



Valley/Nation

Stress on pre-disaster safety measures

Post Report

KATHMANDU, Dec 26

There is a growing vulnerability of disasters resulting in soaring toll on life and property in the country, but there is a lack of pre-disaster safety measures, geographers and experts working in the field of disaster management said here today.

Speaking at a discussion programme on "Our Mountains, Our Settlement and Flood-Landslides" on Thursday, they urged the government to prepare environment hazard maps and to implement the National Action Plan on Disaster Management as soon as possible.

Lekhanath Pokharel, an official at the Home Ministry (Department of Disaster Management) informed that the National Action Plan relating to disaster management in the country has not been translated into action due to technical problems.

The plan prepared by the Home Ministry in 1996 is one of the key policies for managing disasters in the country, which focuses on pre-management and minimisation of disasters in the country, besides making concerned authorities accountable for disaster management.

" Setting up of communication centres to inform and warn about possible disasters across the country is extremely necessary to help mitigate disaster in case of occurrence but we do not have the facility at present", he said.

He was of the opinion that Nepal lacks a clear policy to seek international aids for disaster management.

Narendra Raj Khanal, a researcher, stressed the selection of sites for settlement. According to Khanal, many public infrastructure have been set up without giving priority to site selection and not caring disaster safety measures. The toll to be caused by disasters can be considerably reduced if safety measures are adopted.

He also pointed a lack of community-based early warning system, which is very essential to inform disaster in advance. "Besides, we need landuse guidelines in the country", he said.

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Bhuaneshor Lal Shrestha underlined the need to carry out extensive researches to make disaster-proof houses, using local materials and technology.

Dr. Toran Sharma attributed growing disaster to human behaviour and suggested to respect and use traditional knowledge and materials for its prevention.

Dr. Pitamber Sharma, a geographer, opined that it is very necessary to prepare environmental hazards map.

Speaking at the programme, Forest Secretary Chandi Prasad Shrestha, informed that the government is planning to incorporate local communities to manage watersheds in the country.

e-Parliament for conflict resolution

By Sudha Shrestha

KATHMANDU, Dec 26

e-Parliament is soon going to be a reality for this country, at this crucial juncture, when the real parliament has gone into a vacuum following its dissolution. The creation of data-based www.e-parliament.org is likely to open up immense opportunities for the parties-in-conflict to hold on-line dialogues without human intervention.

The architect of the e-parliament, Dr. Sichendra Bista, Chairman of Global Initiatives International Secretariat revealed this to The Kathmandu Post today which he had proposed at the 3rd International Conference of the Chief Justices of the World at World Unity Convention Centre, recently held in Lucknow.

e-Parliament facilitates secure and confidential online meetings, negotiations, mediation and arbitration when it becomes inconvenient, impractical or impossible to conduct physical face-to-face meetings between and among conflicting parties due to ideological extremity, limitation of time, scarcity of funds, physical availability or geography, according to Dr. Bista .

"The idea is to create a forum for debate on the net. The e-parliament will be operational like the real parliament. There will be space for a speaker, zero sessions and committees," he says, adding that all concerned parties in the conflict will have their own passwords and login to take part in the debate.

The automatically-designed system allows interested parties in the talks to put up its position on-line. If there is no response from the other side, it will be made public after fifteen days. However, the negotiation processes will be kept confidential, according to him.

"At least, the people in the country and around the world will know where things go wrong with the dialogue. This will make the dialogue process transparent to everybody," he further adds.

With technical and moral support of over 100 volunteers around the world, the web-site is keen on creating an engine in the system comprising four main components: e-Legislature, e-Diplomacy, e-Petition, and e-Parliament.

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The major stake holders of e-Parliament are the parties in conflict (monarchs and heads of state, governments, rebels groups), the facilitators (national and international political parties, elected parliamentarians, including incumbent as well as those booted out by force, nearest contenders from the immediate past parliamentary or presidential polls), the online-observers (Nobel laureates and envoys, Chief Justices and Attorney Generals and UN and other inter-governmental mechanisms), the mediator or base (e-Parliament org. Management and Research team, e-Parliament org. Technical and Legal team and e-Parliament org. volunteers and supporters) and the commentators (mass media, local political parties and international organisations, lawyers, human rights and bar associations and civil society, spiritual leaders and global citizens.

All these stake-holders can express their opinions from their respective positions. On-line service mimics the modalities, modus operandi and contents of the parliaments in reality, and operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The lengthening spectre of political conflict and terrorism in the world, mainly in the third world, inspired Dr. Bista to take up the project.

"Our children today have been victimised by long drawn-out political conflicts in this part of the world. In this situation, e-Parliament is our urgent need for finding a solution. The creation of the world parliament through net (e-Parliament), offers hope for the world citizens to hold interactions with any world figures and thereby finding solutions to political issues, including conflicts and human rights violations," he observed. He said that the idea was greatly appreciated at the international forum which was attended by the dignitaries of 40 countries.

According to him, many enthusiastic volunteers world-wide are contributing their ideas and technical support to the project, which is aimed at creating what he says "A Safe Nepal for Ourselves and Our Children". Although it is yet to be seen just how viable and workable will be this project, Dr. Bista is optimistic about the impact of his 'evision'.

"Like birds, we all need a safe and happy 'nest' to live in, don't we," was his final remark.

NAB submits 9-point demands to Minister Ojha

Post Report

KATHMANDU, Dec 26

Nepal Association of the Blind (NAB) forwarded its nine-point demands to Minister for Education and Sports, Devi Prasad Ojha at the latter's office, a statement from NAB stated here Thursday.

The demands include: recruitment of visually-impaired teachers, which has been stopped since the last three years, appointment of at least 85 permanent teachers in various schools of different districts, allotment of fixed scholarships quota for visually-impaired persons for their secondary and higher education and providing five percent of the total scholarships obtained from international communities to the visually-impaired students.

It also draws the immediate attention of the government towards the misuse of teachers' quota provided in the districts for the visually-impaired persons. Such