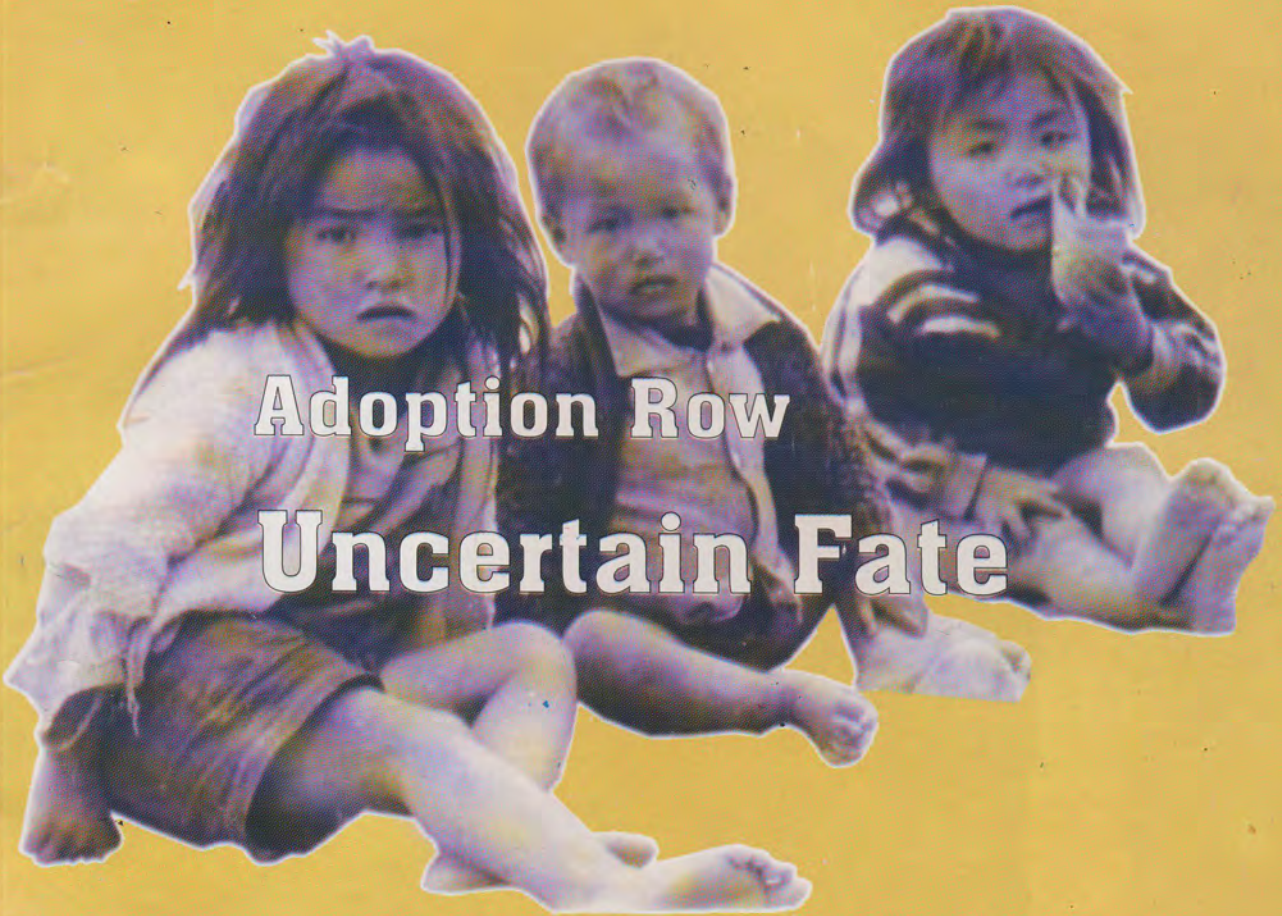


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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Sept.21-27, 2007



Adoption Row Uncertain Fate

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Nepal-China : Festival Begins

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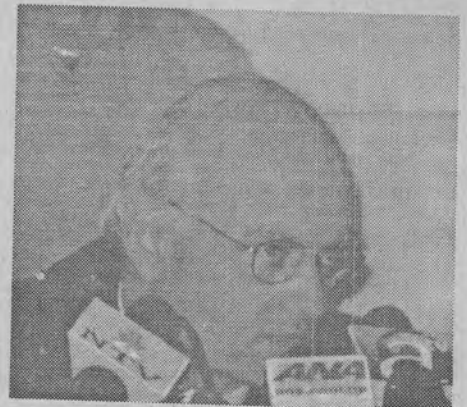


COVER STORY: Neglected Agenda Due to government's apathy, the inter-country adoption continues to remain stalled hurting sentiments of many Page 12



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SPOTLIGHT

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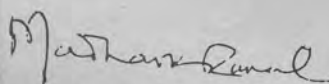
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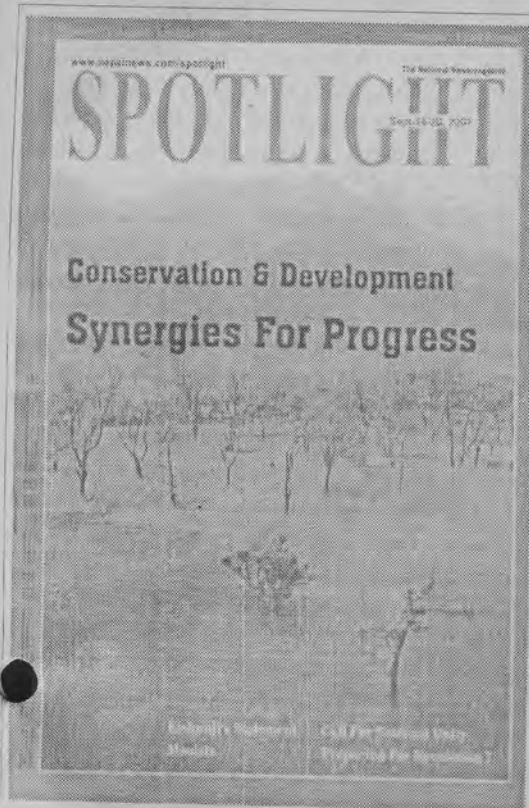
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The sharp twists and turns politics, generally, takes in this miserable mountain nation must, at times, bewilder even the most seasoned political analyst. The latest move by the Maoist in quitting the unconstitutional eight party government and pledging to go to the streets for peaceful agitation to achieve their objectives, whatever they be, is just one example. If the Maoists leaders are thinking that they will be able to win the popular support of the overwhelming poor and oppressed people of Nepal, then one would have to pity their naiveté because they have done nothing to win their hearts. And they must not forget, swords and guns can generate fear only, not love and regard. For that matter neither other bigger political parties have a very broad popular base. If they had they would not go piggy back on alien shoulders, soliciting favor and carrying out their behests. In the last seventeen years since late King Birendra, voluntarily and wisely, surrendered his authority to the elected parliament, no politician of the name has contributed, even a mite, to uphold the honor of the country or to alleviate the miseries of the masses. Even King Gyanendra let his people and country down, failing to cash the opportunity that might never repeat in the history of the world. This Maoist move that must have made the politicians enjoying the state sinecures, sit back with their heads in their hands. Even though it was not, at all, a surprise, the SPA (Seven Party Alliance) did get a rude shock at the Maoist move. As far the elections to the Constituent Assembly is concerned it has become a dead issue now and not even the Election Commission should waste any more valuable money to save the dead horse. It is no use trying to catch the will –o- the -wisp. It is, indeed, undeniable that the country does need a constitution made by the people. And our people have been taken for a ride for almost six decades since they were promised one. But this needs politicians, who have character, integrity and patriotism who could have prepared the ground. Unfortunately, our country has, so far, failed to produce one. All our politicians have done is to come to power on piggy back and act in the interest of their mentors staying like a doll that is remotely controlled. No wonder our country is one of the poorest and politically most destabilized. The Maoists have already quit the government but they must never resort to violence again. It won't help any one except for their destabilizing the situation further and forcing the security forces to flex their muscles. Talking about the security forces, they are the ones who have not been tested in the domestic politics although highly renowned in international arena. They must know their own caliber and not get perturbed by the machinations of the politicians. They must look around and get inspired. And at the end of the day, they only shall have to shoulder the responsibility of saving the nation.



Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Environment In Focus

The cover story on the environment ("Synergies For Progress" SPOTLIGHT September 14) has rightly pointed out the need for conserving the fragile environment of Nepal. However, people of Nepal not only require clean environment but also all-round development to pull them out of poverty and misery. Therefore, environment protection and development must go hand in hand. One cannot be emphasized by leaving out the other.

*Jeevan Sitaula
Sallaghari*

Ignored Facts

In the interesting article by Shree Prakash Jung Rana he, however, totally ignores the fact that prices are higher because of: (1) the graft and corruption practices in donor aid management; (c) gross over staffing; (3) excessive purchase of equipments to meet imagined 'peak' demands (4) and chronic delays in project completion. I hypothesize that it can be cut by 50% if the private sector takes up these projects bearing private risks through soft loans rather than grants. The other reason why prices are high is the faulty pricing decisions where, instead of pricing using Long-Run Marginal Costs (LRMC), the NEC includes all manner of historical, sunk and hidden costs into the price which makes it "unfair" to the consumers. It would be

interesting if he could show us what the comparative components of costs are viz short run marginal cost, average fixed cost (AFC) and average variable cost (AVC). And what would be the resultant price if say the AFC was left out from the price computation? Perhaps, he could enlighten on this point with appropriate facts and figures? Pray let him also enlighten us on what is the (hidden) charge for "government's policy for power development" and the so-called "fair rate of return on investment" as per the Tariff Act, particularly when depositors are getting 2-3% only on their personal savings and having to bear the costs of black outs? Only when the draft Competition Act, lying somewhere in parliament for nearly 18 months, sees the light of day that we will actually know what they are supposed to mean

when matters will have to be more transparent and monopolies have to bear with public accountability. Finally, it is high time that we negotiated with each donor country/organization for complete debt relief at least to the extent of the padding up of investment costs and cost of delays in project start ups up to the time of its handover to NEC. Can the 'loktantra' government dare be so engaged in its quest for a 'new' Nepal? We need formal benchmarks for infrastructure investments to make our national economy globally competitive which, sadly, is not the case where, with 84,000 MW of potential power, we have the highest electricity tariffs in planet earth. No wonder then that only 13% of the people have access to electricity, a basic human right.

*Madhukar SJB Rana
Via email*

Maoists' Pressure

The Maoists are pressuring other parties to meet their demands. They have threatened to walk out of the government as if they are doing all of us a big favor by staying in the government. This peace process was brought about by the joint initiative of all the parties. Therefore, Maoists have no right to want to call the shots all the time. They must be flexible. When every major party has agreed to go for republic through the elected Constituent Assembly, the Maoists are saying that they want the republic just now. This is childish obstinacy. Perhaps, the Maoists are pressuring the government because their past pressure tactics had been rewarded.

*Sugam Shrestha
Lagankhel*

Maoist Combatants Threaten To Launch Indefinite Bandh

Demanding monthly salaries, the Maoist PLA combatants of third division stationed at Shaktikhor cantonment in Chitwan district have threatened to launch indefinite bandh in Chitwan-Makwanpur from September 23. Commander of the third division Bibidh has said in a statement that their demands must be fulfilled as they had patiently waited for ten months. His demands include salaries, allowances, and health services. Meanwhile, Finance Ministry sources say that they had decided to provide regular salaries after the completion of verification. *Kantipur daily reports*

Maoists Bargaining For CA Seats: Mahat

The Maoists have adopted the strategy to bargain for seats in the constituent assembly because they have realized that their popular support is waning. Finance Minister Dr Ram Sharan Mahat said in New Delhi on Saturday (Sep 15). Mahat, who arrived in the Indian capital to attend the SAARC finance minister-level meeting, said: "Maoists have realized that people are not supporting them, so they are trying to escape the election to constituent assembly." "The Maoists have not formally proposed a bargain for seats in the constituent assembly but they have dropped hints to that effect," he said. "The Maoist view of 'going to the CA polls unitedly', is a hint towards bargaining seat for the constituent assembly," he said, adding: "Some senior Maoist leaders could be elected unopposed, but bargaining for CA seats is 'not possible,' he said. "Also, the Maoists' 22-point demands, threat to quit government and seeking announcement of republic before the CA elections, all can be taken as bargaining tactics," he said. "The Maoists' proposed roundtable conference could not be held after nobody responded to the Maoist invitation," he said. "Only the dissident faction of MJF led by Kishor Kumar Biswas showed interest to attend the conference," he said. "There is no alternative to unification of the Nepali Congress and the NC-Democratic

because nomination for the CA polls should be filed by September 30," he said, adding that the process is being delayed due to NC-D president Sher Bahadur Deuba's stance. *The Himalayan Times daily reports*

Mahato Elected NSP Prez

The special convention of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP-Anandidevi) led by Rajendra Mahato's faction has relieved Anandidevi Singh of her position of party chief on Friday (Sep 14). The no-trust motion against Anandidevi Singh was passed by the closed session of the convention in Birgunj. Mahato later became new chief of the organization. Mahato faction proceeded with the convention even though Anandidevi Singh had announced its suspension. Mahato has claimed that 80 to 85 percent of party workers and leaders are with him. On the other hand, the NSP faction led by Anandidevi Singh has written a letter to the Election Commission not to recognize the convention by the dissidents. *Leading dailies report*

Mainali Promises To Tighten Security

Home Secretary Umesh Mainali has said that the government is preparing to tighten security situation in the country from September 18. Addressing security personnel at an orientation program organized in Dhangadi, on Saturday (Sep 15), Mainali said the security will be tightened in view of the impending Constituent Assembly (CA) election. "Now our security agencies will present themselves in a strict manner. We have no choice," he said. Taking a swipe at frequent bandhs and transport obstruction in highways on various pretexts, Mainali warned that the security forces would now control the situation. He said that bandhs and strikes in roads and highways would soon be declared illegal. He said that a new law is being introduced, which will allow the administration to imprison bandh-organizers up to six months. *Compiled from reports*

Melamchi Cost To Come Down By 28 Percent

After the government and the Asian

Development Bank (ADB) agreed to cut down on some constructions in tunnel and water reservoir, the total cost of Melamchi Water Supply Project is expected to come down by 28 percent. Now the total cost of the project will be \$318.2 million or over Rs 21 billion. This agreement was reached at the meeting between government officials and visiting ADB mission last week in Kathmandu. The government had agreed with ADB proposal to cut some components of construction following the withdrawal of aid commitment by three donors. The MWSP is targeted to be completed by 2012. The World Bank, NORAD and CEDA had earlier backed out of the project. The WB had withdrawn aid of \$80 million in 2002; NORAD had withdrawn \$28 million in 2005; and CEDA had withdrawn \$25 million in 2006. Meanwhile, after the Norwegian (NORAD) and Swedish (CEDA) withdrew their aid commitment, the cost for constructing 26-km long tunnel has ended up being much cheaper for the government. The two donors had set precondition for limited competition to choose contractor. But now the government can open global competition for the same, which has resulted in the coming down of its cost from \$74.3 million to \$65.2 million. The tender for tunnel construction would be invited after government fulfills ADB's condition for institutional reforms. The government has promised to complete the reforms by mid-December this year. Other components that have been cut down include water reservoirs. Instead of ten reservoirs, it now agreed that only two will be constructed in Bansbari and Hepali Height. *Kantipur daily reports*

Govt-Chure Sign 9-Point Pact

The government signed 9-point agreement with Chure Bhawar Ekata Samaj on Thursday (Sep 13). Ram Chandra Poudel, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction and Keshab Mainali, president of Samaj, signed the deal. "We have addressed their demands," said Minister Poudel, who is also the chief government negotiator. Mainali said that his organization has withdrawn all programs of agitation following the agreement. "We have been assured by the

government that all our demands will be fulfilled," he said. As per the agreement, the two sides agreed to go for state restructuring as determined by the Constituent Assembly. Likewise, the government has agreed to initiate process to withdraw murder charges slapped against nine Samaj activists. The government has also agreed to bear cost of treating the injured Samaj activists and provide their families with relief, among others. Early last month, Samaj had walked out of talks accusing the government of failing to provide security to hill-origin people inhabiting the Chure-Bhawar region, who have increasingly come under attack from armed Terai groups. Apart from security to hill-origin people, the group has also been demanding 'autonomous Chure-Bhawar state'. *Compiled from reports*

US Urges Nepal To Provide Exit Permit To Refugees

The United States has requested Nepal government to provide 'exit permit' to the Bhutanese refugees who want to be resettled. The US ambassador Nancy Powell made the request with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, during their meeting on Thursday (Sep 13). Although the Nepal government has agreed, in principle, to allow resettlement of willing refugees, it is yet to take a formal decision to this effect. Reports say that PM Koirala – even though he did not use the term exit permit – had indicated that Nepal would allow such refugees to resettle. At the meeting, Powell also requested PM Koirala that

Nepal should not stop allowing the adoption of children by foreigners. Koirala assured that the adoption will proceed as per the law. The recent decision by the government to stop adoption has resulted in heightened international interest. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports*

Dragon Air To Fly To Nepal Again

At a time when travelers have been facing acute shortage of air-seats when traveling to and fro Kathmandu, a prestigious international airlines has announced to resume its operations to Nepal. Dragon Air of Hong Kong, which

used to operate flights to Kathmandu till seven years ago, has announced resumption of flights from December this year between Kathmandu and Hong Kong. The airlines announced the resumption of services with four flights a week from December 2. The airline is operating with an Airbus A320 on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. "We are delighted to be flying back to Kathmandu, where we first started serving in 1989," said Tom Wright, general manager of the airlines for India, Middle East and Africa. He further added, "As Nepal continues to grow in popularity with travelers from around the world, we have decided that this is the right time to resume services to this high potential destination." He also said that the resumption of Nepal operations will provide better air services for thousands of non-resident Nepalis in Hong Kong as well as international travelers coming in and out of Nepal. As a member of the Cathay Pacific Group, DragonAir flies to niche markets in Asia in addition to its core mainland China market, Wright said, adding that the airlines operates a fleet of 31 passenger aircrafts and six freighters serving 31 destinations, including 21 cities in mainland China. "As a subsidiary of the Cathay Pacific Group, DragonAir provides seamless connectivity for its passengers to more than 100 cities across the globe," he said, adding that the airlines, jointly with Cathay Pacific, operates a fleet of 152 aircrafts and flies to 126 destinations. "Supported by Cathay Pacific's international network, passengers flying with DragonAir will have better connectivity to major international destinations. This will be able to draw a considerable number of international tourists to Nepal through its Hong Kong hub," reckoned Wright. He also informed that Nepali passengers flying by DragonAir and Cathay Pacific via Hong Kong to some destinations in South East Asia, UK, Schenzen countries, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand would not require transit visa. Biswajit Ghosh, COO of Amrawati Travels, DragonAir's GSA for Nepal, expressed hope that resumption of the

flights would send a positive message to the international market. *Leading dailies report*

Goit Faction Vows To Disrupt Election

Despite the government's offer for holding talks, the Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM-Goit) has vowed to oppose the Constituent Assembly (CA) election. Issuing a statement on Wednesday, JTMM-G chief Jai Krishna Goit swore to resort to armed opposition of the election. In the statement, Goit has unveiled his faction's agitation schedule from September 14 till November 23. The CA election is scheduled for November 22. Goit has further claimed that the election is 'Nepali CA' and has urged natives of Terai to boycott the polls. The JTMM-G has announced Terai bandh on November 20-23 coinciding with the election. His agitation programs include mobilization of people, torch-lit demonstration, gathering and so on. Meanwhile, stepping up their armed activities, Jwala Singh-led faction of JTMM has resorted to a killing spree in Terai. A day after their cadres mercilessly hacked to death a school principal in Siraha district, they shot to death one employee of local brick kiln in Dhanusha district. Kedar Prasad Giri, 35, an accountant at the brick kiln in Baghchauda has been shot to death. A central member of JTMM-J Rajan Mukti has claimed responsibility for his murder. *Compiled from reports*

School Principal Hacked To Death

Activists of Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM-Jwala Singh) have hacked a school principal to death in Siraha district on Monday (Sep 10) night. Arun Shrestha, 55, principal of Tulsiram Satyabhama Dotel high school, was abducted from his residence in Bishnupurkatti on Monday evening. They later took him around one kilometer away and slit his throat mercilessly. The dead body was recovered by villagers the next morning. Siraha in-charge of JTMM-J Tufan Singh 'Bidrohi' has claimed responsibility for the murder. *Leading dailies report* ■



PM GP Koirala with children on the occasion of National Children's Day Gorkhapatra

THE ELECTION COMMISSION (EC) has introduced the election code of ethics and has announced its phase-wise enforcement in different sectors. According to a press release by the EC, the code of ethics will come into force from September 18 for government, semi-government and local bodies. The code of ethics will be enforced from September 31 for political parties. The same will come into effect for candidates from the date they file their nomination papers. The private media will have to observe the code of ethics from the date the candidates get their election symbols.

FOLLOWING THE MOVEMENT OF OVER 4000 People's Liberation Army (PLA) combatants from Arunkhola fourth division cantonment at Nawalparasi on Friday (September 14) morning, the UNMIN has condemned it as violation of agreement. The combatants demonstrated outside cantonments demanding payment of salaries and fulfillment of 22-point demands raised by Maoists. "UNMIN has monitored the movement of large numbers of Maoist army personnel outside the main cantonment site in Nawalparasi and its satellite sites, in the western region. This is a serious violation of commitments made in the agreement on the management of arms and armed personnel reached between the Maoists and their partners in the Interim Government," states a press release by the UNMIN. It said it deployed three mobile teams to monitor the movement of Maoist army personnel. "UNMIN has communicated its concerns direct to the political and military leadership of the CPN (Maoist), who advised that it ordered the immediate return of personnel to the cantonment. While the verification process of Maoist army personnel is proceeding well, implementing the commitments in relation to the management of arms and armed personnel, without exception, is essential to the overall peace process and in particular to preparing a free and fair atmosphere for the Constituent Assembly election."

CROWN PRINCE PARAS HAS BEEN discharged from Norvic Hospital on Wednesday (Sep 12). He had remained hospitalized since last Thursday after he suffered from heart attack. Doctors had performed angioplasty and stent procedure on him the same day he was rushed to the hospital. Meanwhile, CP Paras will remain under close medical observation. He has been asked to follow strict dietary restrictions and adopt change in lifestyle to avoid further complications. After he was discharged from the hospital, CP Paras told media that he was thankful to all for their kind concerns. Meanwhile, King Gyanendra's aunt, Helen Shah, passed away at the age of 75 on Wednesday. She passed away at Chhauni military hospital. She was suffering from cancer. Helen Shah is the wife of late Prince Basundhara who was a younger brother of late King Mahendra.

KUNIO SENGA, ADB'S DIRECTOR GENERAL for South

Asia, expressed cautious optimism over Nepal's medium term prospects for economic development based on the Government's continued commitment to the reform process. He expressed his optimism at the end of 5-day official visit on Wednesday (Sep 12). However, he expressed concern over the security situation, noting that the currently uncertain environment could affect implementation of development activities. Given the significant risks in the run up to the Constituent Assembly elections, he urged the Government to try its utmost to maintain a conducive environment for effective delivery of development assistance. He reiterated ADB's commitment to assist Nepal's development but underscored that effective and safe implementation of development projects depends on the ground realities, states a press release issued by the ADB.

THE TWO-DAY POWER SUMMIT concluded on Tuesday (September 18) with financiers and developers from Nepal and India showing keen interest in Nepal's hydropower development. "Even the government and the political parties are now showing a renewed interest in developing hydropower," said Radhesh Pant, President of Nepal Bankers' Association, during the closing session of the Summit (The Himalayan Times, September 19). He, however, added that the projects have to move in a transparent manner and the private-public partnership has to be strengthened. Dr Sandip Shah, President of IPPAN, was of the view that there is tremendous investment opportunity in Nepal and the Summit would contribute towards generating more interest of the international companies here. "This is totally an apolitical event," he said, adding: "We must now initiate efforts at business to business level rather than only relying on the governments to do the job." The speakers from the private sector emphasized that the government should focus on creating 'enabling environment' here. The main issues that came up were regarding development mechanism, financial aspect of the projects, development models, looking at India as a natural partner for hydropower, among others. In this connection, TN Thakur of CMD PTC India Ltd, a power trading company, said that Nepal should at least have 10,000 MW by 2020 to firstly meet its domestic demand and then to export. He suggested that the Government of Nepal evolved a national transmission development plan and set-up a National Transmission Authority here as in India to "look into mobility of power and transmission links within the country." The Summit concluded on the note that given the 'political will' and the 'increasing interest of the private sector,' significant strides in the hydropower sector are expected in the near future.

ON THE DAY THE ELECTION COMMISSION (EC) announced enforcement of its election code of ethics, GEOC (General Election Observation Committee), an alliance of civil society organizations, has announced the start of its election observation campaign. In a press statement, GEOC has said that it will deploy observers in 35 districts. It will deploy 35 national observers, 35 district-level observers, 70 constituency-level observers, 40 municipality-level observers and 700 VDC-level observers. In total, it will deploy 880 observers in 3500 polling booths. The GEOC is chaired by Himalaya SJB Rana and its working committee includes Kusum Shrestha of Nepal Law Society (NLS), Udaya Nepali Shrestha of ICJ-Nepal, Ram Binod Bhattarai of Ex-Employees Council, Gokul Pokharel of Nepal Press Institute, Tirtha Narayan Subedi of Nepal Citizens' Forum, and Sunita Regmi of Rural Development Foundation. Krishna Man Pradhan of the Foundation is its member-secretary. The GEOC has stated that its objective is to observe and monitor all the election-related activities by all stakeholders to find out if there is any violation of election code of ethics. ■

"I will not compromise with any force on the issues of sovereignty and independence."

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, talking to students of post graduate who won medals for their academic excellence, in Baluwatar.

"There is no alternative but to quit the government and launch agitation if our demands are not met. We are certain that election cannot be held before republic is declared."

Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, speaking at a function in the capital on Sunday.

"In the past, Prachanda had several times said that they were willing to do everything – return seized properties, come to mainstream – once the Congress decides to go for republic. And now the Congress has already decided to go for republic, but he has raised new demands."

Ram Chandra Poudel, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, in Kantipur FM.

"I have never been a monarchist. I



have always followed the reconciliation policy of BP Koirala."

Shailaja Acharya, nominee for envoy to New Delhi, responding to queries during her hearing at the Parliamentary Special Hearing Committee (PSHC).

"Each political leader I met during my visit told me that this election was crucial, they want the election to take place and my confidence in the people of Nepal has grown stronger than ever."

Shiv Shankar Menon, Indian Foreign Secretary, at a press meet in Kathmandu, in The Himalayan Times.

"There was some lack of homework on our part. And there were some more organizations who had shown interest to take part in the roundtable. That is why we put it off."

Ram Bahadur Thapa aka Badal, senior Maoist leader, explaining why the Maoists called off their roundtable conference.

TRANSITION

REFERRED BACK: The nomination of Kedar Prasad Giri for the position of Chief Justice, back to the Constitutional Council after the Parliamentary Special Hearing Committee was divided over his nomination.

ENDED: The process of hearing on the envoy-nominees for 21 countries, by the Parliamentary Special Hearing Committee. The hearing was conducted for the nominees including Pradeep Khatiwada (Bangladesh), Pramesh Hamal (Belgium), Tanka Karki (China), Bal Bahadur Kunwar (Pakistan), Dr. Ganesh Yonjan (Japan), Dr. Surya Nath Mishra (Qatar) and Gunalaxmi

Sharma BK (Myanmar). Other nominees include Pampha Bhusal (France), Bijaya Kanta Lal Karna (Denmark), Yogendra Dhakal (Australia), and Dr. Rishi Adhikary (Malaysia). Likewise, Arjun Thapa (United Arab Emirates), Baija Nath Thapaliya (Israel), Kamal Koirala (South Korea), Dr Suresh Chalise (United States), Surya Kiran Gurung (Russia), Navin Prakash Jung Shah (Thailand), Murari Raj Sharma (United Kingdom), Hamid Ansari (Saudi Arabia), and Dinesh Bhattarai (Geneva) are also nominees.

RETURNED: Shiv Shankar Menon, Indian Foreign Secretary, on Sunday (September 16) after wrapping up his two-day visit to Nepal. Kunio Senga, Asian Development Bank's

Director General for South Asia, after completing 5-day visit to Nepal.

NOMINATED: Leading businessmen Sanjeeb Rajbhandari, Rajendra Khetan and Padma Jyoti, as senators of the Kathmandu University for the next three years, by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, in his capacity as the Chancellor of KU.

Businessman Rajendra Khetan, as a member of Nepal Advisory Panel of UN's Asia Pacific Leader's Forum (APLF) on HIV/AIDS. Other members of the panel include student leader Gagan Thapa and women activist Sapana Malla Pradhan.

CALLED OFF: The roundtable conference planned by the Maoists. ■

GRAND CANAL OF CHINA: WATER TRANSPORT

By Dr. AB Thapa

Nepal and India had few years back agreed to carry out detailed studies of the Kosi development works primarily to avert the Kosi flood disaster. Components of the Kosi development works have already been identified in the 1997 Indo-Nepal agreement to conduct jointly the feasibility studies. The feasibility studies would cover the Sun-Kosi high dam project, the Kosi high dam project and a navigation canal linking Nepal with the seaport. The 165 km long navigation canal extending from Chatra in Nepal to the Ganges river in India would be the most important component of the Kosi development works equally benefiting both Nepal and India that would help to promote the commerce and industrial development in our region. About 120 km long stretch of the proposed navigation canal would have to be dug in the Indian territory.

China is among very few countries in the world where the inland water transport was developed from the time immemorial. There are 5,800 rivers in China, totaling 430,000 kilometers in length, of which 109,000 are navigable. In the last 40 years, large rivers have been regulated and small rivers canalized. Nepal and India can learn a great deal from the China's past experience. Grand Canal is China's oldest waterway. It dates from a period long before the Christian era and served as means of navigation and communication.

Longest Canal System

Grand Canal is a waterway in eastern China, connecting Hangzhou in the south with Beijing in the north. It is the world's longest canal system, extending in a generally north-south direction for 1,900 km.

Construction of the Grand Canal is regarded to have been attributed to the initiative of Yang Guang, the second emperor of the Sui Dynasty (581-618). The original canal route was constructed during his reign linking the northern region of present-day Beijing with the southern rice-growing region around the city of Hangzhou, on the Huang He (Yellow River). The canal system incorporated and expanded some existing canals, the oldest of which dated

back to the 4th century BC and it connected the Yangtze (Chang Jiang) River and the Huai He. The oldest part of the canal lies between the Yangtze and the city of Huai-yin (also called Ch'ing-chiang; in Kiangsu province), which was originally on the Huang Ho (Yellow River) when that river had a far more southerly course. This section, traditionally known as the Shan-yang Canal, in recent centuries has been called the Southern Grand Canal (Nan Yün-ho). This ancient waterway is believed to have been constructed as early as the 4th century BC. It was rebuilt in AD 607, and has been used ever since. The Sui Dynasty (581-618) built the first great canal system in 607-610, constructing a northeast-southwest link from the Huang Ho (when the Huang had a northern course) to the Huai River. Known as the New Pien Canal, it remained the chief waterway throughout the T'ang period (618-907) and in the early Sung period (960-1126).

New Demand for Transportation

The need for a major transport link again arose under the Yüan (Mongol) dynasty (1279-1368), whose capital at Peking required a grain-supply system. In 1282-83 it was therefore decided to build a new canal from the Huang Ho—which since 1195 had changed its course southward to usurp the former mouth of the Huai below Huai-yin—to the Ta-ch'ing River in northern Shantung province, which was dredged to give an outlet to the sea. The mouth of the Ta-ch'ing, however, silted up almost immediately. An alternative canal, cut across the neck of the Shantung Peninsula from the harbour also proved impracticable and was abandoned. Eventually another stretch of canal, the Hui-t'ung Canal, was built to join Tung-a-chen on the Huang Ho with the Wei River at Lin-ch'ing. In this way, the modern Grand Canal came into operation.

Yuan Dynasty and Grand Canal

Yuan Dynasty, 1279-1368, the period of Mongol rule over China initiated by the conquest of the Southern Song (Sung) Dynasty by Kublai Khan. Northern China had fallen to the Mongols in 1234, but more than 40 years passed before they gained control over and incorporated the rest of the country into what proved to be the largest land

empire in world history. Under the leadership of Genghis Khan and then of his descendants, the Mongols in the 13th century carved out an empire stretching from what is now Korea and western Russia in the north to Burma and Iraq in the south.

During the 13th century, Mongols swept through China from the northwest. Kublai Khan, the Mongol leader, established the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368). It was during his reign that Marco Polo and other European traders established contact with the Mongol Empire.

The Mongol Empire linked Europe and East Asia, initiating the first direct contacts between China and the West. After the Mongols imposed their rule over much of Asia, they promoted trade and travel, permitting West Asian and European traders, artisans, and missionaries to reach China. Chinese silks and ceramics arrived in Europe via Eurasian caravan trails and stimulated European demand for these products, inspiring the search for a sea route to East Asia.

Yuan Dynasty rulers fostered trade and accorded merchants a high social status. Moreover, they promoted commerce by increasing the use of paper money, by offering cheap loans to merchant associations, by building roads, and by allowing traveling merchants to lodge and to obtain supplies at government postal stations, which were located about 32 km apart throughout the empire. Concern about supplying the new capital led the Yuan court to initiate the ambitious project of rerouting and expanding the GRAND CANAL, aiding the shipping of surplus grain from southern China to the less fertile lands of the north.

Peking Again Became Capital

At the beginning of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the capital was at Nanking. After Peking again became the seat of government in 1403, the whole canal—including the section from Lin-ch'ing on the Wei to its junction with the Huang Ho, which was dredged and repaired, remained in operation until the 19th century. It comprised six main sections: (1) a short canal from the outskirts of Peking to T'ung-chou; (2) a canalized river joining the Hai River to Tientsin and then joining the Wei River as far as Lin-ch'ing; (3) a section in Shantung rising over comparatively high ground from Lin-ch'ing to its highest point near Chi-ning and then falling again to a point near Süchow, a difficult stretch with a number of sluices and dams using water from a number of small rivers flowing off the T'ai Mountains and from the string of lakes southeast of Chi-

ning, (4) a stretch from Süchow that followed the southern course of the Huang Ho as far as Huai-yin, (5) a section from Huai-yin following the ancient Shan-yang Canal south to Chen-chiang on the Yangtze, and (6) a section south of the Yangtze where the canal ran southeast then southwest for some 320 km via Su-chou to Hang-chou.

New Repair Works

In the 19th century a series of disastrous floods broke the dikes of the Huang Ho (which began to move to its present northern course), caused great problems in the section of the canal between Süchow and Huai-yin, and cut across the canal between Lin-ch'ing and Chi-ning. After the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64) and the Nien Rebellion (1853-68), the use of the canal as the major supply line to Peking was abandoned, and the canal gradually fell into disrepair in its northern sections. After 1934 the China carried out extensive works on the canal between Huai-yin and the Yangtze; ship locks were constructed to allow medium-sized steamers to use this section, which was dredged and largely rebuilt.

New work was begun in 1958 to restore the whole system as a trunk waterway able to carry ships of up to 600 tons. Between 1958 and 1964 it was straightened, widened, dredged, one new section 64 km long was constructed, and modern locks were added. The canal can now accommodate medium-sized barge traffic throughout its length. The main traffic, however, is concentrated in the southern half. The canal is also used to divert water from the Yangtze River to northern Kiangsu province for irrigation, making possible double cropping of rice.

At The Present Time

Inland navigation on China's many rivers and canals accounts for a large proportion of the goods shipped within the country, and its potential for increased development is great. Despite the fact that the largest inland waterway is the Yangtze River, which has major ports at Chongqing, Yichang and Wuhan, and some 18,000 km of the Yangtze and its tributaries can be traveled by steamboats, the busiest inland waterway system in China, however, is the Grand Canal, which extends from Beijing to Hangzhou, near Shanghai. The southern portion of the canal is actually a network of many local canals and lakes. Such cities as Suzhou, Wuxi, and Changzhou are important inland ports in this region. In parts of rural China, peasants use irrigation and drainage canals as inland waterways.

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT BANK

Promising Venture

Reputed Nepali bankers have joined hands with prestigious international financial institutions to explore opportunities in infrastructure development

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

At a time when its two neighbors China and India are achieving jaw-dropping rate of economic growth, Nepal is just preparing to break itself free from decade-long conflict and political instability.

Although it is still in the throes of uncertainty, Nepal is looking forward to overcoming the political conflict and marching on to the path towards prosperity.

But it has been said by everybody that total lack of infrastructures is going to become primary problem that can obstruct Nepal's attainment of high growth, which is crucial to attain poverty alleviation.

The cash-strapped government of Nepal cannot be expected to invest in costly infrastructure projects. As such, only capable private sector can come to the rescue of the people of Nepal.

And that is what the recent agreement between leading Nepali bankers and international financial institutions is all about. In a historic ceremony on September 16, India's Infrastructure Development Finance Company, along with the Asian Development Bank, DEG-KfW, and the International Finance Corporation signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a private equity group in Nepal and a consortium of all the leading Nepalese banks and financial institutions to jointly incorporate an Infrastructure Development Bank in the country.

Quality infrastructure is essential for economic growth and prosperity. Nepal has critical requirements for international airports, urban development, needs to set up and upgrade education, healthcare and transportation infrastructure and meet the growing demand for power, cement to promote industrial growth.

In this context, a dedicated institution to fund and promote infrastructure projects will play a critical role in the economic advancement in one of the developing countries of the South Asian region.

"Continuing availability of infrastructure throughout Nepal is vital for economic growth. We have little choice but to invest prudently in infrastructure development," said Prithivi Bahadur Pande, Chairman and Chief Executive Director of Nepal Investment Bank Limited representing the Private Equity Group.

Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat said that private sector can finance in infrastructures like hydropower projects, toll ways, health and educational institutions. "On behalf of the government, I would like

to assure you of full support," he said.

"In fact, apart from different hydropower projects, there is one proposed Kathmandu-Terai toll way in which the private sector can immediately invest," said Dr. Mahat. "We have favorable policy regime. We will now need to create conducive environment," he added.

KB Manandhar, acting governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), also promised support to the venture. "The central bank is ready to provide all kinds of necessary support to help this venture. We are aware of its importance and need," Manandhar said.

Rajiv B. Lal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Infrastructure Development Finance Company, elaborated, "Coming from an institution that was founded with the same objectives and has successfully led many reforms in India, there is indeed much that the Infrastructure Development Bank will be able to achieve in Nepal. He further added that "IDFC is



MoU Signing Ceremony: Historic Occasion *Nepal Samacharpatra*

delighted to be working alongside Nepalese banks and financial investors to encourage private capital to help meet the Nepal's infrastructure demands."

"This partnership presents a unique opportunity to all participating institutions to contribute radically to Nepal's development," added Radhesh Pant, CEO, Bank of Kathmandu and President - Nepal Banker's Association, representing the consortium of Nepalese financial institutions.

The main objectives of the proposed Infrastructure Development Bank are to develop and provide a comprehensive range of financial products and services for the development of infrastructure projects and facilities in Nepal; engage with and support the government of Nepal on policies to

facilitate private and public sector investment in infrastructure by sharing international best practices; manage and arrange debt and equity funds to promote infrastructure related projects; and provide advisory services to project developers and companies regarding technical, commercial, financial, legal, and environmental viability of infrastructure development projects in Nepal.

IDFC will be taking the lead in supporting the Nepalese Private Equity Group and the consortium of Nepalese financial institutions with the requisite managerial, technical, legal, and financial resources. The consortium of the Nepali banks and financial institutions involved in this venture include Bank of Kathmandu, Development Credit Bank Limited, Everest Bank Limited, Global Bank Limited, Machhapuchhre Bank Limited, Nabil Bank Limited, Nepal Bank Limited, Nepal Investment Bank Limited, NIC Bank Limited, and Siddhartha Bank Limited.

ADB, DEG-KfW and IFC are considering conducting a feasibility study that will determine the economic viability of such an institution. The conclusions of the feasibility study will help these institutions determine the kind of support that will be offered to the Infrastructure Development Bank.

"We hope that the feasibility study will be completed within six months, after which we can start the operation," said Pande.

William Willms, Director, Capital Markets and Financial Sector Division, Asian Development Bank, said: "We are pleased to be able to partner with Nepal in this important initiative, as it seeks to remove a

significant bottleneck to development. Establishment and support of a designated infrastructure finance institution will make a valuable contribution towards the longer-term objectives of sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in Nepal."

"As a founder investor in Nepal's infrastructure development bank, we are committed to doing more in this country," said Turan Caglayan, Head of Asia Department of DEG KfW Bankengruppe.

"IFC is keen to deepen its engagement in Nepal to make a difference to its economy and promote sustainable development. By participating in this important initiative, there is potential for us to contribute significantly," explained Per Kjellerhaug, IFC Country Manager Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. ■

MAOISTS QUIT THE GOVT

Polls Uncertain

By walking out of the government and announcing protests to foil the election plan, the Maoists have thrown cold water over CA prospects

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Although they quit the government demanding immediate declaration of republic, the Maoist move has thrown cold water over the prospects of holding the Constituent Assembly (CA) election on November 22 – which was widely expected to formally usher in republic in the country.

In a clear indication of their opposition to the November election, the Maoists have also unveiled a series of protest plans coinciding with election schedule. "The election schedule and the code of ethics are no longer acceptable to us. We reject this hypocritical drama of election and our programs will foil such plans," said Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader, addressing a mass meet in the capital on Tuesday (September 18).

The mass meet, which was not attended by Prachanda, was held immediately after four ministers representing the Maoists in the current government tendered their resignation to the prime minister.

Less than six months after they joined the interim government, the Maoists pulled out. They had joined the government on April 1, 2006.

"Our efforts to declare republic from the parliament has failed. Now we will declare republic from the streets. Therefore, we have decided to come in the midst of the people," said Dr. Bhattarai.

Dr. Bhattarai also unveiled the schedule of protest programs, which began on September 18. In the first phase of their agitation, they have announced holding door-to-door public awareness campaign between September 19 and 21. From September 22 till 29, they will intensify rallies and campaigns. And

between September 29 and October 3, the Maoists have stated that they will 'expose' the corrupt people and those named as guilty in the report by Rayamajhi Commission. On September 30, the Maoists have vowed to gherao all the District Administration Offices across the country. They have also announced general strike from October 4 till 6. This strike coincides with EC's schedule whereby nominations of



Maoist Leaders : Pulling out the government.

candidates will have to be filed on October 5.

"These are merely trailers of the movie that will come afterwards," Dr. Bhattarai threatened.

Earlier, efforts to reach consensus among eight parties to address the Maoists' 22-point demands failed and the four Maoist Ministers – Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Dev Gurung, Hisila Yami and Khadga Bishwokarma – resigned jointly.

The consensus failed to emerge after the Maoists stuck to their demand for

immediate republic declaration by the parliament. Other party leaders had proposed a compromise formula whereby they would pass a commitment motion from the parliament to go for republic and also express public commitment, jointly, towards federal republic but in vain. Nepali Congress leaders even urged Maoists to wait for a week since they were planning to formally adopt republican line through their Mahasamiti meeting.

"They decided to quit the government despite our hard efforts," said Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel. "It now appears that they might have planned all along to quit the government anyhow," he said.

Their quitting the government could throw the peace process, interim constitution and the election out of gear.

The uncertainty over CA election has deepened sharply as the Maoists are now speaking against it clearly. This has come

in addition to the continuing situation of insecurity and turmoil in Terai.

The unrest in Kapilbastu this week has also pointed at the still vulnerable security situation in Terai. Following the killing of one Mohit Khan, leader of Democratic Madhesi Front and a former leader of anti-Maoist resistance group, on Sunday (September 16) morning in Birpur area, violence had erupted in Kapilbastu and Rupandehi districts. In the ensuing violence that took a communal color, a total of five persons have already died including Khan. ■

CHILD ADOPTION

Neglected Agenda

As Nepal celebrated National Children Day by organizing various programs highlighting the plights of children and need for their protection, the fate of more than 400 orphans who are in the final process of adoption by foreigners - is bleak. Many foreigners who have already spent months to complete the process of inter-country adoptions and have been emotionally involved with particular babies - are badly hurt by the government's apathy towards this humane issue. In a country where thousands of orphan children are compelled to live as street children, inter-country adoption, remains a good option to provide better human environment for them. When overwhelming number of adopted Nepalese children have been growing up in better environment in adopted country with better human rights guarantee, nobody understands the reason to suspend child adoption for a long period of time. Nepal has already promised to implement international convention to give children's agenda a top priority but the government is now completely ignoring the children's issue including inter-country adoption

By KESHAB POUDEL

The future of Jamuna, 2, (not a real name) who was adopted by a German couple after completion of all the legal process six months ago, is uncertain. When German couple started the process for adoption, she was just six months old. The adoption process took almost a year and they lived with the baby. However, Jamuna's travel to Germany with her adopted parents was stalled six months ago following the announcement of the government to reconsider its earlier terms and conditions.

Jamuna was handed over to Nepal Children Association's children home by police when the infant was found abandoned in nearby Kathmandu. With little financial support from the government, Jamuna has been living in the congested room of country's oldest orphanage home.

Krishna, 3, (named changed) has a similar story to tell. Adopted by an Italian mother, Krishna - who is now

being taken care in Organization for Community, Child and Environment Development (OECD) - is yet to unite with his adopted mother in Italy. Krishna, who became orphan following the death of parents in a landslide in eastern Nepal, is sick now and the adopted mother is suffering emotionally.

- Lilly, 2, (name changed on request) was adopted by a Spanish couple. But she does not know where she will land. Lilly was handed over by District Administration Office through the branch office of OECD.

These three are among more than 400 orphans whose union with adopted families in Europe and America is uncertain as the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare returned all the files which were finalized six months ago. Foreign couples, who have spent almost one and a half year to complete the legal process, have emotional attachment with children and they are

worried about the new decision.

Even children rights organizations opposed the decision of Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare to restart the process of adoption of the children whose legal matching was completed six months ago, but the government is in no mood to listen anyone. "This is a violation of rule law and rights of children. We will oppose this unrealistic decision which violates the rights of the children to live with adopted families," said Manoj Kumar Kanel, coordinator, Children Adoption Watch Group. "If there are any flaws in the laws, the government needs to take action, otherwise the children must be allowed to fly with their adopted parents."

According to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, the files of around 400 orphans whose process for adoption was completed, now has been returned to concerned districts administration offices. Although

this is an emotional issue between adopted parents and children, hundreds of NGOs working in the name of protecting rights of children appear to be silent.

After a long gap, however, diplomats from six European nations urged the government to speedily resolve a deadlock over plans by hundreds of foreign families to adopt Nepali children. "It's a very emotional problem and it's becoming a humanitarian issue for the families," French Ambassador to Nepal Gilles-Henry Garault told AFP.

According to AFP report, diplomats from France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Canada and Germany met with the Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare to try to resolve the fates of 358 children whose adoption process were underway.

Government's Negligence

Although six months have already passed since the government has suspended the inter-country adoption process claiming to improve terms and conditions for adoption, nobody knows when the new draft - which has now reached the cabinet - will be made public.

As it was prepared without any consultation with the stakeholders, it will inevitably generate controversies even after its implementation. Child rights organizations have demanded to include some clauses to make the process more transparent particularly the issues of fees in the adoption and to allow 400 children who have already completed the matching process and to abide by the declaration made by first international conferences and inter-country child adoption.

The rights organizations also demanded to include the clauses so that Nepalese mission abroad and organizations which proceeds the adoption can get the information about the children.

However, the Ministry has proposed new terms and conditions without consultations with stakeholders. "As the new terms and conditions are formulated without consultations of child rights organizations, it will definitely generate controversy," said advocate Upendra



Street children: Deprived of rights

Keshari Neupane, who is also former president of Children Federation of Nepal. "The government must bring out the new terms and conditions, correcting all the loopholes of past rules with the consultation of stakeholders."

"By delaying the announcement of new terms and conditions, the government has shown that the issue regarding the rights of the children is not a matter of concern for them and it is not their priority," Neupane added.

Others see there is a conspiracy behind all these matters. "This is a conspiracy against the children's rights. All the child rights organizations want to see improvement in the existing terms

and conditions of inter country adoptions. However, the government is ignoring all these issues and delaying the process of implementation of new terms and conditions," said Ganesh Bhakta Shrestha, president of OECD. "Inter-country adoption is very sensitive issue. By ignoring the emotional issues of adopted children and parents, the government has exposed its true face."

State of Children

The state of children in Nepal is very bad particularly for abandoned and orphans. Living in more than 500 orphanages and children homes, the future of more than 10,000 children is very uncertain. A study conducted by

New Era in 2005 disclosed the pathetic situation of children who have been living in Children's Homes. In its study, the New Era's report revealed the bleak situation in such shelter homes.

According to an estimate, there are more than 300,000 orphans, more than 12,000 children who are working in Indian Circuses, 8000 children are living lives as street children and rag pickers and 100,000 children are serving in restaurants, house-holds, brick kilns and stone quarries.

In a country where every year more than 7000 girls are trafficked to brothels in India and hundreds of abandoned children are thrown out to the streets of the capital, the inter country adoption - which is mostly made with the parents of western countries at par with international convention and law - is one of the best way to provide better environment for them.

In a country where the welfare for children is virtually non-existent and many abandoned and orphan children are compelled to live in unhealthy environment with bleak future, there are no better alternatives.

"Inter country adoption is a very complicated legal process which strictly binds the laws of both the countries. It is based on valid documents and done under the laws of land," said advocate Upendra Keshari Neupane.

"If the government has capability to provide the social security and welfare to all its citizens, adoption can be stopped. If it is not in a position to do so, it must formulate the laws to allow the adoption," said Neupane.

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, it is estimated that more than 6 billion rupees have already been spent in the name of children welfare by various non-governmental organizations but the number of street children continue to range between 6000-9000.

Cause for Adoption

Family is the best place for a child to get love, care and proper guidance, the basic right of every child. And family is the first place where a child begins to learn the principles of living harmoniously, healthily, and happily within the society.



Rural kids: Poor and marginalized

Many children in Nepal are living in the streets and sleeping with dogs. When they grow up, either they become pick-pocketers or are recruited as cadres for all kinds of criminal activities. There is a genuine human concern from the entire developed world for orphans. The persons from western countries cultured in a Christian morality of passion and pity for the poor wish to adopt Nepalese orphans.

Even though there is an increasing awareness and acceptance of adoption, it is still very difficult to understand the concept of adoption in Nepalese society. Adoption in Nepal is rather focused to the families than for the goodwill of the child. This concept has widened the problem in domestic adoption.

Legal Provisions

Nepalese laws have clear provisions for adoption. Couple or single woman having foreign nationality can apply to adopt a child. According to clause 12 (a) of Civil Code under the provision of adoption, the terms and conditions are formulated for inter country adoption.

Due to extreme poverty, in most of the cases, the babies are abandoned by their parents and these little ones get into an orphanage and they wait for someone loving and caring to get them into their sweet homes to let them enjoy their fundamental rights

There are lots of destitute children of both the sexes available for adoption

in Nepal like in Bal Mandir - a state run orphanage. According to the adoption rules of the Government in Nepal, infertile couples married for four years or even single women, widow, divorcee are eligible to adopt a child. The age difference between the adopted child and parent should be not less than 35 and not more than 55 years.

An application has to be submitted to adopt a Nepali son or a daughter. In case of married couples, the application should also include the infertility report, marriage certificate, family and economic condition statement, health, character certificates, copies of passport and visa and a letter of consent to adopt a Nepali child authorized by the officer of the concerned country.

In the case of unmarried, divorced, windowed single parent, a guarantee letter written by the government of his/her country or the Embassy of his/her country in Nepal has to be submitted confirming that he/she who is taking the child in adoption shall bear the whole responsibility including nourishment and education of the child including the authorized evidence.

Upon the approval of adoption by the government, the child could travel to the country of the adoptive parents. Until the adopted child attains majority, the adoptive parent should inform the concerned orphanage, Nepalese Embassy or Mission located in the concerned

country and Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare of the Nepal Government, in writing, on the child's growth, diet, education and health every year.

The Nepalese Embassy or Mission will also, on the basis of the documents submitted by the adoptive parents and information sent by the Government of Nepal, submit a monitoring report confirming the growth, diet, education and health of the adopted son/daughter, until he/she attains majority, in accordance with the conditions to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare.

"The government has to implement the provision included in the Kathmandu Declaration of inter-country adoption conference held last March," said Neupane.

Trends of Adoption

Government and NGO sources say that some 300 children are adopted annually from Nepal. But data collected by CWIN National Resource Centre in the first three months of year 2007 show 338 children were adopted during this time alone.

Some child rights organizations argue that Intra or inter-country adoption could be one of the resorts for children without families. But the process is sometimes not in the best interest of the children and has many irregularities. Many adopted children might have found a better life and future but there are cases of children being sold and abused sexually.

Some countries have strict laws and have their own rules and regulations on inter-country adoption. There are also countries which totally prohibit inter-country adoptions.

International Conference

Following some controversy over adoption, Nepal hosted the first International Conference on Inter-Country Adoption on 11-13 March 2007 which led to the ratification of the Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption and the adoption of national laws and mechanisms to regulate in-country and inter-country adoption. This conference was an effort towards sharing the benefits



Underprivileged children: Demanding recognition

to the children adoption, national and international legal frameworks and processes, and global inter-country adoption issues.

The Convention of Rights of Child, which guides UNICEF's work, states very clearly that every child has the right to know and to be cared for by his or her own parents, whenever possible. UNICEF believes that families needing support to care for their children should receive it, and that alternative means of caring for a child should only be considered when, despite this assistance, a child's family is unavailable, unable or unwilling to care for her or him.

At a time when the debate is going on over the adoption, Nepalese children, who are adopted by foreigners, are enjoying good environment. When the country is in no position to provide social security to the children, Nepal has no alternatives to adoption.

As it is, now the question is attached with human emotions of many parents and rights of children like Jamuna, Krishna and Lilly, the government has no options other than to give opportunity to the children to unite with their foster parents. Delaying the process of reunification will damage the image of Nepal in the international sector. ■

“The Peaceful, Stable, Prosperous And Democratic Nepal Is In India’s Interest”

-Shiv Shankar Menon

Indian foreign secretary SHIV SHANKER MENON visited Kathmandu on September 15-16. During his visit, Indian foreign secretary Menon met with various political leaders including prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, former prime minister and Rastriya Janshakti Party leader Surya Bahadur Thapa, CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal, Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal and RPP president Pashupati SJB Rana. Excerpts of the statement he made at the press conference held at the end of his visit. Compiled by KESHAB POUDEL

My consultations over the last two days in Nepal strengthened my conviction that the people of Nepal will successfully address the challenging tasks of democratic nation-building which lies ahead.

On His Meetings

I am delighted to be here in the capital of our friendly and close neighbor Nepal. During this visit, I had privilege to meet with several leaders of Nepal of various political parties. I was received by prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, speaker of legislative parliament Subas Chandra Nembang, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel, Foreign Minister Sahana Pradhan and Home minister Krishna Sitaula. I also met with chief election commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel and various political leaders including the president of Nepali Congress (Democratic) Sher Bahadur Deuba, CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, Chairman of CPN-Maoist Pushpa Kamal Dahal, president of Rastriya Janshakti Party Surya Bahadur Thapa and president of Rastriya Prajatantra Party Pashupati Sumsher Rana.

On His Discussions

In these meetings and discussions, I had free and frank exchange of views on bilateral relations and ways and means of further expanding and strengthening close, friendly and wide ranging relations between India and Nepal. I reiterated that these relations remain the highest priority for India. The leaders of government and political parties of Nepal also informed me of the present political situation in Nepal and the forthcoming Constituent Assembly Elections. All of them spoke of the crucial importance of the elections to the Constituent Assembly (to be held) as scheduled and in an environment free of fear and intimidation.

On Condemnation Of Blasts

I also conveyed on behalf of government and people of India deepest condolence on the loss of life, limb and property as a result of the recent blast in Kathmandu and strong condemnation of this cowardly act targeting innocent citizens. I would also like to mention here the resilience and determination shown by the people of Nepal not allowing the act of senseless violence to adversely affect the peace process and the elections to the Constituent Assembly which is scheduled for 22 November 2007.

On Stable Nepal

India has consistently believed that these elections will allow the people of Nepal to choose the manner in which they wish their country to be governed by giving to themselves a new constitution. India will support and assist the transition to a democratic, inclusive, stable and prosperous Nepal. My consultations over the last two days in Nepal strengthened my conviction that the people of Nepal will successfully address the challenging tasks of democratic nation-building which lies ahead.

On Future of Monarchy

We have said this over and over, it is for the people of Nepal to make their decision what nature of state, what forms of government they want to live in. This is an issue for Nepal to decide. It is not for India to take any stand on this. It is for Nepalese people to decide. We think it is for Nepalese people to make their choice on how they want to be governed and what kind of state do they want. We will only help you in transition. We will help you and support you in the transition and in making that choice but ultimately the choice is for the people of Nepal to make.

On Elections for CA

As I said in my statement, every political leader that I had met told me that they regard elections will be crucial and they want this election to take place. My confidence in the people of Nepal and their ability to see transition through has grown stronger each time I come to Nepal. My confidence in the people of Nepal is stronger

than ever.

On PM Koirala's Comment on Threat to Nepal's Independence

I am not going to comment on the statement of Nepalese leaders and that is not my place and that is not my function. In my statement, I have said what the situation is, I told you that my faith in the transition is strong and it is very important transition. I am not going to talk on other issues you have raised. You should ask them not me.

On UN Role

I think they have very clear mandate given to them by the Security Council, by the member states. Their function is to help arms management and to help hold the elections. I hope they do those two jobs well.

On Bhutanese Refugees

It is the issue between two friendly neighbors of India. So obviously, our first preference would be that it should be settled through discussions between Nepal and Bhutan. For the offer of the resettlement other countries have made, we can help, and facilitate. We do feel this humanitarian issue needs to be dealt with as humanitarian problem rather than getting into very complicated legality of right or wrong. It needs to be dealt with the humanitarian consequences of the situation.

On Terai Turmoil

Political leaders told me about the situation. I also met with some leaders from Madhes. They told me what sorts of things have been happening in Madhes. It is internal affairs of Nepal and we cannot do anything.

On Special Security Bureau (SSB) Activities

If you have specific problem with what somebody in SSB did somewhere on the border on specific date, we will take care of it. If you give information about the place and incident, we will go there, investigate and check it. But, secondly we have a larger security system in place between India and Nepal where we share an open border. We both have an interest in a peaceful and safe open border in both the sides. We know that we had suffered when this is exploited either by criminals or by various other

forces. We have a common interest in dealing with it. We have structures and we have regular talks at the secretary level and we have local level contacts. We have ways of dealing with these issues. Don't expect me to comment on specific incident. General issue here is safety and security and peace along that open border. People of both



the sides of that border deserve that.

On His Visit In A Crucial Time

Quite frankly, it is a normal process. Last time also somebody asked me similar question. Between close and friendly neighbors, all times are good times. Because we have so much in common and we have so much to do together. We are interested in each other's welfare. The peaceful, stable, prosperous and democratic Nepal is in India's interest and there is so much we do together and we can do together. So any time is good time to visit.

On Flood

In fact, this was particularly bad year for both the sides of border in terms of flooding and effect on the people. What we suggested was as soon as possible our secretaries of water resources will come here and discuss and decide on the step we can together take to mitigate the effect of flood and talk about a long term strategy to deal with flood control. We have several issues in the long run on all the rivers we share and that link both of us.

On Bilateral Support

We can support in several ways. The most immediate way is, for instance, support to the Election Commission. They need some help in terms of materials. They asked us for some electronic voting machines. They are available. They are directly related to helping election process. Similarly, there are other instances we are asked for. Rather than going into the long list, more important thing is that should friendly neighbor like Nepal need assistance from India, we are happy to provide it. But I think our help has a limit. If we want to serve our basic problems, we cannot do it all alone. We do seek prosperity for our people and we have to do it in open regional environment to prosper together. Basically what we said is we will help in transition. Our ultimate aim is welfare of the people of both sides of the border. ■

Between close and friendly neighbors, all times are good times. Because we have so much in common and we have so much to do together. We are interested in each other's welfare. The peaceful, stable, prosperous and democratic Nepal is in India's interest and there is so much we do together and we can do together.

CHINA FESTIVAL 2007

Show of Friendship

China Festival 2007 helps to bring the people of two countries closer by sharing of culture

By KESHAB POUDEL

Even as Nepal passes through critical transition, two neighbors India and China have been showing growing interests here.

Less than a couple of hours after the comment of Indian foreign secretary Shiv Shankar Menon that India wants to see Nepal as a stable and economically prosperous country, ambassador of Nepal's northern neighbor China, too, echoed the statement saying that China is ready to support Nepal to make it prosperous and stable.

Although officials of Nepal's two neighbors spoke their statements in two different occasions, Nepal's both neighbors have ultimately no option other than to accept that only stable and prosperous Nepal can guarantee their interests.

To show how many similarities are there between Nepal and China and how Nepal can benefit from Chinese progress, Chinese delegation has decorated the Birendra International Convention Center (BCCI) as a model. The menu of the programs is another reflection where Chinese artists sing Nepalese songs. The convention center was decorated in such a style that one can feel the taste of China in the capital Kathmandu where people saw cultural shows along with enjoying Chinese food.

The message of China Festival 2007 is clear: Nepal and China have many commonalities and they have many things to share. Inaugurated jointly by prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala and vice governor of

Guangdong Province of China Lei Yulan, the week long festival is first of its kind where Nepalese can see all kinds of progress made by China over the years and enjoy vivid cultural life of China.



PM Koirala inaugurates Chinese festival: Celebration of relations

"Nepal and China share long border but our relations are problem free. The governments come and go but people to people relations are permanent. I hope this festival will promote centuries old people to people relations," said prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala. "Under the leadership of B.P. Koirala, Nepal and China gave new direction to the relations between the two countries and it will further strengthen in coming days."

Along with bringing cultural troops, China Festival 2007 has also showed how China has made progress

over the years in various areas. "The relation between China and Nepal is centuries old. Our relation is higher as Himalayas and warm and friendly. Being a close neighbor, China is ready to support Nepal to achieve high economic growth and prosperity," said vice governor Lei.

With the growing number of flights and increased access to the Chinese media, Nepalese are very much willing to know about the progress made by China and Chinese people. For Nepalese, Chinese symbolize hard working people with warm behavior towards them. By supporting development efforts in Nepal by

constructing high ways, industries, hydropower plant, irrigation facilities, hospitals and poly-technical institutes, China has already shown its generous interest in Nepal.

By signing an agreement to construct 20 kilometer long Syaphrubesi- Kerung Road, 100, miles north of Capital, China has shown that Nepal and China need alternative roads to meet trade volume between the two countries.

"China and Nepal are linked by river, mountains and our relation is centuries old. China is ready to provide

all necessary support to turn Nepal as a prosperous, stable and developed Nepal. After establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the two countries' relations remain cordial and warm" said Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xianglin.

Fair For Culture

Along with displaying Chinese traditional dances, acrobatic and music, the fair also gives opportunity to see how China has transformed its economic base and achieved development target. More than 60 Chinese stalls are also there to sell various Chinese goods and other products including books.

"We brought here economic prosperity and rich culture of Southern Chinese City of Guangdong," said vice governor Lieu. "From white cloud to white silver, we have come to our beautiful neighboring country."

With high economic growth and fast development, Nepal's northern neighbor has made tremendous progress. The progress made by China is challenge as well as opportunity for Nepal. The railway link to Lhasa and its extension up to Sigatse has already opened Nepal to global market through northern front. This new development will provide immense opportunity to diversify Nepal's trade.

Nepalese business sector is yet to exploit opportunities presented by China. The regular air links between China's Southern city Guangdong with capital Kathmandu has already opened up new destination for businessmen and traders of Nepal.

From cultural programs, dance and acrobatic to Chinese made goods and Chinese food, there is diverse presentation in the festival. To perform the cultural programs, a 35 member strong Cultural Troupe from Hang Seng Cultural Group has stayed in Nepal.

Along with performing Chinese dances, martial arts and other performances, the Chinese cultural troupe also showed Nepalese dance in



BICC Venue: Chinese touch

Nepalese songs. The music and rhythm displayed to perform Nepalese dance showed long preparation by Chinese artistes.

Showing world class performance of ring dance, the Guinness book record holder and eighteen years old Huang Xiaoya demonstrated awesome talent.

In the last one year, two countries have stepped up their cultural and business activities. Less than a week after Nepal-Tibet-China Economic and Trade Expo 2007 in which the organizers had to leave the stall after rush selling, China Festival kicked off. Organized by Embassy of People's Republic of China, World Cultural Net and Guangdong Province, the week long China Festival has some unique charters.

At a time when Nepal's northern neighbor China has made tremendous progress in its economy and development and a large number of Nepalese student go to study in various

universities in China, there is a growing interest in Nepal about China.

People to people interactions between Nepal and China has increased as large numbers of Nepalese students are now studying in various Chinese universities and many China experts are now working in Nepal. Along with education exchange, the interactions at official and other levels are also growing.

Whatever the political system and whoever is in power in Nepal, it does not make any difference to China as it maintains constant and stable relations with Nepal. In the past, Chinese focused more on official relationship but they are now focusing to develop the people to people relationship.

The message of China Festival 2007 is clear as it shows Nepal and China; two neighbors, have many things common which binds the relations for centuries. ■

Law relating to private participation in infrastructure projects in Nepal

By Sudheer Shrestha

Despite grim, divisive and conflict prone political scenario, an encouraging sign of development has taken place in Nepal. On September 17, 2007, amidst the sad news of violence in Kapilvastu and apart from customary news in relation to gloomy political schism between the *reigning* parties, an encouraging news of signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between a Private Equity Group of Nepal led by Mr. Prithvi Bahadur Pande, International Finance Corporation (IFC), The Asian Development Bank, India's Infrastructure Development Finance Company, Germany's DEG-KfW BANKENGRUPPE and a consortium of ten Nepali banks and financial institutions to establish an Infrastructure Development Bank in Nepal came out.

The development of infrastructure facilities until recently was considered as a venture to be developed and provided only by the state or state entities. However, the whole concept is changing with instances of infrastructures development by private parties or in public private participation in many countries. Infrastructures may be developed also as a by-product by private companies as in the case of 90 miles long King Coal Highway in West Virginia in US which is contemplated to build by excess materials extracted during the process of digging the coal mine.

In this modality, private party alone, or in collaboration with public sector, the private party assumes substantial financial, technical and

operational risk in the design, financing, building and operation of a project. Many countries have promulgated separate laws for such private involvement. Nepal has also recently promulgated an Act Relating to Private Investment in Infrastructure Construction and Operation, 2006. The Act largely embodies the model provisions developed by various organizations working in the sector of Public-Private Partnership. The Act has identified road, tunnel-ways, bridge, hospital, irrigation canal, power generation house, power transmission line, trolley bus, tramway, dry port, waterways etc. as possible areas of private or public-private participation in investment and operation. Such involvement is recognized by way of Build and Transfer (BT), Build Operate and Transfer (BOT), Build Own Operate and Transfer (BOOT), Build, Transfer and Operate (BTO), Lease Operate and Transfer (LOT), Lease, Build, Operate and Transfer (LBOT), Develop Operate and Transfer (DOT) models. The list is not exclusionary and the law is accommodative to other forms of private involvement as well, such as, Build Lease and Transfer (BLT), Contract Add and Operate (CAO), Rehabilitate Operate and Transfer (ROT), Rehabilitate Own and Operate (ROO), Lease Renovate Operate and Transfer (LROT) etc. The Act empowers the government to act by way of bidding or direct negotiation.

As the law is already in existence, the endeavours made to establish Infrastructure Bank seems very inspiring. However irrespective of

these promises, there are many challenges yet to be met and fought by the promoters working for the development of Nepal. The Act in isolation is not a consolation for the inflow of capital and technology for the growth of infrastructure. The Rules under the Act is yet to be formulated, which, inter alia, needs to clarify rules for establishing the tariff levels. A serious thought needs to be given to clarify whether Rate of Return Regulation/ Cost of Service method, or Performance based Regulation, or Price Cap method, or competitive bidding or marginal cost based price will be adopted. The Act prohibits the nationalization of projects but is silent on requisition made for short terms.

Nepal is in the brink of constitutional transition. The present Constitution has envisaged for a federal state. The division of powers and natural resources is very significant in such political structure which in turn affects the infrastructure projects. One can easily envision the level of efforts and hard work required in bringing together these multilateral, foreign and local institutions for establishing the proposed Bank. This evidently looks like a very daunting task. However, the politicians have not yet worked and reached to consensus on how the natural resources will be distributed and controlled between the centre and the federal units to provide efficient infrastructure facilities to the people. Similarly, the politicians have not even given a thought on how the taxation powers between centre and federal units will be exercised.

Apparently, they are busy claiming their share in appointments of university officials, envoys and bureaucrats. The recent amendments to Income Tax Act ensures for the continuance of tax concessions mentioned in that Act for the entire period of contract of construction and operation of infrastructure project as agreed with the government. However, ironically, no special concession or exemption is provided for such Project or, Infrastructure Capital Company as the proposed Bank, or Infrastructure Capital Fund. The provision is insufficient in itself to motivate the investments. However, this amended Act will also soon become obsolete in pursuance to the election of Constituent Assembly and adoption of new Constitution.

Analogous to the constitutional hurdle there are other laws that needs to be reviewed and corrected.

Though a smaller bench of the Supreme Court in one case has ruled that the project specific employees need not be made permanent employee of the company, the present labour law provides in black and white for such appointment. The truth is that it does not allow the flexibility to different types of employment contracts. The abiding to Stamp Duty Act may be very costly in the light of huge amounts that may be involved in contracts and share transfers related with infrastructure projects. The judicial system is lethargic. The dispute resolution mechanism through arbitration has also not been efficient due to weak enforcement provisions. Each day of delay in infrastructure projects may cause loss of millions of rupees. As such, a separate dispute resolution forum specifically meant for infrastructure projects needs to be established. Property acquisition laws need to be more precise and clearer.

As the infrastructure projects need huge financial injection, the present debenture issuing law that ties such issuance with paid-up capital also need to be minutely reviewed. On the other side adequate legal framework is also needed to bring balance between the capital injectors whereby a class does not remain "Lenders" with all the securities and the small debenture-holders "Investors" with all the perils. Where the banks (in proper sense) are involved in infrastructure projects the related recovery laws also need to be revised. The present law is not sufficient to enforce security interest such as right to collect the tariff, or operate, maintain or manage the infrastructure facility, or the

effectively such experience can be leveraged depends wholly on the legal ambience set out by the country. But unfortunately, the laws in Nepal are inadequate, obscure and ambiguous. Side by side, even with the fulfilment of the proper and adequate statutes relating to development of infrastructure projects, there is a huge need for political motivation and political will in support of these larger than life projects. The Government policy regarding these issues should seriously reciprocate the existing law and regulations for the easy attainment of these projects, which may be in the pipeline. The pious intentions of the parties involved in establishment of the proposed Bank will be fulfilled only if

The present Interim Constitution has envisaged for a federal state. One can easily envision the level of efforts and hard work involved in bringing together multilateral, foreign and local institutions for establishing the proposed Bank. However, The politicians have not yet worked and reached to consensus on how the natural resources and taxation powers will be distributed and controlled between the centre and the federal units to provide efficient infrastructure facilities to the people. Apparently, they are busy in claiming their share in appointments of university officials, envoys and bureaucrats.

assignment thereof as the license or concession is specifically granted to the project company. As in case of telecom, the government also needs to establish an independent sector specific regulator before opening any infrastructure sector for private participation.

IFC is one of the participants of the proposed Bank. IFC's experience of more than 40 years in assisting the development of infrastructure in various countries is that the existence of an adequate legal framework is the main catalyst for the promotion of private investment in any country. How

the political leadership honestly starts to think upon these issues which will be a real contribution to new Nepal and not merely a lip service. It is also necessary for politicians to see the natural resources as commodity, and opportunities from them objectively, rather than to exploit sentiments of the people if they really intend to provide humane facilities to Nepalese people. But this definitely does not mean that they shall have to be pliant against the national interest. ■

(The writer is a corporate lawyer in Kusum Law Firm)

POLITICS

Where Is Nepal Heading?

Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala and leaders of other parties remarks that the country is under threat generates a new debate

By KESHAB POUDEL

"I don't know what are there in the content of agreement signed between the government and Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities," said prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, in a meeting with the leaders of the Federation.

The next day he said sovereignty and independence of Nepal is in danger, but he didn't explain from where that danger comes from? He mentioned that he had told this fact to the Indian ambassador, American ambassador and, later on, Chinese ambassador.

If prime minister Koirala doesn't know what agreement his ministers sign and he cannot expose the force which is threatening Nepal's independence, it is anybody's guess who is ruling the country and where the country is heading?

Whether it was a rebuff to (Krishna Prasad) Bhattarai or his own hunch/conscience, prime minister Koirala's sense of patriotism and sense of threat to the nation came. Koirala revealed this when his colleague and former prime minister Bhattarai issued a statement recently saying that national reconciliation propounded by B.P. Koirala is very relevant at this critical juncture.

"The country is passing through an unprecedented crisis. Any such crisis will demand collective wisdom and dedication on the part of the people so that it does not sweep away everything that makes Nepal. Late B.P. Koirala, Ganesh Man Singh came back to Nepal from India in 1976 ending the 8 year old exile with the call for national reconciliation. They were clear in their minds that a prolonged difference between the King and the democratic forces will weaken the Nepali nationalism, independence and democracy," said Bhattarai in the statement.

In the circumstances when Maoist pulled out from the government and Bhattarai picked up the cause of B.P.'s national reconciliation, Koirala's, whose previous actions has badly weaken nation's foundation, seems to have raised the sentimental issue to restore himself as a patriotic.

"The center of lurking threat remain unexplained. Neither Koirala's cabinet colleagues nor his party leadership had the privilege to hear that from him. Like the common people they all might have known that through the press and blaring FMs," said a political analyst.

Although Koirala did not explain center of threat, other politicians, who are talking of the same issue in different manner, plainly disclosed the center of threat to Nepal's independence.

One of the members of eight party alliance, Narayan Man Bijukchhe, leader of Nepal Majdoor Kishan Party, sees the threat of Sikkimization. Foreigners are showing greater interest in the elections than political parties. India is showing more interest than others. "Indians are searching a new Lendhup Dorje in Nepal," said Bijukchhe in Nepal Magazine (24 September)

Similarly, another politician Radha Krishna Mainali, who started his political career as a Naxalite and spent 14 years in prison but was the minister in a cabinet chaired by King Gyanendra before the upsurge, visualizes similar situation like Bijukchhe.

"If the present trend continues, Nepal will lose its independent identity like Sikkim," said Radha Krishna Mainali (Sanghu weekly 17 September).

"Obviously his indication was towards India's covert operations. The question of threat in the nation's survival as well as the question of sovereignty has been in discussion in recent days very much. Almost all prominent politicians of eight political parties including



PM Koirala: Whose threat?

Maoists have, at one time or another, raised this issue of dirty machination against Nepal by next door neighbor. Even journalists and non-political persons have also been found talking about this threat alarmingly," said the analyst.

Although they see the threats, they do not elaborate about it and tell the people clearly how the threat is coming from. "India must realize that it cannot turn Nepal into Sikkim. Prime minister Koirala as a pawn of expansionist India and reactionary capitalist America," thundered CPN-Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai in front of tens of thousand of public on Tuesday.

"They all talk about the threat but for their immediate petty interests they find each other as their immediate enemy. When they talk in the larger perspective, they reach into same conclusion of an external threat - the threat visualized by Girija Prasad Koirala octogenarian and unchallenged leader of recent Janandolan II," added the analyst. "He does not mean to utter a cheap jargon but must have seriously realized the threat. But he didn't find any body in his cabinet to share this with."

If there is a lurking threat to independence of Nepal, only the unity and reconciliation among all political forces can prevent it. Although all politicians have been speaking similar words of threat to nation, the words of vengeance, hatred and provocation expressed by them will definite led Nepal to nowhere.

"Nepal seems to be ruled and led by blind fanatics in power who go to the contrary to their diagnosis." The situation is that no body knows where the country is heading. ■

US EMBASSY COMPLETES REVIEW OF 2007 DV

The US Embassy in Nepal has announced that it recently completed a thorough review of the 2007 Diversity Visa (DV) program.

"More than 1100 Nepalese citizens received immigrant visas to the United States through the 2007 Diversity Visa Lottery Program. Over 85% of the Lottery winners met minimum program and legal requirements to qualify and earned the opportunity to start a new life in the United States of America," the press release by the Embassy states.

"The review has affirmed that the Embassy's adjudications in DV cases were in full compliance with United States law, and confirmed that the small number of DV applicants who were refused visas did not qualify under US law, meaning that fewer than 13 percent of the total DV-2007 applicants failed to meet the minimum education or work requirements clearly stated in the application instructions. Another two percent of the DV applicants misrepresented themselves by presenting false documents."

The review was conducted after a number of Nepali nationals staged protests after their DV applications were rejected. They even held hunger strikes.

The Diversity Visa program has been designed to bring greater racial and ethnic diversity to the United States. The DV program offers permanent residency visas to citizens of countries that have a traditionally low rate of immigration to the United States.

"More than 7,800 Nepalese have immigrated through the Diversity Visa program since 2001. To qualify for the Diversity Visa, an applicant must meet simple, but strict requirements, which are clearly spelled out in the application. The US Embassy has sought to make the DV program as transparent as possible, and to ensure that the Nepalese public is well informed when deciding whether or not to apply for a diversity visa."

The season for interviews of 2008 Diversity Visa lottery winners begins on October 1, 2007, and the application period for the 2009 DV program begins on October 3, 2007. ■

Book List

1. Bonded Labour (Kamaiya) in Nepal/2005
Dr. Padma Raj Lamichhane Rs. 350/-
2. Economic Survey Fiscal Year 2006/07
Govt. of Nepal/Ministry of Finance Rs.100/-
3. Electrification Coverage in Nepal/2007
Subarna Prasad Kapali Rs.100/-
4. Essays on the Sociology of Nepal /2007
Chaitanya Mishra Rs.450/-
5. Inside Out Political Parties of Nepal/2007
Dwarika N. Dhungel, IIDS Publication, Kathmandu
Rs.350/-
6. Local Governance in Nepal Democracy at Grassroot/
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Rabindra Kahanal, Rs. 295/-
7. Making Constitution Through Constituent Assembly/
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Bhimarjun Acharya Rs.300/-
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Pratyoush Onta Rs.200/-
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Harischandra Lal Singh Rs.375/-
10. Nepal Year Book/2007
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11. Nepal's conflict and its impact on public policy/2006
Ananda P. Shrestha/ Hari Uprety Rs. 150/-
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Raman Grandon Rs 300/-
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Economy/ 2007 Pyakuryal/Sainju Rs. 350/-
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Gerard Toffin Rs.790/-
15. Regional Strategies for Sustainable Development in
Nepal/2006 Jibgar joshi Rs 400/-
16. Simple Convictions My Struggle for Peace and
Democracy/2007 Girija Prasad Koirala Rs.250/-
17. Societal Analysis Politics of Poverty, Injustice and
Inequity/2005 Narbikram Thapa Rs 250
18. Stock Market in Nepal/2006
Rabindra Bhattarai Rs 110
19. The Fateful Interview/2007
Madhav K. Rimal Rs 400
20. The State and Society in Nepal/2006
Prayag Raj Sharma Rs 460
21. Tilled Earth/2007
Manjushree Thapa Rs 312
22. Wrong We Do, Right We Don't/2005
Aditya Man Shrestha Rs 350

Source: Himalayan Books, Bagbazaar, 4242085

ILLEGAL PASHUPATI ROAD

Threat to Ancient Monument

The decision of Maoist minister to open four lane road at Pashupati Monument site sparks new controversy

By A CORRESPONDENT

Not only for the world's billion Hindus and Buddhists but for archeologists of the world, Pashupati Area, which is declared as a World Heritage Site by the World Heritage Center of United Nations Education and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the news of building of road across the site has come as a shocker. The site is under threat of existence following a decision of a Maoist minister to construct the four lane road.

Although the World Heritage Center wrote to the Permanent Mission of Nepal for

UNESCO in Paris seeking the status of a road being constructed in the middle of the sacred Shleshmantaka Jungle near the Pashupati Temple, the Maoist-led Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning opened the track with one kilometer wide long and 20 meter wide road.

As a country which ratified the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1978, Nepal is obliged to consider the international guidelines for conservation of the monuments recognized as World-Class monuments.

Despite denouncement from the local community, and Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Maoists turned deaf ear. Regarded as one of the world's renowned heritage sites of Kathmandu Valley, Pashupati Area covers a big area including the forest.

"This is a attack against the faith of Hindus and Buddhists all over the world by Maoists. It is an unfortunate incident. The time has come for all the people to come out to protect sacred Hindu religious place of the world," said Rabindra Nath Sharma, president of Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal. "The Maoists exposed their true faces by

attacking sentiments of more than a billion Hindus."

Some other activists also condemned the construction of the road. "It is against



Shleshmantak jungle: Heritage under attack

Bagmati civilization of the valley. The construction must stop and the government must protect the sacred Shleshmantaka Jungle which is the water shed of two small streams of Bagmati," said Hutaram Vaidya, a senior and respected activist of Save Bagmati Campaign.

The WHC reportedly has asked the status of the road and its impact on the recently rescued image of the World Heritage Sites which was recognized as a monument in danger three years ago.

The construction will again put the entire Kathmandu valley in danger. Should the WHC find that the Government of Nepal has not upheld its commitment of preserving the outstanding universal value of the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site, the site will be placed back on the list of World Heritage in Danger. It may even remove the site entirely from the list, writes The Himalayan Sites citing the sources in UNESCO office in

Kathmandu.

Seven Monument zones define Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site collectively viz: Kathmandu Durbar Square, Patan Durbar Square and Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Boudha, Swayambhu, Changu Narayan and Pashupati Area.

Pashupati area covers Mrigasthali hill in the east and in the west lies ancient settlement of Deopatan. To the east is the forested hill of Mrigasthali and to the north is the Kailash Plateau, which might have been the site of the Lichhavi

Capital, Managriha.

"The act taken by Maoist-backed ministry to construct the road at World Heritage Site has hurt the sentiment of billions plus Hindus of the world. This also hurts the centuries long religious harmony existing between various religious groups in Nepal," said Sharma whose RPP-Nepal is embracing the slogans for constitutional monarchy and Hindu Kingdom. "This is malicious work done under the cover of some alien religious groups against Hindu."

According to historical record, Pashupati has been the deity of almost all the rulers of Kathmandu Valley since as early as the 7th century AD. For the Hindus, the construction of road is threat to their faith.

Whatever motives behind the road, it ultimately ruins world's oldest monumental sites. As prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala is bent on compromising everything with Maoists, this Maoist action could also go ahead unchecked. ■

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