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SPOTLIGHT

Feb 15-21, 2008

The Changing Faces Of Crisis

Melamchi : Inching Closer
SPA : Dialogue Again

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अब... १* रु. १ मै बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंक बाढी भन्दा बाढी
नागरिकहरुमा बैंकिङ्ग सेवाको पहिलो अनुभव
एवं बाढी बरन सकोस भन्नाका लागि सजोरब
प्रस्तुत गर्दछ... **मात्र रु.१ मा**
“आफ्नै बचत खाता”
सम्पूर्ण अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय स्तरको सेवा सुविधा सहित ।



जीवनका पहिला पलहरु देखिनै बचतको बाढी
सुरक्षित भविष्यको सपनाढी

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COVER STORY: Changing Faces of Crises From ideology-insurgency to identity based conflict, the only thing constant for Nepal has been the instability

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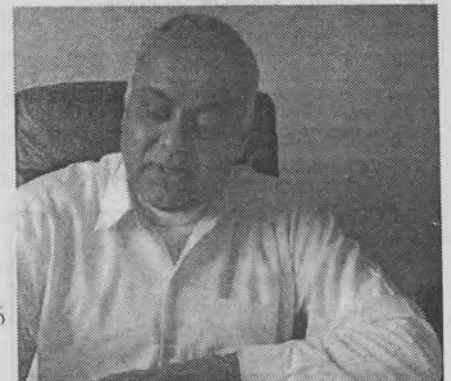


MELMACHI : Inching Closer The dream of valley residents to drink plenty of water has moved a step closer after Asian Development Bank approved the project.

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 Ghimire explains
 government plans
 for reconstruction

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SPOTLIGHT

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Chief Editor And Publisher
Madhav Kumar Rimal

Editor
Sarita Rimal

Managing Editor
Keshab Poudel

Senior Reporter
Sanjaya Dhakal

Design and Layout
Hari Krishna Bastakoti
Jyoti Dangol (Singh)

Photographer
Sandesh Manandhar

Legal Advisor
Advocate Lok Bhakta Rana

Marketing
Navin Kumar Maharjan
Madan Raj Poudel

Editorial Office
GPO Box 7256, Maitidevi, Kathmandu
Tel (977-1) 4423127 Fax: (977-1) 4417845
Chief Editor's : 4435594,
E-mail : spot@mail.com.np
Internet : www.nepalnews.com/spotlight

Cover Design : Digi-Tech Scanning & Pre-Press Pvt. Ltd.
P.O. Box : 1655, Jwagal, Kupondole, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel : 5551251, 5529530
E-mail : degiscan@wlink.com.np

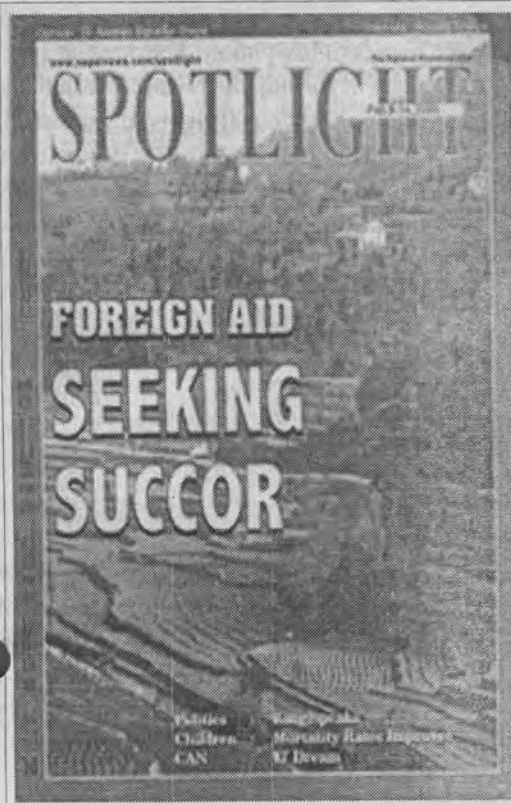
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February 9, 2008, will go down in the history of Nepal as another black day when the SPAM government played havoc with Nepal's sovereign status and turned her into an obedient servant of the big neighbor, India. Previous day, on Friday February 8, the Nepal police apprehended an Indian doctor Amit Kumar in Sauraha, Chitwan, southern Nepal on charges of violation of Foreign Exchange Regulation Act. The Indian doctor is also accused of illegally trading in human kidneys. The next day being a holiday all government offices were closed and no official activity could take place. But the orders of Delhi had to be carried out. Consequently, the Indian doctor was abjectly surrendered to the visiting Indian authorities at the tarmac at the Tribhuvan International Airport and was whisked away in an Indian aircraft to the Indian capital. No body seems to know how this could happen. Evidently, the order must have come from Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala. And everybody knows Girija Koirala loves to play Hanuman to India when it serves his own interest. And who could keep him where he is if not India? Moreover, patriotism, national glory, pride and integrity and even morality are very strange words not very well known to him. As such, we are not at all surprised at Girija Koirala's behavior. It is only just another blotch on his already blemished garment. But we are indeed, very much shamed by the behavior of his colleagues in the government belonging to other parties. How could they still continue to work with him in this government? Are they all willing partners in the crime? If it is so, god only can save this county. Will He? Do Nepali people deserve God's intervention?

Madhav Kumar Rimal
Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Biased Views on Polls

It was frustrating to read your biased views, which depict that the election for CA, is not possible in the near future. At a time when country's all major political forces have been expressing commitments to hold the election, no one can stop it now. The time has come now to support Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula for their sacred goal to hold the election. I hope Spotlight will also contribute to create conducive environment to hold the election for CA.

Via-email

Donors' Contribution

Although there are many cynical persons in Nepal who always criticize foreign aid, Nepal's donor partners have made a very important contribution to uplift the poor rural population. All of the Nepalese need to be grateful for their generous support to Nepal. From building schools to health posts and bridges to road, Nepal's foreign partners always lent their helping hands. As Nepal is in the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation, Nepal government invites Nepal's foreign friends for their help (Foreign Aid: Seeking Succor Spotlight February 8-14).

Khagendra Khatri

Via-email

Poll Analysis

Your analysis on the election preparation was very balanced and interesting (Election Preparations

February 1-7). I really enjoyed reading the article as you have predicted the violence and election preparation will be going together. It is unfortunate to say that our senior politicians and ministers are talking in such ignorant manners. It is very difficult to hold the election in the country when the law and order situation has deteriorated. Whatever home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula said about holding the elections, he cannot hold free and fair elections. If he cannot hold free and fair election, there is no sense to have election.

Jagriti Rai

London Via e-mail

Changing Times

Till a few years ago when Maoists launched their violent campaign from safe sanctuary in foreign soil against Nepal, every body supported their actions justifying them as

necessary step to free oppressed and socially marginalized population. Numerous books are still available in the market which linked violent Maoist insurgency with rampant corruption and bad governance. Now when Maoist leaders are living in Nepal and talking about the need to protect the country's interest, all of them have turned against Maoists. Of course, we all have made mistakes but now we cannot portray Maoists as a pariah like monarchy. If we want to live in Nepal as a nation, there must be unity among all forces. Nepal cannot tolerate the politics of isolation and separatism.

Bipul Khadka

Sano Gaucharan

Eye-Opener

I would like to congratulate Dr. Ananda Bahadur Thapa for bringing such an important issue about selling out of Upper Karnali. I don't understand why the project with 4180 MW storage project capacity is sold out to build 300 MW project. It is shocking to know that nobody has been talking about this. There is no justification on the part of government to issue the license of this project. At a time when India needs huge power to boom its economy, reducing its original capacity from 4180 MW to 300 MW is a great loss to India also - which is the sole buyer of Nepal's hydropower. At a time when renowned expert like Dr. Thapa is constantly opposing it, I would like to request concerned officials to read his article and scrap the agreement if it is necessary.

Jayakrishna Upadhyaya

Via-email



Sujata Says Interim Statute Crossed Govt's Limits

Minister without portfolio and Nepali Congress central leader Sujata Koirala on Saturday (Feb 9) said the government brought the interim constitution crossing the mandate of the Jana Andolan II. Addressing a function on 'Madhes and the Constitution Assembly' organized by the Tarun Dal in Siraha, she said, "The Jana Andolan II has given the mandate of holding the Constituent Assembly election and reinstating the parliament standing on the 2047 constitution, but the government was compelled to write the interim constitution due to the Maoists." Though Prime Minister GP Koirala fulfilled the demands raised by the Maoists, the Maoists were involved in activities to disrupt the CA election, she said. "The armed groups in Tarai, except those aiming to divide the nation, should sit for talks laying down their weapons," she said. *Compiled from reports*

Schools Shut Down Due To Strike

Schools across the country have been shut down due to strike imposed by Nepal Educational Republican Forum (NERF). The Forum has imposed three-day school bandh beginning Wednesday (Feb 6) to press for their demands including betterment of facilities for teachers. The Forum has accused the

government of not fulfilling earlier agreements regarding making the temporary teachers permanent, improving conditions for teachers, rehabilitating displaced teachers and making temporary school staffs permanent.

The Forum went ahead with its school bandh despite appeals by guardians' association and civil society organizations. They had said that the action by the Forum was depriving the children of their basic rights to education. *Compiled from reports*

Thapa Urges Govt, Madhesi Groups To Reach Accord Quickly

Former prime minister and president of Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP) Surya Bahadur Thapa has urged the government and Madhesi groups to reach accord at the earliest to ensure the election. Thapa has claimed that if they do not reach an understanding within a week, the election for Constituent Assembly (CA) slated for April 10, cannot be held. "The election cannot be held without addressing Madhesi movement," Thapa said, on Saturday (Feb 9). "An environment conducive for election must be created within a week through dialogue with Madhesi groups," he said. He warned that mobilising army could be counterproductive. *Kantipur daily reports*

Deuba Says King Has The Right To Speak

Former Prime Minister and senior Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba Saturday (Feb 9) said that King Gyanendra's remarks to Japanese media

persons were his fundamental rights to express his opinion. Speaking at press meet in Birjunj, the former PM said that the king has equal rights to express his opinion just as other citizens. On Monday, King Gyanendra, in an interview to Japanese media persons, expressed displeasure over the recent decision by the country's lawmakers to abolish the monarchy, saying that the decision does not reflect the majority view of the people. Lauding the substantial participation of people in the seven-party assembly held in seven major urban centers of the country despite banda, explosions and threat posed by the Madhesi agitators, the NC leader said that no one can stop the conduction of Constituent Assembly (CA) elections. Deuba went on to claim that the CA elections would be conducted even with the help of the Nepali Army if need be. *Compiled from reports*

FSU Polls Suspended; MPs' Grant Put On Hold

The meeting of the Steering Committee of the Seven Party Alliance held on Monday (Feb 4) has decided to put on hold the election of Free Student Unions (FSU). The meeting held at CPN-Maoist head office in Buddhangar decided to ask student organizations to suspend the FSU election as it could affect the constituent assembly elections. The CPN-UML leaders, however, insisted that the FSU polls should take place. The Maoist side proposed to suspend the campus election taking into consideration the need to intensify the CA polls campaigning, emphasizing that the students should also actively take part in it. Nepal Congress and other smaller parties raised no objection to the proposal to stall the FSU polls. Even as student organizations have not yet reacted to the Steering Committee's decision, it is now certain that the FSU polls would be cancelled with Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula stating that the government would not be able to deploy the required

number of security forces for the polls. On Sunday, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala had also advised the leaders of the Nepal Students Union to withhold the FSU election and concentrate on the CA election. Additionally, the SPA meeting has asked the government to stop distribution of Rs one million to the MPs ahead of the polls. The government's decision to distribute the money to each parliamentarian through district development committees for development activities had been widely criticized. The Steering Committee meeting concluded that the money could be re-distributed to the MPS after the CA polls. The meeting also decided to raise the issue of Susta with India through diplomatic channels. People displaced from Susta staged protest outside the meeting venue in the morning and later informed the committee members about the encroachment of Nepali land by Indian authorities. The Steering Committee also decided not to reconstitute the local bodies for the time being. The decision to form the local bodies had been delayed due to disagreements within the SPA. *Compiled from reports*

Rs 30b Needed For Post-Conflict Work

The government has projected an expenditure of US \$471.44 million (nearly 30 billion rupees) for post-conflict reconstruction and other peace-related activities. Madhav Prasad Ghimire, secretary at the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, said on Monday (Feb 4) that as Nepal cannot meet such a huge expenditure, mobilizing resources from the donor community is a must. "The goal of peace building can remain just a wish, without enough resources," he said, presenting a paper on the topic 'Evolving Peace Process and Emerging Scenario' at the preparatory consultations for a Donors Meet, that ended in the capital, Monday. He said meeting people's expectations — addressing the causes of poverty and

achieving economic development — is quite essential for attaining lasting peace. On the impact of the decade-long conflict, he said it has resulted in an estimated loss of eight billion rupees in destroyed physical infrastructure. Ian Martin, chief of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), said a major challenge for the current peace process is to achieve the same quality of dialogue (as with the Maoists) between the government and agitating groups like the Madhesis and others challenging the constituent assembly elections. Observing that the future of the army is always a central question in countries coming out of war, he said neither can the Maoist combatants be kept in the cantonments forever nor the state army restricted to barracks indefinitely. CK Lal, a newspaper columnist, said the government has to create political, social and economic opportunity to let the country emerge out of conflict. "It needs to unveil rural development packages and other targeted programs," he said. Deependra Bahadur Kshetry, a member of the National Planning Commission, said social and economic transformation is needed to keep the country from conflict. "Still, the peace dividend or the benefit of development has remained within the same coterie of people, not reaching the needy, marginalized and disadvantaged groups," he said.

Kantipur reports

King Gyanendra Says Republic Decision Doesn't Reflect Majority View

King Gyanendra has expressed dissatisfaction over a recent decision by the interim parliament to abolish monarchy after the April 10 Constituent Assembly (CA) election. Speaking to a select group of Japanese correspondents at the Narayanhiti royal palace on February 4, King Gyanendra said, "[The decision] doesn't reflect the majority view of the people. This isn't democracy." He, however, conceded that the people do have the right to choose



the fate of monarchy. The interview was published in Japan's leading newspaper Daily Yomiuri. "Some leaders have tried to take action that's against cultural, social and traditional values," King Gyanendra said, in a cleverly veiled criticism of the Maoist party leadership, which leads a strong campaign to abolish the monarchy. The king also pointed out that law and order situation of the country is deteriorating, questioning the interim government's ability to govern the country. Citing the recent survey which showed 49 percent of respondents favored the continuation of the monarchy in some form, King Gyanendra said: "A majority of the people find great meaning in the institution of the monarchy. In all clouds, there is a silver lining. Let us hope." About a week ago King Gyanendra had broke his closely guarded silence in an interview to a pro-monarchist weekly paper in which he said that he remained silent to "let the peace process succeed." In the interview that appeared on the eve of the third anniversary of his coup, King Gyanendra had said, "Nepali people themselves should speak out on where the nation is heading, on the direction it is taking and on why it is becoming chaotic."

Nepalnews.com reports



Sherpas celebrating Lhosar-New year

NORWEGIAN PRIME MINISTER JENS STOLTENBERG stressed on the centrality of the Constituent Assembly election. After wrapping up his 20-hour visit to Nepal, on Friday, Stoltenberg said to reporters, "The CA is the strong platform to address challenges facing Nepal." During his brief stay in the capital, he met with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and pledged Norway's continued assistance to Nepal. His visit was focused on effects of climate change in the Himalayan nation. He also met with UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal and Maoist chairman Prachanda.

THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN, based on the request made by the Government of Nepal, has approved the utilization of the Counterpart Fund under the Food Aid of Rs 50 million for the implementation of the Project for the Transportation of Food Grains to Remote Area. The project was approved in order to counter the existing food deficit in Nepal, particularly in the remote hilly and mountain districts, due to the low productivity of agriculture, a statement issued by Japanese embassy said. Under this project, Nepal Food Corporation (NFC) will deliver an additional 1,430 metric tons of rice to eighteen remote hilly and mountain districts in addition to NFC's annual program of delivering about 7,500 metric tons of rice. The Counterpart Fund was established through the financial assistance extended by the Government of Japan under the Food Aid (KR). The Government of Nepal has procured rice through this assistance and sold it in the domestic market. The amount collected from selling the rice was deposited as a Counterpart Fund, which can be utilized for implementing various social and economic development projects through consultation between the two governments.

NEPAL GOVERNMENT HAS HANDED DR AMIT KUMAR, the alleged kingpin of a multi-million dollar kidney racket, over to Indian authorities. Dr. Kumar, who faces charges of leading kidney racket in India was arrested in Nepal on Thursday (Feb 7). He was flown to New Delhi by a regular flight of the

Indian Airlines (IC 814) Saturday evening. Earlier, the police officials had hinted at the possibility of initiating a case against Dr Amit in Nepal for illegal possession of foreign currency and some fake documents. Dr. Kumar had been arrested from a hotel in Sauraha, Chitwan by a special team of Nepal Police. There was also an Interpol red corner notice against him.

THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC) is expecting recommendations from visiting foreign forensic experts on whether to exhume the Shivpuri area. The rights body is expected to decide whether to dig up the site after getting preliminary report from the visiting forensic experts on controversial Shivpuri human bodies buried case. The NHRC is expected to get the report within next ten days. "After their recommendation we will decide what steps to be taken further," NHRC member Gauri Pradhan said. Finnish forensic experts Ranta Helena and Saukko Bikko have currently been analyzing the testimonies found in the Shivpuri area after their preliminary examination of the site. According to Pradhan, they are currently busy on technical work with the assistant of domestic experts' team lead by Dr Harihar Wosti. The NHRC had invited the forensic experts to investigate the Shivpuri area on suspicion that 49 Maoists' cadre disappeared from the Maharajgunj-based Bhairav Nath Battalion of the Nepal Army were killed and buried in the area. While the technical team has authority to decide whether or not to exhume the suspected site, the NHRC would endorse its decision. "They are free to decide the steps to be taken further in this case. We will only endorse their decision," Pradhan added.

THE NEPAL GOVERNMENT HAS ISSUED exit permits to Bhutanese refugees who have opted for third country resettlement. This allows refugees to leave the camps in eastern Nepal for third countries once their cases are accepted. In a statement on Monday (Feb 4), the UNHCR welcomed the Nepal government's decision to issue exit permits to the Bhutanese refugees and stated that third country settlement is an important step towards finding solution to the refugee stalemate. More than 107,000 Bhutanese refugees have been languishing in seven camps in Jhapa and Morang districts for 17 years. However, the refugees are sharply divided over the resettlement issue. There have been frequent clashes between refugees opposing the third country resettlement and those in favor of it. Meanwhile, the UN refugee agency has said the group resettlement process has been gaining momentum in the camps since it started late last year. "Thousands of refugees have expressed interest, and UNHCR has submitted the details of nearly 10,000 interested refugees for consideration by the resettlement countries. The refugees are currently in various stages of the process, ranging from interviews to extensive medical screening and cultural orientation before departure." The United States has offered to resettle at least 60,000 Bhutanese refugees and Canada has indicated it will accept up to 5,000. Australia, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway have also shown their willingness to take in refugees. The first batch of refugees is set to fly to the United States in March while larger numbers will be leaving Nepal starting in July. ■

Uncertainties About Upper Tama-Kosi Project

•Dr. AB Thapa

Amid much fanfare sometime back the signing ceremony of the MoU to provide *Sanchaya Kosh* loan to the NEA to implement the Upper Tama-Kosi project was accomplished. Ministry of Water Resources is now saying that the load-shedding will continue until the completion of the 309 MW Upper Tama-Kosi project. The announcement of the NEA has greatly disappointed those who like to see quick end to present power shortage crisis.

There are few critical issues very important to resolve the present power shortage problems. (1) Are we paying due attention to proper maintenance of the existing hydropower projects and strict adherence to dates earmarked for the completion of the projects under construction? (2) Have we explored all possibilities to expand the capacity of the existing hydropower projects at least cost and time to significantly enhance the generation? (3) Can the 309 MW Upper Tama-Kosi project be considered a dependable project to fulfill the need to solve the present load-shedding problem.

Proper Maintenance

It appears according to newspaper reporting that the present deep cut in power supply has been resulted from the complete shut-down in operation of the Kulekhani No 2 project. It is reported that the shut-down of the hydropower was necessitated to carry out repair and maintenance works of the electromechanical equipments. Unfortunately it is not a proper time to conduct maintenance and repair works requiring suspension of the operation. At present the power demand is at the peak, whereas the capacity (KW) is greatly reduced (not necessarily energy KWh).

Kulekhani No 1 and Kulekhani No 2 operate in tandem. Due to lack of adherence to proper operation and maintenance procedures we are now compelled to spill the scarce regulated flow of the Kulekhani river earmarked for the operation of the Kulekhani No 2

Project Under Construction

The Middle Marshyangdi project is the biggest among the hydropower projects under construction at present. The impact of present load-shedding would have been far less severe if this project would have been completed in time. It might not be wrong to say that the construction of this project is in a state of total neglect. Ministry of Water Resources and other branches of the Government such as the Planning Commission must regularly visit to provide necessary supports to those directly involved in the construction works.

Expansion of Kulekhani Hydropower Generation

It might be possible almost to double the generation of the Kulekhani Nos 1, 2 & 3 hydropower stations by pumping water drawn near Chobar into the Kulekhani storage

reservoir. The total cost of such diversion could be only about US \$ 25 million. The value of additional annual power generation at the price of US Cents 6 could be about US \$ 12 million.

At present the average annual flow of the Bagmati at Chobar is about 15 CUMECS. The monthly average flow in seven months from June to December is over 4 CUMECS. In the rest five months from January to May the average flow is 2 CUMECS. We might not be wrong to assume that we would be able to divert enough Bagmati flow into the Kulekhani reservoir to supply average annual 4 CUMECS flow to Kulekhani hydropower stations

The diversion of the surplus Bagmati water from Kathmandu valley to the Kulekhani reservoir could be a very simple and at the same time the most cost effective proposition. The NEA can easily build this scheme at its own cost. The entire construction works can easily be completed within three years.

We might have to build a 15 MW pump station at Chobar to lift 4 cumecs water to a height of about 300 meters which might be equivalent in height to the full supply level (FSL) of the Kulekhani storage reservoir. It is equally possible that instead of one big pump station we might need more than one pump station with a total capacity of about 15 MW depending on nature of topography. A 15 km long waterway might be needed to carry the water into the Kulekhani storage reservoir out of it the length of the tunnel could be about 9 kilometers.

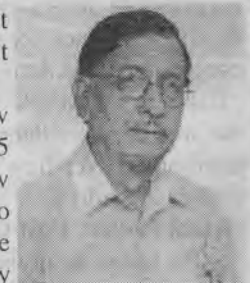
Melamchi and Langtang Diversion

If the whole plan of diversion of the Langtang, Melamchi and Bagmati into the Kulekhani reservoir as laid down in the WECS study reports is implemented, it would be possible to generate about 2,500 GWh additional electricity at the cost of only about US Cents 3 per KWh. The combined diverted flow of the Langtang, Melamchi, Bagmati and Kulekhani will significantly augment the dry season flow of the Rapti river, which can be used to increase the area under gravity irrigation in Chitwan valley.

Schemes on the Tama- Kosi River

The Tama- Kosi River is the second largest tributary of the Sun -Kosi River. Originally 6 hydropower stations in a cascade were planned.

The Tama-Kosi No.6 according to the Kosi basin Master Plan is the uppermost project. The intake of the proposed Upper Tama-Kosi Project is said to be further to the north



close to the China-Nepal border. This reach of the Tama-Kosi is very close to places in Nepal and Tibet where dangerous glacier lakes are located. Thus, any GLOF incidence would have left in its wake the most horrific destruction on this stretch of the Tama-Kosi.

We may need the cooperation from the Chinese side to conduct study related to GLOF. Such study would be necessary to design vital structures. Apart from it we may need to set up monitoring mechanism for early warning. The conclusion of the Arun-3 feasibility report is presented here "It is indispensable to have close cooperation from China in the area of surveillance of GLOF prone glacier lakes and monitoring river flow in its territory". All these are time-consuming works.

Actual Project Cost Could Be High

The bed slope of the Upper Tama-Kosi is expected to be extremely steep. A very high dam is needed to provide a daily storage reservoir adequate in volume. JICA study under the Kosi Basin Master Plan had ruled out the possibility to provide daily storage pond to serve Tama-Kosi-5 and Tama-Kosi-6 projects.

We have learnt from our past Arun-3 Project planning experience that the provision of a daily storage reservoir by damming the river course itself in case of the rivers like the Arun or Tama-Kosi is going to be extremely difficult task that would certainly involve a huge investment. In case of the Arun-3 Hydropower Project, it was originally planned that a dam only 20 meters in height would suffice to provide daily storage pond but at the final stage we had to raise the height to 65 meters.

In case of the 60 MW Khimti project operating at exceptionally high head of about 650 meters the estimated construction cost according to the feasibility study report of the NORPOWER was only US \$ 60 million. The NEA found that the estimate is not accurate. The revised estimate of that project is US \$ 150 million, which has been applied to determine the purchase price of the electricity by the NEA from the developer of that hydropower.

Glacier Lakes Dangerous For Nepal

In 1988 a joint team of Sino-Nepalese conducted the studies of the glaciers and glacier lakes in the Arun and the Sun-Kosi basins primarily in the Tibetan region of China. The Lanzhou Institute of Glaciology and Geocryology took part in the study from the Chinese side, similarly the Water and Energy Commission took part from the Nepalese side.

According to the findings of the above mentioned joint study, there are many glacier lakes in Arun, Tama Kosi, Bhote-Kosi, Trisuli, Buri Gandaki and Karnali basins within Xizang (Tibet) of China which have past records of the

glacier lake outburst floods (GLOF) events. The joint study report has recommended to conduct extensive studies to cover Tama Kosi and other basins also.

The glacier lakes study conducted jointly by experts from the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and WECS in 1991 provides detailed description of the Tsho Rolpa glacier lake on the end of the Trambau Glacier within Nepal in Tama -Kosi basin. This glacier lake is extremely dangerous.

Nepal Hard Hit by GLOFs

On August 4th 1985 the nearly completed Namche hydropower plant was completely destroyed by the Dig Tsho glacier lake outburst flood (GLOF).

Since the nineteen forties, according to Sino-Nepal study, there have been at least 10 cases of glacier lake outbursts within the basins investigated. Among them there have been five bursts in three glacier lakes of the Arun River Basin, and four in three glacier lakes of the Sunkosi River basin.

Gelhaipuco is an end moraine dammed lake located in the headwaters of Gelhaipu Gully (Natangqu River Basin, east of Riwo, Dinggye County) in Arun basin. At 14.00 on Sept. 21, 1964, the lake burst abruptly. According to the study of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, there was a heavy

precipitation in the Natangqu River Basin, which caused the glacier of the Natangqu River to slide. Huge amount of ice slid into the lake. The generated shock waves triggered the lake water to overflow the moraine dam causing the burst. There was a

Huge amount of ice slid into the lake. The generated shock waves triggered the lake water to overflow the moraine dam causing the burst.

breach across the dam which was 30 m deep. The debris flow rushed down to the lower reaches of the Arun River in Nepal, and caused heavy economic losses

At mid-night, July 11, 1981, an end moraine dammed lake located at the headwater of the Sunkosi River suddenly burst. A breach of 50m deep and 40-60m of bottom width was formed at the moraine dam. The highest burst discharge was about 1600 cu. m./s, which was observed 23 minutes after the burst. The high flood lasted about 60 minutes and the burst water amount was estimated at 19 million cu. m. The debris flow damaged the Kodari Highway and the Sun-Kosi Power Station in Nepal. The flood destroyed the Friendship Bridge at Kodari. According to the investigation of 1984, there had been a similar burst in 1964 from that same lake, but the burst discharge and damage caused was smaller.

In Conclusion

Upper Tama-Kosi can be an attractive hydropower project. However, we must conduct a through study of this project before we take decision to implement this project. The study can take quite some time since at certain stage China's involvement might become necessary. ■



Girija Prasad Koirala (Center) : Poll promises

POLITICS

Winds Of Change

Less than two years after a momentous event, politics appears poised for a different turn

By SUSHIL SHARMA

Only two months remain for the constituent assembly elections. But the April 10 elections still remain a subject of speculation.

Fed up, the man supposed to hold the elections sought early this week to brush aside the doubters.

"Election will be held at any cost. Don't talk negative about it," thundered Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala — one more time.

He spoke the same language before the June and November deadlines last year.

During their recent whirlwind tour of the Terai and the Hills, senior Nepali Congress leaders, Sher Bahadur Deuba and Sushil Koirala, too tried to sound

optimistic.

Back in Kathmandu, their language had changed. "The security situation across the country is too poor to hold a free and fair election," said the officiating vice-president of the party, Koirala.

Former prime minister Deuba went a step further, "under the present security situation in Terai, election is not possible."

Both blamed the Maoists.

Until recently, the Maoists saw the monarchy as the major stumbling block to the polls.

After a recent amendment in the interim constitution effectively suspended — if not eliminated altogether — the monarchy, they appear to believe

that they have removed the block.

Now, they have begun to see 'foreign hand' in scuttling the elections.

Some suspected that recent royal interviews could be used as an excuse to formally get rid of the monarchy ahead of the polls.

The suspicion has proved wrong.

The interviews, according to Maoist supremo Prachanda, violated the interim constitution.

Surprisingly, though, they did not invite the wrath for the Narayanhity palace the way a traditional democracy-day statement did last year.

Signs of the changing winds, perhaps.

There are similar signs on another front.

Discernible observers point out that key foreign powers were having a re-think on their Nepal policy.

They say, 'check the over ambitious king' has been replaced lately by 'tame the unpredictable red brigade.'

Maoists and the mainstream parliamentary parties came together to 'check' the king.

The move did succeed. That was two years ago.

The tables have turned now. Knowledgeable sources say, "key powers have begun a re-think on their Nepal policy."

A deal on taming the Maoists appear to be in the making.

Intense diplomatic moves are underway for the purpose.

The flurry of private and officials visits of influential figures to and from Kathmandu in recent weeks is reportedly aimed at that direction.

Election is only one — and NOT THE ONLY — option being considered to achieve the objective.

Insiders say, prime minister Koirala is not unaware. Nor is Prachanda. Nor, for that matter, king Gyanendra.

In the dark are only 'the sovereign' people whose voting rights remain suspended for the ninth year this year. ■

MELAMCHI

A Step Closer

Melamchi Water Supply Project inches closer to quench the thirst of valley denizens after principal lender ADB approves its financing

By A CORRESPONDENT

Since last one decade, politicians and planners have always pointed to Melamchi project whenever the residents of Kathmandu valley raised the issue about depleting supply of drinking water.

Between December and May, when the dry season is in full swing, the residents are reminded of the chimera called Melamchi.

But this time, after a year of serious hiccups, the Melamchi Water Supply Project (MWSP) finally seems to have inched a step closer.

Last week, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) board of directors approved the financing of MWSP.

"A delayed water-supply project in Nepal that includes tunneling 26 kilometers through a mountain to ease chronic water shortages in Kathmandu looks set to proceed, after the Asian Development Bank (ADB) agreed to new terms for the project for which it is the lead financier. ADB initially agreed to support the Melamchi Water Supply Project in 2000, but changes since then have seen the cost lowered from \$464 million to \$317.3 million with careful prioritization and phasing of the project components," states a press statement by ADB.

The project is essential for Kathmandu's 1.5 million residents, most of whom receive piped water for only a couple of hours a day. Many people rely on alternative water sources such as shallow wells, public taps, tankers, rainwater or bottled water - which are expensive.

"This project is the only realistic way to obtain a sustainable, long-term supply of drinking water for Kathmandu Valley," said Leonardus Boenawan Sondjaja,

plant as well as a bulk water distribution system. Existing distribution networks will also be rehabilitated under the project, while access roads to project facilities are being built and will also serve as farm-to-market roads. The project also includes support to mitigate potential social and environmental impacts and improve the living conditions of project affected people.

As part of adjustments made to the project, its implementation will be split



Kathmandu Valley: Crying for water

Head of the Project Administration Unit of the Urban Development Division of ADB's South Asia Department. "While the need to address the water crisis is growing, the changing circumstances surrounding the project required adjustments in scope and implementation arrangements."

ADB is providing a loan of \$137 million equivalent for the project. Other donors are the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Nordic Development Fund and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries Fund for International Development. The Government of Nepal is contributing \$90.6 million.

The biggest civil works package under the project is the 26-kilometer water diversion tunnel. The tunnel will divert 170 million liters of water daily from the Melamchi River to Kathmandu Valley to ease chronic water shortages in that area. The project also involves the development of a water treatment

into two subprojects, with the water diversion tunnel under the first subproject and the water supply and sanitation segment under the second. ADB also agreed to remove a loan covenant requiring the award of a private-sector management contract to support the new utility as a precondition for awarding the tunnel civil works contract. This will enable the two subprojects to be implemented in parallel without delay while a new private-sector manager is recruited under the restructured contractual arrangements.

ADB also approved adjustments to the two loan components under the Kathmandu Valley Water Services Sector Development Program, which complements the Melamchi Water Supply Project. The program is designed to support reforms and institutional development in the water services sector and promote private sector participation. ADB will maintain a \$15 million loan it approved in December 2003, but the program will adopt a new management support plan. ■



Himalayas: Political snow has not melted.

SIGNS OF TIMES

Prolonged Instability

With competing powers around, Nepal is in for a prolonged instability

By SUSHIL SHARMA

Last week, Norwegian prime minister Jens Stoltenberg made some sort of a record. He became the first head of a foreign government to visit Nepal in two years of the restored democracy.

There was another first too. The Nordic nation's premier put environment on the top of his agenda, ahead of politics. Something unheard of during such visits in recent memory.

In a meeting with his Nepalese counterpart Girija Prasad Koirala, the lanky Norwegian did indeed express skepticism over the April polls on grounds of poor security. But the focus of the talks, as he said later, was the melting snow and its impact on the global climate.

Having participated in a climate summit in Delhi along with the host prime minister Man Mohan Singh a day earlier, the Norwegian premier was on the tour of the snowy Himalayas the next day.

He spent barely 18 hours in Nepal. That did not stop him from flying to snowy Manang district and taking an aerial tour of the Himalayas.

"The melting of the snow in the Himalayas could affect the supply of water to a billion people of the region," he told reporters before boarding an own small jet.

The warning is not new. An international panel issued a similar warning ahead of the Bali summit late

last year.

Said the inter-governmental panel on climate change (IPCC), "glaciers and snow cover are expected to decline, reducing the water availability in countries supplied by melt-water."

A London-based think tank went on to warn that South Asia could even witness a big war over water.

Nepal can not remain immune to the effect of such an eventuality. The famous 'yam between two boulders' could even be a cause of it.

The snowy Himalayas lie to the north of Nepal on the borders with China. And the snow-fed Koshis and Karnalis flow down to the south to join the mighty Ganges and the Brahmaputras on the borders with India.

There are already signs of uneasiness in the air. A case in point is the prime minister Man Mohan Singh's visit to China and the aftermath.

The bonhomie over Singh's high-profile Beijing sojourn has been followed by fresh bickering over the disputed Himalayan region of Arunachal Pradesh.

Singh chose to rush to the snowy border state immediately after returning from Beijing. He was the first Indian prime minister to visit the area in 12 years. He hailed the state as "our land of the rising sun."

China instantly lodged a protest with the Indian government. It considers the large areas of the state as its own. Last year, it refused visa to a member of an

Indian delegation who hailed from the state.

Obviously, the political snow has not melted yet, notwithstanding the much-touted warmth in the business relations.

India sees threat from China. Its insurgency-infested north east is too vulnerable. Three hundred thousand troops are stationed there.

A recent report said that these troops are too preoccupied in long-running counter-insurgencies to guard the national borders. Hence the recent decision to create two well-equipped new mountain divisions of 15,000 each.

Significantly, a former army chief, J.J.Singh, has been appointed the governor of the disputed Arunachal Pradesh that borders, besides China, the Chinese-influenced Myanmar.

Indian intelligence officials see Chinese hand behind the insurgencies in the north-east the way the academics of the tightly-controlled Chinese state point fingers at India for the present trouble in Nepal's southern terai.

Two months ago, a Chinese Nepal expert termed the disturbances in Terai "unnatural and unusual."

The tone has hardened. Said another in an interview to international media earlier this month, "according to academics and media reports the root of the problem lies across the border."

One can also see a growing consternation at the role of the western powers. Both Delhi and Beijing share it, as was evident at the recent UN security council debate over the extension of the UNMIN's mandate and tenure.

A small and militarily insignificant Norway may not be a power to ring alarm bells in Delhi and Beijing. But one thing is for sure, power games in their common neighbourhood, have intensified.

Said a political commentator, "Nepal had never before become a playground for such a large number of competing foreign powers."

"It is this external competition that will decide the fate of the new Nepal including the much talked-about constituent assembly polls and the peace process."

As war-over-water warning adds to its difficult geo-political challenges, tougher times await the water-rich Nepal with snow-capped mountains.

Signs of the times? Prolonged instability and scattered violence.

sushil2062@hotmail.com

Crisis In Changing Phase

With the announcement of an agitation by newly formed United Madhesi Democratic Front (UMDF) - a tripartite tie up of Nepal Sadbhvana party, Madhesi Janadhikar Forum and Terai Madhes Democratic Party (TMDP) - the county entered into another phase of prolonged political instability. Situated between Asia's two major powers, India and China, internal political situation here has never been the sole reason for the reemergence of newer forces strong enough to push Nepal into deeper political uncertainty. Since its formation as an independent nation, Nepal has been passing through all kinds of political upheavals and crisis. But what has been changing is the face of such forces. Whether Maoists - an ideology-based political group or UMDF - a regional based non-ideological group - all of them have similar objectives - to destabilize Nepal. Given the regional scenario, this kind of situation might continue for many more years to come

By KESHAB POUDEL

"Madhesis have been cheated many times when negotiating with the government dominated by Pahadis in the past. We want to see the government fulfill our six point demands or they will have to face new uprising from February 17 in whole terai," thundered Rajendra Mahato, leader of Nepal Sadbhavana Party and newly formed UMDF.

The UMDF demands include constitutional guarantee of autonomous Madhes Region with the right to self

determination, immediate implementation of constitutional provision regarding equal representation of all marginalized groups in all sectors of governance and immediate recruitment of Madhesis in Nepal Army. Recognition of martyrdom for all 45 Madhesis killed during the Madhes movement, state funded treatment and compensation for the injured and genuine efforts to bring armed outfits of Madhes to a negotiation table are also

their demands.

"We are ready to fulfill all demands of Madhesis including the federal structure for Madhes as well as reservation for Madhesis in the government jobs, army and police," said Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel. "Some of their remaining demands will be fulfilled after holding the election for Constituent Assembly."

Whatever they say about their



Agitation : Changing faces

position, internal adjustments and negotiations cannot solve the present stalemate of Nepal. If it were so, the country would already have seen election for CA as soon as the government and Maoists signed Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Internal Contradictions

Nepal is a country with heterogeneous combinations of linguistic, ethnic and regional diversities. These contradictions have always been there, which could destabilize the country. Even terai is full of contradictions in its composition of population. As Maoists have united the various ethnic groups of hill under its ideological cover to destabilize the region, the UMDP is trying to unite all heterogeneous groups, which are divided on the basis of caste, ethnicity and linguistic groups in Terai under a single

unit of Madhes. But the question is whose interests are they serving?

According to Census of 2001, among total population in Nepal, Maithali consists of 12.3 percent of population followed by Bhojpuri 7.53, Tharu 5.19 and Awadhi 2.47. Tharus are major ethnic groups in terai consisting of 6.75 percent and Muslims 4.27 percent. Yadavs consist of 3.94 percent while Teli, Harijan, Koiri, Kurmi, Dhanuk, Musahar, Dusad and others are also in considerable numbers.

Despite efforts to raise the unified identity as Madhesi, existing linguistic, regional and cultural differences of terai are bound to trigger search for their own identity. Tharu groups have already claimed that they are the original inhabitants of terai and others are migrants.

“The terai encompasses great linguistic and social diversity. Madhesis

speak Maithali, Bhojpuri, Awadhi and Hindi, languages also spoken across the border, while ethnic groups such as the Tharus have their own language,” writes International Crisis Group Policy Report Nepal’s Troubled Terai Region 2007.

An identity-based political consciousness emerged in terai with formation of the Nepal Terai Congress under Vedananda Jha in 1951. Its core demand included an autonomous Terai, recognition of Hindi as a language and adequate representation in civil service.

Raghunath Thakur was another prominent leader who formed the Madhehs Mukti Andolan and demanded autonomy for terai, appointment of Madhesis in police, army and the bureaucracy and landownership rights. Later on Gajendra Narayan Singh established Nepal Sadbhavana Party demanding reformed citizenship laws, official recognition for Hindi, federal



Maoist fighter : Old phase

system and greater Madhesi representation in the civil service and security forces.

"Every society has contradictions in itself at any time of its history. This is true with the society of every country including Nepal. If these are just an internal contradictions, Nepal, too, has the capability to solve it. When it involves the security interests of much larger neighbors of Nepal, it will be virtually impossible for internal forces to manage them," said a political analyst. "Being a country sandwiched between India and China, it is inconceivable to keep Nepal immune from their interest and influence."

External Role

People from different walks of life talk all the time about internal contradictions of Nepal based upon its poverty, illiteracy and reemerging ethnic and regional interest. Of course, these problems are sufficient to keep Nepal all the time in conflict and instability but these are not alone the determining factors.

"These kinds of problems are there on both the side of Nepal's bigger neighbors India and China, but they are capable of managing them with their tremendous resources and capabilities. Nepal's neighbors have the capability to withstand and counter any of the seen and unseen malicious designs against them. But Nepal lacks that capability to deal with external machinations and encroachments," said the analyst.

The present trend of political instability and disruptions has been there since the beginning of Nepal's statehood. "To Kathmandu, the current potentialities of external domination and subversion are not very different in kind – though they may be in degree – from those with which Nepali governments have had to contend for at least two centuries. And if the problems are not particularly new, neither is the repertory of responses devised by the Kathmandu authorities. There is a basic similarity between King Prithvi Narayan Shah's analyses of Nepal's role in the

Himalayan area and his selection of tactics and that of ninth ruler in his dynasty, King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev," wrote American professor late Leo. E Rose in his book *Nepal: Strategy for Survival* published in 1971.

Even today, Nepal's problem has direct link with its neighbors. "The Indian establishment appears sympathetic to Madhesi demands but does not go out of its way to pressure Kathmandu for concessions," writes ICG report. "Given the open border, a stable terai is particularly important, and New Delhi has in recent years developed a clear sense of how to use economic ties to promote more stable (and binding) political relations."

Chinese scholars, too, are carefully watching new development in Nepal's southern plain. "We are very carefully watching the development in Nepal. We will not tolerate any kind of actions for disintegration in Nepal," said a Chinese scholar.

The more the world relations are interlinked, the more there are reasons to

get nations involved against each other. "To take Nepal's problem in totality of the situation, one must take into account its immediate neighbors and their day to day involvement guided by their own interest – mainly the interest of security," said the analyst. "But, this is what generally people ignore to take into account even though these are so apparent to all."

Nepal lies between two titanic plates, India and China. They have bitter past with them. If they want to continue that no internal change and adjustment in Nepal can ensure peace, stability and progress – whether it is made monarchical or republic even with several new adjectives and rhetoric like federal with right to self determination and so on.

"Nepal, a country of 28 million, is sandwiched between the world's rising giants, India and China, who both have cast their eyes over the Himalayan nation as a buffer against the other. Any unrest in Nepal- hostilities have been suspended, not buried – could spill across into their restive borderlands, particularly Chinese Tibet and the troubled Indian state of Bihar – developments that Beijing and New Delhi would view with alarm," writes Ishaan Tharoor in Time Magazine (February 11).

Unity in Contradictions

Nepal has seen many contradictions but all of them are manageable. Nepali Congress and Maoists- who were bitter rivals till two years ago, are now better partners. Making and breaking of alliances have shown that internal players have no enmity at all.

The analyst argued, "If areas of mutual interest and understanding between India and China- which are referred as an elephant and dragon of present time - harmonize, Nepal need not go for risky experiments in politics. Nepal's traditional structures and harmonious social relationships are enough to make it withstand any new pressure for change and readjustments."

If it was only internal contradiction, one cannot have imagined the change of alliance in Terai. Rajendra Mahato has now joined hands with his bitter rival



Madhese leaders : New front

Hridayesh Tripathy, who had played a key role to kick Mahato out of the government.

Similarly, Mahanta Thakur's bitter foe Jaya Prakash Ananda shared the same platform. Thakur - who labeled Madhesi Janadhikar Forum as a royalist and Hindu fundamentalist group till recent past – has now found Upendra Yadav as a now messiah of Madhes.

Interestingly, even now the traditional monarch is living with all his royal dignity in the Palace.

"Whether it was mesmerized or motivated, even a world wide circulated Time Magazine gave a cover page for Maoist rebels whose party has time and again found New Delhi as a suitable place to negotiate with its internal adversaries," said the analyst. "Reality is something different. Instead of the ground reality, propaganda through market media has been confusing the world opinion, which was expected to highlight the real contradictions internal as well as external."

The more Nepal is becoming unstable, the more neighbor are scared against each others' motives and designs. And the situation is becoming more and more complicated. "Given the large number of Tibetan exiles in India and Nepal-India open border, Nepal going under Indian security umbrella is serious security threat to Tibetan Autonomous Region of China," writes Wang Xiung (Nepal's National Defensive Strategy and Nepal-China Relation).

As the concerns of Nepal's two neighbors increase, the internal forces are

day by day becoming helpless and irrelevant.

"Indians and Americans are backing the agitation in terai so that election can be postponed and the Maoists are blocked from entering the government," said Maoist leader Prachanda, who came to Nepal after signing 12-point agreement with seven parties in New Delhi in 2005.

Unstable Nepal has caused much worries and apprehensions between its neighbors about their own security and national interest.

"As the budding super powers expand in influence and ambition, many see Nepal falling into the crosshairs of a new "Great Game" for the 21st century," writes Tharoor in his article in Time Magazine.

Since long, two neighbors are trying to establish the sphere of influence. The crisis is the result of competition of Nepal's two neighbors to take Nepal under their sphere of influence. Actually, no neighbor wants to see Nepal going to the sphere of influence of other as it involves the question of their own security interest," said the analyst.

As Nepal's geo-strategic position is such that its own internal problems have external linkages, internal players have very insignificant roles to play in managing the political crisis. That is what one can see in Terai's new upsurge also.

As long as Nepal's two neighbors continue to live in uneasiness with long border disputes, Nepal will not have peace and stability. ■

“People Have Been Getting A Lot Of Peace Dividends”

-Madhav Prasad Ghimire

MADHAV PRASAD GHIMIRE is the Secretary at the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction. Ghimire recently presented his paper on Peace Process and Emerging Order in pre-consultation meeting with donors. Ghimire, who also headed the foreign aid division and drafted a Foreign Aid Policy in 2002, spoke to **KESHAB POUDEL** on various issues related with post conflict reconstruction. Excerpts:

How do you find the response from the stakeholders including Nepal's development partners towards Nepal's reconstruction needs?

First of all, this meeting was not for pledging with the donor agencies. Instead of pledging with the donor agencies, the meeting was held to develop confidence showing how our overall peace process has been going on and what are the challenges of government in terms of moving forward. What are the strategies of government in terms of linking peace with the development?

If it was not for pledging, what were other purposes of such meetings?

Basically, we have focused our attention towards engaging international community in our peace building process and to get their support. Along with that we wanted to share our calculation on how much investment we require to push forward the ongoing peace process, particularly after the holding of election for Constituent Assembly and till the formulation of new constitution. That was not a meeting to get commitment from donor partners.

Although the donors have expressed their commitments to support Nepal's peace process, some of them have argued that they will have difficulty to provide the support indefinitely without election. How do you look at it?

Basically, donors have shown interest to provide resources to Peace Fund. What donors have been stressing is the transparency and accountability in the peace fund. They want to see that we have very good system in terms of transparency and there is good system to make it accountable. We have come up with so many actions and strategies to make the system transparent and accountable and they are in the process of implementation.

How is the overall assessment of damages due to the conflict?

The decade-long internal conflict caused

enormous human loss as well as loss of physical infrastructures. It is estimated that more than 13,000 people have lost their lives. Similarly, it is estimated that there have been physical losses amounting to Rs. 8 billion.

How much money Nepal needs to start the reconstruction?

Our estimates have shown that Nepal requires US\$ 471.44 million for rehabilitation and reconstruction. The construction and rehabilitation of physical infrastructures of the public sector alone requires US\$126.98 million.

After signing the comprehensive peace agreement between the government and the Maoists, how do you see the overall scenario in the country?

We have seen drastic changes since then. People have been getting a lot of peace dividends. Number of violent activities have been drastically reduced including the killings, and kidnapping. For instance, in 2005, 1848 people were killed but it was reduced to 95 in 2007.

How do you see the ratio of investment?

There has also been increase in investments in Nepal. In fiscal year 2006/2007, Rs.2.75 billion worth of securities were issued but it increased to Rs 4.31 billion in 2007/08. Tourism sector has benefited a lot following the signing of the peace agreement. The number of tourists increased from 383,926 in 2006 to 550,000 in 2007.

How do you see the investment in the peace and role of international community?

We need support from international community to invest in various sectors for the purpose of rehabilitation and reconstruction. With the help of international community, the Nepal Peace Trust Fund has been established to mobilize the resources in five crucial areas of the peace process.

What are those areas?

Those areas include the cantonment management of the Maoist combatants, security strengthening, and rehabilitation of the IDPs, CA elections and support to the peace process.

There are reports of lack of transparency in the distribution of resources to the victims. How do you look at it?

The ministry has approved modalities with transparency and accountability in the distribution of the fund to the victims of insurgency. One can get detailed information regarding the expenditure of funds.

How will the government finance these things?

What are the strategies of government in terms of linking peace with the development?



Besides regular financing, the peace process is being financed primarily through twin trust funds, the government-operated Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF) and the United Nations Peace Fund for Nepal. The government has made an overall forecast of US\$ 265 million to be required to finance projects through NPTF.

Has the fund approved the budget for the projects?

We have already approved around US\$ 51.4 million to projects designed to improve living conditions, meeting the basic needs and improving the physical infrastructure in Maoist cantonments, finance voter education and training of electoral offices and facilitate the return of internally displaced persons to their villages.

What is the contribution of donor community in the fund?

The contribution of donor community in the fund has been considerable as they have contributed around US\$ 24 million. The government has also contributed US\$ 22.2 million. The United Nation Peace Fund has supported complementary projects that can be implemented by United Nations agencies.

What is the immediate task of management in peace process?

A successful holding of Constituent Assembly election will lead to a new political order, and contributes in promoting a peaceful, prosperous, just and New Nepal.

Do you see possibility of holding the election for CA?

It is the politicians who have to make it possible to hold the election. As a bureaucrat, I have limitation and I will follow the decision of the government.

What is the state of Internally Displaced Population (IDPs)?

There are 24,800 IDPs in 73 districts. Among them around 600 are disabled. As it is an initial report, the number of victims is likely to increase. We have already spent Rs.42 million so far for relief and rehabilitation of IDPs. The money was spent for transportation, incidental expense, daily expenses, education support, house construction, house repair and interest free loan for agriculture inputs and equipments.

What are the challenges faced by the ministry in securing peace?

Meeting people's expectations, peace negotiations, security reforms, implementing all agreements, assisting conflict victims, rebuilding physical infrastructures and institutionalization of peace process are the main challenges.

What strategies have you been following?

We have been taking special measures for disadvantaged, post-conflict social reconstruction, conflict sensitive development approach, creating local bodies and capacity building of institutions.

As national and international human rights groups are opposing your proposed draft for the Truth and Reconciliation Bill, what is the state of the bill?

We are still in the process of discussions and we will introduce it after consulting with all stakeholders. As we know, the truth and reconciliation process would bring about transitional justice to thousands of victims, who have lost family members as well as sustained other physical and mental harms including disabilities and traumatic conditions. ■

The money was spent for transportation, incidental expense, daily expenses, education support, house construction, house repair and interest free loan for agriculture inputs and equipments.



Tourism: Suffering a lot

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

Damaging Cuts

The crippling hours of load-shedding start affecting the industrial production

By A CORRESPONDENT

The energy-crisis is starting to have all-round effects. From common consumers to business enterprises, the lack of energy has triggered a cascading impact everywhere.

Among the worst sufferers include the industries and businesses. From manufacturing to service industries, all have been subject to swelling hours of power cuts.

The 48-hour a week load shedding has decreased the industrial production by an estimated 30 percent and would further worsen if the government did not take immediate measures to improve the situation.

A team of industrialists who met with government ministers last week informed them about the crippling effect of load shedding on industrial production. They also submitted a report that suggests ways to deal with the situation.

The industrialists met Minister for Water Resources Gyanendra Bahadur

Karki and State Minister Dina Updhyaya and conveyed their concern over the load shedding, as well as the delay in reconstruction of infrastructure destroyed during the insurgency.

The team led by Chandi Raj Dhakal, president of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), told the ministers that long hours of load shedding have weakened the prospects of continuing industrial activities, expanding commercial activities, establishing new enterprises and providing employment to the growing population.

The industrialists also submitted a memo to the ministers, seeking immediate measures to stop the flow of capital to foreign countries and the increasing trend of industries being displaced from the place of their present operation. Dhakal also sought the government's assistance to find alternatives of load shedding, a press statement issued by the FNCCI said. ■

Kidney Kingpin Handed Over

Although he was arrested along with foreign currency in Chitwan, Nepal government handed over Dr. Amit Kumar, the



alleged Kingpin of multi-million dollar kidney racket seriously undermines Nepal's right to exercise its law.

After a consultation in the cabinet, the government ordered police to hand over Dr. Kumar to Indian police in Tribhuvan International Airport. Despite the prevalence of extradition Act, Nepal ignored all legal and international provision and handed over him to Indian authority.

"We have handed over Dr. Kumar as per the request of Interpol. There is a tradition in the past to exchange such criminals on the basis of request from Interpol," said Ram Kumar Chaudary, minister of state of home affairs.

Nepal government has handed Dr. Amit Kumar, the alleged kingpin of a multi-million dollar kidney racket, over to Indian authorities. Dr. Kumar, who faces charges of leading kidney racket in India was arrested in Nepal on Thursday.

He was flown to New Delhi by a regular flight of the Indian Airlines (IC 814) Saturday evening. Earlier, the police officials had hinted at the possibility of initiating a case against Dr. Amit in Nepal for illegal possession of foreign currency and some fake documents. Dr. Kumar had been arrested from a hotel in Sauraha, Chitwan by a special team of Nepal Police. There was also an Interpol red corner notice against him.

Police in Nepal have arrested one Dr. Kumar, who allegedly leads a kidney racket operating in India. He was arrested, Thursday, from a hotel in Sauraha, Chitwan – Hotel Wildlife Camp. But his Nepali associate fled the scene after the police came calling. ■



SPA Meet: Unity with cause

SEVEN PARTY ALLIANCE

Dialogue, Again

The seven party steering committee meeting 'upgrades' the talks team to resolve Madhes unrest

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

With less than two months remaining for the April 10 Constituent Assembly (CA) election and the Terai turmoil still in the boil, the seven party steering committee – which was formed to aide the government – has decided to upgrade and expand the talks team.

The formation of the expanded talks team has come at a time when various Madhesi groups have announced 'decisive' joint agitation from next week.

The talks team will include representatives from all the seven parties.



Poudel: Calling for dialouge

It will be headed by Peace and Reconstruction Minister Ram Chandra Poudel.

"A seven party talks team has been formed under my leadership. It will immediately start its job," said Minister Poudel.

The seven party meeting decided to 'upgrade' the already existing government talks team – also headed by Minister Poudel – "to initiate fruitful talks with the Madhesi groups to pave the way for smooth election," according to leader of Leftist Front CP Mainali.

The steering committee meeting also entered into intense debate about the recent attacks by the Maoists in political programs of other parties – such as in Darchula, Baitadi and Sindhuli. The Maoists, on their part, raised the issue of police raid in YCL offices in Kathmandu.

Subsequently, they agreed to form a probe team to investigate and recommend actions against culprits.

"In different places in the country, there have been instance that could undermine the cordial relations among alliance partners. Such instances have occurred in Darchula, Baitadi, Sindhuli and Kathmandu. We decided to probe such incidents and maintain cordial relations to ensure there is no obstruction to the April election," Mainali said.

Even as the steering committee had concluded that there is no alternative to improving relations, the Maoists have defended the revival of their Peoples' Revolutionary Council (PRC) units despite fears by other parties that they could play the role of parallel government units.

"All of us were of the opinion that PRC's revival was against the spirit of Comprehensive Peace Agreement. We demanded that they be dismantled. But the Maoists said that the PRCs were not parallel government units and were formed only to coordinate their own sister organizations," Minister Poudel said. ■



Nepal: No unity

UNIFIED MARXIST LENINIST No Leftist Alliance

The central committee meeting of UML rules out central-level leftist electoral alliance

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

At a time when there were reports of wider leftist electoral alliance – particularly between Maoists and the UML – in the offing, the recently concluded meeting of

central committee of the UML has ruled out the possibility.

“We will not forge alliance with any party or with communist parties at the central level. Such alliances are possible

at local level depending on the situation,” said general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal.

He said the activities by the Maoists and their continued atrocities were the main hurdles for such alliance.

“When such attacks and atrocities are continuing, you cannot expect to strike cooperation or alliance,” he added. “But we are open to alliance with all who believe in federal democratic republic – at the local level.”

The central committee meeting also passed party’s election manifesto. But it has not yet decided on the form of head of state after the CA election.

The party leaders appear upbeat about their prospect of winning the election. “We will win absolute majority in the election,” Nepal said. He also vowed to contest from Rautahat as well as Kathmandu district in the April election.

The meeting of the standing committee to be held next week will finalize the party’s election candidates and the issue of the form of head of state – whether presidential or prime ministerial. ■

INDIAN DELEGATION IN TOWN

A delegation of senior Indian leaders belonging to the ruling Indian National Congress arrived in Kathmandu on February 12.

The delegation was dispatched by the India’s largest and oldest party to study the ongoing peace process, the forthcoming election and continued unrest in southern plains of the country.

Invited by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, the four-member delegation engaged in hectic parleys with key political leaders.

The delegation led by general secretary of All India Congress Committee and former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh Digvijaya Singh met with Peace and Reconstruction Minister Ram Chandra Poudel and Home Minister Krishna Prasad Situala on the very day they landed in Kathmandu.

On arrival at the Tribhuvan



International Airport, Singh said that the CA election should take place on the scheduled date, April 10, as there is no alternative to the polls to make the peace process successful.

After meeting with Minister Poudel, Singh told reporters that it was the wish of both Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Congress president Sonia Gandhi that the election took place at the earliest. He also stressed

on resolving Terai problem urgently through dialogue.

The delegation included Dr. Shakil

Ahmad, Union Minister of State for Information, Veerappa Moily, media chair of All India Congress Committee, and MP Jitin Prasad.

The delegation is also scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal and Maoist chairman Prachanda, apart from leaders of Madhesi parties and Rastriya Prajatantra Party and Rastriya Janashakti Party. ■

RPC

Parallel Revival

The Maoist intention is drawn into question after it revived its infamous peoples' revolutionary councils just ahead of election

By A CORRESPONDENT

By resurrecting the dissolved peoples' revolutionary council units, the Maoists have raised many eyebrows. The revival comes at a time when the party leaders have been going overboard in their attempts to convince others about their sincerity towards Constituent Assembly (CA) election this time round.

Out of the blue, the Maoists, last week, announced the revival of revolutionary peoples' council units at local level to 'ease the problems faced by people at the local level.'

In the past, Maoist people's governments were operational in villages and district level as parallel forms of government undermining state authority during the conflict period. They were dissolved following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the seven political parties and the Maoists two years ago.

The recent meeting of the United Revolutionary People's Council of the party had decided to resurrect the party's people's government. Although the decision came within days of the high level steering committee's decision not to reconstitute the local bodies for the time being citing disagreements within the SPA, Maoists have assured that the people's government would not act as a parallel government like

before.

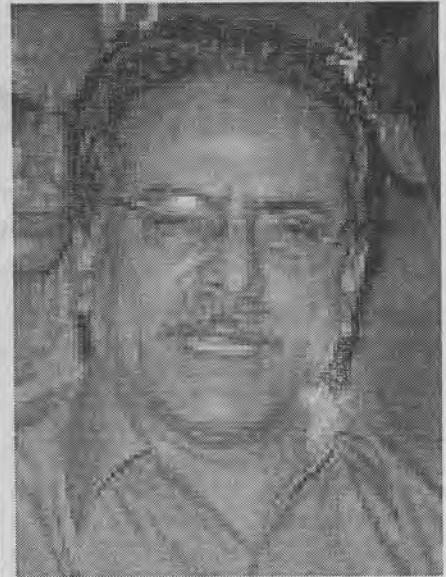
In a statement issued by convener of people's council Dr Baburam Bhattarai, Wednesday morning, it has been stated that "since the local bodies have still not been re-constituted on the agreement among the seven political parties, the people's government have been activated to resolve the problems faced by the people in the district and local level and extend help in development related works."

The statement further said that the meeting which was presided over by Maoist chairman Prachanda also decided to start "model joint development projects" in 11 'autonomous state committees and two sub-committees.'

Additionally, the meeting has also re-constituted the central people's council appointing Dr Baburam Bhattarai as convener and Krishna Bahadur Mahara and Dev Gurung and its deputy-conveners.

Meanwhile, Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal, has said that he will soon be discussing with Maoist leadership over the reactivation of People's Revolutionary Councils.

Speaking on Saturday with Radio Nepal, Martin said, "So far as parallel structures are concerned, what the Comprehensive Peace Accord and the Arms Monitoring Agreement says there shouldn't be



Prachanda: Parallel government

parallel mechanisms in areas of the state or state machinery. The Maoist leadership has said that the activation of the People's Council is not setting up a parallel structure but they said that it was happening because local bodies hadn't been formed by the Seven-Party Alliance and that it would be involved in supporting development work. That does sound that if it is going to substitute for responsibilities of the State, and I should be discussing this very soon, I think, with the Maoist leadership, by a meeting."

The revival of the PRC has also coincided with increasing frequency of attacks at local level by the Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) cadres targeting other political parties.

The YCL cadres attacked and injured former minister Dilendra Prasad Badu and a team of Nepali Congress workers in Darchula district a few days ago.

Immediately after the YCL attack in Darchula, the government ordered police raids in YCL offices in Kathmandu valley, which was also backed by the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML).

BOOK

Monument Conservation

Having long experience of working in heritage and monument conservation, Dr. Shaphalya Amatya describes the importance of world heritage sites of Kathmandu

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Kathmandu valley has been passing through a phase of modernization with construction boom, its historically and culturally important monuments are under the threat of existence.

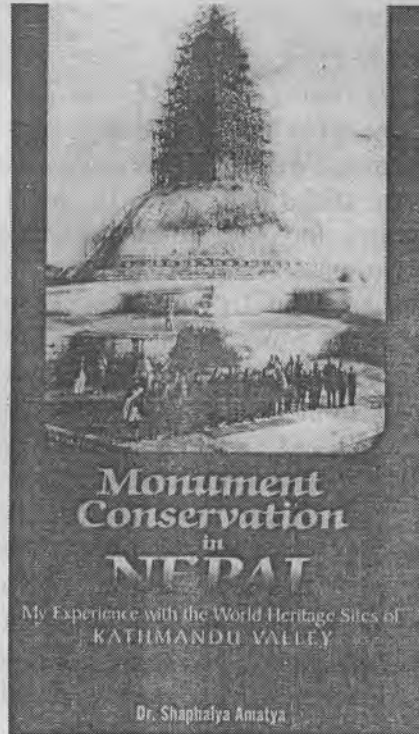
Although there are number of monument sites, which are declared as World Heritage sites, all of them have been struggling to survive. From Bouddhanath, a Buddhist Shrine in northeast part of Kathmandu valley, to Pashupati Area, all of them have been struggling from the onslaught of expanding concrete jungle.

Despite warning from international agency like United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) not to allow the new construction around these sites, the government has failed to arrest it. Due to this, UNESCO has already announced that it is considering revoking its decision to announce some areas as world heritage sites.

Having had a long association with monument conservation, Dr. Shaphalya Amatya knows ins and outs of the state of Nepalese heritage sites. As former chief of Archeological Department, Dr. Amatya was also involved in the negotiation process and identification of monument sites.

Thanks to the support of Eco-Himal, an Austria based INGO working in Nepal for quite a long time, the publication of this important and interesting book has become possible where one can read how the process of declaration of conservation sites begin.

"The World Heritage Sites of the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal- in the



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Nepal**
**My experience with the World
Heritage Sites of Kathmandu
Valley**
By:

Dr. Shaphalya Amatya

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richly- illustrated volume comprehensively presented in cultural-historical perspective for the first time- deserve their place on the list for many reasons. They are true masterpieces of human creativity," said Kurt Luger, University of Salzburg, Austria and Chairman of Eco-Himal.

The preservation as well as management of these monuments is itself a big challenge when new flux of human mobility is moving from one place to another. "Those in charge of managing World Heritage Sites face a dual challenge: they must both market these treasures, and ensure their protection. Many managers see themselves primarily as guardians, and less as promoters of a tourism product," said Luger whose organization has already made significant contribution to renovate the Garden of Dream in Keshar Mahal.

There are more than 830 sites in 138 countries all over the world that are now inscribed on the World Heritage List. It includes seven sites in the valley including Pashupati Area, Bouddhanath, Swoyambhu, Kathmandu Durbar Square, Patan Durbar Square, Bhakatapur Durbar Square and Changu Narayan Temple.

All these monuments represent the masterpieces of human creativity and imagination. "For more than two decades, I had responsibility for heritage conservation in my country. In this book I have tried to document all those events and incidents, the sweet and sour experiences that I have faced in my long career. This should give the reader insights into the problems and sorrowful conditions of heritage conservation in Nepal, the Kathmandu valley in particular," writes the author.

Edited by Ms. Susan Hoivik, this book is divided into 11 different chapters. The book begins with the brief introduction of monument sites of the valley followed by the history of monument conservation in Nepal. Author Dr. Amatya describes areas of monument conservation including the conservation of Hanuman Dhoka, Patan Durbar Square, Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Swoyambhu, Bouddhanath, Pashupati and Changu Narayan. He also discusses the restoration of Keshar Mahal and Garden of Dreams.

“Foreign forces are actively working to disrupt the Constituent Assembly election fearing that the leftists will sweep the polls. We are ready to launch revolt if the election is derailed.”

Pushpa Kamal Dahal aka Prachanda, Maoist chairman, speaking in Butwal.

“[The decision] doesn't reflect the majority view of the people. This isn't democracy.”

King Gyanendra, on the decision of seven parties to write republic in the interim constitution, during his interaction with a group of Japanese journalists, in Yomiuri Shimbun.

“The April election of Constituent Assembly is a strong platform to address challenges faced by Nepal.”

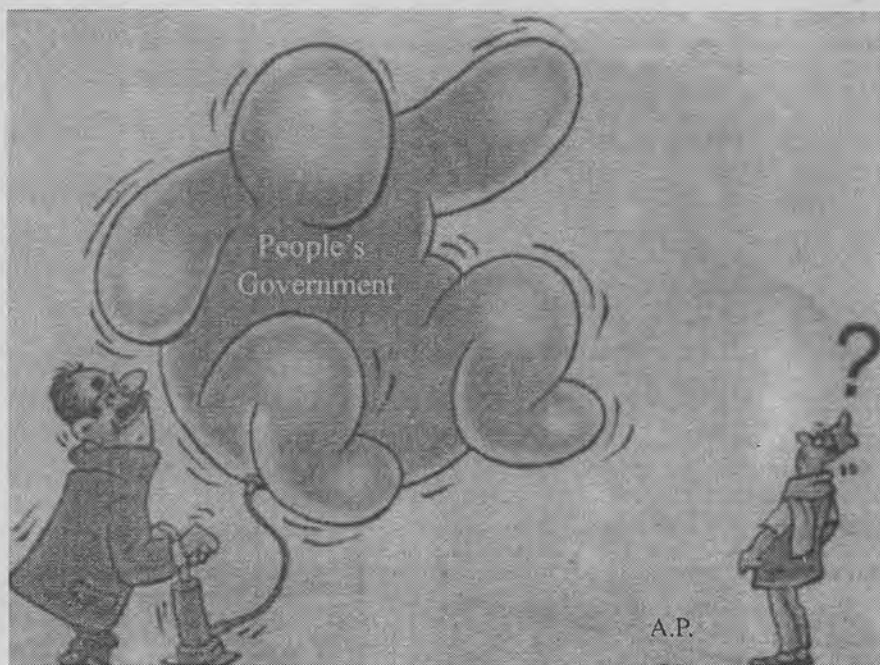
Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway, who paid a short visit to Nepal.

“The Jana Andolon II had given the mandate of holding the Constituent Assembly election and reinstating the parliament standing on the 1990 constitution, but the government was compelled to write the interim constitution due to the Maoists.”

Sujata Koirala, Minister without portfolio, addressing a Tarun Dal function in Siraha.

“The election cannot be held without addressing Madhesi movement. An environment conducive for election must be created within a week through dialogue with Madhesi groups.”

Surya Bahadur Thapa, former



prime minister and president of Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP).

“The government had to conduct a raid in places that are operated like barracks. Even UML cadres were put in those places and tortured.”

Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), backing the police raids at YCL offices.

“The raids at YCL offices were conducted to disrupt the election.”

Ganesh Man Pun, chief of Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL).

“It was nonsensical to broach the issue at the seven party meeting. If the Prime Minister had so desired, he could have

summoned the vice chancellors and ordered them to suspend the election since he is the chancellor (of the universities).”

Iswor Pokharel, senior leader of UML, expressing his displeasure at the decision of seven party steering committee to advise for suspending the election of Free Students Union (FSU), slated to take place in affiliate colleges of the Tribhuvan University and Nepal Sanskrit University on February 28.

“The parties that made such proposal (to suspend FSU election) have given out signals that they do not want the CA election as well.”

Thakur Gaire, president of student wing ANNFSU affiliated with the UML, at a press meet.

TRANSITION

RETURNED: Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway, after wrapping up a 20-hour visit to Nepal.

HANDED OVER: Dr. Amit Kumar, alleged kingpin of kidney racket, who was arrested by Nepal Police from Chitwan on February 7, to the Indian authorities.

PASSED AWAY: Gopal Raj Mainali, senior comedian, at the age of 65. He is



survived by one son and two daughters.

APPOINTED: Bishal Khanal, as the secretary of the National Human Rights Commission, by the cabinet.

APPROVED: The funding for the multi-million-dollar Melamchi Water Supply Project (MWSP), by the board of directors of Asian Development Bank (ADB).

REVIVED: The Peoples' Revolutionary Council units by the Maoists.



IKEBANA Decoration of Flowers

Ramita Manadhar demonstrates the skills of Ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement

By A CORRESPONDENT

Every country has its own unique culture which is recognized in the world.

Japan has its own unique culture. Ikebana and Tea ceremony are some of the very distinct Japanese cultures that are globally recognized.

The flowers always have one or other kinds of role in human life. Whether in happiness or sorrow, there is a culture of exchange of flower as gift around the world. To decorate the indoors also, flower is very popular.

Only challenges all the society face is in its arrangement. Ikebana is a very popular way of flower arrangement. Because of selections of various colors and perfect way of

arrangement, Ikebana has become quite popular around the world.

Till a decade ago, there were only a few Nepalese who knew the skill of Ikebana and vast majority of Nepalese even didn't understand the concept of flower arrangement. Thanks to the growing interactions between Nepalese and Japanese at various levels, Nepalese are gradually learning the way of various cultural and other aspects of Japan and Ikebana is one of them.

Different countries have different ways of arranging flowers but the Japanese way has its unique pattern. This is what Nepal's Ramita Manandhar demonstrated in her skills of Ikebana recently in the capital.

Manandhar - who has been

running Sakura Flower Arrangement School in Lalitpur- mastered the art of flower arrangement from Ms. Toshiko Nishizawa in Japan. Organized by Embassy of Japan, and Japanese Universities Alumni Association Nepal (JUAAN), Manandhar showed her skill of Ikebana recently in Japanese Embassy.

Organized in the premises of Japanese Embassy, one hour program of Ikebana demonstration included the video screening of Yokoso Japan (promotion of Japan visits and tea ceremony, Ikebana and calligraphy).

In the program, Manandhar completed two items of Ikebana which included arrangements of various flowers with different colors. Manandhar, who completed her study in Japan from 1996 to 1999, is one of the prominent Nepalese Ikebana instructors.

Along with Ikebana, a tea ceremony was also organized. A documentary on Yokoso Japan, a promotion for Japan visit was also screened. Tea ceremony demonstrated the very unique of way of tea making in Japan. It involves the combination of making, offering and drinking tea.

Although Japan is an industrialized and developed country, it still retains its culture and values. Along with modernity, the traditional culture like Ikebana and tea ceremony are still valued highly in Japanese society.

"These kinds of culture programs will help understand each others' culture and tradition," said Japanese ambassador to Nepal Tatsuo Mizuno. ■

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Fax: 9771 4782284
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Fax: 9771 4223933
royal_royale8hotmail.com



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Radisson Hotel
Lazimpat, Kathmandu
Tel: 4420311
Fax: 9771 4445525
casinorad@mail.com.np



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Tel: 4482517
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