



**OPINION:**  
**Dipak Gyawali**



**INTERVIEW:**  
**Shree Ram Panta**

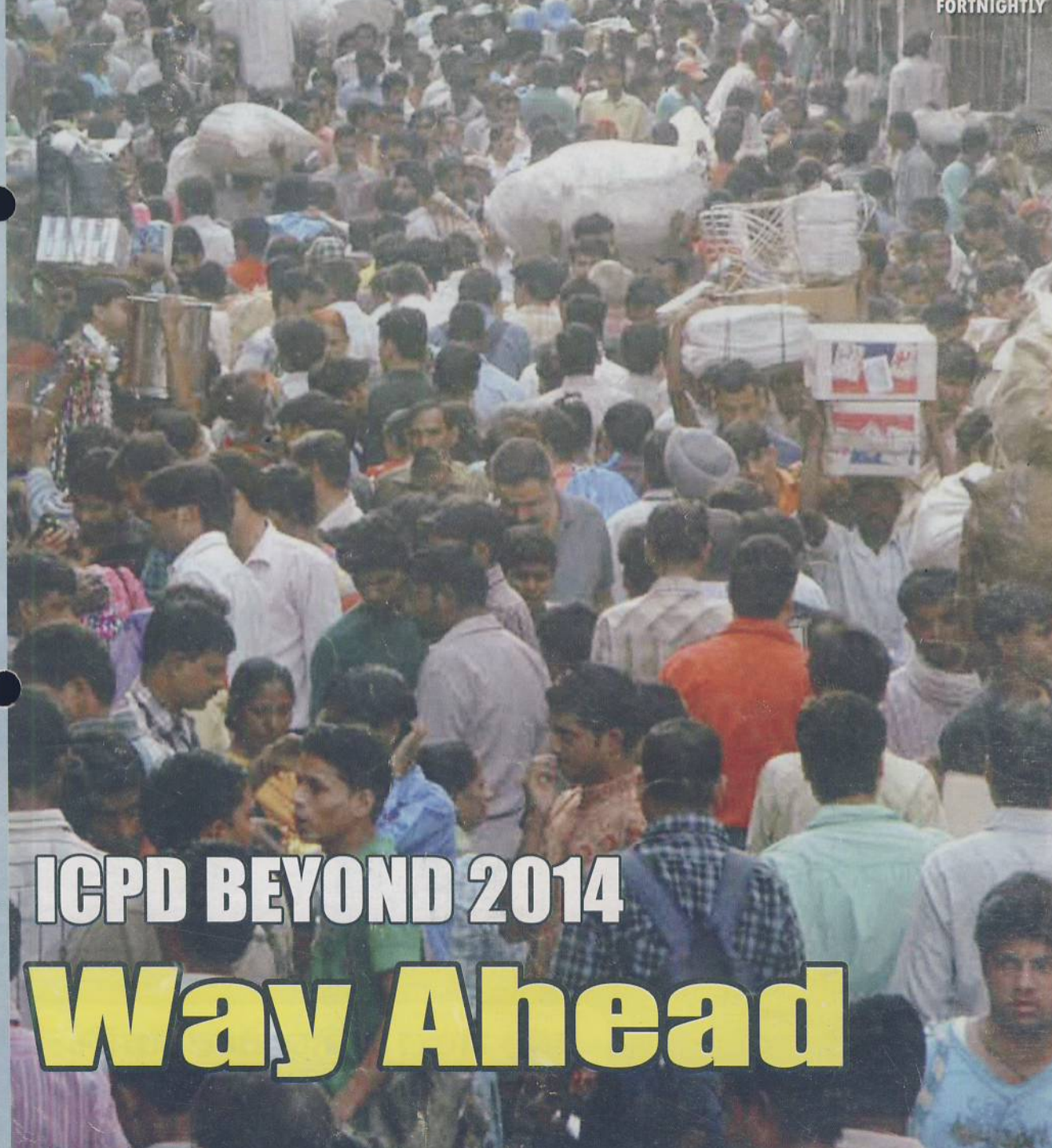


**FACE TO FACE:**  
**Madhap P. Ghimire**  
**Mohan Vaidya**

# New SPOTLIGHT

Aug. 30, Sept.-12, 2013

FORTNIGHTLY



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## From The Editor

Despite making efforts, the government and the political parties are nowhere close to ending the political instability. For the last six decades, the fate of the Nepalese politics has been dictated by instability. This time is no exception. With election or without it, a stable political system or government will remain to be a distant dream. We have the fortnightly update of the political scenario and the likely agenda for the coming days. As political instability seems normal, we have decided to look at other important development issues for our cover story this week. Almost two decades have passed since the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo. However, there are still a lot of things needing to be done. South Asian countries have made a lot of progress in the social sector after the conference and made many a success in the areas of women health, family planning and rights-based approach. However, the region is still far from achieving the total success. In this context, we have decided to look at what lies Beyond 2014 as our cover story. Based on the regional meeting, we discuss the way ahead for the coming decades in South Asia. Along with the population issue, we also include economic issues and other regular columns. With uncertainty prevailing over the national level elections, nobody knows when another round of local body elections will be held. In the absence of elected representatives, the local bodies are in a dire situation. From this issue, we will bring up the stories of mismanagement and irregularities in the local bodies as a regular feature.

*Keshab Poudel*

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor

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## Nepal An Important Friend Of China: Envoy Wu

Chinese ambassador to Nepal Wu Chuntai has said that Nepal is an important friend of China and will benefit from China's development. He said that China is ready to share its experiences with Nepal.

Addressing a book release program, Chinese Ambassador Wu said China and Nepal has a long and centuries old bilateral relation. "China wants to see Nepal as an economically prosperous, sovereign and independent nation. China will continue to provide all necessary support to Nepal," said the ambassador.

Published by China Study Center, the book was jointly released by Chinese ambassador Wu, former vice chancellor of Tribhuvan University Prof. Dr. Madhab Sharma, Professor



Dr. Kedar Bhakta Mathema and vice chancellor of Lumbini University Prof. Tri Ratna Manandhar.

On the occasion Madan Regmi, Chairman of China Study Center, shed light on Nepal-China relations in historical and contemporary perspectives. Dr. Upendra Gautam, General Secretary of China Study Center, in his vote of thanks, explained the objectives of China Study Center, which is principally to disseminate information about China to Nepalese people.

## India Grants Rs. 44.12M For Library

Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC), and Nepal Academy and Indian Embassy signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for providing Indian grant assistance of NRs. 44.12 million for the construction of a three-storied Library building under Nepal-India Economic Cooperation Program.

According to an Indian Embassy press release, established in 1957, Nepal Academy is a premier national institution devoted to the promotion of languages, literature, culture, philosophy, research and the overall development of cultural and intellectual field by bringing together and coordinating national and international activities.

## INGO Festal

Member Secretary of Social Welfare Council Rabindra Kumar inaugurated the first Inter INGOs Fustel tournament. Out of 113 AIN members, ten INGOs took part in the tournament. This is for the first time AIN organized the sports tournament to involve a number of young people in the INGOs.

Inaugurating the tournament, member secretary Kumar hailed the initiatives taken by AIN to enhance the cooperation among the people working

in the INGOs. "This is the right step in the right time," said Kumar.

"This tournament aimed at encouraging youths working in various INGOs," said Ashutosh Tiwari, chair of AIN. The final tournament will be held on 29 August.

## US Support To Livestock Training

A joint program between the U.S. Embassy, the National Livestock Breeding Center (NLBC), and the Regional Livestock Services Training Center in Nepalgunj, Banke, have provided training to 13 new Artificial Insemination Technicians from Dang and Surkhet districts, between August 4-15.

Upon completion of the training, the U.S. Embassy donated artificial insemination equipment to the District Livestock Offices. The equipment will allow the new trainees to immediately begin practicing their new skill under the guidance of the District Livestock Office. Liquid nitrogen storage containers were also provided to both Dang and Surkhet District Livestock Offices to increase their ability to supply the AI Technicians with liquid nitrogen. In all, \$19,275 worth of medicines and equipment were provided by the U.S. Embassy for this veterinary seminar.

**UK English Training To Nepali Police**

British Ambassador Andy Sparkes and Purna Chandra Bhattarai, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, on 20 August signed a contract agreement under which the UK will provide English language training to Tourist Police in Pokhara. During the signing ceremony, ambassador Sparkes said, "this is a small intervention but we hope that it could lead to bigger things. Nepal is poised to increase its tourism and would benefit particularly from visits by wealthy tourists who have many destinations to choose from and will go where they feel most comfortable."

## New NICU In Bheri Hospital

KOICA volunteer Ms. Kang Seon Yeong with the support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) completed her project, "Health and Environment Sanitation Improvement Project to reduce neonatal mortality" at Bheri Zonal Hospital, Nepalgunj.

Bheri Zonal Hospital has recently opened new NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) which was supported through the KOV's (Korea Overseas Volunteer) project in July, 2013. The purpose of this project is to decrease neonatal mortality at Bheri Zonal hospital by improving health service and human resource capacity. Besides this, the project also aims to advance the quality of nursing care through refresher courses in cooperation with Kanti Children's Hospital.

## Pande Promoted

Chief of Nepal Army Gaurav Sumsher JBR conferred the symbol of Lieutenant General to Pawan Bahadur Pande. Lt. General Pande was promoted by cabinet on August 15 from major general. Pande was director general of DGMO.



The position of lieutenant general was vacant following the retirement of Lt. General Nepal Bhushan Chand last month. ■



## Visit Boosted Our Confidence

-BHAWANI RANA, *Vice president of FNCCI*

### How do you take your visit to Thailand?

We learned about the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) program and explored the possibilities to expand trade with Thailand. The visit also provided an international exposure to women entrepreneurs from various districts. We also visited OTOF Trade Fair in Thailand,



which was useful for us to learn the way women entrepreneurs make the 'One Village One Product' program possible.

### How many members were there?

There were women entrepreneurs from 17 districts, from tourism, agriculture and handicraft sectors. The women entrepreneurs visited Bang Sai Arts and Craft Center at Ayutthaya to learn about skills development.

### What lesson did your team learn?

The visit helped boost the confidence level of the participants and encouraged them to work hard. One of the important parts of the visit is that Nepalese women from remote areas like Jumla, Myagdi and Khotang expressed that they will start producing goods using the local resources to make various handicraft products like in Thailand.

## NIBL Opens Branch In Barahathawa

Nepal Investment Bank has opened its 44th branch in Barahathawa of Sarlahi district. The commencement of the new branch is the bank is part of its strategy of focusing further on inclusive banking to support the agricultural activities of the area and be the first private sector commercial bank to operate at the place, a bank statement said.

Jyoti Prakash Pandey, CEO of the bank, inaugurated the branch amidst a function. The newly opened branch shall further strengthen the bank's position in the South Eastern region of Nepal, said the statement

## US Envoy Makes A Call For Investment

Ambassador Peter Bodde hosted a conference call with U.S. businesses on August 21 to discuss opportunities in the hydropower sector in Nepal. Twelve participants, representing industries, including energy and infrastructure, joined the call, including some with a history of investing in Nepal. According to a press release, the Ambassador gave an overview of the economic and business climate in Nepal and then took participants' questions, including queries about upcoming hydropower summits in Kathmandu and how the U.S. Embassy can assist American companies investing in Nepal.

Many American companies have expressed interest in investing in hydropower in Nepal. Although challenges remain, Ambassador Bodde pointed out that Nepal has the

second-largest hydropower resources in the world and less than 1% of this potential has been developed. He emphasized that the U.S. Embassy stands ready to assist American companies interested in investing in Nepal. In closing, the Ambassador noted, "Nepal has enormous hydropower potential and the time to engage with this sector is now."

## RBB Profits Rs 795.7 Million

Rastriya Banijya Bank earned operating profit of Rs 795.7 million in the last fiscal year. Issuing a statement, the state-owned bank said its operating profit was only Rs 24.9 million in 2011/12. The bank mobilized Rs 91.90 billion in deposits and issued loans worth Rs 49 billion until the end of 2012/13. The bank's credit deposit ratio was 53.19 percent during the review year. The non-performing credit of the bank stands at 5.31 percent

## Nepal-Pakistan Economic Agreement

Nepal and Pakistan have agreed to promote mutual investment in agriculture, tourism, trade, education and health sectors. Finance Minister Shankar Koirala and his Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar signed a memorandum of understanding to this effect at the end of two-day "Nepal-Pakistan Joint Economic Forum" held in Islamabad.

As per the understanding, Pakistan has agreed to increase scholarship quota for Nepali students, and increase investment in Nepal's agriculture, tourism, civil aviation and telecommunication sectors. Similarly, Pakistan has also agreed to provide training to Nepali officials involved in postal and health sectors to enhance their professional skills.

## Ncell Launches 'Nagadhma Gadh-Gadh' Scheme

Ncell has launched a new scheme called Ncell Nagadhma Gadh-Gadh, which will be effective from August 26. According to the telecom company, the scheme, lasting for ten weeks, offers Ncell customers with a chance to win attractive gifts, including Rs 1 million, every week.

The company added that the scheme will enable 100,000 Ncell customers to win Rs 50 worth of bonus balance and another 100,000 customers to win 50 free SMS every week.

## Toyota Etios Hits Nepal Roads

Suraj Vaidya, president of United Traders Syndicate (UTS) and Koji Nagata, general manager for the Middle-East division of Toyota Motor Corporation jointly launched their latest global car - Toyota Etios - in the Nepali market. UTS is the authorized distributor of Toyota Cars in Nepal.

According to the company, Toyota Etios boasts the comfort of the rider with premium interiors, ergonomic steering wheel, superb suspension, comfortable seats and virtually anything that one may expect in a segment defining a car.

Vaidya said that the company has always taken pride in bringing the best and latest products for its customers. "For that, we have brought in Toyota Etios, which has all the latest features and values you associate with Toyota," Vaidya said.



# Ignoring The Elephant In The Room

By DIPAK GYAWALI



Now that the *Gol Mech* (round table) conference has turned into a *Golmaal* (chaotic) Match of political mudslinging, the confused voters of Nepal are forced to face uncomfortable truths. The stench from raw political wounds that Loktantrick snake oil salesmen have tried their best to hide under fancy dressings is too overpowering to ignore. Their latest sales pitch is “elections however for whatever” as the new path to political nirvana. Without it the country faces doom, they bleat hysterically. They have similarly cried “Wolf!” every time in the past – from the need to illegitimately self-extend the CA four times beyond the voters’ mandate, indeed about the CA itself as the solution to all ills in Nepal as well as the 12-point Delhi Deal that led the country down this path of reckless adventurism. Their shrill sales pitch now sounds fake and hollow even to rustics in the hinterland who aren’t buying it.

The big elephant in the room is why the CA collapsed and what corrective measures need to be taken so that the proposed new one won’t collapse again. The failed, vision-less leaders are the same; their parties are still feudocratic and unable to present any new faces or ideas; and most important, they have failed to conduct any soul-searching to acknowledge their accountability. The CA failed because from its very birth it carried the “mark of Cain” as the illegitimate carrier of pre-ordained geo-political sins, and its four-year actions were procedurally so flawed they compounded those sins into fatal cancer. A handful of oligarchs took all the decisions behind closed doors and used the CA as a spineless rubber-stamp. The second-rung political leadership within the main parties – who were willing rubber-stamps – are today angry that they are being blamed for the late CA’s failure. They might well be: after all they too have shown no leadership courage to challenge their failed leaders or to convincingly propose corrective measures. Just asking for votes will not move jaded Nepali voters away from deepening bouts of nihilism.

What might such new ideas be that could excite voters and give them hope? The insipid British prime minister Harold Wilson once said that a week is a long time in politics, implying that, unlike long-term statesmanship, garden-variety power brokers are preoccupied with the very short-term. Nepal’s current crop political leaders are particularly myopic and assume history too is as blinkered and does not hold them accountable for the two festering wounds of their making: their own dismal misjudgments since 1990 for which they avoid accountability, and their incompetence to address the larger complex issues of governance without which no new stable architecture can be built. Holding elections in the absence of a well-founded political architecture will result in a rickety House that will not sustain the strains of living with

an option that allows the voter to say “none of the above”. If that option receives the highest or second highest number of votes, a re-election must be held with a fresh set of candidates. The problem of a parliament representing only a minority of the voters was to some extent solved in the late CA by assuring a second ballot of proportional representation. It made the CA the “most representative” in Nepal even if it turned out to be the most ineffective.

However, a few flaws that emerged in this new experiment need to be remedied. First, do not mix elected representatives with selected ones from the proportional system: keep the nominated ones in an “Upper House”. Second, to prevent party oligarchs from nominating incompetent or even corrupt henchmen, require that all parties competing in elections submit

**The big elephant in the room is why the CA collapsed and what corrective measures need to be taken so that the proposed new one won’t collapse again.**

and publicize their list of potential nominees in order of priority. That (and the right of

everyday politics and will inevitably collapse like the last CA. Experience since 1990, nay ever since 1957, indicates that, if a Westminster parliamentary model is to succeed in Nepal’s alien soil far from the land of its birth, the following structural reforms have to be in place before a new House is built.

In a multi-party election, the first-past-the-post system has ensured only parliaments, and hence governments that represented a minority of voters. The victorious MPs would have won with less than a quarter of the votes, and over three-fourths of the voters would not have voted for them. This birthmark of inherent illegitimacy has to be corrected by requiring the winner to have received at least fifty percent of the votes and to have run-off elections among the top two contenders to assure this.

In order to ensure voter sovereignty and to force parties to put up honest and credible candidates, there must be the “California option” on the ballot paper,

voters to recall the representatives if they failed to live up to voter expectations) would ensure the eventual legitimacy of, and respect for, eventual nominees in the proportional system through voter endorsement. It would also force parties to nominate capable and credible candidates, not the incompetent rubber-stamp lot we saw the last time.

There have been a lot of heartburns over a chief justice violating the hallowed principle of separation of powers and also becoming a chief executive. An even bigger flaw not discussed openly by our public intellectuals has been the Westminster model’s executive born not independently but from the legislature and sustained by its umbilical cord. This is the reason why Nepal’s past legislatures failed to fulfill their watchdog functions. When the Kangress sank into the corruption quagmire of Lauda and Dhamija scandals, the UML protested only half-



## NEPAL-EU COOPERATION

*Despite facing economic recession, the European Union is still the largest development partner of Nepal*

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when the government is expressing its commitment to hold the election on November 19, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal Dr. Alexander Spachis has reaffirmed his support to elections while addressing the opening of the EU-Nepal Symposium on Bilateral Relations and Economic Cooperation.



Dr. Spachis

“The Government is committed to hold the elections on 19 November as per the published schedule,” said Minister for Foreign and Home Affairs Madhav Prasad Ghimire. “We don’t have any option other than to hold the elections.”

European Union Ambassador to Nepal Dr. Spachis supported the viewpoint of minister Ghimire. Addressing the function, Dr. Spachis reaffirmed the support of the European Union to holding the elections on the scheduled date of 19 November.

“We have extended a wholehearted support for the elections and eagerly hope that the elections will be held as per the Government decided timeline,” Ambassador Dr. Spachis stated. “There will be no gains but only negative impacts if elections are postponed.”

Jointly organized by the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal and the Association of Former Career Ambassadors of Nepal (AFCAN), the one day seminar openly discussed various issues ranging from EU’s cooperation to Nepal, EU investment in Nepal, Nepal-EU Trade, EU-SAARC relations and the role of the European Union in the promotion of democracy, human rights and electoral process.

Moderated by Dr. Jagadish Chandra Pokharel, Madhuram Acharya, Purushottam Ojha, professor Madhukar S.J.B Rana and Dr. Shreedhar Khatri, four papers were presented by former ambassador to EU Dr. Durgesh Man Pradhan, former permanent representative to the UN Geneva, Dr. Sambharam Simkhada, Sanjaya Poudyal, Nepal Investment Board, Binayak Shah, president of European Union and Hernandez Uriz Genoveva, political officer of European Union.

“The European Union has been a friend in need for Nepal ever since the bilateral relation was established in 1973. We really appreciate the continued cooperation received from the EU for our developmental efforts,” said the Minister for Foreign and Home Affairs, Madhav Prasad Ghimire.

Former ambassador to Nepal’s Mission in Geneva Dinesh Bhattarai questioned the rational of spending the money in the ethnic lines. Similarly, Chiranjibi Nepal, advisor to Finance Minister, stressed the need to spend money in government’s priority areas.

Ambassador Dr. Spachis replied to the questions raised by various speakers and justified the support given by European Union Delegation to Nepal. He stressed the need to have elected representatives at the local level to make accountable institutions at the grass root level. ☺

heartedly in shadow-boxing style. This is because it hoped to do the same and rake in millions if it came to power, and indeed did so through the Chase Air scandal!

If one wished to ensure the structural separation of legislative and executive functions, one might use the proportional “Upper House” for that purpose. While the prime minister, directly elected to the “Lower House” from some constituency, would be the person who commanded a majority in the Lower House, no other legislator representing a constituency should be allowed to be a cabinet minister. They should only be picked from the proportional “Upper House” pre-approved by the Nepali voters. The added benefit of such an arrangement would be the need for parties to look for candidates with capability and expertise. Also, this divorcing of legislative duty from executive ones would keep them sequestered away from the temptation for executive corruption that Nepal’s parties and politicians engage in with impunity. It would then force elected representatives to be better public watchdogs and better legislators, thus minimizing executive misuse of power.

But none of the big parties or their leaders have even given a second’s thought to these challenging issues of political architecture, even less suggesting solutions for a New Nepal, because they have proved themselves incapable of statesmanship. Beyond reaching a position of power for personal and henchmen aggrandizement, they have no agenda, hence this bleating for meaningless elections even as the country cries for long-term visionaries. The political middle has collapsed morally; and similar to the collapse of a suspension bridge, only the poles at both ends remain standing, and only by tying cables to those two ends can a new middle be hoisted in place. A *Gol Mech* with these two polar ends – yes, Baidya’s Dash Maoists and Kamal Thapa’s RPP-N as the two alternative pillars that are left standing in this political and moral void – would have allowed some soul-searching into the sins mentioned above.

Even while disagreeing with these polar political positions, one has to admit they represent issues swept under the carpet all these years that, with the collapse of the CA, are coming back to haunt Nepali politics. Baidya, who resigned from the CA long before its illegitimate extension or collapse, represents a search for something other than the failed Westminster model. It is a matter of justified debate that Stalinist Leninism is not the solution, but his disgruntled Dash cadres do represent the remnants of political honesty behind a betrayed revolution and the failed attempt to radically change Nepali society. Similarly, RPP-N represents evolutionary changes without discarding Nepaliness and its traditions, a constant reminder to voters of how the last CA was born and lived a fraudulent life. Both are a search for alternative models of governance that is not foreign-imposed as with the failed four-party middle. A *Gol Mech* with both these pillars and everything in between, howsoever clumsy, still represents hope amidst the gloom and might salvage a failing Nepali politics. ■



## There Will be Election

- MADHAV PRASAD GHIMIRE



Even as there is a growing uncertainty over the November elections, Home and Foreign Minister MADHAV PRASAD GHIMIRE is going ahead preparing for the polls firmly. Ghimire spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT about current scenario at an interaction during Nepal-Europe Symposium. Excerpts:

**How do you assess the possibility of holding the elections on November 19?**

There is no way other than to hold the elections on November 19. The government is committed to holding the elections in a free and fair manner on the stipulated date.

**As CPN-Maoist led 33-party alliance and other fringe parties have made it clear that they will take necessary actions to prevent the elections, how can you ensure free and fair elections?**

Since the negotiation is still going on, I don't think such a scenario will appear. Given the present statement, all parties including Vaidya's will join the elections. There is still time for that.

**How do you view the preparation of the government?**

Only one task of this government is to hold the free and fair elections. This is our duty and the government is working to fulfill this. We are on a bull's eye. We have been supporting the Election Commission to make the elections possible.

**Will the government go for negotiations, if necessary?**

We will do everything possible to hold the elections on November 19. There can be negotiations on the election agenda without making any change in the election date.

**As some armed groups in terai have already threatened to use all necessary steps to disturb the law and other situation, how do you see the security preparation for the elections?**

So far as the law and order is concerned, it is in good shape. Our security can handle all kinds of threat. We know that no political force has the strength to disrupt the poll given the commitment of major four political parties and people's enthusiasm; no one can disrupt the poll.

**Don't you think, along with the Maoists, armed groups can create some problems?**

The Ministry of Home is preparing an integrated security plan for the coming election. The current strength of Nepal Police and Armed Police is enough to thwart any effort by groups to disturb elections.

**Why do you have so much confidence?**

As the Election Commission has already completed several stages and it is in the final stage of preparation and political parties have already launched their campaigns, there is an election fever gripping the country. In this situation, elections will be held on November 19.

**How do you assure voters that the elections will be peaceful?**

After consultation with the Election Commission, the Ministry of Home is preparing an integrated security plan to provide the much-needed security to the voters and to cast their votes. As I have already mentioned, the government is committed to holding the elections in a peaceful manner.



## Talks Broke Due To Big Four

MOHAN VAIDYA

After breaking out from the negotiations, CPN-Maoist leader MOHAN VAIDYA KIRAN spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on the party's future strategy.

**As the negotiations have broken down, what strategy does CPN-Maoist have now?**

It is unfortunate that the negotiation was broken down because of the autocratic and dictatorial behavior of the four-party syndicate. Despite our commitment to elections, they suddenly pulled out from the negotiations. Now we have no option other than to call a mass agitation or bow down before the dictatorship of four parties.

**How do you respond to the November 19 CA elections?**

Our alliance has already made it clear that it will not take part in the elections, going to be held on foreign pressure. Four parties pulled out from negotiations due to the foreign pressure. We will not allow holding the election, which is going to Sikkimise Nepal.

**Four parties and the government are saying that your party does not have enough strength to disrupt the polls and they can contain your workers. How do you look at this?**

The time will tell who has the strength and who does not have. When we started the People's War in 1996, three major political parties and Nepal's security agencies made similar comments. We were able to establish our strength in 2006.

**What plan do you have now?**

We have been conducting nationwide training programs to our party workers. We are also mobilizing our volunteers so that we can prevent the voters from going there.

**Will voters listen to you?**

No countryman will go for poll if it threatens sovereignty and independence of the country. We will launch nationwide campaigns against the elections. Nepalese are proud of their independent and sovereign status and they will never cast vote while knowing that it will push their country into a colony.

**The government, leaders of four parties and Election Commission have made it clear that they cannot tolerate any effort to disturb the elections. How do you respond if they attack your party workers?**

If they use force, we will retaliate. In that condition, the country will be pushed into another round of violent conflict. The recent statements of leaders of political parties and ministers indicate that there will be more violence in the coming days.

**Do not you think that your action is against CA elections?**

I have been saying repeatedly that we are not anti-elections. CA is our agenda and we want to make the CA elections meaningful. We have been opposing the modalities of holding the elections. The need is to have participation from all the parties. It is the duty of four parties to create conducive environment.



## POLITICS

# Twists & Turns

*After the break-up of the negotiation between the High Level Political Committee and the CPN-Maoist led alliance, more confrontations are likely on the political course of the nation*

By KESHAB POUDEL

For a political analyst, dramatic political turns are nothing new in Nepalese politics. The break-up of the recent negotiations may lead to further confrontation. Given Nepal's political history, more predictable is the continuation of the political instability.

Although the wind is now blowing more in favor of the November 19 election, anything can happen to avert it until the last minute. The political situation took a new turn last week when the High Level Political Committee accepted the demand of CPN-Maoist led 33 parties to call an all-party roundtable. However, the talks broke down suddenly on Saturday (24 August).

Political confrontation has intensified following break-up of the negotiations and the country is now heading towards more violence in politics. CPN-Maoist led alliance has already called on its cadres nationwide to disrupt the elections. The four political parties have ordered their party cadres to retaliate against CPN-Maoist. The government has also ordered its security agencies to remain vigilant against any violent activities of the CPN-Maoist led alliance. It is likely, therefore, that the November 19 polls will see violence at a time when Nepal's political situation is at the crossroads.

## Inside Maneuvering

Chairman of the Interim Election Council of Ministers Khil Raj Regmi has reacted strongly against the agreement reached between the High Level Political Committee and CPN-Maoist led 33 party alliance on 22 August. Soon after the agreement, Regmi met president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav and briefed him on the likely political scenario of the all party roundtable meeting. Chairman Regmi reportedly threatened before President Dr. Yadav

that he will hand over rein of power to Nepal Army in case of failure to hold the election on November 19 and will return to the Supreme Court.

Regmi's anger is understandable as he will be likely to face a major constitutional crisis in case of failing to hold the elections on November 19. After November 19, the government's legitimacy will come to an end. After consultation with Regmi, President Dr. Yadav sent his messenger to the houses of four party leaders asking them to stick to November 19 elections and revoke their decision to hold all party round table meeting. This pressure changed the whole political scenario and four major political parties broke negotiations with CPN-Maoist led 33 party alliance, and retracted from their earlier stand to summon all party roundtable meeting.

This new development was briefed to CPN-Maoist leaders through UCPN-Maoist. On Saturday, 24 August, CPN-Maoist leader Mohan Vaidya visited the house of UCPN-Maoist leader Prachanda. Similarly, UCPN-Maoist leader Narayankazi Shrestha visited Maoist headquarter to meet Vaidya and his team in the afternoon.

## Next Round

The next round of political battle will be more crucial and decisive. As the Election Commission has already moved in line with its election calendar and major political parties are in the process of selecting candidates, chances for November 19 elections are likely to be high. As the negotiations broke down, CPN-Maoist led alliance is likely to come aggressively to disturb the polls. The election preparation will face more

hurdles and resistance.

However, the postponement of elections cannot be ruled out as the major parties in the HLPC have decided to keep the door for talks open should the agitating alliance agree to participate in the November poll under the existing government. As Maoist led 33 party alliance has already held two rounds of talks with government, the Maoist led alliance is likely to give in writing to HLPC to accept the legitimacy of the present interim government and to participate in the elections provided the elections date is postponed till April 2014. In this case, even Chairman Regmi will feel secure about his future role.

## Internal Dynamics

The current process of negotiations has both gains and losses in store for the major political parties. In the ongoing political course, UCPN-Maoist is in very difficult position. If Maoist led by



Maoist Leaders Addressing Press Conference

Vaidya agreed to participate in the elections, it will badly damage its base benefitting Nepali Congress and CPN-UML. UCPN-Maoist will benefit if Maoists decided to boycott the polls. This is the reason UCPN-Maoist leader Prachanda is stressing for election without participation of Maoist and Nepali Congress and CPN-UML want Maoist led by Vaidya on board the election process. Conceding to the demand of MJF-Nepal, UCPN-Maoist, Nepali Congress and CPN-UML believe that it will further divide the votes in Madhesh. Similarly, UCPN-Maoist and Nepali Congress want to deal with Ashok Rai led Federal Socialist Alliance expecting that it will cut the vote bank of CPN-UML. In this internal dynamics, very unusual political developments are in store for the coming few months.



**Highlights of Six Point deal**

Create a 585-member CA with a provision for electing 58 percent of the members under the proportional electoral system and 42 percent under the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system. As per the ratio agreed, there will be a total of 335 CA members elected under the PR system and 240 under FPTP. The remaining 10 members will be nominated by the cabinet. As per the agreement, the EC gave a one-week window period for voter registration.

**Election Preparations**

As negotiations with various political parties continue, major political parties have already been in the election campaign. UCPN-Maoist, Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and Madhes parties are gearing up for polls after recent deal with Yadav led group. All the top leaders of those parties are now concentrating their efforts in Terai. As part of its decision to gear up the campaign for the upcoming Constituent Assembly (CA) election, the Nepali Congress (NC) has directed all its 75 district committees to recommend names for candidates for each election constituency in their respective districts, along with other suggestions, by September 5.

**Security Plan for Elections**

As the election date is coming closer, the government is now finalizing the integrated security plan for the November polls. Home secretary Navin Prakash Ghimire told this subscriber that the draft of the security plan is almost complete and the committee is likely to submit the proposed plan to election commission next week. The role of Nepal Army in the coming elections is yet to be clear as security committee is working to find the role for Nepal Army during the elections. Ministry's officials said they are now more focusing on deployment of Nepal Police, Armed Police and temporary police. As per the demand of Nepal Police and Armed Police, the process of recruiting for more than 15,000 vacant positions has already begun. Nepal Police will be given the role of protecting the polling booths and Armed Police will be in striking range. Nepal Army's role will be to provide necessary logistics.

Although many hurdles for November 19 elections have already been cleared, it is still uncertain whether elections can be held or postponed given the threat issued by Maoists and a coalition of 19 armed groups of terai. ■

## JUDICIARY

**Judging Judges**

*Is equal representation of women in Judiciary is still a very distant dream in Nepal?*

By **BIDUSHI ADHIKARI**

As of early June, the Judicial Council recommended a list of candidates for the vacant positions of District and Appellate Judges to the Chief Justice of Nepal after a thorough process of scanning and securitization.

After an induction training provided by the Nepal Judicial Academy, these judges have now started carrying out their responsibilities in various districts and zone of Nepal.

The Judicial Council, established under the article 113 of the Interim constitution, 2007, is responsible for giving recommendations and advice concerning the appointment of, transfer of, disciplinary action against, and dismissal of Judges, alongside other judicial administration.

The body consists of the Chief Justice of Nepal as Chairperson, and the Minister of Justice, one senior-most Judge of the Supreme Court, one legal expert nominated by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, one other senior advocate, or an advocate who has at least twenty years of experience to be appointed by the Chief Justice on the recommendation of the Nepal Bar Association as members.

With the appointment of judges concluded, even now, the Judiciary consists of only five female judges as opposed to 164 males. Himalayan news states that at present, "there are only two percent women in the judiciary," a problem that in Nepal's context is not very shocking. Regarding representation in other areas as well, like the executive branch, civil service, the Nepal Police, and the army, women make up less than 15 percent of the groups. In the Nepalese Supreme Court, which has been responsible for ameliorating laws to address gender equality and promoting equal gender

representation in different aspects of the government, there is only a single female permanent judge at the Supreme Court, Sushila Karki.

Dr Bipin Adhikari, a senior constitutional expert, said, "The image of justice as a blindfolded woman balancing scales is a very illustrious example in the legal sector. However, in the system that we have, it is still difficult for women and candidates from most of the ethnic communities to be appointed judge and take on this responsibility due to various obstacles. These obstacles must be removed. It is clear that the Judicial Council has not been able to do it."

But all is not lost. Although still underrepresented, the Government of Nepal has seen an increase in the participation of women in government, especially as members of the Constituent Assembly. In the dissolved CA of 2007, 32% of the members were women, a must that the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 clearly stated: "Notwithstanding anything contained in this clause, in case of women, there should be at least one third of total representation obtained..."

Although there is positivity and hopefulness in the increasing numbers of women participating in the government, there is still a lack when it comes to women representation in the most powerful, decision-making sectors of the government, like the Supreme Court and the Judicial Council.

This is true universally as well, where women of position say that an explanation could be that women are too easily content with what they have. Maria Bartiromo, the first, regular reporter from the New York Stock Exchange and a respected financial



journalist worldwide, states that the problem with women is that they "tend to be satisfied with the *status quo*. They won't push ... they'll say, let's keep it as it is." Victoria Medvec, a Northwestern University professor, adds that women don't negotiate, take risks, or demand for work, all of which leads to a slower or even nonexistent climb up the ladder.

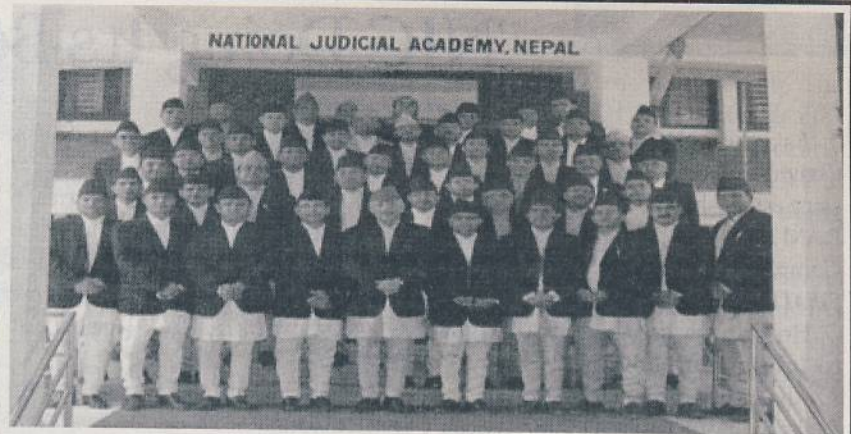
In Nepal's context, there are many reasons why women do not hold the top positions. Advocate Anita Sapkota Chapagain, who is a learned woman lawyer, said, "Qualifications are laid out clearly in the law, and most of the female candidates meet these qualities. The reason why only few women candidates were appointed by the Judicial Council is that there are fewer numbers of women candidates. Fewer women practice law too."

Judge Yamuna Bhattarai, who was appointed the Appellate Court Judge, added, "We need to question how neutral the Judicial Council itself is. Around 50 women candidates gave the exam, but only such few were selected. Is the standard being maintained? If so, why is there no proof? Why aren't they showing us the results of the interview, the exams, or an explanation that shows why such few women were appointed?"

So where is the root of the problem? Bhattarai said, "The foundation of a good lawyer is a good education, of course. For women, this foundation needs to be strengthened. In areas where there is no female representation, like the district courts today, loser criteria and more flexibility need to be considered for there to be proportional representation."

Not only the foundation, but the opportunities that come with a professional life are much limited for women, who are given simpler cases and lesser to work with than are men, said Advocate Chapagain.

As a growing problem of underrepresentation, not only in government but in other professions as well, there are solutions. Chapagain, said, "Judiciary should have strategies,



Judged in Training

rules, and regulations that ensure inclusiveness of women. Everything, from education to experience to training, should be considered, no matter the gender of the candidate. A positive attitude needs to be developed towards women lawyers."

Dr Adhikari added on the topic of criteria that "This is not an issue of identity politics. Judges are appointed not for their gender or ethnic biases, but for their knowledge of law, judicial skills and ability to serve as independent arbiters of the law. Their gender and ethnicity is irrelevant in the judicial decision making."

However, Adhikari is quick to add, "But we are a democracy. We cannot ignore the fact that the percentages of women and most of the ethnic groups in judgeships have not reflected their proportion in the national population. There are many communities in Nepal, which never had the honour of getting a candidate from among them appointed as a judge. This deficit has become a growing concern for organizations focused on issues of equality and non-discrimination. So this problem must be addressed as soon as possible so that it does not get overwhelmed by identity politics."

Aside from proportional representation, women can bring a lot into the court.

Advocate Chapagain said, "There are set laws that women need to work under. But compared to men, women are more sensitive, energetic, and can delivery justice by practicing reason. They can bring new perspective."

The report published by National Judicial Academy on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis of the Nepali Judiciary suggests several ways to improve the situation.

The government needs to ensure that it is providing special provisions to encourage more and more women to pursue a legal education and put it to practice. Arrangements in scholarship need to made. To overcome the mindset that women can't hold decision-making positions, special awareness programs and classes need to be given, to males and females alike. Women themselves need to realize that they need to push themselves and the system in order to go ahead and not settle down with the bare minimum.

The idea of equal representation needs to be emphasized even in the highest sectors of non-judicial decision-making.

[Bidushi is an Intern]

**Global Coverage**



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Global Coverage





# 'NIC Doing Its Best'

SHREE RAM PANTA,

As the National Information Commission celebrated its seventh year since establishment last week, SHREE RAM PANTA, secretary at Information Commission, spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues. Excerpts:

**How do you see the state of Right to Information now?**

After the implementation of the Right to Information Act 2007, we can see a sea change now. Of course, there was certain confusion in the initial stage about some clauses and provisions of law. Everything has been settled now. In the initial years, only a few people knew it. When we do the retrospection of the last seven years, it is realized all over Nepal that RTI is important part of individual rights to seek the information they like to know. Interim Constitution of Nepal also guarantees the right to information as a fundamental right of the Nepalese citizens. Every Nepalese citizen has the right to seek the information under the Right to Information Act. The act also makes it clear that every individual can acquire the information related to public interest from public offices. Every individual has access to information stored in public offices. If we look at the last five years, the trend to demand information from public offices has gone up. In the first year, 12 applications were filed. In 2009, the commission received 39 complaints, in 2010 it was 47, in 2011 it was 136 and in 2012/013 it was 260. Out of them, we settled 11, 29, 22, 90 and 199 cases respectively. We are working to settle the remaining complaints. There is also an increasing tendency among the government offices to share information with the public. The situation is now that every Nepali can get information he or she seeks from the concerned offices. The government offices have to provide the information required by people. This is a very positive achievement of the last five years.

**How do you classify them?**

Out of total applications, the

number is 68 for education, 15 for health, 60 finance, 10 law, 13 local development, 9 security, 4 politics, 6 Information and communication, 8 CIAA, 10 banking, 39 civil servants and 19 others. Out of this, 68 per cent were related to public and 32 percent private.

**How does the law define public institutions?**

Constitutional bodies and institutions are established by law, the public institutions are established through law, political parties and organizations are established through law. Government undertakings, and non-governmental organizations which are directly and indirectly funded by Nepal government, foreign countries or international organizations, are also among these.

**Under the Right to Information, can citizen seek all kinds of information?**

It is not that citizen can get every bit of information. Right to Information Act has classified the information that people can get. The right has made it clear that every Nepali citizen can seek the information under the provisions of the act. The clause 3 of Act has provision which classifies the information with people's direct access and certain information as classified.

**How can the commission make a balance between individual privacy, state security and other secret information and right to information of citizens?**

This is a major challenge. Even developed countries are facing a tough time to interpret the access to information of individuals and states. Nepal is no exception. There is a serious debate going on to have a fine balance between state's security needs and privacy of individual freedom and Right to Information. Even Nepal's Interim Constitution has put certain restrictions on sharing information particularly on the issue of Nepal's



national interest and individual's privacy. The constitution guarantees individual privacy. One of the challenges in Nepal is to make a balance between these two. In the name of national security and individual privacy, the citizen should not be denied his or her right to information. At the same time, there is also the need to draw the border line for individual privacy and national security.

**Since the area of Right to Information is so broad, how do you see the institutional capability of the National Information Commission?**

When it was constituted in 2008, there were three commissioners, including the chief commissioner. However, the tenure of the commissioners has completed. Due to legal provisions, the commissioners cannot be appointed without the election of the Constituent Assembly. Despite the vacancy of the commissioner, the commission is committed to protect and promote the right to information. As a secretary, the government has now assigned me to look at the commissioner's functions until the new appointment. The commission has very limited manpower and resources. However, the commission has been doing its best to uphold and protect the rights of the Nepalese citizens.





## WEAKENING CURRENCY

## Free Fall

*Economists expect that Nepalese currency will further slide against the US dollar, pushing Nepal into more difficult times in the coming days*

By DEBESH ADHIKARY

With already lower export and higher import, the Nepalese economy is likely to see further trouble brewing as the Nepalese rupee continues to weaken against the US dollar. This will mean more hardship for the common people — rising prices and inflation.

After the relentless fall of the Nepalese rupee against the US dollar, which is the currency for Nepal's trade all over the world and secured loan from bilateral and multilateral agencies, Nepal Oil Corporation has made it clear that the price of current petroleum product will be revised. According to NOC, its monthly loss is now over 1.5 billion rupees monthly. As the prices of petroleum products increase in the international market, further trouble seems to be in store.

Similarly, the government's foreign debt will increase as it needs to pay more money as interest to multilateral agencies. This will create problems to the national budget which needs to allocate additional money for regular expenditure.

As the festive season is at the doorstep, the weakening Nepalese currency will also affect the import of

low price goods from China. According to businessmen, they have not ordered any goods given the uncertain dollar fluctuation.

The Nepalese customers from the low-income groups rely heavily on the Chinese goods during the great Hindu festival of Dashain. But, the warehouses in the Tibetan border town of Khasa are empty after the Nepalese entrepreneurs chose to cut the order heavily fearing a huge loss in trading in the face of the weakening Nepalese currency against dollar.

"We do not feel confident to place orders for the Chinese goods due to the growing value of the dollar. We don't want to risk our investment," said Chairman of Sindhupalchowk chapter of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries Rajendra Kumar Shrestha.

With the increasing value of the dollar, the Nepalese currency is also losing against the Yuan. The exchange rate of the Yuan against the Nepalese rupee now stands at Rs 17, up from Rs 13 some two weeks ago.

According to the report, the Nepalese currency has depreciated by more than

17 per cent in the last one year. The Indian rupee slid against a dollar after the US Federal Reserve's recently released minutes suggested that it will begin tapering its bond buying program as early as next month.

Already wary foreign investors who have been pulling out investments from India rushed further that kept hammering the Indian currency. Despite numerous efforts by the Indian central bank, the Indian currency has become the worst performing Asian currency against the dollar. Analysts are in consensus that recent freefall is triggered by talks regarding US Fed stimulus tapering but the problem is structural in terms of Indian economy. India suffers from huge current account deficit.

As the Nepalese rupee has been pegged to the Indian rupee at Nepalese Rs 160 to Indian Rs 100 since March 1, 1992, there is no respite for Nepal either. However, Nepalese currency is surviving because of its pegging with the Indian currency.

At a time when the Nepalese rupee has been hitting one new low one after another in the recent days, some economists have even questioned the relevance of continuing to peg the Nepalese currency to the Indian rupee.

Others see it differently. They argue that the currency peg benefitted Nepal all the time as the southern neighbor has a bigger economy and robust foreign currency reserve.

"The time has come to rethink the peg system. With the Indian currency losing strength sharply against the US dollar, we have to prepare gradually to end the pegging by consolidating our own economy," said economist Keshav Acharya, economic advisor to CPN-UML led government.

At a time when Nepal's economy is marred by double digit inflation, slowing growth, a ballooning trade deficit and declining industrial growth, among other woes, Acharya's extreme views have only a few takers.

"With the country fully embracing an open market economy, it will not be wise to prolong the currency peg



indefinitely. The peg meant suffering the adverse impact of a weakening Indian economy," added Acharya, also a former chief economic advisor at the Ministry of Finance.

Economist Professor Dr. Bishwombher Pyakuryal sees ending the currency peg is an unrealistic argument given Nepal's weak economic performance. In the face of skyrocketing imports and slowing exports, Nepal has seen its current account surplus drop to around Rs 57 billion from Rs 76 billion last year. Similarly, the balance of payments tumbled to Rs 69 billion from around Rs 132 billion over the year.

"It is not easy to end the peg as floating the exchange rate of the Nepali rupees in the open market will destabilize the Nepali economy which is already in various difficulties," he said. Meanwhile, the Nepali rupee weakening against the dollar means more reasons to be upset than to be upbeat.

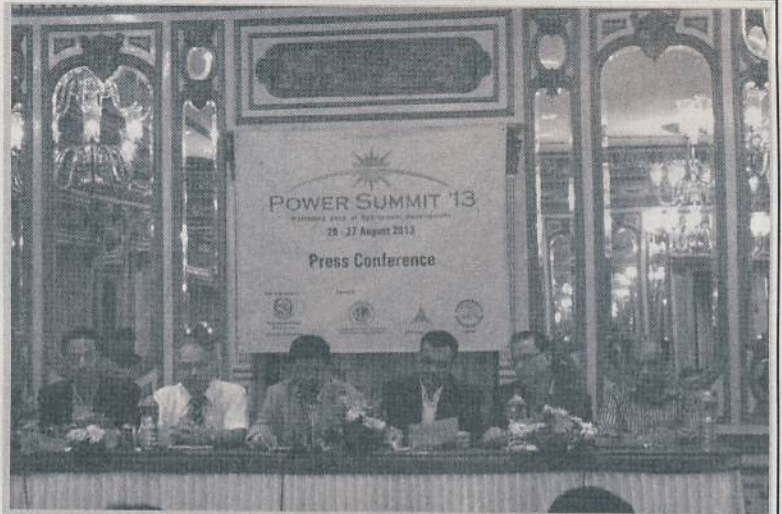
The government can mobilize more customs duty, VAT and excise duty with the rise of the import bill jacked up by the rising value of the dollar. But the stronger dollar has driven up the import price of raw materials for manufacture, spawned double digit inflation, and worsened the trade deficit. With the whopping rise in civil servant salaries and industrial worker wages as well as hike in petroleum prices pushing up inflation, a rising import bill will further worsen the situation.

Being an import-based economy, the rupee depreciation makes a huge impact on the economy. As more money should be spent for purchasing the dollar, goods imported from countries other than India have become expensive. Economists say a weak rupee will push up inflation that is already threatening to touch double digits.

Rajesh Kaji Shrestha, president of Nepal-China Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said there would be a significant price rise if the rupee freefall continued. He said the prices have already risen by 25-30 percent.

#### Pain ahead

The rupee has had a sharp fall since May and is menacingly threatening to canter past Rs. 110 to a dollar. If the country's top economy managers have gone into a huddle after the currency's recent slide, it is only symptomatic of the anxiety inflicting India's broader economy. Analysts warned of more pain ahead as the world settles down to a new normal state of economy. ■



POWER SUMMIT 2013

## Exploring Possibility

As the inaugural process of the Power Summit 2013 began, the light went out for a while till the diesel generator started. From President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav to ministers, high officials and private sector investors, every one present there noticed the blackout. However, only a few spoke about the grim reality of the country.

Although Nepal is projected as a country of immense hydropower potential, it is facing up to 16 hours of load shedding during winter. The grim revelation is that Nepal has the lowest per capita consumption of electricity.

However, Nepal's experts don't tire to cite Nepal as having the potential to be rich in the world by selling power to India. Nepal's power generation capacity is just over 40,000 MW and the estimated power will easily be consumed internally.

Inaugurated by president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, the function saw a wider representation from different sectors. Presenting a paper on 'Power Requirements in Future Energy Scenarios of Nepal' at the Power Summit 2013, Prof Amrit M Nakarmi said Nepal has

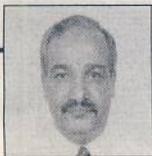
the lowest per capita consumption of electricity in Asia.

Per capita electricity consumption of Nepalis is 93 units, far below the per capita electricity consumption of Asia which stands at 806 units. India's per capita electricity consumption stands at 644 units compared to 2,942 units of China. Per capita electricity consumption of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan stands at 279, 445 and 457 units, respectively.

Despite having an immense hydropower potential, hydropower has only 2 percent share in the energy mix which is heavily dominated by bio mass (85 percent). Petroleum products have 9 percent share in the energy mix, according to Nakarmi.

Nakarmi projected domestic energy demand to climb to 4,000 MW by 2020, 11,000 MW by 2030 and 31,000 MW by 2050. Subarna Das Shrestha, chairman of Independent Power Producers' Association and the organizer of the event, said his association hopes the Summit will energize the energy sector which has slowed down since 2008. ■





## Climate Adaptation: In The Field

By BATU UPRETY

Nepal's untiring efforts at bringing climate change adaptation activities into the field resulted on 9 August 2013 when the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MoSTE) issued an authority for the implementation of the most prioritised urgent and immediate adaptation actions as included in the Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA) of 69 VDCs and 1 municipality of mid- and far-west region. The MoSTE authorised the Local Development Officers (LDOs) of 14 districts to spend about NRs. 49 crores and 35 lakhs in this fiscal year for climate adaptation actions. The MoSTE and Nepal Climate Change Support Programme (NCCSP) organised an inception workshop at Nepalgunj on 8-9 August to brief the LDOs and programme officers of these districts on LAPA activities and implementation framework. These activities will be implemented by the DDCs to address the effects of climate change in selected rural and urban areas. Dr. Som Lal Subedi, the Secretary instructed LDOs to provide adaptation services to the needy people. This is the first project to implement adaptation options in the ground, based on NAPA. Its effective implementation will provide lessons on 'what worked and what did not', and provide guidance on future climate adaptation. The DFID and EU jointly provided £ 14.6 million pre-funding support to the Government for the implementation of climate adaptation actions in these districts in the beginning of 2012. The Government with its 'service provider' took nearly one and a half year in preparatory phase. This period was longer than originally designed.

Nepal's climate change policy 2011 instructs authorities to allocate more than 80 percent of the total climate change fund for field level activities. Nepal is the only LDC which prepared the National Framework on LAPAs with support from DFID to implement climate adaptation activities as

prioritised in the NAPA, endorsed by the Government on 28 September 2010. It required about three years to channelling fund and localising adaptation actions to address the adverse effects of, and adaptation to, climate change.

In Nepal, 1.9 million people are estimated climate change-wise most vulnerable, and additional 10 million are at risk of climate change. Nepal's economic growth rate, energy type and use pattern, and policies related to energy, forests, industry and climate change do not encourage greenhouse gas emissions. Hence, climate adaptation is a 'survival strategy' and 'development agenda' for Nepal.

Implementation of LAPA will address the needs of the local climate vulnerable communities, and will focus on women's empowerment, poor, disadvantaged and marginalised communities. The LAPA ensures gender inclusiveness and good governance, twin-track (bottom-up and top-down) approach and mainstreams adaptation actions into development planning from local to national levels.

During LAPA implementation in these 14 districts, over 50 per cent of the women are expected to benefit from LAPA generated employment opportunities; at least 55 per cent of the women will be engaged in implementing adaptation actions; and each user group and committee will be represented by over 50 per cent women. In other words, NCCSP has recognised poor and climate vulnerable groups, committed to build their capacity in order to address existing problems, and ensured for participation of women, *dalit*, most disadvantaged people and other beneficiaries by mainstreaming gender and social inclusion. This NCCSP is expected a corner stone to streamline climate change adaptation and NAPA implementation in Nepal as it focuses

on process, establishes and strengthens institutions and funding mechanism to implement and promote scalable climate change adaptation and resilience measures.

Nepal has now realised the urgency of addressing climate change impacts. The Government has specified budget code for climate change and allocated about 10 per cent of its budget of this fiscal year on climate change-related activities. This is a good beginning to march towards our long destination of addressing the adverse effects of climate change to protect our people, property and ecosystem services from climate-induced disasters.

**The Government with its 'service provider' took nearly one and a half year in preparatory phase. This period was longer than originally designed.**

Nepal has additional opportunities for scaling-up climate adaptation actions in 2013 and 2014 being a Chair of the LDC Group for UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The NAPA experience calls for urgent action to start the formulation of National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process, to be an 'early mover', to address medium- and long-term adaptation needs. The UNEP and UNDP, with other partners have initiated Global Support Programme to assist LDCs in NAP formulation process. As of June 2013, 17 LDCs are already in pipeline for support.

The MoSTE as the focal point for UNFCCC is encouraged to start its process of accessing and securing climate finance from all available sources. There are high opportunities for scaled-up support on climate change through bilateral and multilateral sources including funds available from both within and outside the UNFCCC regime. Direct access on funding resources provides additional opportunities, and counts a lot for early implementation of response measures on climate change effects. ■



# On *Nīpal* War 1814-1816



By BIPIN ADHIKARI

Many of the writings of Henry Thoby Prinsep (1792–1878), an English official of the Indian Civil Service, are credible. His writings on the origin of Sikh power in Punjab (1834), the discoveries in Afghanistan (1844), social and political conditions of Tibet, Tartary, and Mongolia (1852) are a few of them.

To Nepalese readers, his book *History of the Political and Military Transactions in India during the Administration of the Marquis of Hastings 1813-1823* (Two Volumes) (London: Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, 1825) is of special significance. This is the enlarged edition from the narrative published in quarto in 1820 under the administration of the Marquis of Hastings. It gives one of the very early analyses of the Anglo-Nepal War (1814-1816), which ended with a peace treaty that established the sovereignty of East India Company over many territories under the Nepalese control. The book is generally considered by the British side to be a trustworthy narrative of the political and military events of that time in Nepal, Bhopal, Hyderabad, Poona, Nagpur, Jypoor, Pindarees, and other places of importance in the central India. The preface to the book highlights “its utility as an authentic exposé of the events of the period not having been superseded by any of the publications which had since appeared.”

The author treats the Nepalese part of the history in this book as a special case: “The state of *Nīpal* has purposely been reserved for separate mention, both because its situation and the circumstances which brought it into contact with the British government have no direct connection with the state and powers of central India and because the conduct of their nation, which made war inevitable, even before Lord Hastings had set foot in the country require more specific explanation than suited the cursory

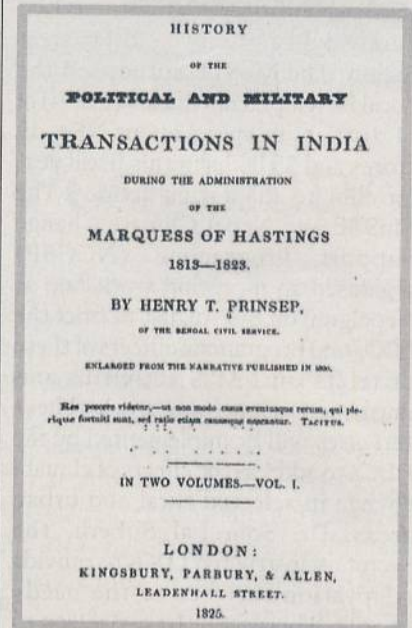
view of the condition of other powers taken in the proceeding chapter.”

The book is not set to find “any consistent relation of the means and gradations by which the *Goorkhas* had risen to power, in the mountainous tract stretching between the plains of *Hindoostan* and the highlands of Tartary and Tibet. Suffice it to say, that when Lord Hastings took charge of the supreme government [in 1813], he found their dominion to extend as far as the river Teesta to the east and westward to the Sutlej; so that this nation was then in actual possession of the whole of the strong country which skirts the northern frontier of *Hindoostan*.”

The author, however, describes “[t]he hill *rajās*, whom [the *Goorkhas*] had successfully conquered and displaced, were more ignorant, selfish tyrants, on bad terms with their subjects and neighbours, but most of all, with their own relations. Thus, while there was amongst them no principle of combination for mutual defense against a common enemy, not one of the petty principalities was sufficiently strong or united within itself to be capable of substantial resistance.”

Henry Thoby Prinsep also gives his reflection on *Prithee Nurayun Sah*, the main architect of the *Goorkha* expansion. He states that *Prithee* has “the merit of establishing the system which raised this nation to power. Taught by the example of our early victories in Bengal, he armed and disciplined a body of troops after the English fashion; and after a struggle of more than ten years, finally subjugated the valley of *Nīpal* by their means in 1768. The *Moorshedabad Nuwab* (Kasim Ulee Khan) attempted to interfere in 1762-3, but sustained a single defeat under the walls of *Mukwanpoor*; and the British government was not more successful in an effort made some years after ...”. The later is a reference to

Major Kinlock’s expedition undertaken at the recommendation of Mr Golding, the British commercial agent at Betia. He feared that “the success of the *Goorkhas* would ruin the trade he carried before with *Nīpal*; it had been interrupted for three or four years in consequence of the subjugation of *Mukwanpoor*.”



The book begins with an analysis of the political economy of the overall military transactions in India. There is an impressive 54-page introduction in which Henry Thoby Prinsep describes relations of the British with native Indian powers, their alliances, subsidiary, and protective. He is very clear as to the natives’ disposition towards British and of states subject to their influence. This helps readers to understand the regional setting of the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-16. Chapter II deals with the causes of the Nepal War more closely. The first campaign of 1814 is dealt with in Chapter III. Chapter IV builds on the first campaign and elaborates subsequent military strategies of both the countries. The second campaign, the extended war and its intensity, its overall effect, and the process of peace



**It gives one of the very early analyses of the Anglo-Nepal War (1814-1816), which ended with a peace treaty that established the sovereignty of East India Company over many territories under the Nepalese control.**

negotiation have been captured by the author in Chapter V. Here the author also describes Hastings' terms of peace. The Nepalese side in particular refused cession of Terai. This leads to break-off in negotiation and the initiation of fresh overtures. There is an effort to modify the terms of treaty mediating further concessions. However, Kathmandu refuses the ratification of the peace treaty. Following this development, General Ochterlony, the English hero of the war, takes to the field.

Giving an account of Turane border disputes, Prinsep deals with Sarun frontier and the *Gourakhpoor* and *Bootwal* cases. There are references on the proceedings of Sir G. Barlow and Lord Minto, and further aggressions of the *Nipalese*. Included is the story of the Indian occupation of 22 villages of Sarun, appointment of a commission by the Governor General, and the resolution of the government on the result of its investigation. *Goorkhas* counter the occupation of *Bootwal* by the British. Thus begins the Nepal War and its first campaign. The book also deals effectively with the resolution of Governor General to attack Kumaon in the far west. Prinsep writes about the desperate attacks of Nepal's hero, *Bhugtee* Thapa, on *Dethoul*, his defeat and death. The surrender of another hero, *Umur* Singh, is another painful event. Notwithstanding the glorious aspects of the Nepalese soldiers, the Anglo-Nepal war was lost to the British.

The author is very clear when he says "the uniform success which had hitherto attended the *Goorkhas* produced, in January 1815, an effect on the public mind in the independent portion of India which is more easily imagined than described. Although jealous, naturally, of our preponderance, and suspicious to a degree of any relinquishment of the pacific policy, the native [Indian] powers had so little knowledge of the strength and resources of the *Goorkhas*, that the war at first excited little sensation." The preparations of the

British side, notes the author, "might have been assimilated to the measures taken in 1812 against the Rewa chief," a small princely state at central India at that time.

The anticipation and cautiousness with which the British viewed Nepalese soldiers was made very clear. Referring to the *Goorkhas*, the author says: [t]hey were an experienced as well as a brave enemy: they had been continuously waging war in the mountains for more than fifty years, and knew well how to turn every thing to their best advantage. Caution and judgment were therefore more required against them than boldness of action or of decision; but most of all, that power of intelligence and discrimination which is never without a resource in circumstances the most unexpected." It is clear from the book, and the account of the war given there, that the *Goorkhas* were very good warriors, but they were not very critical in the assessment of the enemy on the other side.

The war was a hasty decision. According to Prinsep, the *Goorkhas* were not clear as to what extent they wanted to go and how. While they decided to "hazard a breach with the British government," they "never speculated on rousing it to such exertions as they witnessed in the first [military] campaign." "Notwithstanding their early successes, therefore, they very soon repented of the rash measures by which they had brought themselves into so hopeless a contest. Even when at the height of their prosperity, the immensity of the preparations, and the perseverance of their enemy, convinced them their cause was desperate; and they would willingly have given up every object in dispute, could they by that means have brought the war to an honourable termination. They were prepared also for some sacrifices, if such should be required."

A letter, which was sent to Kathmandu and intercepted by the British after the fall of *Nalapanee*, clearly mentioned that the *Goorkha*

commander "was consulted as to the policy of giving up the *Dehra Doon* and the hilly tract west of the *Jumna*, in addition to the contested lands on the *Saurin* and *Gourukhpoor* frontiers." The person writing the letter was no other than *Umur* Singh Thapa, a proud commander of the Nepalese side. "That chief's opinion was adverse to any cession of hill territory."

The instability in the power spectrum of Nepal was foreseen by the author in very clear terms. Following the ratification of the peace treaty, the King of Nepal died of the small pox. He was a young king who was neither a crucial decision-maker in the war nor in the peace process. When he died on the 20th of November, 1816, he was succeeded by his infant son, *Raj Indur Bikrum Sah*. The author's calculation is that "[t]his event contributed to fix more firmly the authority of the party of the General *Bheem Sein*, by giving him another lease of uncontrolled dominion, pending a second long minority [government]."

There are some other interesting remarks in the book about the *Goorkhas*. At one point, the author notes, "[i]t is a saying of the *Goorkhas* that every tree is a mine of gold." An important caution that must be maintained in reading the book, however, is that this is the perspective of a civil servant of an enemy state explaining how they slashed another fierce, indigenous power that had the tendency to know no bounds at the frontier. The rest is a very informative reading. ■





## In Low Stocks

By ABIJIT SHARMA

Even as the economist-prime minister Manmohan Singh and the country's treasury-in-charge P. Chidambaram try to put up a brave face, the Rupee's continuous losing streak has put the Indian economy in a tight spot. The crisis triggered by the return of foreign investment by the billions has led the currency of one of the emerging economies to hit a historic low. The stock prices have plummeted too.

Coinciding with the trouble in the biggest economy of South Asia, crisis of sorts has hit East Asia as well. The hardest hit has been the biggest economy of South East Asia. Indonesia has felt the heat the most. Jakarta's stock fell by 20 percent in the last three months and the rupiah by 10 percent.

Analysts say India faces a far more difficult road ahead than its South East Asian counterpart. With general elections approaching reforms will be tough to implement. Instead, the situation risks of getting

aggravated. The Food Security Bill, for instance, provides for a multi-trillion rupee

subsidy in feeding the poor. The Bill may boost chances of winning the votes, but it could also ruin the economy in the long run by virtue of a ballooning budget deficit and inflation.

But vote politics have clearly gained precedence over the hard economics. As the parliament debated the government-sponsored Food Security Bill the opposition struggled to oppose it but sought to extract some political capitals out of it by proposing amendments. The bill went through in the lower house and was expected to face no major hurdles in the upper house despite the governing coalition not having the comfortable numbers to get it passed.

The bill has come barely three months before the National Capital Region (NCR) goes to elections in three months — just ahead of a national elections. Election is in the air in the Indian capital New Delhi. The Delhi results could give crucial indicators of the things to come when the largest democracy goes to the vote early next year.

The Congress which is in its third consecutive term finds itself in deep water this time around. Apart from the flak it received over the law and order situation especially in the wake of the global headline-grabbing gang rape of a

23-year-old last December, the party has had to face no less flak for rising food prices and rising electricity rates. 'The inflation has hit the common people very hard. It has become increasingly difficult to survive here', says one Delhi local. Chief Minister Sheila Dixit is clearly on the back foot.

The main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party does not stand on a sound footing either. It has understandably made the rising inflation and poverty as its major election plank. But contrary to the Congress rule under an unchanged leadership of Sheila Dixit over the past 15 years, the preceding BJP rule was marred by inefficient and inept governance with the shuffling of the man on the top chair three times in five years.

There has been a new entrant into the Delhi politics last year. Both the BJP and Congress face stiff competition from the newly formed Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The party formed by bureaucrat-turned-politician Arvind Kejriwal, has been picking up momentum thanks to its agendas of clean politics and campaigns against corruption. The party does not have any political history or experience

might find it difficult to stand against the big stalwarts, but it is banking on public apathy to the big parties hopes to give a tough competition with public support. Unlike its counterparts, the party has been selecting candidates for the election from the public through a candidate selection process. But it's not going to be an easy walk for AAP. Even if it shocked the big parties and sprung to the hot seat of power in the National Capital Region it will have a tough nut to crack in fulfilling the expectations of the people.

Taming the rising prices of the essential commodities especially food and giving relief to the people would be the biggest challenge to any party emerging winners in the New Delhi legislative elections. The same would apply to the party/parties seeking to score in the national elections five months later. But the national economy showing little potentials of maintaining the robust growth it witnessed over the past two decades, the road ahead is by no means smooth for the Indian economy. Even if its counterparts in the East rebound as they did in the late 90s, the biggest economy of South Asia looks set for a long ordeal.

Abijit Sharma, Research Associate, India Center Foundation



Source: myseye.in

India faces a far more difficult road ahead than its South East Asian counterpart. With general elections approaching reforms will be tough to implement. Instead, the situation risks of getting aggravated



## SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL MEET

# What Beyond ICPD?

Despite making progress in reducing infant and maternal mortality, increasing family planning indicators, reducing adolescent fertility, and stabilizing HIV prevalence, South Asian countries are still vulnerable. Without consistent support, all these achievements of the last two decades can turn to vain. Participating in South Asia Regional Consultation of Parliamentarians and Civil Society Leaders on Reproductive Health and Family Planning, ministers, parliamentarians, civil society leaders and academics from the region stressed that there needs to be consistent funding to keep the progress.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Almost every day, dozens of mothers die in South Asia due to complication in child delivery. Similarly, large numbers of children still die before completing the age of five. There are issues related to stunting, diarrhea and child health in South Asia. Of course, some countries in the region made certain progress in meeting some International Conference on Population & Development (ICPD) targets. However, they still need to go a long way to sustain the achievements made and progress further.

“Why do we still have so many women die while giving birth? Why do infants and children in large numbers still die despite advances in health systems? Why are women discriminated and bear the indignities of violence and abuse? Why a girl child, in some cases, is simply denied birth? Why are most young people denied access to basic information & services?” questioned Dr. Wasim Zaman to the political and civil society leaders at the outset of the two-day

SAARC level regional meeting.

The questions raised by Dr. Wasim struck the mind of political leaders from the SAARC member countries, represented by senior ministers, MPs and Members of Legislative Assemblies, together with key civil society bodies who had gathered in Kathmandu for the two days regional consultation in reflecting on and taking stock of reproductive health and family planning issues in the region, especially as these issues evolved in the last twenty years after the Program of Action of ICPD was adopted in 1994 in Cairo.

After two days of intense discussions and debates, the regional consultation meeting unanimously endorsed taking forward the ICPD agenda beyond 2014 and called to action. It raises policy issues, resources, services, human resources, young people's sex and reproductive health rights, safe abortion, gender based violence, gender equality, male involvement, emerging challenges, partnership with civil society,

governance and SAARC.

Political and civil society leaders and academia from the region give high importance to the ICPD's agenda. This is the region where the regional consultative meeting saw high level participation. During the inaugural session, ministers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal were present. The concluding program was chaired by the Minister of Population, Government of Punjab, Pakistan Ms. Zakia Shahnawaz.

Two key papers: Overview of the Status of Reproductive Health and Family Planning in South Asia was presented by Ananda Tamang, Executive Director of CREHPA, Nepal and Key issues in Reproductive Health and Family Planning in South Asia was presented by Dr. Saramma Mathai, senior expert in reproductive health. Representatives from the eight SAARC member countries also made their presentations.

After presentation of the country paper, discussions were held in building consensus for collective



action. The program was extensive, covering the entire spectrum of population and reproductive issues of the region.

“Nepal’s maternal mortality has steeply declined; improvements have been made in maternal care services; there has been an increase in the number of women seeking assistance of skilled birth attendants, and expanded safe abortion services are some of the key reasons for considerable decline in maternal mortality “said Vidyadhar Mallik, Minister for Health & Population of Nepal. “Family planning situation has stagnated in Nepal in the past decade. Half of the Nepali women do not use a contraceptive method; whereas unmet need for family planning has increased and is quite high when compared to other South Asian countries. There is a need to respond to the unique needs of young people.”

Home to one fifth of the world population, South Asian countries have been facing several problems in these issues. Leaders of all the countries of the region have shown their solidarity and common stand by attending the meeting. They want to carry the voices of the civil society to the UNGAS special session planned for September 2014.

“South Asian countries have a common voice on population issues. We want continued support from development partners to sustain the achievements made in infant and maternal mortality and to fulfill the unique needs of youth and adolescent,” said Viplove Thakur, MP and Vice Chair of IAPPD and former Chair of Women’s Commission India. “All South Asian countries need to have a common stand for ICDP+2014 and beyond.”

The UN’s International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was a strategic turning point in the way we approach population issues. It firmly placed the needs and rights of the individual at the heart of development policies and programs and envisioned a world



Regional Meet on Population

where all people – women and men, young and old – enjoy equal opportunities and freedom to make choices and pursue their own life and aspirations. It particularly created space for rights-based framework in reproductive health and family planning information and services, including gender equity and equality, for all people, especially hard-to-reach, socially excluded and vulnerable groups.

“Afghanistan has to go a long way in areas of maternal and infant mortality and family needs. Our maternal mortality is still highest. The consultative meeting helped us to share the success stories of other parts of the region,” said Dr. Najia Tareq, Deputy Minister of Health of Afghanistan.

Supported by David & Lucile Packard Foundation and in close collaboration with the CDPS/Nepal (Central Department of Population Studies), the two-day regional consultation was organized by the ICOMP (International Council on Management of Population Programs). This consultative process was aimed at providing a forum for dialogue amongst parliamentarians and civil society leaders as well as other development partners from the sub-region on new or emerging challenges

and opportunities in implementation of the ICPD POA, the outcome of which will feed towards the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process.

Gowher Rizvi, Minister and Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh on Foreign Affairs, said “South Asia as a region will indeed define this century’s agenda. Our region cannot be ignored, it looms large”. While recalling the Cairo Conference, Rizvi said “Much has happened since 1994; it is a story of successes and also frustrations. Civil Society has a pivotal role to play and act as a catalytic change agent. But unfortunately, full potential of civil society has not been tapped in our region.”

“South Asia needs special attention as the region has been facing several problems related to maternal mortality, unmet family planning needs, early girl child marriage and infant mortality rate,” said Dr. Yasmeen Sabeeh Quazi, Senior Country Adviser of the population program of The David & Packard Foundation.

“Bhutan is working to expand the family planning clinics and health clinics to address the issue of maternal and infant mortality,” said Mina, MP of National Council of Bhutan.

Despite long years of engagement



# 'The Regional Consultation Meeting Was Significant'

WASIM ZAMAN

After completion of the two day regional consultation, WASIM ZAMAN, Executive Director of International Council on Management and Population (ICOMP), spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT on various issues related to population management. Excerpts:

**How do you see the outcome of the conference?**

The presence from high level political level leaders, parliamentarians, civil society leaders of all eight South Asian Countries was very important. We have had senior ministers from four countries, parliamentarians from almost all South Asian countries, civil society leaders and academicians, all of whom had been there throughout the meeting contributing to all the sessions. They contributed thoroughly on what needs to be done in South Asia, the action in the areas of reproductive health and family planning particularly focusing on young people, marginalized and poor with less income.

**Do you think all the issues came up?**

All the close issues came up in a big way. There were also repeated discussions about how South Asian urbanization should have regional forum for organization that can take that issue forward for South Asia.

**How did participants view the role of SAARC?**

The role of SAARC was discussed. It was felt that the SAARC needs to be much more engaged, much more effective in the areas of health, population and development. It was also recommended in the call of action that SAARC should be strengthened to take up these specific task and that SAARC should engage as these areas as a priority. In addition to that there were issues that came up about the collaboration between the South Asian countries.

**What lessons have been learnt?**

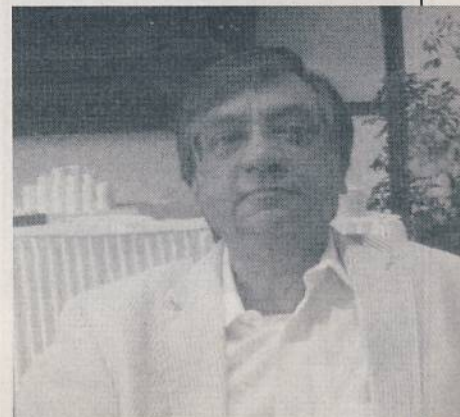
It was felt that all countries have their own lessons that can be learnt and shared by others. We always talk about South-South collaboration but South-South should not be a vague concept that we should have collaboration between South Asian countries. We can learn from each other and very specific examples are given in the Plan of Action.

**Did they raise the question of collaboration in the region?**

The other issue that came up in a very big way is the issue of government-civil society or NGOs collaboration. Let us say governments and civil society are partners. It would be hard to address some of these difficult problems that have been lingering. It was felt that there should be more understanding between government and NGOs. There is a committee for population and development in the UN. The meeting of that committee will take place in April of 2014 and finally the United Nations Special General Assembly on Population and Development will take place in September 2014. It was felt by the ministers, parliamentarians and civil society leaders who attended this meeting that presence of civil society delegates in the official delegation is absolutely crucial. The partnership is bonded and seen and it should be taken forth.

**Why was this consultation important?**

As part of this process, the 6th Asian and Pacific Population Conference (APPC) will be convened by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific, in cooperation with UNFPA from 16-20 September 2013 in Bangkok. The Conference will serve as an intergovernmental platform for the Asia-Pacific preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014. Therefore,



the on-going SAARC level regional consultation here in Kathmandu will prepare substantive ground for the SAARC countries in assisting them with dialogue and reflection, and synthesize and articulate the achievements, gaps, missing-links and lessons gathered under the Population Programs since 1994.

**You also mentioned the gap of fund in the region. How do you look at it?**

The call for action has a specific call there. They have noted concerns that the fund for Asia most specifically for South Asia has decreased. The participants also expressed their concerns that South Asia is not getting the attention it should from international organizations like UNFPA, foundations and other bilateral donors. South Asia is not getting enough money and the kind of attention it deserves. It was also observed in the meeting that we also have no problems that makes Africa get the attention, and that is very important. But we have problems with the issues as South Asia is in the group that has the largest population in the world. If the South Asian concerns are not taken into account viz-a-vie providing matching amount of fund necessary to deal with these issues not provided by multilateral organizations and civil society organizations and NGOs are not involved by them, then we see there will be problem.

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## 'South Asia Has Many Challenges'

Former Secretary DR. RAM HARI ARYAL is also a demographer. He spoke to NEW SPOTLIGHT about the importance of the conference in the context of ICPD beyond 2014. Excerpt:

How does the consultation matter for us?



It was a very important meeting in the present context as the twenty years of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) plan of action is coming to an end next year. One generation of population has already passed since the implementation of plan of action. People born in 1994 are a new generation now. The present demographic divide is those who were born in that period. The time has come to give message to those adolescents and young. The message of ICPD is yet to reach to all. To carry the message of ICPD to the level is very important.

### Why is ICPD important?

We must not forget that ICPD is not a supermarket where one can buy everything. One has to take whatever one needs. We need to prepare for the list of family planning and reproductive health and mobilize resources as per ICPD. There are so many things are included in ICPD but all of them are not applicable for all the countries. We need to identify the applicable issues. The twenty years plan of action made by ICPD is going to end. The discussion is now focused on what should be done after 2014. This kind of meeting is important to know what target the region and countries cannot meet and requirements for further programs.

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in family planning, in most countries of South Asia, family planning and overall issues of reproductive health are still major concerns that policy makers and program implementers have to address urgently.

"Nepal has made a lot of progress in infant and maternal mortality and controlling crude fertility rate. But, they are still insufficient and vulnerable. Like all other countries of the region, Nepal needs sustained support for some time to come," said Professor Dr. Ram Sharan Pathak, Head of the Central Department of Population Studies of Tribhuvan University.

"There is a need for a renewed political commitment by the SAARC member nations as South Asia lagged behind in achieving the ICPD goals in Asia and the Pacific region. Progress has been slow compounded by challenges and gaps. Therefore, it is essential that the voices of South Asian NGOs and civil society leaders be heard in all the important meetings for action," emphasized Dr. Wasim Zaman, ICOMP Executive Director.

As the 20-year deadline for achieving the ICPD goals approaches, a global review of the state of population and development is underway. The review will assess achievements made since Cairo and identify outstanding issues and new challenges. It will serve to renew political support for the Program of Action, which has been extended beyond 2014 by the UN General Assembly, and will inform the post-2015 development agenda. ■

## AP Population Conference

By GIULIA VALLESE



The upcoming AP Population Conference in Bangkok in mid-September will be a key event for the region. It is tasked with adopting an outcome document (currently in draft) divided into four sections: (a) a preamble; (b) policy directions; (c) priority actions; and (d) modalities for implementation at the national, regional and global levels. Section III of the draft declaration covers priority actions in the 11 thematic areas deemed critical by governments to ensure further progress in the implementation of the PoA of the ICPD. These areas are drawn from critical population and development issues already identified for the region and are closely linked to the thematic areas identified in the PoA.

As you know the GA resolution on the ICPD beyond 2014 tells us that we should collectively assess the progress and constraints of the PoA to date as well as respond to new and emerging challenges. The resolution also stated that there would be no renegotiation on existing language. Some of the emerging challenges include the lack of age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, the lack of access to contraceptives and more in general SRH services for young people regardless of marital status and the principle of non-discrimination in accessing information and services regardless of gender, ethnicity, caste, sexual orientation, etc. Several reports (ICPD regional survey, MDG reviews etc.) confirmed that there is a lot of support at the political level but that challenges remain with implementation. They also confirmed that health and education represent unfinished business and that inequities are increasing.

The regional outcome document will be important for a number of reasons:

- It will be a regional input to the global ICPD review process – including discussions at the 2014 CPD and UNGA Special Session on ICPD beyond 2014
- It will frame the commitments for the region for the coming years and as we move forward
- It will also act as an important accountability instrument.

The regional outcome document that will be negotiated in September has been reviewed several times and inputs incorporated, including in a preparatory meeting that has seen the active participation of CSO. The current draft contains language in square bracket, representing diverse views expressed during the above-mentioned intergovernmental review processes.

Vallese is UNFPA Representative to Nepal. Excerpts of her remarks delivered at the ICOMP regional meeting on ICPD beyond.

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MASF

## A Working Approach

*Practical Action's experiences have shown that participatory and systematic approaches can bring a drastic change in the life of small farmers involved in the dairy sector*

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when the government's major projects have failed to fulfill their promises to change the livelihood, small farmers in Nepal's four districts have proved that they have the ability to improve their own conditions through dairy, given they have the appropriate concept and technology.

Cash starved, with weak bargaining power and subsistence based technology, small landholders in Chitwan, Gorkha, Dhading and Tanahu districts had gotten frustrated in doing the dairy business and many gave up hope. Thanks to the implementation of the Market Access for Smallholder Farmers (MASF), implemented by Practical Action, the situation has drastically changed and these same small farmers now have reason to rejoice. Their new choice is: dairy.

Nepal's top policy makers usually adopt an approach that takes development of big infrastructure as something that will automatically bring changes in livelihood. However, the approach has failed throughout the country. Although farmers of all these four districts have access to fair-weather highway through which they are connected to major markets and other facilities around, they don't see much economic sense in that.

To make this big infrastructure workable in favor of small farmers, there is the need of interventions at small scales through market management, breed change, animal health and community based cooperatives. However, the government's agriculture strategy focuses more on big farmers. Practical Action's MASF has succeeded to make changes because of its model where Private, Public and Cooperative organisations come together.

"The project is successful because we were able to link different stakeholders together in the interest of small farmers," said Sujan Piya, Ph.D, head of program, Agriculture, Food

Security and Markets. "During the project period, Practical Action brought all the different stakeholders, the government's livestock offices, private investors and combined unity of local farmers made through formation of cooperatives."

In a country of overwhelming numbers of small and marginal farmers, just by constructing huge infrastructure like highways to link farms to markets cannot yield the desired results. Side by side, another approach to make such highways beneficial for overwhelming number of small farmers, who do not have the capital, technology and capacity to compete in market with bigger players, is also needed.

"The government livestock program is now focusing on small farmers. The government is aware that Nepal cannot make changes without improvement of livelihood of millions of poor farmers who are involved in the dairy sector," said Dr. Dinesh Parajuli, Central regional director of Livestock Department.

As Nepal imports billions of rupees of milk from India during the lean season every year, improvement in milk production can change the scenario. As long as the government does not exploit the small farmers' potential by introducing participatory approach, nothing will change. Individually, small farmers cannot afford the veterinary service, high breed and improved grass, which require investment. The farmers in all these four districts have shown how participatory approach brought change in the dairy business.

"We are collaborating with various NGOs and INGOs and benefiting from their successful model," said the spokesperson of the Ministry of Agriculture Development.

According to Practical Action, MASF explored a participatory and systematic market development approach to reduce vulnerability and secure livelihoods by applying technology for

better production and networking skills to engage effectively in fairer markets.

Market and livelihood program is successful to increase the access of smallholder farmers to established market. The project supports poor communities by making market for them and explores a participatory and systematic market development approach to reduce vulnerability and secure livelihoods by applying technology for better production and networking skills to engage effectively in fairer markets.

According to Practical Action, MASF supported 12,367 small farmers covering 50 percent women, 10 percent dalit, 28 percent disadvantaged Janjati and 20



percent youths. Under the project, the farmers were supported with training on basic livestock management, shed improvement, cattle health management, grass production, mineral bock preparation, safe disposal of dairy waste and quality of milk. Through the project, 71 existing milk collection centers were strengthened and 48 new collection centers were established in coordination with local authorities and cooperatives, resulting in increased milk collection and providing such needed storage facilities for smallholder dairy farmers.

As a result, smallholder dairy farmers from more than 8281 households are supplying milk to major milk processors.

As access to improved breed appeared as one major constraint in commercial cattle farming, the project also initiated the concept of improved Breed Resources Center. The project imported sexed semen of improved breed of cattle for the first time in Nepal. The imported semen was handed over to National Livestock Breeding Center.



## BOOK

# On Civil Society

At a time when the role of the civil society organizations is in question, the book discusses various aspects of civil society in Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

With the liberalization of political system in Nepal in 1990, there was a mushrooming growth in the number of civil society organizations. After the People's Movement II in 2006, another series of floodgates opened.

Despite the increase in the number of civil society organizations, the Social Welfare Council, the institution created to regularize these organizations, failed to perform its duty. In this context, the involvement of civil society organizations extensively expanded. Over 31,000 NGOs have been working in different parts of Nepal. Here comes the controversy over their roles and duties.

At a time when there is a growing dispute and debate over the role of civil society organizations, the book comes out with the agenda and issue prevailing in the contemporary society. Every country needs independent and impartial civil society to self-organize and Nepal is no exception. However, the recent trend in Nepal is different. Civil society organizations are ideologically divided and losing their essential identity.

"Nepal boasts a rich tradition of civic heritage based in the sovereignty of enlightenment over power and privilege reflected in the wisdom of Sage Veda Vyas, Videha Janak, Seer Ashtavakra and Buddha the Enlightened," writes Dev Raj Dahal, head FES Nepal Office in his foreword. "The book captures the foundation as well as the process of the ongoing formation of Nepal's civil society, to show a way out of the political conundrum by shoring up the wisdom expounded by the sages, heroes, and builders of this nation-in-the-making

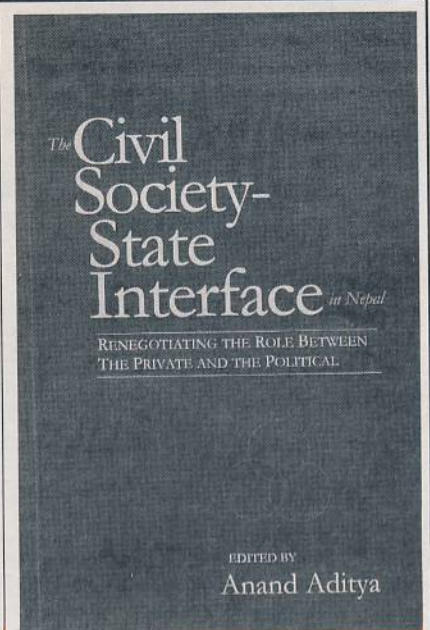
whose cosmos mirrors what humanity deeply aspires for today—living peacefully in harmony with all living beings."

Dahal rightly pointed out the present state of civil society organizations and its role in Nepal. One of the weaknesses of the civil society movement in Nepal is that there are rare debates over their role. "One problem is that there has been little public debate on public goods, public roles and relationships. It is, however, time now that such a discourse starts to bring the gap between the private sector of individual citizens and the political sector of government," writes Anand Aditya in his preface.

The book consists of the research papers presented by many renowned authors of Nepal debating the role of civil society organizations and their implications in society. Anand Aditya's *From Subjects to Citizens: Civic Transformation in Captive Society* discusses the overall process of evolution of civil society in Nepal. Dev Raj Dahal's paper *The Enlightenment Tradition of Nepal: Can the Civil Society Grasp It* discusses the long history of Nepalese process of civil society. Similarly, journalist Yubaraj Ghimire discusses challenges of citizenship building in Nepal.

CD Bhatta's paper *The Civil Society-State Interface* highlights how civil society is supplementing and complementing in the process of national development and institutional growth.

Anjoo Sharan Upadhyaya and Hemraj Subedi's paper discusses the role of civil society in the peace process



**The Civil Society-State Interface  
in Nepal**  
(Renegotiating the Role Between  
The Private and the Political)  
Edited By Anand Aditya  
Published by Pragya Foundation,  
Friedrich Ebert Foundation (2011)  
Price: Undisclosed  
Pages: 223

of Nepal in the last eight years. Tika Prasad Dhakal's paper highlights the role civil society has been playing in Nepal in the areas of peace-politics. Dr. Sambharam Simkhada's paper reflection of civil society helps to learn the evolution of civil society organizations in Nepal. Tone Bleie's paper *Multi-track approaches to peace building in Nepal* and Julius Engel's article on challenges on transitional justice system in Nepal discusses the role played by civil society organizations in Nepal. Pramod Mishra analyzes the role of opinion polls in the civil society in Nepal in 2011.

Published by Pragya Foundation and Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the book analyzes the civil society movements and their contributions in the Nepalese society and their inter-relations with state. ■



## LOCAL BODIES

# Sans Accountability

*As the local bodies are under the reign of a bunch of nominated people, rampant corruption and irregularities are common*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Mangal Man Maharjan, 30, a resident of Chapagaun Village Development Committee does not have any experience of taking part in the local elections. When the last local election was held in 1996, Maharjan was just a 14-year kid. Although there are many problems in his village, Pyangau, such as lack of sanitation, shortage of water supply and deteriorating road conditions, nothing is moving as per the demand of the villagers.

Along with receiving the annual budget from Lalitpur District Development Committee, the VDC has also got its own annual resources. In the absence of elected representatives, there is nobody to set the priority areas and ensure equitable distribution of funds in various wards. Even the resources allocated to the VDCs are often spent randomly.

Chapagaun is not the only village witnessing this situation. Village Development Committees across the country have been running in a mess generally. Instead of working under some 47 elected representatives, with two executive, local bodies are now under the control of a few nominated political activists and a secretary.

Like in the High Level Political Committee (HLPC) at the center which guides the government led by Khil Raj Regmi, the local level political mechanism does a similar thing. As the institution without accountability, nobody can question the performance of the local bodies.

As more than 10 million new voters are registered in the voting list, Maharjan is willing to see the elected representatives take charge

of the village. Although the government set the local election date for April 2014, people have rarely hoped to see that happening. Nepal's tragedy is that over 3099 VDCs, the lowest units of participatory democracy, are without representatives for such a long time. The polls for local bodies used to be held periodically during the Panchayat days.

"We have been pushing for long to hold the elections for local bodies," said Madhav Poudel, former chairman of Lalitpur District Development Committee. "The resources of VDCs, DDCs and Municipalities drained and development is virtually at a halt at the local level."

The Auditor General's report also highlighted the massive misuse of funds at the local level. Although the Auditor General's Office performed auditing of the District Development Committee, it asked private auditors to audit VDCs and Municipalities. Auditor General's Report 2012 narrated the events of massive misuse of funds by District Development Committee.

"We are seriously concerned about the account system of DDCs and VDCs. There are huge amounts of money under unsettled account and we have already suggested several options," Auditor General Bhanu Prasad Acharya told New Spotlight.

Local bodies are the first step of a democratic exercise and set the development agenda in priority. Whether it is the work about sanitation, drinking water, rural road or health for all, lack of elected representatives is hampering it. In the absence of local bodies, NGOs and INGOs are somehow fulfilling the gap. "Had there been the elected bodies, Nepal's development pace would have



gone much faster, by taking the civil society organizations, like NGOs and INGOs, together," said Poudel.

Until the elections for local bodies are held, nothing can make them accountable and there is nothing to fill the gap. As the demands for services like water, sanitation, education and local infrastructure is growing at the local level, only the elected local bodies can address them with accountability. ■

## NEW SPOTLIGHT

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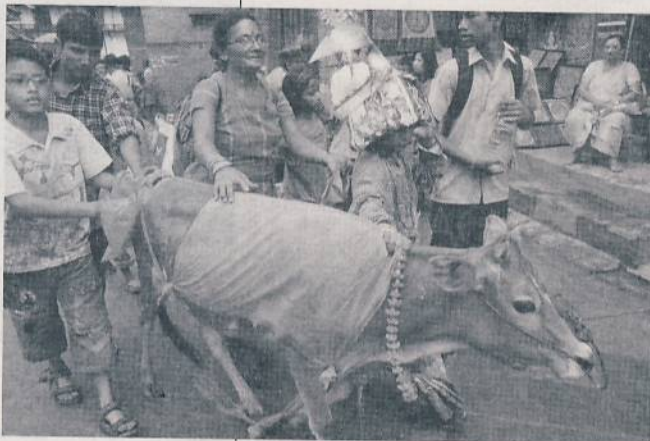
# A Place For Tolerance

By LALA NARA DADCI



There is a place in Kathmandu that gives a peculiar vantage to see life. To take the benefit from that fascinating, awe-inspiring feeling which scrambles your thoughts, you have to explore the first waves of visitors here during the fresh and quiet early hours of a pale cloudy morning. Coming into the temple premises, you get the striking sensation as if you are entering an out-of-time dimension, full of smells and music rhythms. Even so, the atmosphere remains weirdly peaceful.

A cremation is occurring on the western river bank. Smoke will uplift soon towards the dazzling white sky. Nearby a body is prepared; last blessing from the living, last flowers laid



on the chest. Here people who endure pain and sorrow find reciprocal sentiments whilst meeting the eyes of relatives, from other families, who lost someone as well.

With more than 80 per cent of Nepalese asserting to be Hindus, existence of such an amazing place as Pashupatinath to celebrate the last time for the cherished person does not appear surprising.

In India, unlike Hinduism was strengthened by it, Buddhism gradually came to decline and later disappeared. On the contrary, Nepalese Hinduism has sustainably embedded Buddhism by integrating Buddha as one of the great divinities descendant from Vishnu, protector of the world. Syncretism between Hinduism and Buddhism is also observed on the Buddhist side. Saraswati Mandir, in the village of

Pharping well known for its followers of Tibetan Buddhism, perfectly outlines that religious mix. The temple hosts Tara, worshipped deity by both Buddhists and Hindus, that embodies for the former, a virtuous female bodhisattva, and for the latter, a beautiful goddess of great wisdom. It is said that the tradition of religious tolerance had started with King Manadeva visiting both Buddhist and Hindu sites in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. In more

recent times, Newar people were an important vector of syncretism to combine Hindu and Buddhist arts. In fact syncretism has been developing since the very birth of Buddhism. Buddhanath was born in Shakya, Kingdom of Kapilvastu (Lumbini area), before he went to India where it is believed he found Enlightenment.

Yet, while the Nepalese people are almost exclusively Hindu, does contemporary syncretism truly entail a genuine commitment from all religious communities to respect the thought of others? In other words, is religious syncretism in Nepal sincere tolerance or superficial status quo?

Regarding Buddhism of all shades, similar principles tend to consider tolerance as something of the utmost importance. One of the first statements written in the Dalai Lama's *Introduction to Buddhism and Tantric*

*Meditation* mentions the "urgent need for flawless unity among all religions." How, could we ask. "[by knowing] something of the religion of others," then he adds, the most common goal in Buddhism which brings about some certainty in the degree of tolerance is probably the quest for Enlightenment, assuming equal condition for all human beings. "Living beings desire peace and happiness and want to avoid sufferings," he says later.

Hindus seem to have embraced that purpose in their praxis. What a best first step to know bliss than punctual demonstrations of "enlightenment of sympathy"? Borrowed from the American philosopher Michael Frazer, the phrase matches as well with political theory as with practice. Nepalese Hindu festivals stake out well forms that such enlightenment can draw. They celebrate life in a musical and colorful way without excluding anyone. During the Gaura Parva day, women worship Hindu deities for longevity and prosperity of their family whereas during Janai Purnima men have to take a bath before praying likewise. August celebrations reach a paroxysm on Gai Jatra, ironically the day when people who passed away are celebrated with humor and joy. Spotters are invited to become active participants. Tolerance amid human beings meet tolerance between living beings and those who passed away, who now found path to another world.

Religious festivals apparently do what politics has failed to achieve in Nepal: gathering and enabling everyone to participate without any other interest than happily sharing all together. Those kinds of festivals have succeeded to set up the most universal belief throughout the world, the belief in the need of peace and happiness for human kind.

(Lala is an intern from France)



## SUMMER CAMP

# Engineering Community

*With the initiative of Israel Embassy, Kathmandu University conducted a summer program bringing a number of engineers from different parts of the world*

By A CORRESPONDENT

For Israeli Ambassador to Nepal Hanan Goder, this is a hectic assignment. He visits villages, meets farmers and shares experiences. Along with visiting different parts of Nepal, he also encourages collaborative efforts with Nepalese and various organizations of Israel in different fields, education, judiciary, private sector, health and agriculture.

Along with visiting villages, he has something different to offer to Nepal based diplomats and Nepalese retired diplomats and people of various walks of life. Whether it be sending Nepalese youth to Israel to learn modern agriculture or bring Israeli volunteers and experts to villages and hospitals and promoting other activities, ambassador Hanan is busy all the time.

Just a week after organizing a program for young Nepalese farmers, he was busy visiting Kavre village to meet the participants of the summer program entitled 'Engineering for Developing Communities'.

Nepal has undergraduate engineering students coming from Israel, United States of America, Brazil, Australia, France, South Korea and Nepal. This kind of program has been organized for the first time in Nepal.

He hunted the talent of former Nepalese ambassador Dr. Singha Bahadur Basnyat whose Jureli, bird inspired flight of imagination, describes Nepal's natural, religious and cultural diversity.

"With Hanan's words, 'Nepal's gifted with rich natural beauty' in the back of mind, I felt the bird wrote literally the rest of the text," writes Singh Bahadur Basnyat.

Conducted by Kathmandu University in collaboration with

Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, a month long International Summer Course was organized in Nepal for the first time. Participated in by 36 undergraduate students from Israel, United States of America, Australia, France, Brazil, South Korea and Nepal, the summer program entitled 'Engineering for Developing Communities' helped to share Nepal's experiences to the world.

At the end ambassador Hanan organized a big party at his residence and provide certificates to the participants.

"Nepal is a country with immense diversities and possibilities," said ambassador Hanan at the program.

The focus of this program was on the theory and field knowledge with the core idea on Bio-Gas, Improved Cooking Stoves, Solar PV, Improved Water Mills, Rain Water Harvesting and Hydraulic Pump.

Prof. Mark Talesnick, founder and head of Engineers Without Borders (EWB)-Technion, Israel, said, "The program provided an opportunity for all the students to interact and have a real international engineering experience. Not just engineering students but also students from different faculties took part and imparted their different viewpoints."

Dr. Bhim Prasad Shrestha, Kathmandu University Department coordinator for the program in Nepal, said "It was a great opportunity for students and faculty at Kathmandu University to interact with faculty and students from abroad and work together to achieve a common goal.

Such programs will be continued with several other partners around the globe to further enhance such programs in the future."

During their stay, the students worked at the outreach centers of Kathmandu University in Dhulikhel. Bernard Amadei, Professor of Engineering University of Colorado-Boulder, said the summer program helped to learn different modalities practices in Nepal.

EWB is an international organization with more than 300 chapters around the world. Founded in 2001 by Prof. Bernard Amadei, it is dedicated to fostering sustainable



Ambassador Hanan Discussing with Students

energy projects in developing and disadvantaged communities around the world.

Along with this, Mount Everest and Dead Sea Stones Exchange was one of the main joint projects of the Embassy of Israel in Nepal, and the Governments of the respective countries. Under this project, a monument that has embedded stones from the region of Mt. Everest was established at the premises of Dead Sea and the stones brought from Dead Sea, Israel, were installed as a monument near Mt. Everest Region.

Ambassador Hanan showed that Nepal and Israel have a lot of things to share. At a time when Nepal is in desperate need of support for development, recent activities of Israeli Embassy remind us Nepal has the potential as well as opportunities to meet its needs. ■



# Paragliding In Pokhara

By ABHISHEKH ADHIKARI



If you do not feel as if you are flying while reading this article please excuse me and make sure you will visit Pokhara for paragliding to experience it firsthand.

I was in Palpa for some official business. When I came to know there are two roads leading to Kathmandu from Tansen, one via Pokhara and the other via Butwal, I got excited. I made up my mind to spend some time in Pokhara, the lake city. Of course, Pokhara is also known now for its extreme adventure, paragliding.

Most of my friends and some of my relatives have done paragliding in Pokhara. When Shyam uncle, who is 60 plus years of age, and Kamala auntie, his wife, did it, there was nothing to stop me from paragliding. I was just looking for the right moment and this time, indeed, it was the opportune moment.

I booked my tickets with Avia Club through

Shekhar Acharya, a friend of mine who lives in Pokhara expecting some concession in the fare. The next day of my arrival in Pokhara, I was to take the flight. I was crossing my fingers that the day would be clear and would not rain. The day happened to be a clear one.

On our way to Sarangkot, the spot from where paragliders would take off their flights, there were a few clouds and I immediately asked if the clouds would affect the flight. Our Finnish pilot, a gorgeous lady explained to me how the clouds would affect the flight in a positive manner. I must apologize I can't remember what she said about the correlation between humidity, hot air and cloud affecting the flight in a good way. I was glad to know the conclusion that the clouds would not affect the flight adversely.

We were on the spot from where the flights would be launched. There were already other paragliders who were taking their flights and some were preparing to take the flights. It was a pleasant sight to see them fly in the air. Some of them screamed to overcome their fear. Some would just not take the few steps that were necessary to go beyond the edge of the hill into the air for the flight. In that case the other

pilots helped the person by lifting them with their strong arms and throwing them into the air from the edge of the hill. The paragliders were expected to walk a bit and run from the edge of the hill into the air. This was to launch the flight and once in the air, pilots would take control of the flight and thus they were safely airborne. The taking off and landing was a bit of concern. It was indeed nice to see someone soaring up in the sky.

My pilot, Arun, came a little while after we reached the launching spot. I had got acquainted myself with other pilots but not Arun. I have a concern that his name will not be pronounced as the way he would like. Therefore I would restrict myself to calling 'Aeroon'

**The city of Pokhara was visible at its grandest from the air. Of course, because it is a monsoon season, Fishtail and other peaks were hidden behind the clouds and there were water hyacinth in the Fewa lake.**

as my pilot hereafter.

On our acquaintance, I immediately asked his experience as a pilot. "Nine years," he said, his answer somewhat comforting me. Immediately, he added, "I am an acrobat pilot."

I saw another pilot in the air perform acrobatics in the air. I asked him if that is what he meant by 'acrobat'. He confirmed. I was scared for the first time of this flight. I was nervous before but the sight I had just seen and his expertise in acrobatics made me request him if we could do the normal paragliding. His immediate response was there is no thrill and excitement in normal paragliding. However, I was his guest and he said that he was obliged to do how I preferred.

We were getting ready for the flight. The backpack on my back and the clippers connected me to the wide parachute by the straps on my backpack. My pilot was behind me.

I knew I was expected to walk and then run into the air and not sit till we were in the air safely. I had read the instructions while waiting for others to arrive in the Avia Club office and also briefed by the same gorgeous Finnish lady.

I was told to walk but the parachute pulled me back for a fraction of second.

I wasn't able to walk forward, in fact, I was pulled behind in the opposite direction. I was worried if I had made the mistake. Now I realize I had not. Then the parachute was right on the top of us and it was easy for me to walk. I was walking senselessly in the direction advised by my pilot beyond the edge of the hill. After a few seconds, I regained my consciousness and, by that second, I was in the air. My fist was clenched to the strap where I was expected to hold and I was seated comfortably. I did not let go the strap till the end. However, I did try to ease myself a bit once I was comfortable in the flight.

The city of Pokhara was visible at its grandest from the air. Of course, because it is a monsoon season, Fishtail and other peaks were hidden behind the clouds and there were water hyacinth in the Fewa lake. Nonetheless the sight of the city was beautiful. There was cool breeze blowing across my face.

I had millions of questions in my mind once I was comfortable in the flight. During my conversation with the pilot I was told that sometimes birds came close and affected the flight. I had seen a video which showed pilots feeding eagles before our departure from the office. My pilot was trained in France and held a French license.

After some time in the flight it just occurred to me that the flight was getting monotonous and we were descending to the ground. The sight was the same, the breeze did not make much difference anymore and I was conscious that I was asking too many questions to the pilot. I hinted, not being able to tell directly, if we could do some acrobatics. My pilot was willing to do some and soon our movement was 8 times faster than the normal descent which made me scream and cry out loud in excitement. This happened when we were comparatively close to the ground and I did not fear much despite the velocity with which we were descending. Once close to the ground our acrobatics was over and descending was normal. Soon I realized my flight was over and was concerned about the landing. We landed safe. ■



## MOVIE REVIEW

## Madras Café



Political thrillers aren't really Hindi movies' favoured subject matter. Getting embroiled into unwanted hullabaloo — before or post release of the film — is not what a filmmaker would want to get into. But Shoojit Sircar, who attempted a film on Kashmir [YAHAAN] and followed it up with a film on sperm donation and infertility [VICKY DONOR], gets into the serious zone yet again with MADRAS CAFE. An espionage thriller that's set in India, Thailand, Singapore, U.K. and Sri Lanka.

So why a title like MADRAS CAFE for a film that talks of the assassination of our former Prime Minister? Well, that's the cafe where the conspiracy was hatched, we're told. Okay, now let's move ahead...

The Hindi movie spectator has often been subjected to stories that depict the conflict with Pakistan, but Shoojit attempts to narrate a story that not many from the present generation would know — the civil war in Sri Lanka. What transpired in the 1980s and 1990s and how it impacted the political scenario of India has never been recreated in the Hindi film space. The conflict is diverse this time around and so is the territory. In short, enlightenment takes precedence over entertainment in this case. (Courtesy: Bollywood Hungama)



## BASANTA CHAUDHARY

## Literary Journey

*Known for his selection of words in poem and lyrics, renowned industrialist Basanta Chaudhary is travelling the world with his selected poems*

By A CORESPONDENT

Business and literature have different dimensions and scopes. One has to do with money and the other with heart and creation. Basanta Chaudhary is an industrialist by his profession but his heart and mind are full of love, of poems and lyrics. One can see courage, patience and love in all his poems.

Taking out some leisure, industrialist Chaudhary is now on the world's literary tour.

"I cannot carry business home. I do where the things I have to do. I do business in my office. However, I do my creative work in the morning and evening, in my leisure time," said Chaudhary, in his interview to Nagarik. "During my last trip to the United States of America, I recited a poem there. After that I was invited to London, Dubai and Sikkim."

Writing poem is Chaudhary's passion. He has been

## MOVIE PREVIEW

## Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters

Release Date : 30 Aug 2013

Director : Thor Freudenthal

Cast : Logan Lerman, Alexandra Daddario, Jeff Goldblum

In order to restore their dying safe haven, the son of Poseidon and his friends head into the Sea of Monsters to find the mythical Golden Fleece.



## Satyagraha

Release Date : 30 Aug 2013

Director : Prakash Jha

Cast : Kareena Kapoor, Arjun Rampal, Amitabh Bachchan, Ajay Devgan

The film deals with the movement of the middle-class to re-negotiate democracy. It's the story of a man who is a firm believer of Gandhian principles, an ambitious entrepreneur who represents the modern India shining philosophy, a social activist who aims to be a politician, a fearless political journalist and a wily politician who uses every means to break the system.



writing poems and lyrics for many years. In his poetic journey, Chaudhary saw his recent eBook Megha and the 5<sup>th</sup> Album Love Forever released in Baltimore. Released by legendary singer Meera Rana and Nepalese Ambassador to USA Dr. Shanker Sharma, eMegha and 5<sup>th</sup> Album Love Forever are collections of his best works which describe love, nature and human world vividly.

"I am grateful to the audiences in the USA and I would like to express my sincere thank to Ambassador Dr. Shanker Prasad Sharma and legendary Singer Meera Rana for so graciously releasing my eBook Megha and 5<sup>th</sup> Album Love Forever at Baltimore," writes Basanta Chaudhary in his face book wall.

His recent works are the collections of the words burst out from his heart and mind. With five albums published already, Chaudhary has proven that he has the gifted talent to produce the words and enrich literature and lyrics. ■





# Himalayan Rescue Association

By **BUDDHA BASNYAT, MD**



For 4 complete decades the Himalayan Rescue Association (HRA) has been actively involved in treating patients and spreading the message of safety in the Himalayas. One main message that has been stressed time and again is that descent is the best approach to severe acute mountain sickness before it becomes life-threatening and changes to high altitude cerebral edema (HACE) or high altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE). Every day in the spring (March to May) and the fall (September to November) volunteer doctors at the aid posts (at Pheriche in the Everest region and Manang in the Annapurna region) have been giving these prevention lectures and trying to keep their talks simple and understandable so that people from various nationalities including Nepalis are able to comprehend and avoid altitude sickness and other related injuries in the mountains.

For example, the importance of frostbite prevention is paramount because once frostbite happens there is very little evidence-based medicine to help the patient. Not much has changed in the treatment of frostbite since the nineteenth century when Napoleon Bonaparte's army succumbed to frostbite in its attempt to conquer Moscow in subzero temperatures. In the treatment of frostbite, there are no readily available, cost-effective, modern breakthroughs in the context of Nepal. So prevention

remains the main focus. The HRA tragically sees porters who suffer from severe frostbite even though it tries its best wherever possible to educate them beforehand about prevention aspects.

The HRA is only rarely involved in the actual "rescue" of climbers in the Himalayas with high-powered, medically-equipped, state-of-the-art helicopters even though the HRA has been very effective in preventing altitude sickness, frostbite, hypothermia, and other mountain-related medical problems and injuries in the mountains. And for a developing country like Nepal doing all it can to prevent medical problems in the mountains is very sensible.

But its role is not just confined to prevention aspects of hypoxic (low oxygen) illnesses. The HRA does effectively save lives and treat altitude illness and other problems (infections including diarrhea, trauma and so forth) at the aid posts. In that sense (treating the sick and the injured), it does "rescue" patients.

So in terms of dramatic helicopter rescue of injured climbers from the mountains, the word "rescue" in the HRA may be a misnomer; but clearly the HRA's work is unparalleled in the annals of alpine rescue in South Asia for quietly carrying out methodical, conscientious, and challenging medical work (and research) in the Himalayas for decades.

runway is not done soon. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation statistics, some 545,221 tourists came to Nepal in 2011 while some 598,258 in 2012 by air ways. However, only around 282,429 tourists have visited Nepal in the first seven months of 2013 by airways.

Although initially constructed in 1967 with the target to support some 196 tons, the runway has been landing aircraft of around 300 tons in the recent years. With a number of international companies like Thai Airways, Dragon Air, Korean Air, Qatar Airways, Air Asia flying wide body aircraft to Nepal, the request by the government to limit the air carrier size might come as a major hindrance in the operation of these flights.

Although the government has been providing various alternatives to airlines companies for the reduction of weight, however, it is highly unlikely that many aircraft will be able to limit their flight weight within the government directed figure. As many of the flights for the season are already booked, it will be also difficult to cancel the flights to the Nepal for the airlines companies.

The runway crisis has highlighted the over dependence of the country on the TIA for international flights and the need for a second international airport. However, the lack of timely government action in upgrading and improving the runway earlier remains the primary cause of the current problem. Despite knowing the problem, the lack of timely action by the government can be blamed for the current woes.

## TRIBHUVN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Runway Crisis

By **DEBESH ADHIKARI**

In the face of a high likelihood of the runway problem resurfacing again, Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), the only international airport in the country, is facing a severe crisis. Potholes in the only runway of the only international airport of the nation has been proving as a major headache for the TIA and the international airlines companies which are flying wide body aircraft to Nepal. In light of the current plight, Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) has requested international airlines operating wide-body aircraft in Nepal to limit their landing and takeoff weight to 196 tons, as far as possible.

With the runway crisis looking set to stay around, one sector that will undoubtedly suffer most is tourism. As one of the peak tourist seasons is looming closer, the problem is set to send shockwaves to the recovering tourism sector.

Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN), Nepal Association of Tour Operators (NATO) and Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAN) have already stated that the runway problem will affect the tourism sector very badly and have urged the government to find the solution to the problem without any delay.

"As the problems in the runway not only affect international flights but also put passengers at risk, we have requested the concerned minister to renovate the runway as soon as possible," said Amar Man Shakya, general secretary of HAN, according to Republica.

Tourist arrivals this year, already on a decline compared to the past years, might suffer even more if the makeover of the





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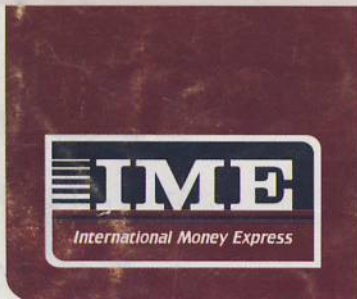
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