

# SPOTLIGHT

September:12-18, 2008

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**NC IN OPPOSITION**

# Political Realignment

Exclusive Interview with former PM GP Koirala

**INSIDE**

**Conflict:** West Side Story  
**Economy:** Budget Calling



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- Suraj Singh Thakuri  
TV Personality/Director



## San Miguel BEER

J.M. Mendez SANTIAGO

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Former prime minister and president of Nepali Congress, Koirala talks about his new role in an exclusive interview to SPOTLIGHT

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**SPOTLIGHT**

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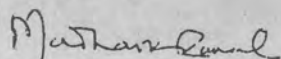
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**T**he vicious uncertainties enveloping the poor tiny nation, even after the formation of the coalition government led by Maoist leader Prachanda are creating great misgivings about where the country is heading. The drama being enacted by the three ruling parties have so far totally failed to convince the poor masses about the sincerity of the government to provide immediate relief to them. Moreover, the recent Kosi flood and its devastation have forced many people to leave their homes in eastern Nepal. As Maoist cadres are yet to correct their criminal behavior and the differences among coalition partners over their priority are growing, the situation will continue to worsen. Absence of law and order, officials and businessmen being robbed and shot dead, police stations being looted are ominous happenings warning us about the greater dangers lurking round the corner. Even the international community is yet to completely back the Maoist led government and they are still in wait and watch mode. But in the absence of alternative political power, they are willy-nilly, forced to deal with them and support the government.

Maoist leader and prime minister Prachanda is paying his official visit to India from coming Sunday on September 14. Given the track record of previous prime ministers, Nepal always surrenders its interests before India. People are expecting that prime minister Prachanda will not commit such crime. However, Maoists, who had spent almost all their time in hiding in India, may have to woo their masters by offering something. As a neighboring country, India could have arrested the rot in Nepal, that could have nipped the Maoists problem in the bud, that could have avoided the decade long violent insurrection that totally devastated the poor country. This is the reason the new ruling parties in Nepal neither have the guts nor the political acumen to deal with her. Nothing drastic can be expected from Prachanda's visit. As long as Nepalis cannot elect honest and patriotic leaders, there is little hope to gain equal treatment from Nepal's southern neighbor. If Maoist government led by Prachanda shows its guts, he will win the heart of patriotic Nepalis.

  
**Madhav K. Rimal**  
Chief Editor & Publisher



## No End In Sight

I don't think there is any possibility to end the trauma of disappeared any time soon (Spotlight September 05-11). It was shocking to know that even after peace agreement has been signed and Maoists are in the power, the families of disappeared are knocking from door to door. Whether a person is disappeared by Maoists or state, it is a heinous crime. At a time when former rebels are now in power, it is their duty to reveal the cases of disappeared. If anyone is found guilty of violating human rights, he/she must be punished. I hope Maoist leader Prachanda will take serious steps to punish the culprits.

*Shree Krishna Shrestha*

*Via Email*

as well as technical aspects of Koshi barrage. Only a few people know that revision of Koshi treaty established the right of Nepal in Koshi river. I don't understand why some politicians have been terming Koshi treaty as unequal. Of course, some of the clauses of the treaty are very unequal but there are some clauses that protects our rights. S.B Pun's article on Koshi is an eye opener. I didn't know that there is such a person like Pun who knows all ins and outs of Koshi agreement. We need to encourage persons like Pun.

*Madan Basyal*

*Nepal Law Campus*

*Via email*

## Who Is To Blame?

Your story on Trauma of Disappeared: Unending Saga (September 05-11) failed to reveal who is to be blame for all these human rights violations. It is an open secret on whose interest Maoists waged the war against people of Nepal? Your story tried to cover the crime of external power which backed, gave safe haven for shelter and protected them who committed gross human rights violation in Nepal. Your story is one sided as the report published by so called human rights activists only point fingers at Nepali soldiers and Maoist leadership.

*Sonam Lama*

*Via email*

## Tragic List

National Human Rights Commission, International Committee for Red Cross and Informal Sector Service Center, all the three human rights bodies, have done a wonderful job by publishing the list of

disappeared people. This is a very tragic phenomenon as nobody knows whereabouts of their beloved ones. Spotlight has rightly pointed out the trauma faced by the families of disappeared. Persons and organizations responsible in this human crime must be put in trial so that no one dares to repeat them in the future. It is unfortunate to say that the Maoist leadership who rode to the power on the sacrifice of the people has not shown any interest to do anything about the disappeared people. I would like to request all human rights organizations to raise this question at international level. All human rights violators should be brought to justice.

*Laxmanlal Karna*

*Via email*

## Comprehensive Document

Only a few people have shown interest in writing about all the different aspects of Koshi. Thanks to the article written by S.B. Pun, it helped me understand a lot - political

## Koshi's Course

Koshi river has devastated the lives of tens of thousands of Nepalese and Indians. This is not the time to engage in blame game but to work together in saving the lives of people living on both the sides. We know the river does not have any political boundary. Thus, it can choose its own course. Similarly, people living in this part of political boundary or that part of political boundary, too, have faced similar fate as Koshi river. Our efforts must be aimed at protecting the people from Koshi water and finding a way of reducing the human sufferings. As experts have predicted, there is still a possibility of major flood in Koshi. If it can destroy such a huge land without a flood, one can only guess what will happen when it carries enough water. I would like the government of India and Nepal to think about the people first and do their best to support people.

*Umakanta Mishra*

*Patna, India Via email*



## Nation Will Plunge Into Disarray If New Govt Fails: PM

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has warned that the country will head towards grave crisis if the new government fails, or is brought down prematurely. "Conspiracy to topple the government is already being hatched," PM Dahal told a delegation of journalists at his official residence in Baluwatar Friday (Sep 05) morning, adding, "The failure of the government will shatter the aspirations of the people, and such a general frustration will lead the nation to grave crisis." "Some people are talking about bringing down the government in three months...six months," Dahal said alluding to a recent comment by Nepali Congress president and former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala that the Maoist-led government would not last more than six months. Saying he was determined to fulfill the promises he made to the people, PM Dahal also urged all including the media fraternity to help the government in achieving its three primary goals - bringing the peace process to a logical end, writing new constitution and bring about economic prosperity. *Compiled from reports*

### PM Asked To Utilise India Visit In Favor Of Nationalism

At the meeting of central committee of the ruling Maoist party, Friday (Sep 05) the members urged the Prime Minister and chairman of the party Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to utilize his upcoming India visit in favor of nationalism. The CC members asked the PM not to sign

any anti-national agreement during the visit and, rather, push for revoking the 'anti-national treaties signed in the past.' The PM is said to have expressed his commitment to do so. The members also asked the PM to bring out a forward-looking and pro-people budget. The meeting was held at Baluwatar, the official residence of the Prime Minister. PM Dahal is leaving for India visit on September 14. *Compiled from reports*

### Govt Abolishes Haliya System

The government has declared the abolition of Haliya system (land tillers working as indentured laborers) prevalent in mid and far-western Nepal for ages. A cabinet meeting Saturday (Sep 06) decided to abolish Haliya system a day after reaching a five-point agreement with Haliyas who have been staging protest in Kathmandu for some time now, demanding abolition of the system along with a proper rehabilitation plan. "The government has uprooted Haliya system from today," Peace and Reconstruction minister Janardan Sharma announced before a group of Haliyas at Kathmandu's Maitighar Mandala, where they have been staging sit-in. Minister Sharma also said the government would soon come up with rehabilitation program for freed Haliyas. There are an estimated 100,000 Haliyas, who belong mainly to Dalit and indigenous Tharu communities, in western Nepal. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) had recently written a letter to the government asking to abolish Haliya system, which exists as a form exploitation of workers. Prior to that, the Supreme Court had also ordered the government to do away with all forms of exploitations of workers including Haliya system. *Compiled from reports*

### 'Coalition Govt Will Not Run Long'

President of the main opposition party Nepali Congress (NC) and former prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala has said that the coalition government led by the Maoists will not survive long. He predicted the short tenure of the new government owing to 'internal contradictions within the Maoists' and

'conflict among coalition partners.' Speaking at the central working committee meeting of NC, which has been going on since last ten days, Koirala, Wednesday (Sep 03), said that NC should keep itself ready as the alternative force. He also accused Maoist chairman and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' of betrayal. He recalled how the NC and other parties signed 12-point agreement with the Maoists in November of 2005 in New Delhi, India - which set the stage for People's Movement that subsequently ejected the monarchy. A central committee member present at Wednesday's meeting quoted Koirala as saying that Prachanda had briefed Koirala about his talks with then King Gyanendra. "When I, along with Chakra Bastola, first met with Prachanda and Baburam in New Delhi, they said that they had talked with the King. They claimed that the King had offered to share power with them by throwing parliamentary party leaders into jail. The 12-point agreement was signed on such background," Koirala was quoted as telling the NC meeting. "On such background, the 12-point agreement and a separate understanding were reached. But they betrayed us in the end," Koirala is further quoted as saying. He did not elaborate on what the separate understanding comprised of. At the meeting, Koirala tried to reassure his party colleagues by saying that the Maoists can never establish totalitarian state or capture the state. "I have seen my friends in fear and terror. But nobody can establish totalitarianism here. Let us wait and watch for some time," he said. Koirala hinted that he was ready to hand over party leadership to other leaders but had not found anyone capable of doing so at the moment. "The moment I am assured that our colleagues can handle the party well, I will relinquish the position," he is said to have told the gathering. *Kantipur daily reports*

### BJP Leader Asks Indian PM To Work On Revising Water Treaty

Senior leader of India's main opposition party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), L K Advani, today asked Indian

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to initiate efforts to amend the 1964 Nepal-India treaty on utilization of water resource to control recurrence of floods, according to Press Trust of India (PTI). "Nepal's Prime Minister Prachanda is to visit India shortly. Keeping in mind our past experiences of the Treaty of 1964, I requested the Prime Minister to work on amending it so that India and Nepal could have a win-win situation," PTI quoted Advani as telling reporters after his meeting with Prime Minister Singh at the latter's office in New Delhi. Before meeting Singh, Advani had led a delegation of political leaders which carried out an aerial survey of the flood-affected areas in Bihar state where nearly two million people have been displaced due to floods after a breach in Koshi embankment in Sunsari, Nepal. In one of the worst disasters, floods have displaced over 50,000 people in Sunsari district, destroying swathes of cultivated land. Advani maintained that amending the agreement "would help Nepal enjoy the benefits of hydel power, while protecting India from recurring floods". "We can show the world that India can turn an adversity into an opportunity," he said. *Compiled from reports*

### East Nepal Seeks Alternate Highway

Thousands of people in the eastern part of the country have been deprived of transport after the Koshi river swept away a section of the East-West (Mahendra) Highway in Sunsari district. Engineers and government officials have said reconstruction of the road would start only after a few months as the work of returning the Koshi back to its previous course would be possible only in the dry season. The Koshi has damaged 10 kilometers of the highway from Laukahi to the Koshi barrage. Travellers are compelled to choose one of two options-either make a risky crossing of the swollen Koshi by boat at Chatara in Sunsari or make a long detour through India. According to local boat operator Kishor Tamrakar, who ferries about 5,000 travellers across the river, the district administration bans boat operation when the water level in the river

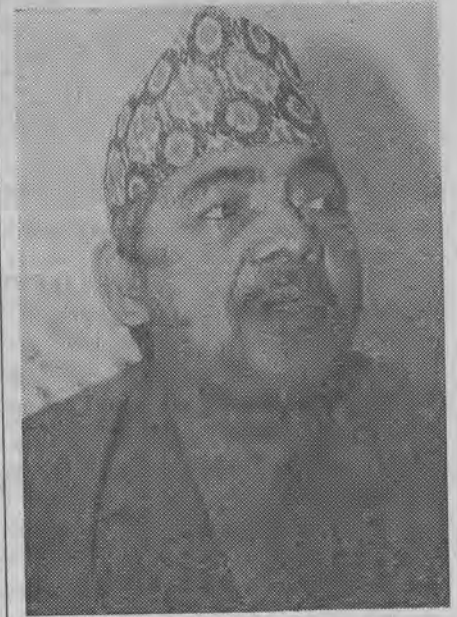
rises. Travellers then have to cover 500 kilometers via the Joghani-Raxaul route in India. Furthermore, the Indian route is obstructed by a rise in the water level, according to him. According to Inspector Roshan Acharya at the Area Police Office in Biratnagar, the Indian authorities have requested not to send travellers if the water level is rising. Indian engineers depl-o-yed for the protection of spurs on the Koshi said there is no possibility of starting work on the embankment until the winter season. "Diverting such a powerful flow from east to west is not possible before mid-winter," Executive Engineer JN Singh of Irrigation Department Bathnaha in Bihar told the Post at the Koshi Tappu Reserve area. There are two options for connecting Chatara in the Baraha area in Sunsari to Rampur Dumribote in Udaypur district across the Koshi. The options are- installing a bailey bridge or constructing a barrage. "Setting up a bailey bridge is a quicker solution but we should use this opportunity for developing it as an integrated project for road building, irrigation and electricity generation," Chief of Regional Irrigation Directorate at Biratnagar, Kamal Regmi, told the Post. According to him, the idea behind constructing a barrage in the Baraha area is to open an alternative highway and for irrigation in Udaypur, Siraha and Saptari district. "This whole project can be completed within four to five years," Regmi said. The number of people using this route is increasing each day. Around 10,000 travellers have been using this route following the damage done to the East-West Highway by the Koshi. Locals and the business community have been demanding immediate construction of a motorable bridge across the Koshi, connecting Chatara in Sunsari and Rampur in Udaypur district. Shyam Bhandari of the Business Association of Morang in Biratnagar said that building this road is urgent as industries closed down one after another due to lack of goods and raw materials. Maoist constituent assembly member from Sunsari district, Kiran Rai, stated that initiatives have been taken at the government level for the alternative highway. He further

claimed that it would get started soon as Defense Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa has made an aerial inspection of the site.

*The Kathmandu Post reports*

### PM Promises Big Changes

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Thursday (Sep 04) expressed commitment to commence the process of profound change cleansing the old hindrances. He said the country could



not prosper in the past due to the then political mechanism and leadership. The government will leave no stone unturned for the change, he added. Inaugurating a new television channel ABC this morning, Prime Minister Dahal said that political determination is required for a change. He claimed that Nepal has displayed a good example to the world on resolving conflict. The Prime Minister said that the government will emphasize in bringing peace process to a logical conclusion. He reiterated that the government's focus will be on drafting a people-oriented constitution and brining about an economic revolution. Speaking at the inaugural function, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Bamdev gautam said that all the efforts will be put into maintaining law and order. Minister for Information and Communication Krishna Bahadur Mahara stressed that the media should put the people and the country first for a positive change. *Compiled from reports* ■



PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal meeting with ADB officials

**THE GOVERNMENT IS SET TO PRESENT** policies and programs on Wednesday, September 10 at the Constituent Assembly. Subas Nemwang, chairman of CA, informed, Friday (Sep 05), that president Dr. Rambaran Yadav will present the policies and programs on behalf of the government. The fourth session of the CA had started from Friday. During this session, the government will not only present the policies and programs but also its annual budget. Meanwhile, speaking at the CA, several members asked the government to make the relief and rehabilitation efforts more effective to help people hit by flood in Sunsari district. Nepali Congress leader and former minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat took a strong exception to remarks by Defense Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal' stating that the latter had accused that the president did not visit China for inaugural ceremony of Beijing Olympics under foreign pressure. Dr. Mahat asked the Defense Minister to either elaborate the accusations or apologize.

**NEPAL POLICE HAVE ARRESTED** two persons accused of involvement in Mumbai bomb blasts of 1993 from Kathmandu. The police nabbed Salim Abdul Gani Gazi alias Asfak Ahmad Shah Asfak and Riaz Khatri alias Riyaz Abubakar Khatri, who is also known as Riaz Ahmad Lone. There was a high priority Interpol red-corner notice against them. The police handed them over to the Indian government via the Indian embassy, Friday. Police said they were operating as manpower agent and pashmina trader in the city. The Mumbai blasts of 1993 had killed around 257 people.

**KUNIO SENGA, DIRECTOR GENERAL** of the Asian Development Bank's South Asia department, arrived in Kathmandu, Wednesday (Sep 03) on a four-day official visit. Senga will meet Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), as well as ministers for Finance, Works and Transport, Agriculture, Education, Water Resources, Local Development, and Physical Planning and Reconstruction. He will emphasize the importance of taking the peace process to a logical conclusion and for the government to focus on economic reform and development agenda. Senga will also meet representatives of ADB's development partners and the media to discuss a wide range of development issues, challenges,

and prospects. He is scheduled to meet SAARC Secretary General to reiterate ADB's readiness to further support SAARC carry out its Summit resolutions and to implement ADB-funded regional cooperation initiatives more effectively. ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in the Asia and Pacific region through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members – 48 from the region. In 2007, it approved \$10.1 billion of loans, \$673 million of grant projects, and technical assistance amounting to \$243 million.

**MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND SPORTS** Gopal Shakya has said he would demand at least Rs. 4 billion for his ministry in the upcoming budget.

Speaking at an interaction 'Youth ministry and the role of youths' organized by the Democratic National Youth Federation, Nepal (DNYF), he promised to address the issues concerning youths if desired amount budget is allocated for the newly established ministry. "The Finance Minister has talked about economic growth that should jump like a frog. I can also deliver in a similar way if adequate budget is allocated," Shakya said. He said that his first priority would be to make policy for the youth by holding consultation with the stakeholders. DNYF in-charge Gokarna Bista said the ministry should be able to remove pessimistic views among the youth at first. DNYF president Ajambar Kangwang handed over a concept paper outlining the priorities to be set by the Youth Ministry to the minister.

**THE LATEST FIGURES RELEASED** by Immigration Office, Tribhuvan International Airport has revealed that the total visitor arrivals till August 2008 have reached to 224,679. The tourist arrival by air in the month of August has decreased by 2 percent compared to the same month last year. However, figures until August this year represent an increase of 2 percent (224,679) in comparison to the same period last year. According to Nepal Tourism Board, the tourism industry has shown some signs of revival in the form of softening in decline as compared to 19 percent decrease in July 2008. India, the largest tourist generating market for Nepal, bounced back with a remarkable growth of 13 percent. The entire South Asian region has gained overall positive growth of 16 percent with Bangladesh (48 percent), Pakistan (45 percent) and Sri Lanka (31 percent). Similarly, other Asian countries Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia have maintained the upward trend with 77 percent, 59 percent and 16 percent of growth respectively in each market. Arrivals from the United Kingdom, one of the major source markets for Nepal, configured a notable growth of 35 percent. Australia and Norway maintained the increasing trend in the arrival figures. However, other markets such as Japan, China, and South Korea witnessed decrease by 9 percent, 35 percent and 13 percent, respectively. European arrivals suffered a significant decline: Italy 44 percent, Germany 37 percent and Spain 28 percent. ■



# KOSI FLOOD DISASTER: WHAT COMES NEXT?

■ AB Thapa

All major news media throughout the world are reporting on one of the world's worst flood disasters that hit our region. It is the Kosi flood disaster.

Lately Indian Government authorities did not appear to have realized that there was really a great danger of Kosi flood in near future. Nepal was told by India in course of exchange of letters that the Kosi flood problems have been solved once for ever after the construction of the embankments.

In 1997 Indo-Nepal joint meeting held in Kathmandu on Kosi dams, a brief presentation was made from our side right at the outset of the meeting to explain about the imminent Kosi flood danger. At that time, much to our relief, the

Indian side led by the Chairman of the Govt. of India's Water Commission had acknowledged off the record with complete frankness that the greatest benefit to accrue from the Kosi project is going to be

from flood control. Unfortunately the officials of governments of Nepal and India, who lately look after the water resources departments and ministries are completely ignorant of the Kosi problems. As a result, the present Kosi flood disaster took everybody by surprise.

## A Complete Surprise

Authorities in India appeared to be completely unaware of the far-reaching disastrous consequences for the vast number of people living in the floodplains of the Kosi even after the swollen Kosi river was already gushing out deep inside Indian territory after bursting the eastern embankment. There seemed little realization that all old channels of the Kosi are already full of water after incessant rain and the flood surges would be rapidly propagated further downstream. As a result, people living in the affected area were not alerted to the great danger facing them.

The Kosi flood affected not just one area adjoining

the first old Kosi channel next to the present course of this river. Huge quantity of sediments carried by the flood water must have helped to spread the submergence area further to the east by reactivating more old channels. It is a typical behavior of the Kosi. Renowned scientists

Leopold and Maddock have explained (1956) braided river, like Kosi, tends to shift laterally at a rate dependent on the rate of accumulation of materials being deposited.



***Authorities in India appeared to be completely unaware of the far-reaching disastrous consequences for the vast number of people living in the floodplains of the Kosi even after the swollen Kosi river was already gushing out deep inside Indian territory after bursting the eastern embankment.***

Many of the people living in lowlands must have abandoned their homes to flee from the flood danger. They might have lost everything. Those living slightly on higher grounds might still be marooned at their homes. According to Indian media about two million people are affected and one thousand square km of land has already been ravaged by the flood.

## Dreadful Prediction of Shillingfeld

Major Rennel and James Ferguson were the first to find out that the Kosi after debouching into the plain constantly changes its course before it empties into the Ganges. The river channel oscillates laterally from the Mahananda to the Gandak and vice versa at a long interval of time.

Mr. Shillingfeld had made observations of the Kosi for about 25 years. He had made the following forecast based on his study.

***(1) The westward movement in such oscillation***

*of the Kosi is slow and is in a series of steps, each of which is attended with damage to property of temporary nature.*

*(2) The Eastward movement of the oscillation will probably be accompanied with great loss of life and property.*

**Great Loss of Life and Property**

The Kosi has now burst the eastern embankment and shifted its course headed to south when the flood discharge was only about one lack and eighty thousand cusecs. This flood discharge is quite insignificant compared to flood discharges exceeding nine lacks cusecs, which have already been recorded twice within the last fifty years. Despite the fact that the Kosi has changed its course at such low flood discharge, Bihar suffered very heavy losses. Can we imagine what would have happened if the Kosi would have burst the embankment at a

time when the flood discharge exceeded nine lack cusecs. There would have been a total devastation of almost the entire north-east Bihar between the Mahananda and Kosi covering an

area of about eight thousand square kilometers. The swollen Kosi would have swept away everything on its way. It is reported (The International Journal on HYDROPOWER & DAMS, Volume Six, Issue Four, 1998) that the breaching the dykes of the Yellow river in 1938 caused the loss of more than five lacks life.

It can hardly be denied that the forecast of the Shillingfeld has now been found to be amazingly accurate. We have got our finger badly burnt handling the Kosi problems with negligence. In future our countries must be very careful.

**Rapit Kosi Bed Level Rise**

The results of the Kosi River channel study for post barrage period have been published by V.C. Galgali, Central Water and Power Research Station, Pune (India), and Gohain & Prakash of Roorke University. All the past studies confirm that the Kosi River bed just upstream of the barrage has significantly aggraded due to sediment deposition. On account of ponding, sediment deposition had occurred, flattening the bed gradient. The bed slope of the river in the pond area was abut 0.61

m per km in the year 1956 prior to construction of the barrage, which became flatter to about 0.42 m per km in the year 1969, ie in six years of the functioning of the barrage. Studies were made to determine the sediment deposition based on post flood 1963 and 1970 surveys. These studies indicated that about 35 million cu.m. sediments had deposited in the pond length of about 10 km upstream of the barrage, giving an average depth of about 0.4 m in about 8 years with a rate of bed level rise at about 0.05 m per annum.

**Aesop's Fable and Kosi Flooding**

China's Yellow River bed sedimentation in early years and its relation to flooding have been interestingly narrated by a Chinese expert by comparing with "The Crow and Water Jug" story described in Aesop's Fable. The crow raises the unreachable water by dropping

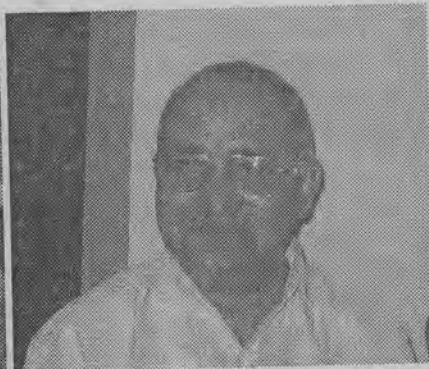
*China's Yellow River bed sedimentation in early years and its relation to flooding have been interestingly narrated by a Chinese expert by comparing with "The Crow and Water Jug" story described in Aesop's Fable. The crow raises the unreachable water by dropping pebbles into the jar. This story truly applies to Kosi river sedimentation also.*

pebbles into the jar. This story truly applies to Kosi river sedimentation also. Now the river bed at several locations might be higher than the surroundings. Thus the Kosi river has turned into a "hanging river".

**What Comes Next?**

We can draw an analogy between the flood problems of Kosi and Huango. In the past the Huango used to breach embankment on an average once in every two years. It used to completely shift its course once in hundred years,

We can say learning from the Chinese experience of handling of the Yellow river flooding that in future Kosi embankment would be frequently breached. It might still be possible to restore the river to its original course at a considerable expense. There would be further rises in river bed levels as the years pass and the works to restoring the river course would become too expensive and technically very complicated. If the embankment is breached at the time of very high flood, there would be a total devastation of the whole region ■



Congress Leader Deuba, UML Leader KP Oli and MJF Leader Yadav (from left): Demand for change

## POLITICS

# Baton Change

*As the country looks forward to a new constitution in two years, major parties brace for a leadership overhaul within a year*

By SUSHIL SHARMA

**I**t has been a month since the Maoist supremo Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' became the prime minister.

Moves to oust him from the top job of the party have also subsequently begun.

Eyeing the top party job is Mohan Baidya 'Kiran'. On grounds that one person can not hold two offices.

Prachanda has ruled out a change in the leadership. He has vowed to hold both offices.

But pressure on him is mounting. So is the pressure for convening the party's general convention facing which could prove an uphill task for him, say insiders?

Three other major parties are also due to hold the general conventions within a year.

The second largest partner of the 6-party coalition, UML, is set to hold it early next year.

The main opposition Nepali Congress will do it the middle of next year.

Madhesi Janadhikar Forum has not decided a date yet. But a top leader said that the party's general convention is expected soon.

The general convention is a platform

to stake claim over the leadership of the party.

The UML general secretary Jhalnath Khanal faces stiff challenge from his predecessor Madhav Kumar Nepal and a close contender K.P.Oli.

Both are not happy with Khanal's hobnobbing with the Maoists.

If the coalition with the Maoists does not yield returns for the party, Khanal's



PM Prachanda: Under pressure

position would be significantly weakened.

In Nepali Congress, octogenarian Girija Prasad Koirala still remain an unchallenged despite recent setbacks to the party in the elections and the government formation.

But falling health will not help the cause of the ever-ambitious Koirala who is on the wrong side in his eighties.

On the surface of it, it would be a toss-up among former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, officiating president Sushil Koirala and vice president Ram Chandra Poudel to succeed Koirala.

Senior leaders do not rule out a surprise, though. "A fourth and much younger leader could emerge as a dark horse," said one.

The chairman of the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum, Upendra Yadav, looks comfortably positioned than the other party chiefs.

But he is far from safe. His number two, minister Jaya Prakash (JP) Gupta, and the parliamentary party leader, Bijay Gachhedhar, have too many differences with him.

JP has publicly called Yadav "a so-called chairman". He has also ridiculed the "anti-Indian schooling" of the leftist leaders of the coalition, with a veiled reference to own chairman who had UML and Maoist background before putting together the MJF.

With major parties bracing for a leadership tussle, the future of the constitution making process will be far from certain.

The process could either stall or get a fillip, said an analyst. It is too early to say what way it would go. ■



ECONOMY: Budget Calling

## ECONOMY

# Maoist Move

*The Finance Minister reaches out to donors and promises to carry on with reforms*

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

**S**enior Maoist leader and Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has urged the donors to continue supporting Nepal.

Addressing a local donors' meeting last week at the Ministry, he also promised to carry on with reforms.

"We welcome and thank for the development partners' continuous support to Nepal's socio-economic development to date, and expect the scaled up support with reasonable flexibility to Nepal in the coming days," he told the gathering.

"Certainly, we will do our best to use the money in priority areas and enhance our absorptive and implementation capacity. We will also continue with the reforms as long as they are proven in the best interest of the country, no matter if they are new or were inherited from the past," he said.

At the first such gathering of local donors, which was participated by

around 30 representatives from all major bilateral and multilateral agencies, Dr. Bhattarai gave ample insights into his new plans and policies.

He called for support to Nepal to help tide over the crisis generated by global food and fuel crisis.

The minister also wanted donor support in medium to longer term. "We need to harness Nepal's immense potentialities in the water resources and hydropower, agriculture and tourism. We need our consolidated efforts for creating a higher level of growth and more job opportunities in a sustainable way. We encourage private sector investment both from within and outside the country, and will work towards ensuring effective presence of social and physical infrastructure to attract FDI. We equally stress on public-private partnership."

The attempt has been partially successful according to experts. "The speech was music to the ears of donors

as he talked about macro economic stability and did not say anything to hint about major deviation from liberal economy. However, the donors will wait for the budget to be presented by this government within a month before they decide to open their purse for new cooperation," said Dr. Shankar Sharma, a former vice chairman of National Planning Commission (NPC).

Dr. Bhattarai also stressed on the need to have rapid economic prosperity. "Currently, economic development is crawling at a lizard's pace that does not match with the rising and exploding expectations of the people after such a colossal political change. This is why we have stressed on 'leap-frogging' to make up the loss that we incurred and catch up with the rest of the world at a faster speed. We need to work with extra zeal and commitment, realizing that normal routine business will no longer suffice," he told the gathering.

He has gone on record suggesting that Nepal must attain over 20 to 30 percent growth rate in order to 'leap frog.' He has even suggested that the size of the budget needs to be expanded substantially to realize such growth.

How sustainable and attainable his goals are for a country whose economy is growing currently at around five percent is anybody's guess.

Dr. Sharma also points at continued suspicions among donors, - "They will carefully watch the new budget and see, for example, how much of budget deficit the new government will present."

The suspicions will be hard to overcome. "There are a number of things that donors and international community will be searching for when the Maoists present their budget. Number one is the size of budget deficit; then they will look into the policies and programs in it; the implementation strategy; the fate of reforms; the policies regarding private sector involvement in economic activities and so on," said Dr. Sharma, adding, "Only after they are satisfied with the budget will they open up their purses for new cooperation and aid. Otherwise, they will remain in wait and watch mode and simply tell the government to utilize the funds already in pipeline." ■



Nepal Army in disaster: Service with cause

## DISASTER

# Flood Havoc

*The government declares state of emergency in flood-hit region to improve relief and rehabilitation efforts*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**T**he government has declared emergency in nine VDCs of Sunsari district, which are severely affected by flood in Saptakoshi river.

Three weeks after the river breached embankments in Paschim Kusaha region triggering a deluge in surrounding Nepalese as well as huge tracts of Indian territory across the border, the authorities have realized the true magnitude of the problem.

It has been well accepted fact that this time around, the problem is not that of a simple flooding. The Koshi river seems to have shifted its entire course as up to 80 percent of river water started flowing through the breach into areas

with human settlement.

"This has led the government to conclude that the problem will need a long-term solution and even rehabilitating the currently displaced persons (over 50,000) needs a long haul actions.

As such the cabinet meeting last week declared nine VDCs in Sunsari as 'emergency areas'. The Home Ministry had brought a proposal to the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers to declare the nine VDCs - Paschim Kusaha, Sripurjabdi, Haripur, Laukahi, Basantapur, Bhokraha, Dhuski, Madhuban and Narsingh - as emergency areas.

With state of emergency in place,

authorities will find it easier to utilize resources without any hurdle for the purpose of relief and rehabilitation, said officials.

The cabinet meeting, Thursday (Sep 04), also decided to allocate around Rs 2.5 billion for short, medium and long term relief and rehabilitation of flood-affected people, reconstruction of destroyed infrastructures and so on.

The government has formed a ministerial team to coordinate the relief and rehabilitation works in flood affected areas of Sunsari district. The cabinet meeting formed the high-level panel led by Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Bamdev Gautam. The team has Defense Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal' and Minister for Physical Planning and Works Bijaya Gachhedar as members.

The ministerial panel's responsibility will be to monitor the relief distribution, repair works at the Koshi embankment and rehabilitation of the flood victims. The cabinet also decided to speed up the delivery of emergency relief materials especially food, clothing and medicine in the flood victim camps.

The long term repair and maintenance is much more challenging as has been suggested by Minister for Physical Planning and Works Bijay Kumar Gachhadar.

He has said that it will take at least another seven months to restore the spurs damaged by Saptakoshi floods. He informed that the government has earmarked Rs 650 million for repairing and reconstructing the embankment and Rs 760 million for building the section of road damaged and now lying inundated by the Saptakoshi river water, because of which vehicles from eastern towns are compelled to use alternative route via India.

The damage in road has severed the transport link between the eastern region and the rest of the country. The minister said obstruction in vehicular traffic will be cleared by installing bailey bridges at the inundated portions of the highway.

The need to restore the transport link is quite imperative. The festive season of Dashain and Tihar is also approaching. ■

## Political Alliance

# NC

# In

# Opposition

With the announcement of Nepali Congress leader and former prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala that his party will play the role of responsible opposition, the new phase of competitive democratic exercise resumed ending the three-years-long unprincipled politics of consensus. Former prime minister Koirala, who played a lead role in the era of unprincipled consensus politics under which the country has seen many anti-democratic experiments and break down of basic constitutional exercise, now seems to be in a position to bring the democratic exercise right on track.

By KESHAB POUDEL

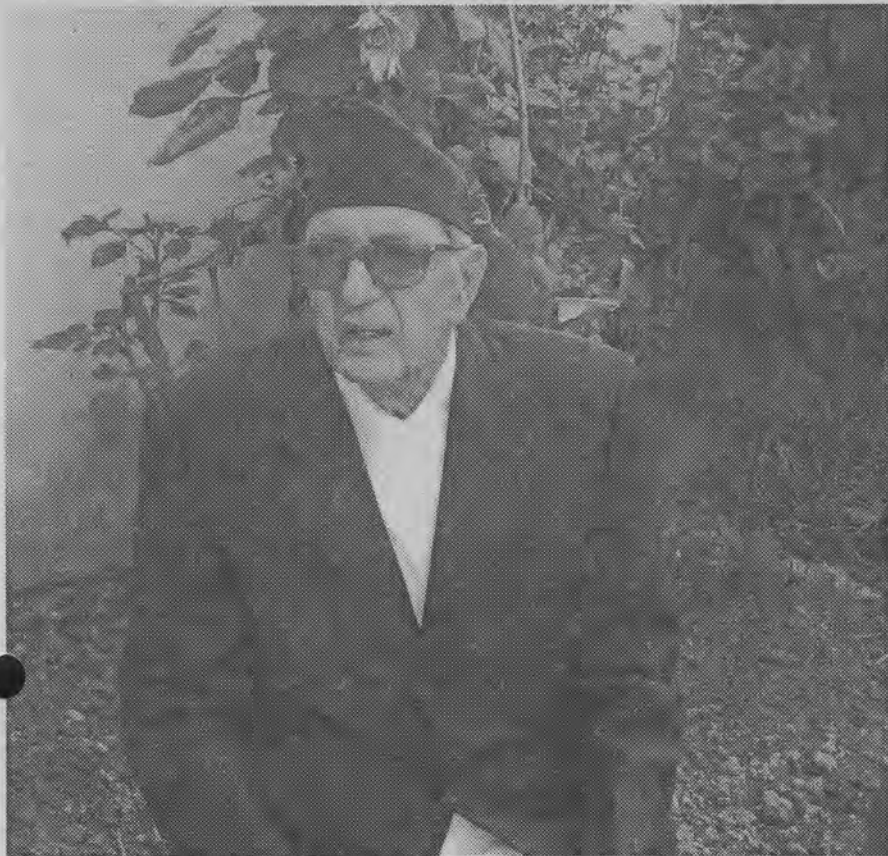
*"Nepali Congress will play responsible opposition. Our party will not break the railings in the street nor burn tyres to disturb the public life," thundered former prime minister and Nepali Congress strongman Girija Prasad Koirala, in his newly rented simple apartment in Maharajgunj. He shifted there from the three-storeyed*

*residence of his nephew Dr. Shashanka Koirala.*

Although his new abode is more spacious and open, the gathering of large number of party workers makes it noisy and congested. Unlike so called leader of proletariat Prachanda, who stayed at luxurious building in Nayabazar, former prime minister Koirala,

who is accused as a corrupt leader, lives in a rented house

As soon as Koirala, a person known for his domineering political position, pronounced his party's role, it rocked the boat of the new government. Koirala remarked that this government will collapse due to inherent political contradictions among the major coalition partners.



Former PM Koirala: Opposition Hat

What former prime minister Koirala spoke this time was politically correct.

"After all, democracy has yet proved its worth in transforming rebels as a player in the democratic rule of game. The other side also has an opportunity to help the nation and to promote a democratic process by maintaining its self restraint and democratic discipline," said a political analyst.

"Whatever Grijja Prasad Koirala did in the last three years have very negative impression in the history of this country. He defied all previous norms and values of his party which had a glorious heritage bequeathed from a person like B.P. Koirala. He went against the political standard laid down by B.P. Koirala in his last phase of political career. The more days are passing away; more the centrist democratic opinion of the country is recalling the policy of reconciliation propounded by B.P. Koirala. Its main thrust was upon a unity between traditional as well as modernizing democratic forces. This was inspired from his patriotic feelings as well as

democratic convictions," said the political analyst.

In the recently concluded Central Committee meeting, overwhelming majority of Congress members demanded the need to bring the party into right track base on its own centrist ideology. "The time has come to break the alliance and follow our own track propounded by B.P. Koirala," said Nepali Congress leader Govinda Raj Joshi.

But it is easier said than done. "As Koirala had expressed several times in the past, it requires enormous patience and tolerance. Unfortunately, G.P. does not have that while leading the legacy left by B.P. Koirala. One can say now the time has again come for Grijja Prasad Koirala to bring his political party on a correct path of democratic development. He has an opportunity to show his skill at his last leg of career by his role as a democratic opposition," said the analyst.

Whether one likes it or not, Grijja Prasad Koirala has established himself as a dominating political leader with his distinct identity. Leading seven party

alliance, his own democratic personality was actually diluted.

"Playing a role of responsible opposition, he has the opportunity to erase black spots formed in his democratic credentials in the last few years," said the political analyst. "Sometimes a role of an opposition determines the destiny of the country and its democratic process. G.P. Koirala had, a few days back, declared his wishes to continue in the leadership. Some may criticise him as power hungry politician but if he plays a corrective role in the days to come, he can do that very effectively again."

But, many doubt how long former prime minister and restless politician Koirala will stick to his stand of playing the role of responsible opposition. Given the nature of Nepal's political development where unseen power's political maneuvering determines the course, how Koirala's mere wish may translate into reality remain to be seen.

#### Good Experiment

This divide between ruling and opposition in the competitive politics is the right beginning. This is yet another opportunity for Nepal to reformulate or to reorganize power sharing structure on democratic basis. The government led by Maoist leader Dahal does not have a facility to impose and implement his own political program as he is running a government consisting parties with divergent political belief and programs:

"Our support will depend upon the performance of the government. We will closely monitor the role of the government. If the government tries to undermine democratic ideals, we will oppose it," said Nepali Congress vice chairman Ram Chandra Poudel.

Although Dahal's coalition partners have enough strength to make any change in the constitution as it has strength of more than two thirds of majority, it is not easy for prime minister Dahal to deal with them on the question of sharing the power and taking decisions.

#### Contradictions Within

One of the basic weaknesses of this

coalition is contradictions among the coalition partners. The differences among the major contenders of power Madhesi Janadhikar Forum and CPN-UML and CPN-Maoist have already surfaced. Although there are many differences, prime minister Dahal's recent statement and interviews sufficiently gives a hint that he is prepared to run a compromise government with utmost flexibility. This political compulsion he seems to have realized in advance.

"I will accommodate and address the concerns of our coalition partners," primeminister Dahal, a former rebel leader, has said.

In the government, prime minister Dahal's party does not have a complete understanding among themselves. "As chairman Prachanda is in power, we need to have different person to look after our party work," said Mohan Baidya 'Kiran', a senior Maoist leader.

Besides that there are other political parties, too, with contradictions within their own. The second person in the government Bamdev Gautam had a splinter record in his own party and, therefore, does not command adequate support from his own party.

Because of his defiant character, Gautam got the opportunity to deal with domineering role of Maoists in the government.

Similarly, foreign minister Upendra Yadav too has his own competition in the party. Moreover, the MJF is completely different in its political character because of its regional appeal. That way it is a non-ideological party.

There are other smaller parties too in the coalition but they too have their nuisance capacity to deal with the team leader Dahal. In total, the government led by Maoist leader Prachanda is an outcome of temporary alliance of heterogeneous political forces.

After all, this team has to lead the government and deliver services to the people.

Many persons in the government including prime minister Dahal have no experience in the past about building or service delivery. They had experience of destroying infrastructures and



**PM Dahal:** Feeling new threats

eliminating adversaries. Now, they are in a reverse role. The task they have assumed will slowly and gradually enhance their experience and capability in the government. Most probably, they will not be the same what they had been in the past. In a melting pot of governance, there is every possibility of their metamorphosis.

Despite several lacunae, Maoists have climbed the ladder of power through ballot papers under democratic procedure.

"Now one has to wait and see the sincerity and capability of our political leaders. At least for Girija Prasad, this is the last opportunity to bring his party in right tack in democratic process," said the analyst.

#### **Other Dimension**

But problem of this country is not only due to internal forces. Though they sounded like Polpot of the past, Maoist party is inclined to work as a ruling party. Similarly, Girija Prasad Koirala wants to play the role of responsible opposition. Do they play the role as per their wish?

These are going to be a mere wishful thinking of the right thinking person in Nepal. Because of the geo-political constraints of this country, there were several such opportunities in the past which failed to deliver stable political process.

"After a very painful period of violent operations against Nepal, a hopeful situation has emerged following the compromise reached in New Delhi between Maoist and other political parties of Nepal. Before that could take a complete shape there was a sudden emergence of terrorist groups in terai under several banners of Madhesi groups. Guards have been changed but the center of supply of arms, training and commands remains the same," said the analyst. "Bring any kinds of compromise formula between contesting forces in Nepal, a new force suddenly comes out under a mischievous grand design. In such a difficult situation, alignments and realignments are going on mostly to fulfill strategic interests of a domineering power than to serve the people in need."

Despite former prime minister Koirala's call to play responsible opposition role, nobody can predict the course of politics. As in the power with all access, prime minister Dahal's recent remarks pointing to conspiracy against his government and his own threat of dire consequences on the fall of his government indicate that nothing is going to change. However, people have a hope that this recent adjustments in power would not be thrown away without giving any adequate opportunity to deliver. ■





Agreements being signed: Generous Gesture

The World Bank

## Generous Gesture

*The World Bank supports Nepal's efforts to consolidate peace and development*

By A CORRESPONDENT

With the formation of coalition government under the Maoist leadership, Nepal is heading towards the new phase of consolidation of peace and development. At a time when the new government is searching for new funds for development, the World Bank comes out with a package to support Nepal's efforts to consolidate peace and development.

The World Bank has provided a grant of US\$ 127 million to help the Government of Nepal consolidate the peace process and to scale up the delivery of basic services to underserved rural populations.

Three agreements were signed in Kathmandu today by Finance Secretary Rameshwore Khanal and Susan Goldmark, the World Bank Country Director for Nepal. Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai and Isabel Guerrero, the World Bank Vice President for South Asia, witnessed the signing.

According to the World Bank's press release, the US\$ 50 million grant for the Emergency Peace Support Project intends to help the Government of Nepal fulfill commitments made under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the subsequent 23 Point Agreement. As part of the peace process, the previous Seven Party Alliance government had authorized payments of Nepalese Rupees 100,000 each to the families of the war deceased. It had also authorized payment of Nepalese Rupees 3,000 per month to approximately 19,600 verified Maoists in cantonments, including arrears on these payments that have built up over the previous months. In addition, the project will also help the Government pilot reintegration initiatives.

"All three projects are anchored in the Nepali agenda — peace needs development and development needs peace," said Ms. Susan Goldmark, World Bank Country Director for Nepal. "As Nepal continues to make progress on the

crucial path of peace-building and development, Nepal can be assured of continued World Bank assistance," she said.

The US\$ 50 million grant for the Nepal Health Sector Program is designed to expand access to and the use of essential health care services, especially by underserved populations. In addition the grant will support two recent initiatives: the removal of some user fees and the introduction of the Safe Delivery Incentive Program benefiting many poor and disadvantaged women and children. The incentive program will be open to women who choose to deliver in non-state hospitals with healthcare providers receiving the incentives. In addition, all medical colleges and reputed non-state hospitals will be contracted to provide free surgical services for uterine prolapse which will benefit rural, poor women. The original project, which was approved on September 9, 2004, has helped a rapid expansion of access to essential services. For example, the community-based integrated management of childhood illnesses has been expanded from 6 to 55 districts and will cover all the country's 75 districts within a year. The US\$ 27 million grant for the Second Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project will scale up the project to provide services to more remote rural areas.

An additional 400,000 people from nearly 600 communities stand to benefit from rural water supply and sanitation facilities with the new financing. Another 450 schemes will undergo the development phase, which includes activities for social capital development, preceding the construction phase.

Meanwhile, social accountability and community score card systems will be institutionalized. It is also expected that a rural water supply and sanitation sector monitoring and evaluation system will be established and made operational within the Government system prior to the close of the extended Project period. It is also envisaged that legislation will be enacted to make the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board a regular sector institution. ■

# People will See Our Visible Presence as an Opposition Party

- Girija Prasad Koirala

*Nepali Congress will play the role of a responsible opposition, we will oppose the government's move which is directed against democracy, independence of judiciary, politicization of security forces, bureaucracy and free press.*

Although he is out of power, former Prime Minister **GIRIJA PRASAD KOIRALA** remains a domineering political personality. His recent statement calling Congressmen to prepare to play the role of opposition has rocked the boat of fierce rebel leader-turned-prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda,' who sees former Koirala's call as a threat to the stability of his government. Koirala, who critics accuse of sacrificing national interests and democratic ideals for the sake of power, is still active in politics. Nepali Congress president and younger brother of late BP Koirala, junior Koirala, who recently moved his residence from the house of his nephew Dr. Shashanka Koirala to another rented but spacious house, does not have his own house. He shifted his place of residence from a room on third storey of Dr. Koirala's residence to ground floor room in a new apartment – because of his health reasons and age. In an exclusive interview he gave to **KESHAB POUDEL** on Sunday morning (September 7) at his rented residence in Maharajgunj where hundreds of his followers were waiting to see him, Koirala talks about his past and future. Excerpts:

**What role will you and your party play in coming days?**

I have already told my central committee members to prepare to play a role of constructive opposition. Nepali Congress needs to show what the role of constructive opposition should be like.

**What do you mean by constructive opposition?**

Our party will not break the iron-railings in the streets (referring to past tendencies of violent opposition street protests) and will not burn the tyre disturbing the lives of common people. Our party will follow the peaceful and legitimate path. We will show the Maoists how a responsible opposition looks like.

**Do you believe that a government, which is led by a party that climbed to power through violent means would feel pressure from peaceful ways?**

I have told you that in the coming days I will try to teach Maoists and other coalition partners that peaceful ways are more effective and powerful.

**Your party was in power almost all the time since the restoration of democracy in 1990. How will you show the presence of Nepali Congress as an opposition?**

We will be visible in the parliament, street and the villages. Whenever the government veers to wrong path, we will oppose it. Whether in the Constituent Assembly or in the streets, you will see our visible presence as an opposition party.

**PM Prachanda recently said that a conspiracy is being hatched to pull down his government indirectly hinting at your recent statement. What do you say?**

Nepali Congress will play the role of a responsible opposition, we will oppose the government's move which is directed against democracy, independence of judiciary, politicization of security forces, bureaucracy and free press. I have not said anything about pulling down the government.

**If that is so, why is Prachanda smelling rat?**

The contradictions within the coalition partners are enough to pull down the government. Nobody needs to hatch any conspiracy against them.

**That means you will not work to destabilize the government now?**

Nepali Congress doesn't need to do that. But, we will not tolerate if the government tries to impose totalitarian system. We will oppose any move against independence of judiciary, free press and fundamental rights of citizens.

**The Constituent Assembly (CA) spent last four months period in making the new government. How do you see the role of CA?**

The role of Constituent Assembly (CA) is to draft the constitution. It is not its job to make or break the government. CA's main responsibility is to write a constitution for federal democratic republic. Now on, CA will concentrate its efforts to write a new constitution.

**You led the whole peace process leading up to CA election and public declaration. But PM Prachanda, in his recent interview, said that his party is committed to write the constitution for People's Republic. What do you say?**

Nepali Congress has a history of waging struggle against all kinds of tyranny including the tyranny of monarch. Nepali Congress will oppose any move of tyranny.

**How easy is it to write a new constitution, when the country's political forces are divided among themselves?**

I made every effort to form the national consensus government but Maoist leaders ignored my plea. Given the geographical position of Nepal, consensus is necessary for its survival and political stability. Had there been a consensus government, it would have been easier to write the constitution and bring about economic development.

**But the Maoists accused that your interpretation of consensus meant you wanted to remain in power?**

My interpretation of consensus was the unity among all political forces. Nepal's



geographical location makes it necessary to have national unity. I have been talking all the time about national unity and reconciliation. I don't care what others say.

**What will you concentrate on now?**

Now, I will concentrate in writing a constitution for the federal democratic republic of Nepal, where there will be guarantee of independence of judiciary, rule of law, free press and freedom of the people. ■

*Had there been a consensus government, it would have been easier to write the constitution and bring about economic development.*



Hariram Yadav's house: Tragic incident

## HUMAN COST OF CONFLICT

# West Side Story

*There violent conflict has taken a heavy toll on human life. People of western Nepal have borne the brunt of the unrest*

By ANAND GURUNG

**T**he decade-long armed conflict in Nepal has left behind indelible scars. The conflict exacted a heavy human cost. Around fifteen thousand lives were lost and many more people were maimed and injured.

Stories of tragedy and trauma are still recalled with undiminished horror by people in several parts of the country. Mid-west region was one of the flashpoints during the insurgency and villages in the region still bear testimony to the brutality of the conflict. The tragedy of Dhallapur is one such story.

Dhallapur is a little village in Mohammedpur VDC of Bardiya district in mid-western Nepal. Like most villages in the Terai plains, it is unbearably hot here during summers and except for paddy fields stretched far and wide there is nothing that would make a traveler remember his visit to the place.

But during the peak of the Maoist insurgency, this sleepy little village was thrust into limelight, as it was witness to one of the most brutal carnage that would haunt the national psyche long after the conflict ended. The locals still bite their tongue whenever they are reminded of the Dhallapur incident in which the Maoists suffered one of the biggest defeats at the hands of the security forces in their decade long war. Official records put the Maoist casualty at 46; but locals say it was much more than that; near about 70. Two Armed Police Force personnel were also killed in the incident and few more injured.

Being one of the most Maoist-affected villages in the whole of Bardiya, the locals were quite used to Maoists coming to their houses asking for food, taking shelter or talking about the sacrifice they may have to make for the people's war. They rarely saw security personnel march through their village

and whenever they saw them coming they became fearful of a possible clash.

The villagers didn't have to wait long for that. February 28, 2005 was like any other day. The cold and foggy winter days [winter is equally treacherous in Terai] were just giving way to spring but life in the village was far from normal. The Maoist cadres had a month ago felled a big Sal tree near the main road so that it acted as a roadblock to prevent vehicles from Nepalgunj to head to district headquarters Gulariya. The villagers were certain of a clash now, as this was a strategy the Maoists used to draw in the security forces in their stronghold and "ambush" them.

So on the day security personnel from the Unified Command had been deployed in the village to clear the roadblock set up by the insurgents and also conduct patrol to check the Maoist activities in the area. At 4 o'clock the fighting started when a patrol team was attacked by the Maoist cadres near the house belonging to Hariram Yadav. There were heavy exchanges of fire and the Armed Police Force personnel, finding themselves outnumbered, ran for covers. Few headed towards Yadav's house for safety with the hail of Maoist gunfire following them. Hariram's 7-year-old son Bijaya was playing at the front of his house when the clash suddenly occurred; so when the Maoists opened fired at the fleeing security forces, he also got hit and immediately fell down. But seeing him still breathing, one security personnel took him in his arms and managed to save the boy by entering the safety of the house. But in the process he himself got fatally shot and died soon after. The firing continued and stray bullets ricocheting from the wall injured four more other members of Hariram's joint family.

However, Bijaya's condition was critical, as he had sustained bullet injuries on his legs, hands and pelvic region. But he couldn't be rushed to the hospital immediately as the fighting was still continuing outside. Only the next day Hariram could call the ambulance and take Bijaya including four other family members who received minor injuries in the clashes to Bheri Zonal hospital.

Among the injured undergoing treatment at the hospital was one Sabitri Raidas, 12, who lived a little way from Hariram's house with her family of five. When the fighting between the security forces and Maoists had started in the main road she was helping her parents out in the fields. She saw a column of security personnel pass through her fields and later few came to her asking for water to drink. Soon after she gave them water and was about to attend to work, suddenly and without any provocation, a security personnel fired at her from behind. The bullet pierced through her right calf and went out from the front, blood gushed out and she immediately fell unconscious. Later her parents found her lying in the ground in a pool of blood. But they too could only take her to the hospital the next day.

However, 13-yr-old Koshan Kumari Yadav's mother from the same village was not so lucky. She had just come to the house from the fields when she heard loud gunfire outside her house. When she peeked out from the window to see what was going on, a stray bullet hit her right on the head. She struggled with life the next day in the hospital bed and on the third day she succumbed to wounds.

After putting the dead bodies of Maoists along with the weapons captured on display for the press, the security forces arrived at the incident site the next day to diffuse the explosives lying scattered at the place. On the third day, Kathmandu papers quoted army officers as saying that life was slowly "limping back to normal" in the village and the residents were returning to "normal routine".

However, when your correspondent reached Dhallapur last week; nearly three and half years after the incident; to talk with the locals, especially the injured, about the clash that took place in their village and know how they were coping with the uncomfortable memory, normal was not the word that came into their mind.

We first went to Hariram Yadav's house. There we met Yadav's wife Phalsara. She called her son Bijaya who was just getting ready for his school. He was now 11-years-old, but very shy and

only answered to our questions when her mother coaxed him to. After some routine questions, I asked him where he had been hit by the bullets; and slowly he pointed at the deep scar on his left hand, hip and, shyly, below his abdomen. Although live bullets had just brushed past his hand and hip, a ricocheting bullet had hit him on his genitals and was stuck there.

Phalsara said that after the doctors in Nepalgunj said that they couldn't take out the piece of the bullet, she had to take her son to Kathmandu for operation. Although the doctors in Kathmandu's Bir Hospital successfully managed to take the shrapnel out, it took Bijaya quite some time to recover from his wounds.

"Even now he gets this burning sensation while urinating," Phalsara spoke for his son, "And as the entire village knows where he was hurt, they say that later when he grows up he would have difficulty in finding a wife for himself."

Ishwori B.K, an activist with Dalit Welfare Organization (DWO) - a partner NGO of Save the Children Alliance which works with the conflict affected children and youth in Bardiya district — said that it has just been few months that these three including other conflict affected children in the village are being given psychosocial care and support and that though notable improvements are yet to be seen, they are confronting the tragedy that befell them rather than trying to run away from it and develop various psychological disorders.

DWO has also been supporting Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups (CAAFAG) in the district, apart from working to ensure children's right to quality education and making schools adhere to the concept of "Schools as Zones of Peace" through pressure groups like child and youth clubs. The NGO has traced 63 "CAAFAG children" in the district till now, giving them psycho social counseling and support in the initial phase and later getting them into some income generation program.

(Courtesy: Nepalnews.com)

## GOVT POLICIES UNVEILED

*President Dr. Rambaran Yadav spelled out the policies and programs of the government amid a gala function held at Constituent Assembly (CA) on Wednesday.*

*For the first time in the history of Nepal, a president instead of King, unveiled the government's policies and programs at the parliament.*

*Earlier the cabinet, Tuesday, had endorsed the government's policies and programs to be presented at the Constituent Assembly.*

*According to government spokesperson and Minister for Information and Communication, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the final policies and programs was endorsed after accommodating 69-point suggestion by Maoists, 50-point suggestion by the UML as well as recommendations put forward by other coalition partners including Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF).*

*The highlights of the text include the resolve to conclude the peace process, write new constitution in two years, sort out the issue of army integration within three to six months, provide relief to the people, among others.*

*It attaches high priority to safeguarding sovereignty and independence of Nepal, institutionalizing federal democratic republic and implementing agreements made in the past with various groups.*

*It also stresses on enhancing ties with India and China, holding dialogue to end violence by armed groups in Terai and kick-starting rapid economic development by building infrastructures like hydropower, road and rail network. ■*

# “The Budget Will Be Important To Find What Economic Programs The New Govt Brings”

-Kunio Senga

After the formation of the three party coalition government led by CPN-Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda,' **KUNIO SENGA**, Director General of the Asian Development Bank's South Asia Department, became the first high level foreign visitor to Nepal. He returned after completing his four-day official visit. Senga met Prime Minister Prachanda, as well as Minister for Finance, Works and Transport, Agriculture, Education, Water Resources, Local Development, and Physical Planning and Reconstruction. He also introduced ADB's new Country Director for Nepal, Barry J. Hitchcock to the Government, media, and other development partners. Mr. Hitchcock assumed his duty in Nepal from the first week of September. Before completing the visit, Senga spoke to **SPOTLIGHT** on various issues. Excerpts:

## **How do you see the strategy of the new government?**

I find the strategy of the new government is quite aligned with what Asian Development Bank has been doing. Our strategy is based on three pillar system. The first pillar is broad based economic growth – essentially economic growth rate should be moderate and also with having impact upon many people particularly those in the rural sector. Second is inclusive social development - possibly benefiting as many people as possible through basic services like education. In this context, the new government also has plans to ensure better access of the people to education and health. Third strategy is the good governance.

## **What are the issues of discussions during your meeting with prime minister?**

During my meetings with the Prime Minister and other senior government

officials, I stressed the importance of staying the course on economic reforms to address poverty and other development challenges as well as achieve higher economic growth crucial for sustained peace and stability.

## **What is your impression about the new government?**

In my view, the government's direction towards economic aspects are 'quite alignment.' What I am yet to understand is their overall priority setting because of what they have gone through on the political scene, that's why my understanding is that the economic development is important to uplift the life of the people. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is committed to scaling up its grant allocation to Nepal in the coming years to help the country meet its development needs in the post conflict transition. Such assistance will largely depend on country performance, mainly in the areas of macroeconomic stability, governance and portfolio performance

## **Do you see any difficult issue that the government is facing?**

There is a difficult political issue like integration of Maoist combatants. This may be more immediate priority of the government. In that sense they would not be able to focus on the economic development. One of the most important tasks is of taking the peace process to a logical conclusion and for the government to focus on economic reform and development agenda.

## **Are you sure they will present the budget focusing on macro-economic stability?**

I am waiting for signal from the government when they present the budget. So, the coming budget will be important to see what economic

programs they will bring - whether they will bring populist budget. Our position will (depend on that). We want to see macro-economic stability. For the past one year or so, secretary of Finance Ministry Rameshwor Khanal has played an important role in generating more revenue. I see there is a very positive sign for generating the revenue.

## **What do you suggest for sustainable economic program?**

If the expenditure side is increasing so high, then you cannot have a sustainable approach. As you know, the ADB worked with a couple of Maoist ministers in the recent past. Minister Hisila Yami and Minister Dev Gurung. Our experience was quite good. As you know, 75 to 80 percent of ADB's budget goes through these two Ministries - Ministry of Works and Physical Planning and Local Development. So, I have been very much encouraged in working with Maoist ministers. Based on our experiences, our relations with them were quite intimate. I know how to cooperate. On that aspect I am quite positive.

## **Do you have any suggestion?**

I would like to request the ministers to keep competent secretaries like acting secretary of Ministry of Local Development and Secretary of Ministry of Works and Physical Planning. We are concentrating now on rural road construction project. We are preparing what we call local governance community development to help the evolution of the power from center to local bodies which should be very important in the context of the federal government system to be adopted. Secretary of Ministry of Works and Physical planning was also extremely helpful and competent. We have worked together in very difficult period of restructuring of the Melamchi project.



Now we are talking about the north-south fast track transport road project. I hope new government will continue with the present secretaries.

**If ADB has had such a good working experience with Maoists, why don't you announce some new programs?**

It is very important for government to give signal about their priority. I have already mentioned that their programs are very much aligned with our programs. We are happy to work with them. But, they have to show their commitment in reality.

**ADB is also supporting West Seti Project. How is that support going to be?**

Under private sector window, we are helping projects to structure the financing part of private sector. Our private sector window invites the private sector entities of the member countries. We are also looking for private sector participation in North South Fast-track project.

**What Nepal needs to do to increase ADB's support substantially?**

We want to scale up our help to Nepal substantially. What is needed is the maintenance of macroeconomic stability and good governance. We want that the money allocated to the country should be used properly to improve the life of targeted population. Nepal needs to improve the performance of the on-going projects. We have good record till now. We focused on the importance of the implementing the ongoing projects. If not, why should we invest more money in other new projects? Again macroeconomic stability, good governance and performance of the ongoing projects are important. These three elements are taken into account very seriously.

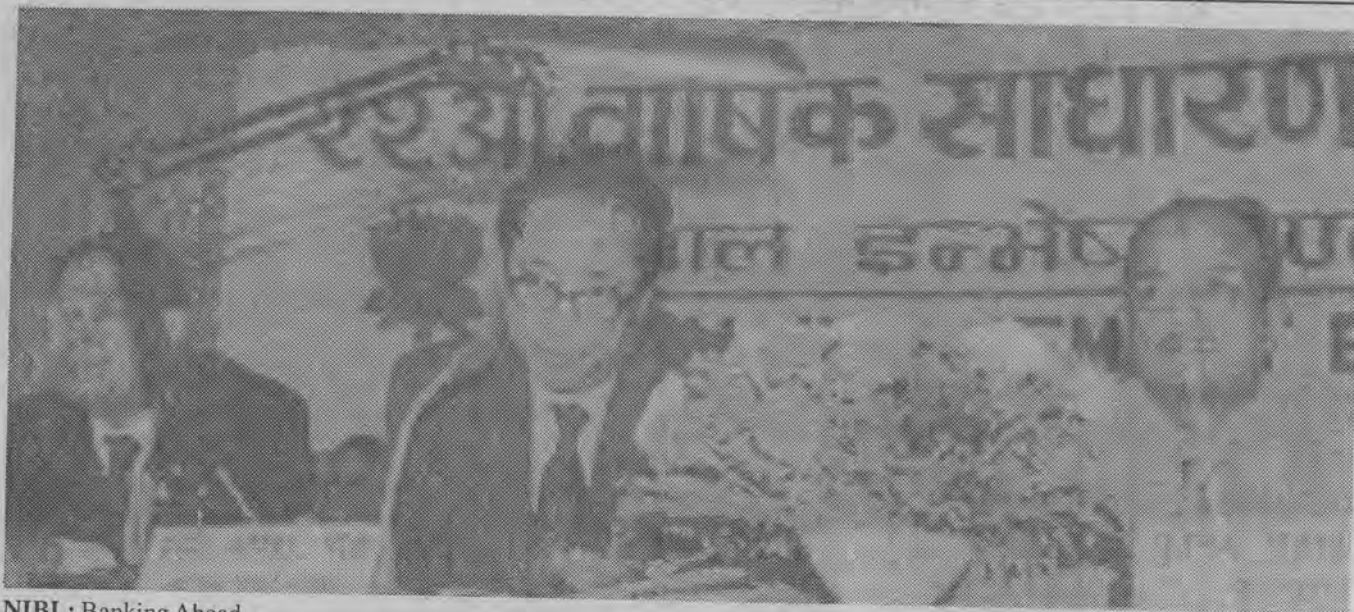
**After meeting with government officials and ministers, what impressions are you taking back?**

I am very pleased about the strategy

and programs of the government but they have not come up with comprehensive indications so far. As far as my discussions with the ministers are concerned, they are satisfactory. But, we are still on wait and watch mood till the new budget comes out.

**What should be the priority of the government?**

The new government was born with the basis of the people's aspirations to bring the welfare aspect by lifting everyone's life because many people in rural areas have suffered so long and so much. So, I don't consider that this is a government that is just based on ideology. This government is reflection of the need to address problems of the common people. For this, they have to encourage private sector participation. Ministers are fully aware about the importance of the private sector participation particularly as an instrument. ■



NIBL: Banking Ahead

NEPAL INVESTMENT BANK Ltd

# Banking Ahead

*Nepal Investment Bank Ltd (NIBL) establishes itself as an efficient commercial bank*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**A**s the Chairman and Chief Executive Director Prithivi Bahadur Pande presented the Board of directors report, balance sheet and profit and losses account for the financial year 2007-2008, there were rejoices among the shareholders gathered at the Bank premises to attend its annual general meeting.

On Saturday (Sep 06), the NIBL held its 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting at Nepal Investment Bank Ltd Durbar Marg. Chairman and Chief Executive Director Pande detailed how the bank had made progress in the last one year. The Bank has made net profit of Rs 697 million - a growth of 39.12 percent over the last year.

For the shareholders, the announcement of bonus share and cash dividend from the profit was most important. The board of directors of the bank have decided to give 3:1 bonus share and 7.5 percent cash dividend from the profit of the fiscal year 2007/08 and 2:1 right share (one share for each 2

shares) on the bank and paid up capital after issuance of bonus share.

The bank has increased its deposits from Rs 24,489 million to Rs 34,452 million in FY 2007-2008 - a growth of 40.68 percent. Similarly, during the year, loans and advances of the bank grew from Rs 17,769 million to Rs 27,529 million (a growth of 54.93 percent) over last year.

Similarly, total investments stood at Rs 6874 million. The non-performing loan of the bank is well within the control at 1.12 percent. The total customer base of the bank as of Asadh end 2065 stands at 165,649.

The bank now has 21 branches with the opening of its Battisputali Branch on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2008, Dhangadhi Branch on 17<sup>th</sup> August and Gongabu branch on 18<sup>th</sup> August. All the new branches of the bank are linked online through any branch banking service to all other branches of the bank and provide complete banking services. NIBL plans to expand its network and have over 50 branches across the country within the next two to three years.

According to press release of the Bank, Afnai Bachat Khata has been extremely successful in growing the client base of the bank and drawing deposits. Under this scheme clients can open a saving account in any branch of the Bank with a minimum balance of Rs 1.00. As of Asadh end, the total clients under this scheme stood at 44,049 with a deposit of over Rs 630 million.

In terms of electronic deliveries, the Bank has issued over 140,000 Visa Electronic Debit Cards to its customers. The Bank has installed 40 numbers of ATMs across the country making the bank the leader in the industry. To provide prompt services to its growing clientele, the bank has created ATM lounge at Durbar Marg, head office by installing 6 new ATMS.

"The bank has recognized its social responsibility and has been contributing to various social and cultural organizations. The bank provided financial support to Pashupati Vidyashram, Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Center, and scholarship to school children for further studies. The bank has also provided financial support for the maintenance and upkeep of various temples and religious sites. NIBL has been supporting Nepal Boxing Association, Cricket Association, All Nepal Lawn Tennis Association, Nepal Golf Association, All Nepal Football Association for the development and promotion of sports in Nepal. As a responsible corporate citizen, NIBL is committed to continue its support as the bank grows," writes press release. ■



“The country will become a failed state if this government is pulled down.”

*Prime Minister and Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' talking to a delegation of journalists.*

“The budget will be highly investment-friendly and growth oriented. It will drive away all kinds of doubts and suspicions that you may have. Never has there been such an investment-friendly environment and never will there be – such will be the new budget.”

*Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, Finance Minister, during interaction with business community.*

Nepal's Prime Minister Prachanda is to visit India shortly. Keeping in mind our past experiences of the Treaty of 1964, I requested the Prime Minister to work on amending it so that India and Nepal could have a win-win situation.”

*Lal Krishna Advani, senior leader of India's main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), telling reporters after his meeting with Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in New Delhi,*

## TRANSITION

**TRANSFERRED:** Secretaries of some ministries, by the government. Home secretary Umesh Mainali has been transferred to the Office of the Prime Minister's and Council of Ministers while Govind Prasad Kusum, Secretary at Ministry of General Administration has been appointed in his place. Likewise, Madhav Poudel and Deependra Thapa have been transferred to Ministry of Law, Justice and Constituent Assembly Affairs and Ministry of General Administration, as secretaries, respectively. Both of them were deputed at PMO earlier. Similarly, Avanindra Kumar Shrestha has been appointed as secretary at the Ministry



*in Press Trust of India (PTI).*

“The security system will be enhanced and total law and order will be established at the soonest.”

*Bamdev Gautam, deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister.*

“We have a nationwide network of our cadres and we will move ahead by correcting the mistake we made during the election to Constituent Assembly to achieve this goal [of being the largest party].”

*Jhal Nath Khanal, UML general secretary, at a discussion programme organised by Ilam-Kathmandu Contact Forum of UML.*

“The Finance Minister has talked about economic growth that should jump like a frog. I can also deliver in a similar way if adequate budget is allocated.”

*Gopal Shakya, the Minister for Youth and Sports, asking at least Rs four billion for his new ministry.*

of Culture and State Restructuring. He was secretary at Cantonment Management Committee. Kulratna Bhurtel has been transferred as Secretary to the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers from Ministry of Law, Justice and CA Affairs.

**RECONSTITUTED:** The committee assigned to oversee the management of Maoist combatants. The committee headed by Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Janardan Sharma will have representatives of the finance, health and physical planning ministries.

**ABOLISHED:** The system of Haliya (land tillers working as indentured laborers) prevalent in mid and far-western Nepal for ages, by the cabinet.

**DECLARED:** State of emergency in the nine VDCs of Sunsari district affected by flood. They include Paschim Kusaha, Sripurjabdi, Haripur, Laukahi, Basantapur, Bhokraha, Dhuski, Madhuban and Narsingh.

**FORMED:** A ministerial team led by Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Bamdev Gautam to coordinate the relief and rehabilitation works in flood affected areas. The team has Defense Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal' and Minister for Physical Planning and Works Bijaya Gachhedra as members.

**RETURNED:** Kunio Senga, Director General of Asian Development Bank (ADB's) South Asia Department, after completing a four-day visit to Nepal.

# True Development Comes Only Out Of Exchange.

-By Pratibha Khanal

How come such a Nepali-like young woman is representing the German institution South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University here in Kathmandu?

This year we are celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations between Germany and Nepal. But as we all know, Germans visiting Nepal really has a much longer history and it is part of my personal life too:

A German lady of 40 years decides to come to Nepal in the year of 1983 and meets my family. She works as a missionary doctor at the Leprosy-Hospital in Pokhara. With the years she became like part of our family and a close friend to us. This way she experienced Nepal and it's society much closer and at many points from the inside-perspective. She was no tourist and neither did she ignore the fact that she was a foreigner.

After 5 years she left for Germany for good, but gave my elder sister and me the opportunity to come to Germany as well. Our father brought us over and waited until all formalities had been cleared, then he came back and we stayed. Thereafter I came home to Nepal on a regular basis, during the summer vacation and later every second year.

Today I am back in my home country after 19 years in Germany. I did my whole schooling there. After the Abitur, I studied Political Science of South Asia and South Asian History at the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg. And today I am here representing this very same institution and hopefully a true representative person for the German-Nepalese relations.

Our aim as a regional branch of the South Asia Institute is to promote the process of cultural and institutional

exchanges between Germany and Nepal. Our goal is to support academic institutions, students and researchers on both sides.

As my foster mother had experienced Nepal from inside out, we want to enable our German scholars to gain this perspective. May it be by internships or fieldworks; the focus lies on to enable regeneration of the experiences over here effectively.

On the other hand we want to serve Nepali scholars and students as informative and counselling institution

us develop in every area of our life and, most importantly, in our own personality.

This means, that if we are willing to give into this two-way development, we might be able to give scholars the opportunity not only to enhance their studies but to learn for life and surely these lessons will enable them to face their future. This way we go beyond the vision of an educational institution to just promote somehow the studying process of these scholars but enable them to gain experiences

---

*At this very point our visions, aims and goals connect, because we all do not only want this country to develop and grow but we want to be part of it and support this process the best we can. At this point we know that this will only be realized when we are able to cooperate with each other. And we might discover that the support of the development of this country can let us develop in every area of our life and, most importantly, in our own personality. This means, that if we are willing to give into this two-way development, we might be able to give scholars the opportunity not only to enhance their studies but to learn for life and surely these lessons will enable them to face their future.*

---

for research or studies related issues in Germany.

For this vision, we as the South Asia Institute know that we can't do this work alone. Therefore, we are grateful to have you and your organizations here with us in Nepal and we are looking forward to working with you on this task ahead of us.

At this very point our visions, aims and goals connect, because we all do not only want this country to develop and grow but we want to be part of it and support this process the best we can. At this point we know that this will only be realized when we are able to cooperate with each other. And we might discover that the support of the development of this country can let

valuable for life. Here we have the chance to mark true success especially for our future generation.

I myself might be a perfect example for being in between two cultural worlds and I have made the decision to see it as a chance for life and my hope is that we will be able, and all of us can and should be a part of this, that other scholars and visitors to Nepal and Germany will find out that true development comes only out of exchange.

*(Excerpts of the remarks made by Resident Representative of University of Heidelberg South Asia Institute, Kathmandu Branch. She made the remarks at the reopening reception of the Kathmandu Branch)*

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