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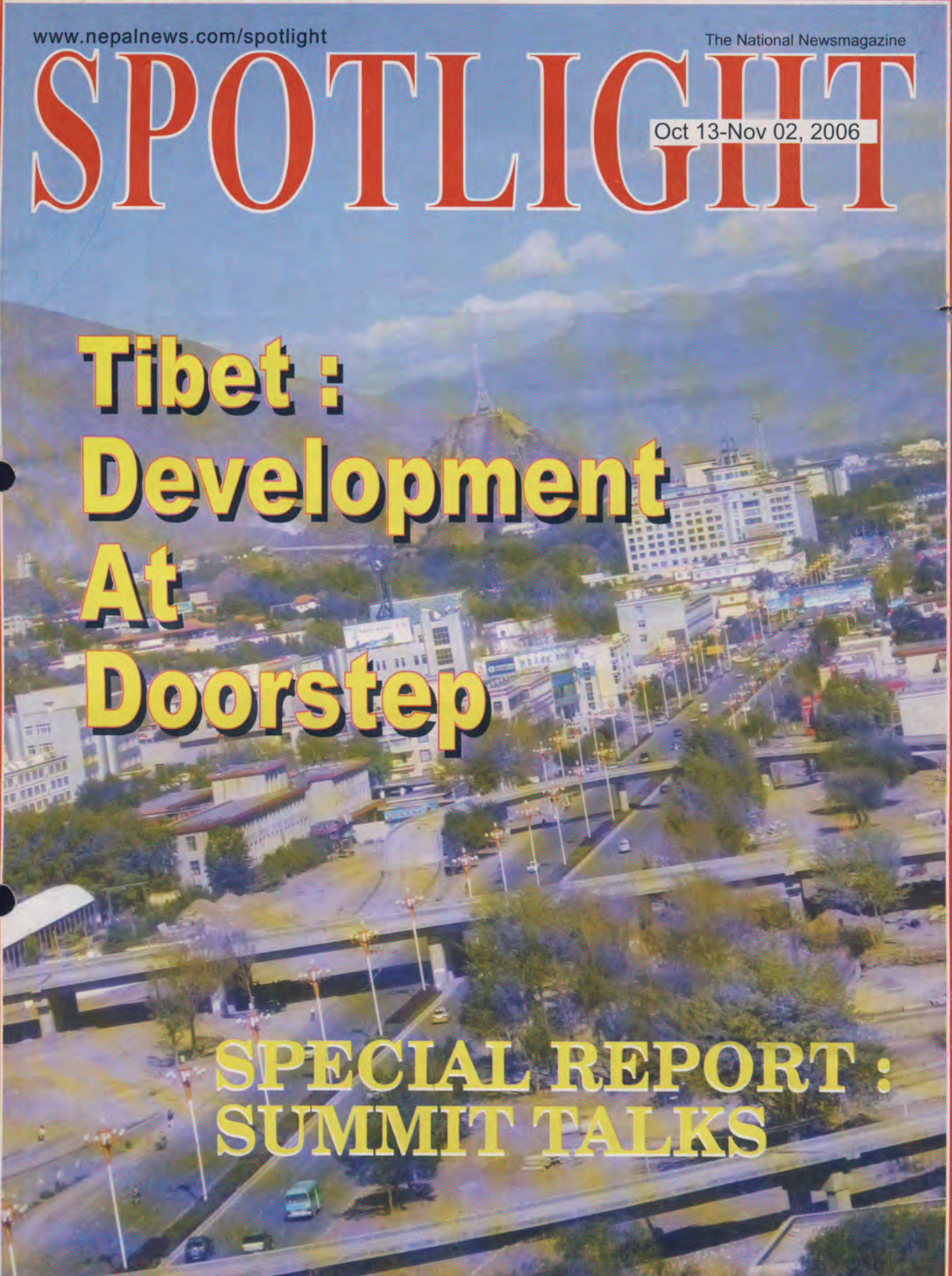
# SPOTLIGHT

Oct 13-Nov 02, 2006

## Tibet : Development At Doorstep

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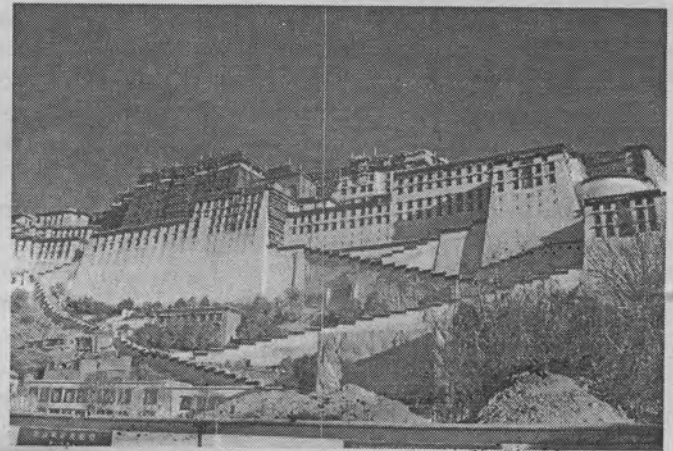
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# CONTENTS

	Page
LETTERS	3
NEWS NOTES	4
BRIEFS	6
QUOTE UNQUOTE/TRANSITION	7
OPINION : Dr. Ananda Bahadur Thapa	8
REFUGEES: Window Of Opportunity	18
ENCOUNTER: Steven R. Mann	19
ECONOMY: Great Strides	20
REGIONAL MEET: Common Issues of Development	21
CHOPPER CRASH: Tragic Loss	22
NATIONAL	23
OBITUARY: Pandav Sunuwar	24



## COVER STORY : Development At Doorstep

Northern neighbor Tibet Autonomous Region is going through stupendous development. Nepal can learn many lessons from its development

Page 12



## SUMMIT MEETING:

Thursday, Oct 12, summit meeting is expected to make historic decisions

Page 10



## POLITICS: Emerging Trends

Following April's uprising, a new trend is emerging in Nepali politics

Page 16

**SPOTLIGHT**

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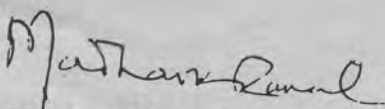
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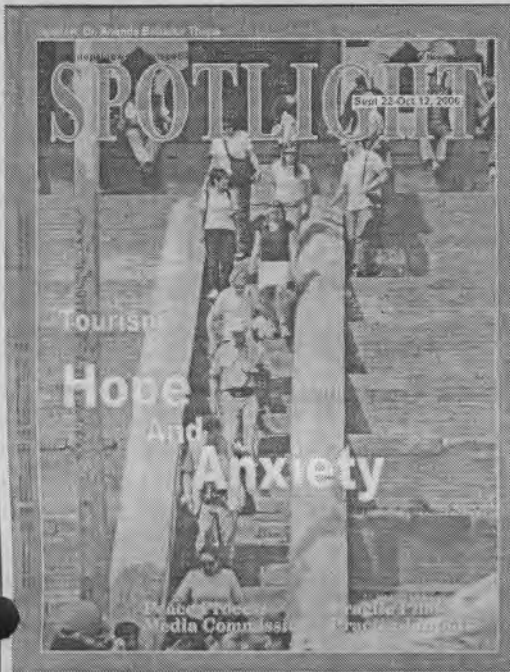
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**T**he Nepalis celebrated a comparatively peaceful Dashain after a long time. While an insignificant minority of government officials, politicians of ruling political parties and a small business community might have reveled in their luxury in the festive season, the overwhelming poor masses faced acute problems and unbearable miseries at their inability to meet even the most simple needs of their small children. That Dashain was peaceful was indeed gratifying. How long the peace will last and whether the country will ever return to its former peaceful days is question no one can answer convincingly. The Seven Party Alliance and the Maoists have already held two summit meetings in four days and are scheduled to meet again seeking solutions to all the serious problems the country is facing – peace being the top most. Since all knowledgeable Nepalis know fully well that the strings of success are in the hands of invisible puppeteers, a feeling of skepticism keeps on wrangling their hearts. The way this tragedy engulfed the poor country being fanned by interested extraneous elements leaves little room for hope that happy days are round the corner. Even more painful has been the callous disinterest exhibited by the powers that be at the blatant double standard of our giant friendly neighbor in the South, despite their avowed commitment to fight global terrorism. Such a behavior has affirmed our belief that the interests of bigger and powerful nations outweigh all other considerations of justice and propriety. More so, if the victim is small and weak. As such, it becomes the bounden duty of all patriotic forces to come forward and shoulder the responsibility of saving our nation from destruction. While we are struggling for our survival, events away from home have overshadowed our misfortunes. The failure of India supported Shashi Tharoor to grab the nomination to the prestigious job of the Secretary General of the United Nations Security Council has greatly disappointed the billion odd people of South Asia. Shashi Tharoor would have been a proud acquisition to the U.N as he was more than qualified for the job. But the chinks in India's armor deprived South Asia of the golden opportunity of leading the world. When that possibility will again come South Asia's way, if it ever does, no body can predict. India is very big in size and number but does not seem so in substance, as proved by Shashi Tharoor's debacle. She shall have to work real hard to refurbish her image if she wants to achieve her soaring ambitions. India does generate doubts and misgivings amongst her smaller neighbors. Unless she sincerely works to win their goodwill and respect, international leadership will keep on mocking her like a mirage.

While the nomination to the UNSC had rocked the South Asian boat the nuclear blast by North Korea has rocked the world boat. Some political analysts have opined it as the total failure of U.S. foreign policy under President George W. Bush. President Bush has no qualms to assert that he has made the United States a safer place especially after his Iraq war, while the reality is just the reverse. Turning North Korea into a nuclear power, Bush has generated serious threats to all Americans wherever they are. The daily loss of hundreds of innocent human lives in Iraq is sure to provoke Muslim radicalism, impelling the Islamic extremists to more horrendous terrorism targeted against the Americans and their allies. This trend must be stopped if the world is to become a safer place. George Bush or his successor has to find the solution. Bullying smaller countries by bigger and powerful nations can never yield positive results. This lesson must be learnt by all concerned. ■

  
**Madhav Kumar Rimal**  
Chief Editor & Publisher



raises- is there no way to return back to lasting peace and stability? The whole of Nepalese society is expecting durable peace returning to the country.

*Krishna Gurung*  
Maitidevi

## Hurt Tourism

As Nepal is rich in cultural heritage tradition, water resources, mountains and so many others, many foreigners are attracted "Tourism Hope and Anxiety" (SPOTLIGHT SEP 22). The foreign currency provided by the foreigners really makes the financial position strong of the country. While tourists come to visit the country many hotels are needed for their stay whether they are five-star or non-star hotels. Many Nepali workers are employed by these hotels. They are financially secure because of the arrival of tourists. No doubt, Many Nepalese survive because of tourism industry. Despite the fact that many people are engaged and employed in hotels and tourism industry, the insurgency and threat of Maoists has hurt this sector. The environment created by Maoist insurgency and extortion have made it very difficult for the workers to survive. The tourism industry is facing unprecedented crises. Forced donations from tourism industry, harassment of management and daily increase of unnatural and undesirable activities have seriously affected the whole sector. If the

## End of Terrorism?

The cover story, "Tourism Hope and Anxiety" (SPOTLIGHT SEP 22) shows that peace is ultimate truth and desire of every Nepalese people. After Janaandolan II, people have felt a kind of relief. To some extent they have felt peace in the country. But is it the end of terrorism? As tourism is one of the most sensitive industries, the daily strikes, traffic jams and crimes had hurt its prospects. Not only this, the Maoist insurgency and extortion had made the tourism field terrible. On the one hand, Maoist leaders give speech on peace and stability and on the other hand, they continue asking for donations. Here a question

situation goes in the same way in coming days, the peace process will remain an unfulfilled hope forever.

*Bishnu KC*  
Sanepa

## Easy Announcement

Is it good to announce separate ten percent of seats to underprivileged groups such as girls, Dalits and Indigenous people in private schools without informing them by the government? Whether the private schools are financially strong or not, can government decide on such matter alone? Obviously to introduce reservation in private schools is good for those students who are economically poor. It helps them to get good education. But there should be discussion between government and PABSON so that both can reach to proper decision. Otherwise, such decision can never be implemented. Announcement is an easy task but implementation is difficult.

*Bipul Sharma*  
Hattisar

## Repetition of Mistakes

The unilateral decision by the government to impose quotas on scholarships to underprivileged students

even in private schools has generated huge debate. Just recently we have seen in India how such policy is misunderstood and mis-implemented. There students of prestigious colleges like All India Institute of Medical Sciences have come out openly against reservation policy. Indian government was forced to announce that it would increase the number of seats in such prestigious colleges in order to accommodate the students who are chosen on the basis of quotas. Can Nepal government also announce such policy? If not, they should have entered into close consultations with private school operators to discuss and decide the proper way forward.

*Bikas Karki*  
Kumaripati

## Good Decision

The private schools in the country have turned commercial. They earn millions of rupees every year. Therefore, it is only proper that they should spend some of their profits to help the society. Private schools, too, have social responsibility. They can bear the responsibility by giving scholarship quotas to students from underprivileged section of society.

*Kebal Rai*  
Maharajgunj

## Welcome Profile

Multifaceted personality Ujwal Ghimire's profile (SPOTLIGHT Sep 22) was a good one. Various kinds of readers are there in the country who have different tastes. For those readers who want to sink in entertainment segment, the profile of this magazine is very helpful. It definitely gives pleasure to them. Personality like Ujwal Ghimire must be chosen in profile in the coming days as well. While reading profile, readers expect to know about all things related to him. That's why I suggest you to include all the things related to a personality in future profiles.

*Pawan Thapa*  
New Baneshwore

**NOTICE :** The next issue of SPOTLIGHT will be published on November 3 after Tihar holidays.

## Maoist Leader Gajurel To Face West Bengal Charges

Senior Maoist leader Chandra Prakash Gajurel aka Comrade Gaurav has been sent to Kolkata where he would face charges of treason. The Chennai Metropolitan Court has ordered, on Monday (October 9), to hand over Gajurel to the police of West Bengal state. The police of West Bengal have said that Gajurel faces charge of treason against the state and have demanded that Chennai court send him there. After serving three year jail sentence in Chennai central jail, Gajurel was released on September 18. However, West Bengal police immediately arrested him and pressed fresh charges. Gajurel was arrested three years ago on August 20, 2003 from Chennai airport as he was about to board an airplane to London. He faced charges of using fake passport. *Compiled from reports.*

## Charge-sheets Filed Against Accused In Bibek's Murder Case

The government prosecutor filed a charge-sheet at the Kathmandu District Court on Sunday (October 8) against the seven accused in the kidnapping and murder of 8-year-old Bibek Luitel. The prosecutor has sought life sentence (which mean 20 years as per existing Nepalese law) for them. The charge-sheet demands life-term for Bhikhari Khan, Okil Ansari, Pappu Mandal, Pateni Lama, Shakhina Manandhar Khapung, and Mokhtar Ansari. Bhikhari, Okil and Mokhtar are Indian nationals. The police produced six accused at the court but could not produce the seventh one Akabar Ansari who is absconding. *Leading dailies report.*

## NC Hosts Tea Reception, Leaders Discuss Unity

Around 6000 persons attended the traditional Dashain tea reception hosted by Nepali Congress (NC) at its party

headquarters in Sanepa on Saturday. Political leaders, diplomats, workers, civil society activists, businessmen, intellectuals and media representatives attended the reception. Maoist leaders Krishna Mahara and dev Gurung also attended the reception. Senior Congress leader Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, however, did not show up. Meanwhile, Congress leaders utilized the reception to discuss the prospects of unity with Nepali Congress (Democratic). NC (Democratic) president Sher Bahadur Deuba said that the unification of Congress party should proceed in a systematic and practical manner. He stressed on forming task force to sort out technical matters of unification. On the other hand, prime minister and president of NC Girija Prasad Koirala said that the two parties could unite "just at this moment if Deubaji agrees." The two Congress parties had split in May, 2002. Earlier, on Friday, the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), too, hosted its annual Dashain tea reception. *Leading dailies report.*

## Koirala Meets With Bhattarai

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala met with senior Congress leader Krishna Prasad Bhattarai on Thursday (October 4) at the latter's residence in Bhainsepati. The two leader agreed about the need of uniting Congress party, according to sources. "I talked with him about the Congress unity. We both agreed that Congress unity is vital at this juncture." PM Koirala told reporters. "Both the leaders were positive about Congress unity. They discussed various aspects of the unity," said Sarat Singh Bhandari, a leader of NC (Democratic) who was present during the meeting. *Leading dailies report.*

## Prachanda Inspects Cable Car Technology

The Maoist chairman Prachanda visited Manakamana temple area on Thursday (October 4) to inspect the cable car system. He went up to the Manakamana temple but did not worship the goddess like other devotees do. He said his visit was not a religious one.

While traveling in the cable car, Prachanda inquired about its technology with Laxman Babu Shrestha – the chairman of Manakamana Cable Car Private Limited. After the inquiry, Prachanda said the technology of cable car should be expanded to other parts of the country as well. *Leading dailies report.*

## Billions Of Rupees Worth Of Power From Middle Marsyangdi To Go To Waste

Due to delay in the building of transmission lines, the power generated by 70 MW-strong Middle Marsyangdi project will go to waste for five months. This situation has developed due to delay in contract agreement and the long wait to receive grant assistance from German development bank (KfW) to build transmission lines. Around 160 million units of electricity, would, thus be wasted because when the project completes, the transmission line would not be completed. Power will be wasted for at least five months due to lack of transmission line, said Arjun Kumar Karki, executive director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA). He said that the first unit of the project will begin generating 36 MW of power from December of 2007 whereas the 132 kv transmission line will be in place at the soonest by May of 2008. The second 36 MW unit of the project will start generation from March, 2008. The wastage is certain to lead to billions of rupees worth of losses. *Kantipur daily reports.*

## US Against Allowing Armed Groups In Political Process

Pointing out that there were concerns in the United States about the conduct of Maoists, the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said that "at the very least armed groups should not be allowed to stay in the political process." She said that the US wanted stable and prosperous democracy in Nepal and hoped that the peace process will go well. Rice made these remarks

during her meeting with the visiting Nepalese deputy prime minister and foreign minister K.P. Oli in Washington DC on September 28. During the meeting, Oli briefed Rice about the ongoing peace process and informed that the government was trying its best to convert the peace process into permanent peace. Oli also requested Rice for the US support in launching the rehabilitation work particularly in the transition phase. The two leaders also discussed about the Bhutanese refugee issue. Oli said that he wanted to hold "one decisive meeting with the Bhutanese side as soon as possible." Rice assured him of US help in resolving the refugee issue. "As for preferential trade agreement involving textiles, she said the US side could sit and work together with the Nepalese side in areas of Nepal's economic development," stated a press release issued by the Nepalese Embassy in Washington DC. Oli also raised the issue of Nepal's candidature for the non-permanent membership of UN Security Council for 2007/08. On his request for US support towards Nepal's candidature, Rice responded by saying "we are good friends, and we will certainly take it very seriously." Meanwhile, reacting to the remarks of US Secretary of State, spokesperson of the Maoists Krishna Bahadur Mahara demanded that the US government withdraw his party from the list of terrorists. "We demand that the US withdraw (us) from the list of terrorists at the soonest," said Mahara, who is also the coordinator of Maoist talks team. "We are totally against unnecessary interventions by the US in the political matters of Nepal," Mahara added. He urged the US to give up its political interests in Nepal.

## Equality Bill Passed By The Parliament

The House of Representatives passed the Equality Bill, which amended some Nepal Acts with the objective of ending existing discriminatory legal provisions against women. The government had prepared the bill in the backdrop of various international

conventions on women's rights to which Nepal is a state party; the directives by the Supreme Court issued in different times; and the commitment by the House of Representatives to provide citizenship also in the name of mother. The endorsed act will amend discriminatory provisions on inheritance of properties, divorce, rape, public service etc. The new act makes it mandatory to mention the name of mother in addition to father when revealing personal information. Likewise, the name of wife has also been added alongside name of husband in such personal record. The act makes marital rape a criminal offense and a valid ground for seeking divorce. It seeks to end the provision that allows a husband to seek divorce if his wife does not bear a child within ten years of marriage. In case of inheritance, adopted daughters will now be equally entitled as adopted sons. For both men and women, the legal age of marriage has been fixed at 20 years. And it seeks to provide paid leaves to husbands when their wives give birth.

## Political Consensus Should Be Sought On Oil Price

Leaders of major parties and the Maoists have said that consultations should be held with the political leaders before taking decision on price of petroleum products. Their remarks came at a time when, the state-owned Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) is losing billions of rupees due to lack of price adjustment in domestic market. A month ago, the government was forced to roll back the decision to hike the price of petro products following intense street protests and opposition by political parties. The NOC is currently losing Rs 830 million every month. Its outstanding dues to its supplier Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has reached Rs 10 billion. Recently, a committee formed to study the petro pricing has also suggested hiking price as the only option. Political leaders, on the other hand, continue to stress for exploring other options. "Although it is clear that there are losses, we have seen what happens when prices are increased without consultation. All political parties and civil society must be taken into confidence first,"

said Nepali Congress leader Arjun Narsingh KC. Adds UML leader Dilli Raj Khanal, "First win the confidence of others by making NOC's transactions transparent. Then political consultations should be held to lessen the loss." Maoist leader Dinanath Sharma suspected the data about NOC's loss and transactions that have been made public. He said his party is conducting a separate study on this matter. "Only after the conclusion of the study we can give our decision," Sharma said, adding that the government should introduce policy of subsidizing petroleum products. Lilamani Pokharel, of People's Front, suggested giving subsidies and imposing progressive taxes on fuel. *Kantipur daily reports.*

## Nepal Lobbies For Temporary Membership

Nepal has stepped up its lobbying for a temporary membership at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the year 2007/08. Recently, deputy prime minister and foreign minister KP Sharma Oli met with dozens of leaders from other countries during his visit to New York and appealed for the support to Nepal's candidature. Currently, acting foreign secretary Bhagirath Basnet and senior officials Dinesh Bhattaraj and Nepal's Permanent Representative to the UN Madhu Raman Acharya are in New York lobbying for the same. However, due to the candidature of another heavyweight Asian nation Indonesia, Nepal's hope has received some jolt. The two are contesting for a single seat from Asia. Nepal's strong points are its regular contribution to peacekeeping missions; the historic people's movement that restore democracy and sentiments of being the birthplace of Lord Buddha. On the other hand, Indonesia is confident of winning votes from all Muslim nations as it is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. Besides, Indonesia has a wide network of its diplomatic missions abroad and is able to spend resources to lobby for its victory. Therefore, when asked if Nepal can win the membership, acting secretary at Foreign Ministry Pradeep Khatiwada replied, "We are trying." *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.* ■



**PM G.P. Koirala attends Dashain tea reception hosted by UML general secretary M.K. Nepal**

Gorkhapatra

**IN HIS FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT AFTER THE APRIL** movement forced him to give up power, King Gyanendra has backed the ongoing peace process terming it as the country's need. Issuing a customary Dashain message on the day of Bada Dashain on October 2, he said that the "success of the ongoing efforts to guarantee security to the people by making the peace process successful," is, indeed, "the need of the nation and the desire of the Nepalese people." In the message addressed to the countrymen, King Gyanendra said that "the glorious history of Nepalese people can continue only with the common resolve of all Nepalese" and added that it can ensure the "beautiful future" of Nepal. King Gyanendra, in his message, has expressed well wishes on the occasion of Vijaya Dashami to all Nepalese people living inside and outside the country and all Hindus for "happy, peace and prosperity." The King further stated, "We pray to Goddess Navadurga to inspire us all to move ahead in the spirit of national unity and reconciliation during this difficult period of history."

**PRIME MINISTER GIRIJA PRASAD KOIRALA, IN HIS DASHAIN** message, has said everybody should cooperate in making the ongoing peace process successful for the sake of nation's interest. Issuing the message from his hometown in Biratnagar, PM Koirala said, "A historic duty is upon our shoulders and if we can carry out this duty well, we can help build a beautiful and peaceful Nepal." In his Dashain greetings, PM Koirala has also appealed to the leaders and workers of Nepali Congress (Democratic) for unity. "Let us not waste our energy by remaining (as separate parties)," he said. Koirala added that the Nepali Congress party will welcome and respect all their colleagues from NC (Democratic). Earlier, addressing business community and workers in Biratnagar, Koirala said that if the peace process in Nepal becomes successful, that will provide an example to the whole world. "Though Nepal is a small country and is not known widely, we can be an example to the whole world and also to the terrorist groups - that any problem can be resolved peacefully through negotiations," Koirala said. This year PM Koirala stayed in Biratnagar for Dashain festival and returned to the capital only on October 3. He did not visit the royal palace to receive tika from King Gyanendra this year. This is the first time that a prime minister did not receive Dashain tika from the King. None of the ministers received tika from the King. Few former ministers of the royal cabinet and government officials went to the palace to receive tika. Meanwhile, army chief Rukmangad Katawal received tika from the King. The army had, however, stated that it is not compulsory for its officers to visit the royal palace to receive tika.

**THE NEPAL ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY (NEA) WILL** withdraw the existing load shedding for one month from (October 18). The officials at the state-owned power monopoly said that since the water reservoir at Kulekhani hydro project has been adequately filled during this monsoon and since the repair works of turbines of Kali Gandaki project have been completed, they are in a position now to call off the weekly load shedding. At present, the NEA has been imposing two and a half hour of load shedding every week. Authorities say that this season, the water level at Indrasarovar in Kulekhani has reached to the level of 1525 meters - five meters more than in the past years. However, NEA managing director Arjun Kumar Karki has said that load shedding would be resumed from the month of Mangsir (mid November).

**THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS ANNOUNCED TO SHUT** down all business across the country on coming Monday (October 16) to protest against the continued indifferences and excesses by the government and the Maoists. A meeting of National Agitation Committee formed by the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) on Monday decided to go for symbolic shut down in order to press their five-points demand that include providing peace and security; ending extortion; and resolving labor and trade union disputes. The demand was made by recently held national convention of business community in Birgunj. The same convention had formed the agitation committee headed by FNCCI president Chandi Raj Dhakal.

**AFTER FOUR YEARS, THE RENOVATION PROJECT OF** Garden of Dreams is finally complete. The renovated Garden of Dreams at Kaiser Mahal in the heart of Kathmandu has formally opened from October 8. The renovation project was carried out by Eco Himal with the support of Austrian government. The renovated garden was inaugurated by New Delhi-based Austrian ambassador to Nepal Ms Jutta Stefan-Bastl. The Garden was constructed by Kaiser Sumsher Rana during Rana regime. He constructed it in a European style following his visit to Europe. For years, the garden had gradually been deteriorating due to lack of care and renovation. Four years ago, Eco Himal took up the responsibility of renovating the garden. The team of architects who had renovated Patan Museum were assigned the responsibility of renovating this garden - which is located at a stone's throw away from royal palace. The project was completed at the cost of \$100,000. Between October 8 and 21, various cultural events have been planned for the Gala Opening of the Garden.

**IN A TRAGIC INCIDENT, THREE KIDS WERE KILLED WHEN** bomb exploded at a rice mill in Basauti Village Development Committee in Kailali district. Nirajan Chaudhary, 2, Rabina Chaudhary, 9, and Parshuram Chaudhary, 12 were killed when the bomb, apparently left behind near the rice mill of a local village resident Chhetra Bahadur Chaudhary, exploded suddenly. The kids were playing in the area when the explosion occurred, reports say. Five other persons were also injured by the same explosion. It is not clear who had planted the bomb there or how it exploded. The incident site is located some 40 km east of Dhangadhi.

**THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC)** has expressed concern over increasing abduction and looting spree by Maoist cadres at different parts of the country. In a statement issued last week, the Commission has stated that ten persons were abducted from Kotabada VDC of Kalikot district on the day of Tika. Of them, two persons - Ganesh Bista and Karna Bahadur Bista - are still in the Maoist captivity. Likewise, the Maoists also abducted Balibhadra Rana, a former mayor of Tribhuvannagar municipality of Dang district. Rana was elected mayor during the controversial February 8, 2005 municipal elections held by erstwhile royal regime. Rana who was living in Kathmandu had gone to his hometown on the occasion of Dashain festival.

SPOTLIGHT/OCTOBER 13, 2006



“Success of the ongoing efforts to guarantee security to the people by making the peace process successful is, indeed, the need of the nation and the desire of the Nepalese people.”

*King Gyanendra, in his Dashain message to Nepalese people.*

\* \* \*

“All the issues cannot be resolved immediately and at a single sitting. We need adequate patience. The talks may continue for two to four days but the dialogue will be successful.”

*Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, talking to reporters, during the traditional Dashain tea reception by Nepali Congress.*

\* \* \*

“Bhutanese Prime Minister Khandu Wangchuk has agreed to resume stalled bilateral talks in November and find a final solution to the Bhutnese refugee crisis.”

*Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs KP Sharma Oli, talking to reporters, upon his return home after attending the 61st UN General Assembly, in New York where he met with his Bhutanese counterpart.*

\* \* \*

“At the very least armed groups should not be allowed to stay in the political process.”

*Condoleeza Rice, US Secretary of State, pointing out that there were*



Annapurna Post

*Haven't you completed? Leave it. Lets first go to Summit meeting, and then we will do the homework.*

*concerns in the United States about the conduct of Maoists, during her meeting with the visiting Nepalese foreign minister KP Oli in Washington DC.*

\* \* \*

“We can also save a huge amount for the state exchequer if the constituent assembly is converted into the first parliament.”

*Narayan Man Bijukchhe, president of Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP).*

\* \* \*

“We like to see fundamental change in the Maoists' actions-actions of the cadres,

of army and of the militia. But if there is no change in behavior or action, then how can anyone expect any change in United States position.”

*Steven R Mann, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs, at a press meet, when asked how the US considered Maoist demand that America withdraw it from terrorist list.*

\* \* \*

“The US offer to take 60,000 refugees is in favor of Bhutanese King and against Bhutanese people.”

*Tek Nath Rijal, human rights leader of Bhutan, criticizing US offer even as he welcomed it “on humanitarian grounds,” in Kantipur.*

\* \* \*

## TRANSITION

**DIED:** Folk singer and radio anchor **Pandav Sunuwar**, 53, died at King's College Hospital in London. He was suffering from liver cirrhosis.

**KILLED:** **Bibek Sharma (Luitel)**, an eight year old child, after abduction, in Kathmandu.

**FILED:** Charge-sheets demanding life sentence has been filed at Kathmandu

District Court against seven accused persons in the killing of **Bibek Sharma (Luitel)**. The accused include **Bhikhari Khan, Okil Ansari, Pappu Mandal, Pateni Lama, Shakhina Manandhar Khapung, Mokhtar Ansari and Akabar Ansari**. **Bhikhari, Okil and Mokhtar** are Indian nationals. **Akabar Ansari** is still absconding.

**SENT:** Maoist leader **CP Gajurel** to West Bengal state of India (to face fresh charges there) by the Madras Metropolitan Court.

**ARRIVED:** Two UN experts – one on military matters and another on electoral procedures – to join **Ian Martin** – the Personal Representative of UN Secretary General **Kofi Annan**, who has been dispatched to Nepal to facilitate the peace process here.

**LEFT:** **Dr. Suresh Chandra Chalise**, advisor to Prime Minister **Girija Prasad Koirala** on foreign affairs, has left for six-day visit to China. He has been sent by the PM as his special envoy.

# Independent Power Producers (IPPAN)- A Request

By DR. AB THAPA

It has been very recently reported that a two-day meeting was held to bring together investors, business professionals etc at a single forum where all kinds of issues from policies and laws to technology and trade were discussed. Needless to stress that the IPPAN can play a very constructive role in future development of our vast hydropower potential.

It is quite clear that our hydropower should be developed in the interest of our country and the people. It is equally true that the private developers must not be treated as philanthropist. They are entitled to make reasonable profits Without such incentives they would not be interested to work.

Unfortunately quite often private developers are seen shamelessly robbing the governments to make vast profits. Recently even the donor countries have started to show great concern over this matter. It has been reported that a British minister participating in the recently held World Bank meeting has categorically said that the British Government will suspend its aids to be channeled through the World Bank if the Bank attached conditions such as the involvement of private sector while disbursing funds for the projects.

In Nepal people have great misunderstanding over the way hydropower projects are implemented by private developers. Khimti Project, Bhotekoshi Project, Indrawati Project are seen as the showpiece among the IPPAN projects. It is hoped that the IPPAN would respond to the following queries that have worried Nepalese people who have great stake in Nepal's hydropower development.

## **Khimti Hydropower Project**

Within the past decade our power development plans have been thrown into a complete disarray. The task of regulatory body even now is nothing more than a mere

formality. The 60 MW Khimti hydropower, the first project in private sector, has opened a Pandora's box. The Khimti project had disastrous consequences for the economy of the Nepal Electricity Authority.

The Khimti project operating at a very high head of about 650 meters was seen in the past as one of the most attractive projects for the generation of cheap electricity. The cost of this project was originally estimated at US \$ 60 millions but astonishingly, it was raised to US\$ 140 millions to calculate the selling price of the electricity to the NEA. It is virtually an incomplete project A most

*It is quite clear that our hydropower should be developed in the interest of our country and the people. It is equally true that the private developers must not be treated as philanthropist. They are entitled to make reasonable profits Without such incentives they would not be interested to work. Unfortunately quite often private developers are seen shamelessly robbing the governments to make vast profits. Recently even the donor countries have started to show great concern over this matter. It has been reported that a British minister participating in the recently held World Bank meeting has categorically said that the British Government will suspend its aids to be channeled through the World Bank if the Bank attached conditions such as the involvement of private sector while disbursing funds for the projects.*

important component of any hydropower is a reservoir for the storage of water at least for daily use to enhance the value of the firm energy. This very important structure is missing. The Khimti project is forced to operate at base load, thus it would be producing electricity at constant rate throughout the day and night. Under such circumstances the true per unit (KWh) value of the firm power of the Khimti by comparison with other power stations like the Marshyangdi, Trisuli etc would be far less.

The Khimti project produces an enormous volume of seasonal energy due to unnecessarily high installed capacity of the power station, which is 60 MW against its firm capacity of only about 18 MW. The seasonal energy procured from the Khimti is completely wasted though the NEA is made to pay about US \$ 9 million per annum for such seasonal energy. Unfortunately, to make matters even worse, the NEA had to build at its own cost very expensive high voltage 120 KV transmission lines from Khimti to Katmandu almost exclusively for the supply of seasonal

energy, which anyway would be completely wasted. A low voltage transmission lines at far less investment would have been adequate for the transmission of the entire Khimti firm energy.

As far as the NEA is concerned, the Khimti deal was indeed a total disaster. Many developers were quick to take full advantage of the precedence set by the Khimti project.

**Dispute Over The Bhote-Kosi Capacity**

The private developer of the Bhote Koshi hydropower is reported to have already made claims that the NEA should purchase each and every unit of the electricity they are able to generate by running the hydropower at its total installed capacity of 45 MW despite the fact that according to the PPA the total capacity of the hydropower had to be only 36 MW. It should be noted here that the Bhote Koshi hydropower would be able to operate at a capacity exceeding 36 MW only during the monsoon season.. It need not be explained that such extra seasonal energy will be completely wasted. At present the NEA has declined to make payment for such extra generation.

The Bhote Koshi hydropower can be expected to operate at full installed capacity of 45 MW throughout the monsoon season lasting about three months ( about 2000 hours each year). During the winter season when the demand for electricity in Nepal is the highest, the Bhote Koshi hydropower is able to generate only about 15 MW. The NEA could be forced to pay extra money each year for the purchase of about 18,000,000 KWh electricity which could be roughly equivalent to Rupees seven crores if the PPA is amended to increase the capacity of the Bhote Kosi project to 45 MW.

**Why Yangri and Larke Were Leased Out?**

The UNDP supported Melamchi Water Supply Project Report explains that around the time 2011 the total system demand for water supply ( in Kathmandu valley) is expected to reach the total supply from in-valley surface sources and Melamchi. Thereafter the next stage of the development of the Melamchi will be required. This entails diversion from the YANGRI and LARKE rivers that flow to the east of the Melamchi. Water would be diverted by tunnels to a point upstream of the Melamchi intake. The total length of the delivery tunnels is expected to be over 12 kilometers. The Larke and the Yangri are the main tributaries of the Indrawati River. After the diversion of the Yangri and Larke rivers into the Melamchi there would hardly be any flow in the upper reach of the Indrawati River during the dry season.

It saddens any common Nepalese who have the slightest care for the country to learn that the Indrawati River has been recently leased out to private developers to build a cascade of hydropower. One hydropower is already completed and the others are also going to be implemented. The IPPAN and concerned agencies at the policy making level should be able to explain the rationale behind the

decision to implement the Indrawati hydropower projects. Could not we find some other suitable rivers any where in Nepal to be leased out to private hydropower developers?

**A Request**

Needless to say that in future the IPPAN would be playing very important role in development of our hydropower resources. It is time that the IPPAN would review its past performances and help its members in future to develop our hydropower resources in the best interest of our country. ■

*(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)*

**Signing Of Extradition Treaty Postponed**

Upon request from Maoist chairman Prachanda, the Prime Minister decided to postpone the visit of Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula to New Delhi to sign the extradition treaty. Sitaula was scheduled to visit New Delhi on October 4 to sign the Extradition Treaty and Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance.

According to reports, Prachanda requested Koirala to defer the signing of the treaty till after the conclusion of peace talks. The new treaty would have replaced the 50-year-old extradition treaty between the two neighbors. The Treaty on MLA will facilitate legal aspects of implementing the extradition treaty. Earlier, on January 20 of 2005, the two treaties were initiated by the Home Secretaries of Nepal and India in New Delhi.

Then, it was stated that the treaties would come into force after the Home Ministers of the two countries sign it. After the initialing of the two treaties, the political change in Nepal and the turbulent aftermath probably had delayed the formal signing by the Home Ministers - which is now taking place next week. Officials have been saying that the updated treaty and MLA have provisions to help investigators (of the two countries) reach the suspects and smoothen the court proceedings.

In January of 2005, then Nepalese Home Secretary Chandi Prasad Shrestha had told reporters that "these provisions do not mean that Indian police can do anything inside Nepal." He was responding to concerns raised by a section of people in Nepal that in the updated treaty Nepal had agreed to extradite even third country nationals. Officials further noted that the two treaties were aimed at checking the growing nexus between left wing extremists in two neighbors, combating terrorism and other cross border criminal activities. In April of 2005, the Indian cabinet had formally endorsed the Nepal-India Extradition

Treaty and Mutual Legal Assistance.

## SUMMIT MEETING

**Baluwatar Brainstorming**

After Tuesday's talks, the seven parties and the Maoists agree to hold CA polls by mid-June next year

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

A huge crowd of people assembled in the street in front of eastern gate of Baluwatar residence of Prime Minister on Tuesday reflected the groundswell of popular expectation that the summit meeting going on inside would restore lasting peace in the country.

The crowd consisted not only of the civil societies and pressure groups but also a fair number of general public who wanted nothing other than peace and prosperity.

In a historic summit meeting between the top leaders of seven parties and the Maoists, all the issues related with political and socio-economic transformation of the country are being discussed.

The summit meeting, which was held on Sunday (October 8) and Tuesday (October 10) has not yet been able to reach broad understanding on key contentious issues. However, on Tuesday, the summit meeting was able to agree to hold the elections for the Constituent Assembly (CA) by mid-June 2007.

Other contentious issues such as management of arms, finalization of interim constitution, interim parliament, status of monarchy and so on remain to be settled. The summit meeting on Thursday (October 12) is expected to conclude on these matters.

On Tuesday, the meeting also decided to appoint commissioners at the Election Commission by mid-October for the purpose. It assigned the talks team of the government and the Maoists to engage in homework to identify points of common understanding and submit them at the next summit meeting.

"Tuesday's meeting was significant in facing the challenges of the nation," said Krishna Sitaula, coordinator of government talks team, addressing the press meeting after Tuesday's summit

meeting. Sitaula said the meeting discussed various issues including implementation of past agreements, major points of interim constitution, monarchy, interim parliament, interim government and modalities of CA.

On the other hand, Maoist spokesperson and coordinator of its talks team Krishna Bahadur Mahara said that this time the summit meeting discussed key issues of national importance in a more serious manner.

Mahara said that the leaders exhibited willingness to reach to understanding rather than stick to their positions. "The nation does not only desire peace. It also desires change, which means complete restructuring of state," he said.

**Management of Arms**

The issue of management of arms has become one of the major stumbling blocks in reaching an agreement with the Maoists.

It has been a well-known viewpoint of not only the Nepal government but also international community that the Maoists must first disarm themselves and renounce violence for good.

But this viewpoint has been rejected by the Maoists who believe that their army is the genuine army. "There have been concerted propaganda to project the issue of arms management in a manner as to push us to a corner. We reject this," said Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, second-in-command of the Maoists.

Dr. Bhattarai said that management of Maoist arms is not the 'major issue.' "Rather it is the restructuring of the royal army that is the major issue," he said.

During the summit meetings also the Maoist leaders reportedly told their seven party counterparts that the question of managing their arms does not arise unless it is raised simultaneously with the issue of managing what they continue to call as 'royal army.'

"During the meeting, Maoist leaders asked us why we were talking about disarming the same army that had helped in the People's Movement II and in the restoration of democracy," said Narayan Man Bijukchhe, president of Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP) said.

As leaders continue to search for common grounds the issue of arms management is likely to be resolved in a "package form." "On Tuesday, there has been broad agreement among us all to search for its solution in a package form – that is to manage both armies simultaneously," said Dr. Bhattarai.

**Status of Monarchy**

Another sticking point at the summit meeting has been the status of monarchy. Even among seven parties, there are various viewpoints about how to treat the monarchy, particularly during the interim period.

There is one proposal by the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) to decide the fate of monarchy through a referendum to be held alongside CA polls. This proposal has drawn a wide support including that of the Maoists.

However, two Congress parties have maintained that holding referendum would only help to activate the already inactive monarchy. They contend that the issue of monarchy should be left for the elected CA to decide. Especially NC president and prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala favor giving a 'ceremonial' role to the King.

The Maoists, on the other hand, have been pushing for outright declaration of republic in the interim constitution. "If some parties have reservations of doing so, then lets decide the fate of monarchy through referendum," said Dr. Bhattarai.

The summit meeting is expected to decide on this matter also on Thursday. Analysts predict that the meeting might decide to keep the toothless monarchy in present state till the elections of CA and/or referendum.

**Interim Constitution**

The meeting of Sunday as well as Tuesday extensively discussed various aspects of interim constitution.

Already an incomplete draft of interim constitution has been submitted by the

drafting committee formed by the seven parties and the Maoists.

The summit meeting is filling up the blanks in that draft constitution. Since constitution involves a whole lot of issues, Tuesday's meeting has assigned the talks team of the government and the Maoists to identify points of agreement and submit them to the Thursday's meeting.

The whole interim arrangement including interim legislature and government will have to be dealt with by the interim constitution. The division of parliamentary seats and government portfolios can also come under its purview.

Apart from the separate issue of interim parliament, the interim constitution has also been dragged into debate on the status of monarchy, independence of judiciary and so on. "We want all the judges to be reappointed so that they are loyal to the new constitution. Otherwise, there is a possibility of disturbances from the judiciary that has been groomed under feudal regime," said Dr. Bhattarai.

Although many people think that the interim constitution does not deserve much seriousness as it would be there only for a short period of time, they could not be further from the truth. The fact that both seven party leaders and Maoists gave the drafting committee two weeks to complete the draft of interim constitution speaks volumes about the seriousness with which they treat this subject. This ridiculous decision later fell flat when the committee could not produce a complete draft even after two months.

"The interim constitution currently discussed by the parties is a project of the greatest possible importance. It is to regulate Nepal's transition to Democracy for a considerable period, a minimum of two and a half years including both the provisional arrangements before and during the period of elections for a constituent assembly, as well as the duration of the assembly itself. Under an interim constitution, the constituent assembly itself would be bound to procedural rules. If under these rules a new constitution is not successfully

drafted and enacted, a new assembly would have to be elected still under the interim constitution that would then remain the country's basic law possibly for another two years," writes Professor Andrew Arato, an American constitutional expert in his article "The Interim Constitution."

According to Professor Arato, being Nepal's constitution for this extremely important and extended period, if well designed, the interim constitution can solve three fundamental problems. "It can protect the country from dictatorship for the whole transitional period by subjecting all power holders both to its rules and to the separation of powers. That is why there must be an interim legislature and constitutional court in the document, and not just an interim executive as in older provisional

democratic order when a fully democratic beginning is impossible, since elections have not yet taken place and someone has to provide the rules and the framework for their organization."

Given the high importance of interim constitution and its power to shape the nation's destiny, Thursday's summit meeting will have to weigh in all kinds of options and opinions when finalizing it. "If it successfully guides the democratic transition, it is the interim constitution that will establish Nepal's place among the most advanced forms of constitution making in the modern world," writes Professor Arato.

### Historic Summit

For obvious reasons, Thursday's summit meeting is set to be a historic one. But there are enough apprehensions and



Mahara (left) and Sitaula: All smiles

government formulas. Second, being part of a two stage process it can provide the country important learning experiences with what works and what does not on the constitutional level so that the constitutional assembly can then design a better, more permanent constitution. And finally, if enacted through the inclusion of at least the main political forces and with the support of society, the interim constitution can solve the problem of how to begin legitimately a

reservations that compel one to become cautious about its outcome.

For instance, Dr. Bhattarai has warned that anybody who is demanding that the summit meeting of one or two days reach conclusion on all issues, is being naive. "Although the King as the feudal leader has weakened, there are the feudal production relations that shape the mentality of major parliamentary parties. Therefore, this is a kind of class struggle," he said. ■

## TIBET

# Development At Doorstep

With the modernization of Tibet Autonomous Region of China through implementation of various development activities, Nepal, a landlocked country, has a reason to rejoice as progress brought about by the development in north will have spillover effects in Nepal. With economic growth rate of over 13 percent, Tibet's ongoing development process—which is going alongside the preservation of its traditional culture and religion – is also knocking the door of opportunities for Nepal. From road networks to rail networks and other development boom in Tibet, there are opportunities everywhere. At a time when Tibet is making all out progress, how Nepal, which shares more than 1400 kilometers border with Tibet, can take advantages remains to be seen

By KESHAB POUDEL, in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region of China

“**F**or twenty days I shall stay in Lhasa, and twenty days on the road. After forty days, it will bring prosperity in small family of impoverished home” – this is how Madan, who is the main character of popular verse Muna Madan by great poet late Laxmi Prasad Devkota, dreams. For centuries, not only the character of that verse, many other people of Kathmandu valley had similar dream - of going to Tibet to bring back prosperity.

But in recent decades there was a lull of sorts. The recent wave of

development in Tibet is now again opening the opportunities across the Himalayas and Tibet's high economic growth and development boom is again knocking the door for Nepal.

Isolated by mountains and high Himalayas, the journey to Tibet was very difficult as it took months to go to Lhasa in old days. Many people died on their way to Lhasa, unable to cope with the high-altitude sickness and dehydration as Madan faces in the verse.

Thanks to the extension of road networks and other transport facilities including the opening up of railways, the situation, however, has changed as expansion of road network in Tibet has cut short the journey. Now one can reach

Lhasa in just one and a half day by bus through Kodari highway and just within an hour by flight.

For those who visited Tibet a decade ago, the physical change in the roof of the world can be unimaginable. Even the visitors like this scribe, who was in Tibet three years ago, the change and progress seems like a miracle. One can visibly see the mechanization of agriculture system and growth of well-planned villages in interiors of Tibet.

Following the completion of two bridges and a tunnel project, the distance from Gongkha International Airport to Lhasa has already reduced from 140 kilometers to 50 kilometers. Not only the improvement of modern infrastructures



**Potala Palace: Cultural Symbol**

like road, railway, airports and others but the renovation of religious and historical sites like Potala Palace, Norbulinkha, Jokhang Temple, Traduk Monastery of Shannan Prefectures and others have helped to preserve Tibet's identity alongside its development.

Unlike in the past, all weather road networks have shortened the time to reach Lhasa. The high economic growth and new development activities in Tibet is definite to benefit Nepal in days to come.

#### **Successful Development**

In high mountains, plateau and barren land, development can be seen everywhere. Tibet has conducted a successful experiment how a difficult terrain and plateau can be made economically viable. Till two decades ago, barley, potato, wheat and mustards were the traditional crops of Tibet and most of the farmers grew one crop a year.

Now the farmers in Tibet can grow everything in their land. From water melon to green vegetables, cabbage, ginger, garlic, apple and cucumber, farmers grow all kinds of vegetables all the time using modern methods. Introduction of green house methods has made it possible for them to grow all

kinds of vegetables. The high quality seeds, technical support and improvement in irrigation have doubled overall agriculture production.

"We can produce surplus food now and we send water melon, cabbage and other vegetables even out of Tibet Autonomous Region," said Fupuchoma, 56, a resident of Ging village of Lhasa. "Our income has gone up from 800 to more than 3000 Yuan annually."

The overall income of farmers living in Shannan and Lhasa are going up as their productions have also increased. Tibet now exports ginger and high quality apple to Nepal and other parts of China.

According to the Nepalese Consulate General office, Nepal alone imported Rs. 2 million worth of ginger from Tibet in the fiscal year 2004/05. Tibet exported 17 million rupees worth of ginger in the year 2003/04. Similarly, Nepal imported Rs. 121 million worth of apple from Tibet in year 2004/05. China has shown that development is possible in all kinds of places including in the high plateau like Tibet.

#### **Quest for Development**

According to the investment guide to Tibet Autonomous Region, TAR shares

border with Burma, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Kashmir region. With the territory of 1.2 million square kilometer, Tibet has long been known as the roof of the world because it has largest and highest plateau with an average altitude of 4000 meters above the sea level in the world.

Whether it is Lhasa or other prefectures, the high economic growth is bringing in tremendous change in Tibet. Shannan prefecture, 150 kilometer South-east of Lhasa, has shown how building infrastructures can reduce poverty in interior parts of Tibet. "Shannan economic growth rate is over 17 percent. With the literacy rate of over 95 percent, Shannan has drastically reduced the number of population living below the

poverty line," said Sangpu, deputy chief of Shannan prefecture. "We have just a few families living below poverty line out of 330,000 populations. By the end of next five years plan, the poverty in the prefecture will be completely wiped out."

Since long time Nepalese experts have had pessimist views towards the development in the northern hills of Nepal and failed to introduce programs to drastically change the life of people there. But, Chinese experts have proved that the progress is possible in high Tibetan plateau. Their success can be replicated in Nepalese hilly and mountainous districts as well.

#### **Implications of Qinghai-Tibet Railways**

The Qinghai-Tibet Railway has changed the overall position of Tibet as it is linked with the rail network of China supporting in the reduction of overall cost for carrying goods to Tibet as well as bringing in a large number of tourists in the region. Previously, the airfare was so costly that only a small number of people could afford to visit Tibet and driving through the road was often difficult.

The rail service increased the number of visiting tourists in Tibet.

According to the officials in Tibet, the rail carried 274,000 passengers in the month of July. Out of total passengers, 74,000 were foreigners.

"The railways have already reduced the cost of goods carrying in and out from Tibet to other parts of China. The Quinghai-Tibet railway will provide Nepal historic opportunities to improve trade between China and Nepal as rail has already reduced the travel time and lowered the cost," said Chouzhong Lifu, deputy director of TAR. "Nepal has enormous opportunities to increase the trade with Tibet."

Unlike other parts of South Asia, the Tibet Autonomous region is moving towards the path of development with absolute tranquility and harmony. From interior rural areas to urban centers, the pace of development is very fast. Along with education institutions, road networks and health facilities, the power is gradually reaching to the rural areas. In remote parts of Tibet, the TAR is promoting the solar energy as an alternative with heavy subsidies.

Tibet is now a model for development of hills and mountainous terrains and Nepal can learn many things from development and progress made by its northern neighbor.



**Fruits and vegetables:** Boosting agro-economy

#### **Preservation of Cultural And Religious Sites**

Along with modernity, Tibet also maintains its traditional life styles. The street of Lhasa are full of combination of modern brands of Tibetan to traditional forms devoted to Mahayana Buddhism.

Large number of devotees reach Lhasa from far flung rural areas of Tibet

to perform traditional rituals and to devote their life and time to Gods. Temples are full of devotees and monks carrying incense sticks in their hands.

The restoration of cultural religious sites in Tibet has turned the city into a home of Mahayana Buddhism. Every one condemns what was destroyed in the past and the government is putting a lot of money to protect remaining temples, palaces and other historical sites to preserve glorious culture and life of Tibet.

Despite these achievements, there is a political factor, which poses as an upheaval task for Chinese, to bring about fully open and pluralistic society all of China including in Tibet.

#### **Dream Land**

In the early days, Tibet used to be a dream place for the settlers of Kathmandu valley as everyone wished to go to Tibet as they felt that and prosperity lies across the Himalayas. The pace of recent progress will now benefit the settlers of northern sides of Nepal.

The curse of landlocked situation can be converted into the boon to Nepal if it responds properly to the opportunity in the doorstep.

Nepal always felt handicapped by its landlocked situation. All the time its life



**A road in interior of Tibet:** Expansion of infrastructure



line was limited to transit facility from Indian Territory.

Despite difference in political systems, China has offered to facilitate Nepal to have access to the sea through its new access of road networks and railway networks. Vice chairman of Tibet Autonomous Region said Nepal should take advantage of this but he did not explain it in so many words. But by implications Nepal could use 44000 kilometer of roads to be in contact with central Asian countries and far eastern countries.

Along with highways, in Tibet there are more 615 main roads, 315 branch roads with total mileage of about 260 thousand kilometers. TAR has already constructed more than 500 power stations with the total installed capacity of 500,000 kilowatts and over 400,000 kilowatts is generated by hydropower. Theoretically, the Yanglutanau River can produce over 80 million kW of hydropower.

"China wants to see prosperous and stable Nepal. If Nepal wants, it can take advantage of road networks of Tibet," said Luosang Jianguan, Vice chairman of Tibet Autonomous Region of China. "Nepal has recently reassured us that anti-China activities should not be allowed in Nepalese soil. The new government reassured us that Nepal would not allow reopening Dalai Lama's office in Nepal."

From railway to road network, the accessibility to Tibet has drastically increased. Along with Nepalese border town Kodari, it has recently opened trade route through Nathula Pass with India. The road network of Tibet is so long that the Tibet has accessibility to Karachi and Yangoon also.

Nepal's trade with Tibetan Autonomous region continues to increase as the country still exports traditional products to Tibet like textiles, handicrafts, and the utensils for religious purposes. Nepal imports readymade garments, shoes, raw wool, textiles, electronic goods, transport equipments, TV and its parts as well as raw silk and other machinery parts.

According to Nepalese Consulate General Office in Lhasa, in the year 2004/05, Nepal imported goods of more

than Rs 4.64 billion and exported goods worth Rs 1.83 billion to Tibet.

"There is immense possibility to expand trade with Tibet Autonomous Region but what is required is to identify the demands of Nepalese products in Tibet," said consulate general Lilamani Paudyal. "We need to identify the exportable items to Tibet and market but Nepalese business communities are now doing business without identifying the market for Nepalese products. High economic growth has increases the purchasing power of people in Tibet so Nepal has high potential to increase its export. Nepal needs to do study which Nepalese products have comparative advantage in Tibet."

the border trade between the two countries has increased by 24 percent. There are opportunities lying in Tibet and it is up to Nepalese government and business communities to take the advantage. We urge Nepalese business communities to take advantage."

Although more than 85 Nepalese have already signed agreement to invest in different joint venture sectors in Tibet with total commitment of US\$ 10.37 million but only 8.2 million dollar has been invested in Tibet till now. According to Chouzho Lifu, Nepalese are investing in hotels, restaurants, beauty parlors and such other sectors.

"It is still an unbelievable fairytale to policymakers in Nepal that China meant



**Tibetan people: New found prosperity**

In the last five years, Nepal's trade with Tibet has increased by more than double as Nepal exported just over 525 million rupees of goods in 2000/01 compared to 1.83 billion rupees now. Tibet's export to Nepal, however, has declined. In 2000/01, TAR exported to Nepal about 5.29 billion rupees of goods but the figure is 4.64 billion rupees now.

"Tibet-Nepal trade has increased over the years as people living in both the sides are benefiting from growing trade," said Schounzho Lifu, deputy director of Trade Department of TAR. "In the last six months,

what it has been proposing. But, Nepal is in a buffer like situation between India and China. If the economic interest gets priority, it will be a boon to the whole region. If it is considered solely by security interest then calamities are there waiting for all of us," said a political analyst.

From railway to road networks and high economic growth, the opportunities are growing in Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. How Nepal will take advantage of these development opportunities across the Himalayas remains to be seen. ■

## POLITICS

# Emerging Trends

Following April's popular uprising, a new trend is emerging in Nepalese politics

By KESHAB POUDEL

Six months after the restoration of democracy through popular uprising of April 2006 - when there was a high expectation in the mind of people that restoration of democracy would bring absolute change in their daily life-people in general now, are uncertain about the future political trend.

There is obvious sign of frustration and pessimism in the mood of people because of lackluster performance of the government and its leaders. Every one is asking now: What has the change brought? Where the country is being led by the politicians? Which of the problems of the country has been tackled smoothly and satisfactorily?

The government-Maoists talk is yet to bring long-lasting peace and common people continue to suffer from all kinds of problems like extortion, intimidation and other law and order problems.

In such a situation, one has to take stock of the balance sheet of the performance of the government. The ceasefire declared by Maoists has not been sincerely observed. CPN-Maoists - which is a party - has army with military discipline. Usually, the communist parties have an impression that they are most militant and disciplined but all seem to be proving wrong.

"On the government side they have not yet decided the procedure of the elections for CA even after several rounds of talks. Although they have set six months target for CA elections, the first six months have already passed but leaders are still assuring to hold the elections of CA in next six months," said a political analyst.

"Few months back, parties proposed to make an interim constitution in two weeks but it did not materialize. Now, leaders of seven parties and Maoists are talking to announce the interim constitution within few weeks. As the promises of CA are willingly postponed for indefinite period, now politicians are talking about the interim parliament and interim government," said the analyst.

Ambassadors of more than 10 countries were recalled within hours after the government was formed but these six months have passed without



PM Koirala and M.K. Nepal: Whither politics

ambassadorial assignments in even the top priority countries. Who else can be blamed for this except the fate of the people of Nepal.

Tribhuvan University, the oldest university of the country, which has more than 200,000 students, has no vice chancellor. On political side, the situation is not enthusiastic, either. Although they continue to sit with government, Maoists are neither full-fledged fighters nor the beneficiary of the government positions. The Maoist leaders are expressing frustration and anger.

"If our political demands are not addressed, we don't hesitate to back to

war as we did in the past when more than 12,000 people were killed." CPN-Maoist leader reportedly told in Baluwatar summit. "We want final negotiations and time is running out."

This long list of negative trends has made people disappointed. The permanent judges of Supreme Court and lower courts are all the time being threatened by politicians in power stressing that the judges would have to get reappointment as soon as interim constitution is enacted. The law and the constitution have no meaning because the rulers of this country have a 'mandate' of uprising. "This is the government constituted through the popular uprising. We don't know what the constitution is all about," said Home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula.

"It is strange that they claim all the powers which the constitution gives to the politicians but when it comes to restrictions and control by the same constitution, they discard the whole constitution. The constitution had a model of check and balance in democracy. Rulers at present don't want any kind of constitutional checks and they want absolute power," said the analyst.

But there is also another trend emerging in the country which gives sufficient point about the claimant of the change and its priorities. The King was deprived of all constitutional privileges and powers. The army has been humiliated now by politicians or their pampere press. All the time Rayamajhi commission has been issuing torturous statements to the head of the state. Despite such provocative actions, the King has shown extraordinary patience to allow the new leadership to work.

Other security agencies like police and armed police also have been disrespected and demoralized by pick and choose method. People, in general, have all the time been called sovereign but nobody knows when the sovereign's most privileged rights will come to be exercised.

## Other Trends

Internal trend is dismal but the country has seen many changes in terms

of its external relations as well. Soon after the formation of new government, expert committee was formed in haste to see Nepal's foreign policy and the committee came out with a report which is yet to come to public knowledge.

"It was reported in the press that the committee had an opinion advanced to the government that Nepal is no more a yam between two boulders, which was generally considered as the equidistance between the two big neighbors of Nepal," said the analyst.

"The government is also in a hurry to invite foreign investors in hydropower sector. Without any concrete commitment, almost all major water resources seem to have been engaged by investors, mostly from India. Some Nepalese experts who are either retired still in job argue all the time explaining that projects like Upper Karnali has minimum cost and maximum rate of return which can be completed through the use of Nepalese skills and resources."

Then came the most sensitive issue of citizenship in the country. The constitution of Nepal 1963 for the first time determined the cut off date for domicile persons of foreign origin. The 1990 constitution maintained the same cut off date by consensus. Now the government did not wait either for Constituent Assembly or interim constitution but all ministers in seven parties in the government passed unanimously the draft of citizenship bill which is contrary to the article 9 and 10 of the constitution.

"This cut off date has very sensitive and dangerous implications, which can put the country into a crisis. Some vocal political leaders of regional parties like Nepal Sadbhavana Party have aroused a sentimental feeling of separation from the hills, if this proposed cut off date of 1990 is rejected. They have said Nepal will face scenario like that of war-torn Sri Lanka. If it is implemented in toto, the country may face the fate of Sikkim. None of the leaders of this country have time to think seriously in a long term perspective about these problems," said the political analyst.

"If the parties do not support the bill, we don't have any option other than

to launch the war against state as in Sri Lanka," Minister of Industry, Commerce and Supply Hridayesh Tripathi.

Home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula, who was supposed to sign the new extradition treaty with India, postponed his visit to New Delhi at the last minute citing that the Maoists opposed the treaty, which allowed India to seek any third country's citizen from Nepal to investigate even for unspecified offense.

Although the government is interim in nature, it does not mind taking decisions of longer implications. Media is a powerful instrument known as the fourth estate but the government with short nature has already accepted the proposal of high level media committee to allow 49 percent of share to foreign media company. Even neighboring India has permitted only 25 percent of foreign investment in media sector. "This short term government

has no moral and ethical capacity to enter into such agreement with long term implications," said the analyst.

In the meantime, prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala sent his own emissary Dr. Suresh Raj Chalise to Beijing to explain Nepal's political situation. The trend shows clearly that there are two kinds of priorities for the government. In its domestic priorities, the government has been lackluster. However, it has all the time been very prompt and responsive to other kinds of priorities - to maintain trust with an external power.

"Keeping the people all the time confident and optimistic should have been the priority of the government. Unfortunately, present politicians in power who had experiences of last three parliament and government under it have no sense of urgency whereas the country is slowly and gradually entering into a domination under a proxy force," said the analyst. ■

## Wrath Against Army Chief Mysterious Attack

Soon after his appointment as an army Chief, a mysterious group launches tirade against general Rukmangat Katuwal

Whatever the steps newly appointed army chief takes, there is a group of vested interest people with mysterious design who don't mind humiliating and attacking Army Chief Rukmangat Katuwal.

When army chief Katuwal went to King to receive tika, a section of media immediately termed him a pro-monarchist. At a time when King Gyanendra is still the head of the state, no one can deprive any individual from meeting him. King Gyanendra is not a pariah as his role as a constitutional monarch is still there.

As an army chief, it is common and formal way to pay respect to the King as the head of the state. Whatever the constitutional provisions are there, a section of people don't mind to criticize chief of army for fulfilling his duty.

These brands of people, who seem to be guided from some quarters which want to weaken the country, are always there to demoralize the army chief and the institution he represents.

Whether in case of his appointment or his birth date, a group of lawyers are challenging him in court and there is a section of media which enjoys publishing articles and comments humiliating the army as an institution. Army chief Katuwal, the first common Nepali to reach to the highest position, has to fight all the front alone working sincerely protecting national security.

In his less than two months of appointment as an army chief, general Katuwal has been fighting war in all fronts. From court to media, a group of vested interest people with mysterious designs are trying to rock the institution of army. ■

## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

# A Window Of Opportunity

The US offer of resettlement provides a window of opportunity to relieve the burden from the shoulders of conflict-torn nation

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

**T**he United States as the land of immigrants has offered to take up to 60,000 Bhutanese refugees currently languishing in several camps in eastern Nepal.

This provides a unique chance to the harried refugees who have been living miserable lives in camps to restart their life in the "land of opportunities."

Likewise, the offer also provides Nepal with the opportunity of relieving off the burden that it has been shouldering for no fault of its own since last one and a half decade.

Due to recalcitrant and inhuman attitude of Bhutanese regime, the lives of over 100,000 people have been rendered miserable. Youths and children are living in a hell-like situation in camps deeply frustrated and anguished.

Therefore, notwithstanding how this decision could be translated as absolving Bhutanese regime of its wrongdoings, it does provide a practical solution to the plight of the people.

Strangely, the US offer seems to have irked the leaders of the refugees. A senior human rights leader of Bhutan has termed it as being supportive of Bhutan King. Even though he welcomed the US offer on humanitarian grounds, Tek Nath Rijal has criticized it as being "in favor of Bhutanese King and against Bhutanese people."

On the other hand, the US proposal is said to be rapidly dividing the Bhutanese refugees. Following the offer, the debate has intensified even among members of a family with some wanting to go to the US, some wanting to return to Bhutan, some wanting to stay back in Nepal and some wanting to engage in agitation. This debate is taking intense form at seven refugee camps in Jhapa and Morang.

Groups of refugees who want to be resettled in the US or the third developed country, have started signature campaign in refugee camps of Beldangi, Goldhap, Timai and Pathari. They have even floated organizations to intensify the campaign.

This development has angered refugee leaders. Rinjin Dorjee, general secretary of Druk National Congress - Bhutan, has accused that a conspiracy is being hatched to split the refugees by compelling them to open up various parties, committees and organization in the pretext of resettling them to the US. "Situation is such that, there could even be a bloodshed. When we said that repatriation is the ultimate alternative and the only sustainable solution of this impasse, threats were made to our lives," said D.B. Rana Sampang, chairman of Bhutan Gorkha Liberation Front. D.P. Kafle, general secretary of Human Rights of Bhutan, urged all concerned to be cautious about the likelihood of clashes. "If we are not cautious in time, there could be unimagined consequences (of this resettlement proposal)," he said.

Most of the refugee leaders claim that repatriation must be the number one priority. But this has been their stand for the past 15 years. Even after 15 ministerial meetings, the problem could not be resolved. A new round of ministerial meeting is expected to begin from November this year.

Although Nepal government has not made any official comment about the US offer, foreign minister KP Oli recently told reporters that Nepal first wanted to resolve it by repatriating the refugees. "But we could also look into other viable options," he said.

The US offer was formally made by Assistant Secretary of State for Refugee Affairs, Ellen Sauerbrey, during a conference of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva last week. She said that the US was "willing to resettle a very significant part of this [refugee] population." She said, "We think over the next three or four years that we can easily absorb 50,000 or 60,000 of the people who are now in the camps." AP quoted her as saying.

Every year the United States accepts around 50,000 refugees from all over the world - from Bosnia to Somalia. This is the first time US has shown interest to resettle Bhutanese refugees. Other developed countries such as Canada and Australia, too, reportedly have shown interest to take up some Bhutanese refugees.

## Dengue Scare Forces Govt To Send Expert Team

Amid reports that few dengue patients have been located in hospitals in Nepalgunj, the government has decided to send a team of experts to verify the cases. The Department of Health Services is dispatching a team led by Dr. Garib Das Thakur, a senior official at the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division to Nepalgunj on Thursday to test the suspected patients. The team will take a special medical test kit to verify the disease. It will also train the medical staffs there about the process of identifying the disease. The outbreak of dengue - a mosquito-borne disease - has affected different cities of India including its capital New Delhi. Although Nepal has not reported dengue disease yet, the border towns are said to be highly susceptible to it. Meanwhile, reports say dengue can be diagnosed in Kathmandu. "Diagnosis is possible in Nepal and infected people need not go to India or other country," said a statement of National Reference Laboratory (NRL). Managing Director of NRL, Sushil Thapa has asked blood samples for diagnosis in case any patient is suspected to be infected from dengue. Thapa also asked the Ministry of Health and Population and all the health workers working in Nepal-India border to send the blood samples to the NRL for testing. Testing for dengue costs Rs. 1500, said Thapa. The disease has already killed more than 60 people in India by Saturday while 60,000 others are said to be infected by the disease. He said there could be cases of dengue in Nepal but due to lack of diagnosis the disease might have been unreported in Nepal. According to doctors, two people died from the dengue last year in Nepal but because of lack of diagnostic facilities in Nepal, their blood samples had to be sent to Japan. Chief of NRL, Chinta Mani Sharma said that the disease is spread by bites of the mosquito of the *Aedes aegypti* species that are found in Terai region mostly during the rainy season. Dengue is a communicable disease that can spread to epidemic proportion if not treated on time.

# 'US Will Support All The Efforts Which Will Bring Peace And Stability In Nepal'

— STEVEN R. MANN

**STEVEN R. MANN**, Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, was recently in Kathmandu in his first visit to Nepal. Mann, who has experience of being involved in a numbers of negotiations, addressed a press conference at the American center last week before leaving for Washington. Excerpts of his remarks:

## Purpose of Visit

The purpose of my visit was to understand more fully the state of affairs in Nepal in particular the peace process and democratic transition underway. There is real interest in Washington in development here and I needed to see the situation for myself. I have benefited from excellent meetings and am warmly grateful to my interlocutors for receiving me at the holiday time.

## US Support

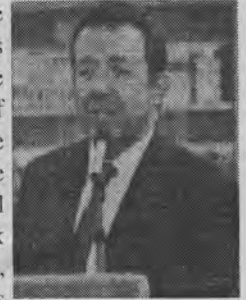
As first point, let me underscore how the United States is supporting Nepal's response to these historic opportunities and challenges. We announced recently that USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) will provide up to US\$ 15 million over two years in small grants and short-term technical assistance to support the peace process. In addition, we have been committed for more than 50 years to helping Nepal reach a level of economic development and democratic governance so that someday all Nepalis, regardless of age, caste or gender, may enjoy fully productive lives. This increase was due in part of US determination to support

Nepal's democratic transition after the King relinquished power and reinstated the Parliament.

## Period for Compromise

Much is at stake. This is a period of great promise for Nepal but it is a promise that can only be achieved with determination, insight, and sincerity through the peace process. Any peace must be a meaningful peace: one that firmly respects multi-party democracy and freedom of opinion, one that has no

strict observance of commitments made in the negotiations. If commitments are not observed, the basis for real progress is weak indeed. Secondly, no negotiations can ever succeed without compromises from all parties. The situation will be no



exception. In sum, the United States looks forward to continuing to support Nepal in the unfolding peace process and democratic transition.

## Hurdles Ahead

There are still many hurdles in the peace process and negotiation is itself a difficult process. After meeting with leaders of different political parties and senior government officials, there are hopes that the peace process will succeed. We want to see Maoists join the peaceful political process giving up violence. Maoists

*Much is at stake. This is a period of great promise for Nepal but it is a promise that can only be achieved with determination, insight, and sincerity through the peace process. Any peace must be a meaningful peace: one that firmly respects multi-party democracy and freedom of opinion, one that has no place whatsoever for Maoist intimidation, coercion, or violence. In sum, we look for an outcome that strengthens rule of law and leads to strong and sustained economic and social development, guided by effective governmental institutions.*

place whatsoever for Maoist intimidation, coercion, or violence. In sum, we look for an outcome that strengthens rule of law and leads to strong and sustained economic and social development, guided by effective governmental institutions.

## On Negotiation

Let me (share) two brief observations from my experience as a negotiator. The first is that any successful negotiation must be characterized by

continue to carry guns, extort money and intimidate people. They must give up all their activities so that they can compete in multi-party politics with all other parties. United States wants to see normalcy in Nepal with multiparty democracy and elected government. US will support all the efforts which will bring peace and stability in Nepal. Peace and stability in Nepal is in the interest of whole region. ■

## OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT

# Great Strides

Foreign employment is coming up as the fastest growing and most lucrative sector of national economy

By A CORRESPONDENT

**T**he growth of foreign employment sector has been praised for all the positive economic development – of which there are so few – in the country right now.

From macro economic stability to surging foreign exchange reserve and from poverty reduction to income distribution to rural areas, the foreign employment has managed to grab headlines every now and then.

And now a new report has shown that foreign employment continues to be the biggest draw for the Nepalese youths.

The number of people leaving for overseas employment increased by over

25 percent in the first two months of the current fiscal year. The new statistics released by the Department of Labor and Employment Promotion shows that approximately 557 people left Nepal everyday in search of jobs overseas during the months of Shrawan (July/August) and Bhadra (August/September).

According to the department, 33,445 people left the country for foreign employment, up from 26,600 people during the same period last year. There are 13 most favorite destinations for Nepalese workers with 48 percent opting for Malaysia. Other favorite destinations include Gulf countries, Israel, South Korea, Kuwait, Hong Kong, the USA and Russia.

The number of people leaving the country rose by over 2000 during the month of Bhadra to 17,887 against 15,558 people in Shrawan, the first month of Nepali fiscal year.

The department's report shows that a total of 16,507 workers left for Malaysia in the first two months of the current fiscal year compared to 12,196 during the same period last year, which means 275 workers are currently leaving for Malaysia for employment every day.

No wonder then that the country received Rs 97.53 billion as remittance amount from formal banking channels during the last fiscal

## Review Meeting On Trade Treaty

As both Nepal and India did not exchange any letter six months before the scheduled expiry of the bilateral Trade Treaty, the path for its automatic renewal has cleared.

However, the officials of the two countries would be meeting after a month to talk about procedural matters aimed at streamlining the treaty with regional understandings. The bilateral treaty is set to expire on March 5, 2007.

"The review meeting is felt necessary to discuss about non-tariff barriers and streamlining them with regional agreements," a government source said. The meeting will be held at joint secretary-level.

The treaty was first signed a decade ago. It provides duty free access to almost all Nepalese goods to Indian market except those in negative list. The treaty is of vital importance to Nepal as over 60 percent of Nepal's foreign trade is conducted with India.

The bilateral preferential treaty is in favor of Nepalese traders as it provides many facilities to them. After its signing in 1996, Nepal recorded a huge growth in its trade with India. However, the treaty was later amended in 2001.

year. This is the highest amount of remittance to have come through formal channels till date.

An international financial institution has estimated that, on average, only 50 percent of remittances are received through formal channels. However, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) estimates that around 60 percent of remittance amounts are received through formal channels.

As per its estimates, Nepal might have received Rs 140 billion remittance last year. In previous fiscal year, Nepal had received Rs 65.54 billion remittance through formal channels. Sending remittance through formal channels has picked up pace with the promotional campaigns by banks, and money transferees.

SPOTLIGHT/OCTOBER 13, 2006



Nepali workers: Boosting nation's economy

## MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

# Long Way To Go

South Asian countries including Nepal have a long way to go to achieve the targets set by MDGs

By KESHAB POUDEL

The recently released report on Millennium Development in Asia and Pacific region reveals the dismal picture in some South Asian countries in terms of implementing programs targeting the MDG goals.

Although more than 100 delegates from eight different South Asian countries discussed to develop a road map to eradicate extreme poverty in the region by 2015, it is very difficult to fulfill the target.

Organized under the tripartite initiative between the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific, the United Nations Development Program and the Asian Development Bank, the two day discussion that kicked off in the capital on October 11 is a first of its kind to evaluate the overall situation of the region.

South Asia, which is regarded as one of the world's most dynamic regions, has made some progress towards achieving the UN Millennium Goals. According to the UN, however, one of the countries in South Asia is on track to meet all the goals by 2015.

"Despite some encouraging trends, other sobering indications of South Asia's overall MDG achievement caution against any complacency. This sub region faces some very difficult challenges. After the mid-1990s, both the absolute levels and the rate of change in the reduction of income poverty have slowed down markedly. Over 400 million people still live in poverty. This means that South Asia is making less progress in combating hard

core poverty, which in turn holds back progress in other areas," said Kim Hak Su, under secretary general of the United Nations and executive secretary Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. South Asia needs to devote more financial and human resources to ensure that the benefits of economic growth reach who are most in need.

One of the poorest countries of the world caught in prolonged conflict, Nepal has dim chances of fully attaining the MDGs in stipulated time. "Nepal has made certain progress but it need to take more concerted actions to achieve the goals," said Sultan Hafeez Rahman, country

representative of Asian Development Bank.

Following the announcement of ceasefire by Maoists and beginning of negotiations, Nepal has seen some positive indication in the areas of program implementation but it still has a long time to go before it can achieve the goals set by MDG.

In certain areas like poverty alleviation, Nepal has made certain progress. According to National Living Standard Survey II, the absolute poverty line has come down from 42 percent in 1995-96 to 31 percent in 2005.

On the issues of universal access to primary education, the net enrolment ratio is on track at 84 percent. The ratio of children completing up to fifth grade has also increased to 60 percent from 38 percent in 1990. The goal of eliminating gender disparity in all levels of education by 2015 is impossible to achieve.

"We are taking efforts to achieve the target set by MDG. As the country's political situation is once again returning to normalcy, there is every possibility to achieve the target," said finance minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat.

Maternal mortality ratio continues to be a sore point and the incidence of HIV prevalence has been growing from 0.29 percent of total population in 2000 to 0.5 percent in 2005.

"In some areas, the progress is satisfactory but there is a need to take more actions to meet all the goals," said Matthew Kahane, UN resident coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative to Nepal.

From access to safe drinking water to ending disparities and halting the spread of major diseases, Nepal is still far away from realizing the goals. According to recent studies, Nepal is on track only on 3 of the 11 targets. Of course, the poverty has declined but the disparity is growing. ■



Nepali people : Gripped by poverty

## HELICOPTER CRASH IN GHUNSA

# Huge Setback To Nepal's Conservation Efforts

In one of the most tragic incidents in Nepal's aviation history, all 24 aboard the Shri Airlines helicopter have been killed in a crash. The chopper, which had gone missing since Saturday (September 23), was located by a team of rescuers including mountaineers and officials of World Wildlife Fund (WWF-Nepal) around two kilometers southwest of Ghunsa on Monday (September 25).

Initial reports suggest the chopper crashed moments after it took off from Ghunsa en route to Taplejung airport. It is reported to have hit a high hill.

The ill-fated helicopter was carrying renowned personalities including a minister, acting secretary, foreign envoy, experts and donors. "This is an irreparable loss to the nation," said Pradeep Gyawali, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation. The Ministry has formed a committee headed by Appellate Court judge Keshari Raj Pundit to probe the incident and submit preliminary report within two weeks.

The fatal crash of Shri Airlines helicopter was a huge setback to the nation, particularly to the field of nature conservation as the nation lost a number of experts and intellectuals. "Those who worked tirelessly to hand over the issue of conservation to the local people have disappeared. A day after they handed over Kanchanjunga conservation area to the local people, they died in the lap of Kanchanjunga," said renowned botanist Dr. Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha.

Ukesh Raj Bhuj, archaeology and conservation expert, said the nation would require more than three decades to produce such expertise in conservation. "We lost people renowned for their expertise in conservation, fund raising and mobilization," he remarked.

Those who perished in the crash include State Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation Gopal Rai and his wife Meena Rai; the charge d'affaires of Finland

Embassy Pauli Mustonen; assistant director at the USAID Margaret Alexander; country director of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Dr. Chandra Gurung; noted geographic and social expert Dr. Harka Gurung; acting Secretary at the Ministry of Forest Damodar Parajuli; director general of Forest Department Sharad Rai; and director general of Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation Narayan Poudel. Likewise, Mingma N Sherpa, managing director of EHBC, WWF-US; Dr. Jill Bowling, country director of WWF-UK; Dr. Tirtha Man Maskey, co-chairman of ASRSG, WWF-Nepal; Jennifer Headley, regional coordinator of Eastern Himalayas, WWF-UK; journalists Hem Raj Bhandari and Sunil Singh were also killed in the same crash.

Furthermore, other passengers of the chopper who were also killed include Yeshe Lama, senior program officer of WWF-Nepal, Matthew Preece, programming officer of EHBC, WWF-US; Bijaya Shrestha of FNCCI; Dawa Tsering Sherpa; and Dr. Bijan Acharya along with four cabin crew members.

Meanwhile, chairman and chief executive of Switzerland-based WWF Carter S. Roberts has said the accident was the most tragic loss in the 45-year history of the organization.

The government declared Wednesday (September 27) as the day of national mourning to mourn the deaths of state minister Gopal Rai and a number of national and international conservationists in a helicopter crash on Saturday.

Furthermore, the Director General WWF James P. Leape issued a statement saying that it was a terrible time for WWF, for Nepal, and for conservation around the world. "These are dark days for Nepal, too. The country has lost its Minister of State for Forests and Soil Conservation, the Secretary of that Ministry, the Director General of National Parks and Wild Life Conservation, the Director General of Forests, several of its most distinguished defenders of natural resources and overseas specialists who were champions for conservation in Nepal. Nature conservation in the country will suffer a severe setback," he stated. ■

## BIBEK'S MURDER

# Chargesheets Filed

The government prosecutor filed a charge-sheet at the Kathmandu District Court on Sunday (October 8) against the seven accused in the kidnapping and murder of 8-year-old Bibek Luitel.

The prosecutor has sought life sentence (which mean 20 years as per existing Nepalese law) for them. The charge-sheet demands life-term for Bhikhari Khan, Okil Ansari, Pappu Mandal, Pateni Lama, Shakhina Manandhar Khapung, and Mokhtar Ansari. Bhikhari, Okil and Mokhtar are Indian nationals. The police produced six accused at the court but could not produce the seventh one Akabar Ansari who is absconding.

Bibek was abducted from his residence in Koteshwore a month ago. Three weeks later his dead body was discovered near Chabahil. Apparently, he was murdered the same day he was abducted. Family members, neighbors and human rights activists have deplored police inefficiency in the investigation of the case. ■





## Trade Deficit Widens

Triggered by the higher rate of growth in imports compared to exports, Nepal registered a substantial rise in trade deficit of about Rs 114 billion during the fiscal year 2005/06, in comparison with the previous year.

The trade imbalance continues to rise due to swelling imports vis-à-vis sluggish exports, as it rose by an overwhelming 25.5 percent in 2005/06 compared to the growth of 10.2 percent in 2004/05, reports The Himalayan Times daily citing a report by the central bank.

Nepal's total foreign trade, however, recorded a sound growth of 13.5 percent and touched Rs 236.36 billion during the period according to Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) report.

In 2004/05, the country's total foreign trade was Rs 208.17 billion. Despite the increase in trade deficit and a decline in net services, a surplus was registered in the current account primarily due to the higher inflow of remittances.

*According to NRB, the total exports registered a growth of 4.2 percent compared to an increase of 8.9 percent in 2004/05. Exports accounted for 10.5 percent of total GDP, compared to 11 percent a year ago. Exports to India rose by 5.4 percent while that to third countries rose by 1.8 percent compared to 26.4 percent increase and 14.5 percent decline, respectively, a year ago.*

Consequently, the balance of payments (BoP) registered a surplus of Rs 25.6 billion in 2005/06 and the current account marked a surplus of Rs 13.8 billion during the period in comparison to Rs 11.5 billion a year earlier.

According to NRB, the total exports registered a growth of 4.2 percent compared to an increase of 8.9 percent in 2004/05. Exports accounted for 10.5 percent of total GDP, compared to 11 percent a year ago. Exports to India rose by 5.4 percent while that to third countries rose by 1.8 percent compared to 26.4 percent increase and 14.5 percent decline, respectively, a year ago.

Likewise, the total imports increased by 17.2 percent compared to 9.7 percent a year ago. The share of imports in GDP rose to 30 percent from 28 percent a year ago. Imports from India soared by 23.3 percent while that from third countries rose by 8.2 percent compared to 12.6 percent and 5.7 percent rise, respectively, a year ago.

Petroleum products constitute 30.8 percent of total imports from India. This year, the import of petroleum products increased by 26.3 percent. Currently, India's share in the total trade stands at 63.6 percent – up from 61.3 percent a year ago. ■

## HINDI MOVIES



Salam Namaste  
Chocolate  
James  
Topless  
Ram Ji London Wale  
No Entry  
Barsaat  
Maine Pyar Kyun Kiya  
Dus

## ENGLISH MOVIES



Stealth  
Tiger Land  
B.13  
Full Time Killer  
Bewitched  
Ice Princess  
Dead Racer  
Batman Begins  
Mr. & Mrs. Smith  
Onsbak (The Thai Warrior) 2

(Source : New Super Star Enterprises, Ph : 4230971)

PANDAV SUNUWAR

# Loss of a Master of Voice

Radio Nepal has lost a popular program producer whereas the nation has lost an illustrious singer in the death of Pandav Sunuwar

By KABI ADHIKARI

Many personalities come and go but departure of some personalities is painfully felt by the whole community. Such was the personality of Pandav Sunuwar that his death left a huge void in the field of Nepalese culture.

As a radio anchor and a singer, Sunuwar had worked hard and excelled in both field. Many youths aspire to be heard and be popular but only few have the real capacity to hold the audience spellbound by their verbal skills. Pandav had proved that he was one of those rare gems.

Endowed with a typical voice that perfectly suited the tunes of Nepali folklores, Sunuwar had not only established himself as one of most popular radio program presenters but also as a popular folk singer. Nepali audience respected and liked him both as a singer and a radio anchor.

Radio programs 'Chautari' and 'Rodhi' that started in Radio Nepal almost three decades back were very popular. The programs embraced the concept of audience participation and were conducted in an informal manner reflecting the typical rural culture.

Sunuwar learnt the rudimentary skills of music through his participation in various cultural rituals of his village in Okhaldhunga district.

After passing high school in 2026 BS, he came to Kathmandu and applied to become a

radio program presenter in Radio Nepal. Luck did not favor him in his first attempt.

However, after three years, on his second attempt he was selected as an assistant presenter in Radio Nepal. He used to conduct 'Gramin Karyakram' in those days. The same year he formally set foot in folk singing by recording the song



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'Sapana Bhari Hansi Rahanchhu Bipana Bhari Runchhu'.

As a radio program presenter, he had started a number of new concepts to increase audience participation in Radio Nepal. He started the 'phone-in' program in 2041. The program is still running and very popular. The concept had become so popular in Radios that most of the programs of the FM radios that have spawned in the recent years follow the 'phone-in' concept.

Sunuwar had collected and sung about a hundred songs. Inspired by his birthplace most of the songs he had sung are 'maruni' - a folk genre popular in the eastern region. In addition he had also sung 'Samala', 'Ghatu', 'Tamang Selo', among others. Similarly, he had collected typical folk tunes from the eastern region. He often felt that it is difficult to collect 'pure folk songs' these days.

'Hitaiko Maya Bhetai Bhayo' and 'Fikkalaiko Bazaraima' are some of his recently recorded songs. Some of the popular songs recorded earlier are 'Narou Mayalu', 'Babari Phulko Bot', 'Bairodko Batoma Dhulo Udaundai' and 'Bhijyo Timro Rato Pachhyauri'. These songs are as popular today as they were then.

Born in Ragini Village of Okhaldhunga district in 1952 AD, Sunuwar breathed his last Saturday (October 7) morning while undergoing treatment at King's College Hospital in London. Sunuwar had been suffering from liver cirrhosis for the last several

years. He was in a state of coma in the Hospital for a few days. Sunuwar survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.

Sunuwar's death has caused a setback to the music sector. His mellifluous voice, outgoing persona and creative talent will be missed for generations to come. However, he has left behind such an array of musical creations that he will live in the hearts of people for decades. ■

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