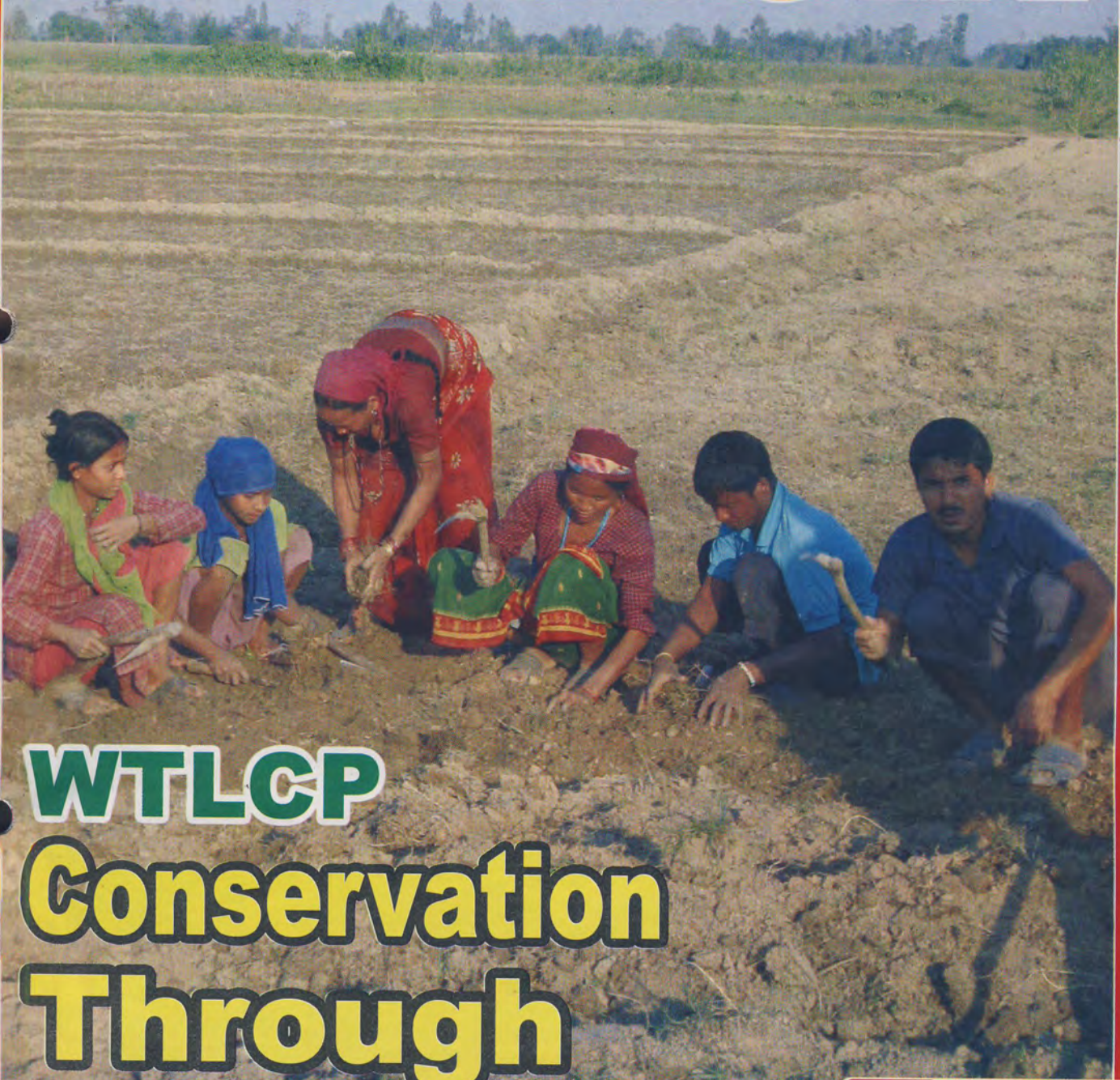


SPOTLIGHT

Dec. 05-11, 2008



WTLC Conservation Through Cooperation

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- GOVT 100 DAYS: Rebel Rousing
- MAOIST POLICY: Redder Shift
- CHINESE FM'S VISIT

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



जीवनका पहिला पलहरू देखिनै बचतको बानी
सुरक्षित भविष्यको लगानी

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SPOTLIGHT

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Terrorism has become a global menace. No country howsoever big or small, rich or poor and mighty or weak can totally avoid terrorism. Even though it may not be easy to pinpoint the origin of terrorism, that the world has been scourged with this plague noticeably after the Second World War and come into fore in recent years cannot be denied. The one conspicuous factor that has promoted this evil and made life miserable for millions around the world lately is the arrogance of the rich and mighty. Nearer home the partition of colonial India in the middle of the twentieth century into two sovereign independent but inimical states of India and Pakistan and the unfair division of Kashmir sowed the seed of terrorism which will be difficult to uproot as long as the problems is not resolved one way or the other. The overwhelming Muslims in Kashmir feel that they were cheated and have been fighting for justice. In this context, it might not be irrelevant to quote Christofer Beaumont who was private secretary to Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the British judge fully responsible to divide India into two states as Chairman of Indo-Pak Border Commission. He has minced no words in blaming Lord Louis Mountbatten, Governor General of undivided India at that time not only for inhuman massacres of thousands of Hindus and Muslims but also for the unjustified resolution of the Kashmir feud. Christofer has written in his memoirs "Mountbatten not only bent the rules but also bent the border in India's favor. He put such a strong pressure on Sir Cyril which was quite difficult for him to resist." As such, it may not be, at all, wrong to say that Kashmiri youths are kept inspired all the time to fight for their rights. Moreover, India's role in the breakaway of Pakistan's eastern wing could never have contributed to cement Indo-Pak relations. Another significant factor that nourishes terrorism in India is the misgivings harbored by the overwhelming Hindu population, politicians and statesmen about the unflinching loyalty of one hundred and forty million Muslims living all over India. Another factor that has vitiated relations between the countries of South Asia has been India's failure to win confidence and good will of her smaller neighbors. Even as far as Nepal is concerned, there is not much room to be optimistic. The ten year long violent struggles the Maoist terrorists launched against their own country from the sanctuary of India had Indian blessings, even cooperation. What has India gained by Nepal's political turmoil and might gain if Nepal disintegrated we don't know. That Nepal's unending political travails for the last three years with a very gloomy future cannot be resolved without India's sincere cooperation needs no emphasis. India must lose no time in using her good offices to stop state terrorism in Nepal. That the leader of the government in power should encourage its former combatants and political workers to practice terrorism and the home minister to stay as a silent spectator speaks volumes about the law and order situation in the country and the prospects of speedy economic development. Even stranger is the disinterestedness shown by the Nepal's friendly countries, donors and well wishers at the unlawful activities being carried on by the Maoist cadres with impunity. Who will stop this state terrorism?

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



Regional Initiative

It was interesting to read the cover story SACOSAN III: Regional Initiative for Sanitation (November 28-December 04, 2008). I agree with you that eight countries of South Asian Region have variations in the level of economic development and geographical size but all the countries have one thing common: their poor sanitation coverage. Despite achieving high economic growth and development, we are yet to be able to provide safe drinking water and sanitation to all our population. The meeting like SACOSAN is right step towards addressing the issues like sanitation.

*Maila Tamang
Via Email*

Shameful Situation

It is shameful, to our political leaders of New Nepal to see such a large percent of population living without sanitation (SACOSAN III: Accepting Sanitation as Human Rights Number 28- December 04). How can they bring change without implementing the program to have basic sanitation facilities for the common people? Although Minister of Physical Planning and Work Bijaya Kumar Gachhedar expressed his strong determination to implement the SACOSAN III resolution, it is yet to see how the government will do it.

*Santosh Nakarmi
Via email*

Enormous Challenge

Despite many political differences among the countries of South Asia, SACOSAN is right regional body to deal with the basic human issues like sanitation. Of course, the region has made enormous progress in economic development. One of the tragedies is

that the countries of the region are yet to provide basic facilities like sanitation to its citizens. Even Mahatma Gandhi stressed that sanitation enhances dignity but the entire nation in the region failed to properly handle the matter. Accepting sanitation as fundamental rights, the leaders of the region tried to correct their past mistakes. This must be taken as a right step towards the right direction. Millions of people living in this region will have basic facilities like toilet in their home.

*Santan Singh
Via email*

Mobilize Community

Of course, Nepal's progress in sanitation is not rosy but Nepal has done certain good things. The mobilization of communities to increase the sanitation coverage is right step. Unfortunately, the country paper failed to mention this important program. In the last few years, Nepal's community organizations have shown that they can really play an important role of social mobilization. The role

played by the community must be recognized.

*Jamuna Karki
Via email*

Discouraging Trend

Just a week after publication of cover story Resurgence of Tourism Industry in Spotlight, Maoist led trade union launched series of activities to discourage the tourists visiting to Nepal. Forcing hotel entrepreneurs by demanding high salary, Nepal's tourism industry has sent a wrong message to the world. Tourism industry is very sensitive industry. If we will not give up our old habit to create noises on all issues, Nepal may face more dire consequences in future. We can increase the number of tourists for certain period but we cannot continue it for long period of time. I would like to request trade unions please allow the industry to move smoothly.

*Subodh Hamal
Jawalakhel, Via Email*

Union Worry

Just after the publication of article in Spotlight about resurgence of tourism industry, Maoist affiliated trade union disrupted the tourism industry by shutting down hotels in Nagarkot. Although Maoist party is in the government, its trade union organizations are working as anti-government forces like in the past fulfilling the interest of inimical forces of Nepal. Otherwise I don't see any reason for them to take such a harsh step to evict the foreigners from hotels. Of course, labors also have right to put forward demands but they must abide by the law and see the interest of their own industry. At a time when global economy is melting down, Nepal needs to take several steps to protect itself. Promoting the tourism industry is the best option.

*Goljying Lama
Boudha Via email*



Koirala Warns NC Could Float A Constitution By Itself

Former prime minister and leader of main opposition Nepali Congress (NC) Girija Prasad Koirala has said that his party would be forced to float a new constitution by itself if the process to write the new constitution continues to be delayed. Talking to reporters in Pokhara, Sunday (Nov 30), Koirala said that though NC is committed to writing new constitution, the Maoists are not serious. He said that if the Maoists block writing of new constitution, NC will write it by itself and float it to the public. He reiterated that the Maoist combatants must not be integrated into national army. They should be managed in other ways, he said. Koirala added that Maoists must dissolve their youth wing YCL before the process of integration and management of armies can begin. *Compiled from reports*

A Nepali Injured In Mumbai Attack: Report

Jagat Khadka, a Nepali working at Leopold café in Mumbai, has been injured during Wednesday's attack, a local newspaper report said. According to 'Nepalnews' daily—a Nepali-language newspaper published from Mumbai—Khadka was hit on his left hand and stomach when an Islamic extremist opened fire at the popular restaurant on Wednesday evening. A resident of Ghoongarkot VDC in far-western district of Achham, Khadka was working as a

security guard at the Café. He has now been discharged after treatment from a local hospital and is recuperating at his house, the newspaper said. A number of Nepalese worked at Hotel Taj Mahal Palace and Hotel Trident Oberoi but there are no reports of Nepalese casualty other than Khadka, reports said. A Nepali chef, Purushottam Basyal, who worked at the Taj was able to survive after hiding at the basement of the hotel on Wednesday night. He was later rescued by security personnel. The blatant attacks have left at least 160 people dead in Mumbai, the financial capital of India. *Compiled from reports*

British Army Chief Arrives, Chinese FM To Visit Nepal

The British Army's Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Richard Dannatt arrived in Nepal on Nov 28 for four day visit. General Dannatt is here to see British Gurkhas Nepal's recruit selection process and to be briefed on its supporting activities, the British Embassy in Kathmandu said in a statement Thursday. This will be General Dannatt's first visit to Nepal during his tenure as the professional head of the British Army. He met with General Rookmangud Katawal, chief of Nepali Army (NA) and also called on president, prime minister and defense minister. Meanwhile, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jeyichi is arriving in Nepal Tuesday (Dec 2) on a 4-day visit. During his stay in Nepal, the Chinese foreign minister will meet President Dr Ram Baran Yadav, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, political leaders of major political parties and top government officials, according to the spokesperson of Chinese Foreign Ministry. Although the agenda of the visit is known yet, the visit by a high profile Chinese leader a week after a visit made by Indian foreign minister is viewed meaningfully. After finishing his visit, the Chinese FM will fly to Myanmar. *Compiled from reports*

Commercial Banks' Deposit Increases By 22 PC

Nepali commercial banks have been able to collect 22 percent more deposit during the first quarter of this fiscal year (FY) than they did in the same period

last year, according to media reports. "The deposits accumulated by some 25 commercial banks during the period in the country stands at Rs 450 billion whereas the same amount collected in the corresponding period of the last year was to the tune of Rs 351 billion," the reports quoted a press communiqué issue by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) as saying. It is also learnt that the deposit figures for the first quarter of the FY 2008/09 also included Rs 37.59 in foreign currency and the remaining sum in domestic currency. In a linear fashion, collective loans and advances of the commercial banks saw an upward spiral by 25.5 percent during the first quarter of the current FY. "The 25 commercial banks collected loans and advances amounted to Rs 321 billion against Rs 239 billion recorded in last FY's first quarter," relate the sources. *Compiled from reports*

NC Will Wage Agitation If Seized Properties Not Returned Right Away: Deuba

Senior Nepali Congress (NC) leader Sher Bahadur Deuba has warned that his party will launch agitations if the Maoists do not return the properties they had seized during the decade-long insurgency. Addressing NC supporters in Dang, who have been staging Satyagraha (resistance movement) demanding return of seized properties, on Wednesday, Deuba said the NC "will not remain silent" if Prime Minister and Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal's assurance to return all the captured lands and other properties is not executed right away. The Maoists, according to the NC leader, have not shown intention to give the properties back to the real owners. Dozens of families in Dang whose lands were captured by the Maoists have been staging Satyagraha for some days now. The Maoists had captured some 2500 bigha land owned by 270 families in the district. *Compiled from reports*

NRB To Discourage Investment On Real Estate

The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) plans to tighten monetary policy discouraging financial institutions to make further investment in real estate without investigating risks. The initiatives come

after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) commented that loose monetary policy of Nepal has some contribution to boost real estate prices, adding the decline in their prices would invite negative impact on the investors. Acting Governor Krishna Bahadur Manandhar has said that NRB had increased 'risk weight' provisioning to 150 percent in the real estate sector against 100 percent in other sectors. He further said increased cash reserve ratio (CRR) to 5.5 percent from 5 percent was meant to discourage banks and financial institutions from investing in high risk ventures. *The Kathmandu Post daily reports*

SEBON Chief Resigns

Accusing the government of ignoring the deteriorating situation in securities market, chairman of Securities Board of Nepal (SEBON), Dr Chiranjibi Nepal, has resigned from his post. He accused the government of indifference towards introducing necessary laws to bail out the plunging capital market. "From its value worth 60 percent of GDP, the capital market has already come down to 40 percent of GDP. But there is no seriousness on the part of the government," he said, addressing a press meet, Wednesday. "In India, the Finance Minister holds daily briefing with securities market chief," he said, adding that nothing like that happens here. He also criticized the government decision to impose capital gain tax and sundry other taxes discouraging share investors. "Even a minister goes around saying that securities market is just like gambling," he accused. Nepal in his resignation letter said the government did not cooperate with the Board in better managing the financial market and it showed sheer indifference at a time when it is required to come up with necessary measures. He said the actions of the government have discouraged the investors. The SEBON chairman's resignation comes in the wake of a continuous downward spiral of NEPSE (Nepal Stock Exchange) index. On Tuesday alone, the benchmark index of NEPSE (Nepal Stock Exchange)

nosedived by 27.66 points or 3.81 percent to close at 698.81 points. Nepal was appointed as chairman of SEBON, the regulatory body of the country's financial market, for a four-year term a year ago. *Compiled from reports*

Downward Spiral In NEPSE Continues

The benchmark index of NEPSE (Nepal Stock Exchange) on Tuesday (Nov 25) nosedived by 27.66 points or 3.81 percent to close at 698.81 points, according to media reports. The indices of all sub-groups declined sharply thus resulting in a reduction of market capitalization to Rs 371 billion. When the country's sole secondary market closed on Monday the market capitalization stood at Rs 385.9 billion. Thirty seven of the 47 companies whose shares were traded on Tuesday suffered the drop of the prices of their shares. Nepal telecom shares saw a downward spiral of 8.47 percent to close at a historic low of Rs 540. In a linear fashion, the banking sector suffered a sharp decline of 22.53 points or 3.18 percent to respire at 686.91. The group index of the hydropower sector also went down by 13.33 points to 860.81. Meanwhile, finance companies and insurance companies saw a marginal drop of 2.68 and 3.8 points respectively. Market analysts ascribed the decline to various banks and financial institutions announcing bonus shares and rights issues. *Compiled from reports*

CAN Info Tech 2009 In The Offing

With the slogan 'ICT Milestone for New Nepal', Computer Association of Nepal (CAN) is organizing CAN InfoTech 2009 from January 14-19 at Bhrikuti Mandap. According to the organizers, the six-day event will evoke participation of scores of different organizations, national and international companies. CAN expects around 3.5 lakh visitors to the event which will have around 188 stalls. The CAN InfoTech seminar on January 15-16 will be held at Rastriya Sabha Griha. According to CAN,

representatives from Asian Oceanian Computing Industry Organization (ASCOCIO) and World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) will also participate in the event. The event will comprise presentations on infrastructure development of information technology and communication, e-commerce, bio-informatics, leadership in electronic work and e-governance. CAN has been holding the yearly info tech since as far back as 1994. *The Himalayan Times daily reports*

PM Cannot Speak Against Democracy: Koirala

Nepali Congress president Girija Prasad Koirala has criticized the



statement by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal that Maoists would not accept parliamentary form of democracy in Nepal. Inaugurating a seminar on Thursday (Nov 27) in Kathmandu organized by Nepal Democratic Lawyers Association, Koirala said Dahal cannot by ethics speak against parliamentary democracy since he was elected through popular votes. He sought assistance from lawyers in strengthening the democratic institutions in the country and chalking out sketches for the kind of federalism that Nepal should adopt. Koirala stressed on the need to divide the nation into states based on geography with Nepali peculiarities but said his party needs suggestions and recommendations from law experts on the subject. *Compiled from reports* ■



Nepal Army Chief General Rookmangud Katwal meeting with British Army Chief General Dannatt

THE NATIONAL LAND RIGHTS FORUM, a pressure group of landless people around the country, has agreed to stop its agitation after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal gave his commitment to address its demands. During a meeting with the representatives of the Forum Saturday (Nov 29), PM Dahal assured that the government would form a high-level Land Commission, which is the main demand of the landless people, within two weeks. The PM also assured that the landless people would be represented in the high-level commission that will devise policies on land ownership as well as distribution of land to the landless farmers, freed Kamaiyas and Haliyas. Landless people have been staging dharna (sit-in protest) at Khula Manch in Kathmandu for a week now, demanding state guarantee of land ownership to all the landless people in the country. They have also demanded immediate scrapping of the Land Act 2021 B.S. Later in the afternoon, Minister for Information and Communication Krishna Bahadur Mahara and Baldev Ram, the chairman of the Forum, signed an agreement which charts the commitment made by the Prime Minister. In the agreement, the government has assured of land ownership to landless farmers. After signing the agreement with the government the Forum announced withdrawal its ongoing protest programs.

THE SUPREME COURT (SC) HAS ASKED THE government to introduce a separate act to manage dance and cabin restaurants and has issued its 16-point guideline for the time being till the drafting of such law. The SC bench comprising judges Balram KC and Kalyan Shrestha issued the guideline, which states that the dance bar, cabin restaurants, and massage parlors be allowed to operate after being registered with District Administration Office. The SC has said that it needed to bring the guideline to protect the interest of workers of those restaurants especially the women. The guideline prohibits exploitation, particularly the sexual exploitation, of the workers. The SC has said that since the right to work cannot be violated, it is

the duty of the government to regularize, and manage such workplaces. The apex court has said that since there are over 1200 dance and cabin restaurants where over 50,000 people work, the government needs to bring out necessary law. The SC issued the guideline in response to a writ petition filed by advocate Prakash Mani Sharma of Pro Public.

NEPAL CONDEMNED THE TERRORIST ATTACKS in the Indian city of Mumbai that killed around 195 people and left over 300 hundred injured in one of the worst coordinated attacks on India's commercial centre in recent memory. "We strongly condemn this cowardly attack and the killing of the innocent peoples," President Dr Ram Baran Yadav said in a message to his Indian counterpart

Prativa Patil Thursday (Nov 27). He also extended his deepest condolence to the families of those who were indiscriminately in this attack. Similarly, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal said in another message issued Thursday, "These attacks, directed against innocent people and to terrorize the industrial and commercial centre of India, deserve unequivocal condemnation from all over the world." In the message issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), PM Dahal further said that the government and people of Nepal "unreservedly deplore in strongest terms these cowardly terrorist attacks" and expresses "full solidarity with the government and people of India at this hour of distress".

THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS URGED the government to adopt necessary measures to ensure an investment-friendly environment to attract investment in the hydropower sector, according to media reports. Speaking during a hydropower symposium titled "Vision 2020: A Vision for Hydropower Growth" organized by Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), its president Kush Kumar Joshi said, "The government has highly prioritized the hydropower sector in its plans and policies. But, it is mandatory for it to come up with concentrated measures to propel the potential investors to invest in the sector." Other participants of the symposium were also of the view that the concerned authorities lack focused and well-defined vision on how to achieve its goal of generating 10,000 MW of power within the next ten years. Nevertheless, the high level government officials informed that the government is well on its way to harness the hydropower sector by bringing greater efficiency in the process of issuing license for the hydropower related projects. It is learnt that the government has already issued license for some projects to produce about 13,000 MW. ■

HOW OVERAMBITIOUS SUEZ CANAL PROJECT RUINED EGYPT

Dr. AB Thapa

The history of the construction of the Suez Canal in the 19th century provides a glaring example how the Egypt's economy was totally devastated. Government was declared bankrupt. Foreign intervention finally compelled Egypt to relinquish sovereignty. On the contrary the financing country the Great Britain enormously profited from the Suez Canal project. Thus, implementation of overambitious water resources development project without fully studying the financial, technical, environmental and all other relevant implications can be catastrophic for a country like Nepal.

Old Canal

The Isthmus of Suez so obviously provided a short sea route from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean and beyond as against the sea voyage around Africa that a canal was dug in antiquity. The first canal between the Nile River delta and the Red Sea was excavated about the 13th century BC, possibly at the time of Egyptian ruler, either Seti I or Ramses II. For long periods of time during the next 1000 years the canal was neglected, but several rulers at various times had it re-excavated or modified. All efforts to maintain it in good condition were finally abandoned in the 8th century AD. From time to time thereafter various proposals to dig a canal across the Isthmus of Suez were advanced, but no action was taken.

New Suez Canal

In 1854 the French diplomat and engineer Vicomte

Ferdinand Marie de Lesseps succeeded in arousing the interest of the Egyptian ruler Said Pasha in the Suez Canal project. Egyptian ruler authorized to construct the Suez Canal. The construction of the canal started in 1859 and ended in 1869.

Canal Alignment

Suez Canal is an artificial waterway running north to south across the Isthmus of Suez in northeastern Egypt. It connects the Mediterranean Sea with the Gulf of Suez, an arm of the Red Sea. The canal provides a shortcut for ships operating between both European and American ports and ports located in southern Asia,

On the contrary the financing country the Great Britain enormously profited from the Suez Canal project. Thus, implementation of overambitious water resources development project without fully studying the financial, technical, environmental and all other relevant implications can be catastrophic for a country like Nepal.

eastern Africa, and Oceania. It is one of the world's most heavily used shipping lanes. The Suez Canal is 195 km long. The minimum bottom width of the channel is 60 m and ships of 16 m draft can make the transit. After it was opened to navigation in 1869, initially the Suez Canal measured only 8 m deep, 22 m wide at the bottom, and 70 m wide at the surface.

Suez Canal can accommodate ships as large as 150,000 dead weight tons fully loaded. It has no locks, because the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Suez have roughly the same water level. The canal utilizes

three bodies of water – Lake Manzilah, Lake Timsâh, and the Bitter Lakes (the latter is actually one continuous body of water) – and is not the shortest distance across the isthmus. Most of the canal is limited to a single lane of traffic, but at several places passing bays exist, and two-lane bypasses are located in the Bitter Lakes and between Al Qanbarah and Ismailia. The Suez Canal is an open cut, without locks,

Construction of the Canal

In 1858 La Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez (Universal Company of the Maritime Suez Canal) was formed with authority to cut a canal and to operate it for 99 years, after which ownership would return to the Egyptian government. The company was originally a private

Egyptian concern, its stock owned chiefly by French and Egyptian interests. In 1875 the British government purchased Egypt's shares.

Construction began in 1859 and took 10 years instead of the 6 that had been envisaged. Climatic

difficulties, a cholera epidemic in 1865, and early labour troubles all slowed down operations. An initial project was the cutting of a small canal.

At first, digging was done by hand with picks and baskets, peasants being drafted as forced labour. Later, dredgers and steam shovels operated by European labourers took over, and, as dredging proved cheaper than dry excavation, the terrain was artificially flooded and dredged wherever possible. Other than in the few areas where rock strata were met, the entire canal was driven through sand or alluvium. In August 1869 the waterway was completed, and it was officially opened with an elaborate ceremony in November.

Egypt was Declared Bankrupt

Construction of Suez Canal became too heavy financial burden on Egypt. Economic conditions quickly

deteriorated forcing Egypt to borrow from foreign creditors to finance the project. To stave off economic crisis, the government adopted drastic measures such as collecting taxes in advance, selling its shares in the company that operated the Suez Canal, and finally declaring bankruptcy. Egypt's inability to pay back its loans led to the appointment of foreign debt commissioners to monitor Egypt's finances in 1876, the inclusion of British and French ministers in Egypt's cabinet in 1878, and finally the forced abdication of ruler in 1879. Under European pressure, a new ruler was installed who cooperated with Egypt's foreign creditors.

Great Jubilation

Completion of the construction of the Suez Canal in 1869 had been marked with a great jubilation among

In 1875, financial troubles compelled the Egyptian ruler to sell his holding, which was at once bought by the British government. Until that year the shares had remained below their issue price of 500 francs each. With the British purchase (at 568 francs each) quick appreciation took place.

the western power countries while the Egypt was slowly sinking into deep financial crisis. Verdi, Giuseppe (1813-1901), Italian operatic composer, whose works stand among the greatest in the history of Italian opera. Aïda (1871), perhaps Verdi's most popular opera based on Egyptian story of ancient pharaoh period, was specially commissioned to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal. It was first performed in Cairo.

The Winner

In 1875, financial troubles compelled the Egyptian ruler to sell his holding, which was at once bought by the British government. Until that year the shares had remained below their issue price of 500 francs each. With the British purchase (at 568 francs each) quick appreciation took place. The share value shot up to more than 3,600 francs. ■



Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and Nepalese Foreign Minister (Left) at TIA : Security concern

NEIGHBOURS

Insecurity Concerns

Nepal's big neighbours have common interests but different objectives in their small backyards

By SUSHIL SHARMA

"India meets China in Nepal", wrote veteran Indian journalist Girilal Jain several years ago.

The global cold war was at its peak when the Jain masterpiece hit the bookstall.

Much water has flowed down the Bagmati, Hwang ho and Ganges since then.

From warring parties over the Himalayan borders in the early sixties, they are today partners in an unprecedented economic boom.

But, as the two one-billion plus nations march towards becoming global powers, the mutual rivalry has a potential to assume a much larger dimension. And the implications, specially for the

neighbours like Nepal, much graver than before.

No wonder, analysts are tempted to see a link between the subsequent high-profile visits from the two giants.

Security concerns topped the agenda of the Indian external affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee when he came a visiting last week for what the officials said was a "goodwill" visit.

"The porous Nepal border" has always been high on the agenda of Delhi. Especially for its security vis-à-vis terrorist activities.

His Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi's priority was no different during his "routine" sojourn in Kathmandu this week.

"The porous Nepal border" has, coincidentally, been a concern for China as well. Also for security vis-à-vis Tibet.

If India sees Pakistan-based anti-Indian militants trying to take advantage of the "porous border" to create troubles from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, China suspects the same border being used by the India-based Tibetan militants to "undermine the Chinese nation".

Both have a security stake in Nepal. It has increased as instability and chaos threaten to mar Nepal's political transition and peace process.

Clearly, the recent visits by the foreign ministers of the two countries underscore their security concerns.

Both have a common interest in a peaceful and stable Nepal – but on their own terms which are definitely not common.

Common interests but contradictory objectives of the two powers do normally turn their small neighbour into a big trouble-spot.

That explains why political instability continues to plague Nepal even today. From the time Girilal Jain wrote the famous book to this day of a republican regime in Kathmandu. ■



PM Dahal: Difficult time.

POLITICS

Rebel Riders

The first hundred days of the Maoist-led government does not inspire the people

By SANJAYADHAKAL

The most telling analysis of the first hundred days in office of the Maoist-led government has come from none other than the rebel-leader-turned Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' himself.

"I am finding tougher to overcome the traditional nexus of corrupt and miscreants than fighting the people's war," he said recently at a function organized by Administrative Court.

He has also been directly and indirectly been hinting of the failure of his government to meet the aspirations of the people.

"I am the Prime Minister. But I get frustrated sometimes by the failure to deliver. I have not yet been able to form a commission on Disappeared Persons. This or that tangle, technicality and/or bureaucratism has blocked this process," he said at the Constituent Assembly recently.

The first hundred days of the Maoist-led government has not witnessed the beginning of the process of writing the

new constitution. The PM made quite a few foreign visits during this period.

On the internal security front, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister and a firebrand leader of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Bamdev Gautam took a number of measures from restricting the time of opening the dance bars and cabin restaurants to evicting footpath vendors as well as imposing restrictions on open sales/distributions of alcohol.

He has claimed that the security has improved a lot in this period. However, the gruesome killing of two youths Nirmal Panta and Pushkar Dangol allegedly by Maoist-affiliated YCL cadres followed by even more grisly murder of two kids Ashish Manandhar and Ritesh Rauniyar, which triggered protest demonstrations has been a blow to DPM Gautam's tall claims.

The killings and abductions in Terai districts have also continued unabated. Just on Saturday (Nov 29), a gang of three motorcyclists opened fire at a

policeman on duty in Janakpur.

The peace talks with the Terai armed gangs have not taken off. Although the government has formed a committee headed by former Maoist commander and current Peace Minister Janardan Sharma, the talks have not yet started.

On the economic front, the government has glossed over the increased revenue collection, which is necessary to meet the ambitious revenue target this year.

However, the sporadic but sustained bandhs in industries by Maoist-affiliated workers have hampered the government's aims to bring in more investment.

The recent incidents of closures at Hetauda industrial estate, return of Colgate Palmolive, shut down of Manakamana cable car are some of the indications of worrisome trend.

The private sector has expressed extreme anxiety over the government's flip flop policies.

However, upon the completion of the hundred days in office, the government did come up with a report congratulating itself for its 'achievements.'

The government actually unveiled a 40-page 'progress report' of its initial 100 days in action. The report said the coalition government made significant achievements in a number of areas during the honeymoon period including foreign relations and revenue collection.

According to the report, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's foreign trips and the successive visits of high-level foreign delegations to Nepal were very important in improving the country's foreign relations.

Unveiling the report amid a press conference in the capital, Information and Communication Minister and government spokesperson, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, said the government had to work more on institutionalizing the recent political changes in the country rather than on the day-to-day problems of the people. Saying that the budget review process took unnecessary long time, Mahara said the government would concentrate more on development works in the coming days.

He also informed that new policy on internal security and defense would be introduced very soon. ■



Nepal-India Border : Surprise Surge

ECONOMY

Surprise Surge

The exports have registered a handsome surge in the first quarter of the current fiscal year

By A CORRESPONDENT

Exports have surged six-fold while imports more than doubled in the first quarter (Q1) of the current fiscal year in comparison to the same period the last fiscal year, The Himalayan Times daily has reported quoting a report by the central bank.

In the first three months of 2008-09 fiscal, exports went up by 27.1 per cent in comparison to a rise of just 4.3 per cent in the corresponding period for the previous year, according to the first quarter report of the Nepal Rastra Bank

(NRB), the central bank.

At the same time, total imports also increased by 30.6 per cent in the same period in comparison to a lower increase of 13.1 per cent in the Q1 of last fiscal year. "Of the total exports, export to India increased by 10.1 per cent in comparison to an increase of 0.6 per cent in the same period last fiscal year. Exports to other countries also soared by 58.3 per cent compared to an increase of 11.9 per cent in the same period of the previous year," said the report 'Recent Macroeconomic Situation' based on Q1.

The report attributes the rise in exports to India to the upsurge in exports of readymade garments, shoes and sandals, polyester yarn, copper wire, rod and GI pipe. Likewise, the rise in exports to other countries was ascribed to the upsurge in exports of pulses, woolen carpets, pashmina, herbs and tanned hides.

Meanwhile, imports from India augmented by 19.3 per cent in the review period compared to a growth of 13.7 per cent in the corresponding period the last fiscal year. Imports from other countries expanded by 48.5 per cent compared to just 12.1 per cent last fiscal, said NRB. An increase in the import of petroleum products, vehicles & spare parts, cold-rolled sheet in coil, hot-rolled sheet in coil and cement, among others, from India and gold, MS billet, telecommunication equipment & parts, computer & parts and polythene granules, among others, from other countries led to the surge in imports in Q1.

Overall Balance of Payment (BoP) recorded a surplus of Rs 7.7 billion in the first three months of this fiscal year in contrast to a deficit of Rs 5.6 billion in the same period last fiscal. According to the central bank, the current account also posted a surplus of Rs 8.8 billion in the period as against a deficit of Rs 6.6 billion in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year. Such current account surplus was primarily attributed to the surge in net transfers by 75.5 per cent in the first three months. Under transfers, workers' remittances soared by 80.7 per cent compared to a growth of 17.2 per cent in the period last fiscal.

Gross foreign exchange reserves stood at Rs 230.8 billion by mid-October, an upsurge by 8.5 per cent compared to the level as in mid-July 2008. Such reserves had gone down by 4.1 per cent in the same period of the preceding year. However, in terms of the US dollar, gross foreign exchange reserves declined by 3.9 per cent to \$3 billion in mid-October. In the same period the previous year, such reserves had gone down by 1.6 per cent. The current reserves are adequate for financing merchandise imports for 10.1 months and merchandise and service imports for eight months. ■

WTLCPP

Balancing Conservation

And

Livelihood

At a time when Nepal's major protected areas and their natural surroundings are under constant threat of conflict and encroachment, the Western Terai Landscape Complex Project (WTLCPP) has shown a way to manage the landscape by bringing all the stakeholders together in managing them. With the empowerment of local communities through alternative livelihood programs and promoting the conservation, the project has already introduced various schemes for sustainable, biodiversity friendly natural resources and land use management system. As Nepal has made enormous progress in the protected areas resources management in the last decades, challenge for WTLCPP now is balancing between the conservation and livelihood

KESHABPOUDEL
in Kanchanpur,

For Dev Ram Koirala, 45, a resident of Shivapur Village Development Committee of Bardiya National Park, life is easier now. In the past, they relied on the forest of Bardiya National Park for their daily livelihood and their cattle used to graze inside the park. But the wild animals like elephants, boars and rhinos used to come to their fields for grazing. This prompted conflict between the people and wildlife in protected areas.

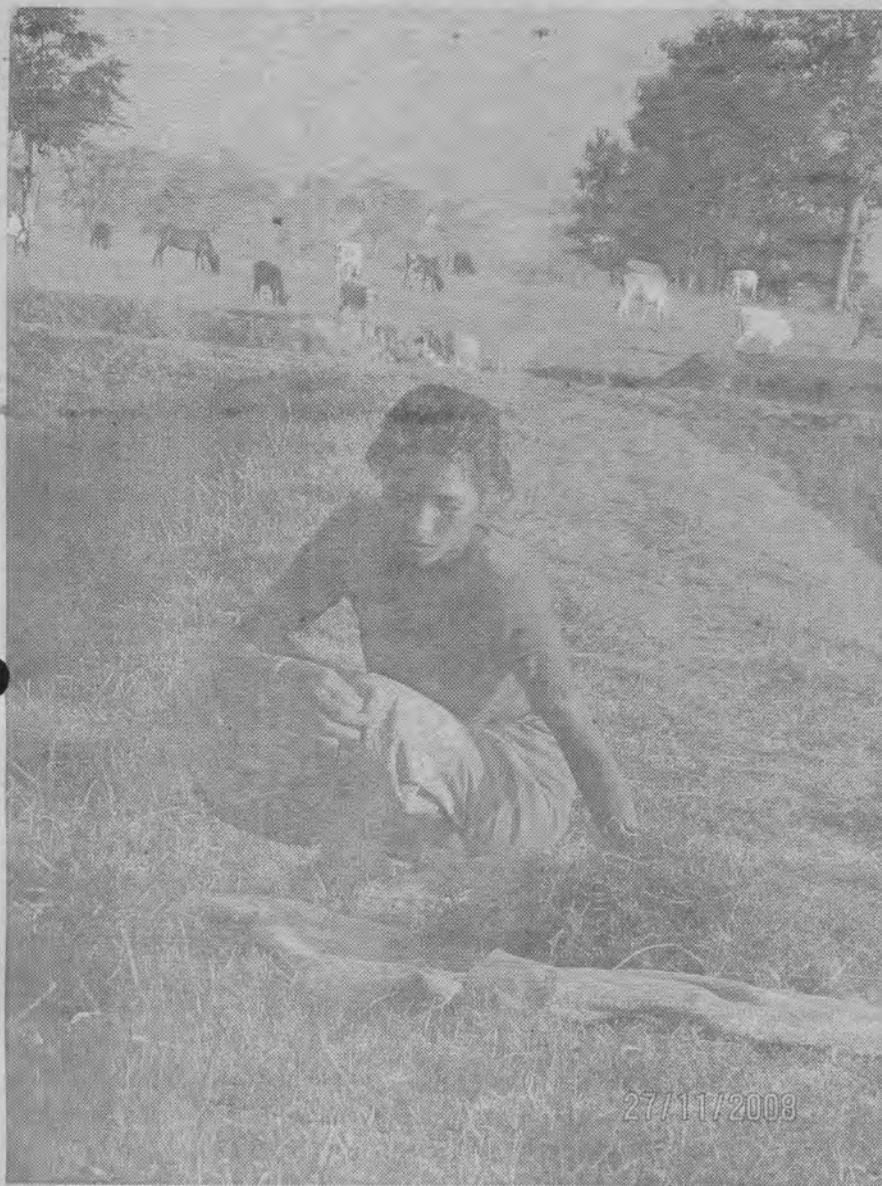
As the focus was given more on

conservation, the issues of livelihood of surrounding areas was undermined. Though introduction of buffer zone management reduced the tensions and gave some role to local community, the question of landscape management remained unresolved as what was lacking was balanced approach between conservation and livelihood.

Amid this gap, the WTLCPP was introduced as it focused its attention on the use of landscape of terai for the

betterment of livelihood of local population and conservation of resources of protected areas.

With the implementation of WTLCPP in 2006, local people have felt different situation and are gradually becoming convinced that the conservation of natural resources and betterment of their livelihood can go side by side. Working from behind, WTLCPP encourages other stakeholders in the districts including National Parks, District Forest Officers, District Development Office, civil society



A Tharu Woman in Bardia: Conservation for livelihood

members, community forest user groups of buffer zones and other stakeholders to take a lead role.

"It was very difficult for us to survive till few years ago because of terror of wildlife and negligence of human settlement by officials. Now the situation has somehow changed. The electric fence has virtually stopped the destruction of our crops by wild elephants, the bio-gas, improved stoves and use of solar light reduced our dependency on forest. Finally, the income generating activities offered us better alternative livelihood," said Koirala. "As villagers like me get a lot of benefits, we come to realize that national park is here

to benefit us. People think that the protected areas and conservation of natural resources are also for them. Of course, there are still certain conflicts but people have now sense of ownership."

Along with Koirala, more than 150,000 people of 52 Village Development Committees of three districts in western Nepal in Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur have obtained better alternatives for their livelihood due to cost of conservation of bio-diversity in protected areas.

Hareram Tharu, chairman of black buck protection committee of Khairapur Village Development Committee of Bardiya has reason to rejoice as the WTLCP supported to build two fishing

ponds in return for their role in protection of black buck. Khairapur is the only remaining habitat of black buck. "As we are given alternative livelihood programs constructing fishing ponds and technology for vegetable farming, we are able to maximize our income. This is possible because of conservation of black buck," said Chaudhari. "With the completion of fishing pond under WTLCP, we are now spending our time to protect black buck," said Chaudhari.

Like Hareram, whose crops used to be destroyed by black bucks, 86 groups of 43 localities surrounding Khairapur are engaged in alternative income generating activities. As they have built fishing ponds and other alternative crops, they need not worry about the destruction of crops by black buck. "As local people actively take part in the conservation, the number of black bucks has jumped from merely dozens to over two hundred now," said Asok Prasad Ojha, field manager, WTLCP. "For instance, we have already completed 10 kilometre electric fencing in the areas of Betani to Motipur. Similarly, the 13 kilometre electric fencing was completed in Rajapur."

For a long time, people living in surroundings of protected areas had complained as they had conflicts with the wildlife which usually attacked their means of livelihood. As they didn't have other alternatives other than farming, people lived without any sense of conservation and they sent their cattle inside the park and felled trees for fuel.

"The Bardiya National Park used to receive hundreds of complaints from Thakurdhara and Shivapur VDCs regarding the loss of crops by wild elephants. After electric fencing, there is virtually no complaining this year. We are planning to fence more areas in coming years with the support from WTLCP," said Ramesh Thapa, assistant conservation officer of Bardiya National Park.

Till a few years back whenever people saw black bucks grazing in their fields, they usually attacked but now the situation has changed "We were tired to



Pond Inside Shuklaphata in Kanchanpur : Water to wildlife.

see the black bucks often grazing in our land destroying our crops. After construction of ponds and introduction of alternative agriculture, we need not worry," said Purna Bahadur Chaudhari. "By protecting black bucks and their habitats, we are getting better alternatives for livelihood."

Parbati Chaudhari of Shivapur Village Development Committee of Bardiya district adjoining the Bardiya National Park has similar story to tell. With the seed money given by WTLCP through a local cooperative, Chaudhary brought broiler chicken. "I have already made profit of Rs.20,000 (US\$ 250) just in last two months," said Chaudhari. "This alternatives livelihood helped me make money by conserving the forest."

The WTLCP has divided the population under four categories: rich, middle class, marginalized and lower

marginalized on the basis of their income. Those whose income is lower than \$ 1 a day are under the lower marginalized community. As this class of population does not have anything, they are most. When WTLCP introduced schemes including collective farming under agro-forestry program in newly planted areas of buffer zone, providing loan to buy rickshaws, and so on, there was change in overall status of livelihood. These lower marginalized groups now have better income.

The villagers of Bichuwa Village Development Committee of Southern part of Kanchanpur district have made enormous progress in the last two years. In a land in buffer zone of Jhil Jhila Phanta, the local population are now growing herbal crops as an alternative to maximize the income livelihood. In 266 hectare lands bordering with India, 50

households of Bichuwa Village have already planted various herbal aromatic plants like Lemon Grass, Palmarosa and Chamomile, Mentha and Frech Basil

As Chaudhary Biosys has already agreed to buy the products, people don't have to face the market problems. "We are providing technical support to the villagers and we will buy their products," said Technical advisor Loknath Pathak, who is stationed in the area.

As a buffer zone of Shuklaphanta reserve and corridor to Dudwa National Park of India, and Shuklaphanta, this area used to be more vulnerable to poaching.

Under a trans-boundary conservation program, the people living in Nepal side and across the border regularly conduct joint operation. "The farming of herbs help in increasing the income and gives alternative sources for livelihood," said Shivaraj Adhikari, chairman of

Khageshowri Forest User Group. "Our people along with the residents from Indian side are regularly monitoring wildlife movement. Since we were given this area to make the buffer zone, it is our duty to make money and plant the trees."

At a time when the low marginalized population living in the areas don't have any alternative to their livelihood, they don't feel any attachment with the protected areas and conservation becomes nobody's concern.

"Frankly speaking, we were in the receiving end in the past. The wild elephants and rhinos often destroyed our crops and many other species came to graze in our land. Some time many villagers had empty field," said Ram Dutta Bhatta, chairman Bageshowri Forest User Group Jadibudi. "This year our committee was also registered by warden Gopal Prasad Upadhaya and we have been legally recognized."

Along with conservation the WTLCP has been concentrating to provide alternative livelihood programs to the community expecting support in conservation.

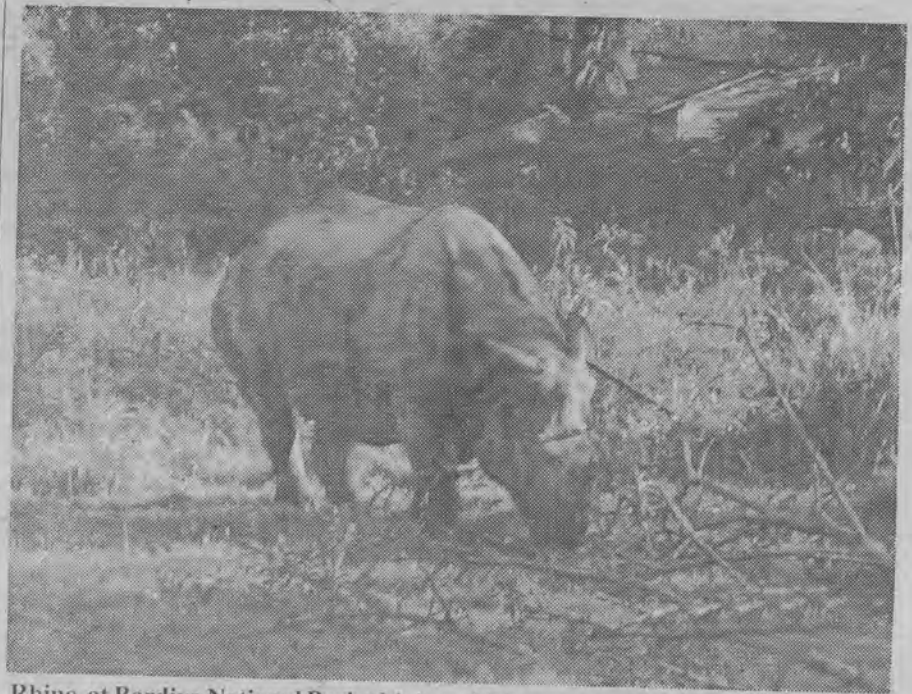
Under agro-forestry program, low marginalized community of Mohana community forestry in Dhangadhi Municipality of Kailali district is getting similar opportunity. Loton Chaudhari, 39, Boaradadi of Dhangadhi Municipality is now taking in joint farming in community forestry. Twenty five households of marginalized community of Dhangadhi have already planted vegetables in 4 hectares of forest land.

"We are expecting to generate additional income by selling our vegetables," said Loton Chaudhari.

As they get more benefits, there has been increase in the sense of



Tuladhar : Conservation with livelihood



Rhino at Bardiya National Park : Living with harmony

conservation of natural resources.

The three districts Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur are important to connect the larger wildlife habitat areas to protect the endangered species. Connecting four protected areas including Dudhwa National Park and Katrenaghat Wildlife Sanctuary of India with Nepal's Bardiya National Park and Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve through Khata, Basanta and Laljhadi corridor will make a lot of difference to lives of endangered species.

This is the reason the immediate objective of the project is to establish effective ownership among the local communities and various stakeholders.

"We are implementing the programs side by side with the bio diversity conservation and livelihood or poverty alleviation. WTLCP is bio diversity conservation project but it cannot go alone and it must include livelihood of people. If there is increase in the number of wildlife, it must bring substantial change in the livelihood of the people. Until people do not see any benefit in the conservation, they will not participate in the conservation work. Our aim is to bring conservation and livelihood together, this is our challenge," said Dinesh Karki, biodiversity Conservation Officer of WTLCP.

As number of wildlife increases in

protected areas and the population living in the buffer zones have to suffer, there increases the number of conflict between the people and wildlife of protected areas.

From electric fencing to alternative agriculture, the WTLCP has offered various ways to change the situation.

For the wildlife management, the WTLCP is also supporting protected areas for management. It supports the works like building bridges, ponds for wildlife and other such infrastructure as demanded by the protected areas.

"WTLCP has been supporting Shuklaphanta Reserve to build some bridges, watershed management, visitor towers and other such things," said Gopal Prasad Upadhaya. "What is lacking now with us is the awareness where people can feel the ownership of protected areas. It is unfortunate to say when hundreds of people are illogically encroaching deep inside the protected areas, and nobody is there to speak against it."

WTLCP stretches from Bardiya National Park in the east to Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve in the West covering a total area of 3,466 sq kilometres in the western three districts Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur of Terai Arc Landscape.

Implemented by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation with the

“We Are Also Concentrating Our Programs To Conserve Biodiversity Outside The Park”

-Dinesh Karki

DINESH KARKI, Bio-diversity Conservation Officer, Western Terai Landscape Complex Project (WTLCP), has a long experiences of working with the project. Karki spoke to **SPOTLIGHT** on various issues related to the WTLCP. Excerpts:

What is WTLCP?

It is basically a landscape level biodiversity conservation program with different approach. In the context of Nepal, various activities have been going on since 1970s. There are number of protected area system in terai and hills, and many works have already been carried out in these areas. But, they have been facing problems. Bio-diversity species are not only inside the protected areas but they are out side the protected areas. One of the goals of the project is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of globally significant bio-diversity in western terai. Along with protecting biodiversity species just inside the park; we are also concentrating our programs to conserve the biodiversity outside the park.

Is WTLCP an alternative to existing program?

No, our program is not an alternative to the existing programs carried out by government and other agencies. Our program aims to support them and this is a supplementary program. The rationale behind this project is that it works to protect the resources as a partner with others. Since this program is Nepal's government program, it is in the line with government policy. The project's landscape approach envisaged ecosystem management to achieve the multiple objectives of conservation, sustainable natural resource management and poverty alleviation by reorienting biodiversity management approaches and its institutional arrangements.

Why you are covering such a large area?

The wildlife and habitat cannot live in same place for year. They need a large

area specifically tigers and rhinos which are flag species. They roam in large areas. To place the species like tigers in the protected areas of 900 square kilometres is like putting them in prison. There is need to have wider areas for their free movement.

Why do you need corridor protections?

There are wildlife in our national parks and as well as wildlife in India's national park. If they are confined to their own area, there is possibility of genetic loss in long run. Thus, there is need to interlink between them. Even within Nepal, there is a need for connectivity between Nepal's wildlife reserve, other forests and national parks.

What is the state of forest outside protected areas?

Although the forest outside protected are in critical position, there is still possibility to maintain them. We have two protected areas Bardiya National Park and Shuklaphanta National Park and there is a buffer zone outside these parks. We have been working in core areas of national park as well as buffer zones even in Chure areas. In core areas, our thrust is on how to improve natural habitat and in buffer zones on how to institutionalize the buffer zone communities.

What is the role of Chure?

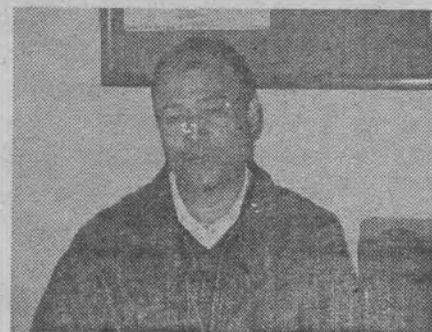
Chure mountain range is very important component which is very rich in biodiversity. Chure consists of various species of plants, trees and birds and their habitat. To link Nepal's national parks with India's national park, Chure is known as a biological corridor.

How many corridors are there?

There are three biological corridors which include Khata Biological corridor, Basthanta corridor and Laljhadi biological corridor.

Why do you need the preservation of corridor?

What we have been doing now is linking Nepal's protected areas with India's areas through the corridors. For



instance, Khata biological corridor links Nepal's Bardiya national park with Katarniyaghat Wildlife Sanctuary of India and Kailali's Basanta Biological corridor links Nepal's chure with India's Dudhwa National Park. Similarly Laljhadi corridor of Kanchanpur links Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve and India's Dudhwa National Park and Chure. Our objective is to make forest and wildlife habitat in tact and connect them so that all wildlife species can move freely from one place to another.

What are the other things you do?

Policy and legal environment needs to be conducive to landscape. Thus, we stress for the institutional frame work mechanisms. The conservation of biodiversity is other important component.

Why you are focusing on livelihood?

There is a need to implement the programs side by side with the biodiversity conservation, and livelihood or poverty alleviation. WTLCP is bio diversity conservation project but it cannot go alone and it must include livelihood of people. If there is increase in the number of wildlife, it must bring substantial change in the livelihood of the people. Until people do not see any benefit in the conservation, they will not participate in the conservation work. Our aim is to bring conservation and livelihood together, this is our challenge.

How much do you focus on poverty alleviation?

Our project is not for the poverty alleviation but it is our responsibility to

carry out development works targeting marginalized population living in our project areas. As long as we don't address the problems of the population living in our areas, we cannot involve people in conservation.

What are the activities of WTLCP?

At policy level, we support the program in district and ministry. There is district level forest coordination committee chaired by DDC chairman which includes all the members of government line agencies, and civil society members. For biodiversity conservation we have been supporting to improve infrastructures inside the protected areas building bridges, fire line construction, grass land management, water hole management. In buffer zones, we have been working to institutionalize the communities. We have been providing alternative energies like biogas, solar, improved stoves to reduce the dependency on forest. Similarly, we have been supporting them for organization management.

Why did you choose far western region?

Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation developed a strategy known as Terai Arc Landscape Strategy which includes 14 districts of terai from west of Bagmati to Mahakali. Earlier WWF had launched program under the leadership of MOF. We have started in three districts because of agro biodiversity. There are altogether 96 VDCs and municipalities in Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur. Among them we have been working in 52 VDCs. Our target area is forest and forest areas or dependent family. Our target group is just 150,000 and 50,000 of them are most vulnerable.

How do you prevent duplication?

Our program runs under the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation and senior officials of the ministry head our project. For instance, our national program manager is joint secretary of MoF. National Project Director is also from MoF. Department of Forest, and

Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation is in the driving seat. We are giving lead role to Ministry and departments. Thus, there is no question of any duplication. ■



Landless farmer : Encroaching forest land

financial support from UNDP, GEF, SNV-Nepal, WWF-Nepal, Biodiversity International, NARC and Li-Bird, the program is first of its kind which concentrated on a holistic landscape level approach for conservation and sustainable use of bio-diversity.

An eight year long project, it aims at achieving vision of landscape level conservation in Nepal. Working in 52 VDCs of 3 districts of western Nepal, the project is in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy, and Terai Arc Landscape Strategic Plan.

WTLCP has envisaged establishing a framework for trans-boundary coordination and collaboration between

Nepali and Indian government agencies in deterring Trans boundary poaching, illegal grade of biological resources and synergize landscape level conservation vision of Nepal government. WTLCP-Bardiya since its inception has been supporting and facilitating buffer zone institutions and protected areas offices to organize local Trans Boundary meeting at various levels.

From providing alternative livelihood to alternative resources, WTLCP has shown that the balancing between conservation and livelihood can sustain the protected areas and existing biodiversity. One cannot think conservation in isolation. ■



UNFPA

Health for All

With the support from ECHO, UNFPA launches programs in delivering essential reproductive health care for women, men and adolescents through mobile reproductive health camps

By A CORRESPONDENT

As far western region and mid-western region of Nepal have been facing many problems related to reproductive health, the decision of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to launch the mobile reproductive health camps is very significant.

Under UNFPA's mobile reproductive health camps, large numbers of population living below the poverty line, particularly women and adolescents of various ages, have enjoyed a lot of benefits in the mid western and far western region.

According to UNFPA, it launched two projects through which most vulnerable populations of Nepal can expect to receive immediate services. One is an 18-month long project funded by the Danish Embassy to improve the reproductive health status of populations in Kailali, Dadeldhura,

Bajhang, Salyan and Jajarkot districts. The other project, funded by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO), provides emergency reproductive health services to conflict affected populations in Mid Western Nepal.

Because of lack of access to health posts and hospitals, large number of women and adolescents have been suffering from various diseases including some very complicated ones. The mobile health camps will serve the needy population.

The aim of the project is to meet the immediate needs of conflict affected populations and to build sustainable service delivery systems for reproductive health (RH); including response mechanisms for gender based violence (SGBV) through an increased understanding of the forms of and

needed prevention mechanisms for GBV.

"Key activities will include the conducting of mobile reproductive health outreach camps that in total are expected to directly deliver services to over 50,000 women of reproductive age, men, and adolescents. An estimated 430 women with uterine prolapse will be operated on through the two projects. The camps will have facilities for screening, counseling and treatment and will also be able to provide awareness-raising for family planning and the prevention of the spread of sexually transmitted infections. Based on previous experiences, about 6% of all clients are likely to benefit from screening for GBV. The project will benefit local health service providers who will receive hands-on training in the mobile camps," said UNFPA's press release.

Since 2005 UNFPA has implemented humanitarian assistance projects in over 21 districts and has improved the lives of close to 100,000 women, men and adolescents. The reproductive health camps are a humanitarian response to deliver immediate services to populations in areas where access remains weak, particularly after the disruption caused by the conflict. 'At the same time as sustainable comprehensive health care services are developed nationally, immediate needs cannot be neglected,' notes UNFPA's acting Representative Ugochi Daniels.

The mobile health camps contribute towards long-term goals to improve the reproductive health status of women and to advance women's empowerment. The project is in line with the Government of Nepal's ongoing efforts to deliver uterine prolapse surgeries as well as the goals of the new health policy directives, according to which health services will be free up to the Primary Health Care Centre level. This will play a key role in the prevention of uterine prolapse in Nepal.

As the project will be implemented by local NGOs in cooperation with district stakeholders, zonal hospitals and national and local government agencies, it is expected to cover large number of populations living in various parts of the region. ■



PM Dahal With HIV Positive Sudip Bhattarai : Committed to cause

WORLD AIDS DAY

● Rising Alarm Bell

As the number of HIV infected cases rises through out the country, it gives alarming signals

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when Nepal was celebrating the World HIV/AIDS day, a couple of Nepalese would be infected by this deadly virus.

From prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal to all other senior officials, civil society members and industrialist, all have expressed commitment to fight against HIV/AIDS but there is no sign for taking necessary steps to chart out long term programs.

"I will promise that this government will accelerate all endeavors to fight HIV/AIDS and to lead actively making Nepal an HIV-free nation," declared prime minister Dahal addressing a rally. "National leadership promises to lead and support the organizations working in the field of HIV/AIDS in order to check further infection and to create a proper living situation for those who are infected."

Although prime minister Dahal chairs the National AIDS Council, he is yet to attend any of its meetings. According to the official of ministry of Health, the council meeting was not held

in the last several years.

According to the government statistics, 69,790 people are infected with HIV in the country with an everyday addition to the figure. According to an estimate there are additional 50,000 cases of HIV that are unreported in Nepal. Although there are available medicines, only 2280 people living with HIV are on anti-retroviral medication.

Whatever the prime minister says about it, the situation in various parts of the country is dismal. The report came from Dailekh shows how HIV and AIDS are penetrating rural parts of the country. According to the report, forty-five people died of AIDS in Dailekh's Sinhassain Village Development Committee.

Chief of District Health Office Gunaraj Avasti, disclosed that over 60 percent of population is infected by HIV in some villages. "If something is not done to prevent it, every members of the family will be infected," said Dr. Avasthi.

As Nepal's recent state of HIV indicates, it is gradually penetrating deep inside the rural parts of Nepal. ■

UN WATCHDOG WORRIES

The United Nations Human Rights Committee has accused Nepal of violation of its human rights

The United Nations Human Rights Committee has accused Nepal of violation of its human rights obligations in relation to an enforced disappearance case.

The UN rights watchdog found Nepal in violation of Article 7 (the right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in the case of Surya Prasad Sharma, who is alleged to have been forcefully disappeared by personnel of the then Royal Nepalese Army in 2002 in Baglung District, according to a press release issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal.

The release added that Sharma was held incommunicado; in violation of Art. 9 (the right to freedom from arbitrary detention) because he was not taken before a judge and given the opportunity to challenge his detention, and in violation of Art. 10 (the right to be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of all persons) because he was forcibly disappeared.

The Committee, in the release, reminded Nepal of its obligation to provide an effective remedy in the case, including, a thorough and effective investigation into the disappearance and fate of Sharma and his immediate release if he is still alive. ■



Dr. Bhattarai: Ideology shift

MAOIST POLICY

Redder Shift

Maoist national convention endorses 'people's federal national republic' proposal – an euphemism for what other parties perceive as turn towards totalitarianism

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

At the end, the national convention of the senior cadres of the Maoists ended in the way that all the conventions of radical communists usually end – with leaders inventing hard-to-understand jargons to cover up the dissensions, dancing and shedding tears in a charged up emotional atmosphere.

As all eyes were on the increasing dispute within the Maoist party, the chairman and the current Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' was able to prevail in the end over his mentor-turned-challenger Mohan Baidya 'Kiran.'

And Prachanda had verbose explanation to all the dissensions and wrangling. He termed it as 'grand exercise of people's democracy within the party' – something which flew in the face of the fact that only a few days ago he had tried everything to convince Kiran not

to submit a separate political report challenging his.

Anyway, days of debates and discussions – held again in typical radical communist fashion of group discussions – led to the situation where Prachanda could not bulldoze his report but had to accommodate some portions of Kiran's report.

Kiran who advocated outright march towards people's republic through people's revolt – for which he said the ground was ripe – was able to puncture Prachanda's unquestioned sway over the party.

Subsequently, Prachanda who favored gradual march to people's republic through the consolidation of the federal democratic republic had to modify his report.

After four days of debate, the

National Convention of Cadres passed a political report by party chairman and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda,' proposing "people's federal national republic" as the party's future strategy. This was mixture of his and Kiran's strategies.

Immediately after the document was endorsed by the convention, the Maoist leaders went around making grandiose claims of new-found pillar of unity in the party.

The latest policy shift by the Maoists has attracted serious attention of the other parties. While opposition parties like Nepali Congress (NC) have already started accusing Maoists of not abandoning their dream to establish communist totalitarian state in Nepal, other parties in the ruling coalition are watching with anxiety.

However, this anxiety has not yet translated into anything dangerous for the stability of the Maoist-led government as was seen during the forging of alliance in the election of vice chairperson of the Constituent Assembly (CA).

A Maoist CA member representing Banke-4 constituency Purna Kumari Subedi was elected by majority to the position of vice chair of the Constituent Assembly (CA). Subedi bagged 346 votes in her favor. There were 69 votes against her and 90 abstentions. Her candidature had been backed by Maoists, Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) and Jana Morcha.

But the actual ramifications of the latest policy shift – even at tactical level – could be seen only in the coming days when the contentious issue of army integration has to be dealt with conclusively.

One fallout of the policy shift could be the increased unwillingness on the part of the Maoists to dissolve their separate army – under any pretext. They could, thus, linger the process of integration, say experts.

Likewise, the issue of writing new constitution could also face several new challenges beginning with renewed Maoist interest of drafting it in their party and ideological interest. This could, in turn, escalate tensions with other parties, and, ultimately, disrupt or even sabotage the whole process. ■

FOREIGN AID

Precious Gestures

A British minister pledges aid of Rs 2.4 billion while a Danish minister hints of continued support to Nepal as it moves on the path of democratization

By A CORRESPONDENT

In the last one week, two senior officials from European countries who remain primary donors to Nepal, have renewed their pledge to support Nepal as it charts through the difficult process of transition to flourishing democracy and durable peace.

The British Minister for International Development Mike Foster on Thursday (Nov 27) announced the United Kingdom's fresh financial aid of £20 million (Rs. 2.4 billion) to carry out various development activities in Nepal for the next two years.

Addressing a press meet organized on Thursday, Foster said, "The amount will be used to support the peace process and programs on poverty reduction that would bring real change in rural Nepal."

Earlier, Department for International Development (DFID) had announced £102 million (Rs. 10.4 billion) support for the Nepal Peace Trust Fund, health and education sectors, building good governance, improving public financial management, rural infrastructure and livelihoods and addressing climate change for year 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.

Foster called on the political parties to use the historic opportunity to build lasting peace in the country. "It is imperative that the Nepal Government utilize the people's mandate by building lasting and inclusive peace."

He said the leaders he had met assured him that they would do the needful to build peace and reduce poverty. During his stay here, he met Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Bamdev Gautam, Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, Foreign Minister Upendra Yadav, Minister for Environment and Science



Danish Minister Moller : With a package

and Technology Ganesh Sah, Constituent Assembly members belonging to marginalized groups, UN Secretary General's Special Representative Ian Martin, donors, climate change experts, community groups and private sectors, according to a statement released by DFID.

DFID will also provide £ 500,000 to the Constituent Assembly, said the British minister. The minister who came to Nepal on a four-day visit had also announced a financial support of £1.4 million (around Rs 168 million) for the Koshi flood victims and pledged £4.5 million (Rs 542.655 million) to

build two bridges in the eastern Nepal. Similarly, the minister had announced aid of £660,000 (Rs 795.894 million) by the British government to National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) for climate change in Nepal.

Likewise, Danish Foreign Minister Dr. Per Stig Møller who arrived in Kathmandu on November 28, has said that his government is ready to extend all possible support for success of Nepal's peace process.

During his meeting with Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal at the PM's residence in Baluwatar Saturday (Nov 29) morning, the Danish minister said his government can also contribute their expertise on the constitution making process.

According to Hira Bahadur Thapa, Foreign Affairs advisor to the PM, Dahal apprised the Danish minister of aid assurances received from the two big neighbors for Nepal's success in establishing peace and economic transformation. Thapa said the Danish minister express happiness over the progress of the peace process.

A press statement issued by the Danish embassy stated that Minister Møller urged the government to strengthen respect for human rights and to establish the necessary commissions in accordance with international standards in order to heal the wounds of Nepal's violent past.

The Minister also emphasized the importance of conducting a general reform of Nepal's security forces and agreeing on a permanent solution to the Maoist soldiers in the camps. The Minister also emphasized the importance of UNMTN's role in this regard.

The Danish Minister also stressed the need to build the foundation for lasting peace and prosperity by an inclusive constitution process based on a multiparty democratic system. ■

BOOK

Border Administration

Tulsi Narayan's new book discusses about Nepal's northern border and regional administration

By A CORRESPONDENT

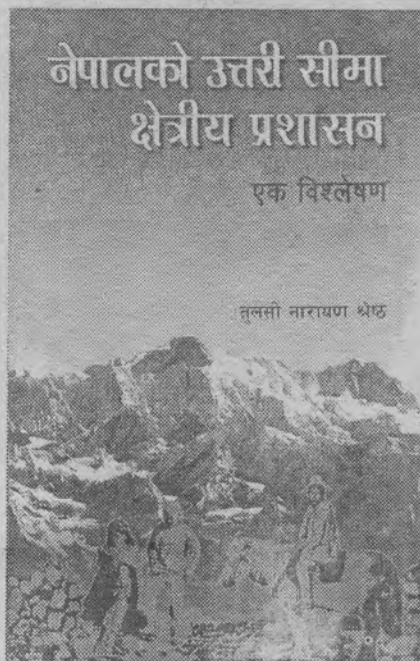
Divided into three ecological zones, Nepal shares its border with India in south, west and east and China in north. Nepal's northern border with China is more than 1400 kilometres in length. Though it is geographically very hostile, there live thousands of people in Nepal in those mountainous regions.

From the world's highest peak to other mountains, the northern part of Nepal has also many passes which facilitates the trade between the countries. The people living in Nepal's northern sides depend on Chinese market to survive. In this context, it is a matter of interest for Nepal to know what the scope of administration is and how administration functions in northern part of Nepal.

This is what professor Tulsi Narayan discusses in his new book Nepal's northern border and regional administration. Along with taking care of administrative activities, one of the main functions of regional administration in northern Nepal is to see boundary management and regulate the border as per the agreements signed between the two countries.

Based on his three decade old research for doctorate from Rajasthan University, Shrestha has published this new book. He has done intensive study of literature and conducted more than six months visits of various northern districts. This book also includes vary valuable documents and other important books.

According to author Shrestha some of the documents included in this book are



Nepalko Uttari Sima Kshetriya Prashasan Nepal's Northern Border and Regional Administration

By: Tulsi Narayan
Shrestha

Price: Rs. 225.00

Published by: Tulsi
Narayan Shrestha

Pages: 229

very valuable since one cannot find these documents now.

The book is divided into several chapters. The first chapter discusses about the needs of creating northern regional administration. In this chapter, the author highlights the situation of northern Nepal and needs of the people living in the region.

Second chapter is all about the characteristic of northern border regional administration. In this chapter, Shrestha discusses how it is different from the rest of administrative units and how it is distinct in terms of functioning and role of administrator. Nepal's northern border administration has a long history as it was started centuries ago. Nepal has seen many ups and downs and disputes in northern areas in the past. There was a major dispute in 1774.

In this context one needs to read all about Nepal's northern border. Author Shrestha has made several efforts to bring it out to the public. Some of the documents included in this book are very valuable to see how Nepal's northern border administration functioned in various times and various political periods. The third chapter deals with northern border regional administration's structure and role of regional administrator. In this chapter, author highlights the important role the regional administrator has to play in the context of regional administration.

In fourth chapter, author Shrestha reviews the documents about Nepal's northern border and its administrative structure.

Although the book is written in Nepali language, it helps a lot to all scholars and students of public administration who want to know about Nepal's northern boundary. ■

“I am finding tougher to overcome the traditional nexus of corrupt and miscreants than fighting the people’s war.”

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda,’ who is a former rebel leader, addressing a function organised by Administrative Court. “If the Maoists do not start the process of writing new constitution, NC will write it on its own and float it to the people.”

Girija Prasad Koirala, former prime minister and leader of opposition Nepali Congress (NC), talking to reporters in Pokhara.

“We strongly condemn this cowardly attack and the killing of the innocent peoples.”

President Dr Rambaran Yadav, in a message to his Indian counterpart Pratiba Patil, condemning the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India.

“The NC will not remain silent if the seized properties are not returned as promised.”

Sher Bahadur Deuba, former prime minister and senior leader



of NC, warning that his party would launch agitation if the Maoists do not return seized properties within mid-December as promised by the Prime Minister.

“The National Convention has given the message of unity.”

Krishna Bahadur Mahara, a minister and spokesperson of Maoists, after the conclusion of National Convention of Cadres of the Maoists, which endorsed a revised

report of PM and party chairman Prachanda.

“The first hundred days of the Maoist-led government has been disappointing. The main task of writing new constitution has not even started.”

KP Oli, former minister and standing committee member of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) – a partner in the ruling coalition – warns that his party could review its decision to remain in government if the latter does not deliver.

TRANSITION

ELECTED: Purna Kumari Subedi, a Maoist Constituent Assembly (CA) member from Banke-4 constituency, as the vice chairperson of the CA, by the majority of CA members.

RETURNED: Pranab Mukherjee, Minister for External Affairs of India, after completing three-day visit to Nepal.

Dr. Per Stig Møller, Foreign Minister of Denmark, after completing his brief visit to Nepal.

Mike Foster, British Minister for International Development, after completing his visit to Nepal.

General Sir Richard Dannatt, the British Army’s Chief of the General Staff, after completing his four day visit to Nepal.

ARRIVED: Yang Jeyichi, Foreign Minister of People’s Republic of China, on a four-day visit to Nepal.

RESIGNED: Dr. Chiranjibi Nepal, chairman of Securities Board of Nepal (SEBON) – the regulatory body of stock market.

INJURED: Jagat Khadka, a Nepali working at Leopold café in Mumbai, during terrorist attacks.



ART

Face of Buddha

Artist Lama Koccha Sherpa paints various faces of Buddha

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although he chooses different themes, artist Lama Koccha Sherpa is in a single mission to convey the spiritual message of peace, tranquility and happiness. In his painting exhibition *Glimpses of Realization*, artist Sherpa expresses his message of peace through faces of Buddha, Yoga and snow capped mountain.

The combination of three different topics express his realization of glimpses of peace and tranquility. From faces of Buddha to Amadablam Mountain and painting of Yoga, all have same meanings: to convey importance of peace in human mind.

In this art exhibition, artist Sherpa was able to do so. From his choices of colors to theme of paintings, all have perfectly depicted his inner feel-

ings about peace and tranquility. Although he is young, artist Sherpa's message is clear and concise: the importance of spiritual peace.

Buddha is regarded as a messenger of peace. This is what one can see in various faces of Buddha. In his different sittings, Buddha has different meaning of peace to tell. Being an artist, Lama Koccha Sherpa tries to paint this reality of peace through his brush and colors.

"Students get their all lessons of Buddhism from their teachers. We cannot explain all but we can express real feelings and meanings of Buddhism through our paintings," said artist Sherpa.

Exhibited at Saturday Café, artist Sherpa, in his exhibition titled *Glimpses of Realization*, showcases

Buddhism through colors. One of the important parts of artist Sherpa's paintings is that he has used bright shades to make his paintings more vibrant. Along with modern ways, artist Sherpa also incorporates the traditional elements of painting. Although his paintings give traditional glimpses of traditional art forms, he claims that he brought modern elements through color composition.

He tries to paint all forms of Buddha of Mahayana sect. From Bipashow Buddha to Shakya Muni Buddha, one can find all kinds of glimpses of Buddha.

His observations are so good that one can find the message of peace and salvation conveyed by the various images of Buddha. Artist Sherpa also focuses his attention on Yoga. With his paintings what artist Sherpa tries to convey is the deeper meaning of Yoga. "Yoga is not only a medium of physical exercise but there is a more spiritual side which I want to convey to others," said artist Sherpa. Yoga is physical as well as spiritual as it helps to improve the meditation and making the mind peaceful.

As a Sherpa, he also sees something interesting in mountains. In his paintings on Amadablam, artist Sherpa tries to paint the nature of peace and tranquility.

The painting of Himalayas particularly Mount Amadablam depicted peaceful nature. Snowcapped tall mountain with blue sky clearly gives the message what artist Sherpa wants to convey.

Although his topic is very difficult and complicated to explain, artist Sherpa is able to do so. As all these three are related to each other, artist Sherpa might understand the real ethos of these three. The painting exhibition is on still December 31. ■

Jai Kumar Nath Shah, former president
of Cricket Association of Nepal,
a cricketer who has earned
unprecedented
honor for
Nepal



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