the art and architecture and Prakash Darnal, who is an expert on the 'Archaeology of Buddhism' recent discoveries with the Kaliya Region of Nepal.

This was exciting as this was the first time that we got a glimpse of Lord Buddha's maternal birth place and home and saw the ancient relics and buildings which were newly dug up and unearthed by the team. Nepal Britain Society and its executive members are voluntary members and all programs that we carry out are funded by our own fundraising programs and we also get great help from our sponsors who believe in our work.

(Pande is president of Nepal Britain Society. Excerpts of her statement delivered at a function organized to welcome new British Ambassador to Nepal Andy Sparks.)

Supreme Delay In Dispensing Justice

By ABHISHEKH ADHIKARI



There are people travelling all the way from remote areas of Nepal to the Supreme Court in search of justice. The Supreme Court is the court of last resort. Expecting their cases will be heard soon, they spend months in Kathmandu, the most expensive city in Nepal. Most of the time, their travel bears no fruit. They return to their home disappointed just to make another similar visit the next time in anticipation that their cases will be heard. It is a heart-rending story happening every day to everyone whose cases are not heard and who travel in search of justice to the Supreme Court of Nepal.

It is painful to observe how the Supreme Court works. The cases are listed for the day. Ordinarily, there are about 10 cases listed for each bench. Sometimes, the list has more than 10. The judges never come on time to preside over the cases. Lawyers normally expect them to come 45 minutes to an hour late. This is accepted by all the lawyers, but not the novices. Novice lawyers question the practice in their minds, but do not raise voices against it.

Most of the time, the proceedings of the court are conducted more than an hour late. One case normally takes up the whole day. If the issue is long, sometimes the case goes on till the next day, making the next day's listed cases being postponed for another day. It is rare that there are more than one case heard in a day by a bench.

Judges, after arriving late in the courtroom in the first place, ask the bench officers to brief them about the case. After hearing the arguments of the case for about an hour and half it is time for a tea break. Sometimes, when there are fewer than 15 minutes left, the judges adjourn the hearing for the tea break. Again after tea, they are seated in the bench late. Towards the end of the office hour, judges always are in a hurry to adjourn the hearing. They have multiple untold reasons for it.

Is it being too demanding to expect judges to devote their entire office hours in dispensing justice?

During pleadings there are many

lawyers hired by the same parties. Each lawyer argues most of the time repeating the facts and laws already stated by previous lawyer who just happens to finish his arguments before. Most of the time lawyers repeat their own arguments thinking that judges are not convinced or are not concentrating on what they are arguing. There is a lack of systematic pleading in the court.

This happens every day. There is no hearing of most of the cases listed for the day. This makes everyone wonder about the the principle of 'justice delayed is justice denied'. But is anybody answerable to this? Is it so very difficult to practice what we preach? Do these principles carry more meaning in the day to day life?

Is justice accessible to all in these circumstances? Who is accountable for the justice denied because of delay in justice to those who have faith in judiciary? Does not this adversely affect the faith of people coming to seek justice from the Supreme Court of Nepal? Is the lethargy in legal system not a culprit to erode people's faith in justice system of Nepal?

It takes, on an average, 6 years to get the final judgment from the Supreme Court; the parties to the disputes having approached three levels of courts, the District Court, the Appellate Court and the Supreme

Court. Sometimes the cases take more number of years.

Shouldn't it matter so many cases come to the Supreme Court and so many cases are pending before it right now? To make the matters worse there are not enough judges appointed to the Supreme Court. By not appointing the judges, aggrieved parties woes are directly aggravated.

Isn't it time to value every minute in the court in the name of justice? Shouldn't every minute be spent in the court for the cause of dispensation of justice to the people? Isn't it the duty of every officer of the court, the lawyers included, to make efforts toward making justice accessible to innocent parties to the dispute?

Observing the workings of the court for a month has raised so many questions in my mind and before I conform to the system, I wish to tell this unfortunate story of our Supreme Court.

Adhikari is a Lawyer

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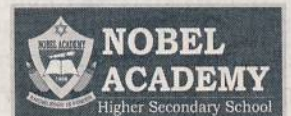
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Bajhang Calling

By DHANA PRASAD PANDIT

Bajhang is one of the Himalayan and remote districts of Nepal. This division was fixed during Panchayat period on the basis of geographical difficulty, underdeveloped situation of the society, backwardness and deprived social situation. That is why this district is among the other 24 districts in the domain of remote area development committee. Now the ministry of federal affairs and local development is looking after this area. Politically when the first elected government was foiled due to king Mahendra's constitutional coup of B.S. 2017 Poush 1, Bajhang prince Om Jung Bahadur Singh opposed king's action and claimed the independence of Bajhang. This is also known as 'Bajang Kanda 2018.' Until the final stage of unification of Nepal. That's why Bajhang was one of the key focused principalities of Nepal and it remained among the four recognized principalities Bajhang, Mustang, Jajarkot and Salyan until the end of Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 2047 B.S. Then Bajhang Raja Jaya Prithivi Bahadur Singh had also insisted Rana regime to start the publication of the eldest news paper Gorkhapatra. He himself became the first editor of that newspaper. He also started the first school in Bajhang bringing teachers from India.

Now the time has come to think seriously for the development of that backward area of Nepal through international road connection, especially with road to northern neighboring country China, connecting through difficult and remote part of both countries.

A Chinese company has agreed to work on West Seti 750 MW hydropower project construction. Three Gorges has experiences with many hydro power projects in China. It will be the largest hydro power project till now.

Chainpur-Taklakhar Manasarowar

Kailash (Hindu and Buddhist pilgrimage is the shortest route from Delhi via Chainpur, Ugrilek to Manasarowar. So, it is the best pilgrimage route to connect two worlds in populated countries through the land route. Actually there is another possible route linking Seti zone from north to south (Bajhang to Kailali). We can also use the mid-hill national highway and connect Manasarowar road to Katarniya ghat of Kailali. If we think of the alternative



roads, Chainpur Chhanna, Bajura, Accham, Tikapur, and Kailali can be the shortest north-south route in Seti zone.

Bajhang and Tibet have almost a one thousand year long historic relationship. Likewise Nepal and China are best friends. China is also one of the development partners of Nepal. People of remote areas need more support for infrastructure development. So this highway construction will benefit the three countries, Nepal, India and China. It provides an easy access to Kailash Manasarowar for religious purpose in low costs. Therefore, this route should be opened by either of the countries or through mutual cooperation of all these countries.

Former Chinese Ambassador Yang Houlan wrote in his article, 28th Sept. 2012, in New Spotlight magazine about Nepal and its neighbor. He focused on the issue of Nepalese development and argued Nepal should

get support from both countries, China and India. India and China also should be involved to promote tripartite relations general readers of that article can easily understand this sense. Simple understanding of his expression will be beneficial to all if there is no any hidden interest.

The western area of Tibet is also remote and difficult, thus China should expand its railways from Lhasa to Kailash and Manasarowar. It will open up the prosperity in that region. This railway will also help to export Chinese goods to Nepal and India.

Taklakhar-Kailash road will contribute to the development and prosperity of this region. Bajhang and

people of this area have very low per capita income, lack of educational opportunity, and industrial infrastructure as the obstacles to development. To address all these problems, we should focus on investments in hydro power projects, building of infrastructure, expansion and construction of highways.

The shortest route to Kailash-Manasarowar from Nepal would be Sunikoty-dhamena - Ruwatola - Bakti-ramadi - Ayarkhed - Jadaya - Katyagaun - Dhuli - Tand - Lagamandu - Saipal - Ura - Bhanjyang (pass) in Nepal and Taklakot, Manasarowar, Bhatra, Checkpost, Dharchhing bazaar, Kailash Gaurikunda, Dropa bhanjyang of China (Tibet). According to unwritten history of Bajhang, his short foot trial have existed there since 1235 b.s. This foot trial was opened by the order of Langa (god) under the leadership of Sunel Raja Sari Bamma and Talkoti Rajwar Medani Singh.

Still when old dhami of masta dies, the devotees start searching new dhami. One of the major challenges and tests for the claiming new dhami is to visit Manasarowar via unadventured route and take a holy bath there. He has to show some miracle to prove the existence of divinity in him.

Pandit is Associate professor Padma Kanya Campus

Human Development



By BIDUSHI ADHIKARI

With the world moving in different directions, various new ideas and priorities appear. Georg Hegel, a German philosopher and a major contributor to the German Idealism, stated that there always existed a struggle between ideas in society. He stated that there was a dominating idea called a "thesis" and other minor ideas called the "antithesis." History, he stated, was an effort to overcome this struggle, and when a compromise was reached, it would become a "synthesis" of the two. And so, Hegel said, this circle would be carried on and on until we reached an ideal world.

Some may say that our world today may seem like the ideal world. We have the technology, the development, the infrastructure, the luxury, and the privileges. Science has taken discovery and experiment to another magnitude. Superpowers have emerged to take the economy by the throat and wriggle it enough to extract buckets full of money. However, in another point of view, today, society couldn't be further away from being an "ideal" one. I believe that level of compromise to reach the synthesis is yet to be accomplished.

The first and foremost example that comes into mind is the state of feminism in our world today. The other day, I came across a blog called "A Curious Faney" by a woman named Ragini Nag Rao. She emphasized, amongst other things, the horrors of the simple task of travelling alone in a country like India, how her mother had scolded her for wanting to wear a dress when she was a little girl, and how she felt uncomfortable wearing skirts and shorts even when she became a full-grown woman with a degree from the United Kingdom. Fashion came to define her, while society looked down upon her for showing too much skin. After battling a case of anorexia, she gained a lot of weight and started a fashion blog and became more confident. When looking at such an example, it is important to ask ourselves: does weigh dictate who we are inside? Does feminism only refer to skinny, tall women? Do we, as females, whether fat, skinny, short, tall, or overweight, get to express ourselves through what we wear?

Environmental issues are another aspect of our lives that we don't give much importance to, which is surprising as we are in the second richest country in water resources. When I fly in from Delhi twice a year, the beautiful mountain range that is in view just before we land never fails to leave me in awe. The beauty and tranquility that Nepal has to offer is something rare and should be protected. However, once we are flying over the valley of Kathmandu, there is a certain change in the air, a thick embodiment of smoke and pollution, and a sight of a dirty city. Just driving around town, it doesn't take the greatest of observers to notice that the rivers are slowly turning into

thick, trash-filled streams or that the piles and piles of garbage and sewage aren't not being taken care of. What is happening to the Kingdom in Himalayas? Who is doing anything to stop this? Where the appreciation of nature gone? What happened to preserving national treasures?

Unfortunately, these questions are still hard to answer. While annual gatherings and protests, like the Slut Walk, happen all over the world, we, as supporters of fat people and thin people and chubby people and tall people, should help mobilize the community we live in. We should try to convince those who are unwilling to accept that women can be fat and fashionable. We have to point out to others that the danger that our environment is in is a growing issue that should be addressed soon, before we come to regret it. We need to start caring for things other than ourselves.

Just because these things do not affect us directly does not mean, in any way, that we should not take it upon ourselves to fight for it. Because we are all trying to survive in this single Earth, and amidst all the technology and development, we need to find space for empathy, for acceptance, for open-mindedness. As of right now, science and technological advances have outgrown us, as human. It is our responsibility to grow as humans and develop key characteristics that the modern world requires. Only then can we reach the level of "synthesis" Hegel talks about. Only then can we possibly hope to become an ideal society.



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'ISO Award Both Pride & Challenge'

VINOD SAGTANI, chairman of Sagtani Exim Pvt.Ltd., is a very energetic and dynamic young businessman. Excerpts:

How do you feel now that you received the ISO 9001-2008?

It is a pride for us as well as a challenge. The certification will make us even more conscious about the international standards management system and will boost the morale of all the stakeholders of the company starting from our employees and the customers.

How challenging is it?

Of course, it is very challenging. Although our company has a strong commitment to the quality management, it is going to be further fortified with the formal certification to quality management. The challenge before us is to maintain our standard.

I believe in quality products. I have always put my efforts to maintain the world standards quality. The quality has to be core of all operations. I am happy that after dedicated efforts of 6 months, my team and entire organization has been able to put in place a system which has been awarded for international standards.

What is ISO 901-2008?

It is not only a standard which talks about quality at international standards but also ensures management involvement and continued improvement.

I have travelled across Europe, South Asia and South East Asia. May it be Italy, France, Germany, The Netherland, Indonesia, India, or China, what I have learnt is their ability to grow business on a systematic basis with professional approach.

What is your vision?

My dream has been to build an organization which thinks globally but acts locally. This certificate has been an important step in that direction. We are also looking in priority service solutions to our customers where not only we provide infrastructure and equipment but also training to our customers to be better in their work.

Sagtani Exim Receives ISO Certification

Sagtani Exim Pvt. Ltd, a group of companies involved in trading and business of commercial kitchen equipment and home appliances of the world famous brand IFB, Scotsman, Nayati, MBM, and Bonnet, Bobart, Ecolab, Roller Grill, Santos, Hamilton Beach, Blanco, VITO etc, has been awarded with an ISO 9001-2008-quality management system certification by Hayden Davies Global, CEO of BM TRADA Certification Limited, UK on behalf of the company.

After distributing the certificate, Davies said it is the responsibility of Sagtani Exim now to maintain the quality. K.L. Kabra, chairman of BM TRADA, India mentioned that Nepal had immense potential. "We have especially made this trip to Nepal to partner with company like Sagtani Exim to see how it can help economy to grow," said Kabra.

Dheeraj Rathi, director BM TRADA India, said his company focuses on professional management to bring growth in business. Similarly, Janardan Ghimire, representative of BM-TRADA certification Nepal said that the company is looking at developing specific training programs in the areas of hospitality and food safety management system.



MOVIE PREVIEW

Ghanchakkar



Genres: Comedy, Romance

Director: Rajkumar Gupta

Cast : Emraan Hashmi, Vidhya Balan, Sanjay Dutt

When Sanju (Emraan Hashmi), a suave, master safe cracker wants to retire from a career in crime, he decides to team up with two dangerous criminals to commit one last heist. A bank robbery that will ensure that he never has to worry about money again! Everything goes according to plan. Sanju is given the task of hiding the money till things cool down and the booty can be split. Two months later the associates return to collect their share of the loot, but Sanju refuses to even recognize them! What dangerous game is Sanju playing? Ghanchakkar is a crazy, quirky rollercoaster suspense ride that will surprise, shock and entertain the audience at every turn.

The Lone Ranger



Genres: Action, Adventure

Director: Gore Verbinski

Cast : Johnny Depp, Armie Hammer, Tom Wilkinson, Helena Bonham

Native American spirit warrior Tonto recounts the untold tales that transformed John Reid, a man of the law, into a legend of justice.

Once Upon A Time In Mumbaai Again



Genres: Crime

Director: Milan Luthria

Cast : Akshay Kumar, Imran Khan, Sonakshi Sinha

Once Upon A Time In Mumbaai Dobra (also known by the abbreviated OUATIMD) is a Bollywood crime gangster film directed by Milan Luthria and produced by Ekta Kapoor and Shobha Kapoor. It is a sequel to the 2010 hit film Once Upon a Time in Mumbaai. The project features Akshay Kumar, Imran Khan, Sonali Bendre and Sonakshi Sinha in signed roles respectively.

Gastroenteritis

By **BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD**



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Nepal has to offer is something rare and should be protected. However, once we are flying over the valley of Kathmandu, there is a certain change in the air, a thick embodiment of smoke and pollution, and a sight of a dirty city. Just driving around town, it doesn't take the greatest of observers to notice that the rivers are slowly turning into thick, trash-filled streams or that the piles and piles of garbage and sewage aren't not being taken care of. What is happening to the Kingdom in Himalayas? Who is doing anything to stop this? Where the appreciation of nature gone? What happened to preserving national treasures?

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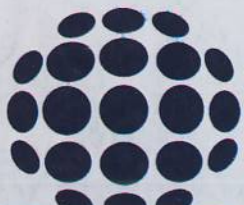
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