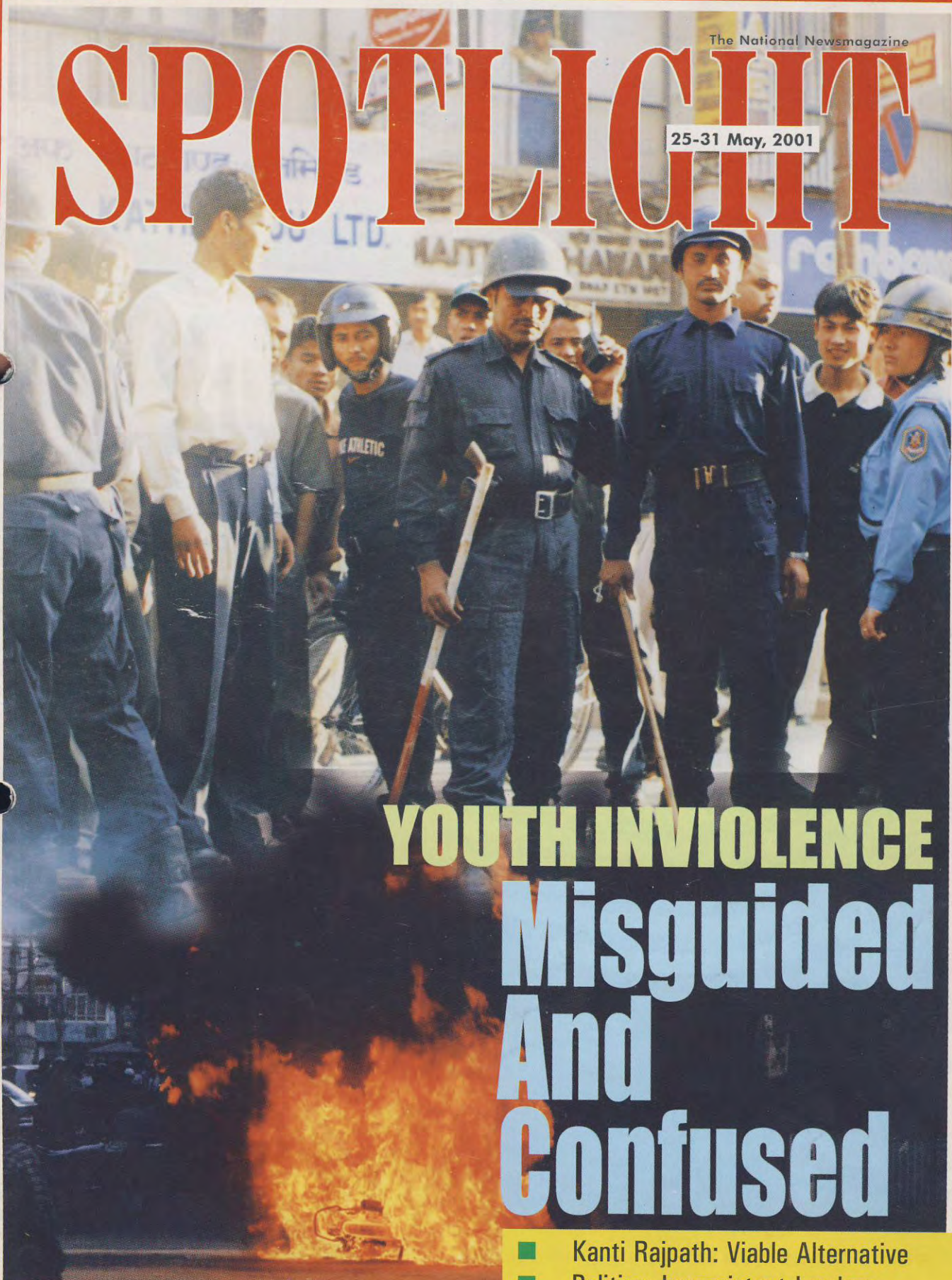


The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

25-31 May, 2001



YOUTH INVIOLENCE Misguided And Confused

- Kanti Rajpath: Viable Alternative
- Politics: Inconsistent Leaders
- Ninth Plan: Poor Performance

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COVER STORY : MISGUIDED AND CONFUSED

The growing participation of youths in violence is a matter of serious concern.

(Cover photo by Sandesh Manadhar)

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KANTI RAJPATH : Slow Start

Despite being the shortest alternative route to link Kathmandu with Hetauda, the construction of the highway has delayed due to government indifference.

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INTERVIEW : Chakra P. Bastola

Foreign Minister Bastola says the recent visit by Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji enhanced the bilateral ties.

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Chief Editor And Publisher
Madhav Kumar Rimal

Editor
Sarita Rimal

Managing Editor
Keshab Poudel

Associate Editor
Bhagirath Yogi

Senior Reporter
Sanjaya Dhakal

Reporter
Akshay Sharma

Design and Layout
Jyoti Singh

Photographer
Nishchal Chapaganin

Art
M.S. Khokna

Legal Advisor
Advocate Lok Bhakta Rana

Marketing/Advertisement
Sarit Rimal (USA)

Marketing
Madan Kaji Basnet
Navin Kumar Maharjan
Madan Raj Poudel

Editorial Office
GPO Box 7256, Baluwatar, Kathmandu,
Tel : (977-1) 423127, Fax : (977-1) 417845
Chief Editor's : 435594
E-mail : spot@mail.com.np
Internet Add: <http://www.nepalnews.com/spotlight>

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Wordscape
Kamal Pokhari, Ph : 410772, Fax : 432872

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Bazaar International
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G.P.O Box 2480, Ph: 222983 Fax : 229437
e-mail : bazaar@mos.com.np

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The recently concluded three day official visit of the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China to Nepal seems to have generated quite a bit of controversy. A very reliable leader of yester years confided to this scribe that this visit of the dignitary from the biggest nation of the world failed to keep up with the tradition — the mutual expressions of uninhibited intimacy and concern for each other's well-being. Had it not been for the deep respect they bear to the throne of Nepal, he went on to say, the Chinese could have easily postponed or even cancelled the visit. Not that they were not fully aware of the political situation prevailing in Nepal and the severe constraints the host government has been suffering from. The changed international scenario and developments nearer home must have had irresistible influence on the secular democratic government of the Nepali Congress in Kathmandu. This, indeed, has been plainly evident by the manner the Free Tibet movement in the nation's capital has been functioning despite the firm commitment of the government not to permit anti-Chinese activities on the Nepalese soil. Since the Chinese do not permit such minor incidents to affect the deep-seated friendly relationship with the Nepalese people, the agents provocateurs have gained nothing except heart burning chagrin. Modern Nepal-China relationship founded on solid rock by the late Nepalese dignitaries — King Mahendra and Tanka Prasad Acharya and Chinese leaders Mao Tse Tung and Zhou en Lie is too strong even for Hercules to dislodge. Since both the Nepalese and Chinese people are firmly convinced of this irrefutable fact the bilateral relations between the two countries will ever go on strengthening.

* * *

The three day Bandh called by the leftist forces seems to be destined to come through. All the pleas by the rest of the Nepalese (including all sectors of Nepalese society) have fallen on deaf ears. That the responsible opposition party in the Parliament is becoming so irresponsible as to push the country to economic chaos by initiating the three day bandh is sure to soil its image further. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala will oblige the opposition by vacating his chair. Even though leaders of the UML are getting too impatient to go to the other side in the parliament, they know they will not achieve their ambition in the near future. Taking recourse to measures that might spell disaster for the country while hitting the poorest section hardest, is sure to boomerang in the days to come. Our opposition to the three day bandh should not be interpreted as support to the infamous Koirala government. We have, time and again called for the outright dismissal of the corrupt Koirala government. But democracy, parliamentary practice and constitutional monarchy have proved to be invincible shield protecting Prime Minister Koirala. Even though the country is heading towards unavoidable catastrophe, no body seems to be least concerned to save it. When the integrity of the country is at stake, one must be able to sacrifice all personal or partisan considerations. We have come to a stage where all patriotic forces have to join hands and work unitedly to free the country from the iron grip of the Frankenstein of corruption and alien machinations. There is absolutely no alternative and no time should be lost. ■



Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Cooperative Controversy

Your cover story "Mushrooming Growth" (SPOTLIGHT, May 18) clearly pointed out how fly-by-night operators are exploiting loopholes in the law to make a fast buck at the cost of innocent investors. It is a pity that the very authorities who are supposed to check the activities of cooperatives appear so powerless. No wonder, the mushrooming of such dubious cooperatives is continuing unabated.

Sheela Sharma
Ghattekula

ing Times" (SPOTLIGHT, May 11), it seems that Nepal would do better by stressing the export of orthodox and herbal tea rather than CTC. The high-value orthodox tea has a greater market among the health-conscious population of the West. Besides, this is the sector where Nepal enjoys comparative advantage. Herbal tea finds appropriate environment to thrive in the eastern hills of the country.

Roshan Amatya
Dhapasi

Great Loss

The untimely demise of mountaineer Babu Chhiri Sherpa is a great loss not only to Nepal but also to the entire mountaineering community ("Into Thin Air", SPOTLIGHT, May 4). His feats are as tall as the Everest itself and will not be forgotten. While we did talk much about his outstanding personality, we could pay a real tribute to Babu Chhiri by joining hands in realizing his last dream — opening a school in his native village in Solukhumbu.

Manoj Gurung
New Baneshwor

Catch The Culprits

Unless the authorities catch the culprits who have run away with the investors' money, the people will continue to lose confidence in the cooperatives. ("Mushrooming Growth", SPOTLIGHT, May 18). If the series of cases of fraud are not addressed soon, many more poor Nepalese will lose millions of their hard-earned rupees. The Finance Ministry, the Department of Cooperatives and the home administration should cooperate to prevent such cases.

Raman Gurung
Bhotebahal

Tighten The Laws

It is ridiculous that there is no adequate legal provision to check the irregular activities of the cooperatives ("Mushrooming Growth", SPOTLIGHT,

May 18). Why did the government allow the cooperatives to operate without ensuring proper legal checks and balances? Did the authorities work hand in glove to swindle the public? If not, what are they doing at a time when half a dozen cooperatives fled in the span of a week? The people want answers quickly.

Suman KC
Bagbazar

Erosion Of Confidence

The continuing cases of swindling and fraud have hit hard at the confidence of the investors ("Mushrooming Growth", SPOTLIGHT, May 18). There is palpable sense of panic among small investors. The apparent indifference with which the authorities are dealing with this problem have shaken them. If this situation continues, a time

will come when investors will start losing faith even in financial institutions and banks.

Krishna Thapa
Minbhawan

Tasty Potentials

The unique geography of Nepal is very suitable for growing tea ("Testing Times", SPOTLIGHT, May 11). However, statistics show that tea export has not really taken off. The volume of tea trade is still insignificant. The introduction of a tea policy is a welcome development. But it needs to be translated into action. Gloating about our potentials is not going to pay. Indeed, we have to emulate the success of Sri Lanka in this field.

Anup Shrestha
Sanepa

Stress On High Value

Apropos the article "Test-

Anti-Chinese Activity

It has been reported that the Tibetan followers of Dalai Lama are freely carrying on anti-Chinese activities in Nepal. Recently they cast votes in Kathmandu for the Tibetan government in exile. Despite Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's firm assertion that Nepalese soil would not be permitted to be used against China, the followers of Dalai Lama in collaboration with some Nepalese and the Indian RAW are freely resorting to anti-China activities. It is also presumed that the Indian RAW is spending huge amount of money for this purpose. Who will take appropriate steps to stop such anti-national activities?

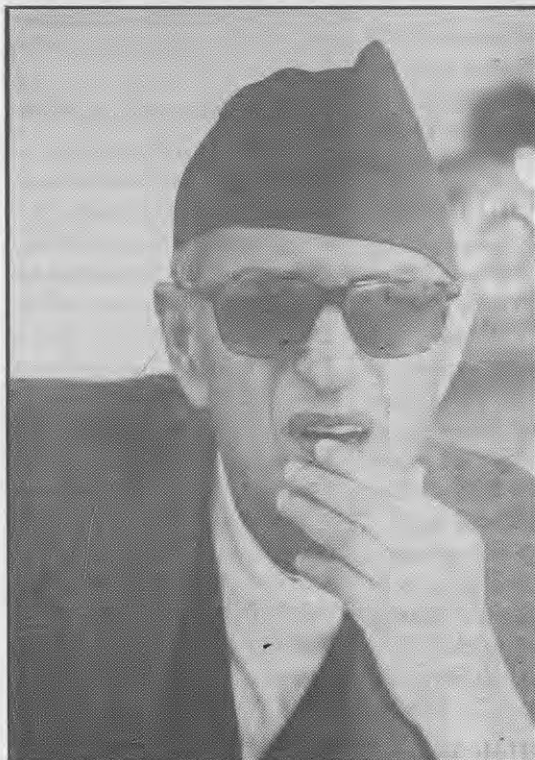
Ram Man Shakya
Buddha, Kathmandu

Refugees Demand More JVTs

The Bhutanese Refugees Repatriation Committee (BRRC) has demanded that more verification teams should be formed to speed up the verification process. The Nepal-Bhutan Joint Verification Team (JVT) has so far verified nearly 2,500 people belonging to 400 families over the last two months. In a statement, BRRC chairman S. B. Subba demanded that more verification teams should be formed reviewing the experience of the present team so that a large number of families could be verified at a comparatively shorter time. Currently, a single JVT has been verifying around 10 families every day, except on public holidays, at its Damak-based field office. The JVT was formed following an agreement during the 10th round of joint ministerial meeting in Katmandu late last year. *Compiled from reports May 22.*

Prime Minister Instructs Top Officials

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala



Koirala

has asked top government officials to cut down unnecessary meetings with people and spend more time on studying and clearing files. At a meeting with cabinet ministers, secretaries and former secretaries, Koirala instructed the officials to ensure that the government employees are in place in the areas of their posting, to strengthen personnel administration, to ensure coordination among the ministries effective, formulate and implement policies only after extensive discussions and execute their duties by remaining within the framework of relevant laws and regulations. He also instructed the ministries to work effectively for the success of the integrated security and development program that the government is launching to carry out development works in the areas affected by the Maoist insurgency. *RSS news agency reports.*

'Govt. Has Made Preparations For Talks'

Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Ram Chandra Poudel has said the government has completed preparations to hold talks with the Maoist rebels. "Whatever rumors may be doing the rounds outside, we have conveyed our willingness for talks to the insurgents and have also guaranteed full security to them," he said. Poudel said the Maoists should now directly contact the government and should not put forward any conditions. "We want a couple of rounds of informal talks before the formal ones," said the minister.

Meanwhile, leader of the main opposition Madhav Kumar Nepal has said there is no possibility of talks between the Maoists and the present government. "The Maoists will never hold talks with the G.P. Koirala-led government," Nepal said. He also declared that his party will not participate in talks with the Koirala government. *Himalaya Times May 18.*

PAC Fails To Arrive At A Decision

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the House of Representatives failed to reach any decision Monday regarding alleged irregularities in the aircraft lease deal between the state-owned Royal Nepal Airlines and China South



Nemwang

West Airlines. A sub-committee headed by Rastriya Prajatantra Party lawmaker Buddhi Man Tamang has already concluded that the deal — made during the tenure of UML minister Bhim Rawal — was full of irregularities. In Monday's meeting, the ruling party legislators alleged that the committee — headed by UML legislator Subash Nemwang — was deliberately trying to delay the decision on the controversial case. *Compiled from reports May 22.*

Maoists Form 'Govt.' In Rolpa

The underground Maoist rebels have declared their 'local people's government' in one of their strongholds at the mid-western district of Rolpa last week at an open mass meeting. The formation of the 'local government' was declared in the meeting participated in by hundreds of local people and Maoist sup-

porters days before the army is scheduled to march in. The rebels declared what they called "people's local government" last Wednesday amid tight security cover provided by the Maoist guerrillas. Newly elected chief, Santosh Budha, said his party was ready to fight with the army if it invaded their territory and targeted the structures built by them. Chief District Officer of Rolpa, H. K. Upadhyay, said there was a strong possibility of army-rebels confrontation in the district. *Kantipur May 20.*

Toni Hagen Foundation Set Up

In honor of the Swiss geologist and a friend of Nepal, Toni Hagen, who first visited Nepal in 1950, the Toni Hagen Foundation was set up here Friday. The foundation would help introduce Nepal in all its geographic, economic, social and cultural grandeur to the world. Daughter of Toni Hagen, Dr. Catherine Hagen, said the Europe branch of the foundation will be set up in near future. At the function, the Nepali version of the famous book "Nepal: A Kingdom in the Himalayas" was also released. First published in 1961, the book has also been translated in German, French and Japanese languages. *Compiled from reports May 20.*

Summiteers Appeal For Strike Withdrawal

Everest Summiters Association (ESA) has appealed to the group of six left parties to withdraw their three-day nationwide general strike slated for May 27, 28 and 29 citing that bandh would hamper the World Everest Day that falls on May 29. In a statement, ESA said for the last few years, Nepal has been observing May 29 to mark the victory on Mt. Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgé Sherpa in 1954. Saying that Mt. Everest has played a very positive role to take Nepal's fame around the globe, the ESA said the sudden announcement of bandh program has created dilemma for the ESA. It is more important to observe the day to honour and respect



Street Strike

the ideals of the late Babu Chhiri Sherpa, who died last month while trying to scale Mt. Everest for the 11th time. Meanwhile, the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) said one day's hotel closure would directly affect almost 28,000 tourists and over 4.5 million Nepalese directly or indirectly engaged in the country's tourism sector. *Compiled from reports May 21.*

22 Kg Hashish Seized

Officials from the Customs Department and Drug Abuse Control and Law Enforcement Unit of Nepal Police raided and recovered 22 kg of hashish from one of the godowns of at the Tribhuvan International Airport Thursday. The hashish was concealed in a cargo of carpet due to be exported to Germany. Police said that customs officials seized 61 packets of hashish hidden inside ten rolls of carpet. "This is the biggest haul of the contraband drug in the last two years," officials said.

The consignment was being exported by Lord Buddha Export Company to one Christian Pearls Company at Osana Bruke in Germany. In a separate incident, a group of seven unidentified men looted more than Rs 2 million from businessmen in the capital at Wotu, near New Road in broad daylight Thursday, re-

ports said. Sanjay Agrawal, who lost his money, said the gang looted about Rs. 2 million in cash and kind. Police said a search is underway to nab the culprit. *Compiled from reports May 18.*

Food Aid Arrives In Taklakot

The first consignment of 20 truckloads of coarse rice, procured by the World Food Program (WFP), arrived at Talakot near the border between Humla and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China recently, the WFP said. The WFP has also sent 200 metric tons in food aid to remote northern district of Humla. The WFP got permission to send food aid via Tibet after the Chinese authorities granted it clearance last July following the visit by WFP's representatives to Beijing. The Chinese authorities also expressed desire to support the WFP's efforts to reach to the hungry poor people in remote areas of Nepal. The WFP plans to seek extension of the transportation clearance, granted for an initial year. "Providing development opportunities for some of the most vulnerable populations in Karnali is a priority for WFP," said Douglas Casson Counts, the WFP Representative in Nepal. *Compiled from reports May 17.*



Himalayan Times

Students going to their schools after the week-long closure of private schools ended

THE FLOW OF FOREIGN AID TO NEPAL IS LIKELY to double this year compared to last year, officials said. According to the Finance Ministry, approximately Rs 29 billion worth foreign aid has been committed as of mid-May 2001 and the figure is expected to go as high as Rs 36 billion by the end of the current fiscal year. It will be nearly double the amount of Rs 18 billion worth aid commitment made fiscal year. The aid increment this year is mainly due to the loan sanctioned for the ambitious Melamchi Water Supply Project (MWSP). The Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Japanese government and the Norwegian government have committed over Rs 13 billion for MWSP. Chief of the Foreign Aid Division at the Finance Ministry, Madhav Ghimire, said the government's commitment toward its continuation in financial sector reforms significantly helped to send good signals to the donor community.

MAOIST REBELS HAVE CAPTURED DOCUMENTS related to national census 2001 in their stronghold in mid-western district of Rukum, Nepal Samacharpatra daily reported Friday. The insurgents have so far captured census documents allocated for 16 village development committees in the district. A local supervisor of the census, Purna Bahadur Bohara, quoted the Maoists as saying that they will conduct the census separately on the basis of the prescribed forms.

A GROUP OF NEARLY 300 MAOIST REBELS stormed a police post in eastern hilly district of Okhaldhunga Friday night (May 18) killing three policemen, including a police sub-inspector and injuring 11 others, reports said. According to police, the rebels killed the policemen in a very brutal way after nearly two-hour long gun battle. The injured have been airlifted for treatment. The rebels also seized arms and cash from the police personnel after they

captured the outpost. Officials say the rebels are spreading their activities in eastern Nepal and targeting ill-equipped police posts after the government mobilized army personnel in their strongholds in the mid-western region to contain the rebellion.

THE ELECTION COMMISSION HAS EXTENDED THE deadline for distributing voter identity cards till July 15, this year at the request of the Home Ministry. According to an EC spokesman, this is the third time that the deadline for distributing voter identity cards is being extended. The EC had chosen a total of 41 constituencies in 27 districts for the distribution of voter identity cards under the second phase.

INDUSTRY ORGANIZATION OF MORANG HAS D manded with the government to impose restriction on the export of raw jute to India, RSS news agency reported. In a statement, the chamber has said all the jute industries in the country will be closed down and about 18,000 laborers will be forced out of employment if the trend continues at a time where there is acute shortage of raw jute in the domestic market. Chairman of the organization, Sushil Kumar Dhanawat, asked jute farmers and trade unions to prevent the export of raw jute from the country.

DEFENSE MINISTER MAHESH ACHARYA HAS SAID the national consensus can't be a pre-condition for the government in implementing any program such as integrated security and development program (ISDP). "Yet, we will continue dialogue with all the political parties for effective implementation of ISDP," said Acharya, speaking at a face-to-face program organized here Thursday. Acharya said mobilization of army was just one component of ISDP and insisted that army mobilization did not rule out the possibility of talks with the insurgents.

THE XIVTH INDIAN ARMY EX-SERVICEMEN WEL-fare Organization in Nepal (IEWON) meeting was held at Kathmandu under the chairmanship of Deb Mukharji, Ambassador of India, from 16-17 May 2001. The IEWON is an organization established to look after the welfare of Nepalese Ex-servicemen of Indian Armed Forces. It meets annually to review the welfare projects executed for the Nepalese ex-servicemen of Indian Armed Forces and to plan new welfare projects. The participants include senior officers of the Indian Army and the secretaries and zonal members of the District Soldiers' Boards in Nepal. India disburses NRs 554 crores as pension to 110,502 pensioners in Nepal every year. An expenditure of about IRs 5.13 crores is incurred annually on various welfare schemes for Nepalese ex-servicemen of Indian Army residing in Nepal. ■

“There is neither the possibility nor the need for a mid-term election.”

Ram Chandra Poudel, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, in Deshantar.

* * *

“Leave alone the oppositions, even some Congress leaders are waiting for Maoists to attack police posts so that they can release a prepared statement demanding PM’s resignation.”

Govinda Raj Joshi, Minister for Local Development, criticizing the dissident Congress leaders for not helping the government, at a party program in Dumre, in Kantipur.

* * *

“We won’t rest before taking this movement to its logical conclusion.”

Khadga Prasad Oli, former minister and central leader of Unified Marxist-Leninist, on his party’s movement to oust Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, in Budhabar.

* * *

“At present, the economy of the country is active. The economic activities have increased mainly due to the remittances by the Nepalese workers abroad.”

Prof. Parthiveshwor Timilsina, commenting on the economic situation of the country, in Gorkhapatra.

* * *



Jana Bhawana

“That was not healthy.”

Radha Raman Upadhyaya, former chief of the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), commenting on the recent differences of opinion between CIAA and the Prime Minister’s Office, in Bimarsha.

* * *

“Everybody above 75 years of age

should retire from politics.”

Dr. Dilli Raman Regmi, senior politician, in Punarjagran.

* * *

“If the current situation is not given a way out before six months or a year, the soul of the nation will die.”

Sudip Pathak, rights activist and a member of people’s committee for peace dialogue, stressing on the urgency of dialogue between the government and Maoist rebels, in Jana Bhawana.

* * *

“There is no use talking of foreign investment at a time when even the domestic investors are running scared.”

Rajesh Kaji Shrestha, President of Nepal Chamber of Commerce, in Drishti.

* * *

“I just wish that I would get chance to do different roles.”

Niruta Singh, popular movie actress, when asked about her plans, in Punarjagran.

* * *



Nepali Patra

Shuttling Ranabhat

House of Representatives Speaker Taranath Ranabhat is busy these days shuttling between the residences of Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Sher Bahadur Deuba. As the two former prime ministers live at opposite ends of the capital, Ranabhat's journey must be very taxing. In hopes of gaining something after the removal of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, Ranabhat doesn't seem too bothered by having to make several trips each day. But who foots the transport bill? As long as he is the speaker of the House of Representatives, that's not something Ranabhat should worry about. But shouldn't we?

Oli's Strategy

CPN-UML leader K.P. Sharma Oli is ranked among the more firebrand of our comrades. Wherever he goes, Oli does not miss a chance to talk about corruption in airline



Oli : High on air

deals. His mention of the words "air deal" has sparked new interest among party workers. After the House of Representatives Public Account Committee subcommittee on the China Southwest Airlines deal issued its report on alleged irregularities, Oli has given up

using the word Lauda. Whatever Oli's motive may be in doing so, supporters of party general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal are worried.

Thapa's Destination

It may be truly frustrating for RPP leader Surya Bahadur Thapa to have found few people seriously responding to



Thapa : Many buyers for my idea

his proposal for a national consensus. Nevertheless, he continues to harp the theme wherever he goes. After his meeting with different political leaders, the RPP leader is now visiting different parts of the country to sell his vision of national consensus. If Thapa fails to impress the people as well, where does he expect his next destination to be?

Radical Race

It seems there is a feverish race among student unions affiliated to communist parties to prove who is the most radical in standing up for the cause. After the Maoists-affiliated group burned two cars and a school building in the capital last week and the Marxist-Leninist-linked union set afire a private bus, the student wing of main opposition party has come out with a novel way of

REVELATION

'Politicians Do Not Have Rational Answers'

— RAJESH KAJI SHRESTHA

RAJESH KAJI SHRESTHA, president of Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC), believes frequent bandhs will destroy the country's hopes for economic progress. Shrestha spoke to journalists about the NCC's opinion on bandhs. Excerpts:

How do you see the three-day bandh called by six left parties?

It will destroy the national economy and the people will have to face further hardships. As Nepal's tourism industry is struggling to recover from earlier blows, the three-day bandh will severely affect the process of recovery.

Haven't you talked over this issue with the organizers?

We have requested them to withdraw the three-day bandh on the ground that it is in nobody's interest. We also informed them how much money Nepal stands to lose from the strike.

What was the response of the organizers?

They agreed with us on the economic impact but they put their political agenda in front of us. Politicians do not have rational answers. It seems that the agitators have certain compulsions.

Is this the right way to press demands?

No, it is not a rational way to press demands. I don't know why the main opposition party is sticking to its hard stance.

The leaders of the main opposition party have said the bandh is part of the sacrifices the nation needs to make to achieve certain goals?

Why does the nation need to make sacrifices to fulfil political interests? We don't care about their political interests. What we want is a peaceful society with no political agitation like this. If responsible political parties organize frequent bandhs, what would stop other groups from doing the same?

proving its fiery credentials: burning the chairs of the District Education Officers. In a week, UML's student wing set on fire three chairs in Kathmandu valley. When they see their leaders setting government vehicles on fire, the students must be thinking that their pressure tactics are mild enough.

Bhattarai reacts

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai

rang up SPOTLIGHT and denied his statement of "fasting unto death" published in SPOTLIGHT..... He was so assertive that he said he would give one lakh reward to any body who could prove that statement to be correct. Those who know Bhattarai well need not be assured of his fickle mindedness. He takes no time to make a *volte face*. More so now since he has become almost senile. ■

NEPAL-CHINA RELATIONS

Friends In Need

Poor preparations left Nepal unable to take full benefit from the visit of Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji

By KESHAB POUDEL

For the first time in 12 years, a Chinese premier paid an official visit to Nepal with such a big delegation, including the foreign, trade and transport ministers, but the government was unable to exploit the opportunity to gain more benefits for Nepal.

Although Nepal and China signed some important agreements on trade, development and other issues, Nepal could have extracted much bigger promises from the northern friend.

The opening of the Syaphrubeshi-Rasuwadhi road will provide an alternative transit point through Tibet, but there is a long way to go before it materializes. Both sides have to complete various stages of agreements before the final construction.

The government withdrew some of the projects from their list following the instability sparked by the letter from the Commission of Investigation of Abuse of Authority to Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala on the Lauda Air deal controversy.

After the letter of the CIAA, the government was shaken and preparations for the Zhu visit were totally disrupted for a couple days. Till the last minute of Chinese premier visit, the host was gripped in instability as nobody knew what further steps the CIAA would take.

Prime Minister Koirala was facing severe attacks from all quarters some time before the announcement of the schedule of Chinese premier's trip. The main opposition party took the issue of Koirala's resignation into the streets and the internal squabbling in the

ruling party further weakened his position.

"The visit was successful as the leaders of two countries got an opportunity to share their views," said Foreign Minister Chakra Prasad Bastola. (See interview)

The Chinese cooperation is not very substantial, still it is sufficient to

King Birendra also granted audience to Premier Zhu and had a quiet dinner with him. Apart from Prime Minister Koirala, the Chinese dignitary also met business leaders, providing an indication of where his interest lies.

Premier Zhu met members of parliament and the leader of the main opposition party. Although communist parties control four out of five municipalities of Kathmandu, no municipality organized a civic reception in honor of the Chinese Premier. "This conspicuous lapse in the welcome to the valued friend has generated a big debate why Koirala government overlooked such an important event. It has come as a big surprise why big indigenous business houses were so luke warm in express-



King Birendra (center) with Premier Rongji (right) and PM Koirala (left) : Neighborly talk

make Nepal maintain economic independence. At a time when the number of Indian tourists are declining, the arrival of Chinese tourists may cover the gap.

Although the Chinese premier accepted the request of Nepalese side to build the Baglung-Jomsom-Mustang road, another alternative road to link Nepal with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, things will not be easy when it comes to executing the project.

ing their welcome to the Chinese dignitary," said an analyst.

The Chinese premier carefully avoided making any controversial statement. "Even during the sightseeing trip to Patan, the Chinese premier kept a low profile," said a diplomat.

China and Nepal share stable relations in diverse spheres and have no differences. Increasing the volume of trade with our northern neighbor would add a firm dimension to the bilateral ties. ■



A jam at Prithvi highway : Recurring scene

KANTI RAJPATH Slow Start

Despite being the shortest route to Hetauda, the Kanti Rajpath is yet to get the priority it deserves

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Last year when the landslide at Krishnabhir in the Kathmandu-Mugling section of Prithvi Highway cut off the capital's access to the rest of the country for 10 days, there was a heated public debate about the urgent need for an alternative route to link the capital valley. The idea to develop the Kanti Rajpath was once gain mooted then.

But as soon as the monsoon rain subsided and mudslides stopped, the debate, too, ceased. This year, too, there are already clear signs that more landslides could be in the offing. Even before the onset of the monsoon, the landslide in the same Krishnabhir area obstructed the highway traffic for more than 12 hours — just three weeks ago.

It has been many years since Kanti Rajpath was first recognized as a viable alternate route. But interestingly people get to hear about the importance of this route only during wet season — only to be washed away with the final drops of monsoon.

The need for an alternative route to link the capital valley can not be exaggerated. Though the Tribhuvan Rajpath, which is also known as upper highway, helped the highway travelers during last year's jam, it is considered unreliable and lengthy. Another alternative highway Dhulikhel-Bardibas is under construction and will be ready after five or six years. This highway, however, links the eastern parts of the country.

Kanti Rajpath is one of the oldest recognized alternate route to link the valley with Hetauda, the commercial hub of the inner Terai in the central region. Hetauda is strategically located and provides outlet to both the eastern as well as western cities, not to mention the Indian border points.

The major attraction of Kanti Rajpath lies in its length. It is the shortest route between Kathmandu and Hetauda. Starting from Tikabhairab, a dusty Lalitpur village lying at the banks of Nakkhu river six kilometers south of the valley, the Rajpath takes only 86 kilometer to reach Hetauda. If you go by Prithvi Highway,

Hetauda is around 220 km from Kathmandu.

Although the preliminary construction of the Tikabhairab-Hetauda road was started as early as in mid-50s by the Nepalese army, the route still remains rough and incomplete. At present a narrow and rough road, links Tikabhairab with Chhaveli and Kalche, some 25 kilometers away. Some light vehicles and mini-trucks carrying dairy products from nearby villages in Chhaveli and Bhattedanda ply in the route regularly except during monsoon.

A bridge in the Bagmati river is awaiting construction near Jyamire villa which could link Lalitpur with Makwanpur district.

"The Kanti Rajpath is not only important for Lalitpur district but also for the whole country. If opened, this highway can provide commuters with a two-hour drive to Hetauda," said Madhav Poudel, president of Lalitpur District Development Committee (DDC). "This route can provide the shortest link between Kathmandu and Raxaul." Raxaul, a major Indian border point near Birgunj, is the most-used route for transporting goods to and from Calcutta port in India.

Poudel says, in the face of growing problems of landslides and increased traffic, the country is in dire need for a short alternative. "Kanti Rajpath provides just that," he said.

Understanding the significance of the Kanti Rajpath, the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) — a Korean government body — has been showing interest in financing the project.

"KOICA has already completed feasibility study in 1998. And now we are planning to do a detail design for main construction," said Sang Chul Kim, Attache at the KOICA Nepal Office.

The detail design of the highway is said to take around three years to complete. "We will be starting the detail design hopefully by the beginning of the next year," said Kim Jin-Sik, Counsellor and Consul at the Embassy of Republic of Korea, Kathmandu. The detail design of the road could cost around US\$1.3 million while the main construction could cost around \$17 million and take four

years to complete, according to KOICA Nepal Office.

The South Korean government is prepared to provide grant assistance for the detail design and a long-term soft loan for the main construction under the Economic Development and Cooperation Fund. "Korean companies including the construction firms have been working in Nepal for the last 30 years. Definitely, they would want to participate in the construction of the highway," said Kim Jin-Sik.

The delay in the project taking off is said to be due to the lackadaisical approach of the government. It has been reported that the Nepalese government only recently requested the Korean government for the detail design.

"It is unfortunate that the government has no systematic development priority. The authorities do not pay heed to the requests of elected representatives while formulating development plans and distributing national budget. Kanti Rajpath is merely an example," rued Poudel.

At present the Lalitpur DDC is mobilizing its own resources to develop the road. "But our resources are not enough," said Poudel.

Just last year, the government constructed a crucial bridge over Nakkhu river in Tikabhairab. The bridge cost

Chronology Of Kanti Rajpath Development

- * The first works of Tikabhairab-Hetauda road starts in 1954.
- * Nepal army is given the responsibility of the construction in 1957.
- * A section of the rough road completed in 1959.
- * The road named Kanti Rajpath in 1962.
- * An Italian consulting firm undertakes a study of Kathmandu-Hetauda road in 1971.
- * Works and Transport Ministry urges private parties for Build, Operate and Transfer in 1988.
- * Japanese International Engineering Consultant Association does another study in 1991.
- * Swiss consultants study the road project in 1992.
- * Finnida, too, studies in 1993.
- * Lalitpur District Development Committee (DDC) conducts a survey in 2050 BS (1993/94)
- * A task force headed by Dr. Santa Bir Tuladhar studies the section of the road up to Bagmati river in 2051 BS (1994/95).
- * Two separate committees are formed by Lalitpur municipality and Lalitpur DDC to look into the construction of the road in 2052 (1995/96).
- * Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) undertakes the feasibility study in 1997.
- * The government finally recognizes the road as alternative highway in 2056 (1998/99).

Source : Lalitpur DDC/Madhav P. Poudel

about Rs 12.5 million, according to Kiran Joshi, chief of the Lalitpur district road office.

As the government has not earmarked funds for the development of the highway, the Department of Roads has been involved in limited maintenance work.

"As far as the road department is concerned, apart from building the Tikabhairab bridge, we are only involved

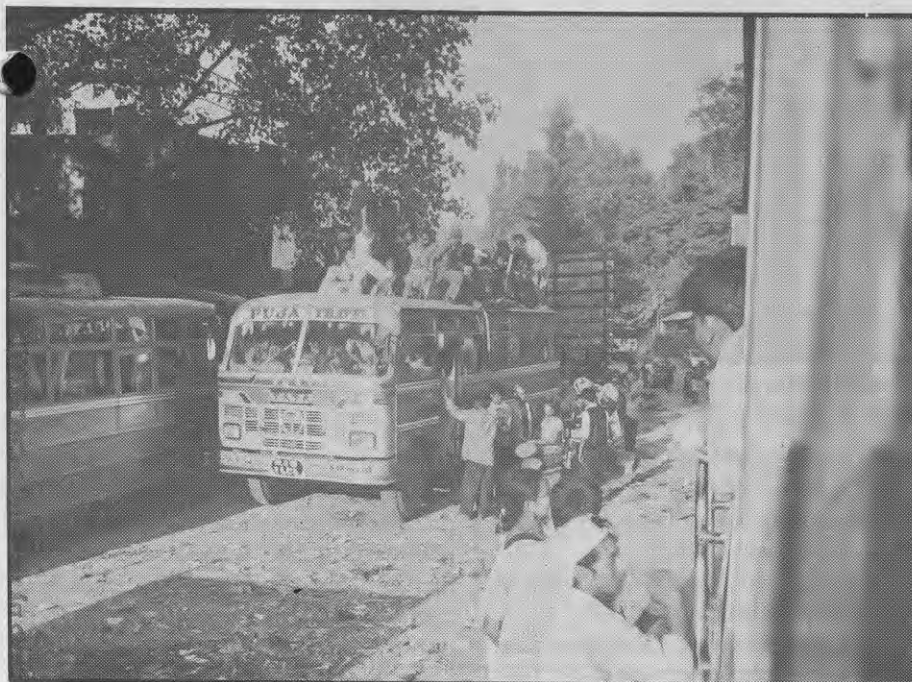
in few patch-up efforts in the Kanti Rajpath," said Suresh Kumar Regmi, deputy general manager at the Department of Roads.

Road officials also believe that there is a need for a shorter alternative to the existing highway. Not only the road officials but also the DDC officials believe that the Nepalese government should expedite the construction of the road by making use of the assistance promised by the Korean government.

Apart from providing a crucial short alternative, Kanti Rajpath could herald a new era of development in the poverty-crushed southern parts of Lalitpur district. "The road can usher in revolutionary changes in the livelihood of people living in nearby villages of Lalitpur and Makwanpur," said Poudel.

Being a shorter course, the highway could help bring down the consumption of fuel for vehicles, increase the age of vehicles by trimming down the wear and tear, lessen the traffic load on Prithvi Highway, save transportation cost, cut down export cost and expand industries and trade in the area.

As the highway commuters have to travel anxiously during the monsoon thanks to the fear of landslides and traffic obstruction, the authorities would do good by introducing alternative routes as soon as possible. ■



A passenger bus : Heavy load

POLITICAL LEADERS

Inconsistency In Their Stand

Nobody can predict what Nepalese political leaders will say or do next

By KESHAB POUDEL

Just as a bad coin drives out a good coin from circulation, the good quality of Nepalese leaders is covered up by their light remarks.

Be it former prime minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, main opposition party leader Madhav Kumar Nepal, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala or RPP leader Surya Bahadur Thapa, all have a character of inconsistency.

If the gathering of leaders at the CPN-UML's meeting to commemorate the death anniversary of Madan Bhandary and Jeev Raj Ashrit was an indication, it showed how alliances can be made or broken at the whim of leaders.

One and half years ago CPN-UML leaders, including Madhav Kumar Nepal, accused then prime minister Bhattarai as corrupt and inefficient. But today Bhattarai is savior of their party. Bhattarai, too, feels very much obliged to the CPN-UML leaders.

How did they suddenly change and become friends? The answer: lust for power and the policy of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". Consider the following statements made by Nepal:

"The present Nepali Congress government led by Krishna Prasad Bhattarai has proved to be the most inefficient in the country,"—Madhav Kumar Nepal, in *Nepal Samacharpatra*, January 10, 2000.

"The government has not only failed to check corruption and worsening law and order condition but is fostering them."

— Madhav Kumar Nepal, *Nepal Samacharpatra*, February 13.

"Bhattaraiji is a great politician who has

sacrificed his life to the cause of democracy. He has to help the campaign to unseat Koirala."

— Madhav Kumar Nepal, CPN-UML general secretary, in *Himalaya Times*, May 17, 2001.

CPN-UML leader K.P. Oli, too, has used many derogatory remarks against Bhattarai, but now he also sees Bhattarai as his ideal.



Nepal (left) with Bhattarai : Strange alliance

What happened in one year to turn Bhattarai from a villain to a hero for UML general secretary Nepal? The political equations have shifted.

Bhattarai, too, was anti-UML when he was heading the government.

"I don't need any certificate from communist leaders about my behaviour. They distort facts to discredit me. All I said in

Birgunj was that it was not a serious crime for a low-level employee to take a bribe of Rs 10 or Rs 20 compared to a prime minister taking a bribe of Rs. 1 million," then-prime minister Bhattarai was quoted as saying in *Gorkhapatra* of December 27, 1999.

Bhattarai, who saw communist leaders as conspirators until some years ago, has now changed his stand and hailed them as most efficient leaders. "CPN-UML leaders Madhavji and Oliji also are also hard-working leaders. They have also suffered hardship. By his experience and experiment, Madhavji has established himself as one of the prominent leaders. I became prime minister for the second time with the blessings of Girijababu. I will be prime minister again. I get the blessings of the CPN-UML." Bhattarai was quoted as saying in *Chalfal* May 20, 2001.

If one follows the statements of Bhattarai and Nepal, their U-turn becomes easily apparent.

Inconsistency in stand results in the deterioration of the quality of politicians. "Inconsistency is a hallmark of political leaders," said a political analyst.

What political leaders said yesterday do not seem to matter the next day. What they say today may not matter tomorrow. "The stands of leaders change every couple of hours," the analyst said.

Political leaders even forget who their enemies and friends are. Although all Nepalese political leaders have the quality of inconsistency, Bhattarai and Nepal top the list of doublespeak.

Such inconsistency was not always an underlying feature of Nepal politics. After the revolution of 1950, people talked about B.P. Koirala, whose greatest virtue was consistency in his opinion whether in power or prison. His views regarding democracy and dictatorship remained consistent. Such steadfastness is not found in other leaders.

Sometimes political leaders make communists their No. 1 friend and the next moment their main enemy. If the leaders are confused about their enemies, they create them within the party. This has been the character of Nepalese politics. Bhattarai and Nepal are no exception. ■

TOURISM

Successive Blows

Why do opposition parties, hotel workers and even some entrepreneurs want to bring the tourism industry to a standstill?

By AKSHAY SHARMA

After the hijacking of an Indian Airlines flight from Kathmandu to New Delhi in the last week of December 1999, Nepal's tourism sector has undergone several convulsions.

Despite the series of sustained efforts aimed at paralyzing the sector, Nepal's tourism industry has been able to survive. From indefinite closedown of hotels to the hostile propaganda unleashed against Nepal by India's mainstream media, Nepal has still been able to draw visitors.

In the first three months of the current fiscal year, tourist arrivals from third countries witnessed a single-digit increase.

Nepal Tourism Board also took certain positive steps to lure Indian tourists. The board has started a special campaign to attract Indian tourists to Nepal by publicizing the rich and diverse itinerary the country has to offer.

The Nepalese media, too, created some difficulties for tourism by its sensationalism. In October and November last year, major Nepalese newspapers were full of stories of birds hitting aircraft at country's international airport.

Although arrivals of Indian tourists plummeted in 2000 and during the first three months of this year, total arrivals still remain positive.

"The nation has to pay a heavy price for frequent strikes. I don't see any

rationale behind them," said Dr. Badri Prasad Shrestha, addressing journalists.

If things remain unchanged, the three-day general strike called by the six left parties, including the main opposition CPN-UML, will push the Nepalese tourism industry to the brink.

"The tourism industry will be destroyed by the three-day bandh. If political parties are really sincere about uplifting the national economy, they have to bring other types of agitation programs," said Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, president of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Others agree that the tourism industry would be damaged beyond recovery if political parties do not give up such irrational forms of protest.

"How can tourists come to visit Nepal when they don't have transport to go to the hotels," said one tourism entrepreneur.

Although opposition leaders are trying hard to justify their decision to hold the bandh, they haven't been successful. "We don't want to damage the economy, what we want is to press Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala to resign," said MP Dr. Dilli Raj Khanal.

The people are not in a mood to support such destructive activities. It is beyond their imagination that a party that is running the shadow government would choose to take such a harmful course.

"It is not our wish to go ahead with such program, but we are forced to take such a harsh decision," said Dr. Khanal. He did not mention who forced the organizers to take such a suicidal step.

As tourism has a major contribution in the national economy, any negative effect in this sector would harm the country's long-term interest. If Nepalese political parties are really sincere to the cause of the nation, they would have to start thinking constructively. ■



Tourists travelling by rickshaw : Hit by strikes

NINTH PLAN

Poor Performance

A recent study says the targets of the periodic plan are unlikely to be met

By BHAGIRATH YOGI

Given the performance of the economy over the last three years, the targets set by the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) are unlikely to be fulfilled, says a latest report. According to the mid-term review of the Ninth Plan that is yet to be made public — conducted by the Nepal Rastra Bank, the growth target set by the plan document is least likely to be achieved.

As against the target of attaining 6 percent growth rate per annum during the plan period, during the first three years (1997-2000) the average growth rate achieved has been only 4.6 percent. It is mainly because of the poor performance of the agriculture sector (2.9 percent of growth rate as against the target of 4.0 percent). (See Box)

“Even if the GDP growth rate maintains the current pace of 6 percent per annum for the next two years the average growth during the plan period will be not more than 5 percent — less than 1 percentage point than the target,” says the report.

The targets related to consumption, investment and savings are no better. As against the target of attaining a growth of 6.1 percent in investment, the average growth of investment in the first three years has been only 3.4 percent. This is because of the ensuing political instability and slowdown in the economic activities, says the report.

The Ninth Plan was formulated during the coalition era (1994-99). Though the second year of the plan saw the formation of a majority Nepali Congress government after general elections in 1999, the growing indiscipline and infighting in the ruling Nepali Congress

had had adverse impact upon the performance of the government. Even today, the situation is no better.

Despite the government's commitment to cut down unnecessary expenditure, downsize the bureaucracy and privatize state-owned enterprises, nothing spectacular has happened during the first three years of the plan period. The government had set a plan of privatizing 30 SOEs during this period but so far only one company, Nepal Tea Development Corporation (NTDC) has been privatized and the privatization of the Butwal Power Company is under way.

Over the last three years, the government expenditure has grown by annual rate of 12.4 percent on an average. Increasing debt liabilities of the government and spiraling expenses under internal security headings are mainly responsible for continuous rise in the government expenditure. Similarly, as against the target of spending Rs 189.58 billion in development works, the government has been able to spend only nearly 42.9 percent of the target (Rs 81.29 billion) in the first three years. If the trend continues, the government will not be able to spend more than three-fourth of the targeted amount.

The performance of the government on the revenue mobilization front, too, is not satisfactory. Revenue mobilization over the last three years has almost remained stagnant at 11.0 percent per annum over the last three years as against the revenue mobilization of 10.8 percent at the end of the Eighth Plan. Foreign aid mobilization in the first three years, too, is not satisfactory with the aid flow remaining at only 42.6 percent of the targeted amount.

The report has also made some recommendations to improve the performance of the government during the rest of the plan period. Referring to the recommendation of the Administrative Reforms Commission in 1991 to reduce the number of posts in the civil service to 70,000 from over 90,000 now, the report says the government should scrap unne-



Export items : Initial pick-up impressive

essary grades in the lower rung of the civil service by formulating an organization structure.

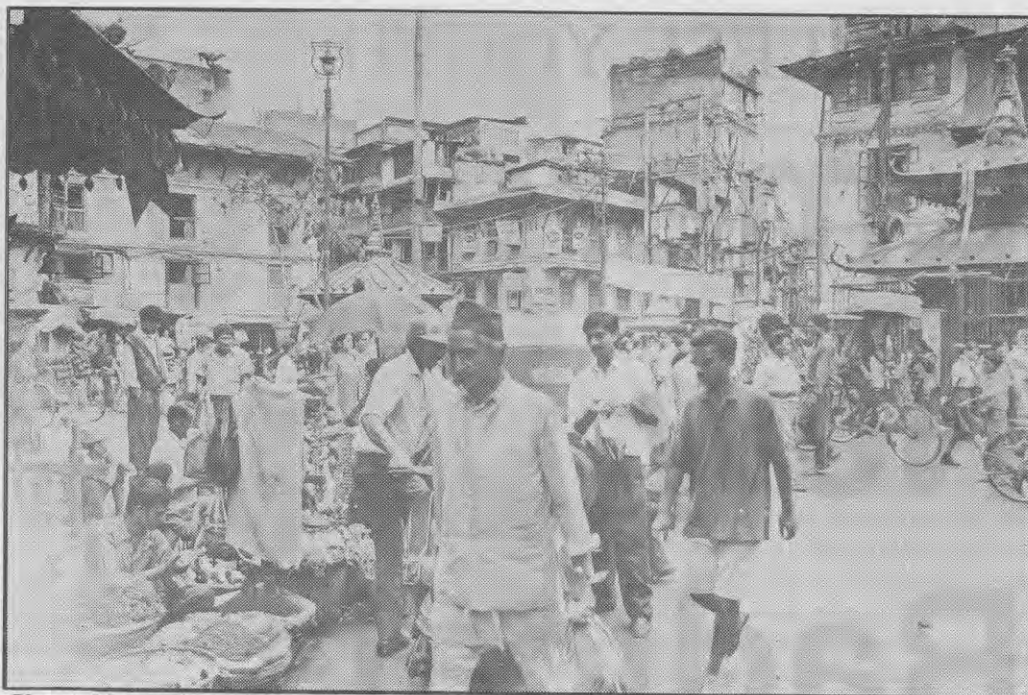
During this period, the government has reduced the number of ministries to 21 from 26. The report recommends that there still is the need for reducing unnecessary government offices and making local level bodies more effective as per the spirit of decentralization.

Saying that development projects are still selected under political pressure — nearly 700 projects are still in the implementation phase, the report has recommended improvement in the selection process of the projects and back them with adequate budget.

In order to mobilize more revenue, the government should check leakage at the customs point, enforce the billing system strongly to implement the Value Added Tax effectively and implement the provision of banking transactions for trade transactions with Tibet Autonomous Region of China, the report said. It has, however, not mentioned anything about the impact of the government's move to mobilize army at the customs point to check illegal trade.

Regarding privatization, the report says that there is an urgent need to remove the environment of uncertainty related to the state-owned enterprises. If these enterprises were run in a professional way by doing away with political interference, there would be improvement in their performance, the report says.

Of course, there are some positive aspects of the economy. The foreign exchange reserves with the banking system in the country reached equivalent to Rs 105.51 billion by mid-December 2000 which is adequate to finance imports for a period of 11 months. Similarly, there have been significant progress in the exports front. The total exports from Nepal rose to US\$ 751 million in 1999-2000, up from US\$ 399 million at the end of the Eighth Plan.



Vegetable market : Agro-products need to rise

Interestingly, the report prepared by the central bank remains silent about the progress toward meeting the overriding objective of the Ninth Plan — to reduce

poverty from 42 percent at the end of the Eighth Plan to 32 percent during the plan period. "There is a need of a separate survey to see if the incidence of poverty has come down," the report said.

An independent report commissioned by the NPC has claimed that the incidence of poverty has declined marginally to around 39 percent during the first three years of the plan period, mainly due to the influx of remittance to the tune of up to Rs 77 billion per annum. The report is yet to be endorsed by the officials.

Since its journey on the path of planned development in 1956, Nepal has made considerable progress in the areas related to infrastructure development and social sector.

But as nearly half of the population is destined to live below the poverty line even at the turn of the century, whether the change in figures at the end of the periodic plans will make any positive impact upon the lives of hundreds of thousands of poor Nepalese remains to be seen. ■

Target and Achievement of the GDP

Sector	target*	achievement**
Agriculture	4.0	2.9
Non-agriculture	7.3	6.0
i) Industry	9.1	7.1
ii) Electricity	10.4	6.1
iii) Construction	5.9	4.4
iv) Trade	7.4	5.2
v) Transport	8.7	7.2
vi) Finance	5.8	5.4
vii) Social Sector	7.0	7.3
Total GDP (at factor cost)	6.0	4.6

Note: * stands for annual growth rate targeted by the Ninth Plan.

** stands for average growth rate during the first three years of the Ninth Plan.

(Source: Central Bureau of Statistics)

NEPALESE YOUTH Emerging New Radicals

Its traditional image of peace and tolerance fading away, Nepal risks becoming a playground for a violent breed of youth. At a time when a large number of young Nepalis are veering towards radical ideologies, the behavior of the emerging society is becoming less predictable. The incidents of the last few months point to the danger that Nepalese youth, who are being groomed under the influence of increasing aggressiveness and anarchy, may become the source of great instability

By KESHAB POUDEL

The District Education Officers of Bhaktapur and Lalitpur experienced the horror of their life when a group of youths kicked them out of their offices and set fire to their chairs. These attacks were part of a campaign of the student wing of the main opposition CPN-UML to show how violent they could become in the course of their agitation against the country's education policy.

- In Batutole area in the heart of the

capital, a group of youngsters attacked another youth with a sharp Khukri and sticks.

- Two weeks ago, another group of students tried to burn Rupy Singh, principal of Rupy's International School, as she was working in her office. A restaurant at Jeetpur Phedi was ransacked and burned.

- These are only a few examples of the destruction unleashed by the youth in recent times. A large number of other cases of extortion, coercion and violent activities go unnoticed.

The current behavior of Nepalese

youth shows that they have developed a habit of living in situations of violence and intimidation. Students of government colleges aged between 16-21, who come from rural areas for higher education in the capital, have deviated from their traditional values.

As children of illiterate parents, youth who come to urban areas for education do not hesitate to join any kind of movement, whether it is justifiable or not.

Although activities like smashing windows, burning cars, obstructing common citizens from moving freely are



Youths obstructing street : Culture of violence

against the rule of law, political leaders, who are the role models of many of these students, justify such acts as a necessary means to achieve ends.

"It is right to call a general strike when the government turns a deaf ear to the demand of the country. Students have always played major role in bringing change in the country," said Shankar Pokharel, a CPN-UML leader who was a student leader until a few years ago.

Apart from these mobs of students affiliated with political parties that say they are struggling for a cause, there is a violent streak in another group of youth: the urban youth, offspring of people in positions of power, including bureaucrats and politicians. Organized student groups, which are regarded as powerful themselves, are also used to destabilize the political process through criminalization. As their parents are literate and enjoy social status, the urban youth always receive the backing of society.

A third group of youths is turning increasingly aggressive. During general strikes and protest demonstrations, they are used to destroy public property. This group mostly comprises street children who are totally deviated from the social mainstream. As the number of such youth, who don't have social and economic status, rises in the city, there are fears of a

greater threat to peace and stability in the long run. Political forces often use this group of youth to terrorize the common people.

Political leaders, business groups and other internal and external forces influencing the political process exploit the potentials of these youth to create panic in society. Things remain under the control of the patrons as long as the group members follow their orders. If they turn hostile, the situation risks spiralling out of control. When the youth find an easy way of making money and gaining social and economic status through violent means, few can avoid the temptation. In such a situation, the friendly youth of today's society may fall into the hands of the enemy.

There has been no concerted effort to study the criminal behavior of the youth, juveniles and other groups in Nepal. Worse, no one considers such a study necessary. "The resolution adopted by the recent government attorneys' conference demanding the establishment of a crime research center is a very timely step. Such centers are entrusted with the task of studying criminal behavior of offenders, cause of the crime, rehabilitation of the offenders, impact and effectiveness of the existing criminal laws," said Attorney-General Badri Bahadur Karki.

It seems almost normal these days to listen to experiences of terror and violence from different sections of society, including ministers, bureaucrats, businessmen, teachers and common citizens. Such activities are made to appear justified as long as they occur under the cover of political ideology. The real threat is emerging of violent gangs and local Mafia, though small in number, who also link their cause with some political groups.

Why are the young pre-disposed to violence and anarchism in such a way? The youth who are groomed in the current atmosphere, can save themselves or push themselves over the brink by being immersed in a culture that glorifies violence and revenge. There is not a single reason behind this growing militancy, as Nepalese society has inherited some of these traits through the process of modernization and westernization.

Nepal's traditional values are based on an abiding sense of respect, integrity and honor. But now political parties, particularly communists, are instilling among the young the radical thoughts of Stalin, Mao and Lenin. What can one expect from a youth that believes in the ideology of Stalin who justified the physical elimination of enemies for political gain?

Religious leaders argue that the fading of Hindu culture is responsible for this behavioral change. "In the early days, it was religious authority which molded the behavior of the youth. In the modern society, it is the sense of rule of law, which helps to shape the youth's outlook. In the absence of rule of law and religious authority, such deviation in youth is inevitable," said Radha Krishna Adhikary, a professor at Balmiki Campus. "If the young mind remains vacant, lacking faith in religion and law, lawlessness will ruin our society."

As all political parties recruit youth from educational institutions, it may not be hard to explain the tide of youth violence. For political mileage, parties justify mobilizing the power of the youth. The new violent culture originated from the decline in religious authority. When the youth are learning the values that run contrary to their traditional culture, it is natural to see anarchism. "Values play

the most prominent role in the life of every individual. They encompass the entire region of human endeavor, whether it concerns feeling or willing or doing. Values are considered as potential determiners of human behavior," said Dr. Niranjana Prasad Upadhyay, a senior psychologist. Nepal's culture is more tolerant and egalitarian than the cultures of other parts of the world. However, the penetration of modernization is pushing Nepal into irrationalism and anarchism.

Other anthropologists blame the lack of social control and proper socialization responsible for the present situation. "Our youth are confused about their role. They were taught to respect the elders at the

the prime minister. In such a situation, restoring law and order become an impossible task.

Violence in the youth leads to the breakdown of institutions. The pictures of Lords Krishna, Rama, Shiva and Mahatma Gandhi that used to hang in Nepalese homes now seem to be replaced by those of Marx, Lenin and Mao, who taught ways of paralyzing society. If the youth are groomed under such circumstances, one can expect society to plunge into greater violence and anarchy.

What kind of tolerance can you expect from youth who were taught to eliminate the enemy? The young are being raised on an ideology that seeks to elimi-

violent campaigns to overthrow the Panchayat system, is facing a difficult situation in power. Once the youth develop the tendency to break the law, it is difficult to wean them away from that path. "During the agitation against the Panchayat system, the present ruling party called on its young supporters to disobey authority. They do not command the moral authority to persuade the youth to abandon violence," an analyst said.

The CPN-UML will face a similar situation if it wins power. The party leaders are today asking their youth to break the law by organizing a three-day shutdown. They will lose the moral ground to ask other parties to abide by the law when they go to power.

The violent nature of the youth has already been reflected in different parts of the country. Major towns in Nepal have witnessed massive violent street agitation in the last few months as burning government vehicles and private property seem to be a normal and well-accepted practice. Under the banner of political parties, desperate and frustrated youth have been justifying their anger against the establishment.

"Nepal, once known as a country of friendly and tolerant people, is turning into a breeding ground for violent youth. Who will benefit from such behavior and how can the youth recover their faith in the social process?" asked a social scientist.

"In a country like ours, the youth should not be seen as a problem. They should be considered as a key resource for nation building," said Padma Lal Devkota, an anthropologist. The youth have an important role to play." Although the nature of violence is different in various parts of the country, the youth are actively taking part in violent activities with an aim to disobey the authority of the state. In the absence of certain well-accepted values, Nepalese youth are forced to follow the wrong path.

Security Firms

There is plenty of evidence to show that the youth from various parts of the country are being groomed under the psyche of violence. In urban areas like Kathmandu, student migrants from the



A street rally : Political pawns

home but they are taught to disobey the order in school and other institutions," said one.

"The youth will ruin society if they go scot-free for their criminal offense. Formal and legitimate state authority, which is supposed to control through the administration of criminal justice, is found to be totally inadequate and inefficient," said Attorney-General Karki.

The advent of the culture of the jungle should not come as a surprise at a time when political parties act irresponsibly by encouraging a hate campaign against every authority and institution, including

nate the enemy physically, if possible, or assassinate the character of those who don't necessarily agree with you. For youth who are trained in such political thought, logic and rationalism do not have any meaning.

The youth are being taught the necessity of violence as just other means to justify the ends. Whatever the aims of the demonstration may be, destruction of public property cannot be considered good for society. If one teaches the lesson of hating authority, how can one expect others to abandon that path?

The Nepali Congress, which launched

rural areas have always seen violent politics as a mean to make an instant fortune. The youth know that most politicians, who are their role models, were one-time street agitators.

More than ninety-percent of Nepalese communist leaders, including CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, were formerly student leaders. In the Nepali Congress, Sher Bahadur Deuba, Ram Chandra Poudel and dozens of ministers were one-time student leaders who blocked roads and defied state authority.

The chances of rising up the leadership ladder is higher through violence than by working hard. At the same time, the Maoist insurgents are teaching a gun culture to the youth. "Nobody reports against the Maoists. They're afraid they'll be killed. Every one is scared," said an analyst.

Security Business

The booming business security firms are enjoying provides a firm evidence of the radicalization of society. These days almost all private companies employ security guards that take care of the office



A bus-load of activists : Misuse of youthful energy?

and employees. Even multinational firms like Group 4 are providing security in many offices. Until ten years ago, no one required private security. Hotels, industries and business houses were regarded as safe. There is a growing awareness of security risks and an increased perception of threat. In these circumstances, private security firms continue proliferate.

After the beginning of the Maoist insurgency and the emergence of threats from other groups, many business groups have started to hire their own security guards. "If we do not hire security guards, there is a possibility of attack from different groups," said a businessmen. "We don't know when a group of youth will enter our compound and demand ransom."

In a sense, such fears defy reality: Nepal Police's overall crime rate has actually dropped. Since the beginning of the Maoist movement, the overall crime rate has fallen. However, such statistics give scant comfort.

The fear is growing that Nepal has become an ideal stalking ground for an emerging generation of radical youth. Politically radicals may be tamed, but who will tame other violent groups?

Still Safe

Compared with other cities of South Asia, Nepal is still a safe place to live in. During the Panchayat system, the youth were groomed in a disciplined manner where few ideas of radicalism found place. Although the Congress and Communists outfits had their students and teachers wings, they did not have strong influence over the large number of young generation. The referendum of 1979 and the entry of communists and Congress student wings in the university changed that situation.

Following the restoration of democracy in 1990, the university has turned into a recruiting place for youth. Political parties find youth as cheap and reliable volunteers to carry out various activities. Now, political parties are even eyeing school children as potential recruits.

The shopkeepers in downtown Kathmandu and transport owners did not have to worry about any kind of disruption. Events like bandh and general strike were virtually non-existent under the Panchayat system. In those days, everyone could sleep without fear, leaving their



Street agitation : For whose benefit?

balcony doors open to cool breezes. "Nepal is not going to be the same again. We will have to face more difficult times in coming days," said an analyst.

The youth are ready to storm the gates of Singha Durbar, as they do not see anything wrong in burning private buses and property to press their demands. For most of the last decade, politics has dominated education and all other sectors. With fascism, communism and other such ideologies fading away from the world, Nepalese youth are facing their full impact.

The behavior of youth

Science has a new understanding of the roots of violence that promises to explain why not every child with access to radical friends does turn so. In other children, constant exposure to pain and violence can make their brain's system of stress hormones unresponsive, like a keypad that has been pushed too often just stops working. These are the kids with antisocial personalities. They typically have low heart rates and impaired emotional sensitivity. In the Nepalese context, every party that is not in power feels a sense of injustice on themselves. The different responses of parents produce different brains and thus different behavior. Behavior is the result of dia-



Protest rally : Youth in the forefront

logue between your brain and your experience. There is some out-and-out brain pathologies that lead to violence. The good news that understanding the roots of violence offers clues on how to prevent it.

The youth culture of Nepal, in comparison with that of other parts of the world, predominantly associates itself with value-orientation, but it is gradually losing ground.

Youth have to assume a cohesive form with coherent policy and direction. Students see themselves as foot soldiers of democracy, yet many activists show little taste for the conflict and compromises inherent in a democratic system.

Traditional values are decaying in Nepal as parental controls and social values are disappearing. For the short term, various political parties and interest groups may benefit by injecting radical orientation in the youth to destabilize the political process.

However, in the long run, there seems to be a total breakdown of social control, threatening the stability of society. In these circumstances, everyone has to pay heavy price once others misuse the youth groups. The worst side of the story is that political parties and leaders are exploiting their youth supporters for temporary gains.

Those political leaders and parties supposed to control and regulate the youth are using them in a totally destructive manner. There is no mechanism to control the youth. The political parties are trying to consolidate their own positions by taking advantage of the restlessness of the radical youth. Under a political cover, vandalism, extortion, coercion and violence are justified. How long can political leaders go on mobilizing the youth power for their own selfish purposes? ■



Police arresting agitators : Who is to blame?

'Politicians Must Have The Vision To Change The Youth'

— PADMA LAL DEVKOTA

PADMA LAL DEVKOTA, who teaches anthropology at the Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology of Tribhuvan University, holds the view the youth are deviating from their traditional role. Devkota spoke to SPOTLIGHT on various issues relating to the role of the youth.

What do you think is the root cause behind the violent nature in youth?

Different societies have youth of different natures. As the values of urban and rural youth are different, their nature and behavior also have distinct characters. The parents of the rural youth are generally illiterate, whereas the parents of urban youth are literate. The rural youth are taught to respect their parents.

Is there a clear pattern?

There are many factors that encourage youth to deviate from their tradition. In rural areas, parents are illiterate and send their children to urban centers for education. Interestingly, as soon as the offspring of rural parents are educated, they tend to deviate from their value system and disobey their parents.

When do the rural youth start to defy the law?

As soon as the rural youth come to urban areas, they meet people like themselves and form an alliance. When the rural youth form the group, they automatically understand their power. Political parties and other groups use different methods to use them. As soon as youth understand their power, they become more aggressive.

How do you see the youth of urban areas?

The urban youth are children of power-oriented people. They may be sons or daughters of bureaucrats, politicians or police officers. Generally the parents of urban youth are literate and enjoy social status, but they defend every act of their children.

This group of youth is more violent.

Is there any other group?

There is a third group of youth who are totally deviated from society. These youth represent people without proper socialization, people who have suffered family tragedy and people who belong to the ignored class. This group does not have a political base, economic or social status. The street kids can be placed in this group. Politicians can use them because those belonging to this group do not hesitate to use any means. Politicians encourage them to violate the law.

Do you think politicians are only ones who exploit the youth?

No, there are also criminals and Mafia who misuse the power of the youth. However, there is greater opportunity for the youth in politics and there is more privilege.

Why are Nepalese youth turning violent?

Youths have their own expectations and they will do everything if someone promise to fulfil his or her expectations. A large number of youth enter the job market each year but only a few get opportunities. The youth know that only political backing helps them get a job.

Are there other factors?

Youth also see how their role models have achieved social and economic status. They know that most of the political leaders have achieved their objectives by smashing windows and burning cars. In this context, they understand that participating in agitation would help them achieve their target. To follow a party is shortest way to get status. If we see the trends, this reasoning proves right. Most of the leaders in today's politics were one-time student agitators.

What role do political leaders need to play?

They have to stop recruiting students. Instead of encouraging them to join poli-

tics, political leaders should develop certain model and norms. Politicians must set the youth in the right direction.

Then why aren't politicians doing this?

They know that no youth would follow them if they developed certain norms. If employment were available, no youth would have to follow political leaders.

Do you see any threat from the misuse of youth power?

Yes. If political parties alone don't fulfil the desire of youth, they will go to any extent. Any force may use the youth. When the youth deviate from society, they can do anything — even kill their masters. There are politics-, culture- and social-specific roots.

Why are the youth going against the law?

Culturally, no society can accept crime, but the tendency in rural areas is gradually changing. Law-breaking tendencies are emerging. This is really a bad practice.

What is responsible for the existing situation?

It is coming mostly through the processes of modernization and westernization. We have been injecting radical western thought in the mind of Nepalese who are socialized in the sense of respect, integrity and honor. Children are forced to learn destructive ideas. If this situation continues, the social structure will be destroyed.

Do you see the youth as a problem?

The youth should not be seen as a problem. They should be considered as the best resources for nation building and overall development. Political leaders must develop the vision to change them. In the process what they need to do is to sacrifice the vested interest. ■



'I Have Been Trying To Make Our Foreign Policy More Dynamic'

— CHAKRA PRASAD BASTOLA

Foreign Minister **CHAKRA PRASAD BASTOLA**, who also holds the agriculture and cooperatives portfolio, is one of the prominent young leaders of the ruling Nepali Congress. Since his appointment as a foreign minister a year ago, Bastola has visited more than half a dozen countries, including Nepal's two neighbors, India and China. A former ambassador to India, Bastola spoke to **KESHAB POUDEL** on Nepal's foreign policy and other issues. Excerpts:

A Chinese premier recently paid an official visit to Nepal after 12 years. How do you assess the outcome of the Zhu Rongji visit?

It was unique in the sense that we had been working on development issues for quite some time and about other matters relating to trade. We have received assurances that they will be looked into. To sum up, the visit was productive and useful.

What were the issues Nepal and China discussed during the visit?

When we talk about issues, we tend to speak as if there are problems. The speciality of Sino-Nepalese relations is that we do not have problems as such. So whatever we talked about basically had to do with development cooperation and find ways and means to balance the deficit trade between the two countries. We did talk about the potentials in the field of tourism, ways of expediting cooperation and making it more rewarding for both countries. We also discussed regional and international issues of mutual concern.

Did the Chinese premier also raise the issue of anti-Tibet activities in Nepal and Beijing's security concerns?

No, such issues were not taken up in our bilateral talks. We have reaffirmed time and again that we will not allow Nepalese soil to be used against any friendly country. We are committed to that principle.

Before Zhu's arrival, you had told the media that the Chinese authorities might raise security issues?

They did not bring up security issues, but as I had mentioned earlier, they have always raised the issue of Taiwan and Tibet. We have always communicated our point of view to them. We support the one-China policy. Nepal sees Tibet as an integral part of China and Taiwan as a part of China. The

Chinese authorities thanked us for our stand and commitment on both issues.

At a time when India and China are competing to establish their influence in Asia, what do you think India's response to Zhu's visit to Nepal would be?

I have been following Chinese Premier Zhu's statements during his visit to the region. If I remember correctly, Premier Zhu's remarks in Pakistan also gave some indication about their position. He said Chinese relations with Pakistan are independent of Chinese relations with India. In our case also, our relations with India did not figure in our talks with the Chinese.

Did Chinese side have any specific agenda?

Of course, we held talks on specific and general issues. In general, we talked about regional and international issues. We also discussed issues of specific interest. We talked about more development cooperation and bridging the trade gap. We talked about these issues very specifically.

How do you see the agreement between two countries on building the Rasuwa-Syaphrubeshi road?

The Chinese held the view that there is no stable road between Lhasa and Kathmandu. Even their part of the road from Lhasa to Khasa is not stable. So they felt that there is a need for a stable road between Lhasa and the Nepalese border and up to Kathmandu. So I think from their point of view, this may be a stable road connecting Kathmandu and Lhasa.

What was the response of the Chinese to the Baglung-Jomsom-Mustang road proposal?

We proposed that they undertake to build the road under a grant. We were assured that they would look into our request after they completed the Rasuwagadhi road.

Nepal and China have had a frequent exchange of visits in the last year. Why isn't this the case with India?

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala visited India last year, which was very significant. Before that, I also paid a visit to India. Other ministers have also visited India. We can say that Indian have become more preoccupied with the region.

In recent years, some strain seems to have set on relations between India and Nepal. Is the

"The speciality of Sino-Nepalese relations is that we do not have problems as such."

slackening of visits a reflection of this?

As India is a big country, you have to understand its interest in regional matters. But, as I had also mentioned during my visit, long intervals in high-level interaction are not a very healthy sign. We should make sure this should not happen. Even the Chinese premier's visit took place after 14 years. The Indian prime minister visited Nepal not so long ago.

It seems the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has become active since the Nepali Congress formed a majority government two years ago. After your appointment, you have paid more than half a dozen visits, including two trips each to China and India. How do you look at it?

What I have tried to do is to make international relations more dynamic. When you react and respond to a situation, you get a counter response. And then things start. If you do not have enough time to give to an issue and do not get a response and do not interact, the results will not come. What has happened in the last one year after I went to Shital Niwas (Foreign Ministry) is that we have been trying to become proactive in responding to issues, countries and visits.

Do you see the possibility of holding the long-delayed SAARC summit in the near future?

We are doing our best to see the SAARC process take place, ultimately leading to the summit. We have been involved in quiet diplomacy to convene the SAARC summit.

As foreign minister, you have made many visits. What has Nepal gained from such visits?

I visited Finland and Denmark and Belgium. In Denmark, I announced our desire to open an embassy. I also met the Swedish foreign minister who was busy with the European Union.

How do you see the functioning of the foreign ministry?

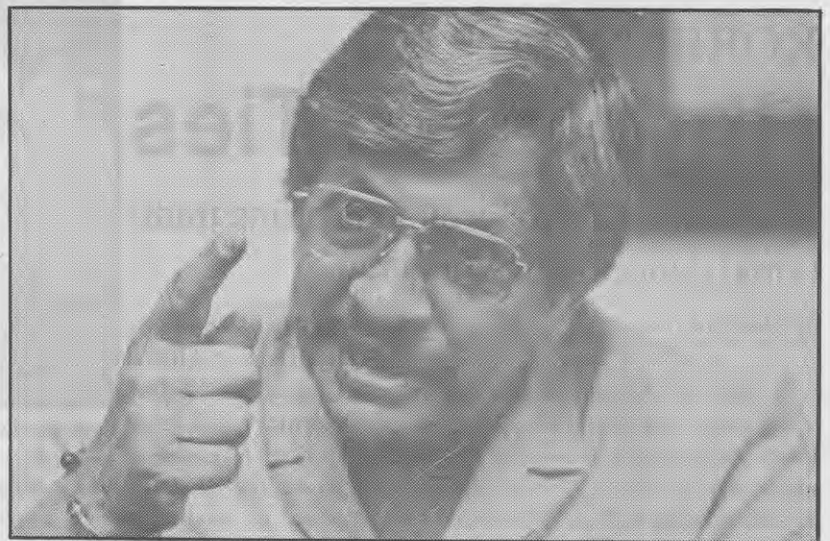
We want to be proactive and dynamic because in terms of the Bhutanese issue and other matters, the last one year has been very hectic. We do not have very big staff. All these activities have geared up its activities. I might even say that the staff is overloaded with work.

What is going on with the verification process of Bhutanese refugees?

They are making progress but the process is very slow. The process of verification is a learning process. We need not be agitated so soon. We have to find ways and means to expedite matters.

You have the additional portfolio of agriculture and cooperatives. What is your stand on Agriculture Perspective Plan?

We are working on it. I want to correct the



anomalies the APP has.

What are the anomalies in the APP?

First of all, it is a fertilizer-based strategy. Now fertilizer has become a problem in terms of import and transport. The other thing is irrigation, as the APP identified shallow tubewell as a ground water irrigation system. Agriculture cannot achieve desired results by introducing shallow tubewell. It is technically not feasible to irrigate the land targeted by the APP. These are among the things that have to be reviewed.

How do you see the response of donor countries?

Donors are quite positively towards the proposal. The review will bring some results and we are trying to gear up the changes. The structural review has been done and functional review remains.

Cooperatives also fall under your ministry. At a time when a large number of cooperatives are reported to be misusing public money, what plan do you have to regulate them?

The ministry is aware about the situation. We will take necessary steps to regulate them. As you know, cooperatives are rooted in a philosophy of economic justice to support the rural population. It is a unit formed by like-minded people. Frankly speaking, we have not been able to follow this concept.

Your party secured a majority in the parliament with the pledge that it would provide stability. However, internal squabbling is on the ascendant once again, breeding renewed instability. How do you look at this situation?

It is very unfortunate that we have a lot of internal squabbling. It hampers the development agenda and other issues of national concern. We have to overcome it. We have to realize what our responsibility is. We have to prove that our party is different. ■

"We are doing our best to see the SAARC process take place, ultimately leading to the summit."

KOREAN DANCE

Rhythm Of Ties

A leading Korean group performs traditional dances in Kathmandu

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Apart from growing economic relations, Nepal and the Republic of Korea are now going to have closer cultural ties as well.

Coinciding with the Visit Korea Year 2001, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea organized the 2001 Korean Traditional Dance Group Performance at the Birendra International Convention Center on May 22. A team of artistes from the Seoul Metropolitan Dance Theater (SMDT) staged the performance of traditional Korean dance. "The cultural exchanges will boost our relations at the people's level," said Kim Jin-Sik, Counsellor and Consul at the Embassy.

The dance program covered a variety of performances including Taepyeong Mu, Drum Dance, Ganggangsullae, Salpuri, Cheon-do, Fan Dance, Chum Bon, Mask Dance and Janggo Drum Dance. Each of the dances involving different kinds of movements were testimony to the rich culture and tradition of Korea.

The SMDT is a leading force in Korean traditional dance. The theater travels around the world introducing the rich cultural heritage of Korea through a diverse repertoire. The vibrant dance performances enable the audience to appreciate the beauty of the Korean dance and get a taste of the rich Korean tradition. As the country is achieving great success in economic development, Koreans are deeply attached to their traditions and culture.

Nepal and the Republic of Korea established diplomatic relations in 1974. Ever since, the range and volume of bilateral ties has been expanding. The Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the Korean government's body, is involved in various development projects in Nepal.

Some of the major KOICA activities include its help in the computerization of

the Nepalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chameliya Hydro-electric Project, study of Kanti Rajpath and

so on. The KOICA has also been helping Nepal by sending trainers, experts, doctors, taekwondo instructors and volunteers.

The Republic of Korea is also an important trading partner of Nepal. Electronic items, vehicles, chemicals are the major goods imported from the Republic of Korea whereas goods exported there include carpet, pashmina and agriculture products. But the balance of trade is heavily in favor of the Republic of Korea.

Nepal imported goods worth US\$26 million from the Republic of Korea in 1999, which came down to \$20 million in 2000. The decline in this trade volume was



Korean dance : Rich culture

mainly because in the latter years, South Korean car companies like Hyundai and Daewoo opened up their assembly plants in India and began marketing their products to Nepal through those plants itself. Last year alone the volume of the imports of cars from these companies was around \$20 million.

Recently, Golchha Organization, a leading business house of Nepal, in collaboration with the Daewoo company has opened an assembly plant in Nepal for manufacturing television. "In future, car assembly plants could also be opened in Nepal," said Kim. ■

Hama Bags ISO Award

Hama Iron and Steel Industries Pvt Ltd, a leading producer of iron rods, has recently been awarded the international ISO 9001-2000 for manufacturing high-class rods. Established in 1990, the plant is spread over a 2,000-square-meter area in Simara, in Bara district. The industry started production in 1993 and has already attracted investment worth Rs 200 million. Though it took off with an annual production capacity of 8,000 metric tons of rods, the modernization and expansion efforts introduced from time to time have raised the capacity to 30,000 metric tons annually. "Despite the existing recession in the country, the industry has been successful to carve a separate niche for itself in the market because of its unending commitment towards consumer satisfaction," reads a press release issued by the industry. The industry claims that although several iron industries have shut down because of adverse conditions, Hama has been able to occupy 15 percent of the market share in the country. "Our products are used in many major projects like Manipal Medical College, Taragaon Regency Hotel, Bagmati Irrigation Project and Modi Khola Hydro Power Project, among others." The industry says it is also eyeing the burgeoning market for iron rods in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. The industry is also planning to manufacture blades, angle, channel, binding, wire, nails apart from rods. It currently employs 250 workers. Lack of proper government policies, high interest rates of banks, lack of physical infrastructures, unhealthy competition, bureaucratic hassles, political instability, breakdown of law and order and obstruction in electricity supply are some of the major problems faced by the industry. ■

PHOTO EXHIBITION

Street Life

The photographs of Wayne Amtziz vividly depict life on the streets of Kathmandu

BY AKSHAY SHARMA

The streets of Kathmandu are full of romance and misery life, but only a few people have been able to capture those images and present them to the people.

In her series, "From the street of Kathmandu", Amtziz closes in on vari-



Wayne's photo : Vibrant

ous forms of life she saw in the streets of Kathmandu. Some of her photographs tell the story of the misery of the city's people in fascinating detail.

In her photographs, one can see various forms of life, including the assemblage of the poor in the richest city of the country.

From the old and young to arts and crafts to exquisitely carved temples,

Amtziz captures various movement of time.

The quality of her photos are excellent as is her imagination of the city. In her photographs, Amtziz has made every effort to highlight the events in front of her in their full starkness.

Her passion and courage to go to different parts of the city is commendable. She is able to bring the total picture of the life of the streets of Kathmandu.

From the old generation to new and from the urban elite to the poor, she tries to catch their movements in her camera.

Although many photo exhibitions have been held on the theme of life in Kathmandu, this is first time a foreign photographer has captured all glimpses of the busy streets of the city.

One of the interesting parts of the photographs of Amtziz is the composition of her photographs. Photographer Amtziz catches glimpses of all the elements surrounding a particular scene.

Her photographs are evidence of the transformation of Nepalese society. The photographs captured social and cultural aspects of the street of Kathmandu.

"One of the aims of the exhibition is to show the day-to-day account of the street of the Kathmandu," said Amtziz, replying the queries of the reporters.

Amtziz' photographs also showed the power of photography to collect the account of particular time and situation. It depicts how Nepalese society is transforming itself into modernity. ■

CHILDREN

Help The Needy

A German NGO joins hands with a Nepalese counterpart to support underprivileged children

Sane Nagarkoti, 10, a resident of Halchowk, just behind Swayambhunath temple, stopped going to school a few months ago because his parents couldn't afford to buy clothes and stationery. The son of a stone quarry worker is now back in class because his needs have been taken care of.

Some 200 children have a story similar to that of Nagarkoti. Although every passer-by could see the plight of the Nagarkoti family, no one seemed to be really aware about the extent of their situation.

With the initiative of Partnership Society-Nepal (PS-Nepal), a local non-governmental organization, steps have been taken to support these children. The group has received support from social workers from Germany and the Netherlands.

In association with social workers from those two countries, PS-Nepal has distributed clothes and stationery to the children of workers.

The German and Dutch social workers were here as part of the 125th anniversary of Henkel KgaA, a Germany-based chemical company.

On behalf of the social workers, Susanne Lucker from Germany and Ines Von Rosentiel from the Netherlands distributed clothes, pens and notebooks to families who were unable to send their children to schools.

The duo also contributed 400 kilograms of clothes to sick children at Kanti Children's Hospital and equipment to the hospital management. "We are helping children in 52 countries around the world," Lucker said. ■

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT Continuity with Change

A fact-packed volume on the political and constitutional evolution of Nepal

By KESHAB POUDEL

Every country has its own painful journey on the road to political and constitutional development. It is only through an evolutionary process that countries can expect to attain success. The history of political and constitutional development in Nepal has seen several highs and lows.

One of the important aspects of our five-decade experiment in constitutional governance is that the country has developed some institutions and infrastructure to sustain the political process. Nepal's democratic growth has been regularly facing disturbances in the name of political agitation. As a result, the process of political institutionalization has had to face setbacks.

Had Nepal been able to travel on a less turbulent road, the situation would have been much different. Nepal has had four different political systems with five constitutions and a notable feature of this experience has been continuity with change.

It was during the tenure of the second last Rana prime minister Padma Sumshere that Nepal's first constitution was drawn up. Although that document did not have many things to boast of, it began the process of constitutional evolution.

In this volume, Ram Kumar Dahal, a prominent scholar of political science, has attempted to explain the vicissitudes Nepal's political process has endured. He reflects on the impact and implications of the interruptions in constitutional growth. Dahal has published several books on the country's political growth and his latest book gives a powerful insight into the

metamorphosis of Nepalese politics.

Following the advent of first constitution in 1948, Nepal went on to see three more constitutions before the Constitu-

Constitutional and Political Developments In Nepal
Written by Ram Kumar Dahal

Price: Rs. 595.00

Pages: 542

Published by Ratna Pustak Bhandar,
Bhotahity, Kathmandu

tion of Kingdom of Nepal was promulgated in 1990. As several political parties have already demanded amendments to the constitution, no one is certain how long this one will last.

In the process of studying constitutional development in Nepal, the constitution of 1962 has its own relevance. It was amended three times before the king scrapped it in 1990. Although it enshrined a partyless polity, the 1962 constitution did provide relative stability to the political process.

While many books have been written on various aspects of the development of Nepal's political process, few researchers have attempted to analyze the various factors destabilizing the process. Nepal's political spectrum contains a broad range from radicals and moderates on the left to centrists to rightists. In the past


decade, the country has seen majority, minority and coalition governments. Whatever the ideological postures they hold, the performance of all of these parties has been similar.

The current constitution, which is described as the best Nepal has seen, has brought little meaningful change. The constitution of 1948, which contained limited rights, would probably be able to bring about better results provided it was implemented in letter and spirit.

Dahal also tries to analyze various factors influencing Nepal's political system. In his effort to highlight the history of political development Dahal goes through different phases of modernization of political systems in Nepal. He has covered all important events that have influenced political and constitutional development.

To researchers and students of political science, the book provides a wealth of material, including copies of all the constitutions promulgated so far. Through his painstaking and scholarly work, Dahal has brought a new dimension in the study of Nepal's constitutional development. ■


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
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By M.S.KHOKNA



TRANSITION

RETURNED: Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat, Finance Minister, after taking part in the 34th annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) held in Honolulu, United States, and the Third UN Conference on

LDCs held in Brussels, Belgium.

AWARDED: Durga Lal Shrestha, renowned poet of Nepali as well as Newari, with the Abhayan Puraskar 2058, for his outstanding contribution to society.

Lain Singh Bangdel, senior

litterateur and artist, with this year's Uttam-Shanti Puraskar.

Ghanashyam Kandel, a poet, with Deep Smriti Award, and **Parshu Pradhan**, an essayist, with Deep Ratna Award, by the Deep Rana Smriti Committee.

Radha Prasad Joshi and **Jaya Prakash Rijal**, two journalists, with the Cine Journalism Award 2058, by the Cine Journalists Association.

Ram K.C., a journalist of National News Agency, with this year's Media Point Journalism Award. ■

NELSON WANG

Man In The Kitchen

Chinese chef Wang delights Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji and his delegation with his wide-ranging fare

By A CORRESPONDENT

Apart from warm hospitality, what did Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji and his delegation experience in Nepal? Only Nelson Wang, executive chairman of China Garden, a restaurant in Mumbai, India, can tell how the Chinese guests enjoyed an array of Chinese and Italian food.

For Premier Zhu, the chef offered 280 types of dishes, including Chinese and Italian fare. Even during the state banquet at Singh Durbar and the quiet dinner at the Royal Palace, the food was prepared under the supervision of Wang.

Wang saw the Chinese premier take very small portions of food. "While he was keeping his busy schedule, meeting with high-ranking officials, I was able to prepare food for Premier Zhu and his delegation, thanks to the support of the management of Soaltee Crown Plaza."

Zhu was offered Shanghai-style dishes and Italian food for breakfast. "Geographically, China is a big and diverse country, so food and its taste differs from region to region," Wang says. "The cuisine in Sichuan, Canton and Shanghai have entirely different flavors."

During Zhu's three-day stay in Nepal, a team led by Wang prepared Chinese cuisine. "I am happy that all delegation members were happy to have genuine Chinese food with excellent taste." Zhu had all five meals prepared by Wang during his 42-hour visit.

Thanks to the effort of the Soaltee Hotel Crown Plaza, Wang, an Indian citizen of Chinese origin, ran the Chi-



Chef Wang : Delicious personality

nese delegation's kitchen. Wang is a prominent Chinese food supplier in Mumbai.

"I tried to offer the best food possible to the Chinese delegates in keeping with their taste. I was happy that the Chinese premier and members of his delegation liked it," said Wang. Chinese cuisine is well known for its variety as well as taste. As Chinese usually prefer their own food wherever they go, there is great premium on ensuring it

tastes right. "I am very proud to be here to cook Chinese food," said Wang, who served dignitaries in India. Wang, whose family migrated to India four generations ago, sees Chinese food as completely different from other cuisine. "Before preparing the food for the Chinese delegation, I discussed with them about their preferences."

Wang's China Garden Restaurant at Mumbai is one of the reputable ones in India. This is the reason why top Indian politicians and film actors are regular visitors. "The demand for Chinese food is high in India amid the large number of middle class Indians," he says.

Unlike other countries in the region, Wang found all ingredients in the Kathmandu. "From oil to all the other items, I don't have to go anywhere else."

"I really feel privileged to have been able to cook the food for the Chinese premier in a beautiful country like Nepal," Wang says. "I have always considered Nepal as the Switzerland of Asia," says Wang, who is planning to open

a Chinese restaurant in Kathmandu. ■

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Other SAARC Countries	US \$ 75.00	US \$ 150.00	Other SAARC Countries	US \$ 75.00	US \$ 150.00
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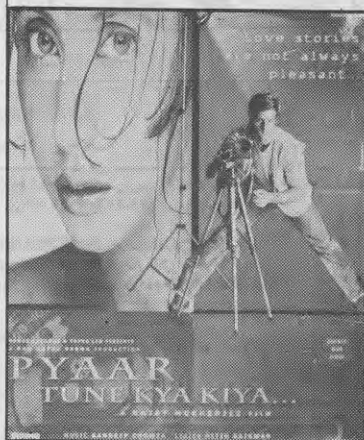
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Video (English)

- Replicant
- Driven
- Mummy The Return
- One Night Mc.Cool's
- Secret
- Russian Mafia
- Down & Country
- Me Myself & Irne
- Rat
- Tom Cats



Hindi

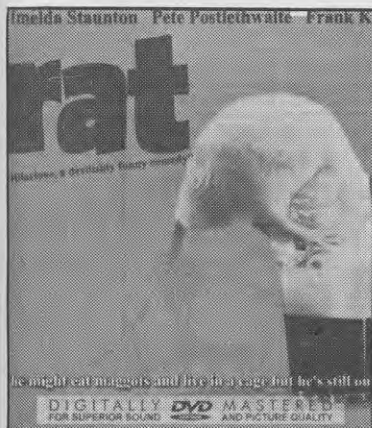
- Ek Ristha
- Pyar tune Kya Kiya
- Daman
- Ujhan
- Khatron Ke Khiladi
- Jodi No 1
- Rahul
- Albela
- Censor
- One 2 Ka 4

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"Do not yearn for physical joy and, by so doing, discard the more permanent joy of inner calm and contentment."

- SATHYA SAI BABA



PEANUTS



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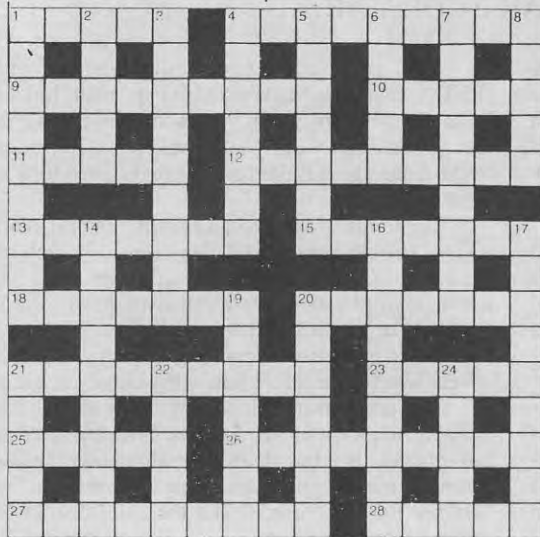
ERNIE



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BOBACE

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Finished a dish (5)
4. Riding terrain towards the interior (2-7)
9. Ruined ancient city in which Chopin set composition (9)
10. Wooden actor-knight (5)
11. Sort of whisky made by a republic (5)
12. Trips and hits the floor noisily (3-6)
13. Foreign tongue used in dog food, we hear (7)
15. Petition to include painting succeeded (7)
18. Attendants in train (7)
- Survive weird sister's entrance (7)
21. Draw with lead initially ñ the sharp end (5,4)
23. Arts patron gripped by opera tour-de-force (5)
25. Not picked to win, say, being slow? (5)
26. See how the land lies to shop-lift (4,5)
27. A claimant before the money is found (9)
28. Go up and down in the mountain air (5)

DOWN

1. Controller in charge of the beat (9)
2. Put letters in right order for magic formula (5)
3. Trouble occurring in washing machine (9)
4. Release a French couple (7)
5. Sort of vase mummy died to have (7)
6. Extremist giving up painting left university (5)
7. Virogous number to sign about king (9)
8. Ages taken on Sky sport (5)
14. Helping porter within reason (9)
16. Unused pullover is in a state (3,6)
17. Tube that goes below the surface (9)
19. Send forth to meditate without a break (7)
20. Part of electrical system in a Roller? (7)
21. Dowdy woman following on behind (5)
22. Its holder has to be a good sport (5)
24. Confessed to audience, but not to oneself (5)

Across: 1. Pasta 4. Up country 9. Ctesiphon 10. Treen 11. Malta 12. Tap dances 13. Kurdish 15. Canvass 18. Retinue 20. Bewitch 21. Frontline 23. Erato 25. Unapt 26. Take stock 27. Pretender 28. Yodel

Down: 1. Pacemaker 2. Spell 3. Agitation 4. Unhitch 5. Canopic 6. Ultra 7. Trenchant 8. Yonks 14. Rationale 16. New Jersey 17. Schmorke 19. Emitted 20. Breaker 21. Trump

NOITUTOS

BRIDGE

NORTH 3-13

♠ K Q 5
♥ J 9 5
♦ K 10
♣ Q 10 9 8 5

WEST EAST

♠ A 10 9 8 3 ♠ 7 6 4 2
♥ Q 4 3 ♥ K 2
♦ 9 8 7 ♦ 5 4 3
♣ K 4 ♣ A J 6 2

SOUTH

♠ J
♥ A 10 8 7 6
♦ A Q J 6 2
♣ 7 3

Vulnerable: North-South
Dealer: South

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♣	2 ♠
3 ♦	Pass	4 ♥	All pass

Opening lead: Spade ace

“Resemblances are the shadows of differences. Different people see different similarities and similar differences.”

— Vladimir Nabokov

A reader asks, “As opening leader, when I win the first trick, how can I tell if partner is signaling attitude or suit preference?”

The principle is simple, simpler perhaps than applying it at the table. Treat every third-hand play as an attitude signal (encouraging or discouraging), unless it is obvious to both players that it cannot be an attitude signal. Here’s an example.

West leads the spade ace, dummy and East play the five and deuce, and South plays the jack. Does East’s spade deuce request a switch, or is it a suit-preference signal?

At the table, West treated it as a discouraging signal and switched meekly to a diamond. Seizing his opportunity, South won dummy’s king and discarded two clubs on dummy’s spades. He lost a trump trick, but he scored an overtrick instead of going one down. West argued it was too dangerous to lead the club king at trick two. However, as events proved, it was more dangerous not to switch to clubs.

How does West recognize East’s spade deuce as a suit-preference signal promising strength in the lower-ranking side suit? With dummy holding the king and queen of spades, it should be obvious to both defenders that a switch may be vital. Therefore, with a choice of spades to play (East’s raise), East signals suit preference by the spade he plays at trick one. His highest spade asks for diamonds, his lowest for clubs, and a middle spade indicates no preference.

Press Freedom Undermined By Systematic Infringement

By SHOBHAKAR BUDHATHOKI

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 has enshrined the fundamental rights of the citizen and accepted press freedom as a basic tool of democracy. The government has recognized the press as the fourth organ of the state. Parliament has enacted the Press and Publication Act and enforced its regulations and introduced the Working Journalists Act. Nepal is state party of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In principle, the government is committed to the protection and promotion of press freedom and freedom of expression. But journalists and media workers are also facing obstacles from the government, civil society, administration, political parties, police and Maoist rebels. On the other hand, some media professionals are violating their code of conduct and have misused press freedom.

Investment in the print and electronic media is growing especially because of the growing involvement of the private sector. The number of daily and weekly newspapers is increasing. There were 1,536 newspapers registered as a daily, weekly, half weekly, fortnightly and monthly last fiscal year. This year Nepal Samacharpatra started publishing its eastern regional edition from Biratanagar and Kantipur is set to do soon.

Public participation is increasing in the electronic media through commercial and community radio. The establishment of community radio, in particular, has been instrumental in raising public awareness. There are seven FM stations — Radio Sagarmatha, Kantipur, Classic, KATH, HBC, Hits and Metro — in Kathmandu that carrying entertainment and other programs. Several FM stations are already in operation outside Kathmandu such as Koshi (Biratnagar), Hetauda (Manakamana), Lumbini (Butwal), Madanpokhara (Palpa) and Machhapuchhre (Pokhara). Recently, another FM station, Swargadwari, received a license to operate from Dang. Several groups have applied for community radio licenses.

State-owned Nepal Television (NTV) plans to begin satellite broadcasting from mid-June. The private-sector Space Time Network (STN) planned to transmit "Nepal Channel" via satellite to 52 countries from the Nepali New Year (Baisakh 1, 2058). However, the government is blocking STN's plan citing administrative procedures. State-controlled Radio Nepal is taking new steps to provide more effective service and plans to operate FM stations in different parts of the country. But NTV and Radio Nepal are also under heavy political influence, often broadcasting news to mobilize support for the government and the ruling party.

The audience granted by the Crown Prince to top journalists, the release of Janadesh editor Krishna Sen under a Supreme Court order after 22 month in detention, moves to establish the Information Technology Park and the decision to encourage the private sector in television are positive developments. Efforts to build a Media Village, the establishment of a computerized newsroom in Radio Nepal, the setting of the Remuneration and Compensation Panel, the commitment against censorship expressed by newly appointed Minister for Information and Communication Shiva Raj Joshi and the introduction of proportionate advertisement policy were also laudable actions.

Among the negative features of the year were the restrictions imposed by Royal Security personnel on private-sector photo journalists trying to take pictures during two programs inaugurated by His Majesty King and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's complaint against the emergence of "tycoon" journalism (referring to private publication houses). Similarly, allegations of news published under the influence of Maoist rebels, the new requirement to submit an application to get information and the failure to provide compensation for a journalist injured by the chief justice's official car were discouraging aspects.

Media workers found themselves working under several restrictions. Milan Nepali, former managing editor of Janadesh weekly, has been missing for two years from police custody. Amar Bahadur Budha, also associated with Janadesh weekly, was arrested in Udayapur in April 1999 for alleged links with the Maoist movement and is in detention in Dang jail.

Central Council Member of the Federation of Nepalese Journalist (FNJ) Kumar Ojha was arrested in Panchthar, Kapil Rimal, a member of Nepal Press Union (NPU), Nuwakot and a reporter for Radio Sagarmatha and Janabhabana Weekly in Nuwakot, and Rajendra Aryal of Hakahaki Radio magazine in Kathmandu were detained for a few hours while they were on assignment.

The administration has taken action against journalists. The management of Gorkhapatra Corporation suspended a sub-editor of state-owned Gorkhapatra, Ram Prasad Acharya, for publishing a statement of a Maoist leader. The order was subsequently withdrawn. The Ministry of Information and Communication instructed private FM stations not to broadcast news based on their own reporting and sources and required them to seek a week in advance permission to broadcast current affairs programs.

The government has attempted to amend laws to restrict press freedom. Regional Police Offices have restricted reporters' access to information, directing them to headquarters. The administration questioned the managing director of Space Time daily, Jamim Shah, about the "Hrithik Roshan episode" and the chief district officer in Panchthar refused to register a newspaper.

Police blocked reporters from entering Maoist affected districts, although news coverage of the insurgency continues. NTV banned a song titled "Dirty Kathmandu". The government banned movies featuring Hrithik Roshan after last December's riots. The government finally gave its permission to screen "Aago" (Fire), a movie that was banned early last year. Police confiscated copies of Deshanter weekly in Kapilbastu, Yugabodh daily in Dang and Abichal weekly in Birgunj.

Media workers are experiencing threats from political parties, civil society, administration, police and Maoist rebels. During the year in review, 34 journalists were attacked. Among them, Mohan Bhandary, council member of the FNJ and reporter of Deshantar weekly, and J. Pandey, Kantipur reporter based in Nepalgunj, were attacked by police. The activities of journalists and human rights activists were curbed under the direction of vice-chairman of Matigada village development committee in Saptari district. Several journalists were attacked under orders from political leaders.

Dharma Dahal of Kantipur Diary weekly was abducted. Maoist rebels attacked and injured Megh Raj Bhatta, chairman of Nepal Press Union, Pyuthan, and correspondent of National News Agency (RSS) Bhimnidhi Hamal, a reporter of Space Time daily. The rebels looted communication equipment provided by WorldView International in Bhalche VDC.

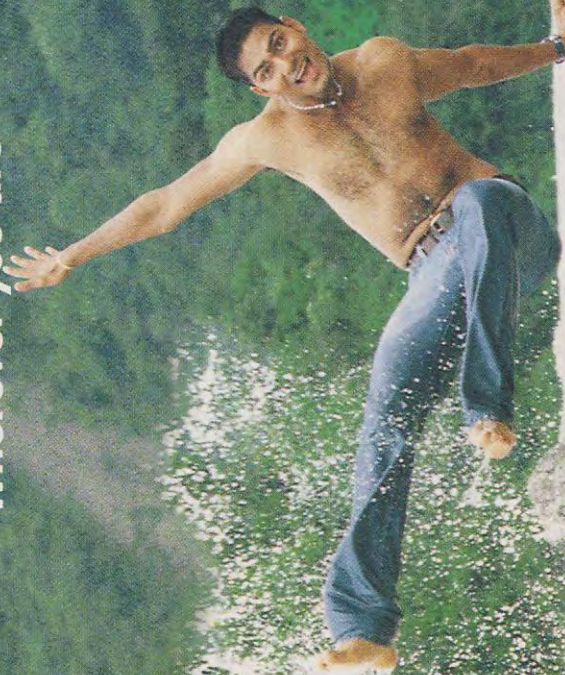
Nine journalists received threats. Among them were Dipendra Chauhan, secretary of FNJ Birgunj and reporter of Bimarsha weekly (who was threatened by Minister of Science and Technology Surendra Chaudhari), Gopal Thapaliya, chief editor, and Ganesh Basnet, reporter of Chhalphal weekly, Suresh Acharya, chief editor of Tarun weekly and central president of FNJ, and Parasu Ghimire, publisher of Tarun weekly.

Legal redress is considered vital for the protection and promotion of press freedom and freedom of expression. But it is very difficult to achieve justice because of delays in the justice system. Some news cases were filed against media workers and newspapers and some pending cases, mainly related to defamation, were finalized. Among them, the case against the verdict of Kathmandu District Court filed by K.P. Gautam and others are yet to be finalized. A case has been filed against "Birkhe" cartoon published in Gorkhapatra daily on the charge defamation of the court. The case filed by Raghu Mainali against the government's directive to FM radio stations is seen as a major legal action of the year. ■

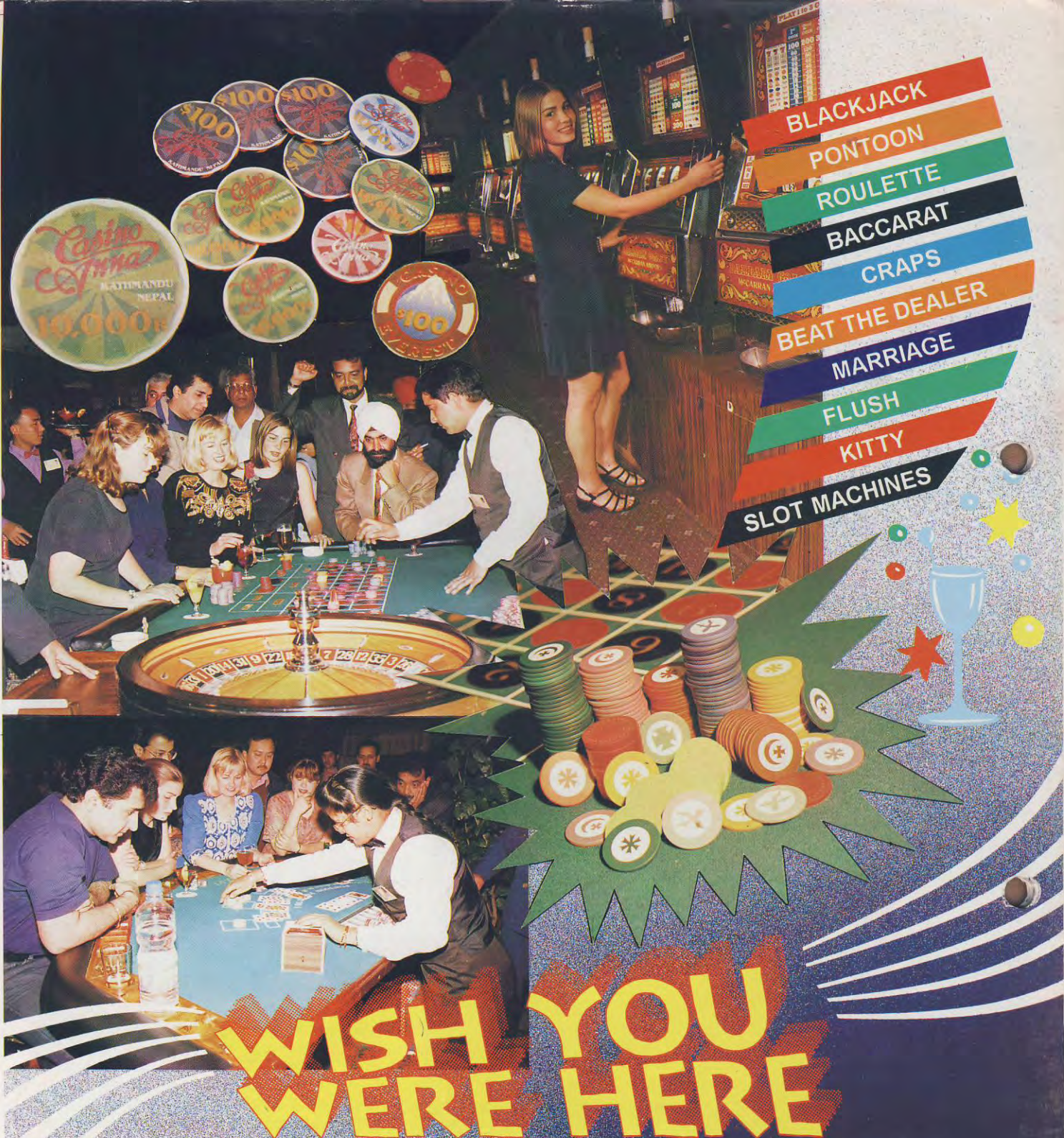
(Budhathoki, general secretary of the Center for Human Rights and Democratic Studies, was the coordinator of the "Status of Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression in Nepal Annual Report 2001" on which this article is based)

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