

The National News Magazine

# SPOTLIGHT

27 July-Aug 2, 2001

## Deuba's Second Coming



- Maoists Cease-fire
- Property Rights Bill
- Tracking Tourism

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**COVER STORY : Challenges For The Second Innings**  
Finally, the Congress leader from the far west Sher Bahadur Deuba manages to replace his mentor Koirala.

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**MAOIST VIOLENCE : Cease Fire?**  
For the first time after they launched "people's war" six years ago, the rebels declare cease-fire. But for how long?.

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**CIAA : Moral Dilemma**  
Chief of the anti-corruption body CIAA, Surya Nath Upadhyaya finds himself in a tight spot after being charged of irregularities in an irrigation project.

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# SPOTLIGHT

THE NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

Vol. 21, No.5, July 27, 2001 (Sawan 12, 2058)

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**Cover Design**  
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**Distribution**  
Bazaar International  
228 Sanchaya Kosh Bldg. Kathmandu  
G.P.O Box 2480, Ph: 222983 Fax : 229437  
e-mail : bazaar@mos.com.np

**Printers** : Kishor offset Press (P.) Ltd.  
P.O. Box 4665, Galkopakha, Thamel,  
Kathmandu, Tel: 351044 (Off), 351172 (Res.),  
Fax : 977-1-351172,  
E-mail : kishor@groupktm.mos.com.np

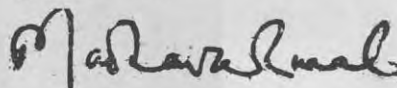
C.D.O. Regd. No  
151/039-40  
Postal Regd. No  
42/057/58  
U.S. Library of Congress  
Catalogue No. 91-905060

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Nearly after five years, Sher Bahadur Deuba has made a come back. But he has inherited a dilapidated chair which may not be able to bear his weight for long unless he can mend it without undue delay. Since his first stint as Prime Minister could not be said to have made any lasting and tangible contribution and his fag end had been quite unsavory, his friends and well wishers hope his second stint will be more purposeful.

Even though the nation has heaved a sigh of relief at the ouster of the Koirala government, Deuba's second inning has so far not been able to bring in any whiff of fresh air the country was longing for. Since Deuba must have learnt some valuable lessons in the interlude, we do trust he must be a chastened man able to resist pressures and temptations from all; cronies, friends and adversaries. He must also realise that times have changed for the worse but the temperament and character of Nepalese politicians including his own colleagues in the Parliament has not changed whatsoever in any way and he will have to face challenges and leg pullings right from the word go. With the country on the verge of civil war and the nation's economy in total ruin, Deuba must be aware of the magnitude of the problems he will have to tackle— insecurity of life and property, unbearable hikes in the prices of necessities, total indiscipline in the administration and rampant corruption; all have turned the government into a scarecrow. On top of that the recent massacre at the Royal Palace has shaken the very foundation of Nepali national solidarity. Besides critical and disparaging comments from friendly donor countries on the shameful non-performance of the democratic governments have sunk the image of the political parties that have gone to power to an unimaginably disgraceful depth. If Deuba has chosen to come to power to tackle these Herculean problems in sincerity and honesty, we will have to appreciate his guts and extend our utmost cooperation. But, if he has been influenced by the frills and frivolities of office and to cater to the just and unjust demands of his parasites who have already started to flex their muscles, he may only help to sound the death knell of the enfeebled multi-party democracy.

The cease-fire announced by the Maoists is not only positive but a welcome step in the direction of solving the vexing issue. Deuba, with his gentle and soft line approach may strike some kind of understanding with the Maoist leaders and bring this tormenting problem to an all time end. But if the rumors going hot in the capital are true and some power is behind the Maoists, how will this problem be resolved nobody can tell for sure. Anyway many Nepalese seem optimistic that Deuba can play a meaningful role to resolve this issue. Since we are still not initiated into the secrets of Deuba's cabinet formation and as our dateline to go to the press has almost expired, we will defer our comments on his cabinet for next issue. But we would like to see completely new faces. Those who have been tried and found wanting should be discarded like an epidemic. Can Deuba gather that kind of courage? Deuba's another responsibility would be to stand up to our southern neighbor like a Nepali statesman and not cringe like his senior colleagues. He also must be able to convince his Indian counterpart that their media has not helped to complement their assertions of friendship and good will towards Nepal and totally ravaged Nepal's tourism by undesirable and baseless publicity. Whether abetted by any official agency or not, Indian media as long they don't stick to objective reporting, will be inflicting a big damage on Nepal-India relationship, and it will take a long time to repair that damage. All these are big challenges and Deuba's helping hands in the government have proved their incompetence hundreds of times. Anyway, we do congratulate the new Prime Minister and assure him of our unstinted cooperation as long he sincerely pursues nation's interests. May Pashupatinath give him wisdom. ■



**Madhav Kumar Rimal**  
Chief Editor & Publisher



## Invest In Programs

With reference to your cover story "Stepping Into Space" (SPOTLIGHT, July 20), I agree that without quality programs, our channels will not be able to compete in the world of satellite television. There is a clear need to invest more in the development of standard programs. Otherwise, our channels will remain ignored. Unless the TV authorities come out with a concrete plan on exploiting the opportunity from expanded coverage, going for satellite transmission will not be fruitful.

*Sailesh Karki*  
Satdobato

through satellite is not going to make much of a difference on how the rest of the world, especially our neighbors, look at us ("Stepping Into Space", SPOTLIGHT, July 20). Our channels have gone for satellite transmission very late in the day. In the meantime, hundreds of Indian and other foreign channels have already swarmed our space. Nepalese channels are going to be lost in the crowd. Had we gone for satellite transmission earlier, we might have been able to carve our own niche.

*Shivendra Gurung*  
Paknajole

## Only Small Fishes

This is in reference to the recent action taken by the palace against the ADCs of the then royalties. It seems that only small fishes have been caught. Only few ADCs have been sacked while big fishes, who must have been held responsible for the overall security of Narayanhity palace have been let off scot free. Moreover, it is strange to see a person, who was the architect of the palace security system some time back and who left behind the legacy of insecurity, head the committee formed to detect the security lapse that lead to the tragic incident. The recently retired generals were responsible for the palace security for many years. As the men really responsible for the palace security have got away unscathed, the people expect King Gyanendra to make someone more objective head the committee to look into the matter once again. So that justice is done and small fishes are spared.

*Dilip KC*  
Chabahil

## Good News

The fact that Nepalese channels are now available through satellite is welcome news ("Stepping Into Space", SPOTLIGHT, July 20). Nepalese channels should start airing our perspective vigorously in order to pre-empt and counter the baseless news being carried by foreign channels. This would go a long way in cleansing the image of Nepal, which has been tarnished by negative publicity.

*Rakesh Joshi*  
Pulchowk

## Rope In Talents

If Nepalese channels want to survive the satellite competition, they must take advantage of talent available in the market and produce new and

standard programs ("Stepping Into Space", SPOTLIGHT, July 20). As you mentioned in the cover story, TV producers must start recruiting talent from the Nepalese film industry. There is a large pool of talent available within the country. Given the right environment and proper financial incentives, there is no reason why they wouldn't be drawn to the small screen.

*Binaya Dhital*  
Balaju

## Metro Channel

In your interview with NTV General Manager Durga Nath Sharma ("Stepping Into Space", SPOTLIGHT, July 20), he has said that NTV is planning to come out with a separate metro channel targeted at the urban audience.

This is good decision. In this age of cut-throat commercial competition, NTV does need a separate channel that could concentrate on entertainment programs. In India, too, the national television Doordarshan has similar channels targeted at different section of masses. As things stand now, NTV has a dual responsibility — that of catering to audiences' taste as well as fulfilling its social obligation. After it starts the metro channel, NTV can concentrate on specific programs and be able to survive amid competition.

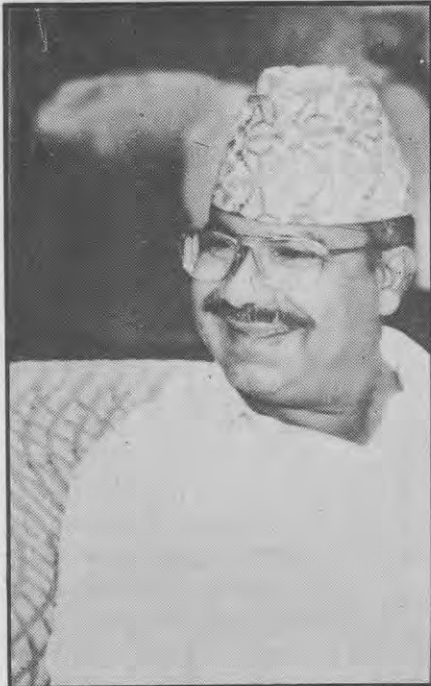
*Chandra Maharjan*  
Gwarko

## No Change

The availability of Nepalese television channels

## Opposition To Wait And See Deuba's Performance

Opposition leaders have said they would like to wait and see the performance of the Sher Bahadur Deuba-led government for sometime now. But they were quite critical about his past performance. "Looking at the past of Mr. Deuba, there is no reason to trust him," said Madhav Kumar Nepal, leader of the main opposition and



Nepal

UML general secretary. But we are ready to cooperate the government if it comes up with new comprehensive programs, he said. Vice chairman of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani, said the new premier should be given some time to prove himself. CPN (ML) President Sahana Pradhan said Mr. Deuba should bring some change in his behavior this time around. Deuba's 18-month rule during the coalition era (1995-97) is still criticized for allowing duty free luxury vehicles to the lawmakers, among others. *Compiled from reports.*

## Rebels Kill Two Policemen

As the Nepalese capital was busy

choosing a new premier, Maoist rebels raided an isolated police post in the eastern hilly district of Tehrathum on Saturday night killing two policemen and injuring five others. The insurgents looted all the arms and ammunition from the Potlang police post, reports said Sunday. The post has collapsed completely due to the bomb blast. The injured policemen are being treated at the BP Koirala memorial hospital in Dharan. *Compiled from reports.*

## RNAC-Lauda Agreement Terminated

After causing an irreparable loss to the image of premier GP Koirala and loss of over Rs 400 million to the state-owned Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation, the infamous Lauda air deal has come to a premature death. Official RSS news agency reported that RNAC has cancelled its Boeing 767-300 ER aircraft lease with Lauda Air of Austria with effect from May 26, 2001 through mutual consent. Both the sides had reached into an agreement on September 27, last year and regular services had started from December 1, 2000. The aircraft did not return to Nepal after it was taken for repair and maintenance to Bangkok on My 29, this year. The agreement has been revoked without any additional liability to the RNAC, officials said. The Commission for Investigation on Abuse of Authority has filed cases against ten officials involved in the deal including a

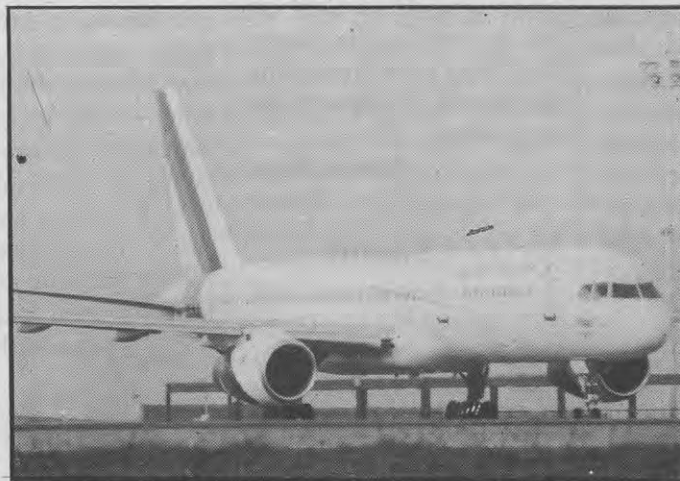
former minister, senior RNAC officials and two executives from the Lauda Air for their involvement in alleged irregularities in the deal. *Compiled from reports July 19.*

## Ex-Gurkhas To File Case At British High Court

Ex-Gurkha soldiers of the British army have said they are going to file a lawsuit at the High Court in the United Kingdom shortly demanding for equal rights and facilities as their British counterparts. The Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen's Organization (GAESO) branch office in the eastern district of Sunsari has appealed to all its members to fill in forms for the lawsuit since the case cannot be filed in an organized way. Till the July 9 deadline 2,714 ex-armies have filled the forms for filing the case. According to Bhakta Sher Rai, president of the Organization, there are a total of 3,167 British ex-armies in Sunsari district alone. Of them, the number of ex-armies receiving pension facility is 2,500. The GAESO has been spearheading the campaign for what they say discrimination against the Gurkha soldiers in the British army. Nepalese citizens are allowed to serve in the British and Indian armies as per the tripartite treaty of 1947. *Leading dailies report.*

## 'Koirala's Resignation Victory Of The People'

On the eve of the elections for the new leader of the ruling Nepali Congress parliamentary party, chairman of the underground CPN-Maoist, Comrade Prachanda, said if the new Prime Minister is not different in character and style as Girija Prasad Koirala then the country's problems would remain unsolved. In a state-



A Royal Nepal plane

ment issued on Saturday, Prachanda said attempts to choose a leader similar in character to Koirala would not solve the problems in the country even after Koirala's resignation. Resignation of Koirala is a victory of the people," said Prachanda. Koirala had no option but resign as he could not escape the armed as well as peaceful struggle of the people," he added. *Compiled from reports July 22.*

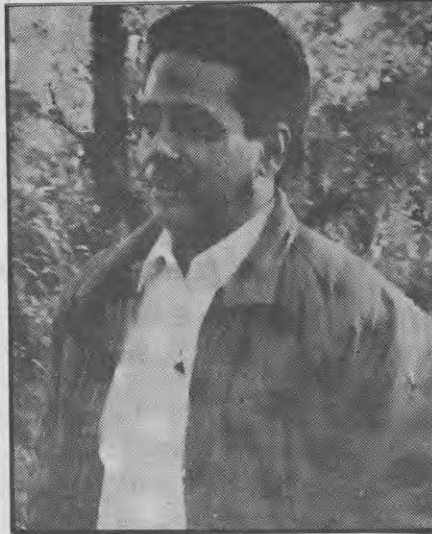
## Death Toll Reaches 17 In Bajura

The death toll of policemen killed in an over night attack at Pandusen striking police base in the far-western district of Bajura Sunday night— within hours of the appointment of Mr. Deuba as the country's chief executive has reached 17, officials said. Thirty-one policemen were injured of five of them seriously, and two others are missing after the assault. Police said up to 30 rebels might have been killed during the gun battle. The rebels take away all of their dead and injured comrades after the assault. More than 50 policemen were stationed at the base during the time of attack by hundreds of Maoist rebels. More than 400 policemen have lost their lives so far in the Maoist attacks over the last five years. *Compiled from reports July*

## New FNCCI President Outlines His Priority

Newly elected President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Ravi Bhakta Shrestha, has said he will give priority in ensuring renewal of the Indo-Nepal trade treaty due to expire later this year "in a way that it would not have any adverse impact on the Nepalese products." He also said he would give priority to unify the business community and to maintain industrial security.

Shrestha expressed worry about deteriorating situation of industrial security and said he would hold dialogue with the government to ensure imple-



Shrestha

mentation of the recommendations given by the FNCCI. Shrestha has succeeded Pradip Kumar Shrestha after being unanimously elected to the post of the apex private sector chamber by the 35th AGM of the FNCCI. *Kantipur July 19.*

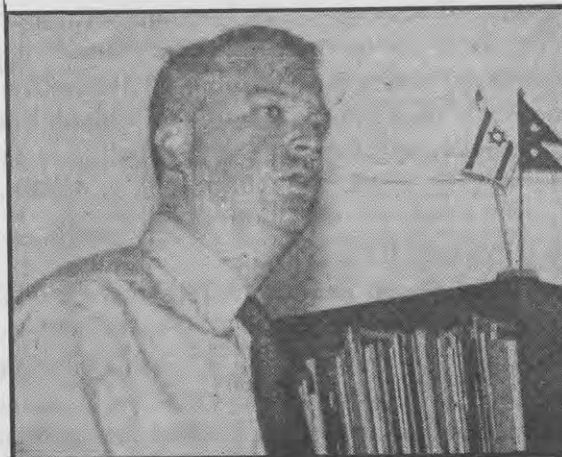
## "Nepalese Must Resolve Nepal's Problems"

Addressing the 35th AGM of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) on July 17, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala said the problem in Nepal was such that we could become the playground of foreigners. There may be problems within the party, differences in the programs, but if we can rise above the partisan interest, by keeping in view of the nation all the problems that have emerged today can be resolved forever and Nepal would emerge as a strong nation, said Koirala. "I have been telling to Maoists or terrorists that we should resolve this problem (created by ourselves) within the country. Why should we look at others? Why should we seek other's help? Nepalese must resolve Nepal's problems," said Koirala. *Nepal Samacharpatra July 19.* ■

## "Israel Wants Peace"

Israeli Ambassador To Nepal, Avraham Nir, has said restoration of peace in the Middle East is possible only through the medium of dialogue. Talking to reporters at the Israeli embassy in Kathmandu on June 19, Nir said Israel has always been in favor of peace. The only democratic country in the Middle East,

Israel wishes for the peace and prosperity of its neighbors, said Nir, RSS news agency reported. He also expressed concern over the escalation of violent incidents within Israel. Saying that Palestinian side was behind 570 violent incidents that took place in Israel in the past 35 days, the ambassador accused the Palestinians of trying to win international support by fielding children in war zones. The Palestinians want Israel to turn into



Ambassador Nir

Rajdhani

another Kosovo, he said. Mr. Nir also accused Palestinian side of carrying out misleading publicity against Israel in order to garner support from the international community.



Himalaya Times

**People celebrating traditional festival of Gathe Mangal, last Thursday**

**THE SUPREME COURT HAS ISSUED A MANDAMUS** to the government not to provide citizenship against provisions of the constitution and the law through the formulation of working guidelines. In a ruling handed out on Monday, a joint bench of the justices comprising Laxman Prasad Aryal, Govinda Bahadur Shrestha and Kedar Prasad Giri ruled that the authority to provide naturalized citizenship is vested in His Majesty's Government and the authority delegated to the Home Ministry and the citizenship distribution team is to be scrapped. "Though the apex court has given many ruling sin this regard, the citizenship has been provided in contravention of the provisions of the laws," the court said. The court verdict came in response to a writ petition filed by advocate Bal Krishna Neupane more than four years ago.

**THE LOWER HOUSE OF THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT** that opened for a month long monsoon session Monday was adjourned after paying tribute to the deceased King of Nepal, Birendra Bir Bikram Shah. According to AFP news agency, the tribute was expected as neighboring Nepal and India enjoy friendly relations. Crown Prince Dipendra killed King Birendra, Queen Aishworya and other members of the royal family at the Narayanhiti royal palace on June 1 reportedly before allegedly committing 'suicide.'

**NEPAL TARUNDAL, A SISTER WING OF THE RULING** Nepali Congress has claimed that the Rusiyal-Khurdalautan dam constructed by the Indian government near the Indo-Nepal border at Marchabar in Rupandehi district will submerge some 200 villages on the Nepali side, official RSS news agency reported. In a statement issued Monday after an on-the-spot inspection, the Dal said the dam is likely to displace 103,000 people and 172,000 livestock in the Nepali side. "The dam constructed unilaterally and against international law will provide irrigation to thousands of bighas of arable land in Nepal," the Dal said. The 15-km dam has been constructed in Rasiyawal

Kala and Rasiyawal Khurdgram panchayat of Siddharthanagar district in Uttar Pradesh of India. A team led by the Democratic National Youth Organization, the youth wing of the main opposition UML, is also visiting the area at present. There hasn't been any official reaction regarding the construction of the controversial dam from both the Nepalese and Indian governments as yet.

**THE DEFENSE MINISTRY ON JULY 18 ADMITTED** that the army personnel have shifted their base to Lingun of Budhagaon from their earlier base at Nuwagaon in the mid western district of Rolpa. The security forces are strategically located around Linlung as part of their continuing efforts to rescue the 69 policemen taken hostage by the Maoist rebels a week back, the Ministry said. The security personnel have exercised patience to avoid the loss of life and property as far possible as the Maoists have used women and children as human shield, the Ministry said.

**THREE POLICEMEN WERE KILLED AND TWO OTHERS** injured when the Maoists attacked a Police post at Khidim in the western district of Arghakhanchi Tuesday night, reports said. According to Police, the policemen were killed after they surrendered at the end of nearly three-hour long gun battle. Separate groups of rebels burnt down police posts in Palpa and Ramechhap districts. In Nuwakot district adjoining capital Kathmandu, the rebels raided two local bank branches looting more than Rs 200,000 in cash and guns from the bank guards.

**THE GOVERNMENT OF DENMARK HAS AGREED TO** provide a technical assistance of DKK 1.19 million (equivalent to rs. 10.27 million) for a project to support institutional strengthening of the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA). The assistance consists of four different components viz equipment, in country training work shop and rehabilitation of the training hall, regional training workshop, and tours and expert services. The main objective of the project is to enhance the institutional capability of the CIAA in combating corruption. This assistance is being provided under the framework of Danish support in the area of human rights, good governance and decentralization.

**THE GOVERNMENT HAS DISTRIBUTED 1,999 BIGHAS** ,18 kattha and 14 dhura of land to the 13,259 families of Kamaiyas without houses and land. These Kamaiyas were staying at the unoccupied barren land of Dang, Banke, Bardia, Kailali, and Kanchanpur districts of mid and far western regions. The lands were distributed under the government's program of rehabilitaion of Kamaiyas. The government had formed land registration committees in the five districts of two region with the objectives of providing five kattha of land to each Kamaiya family. ■



**“T**his is a victory for Girijababu. This is a victory for Sushil Dai.”

*Newly elected Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, after he was declared the winner of the election for Nepali Congress parliamentary party leader.*

\* \* \*

**“I** have an abundance of sportsmanship spirit. My full support is with Deubaji.”

*Sushil Koirala, general secretary of Nepali Congress, saying that the Deuba-led government will survive the remaining three-year tenure of the Nepali Congress.*

\* \* \*

**“A** new leader has emerged with a new vision.”

*Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, reacting after dissident leader Sher Bahadur Deuba defeated his protege, Sushil Koirala, in the election for the Congress parliamentary party leader.*

\* \* \*

**“W**e had not opposed the person called Girija. It was the attitude, behavior and character of Girija that we opposed.”

*Madhav Kumar Nepal, leader of the main opposition and general secre-*



HIMELAVA T.M.P.

*tary of Unified Marxist-Leninist, in Nepalipatra.*

\* \* \*

**“T**he attempt to oust the legitimate Prime Minister Who enjoys majority is an unfortunate incident in parliamentary democracy.”

*Shailaja Acharya, for deputy Prime Minister and senior Congress leader, in Himalaya Times.*

\* \* \*

**“I**nstead of opening windows of opportunity, we are busy building doors of paurety.”

*Rabi Bhakta Shrestha, President of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) in Drishti.*

\* \* \*

**“I** like the songs of olden days. We had to work hard to record songs those days.”

*Mira Rana, senior singer, explaining her preference for old songs, in Chhalfal.*

\* \* \*

**“I** cannot say when, but I will definitely return one day.”

*Saranga Shrestha, an actress, who recently left for United States of America, in Ghatana Ra Bichar.*

\* \* \*



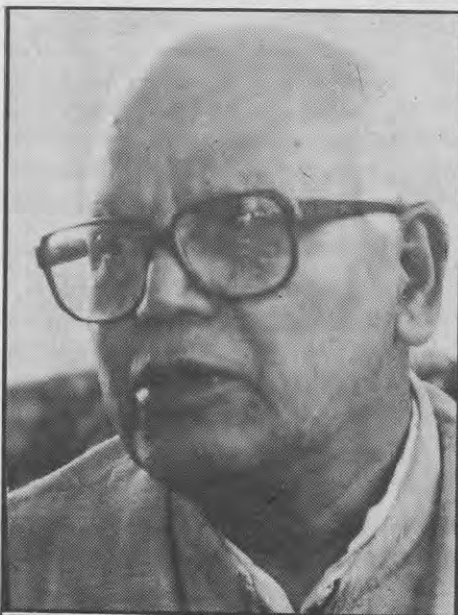
Deshanar

## Poudel's (Im)patience

The patience of former deputy prime minister Ram Chandra Poudel just seemed to have snapped last week. After having waited in vain all these years for his chance to get the top job, he thought he would just go ahead and announce his candidacy for the premiership. After quitting the cabinet last fortnight, Poudel immediately launched a blitz to project himself as a moderate who represented continuity and change. But, in the days, after Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala stepped down, Poudel's slogan of a "multiparty front" found few takers within the fold. When the numbers in the Nepali Congress parliamentary party also started looking unfavorable, he decided to pull out of the race for prime minister. Is the country in for another phase of a patient Poudel?

## Troubled Ties

When soon-to-be-premier Sher Bahadur Deuba arrived at the residence of his mentor,



**Bhattarai** : Brewing tension

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, he was said to have uncharacteristically left behind his pack of cigarettes. Deuba was too thrilled by the news that Girija Prasad Koirala had finally resigned. This elation was short-lived, because Bhattarai soon gave out orders against speculating on who the next prime minister was going to be. During a meeting with colleagues later, Deuba was said to have expressed his disappointment. Who said mentor-protégé relations were free of tension even when it's a done deal?

## Premier Precedent

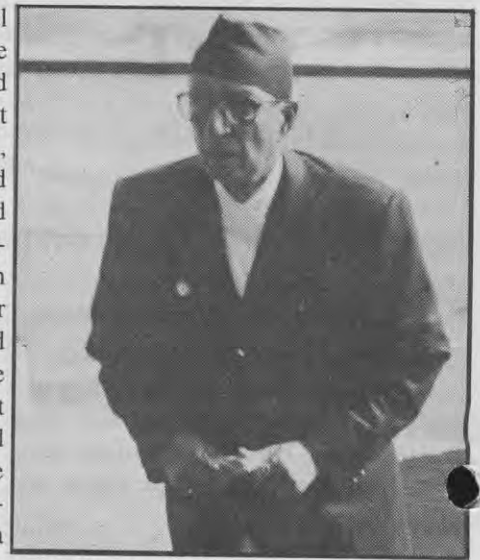
For some in the opposition camp, Koirala's resignation brought bad news. For CPN-UML deputy leader K.P. Sharma Oli, change of leadership in the government means no more disruptions in parliament. "If we don't get to disrupt the proceedings of the house, what the use of my remaining as deputy leader of the main opposition," Oli was said to have remarked. But Oli seems to have missed the precedent that has been set. Now opposition

parties can obstruct parliament whenever they feel the time of the prime minister is up.

## Speaker And Stars

Nepali Congress seems to be a party full of astrologers. From House of Representatives Speaker Taranath Ranabhat to former prime minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Congress leaders can make

predications fly in all directions. When the opposition disrupted parliament last Wednesday, Ranabhat declared that the house would resume only on Friday because by then Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala would have resigned. But Koirala stepped down a day before the speaker's deadline. We found out a few weeks ago on national television



**Koirala** : Feeling relief

that Ranabhat had inherited the sense of humor of his guru Bhattarai. No he seems to have mastered the astrology part as well.

## Cost Of Resignation

After Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala announced his resignation on national television and radio, some of his ministers were busy attending to

last-minute business at their ministries. Minister of Environment and Population Siddha Raj Ojha was said to be in a particularly bad mood because he had to cancel a foreign visit at the last minute. In financial terms, Koirala's resignation cost Ojha more than Rs 100,000 in lost allowances. Has political instability reached such a point that ministers can no longer keep their travel plans? ■

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# MAOIST VIOLENCE

## Cease Fire?

The new premier wants to trade peace with the rebels. But at what cost?

By BHAGIRATH YOGI

Even before followers of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba had time to open 'champagne' to celebrate the long-cherished victory of their leader, Maoist rebels raided a police striking base at Pandusen in Bajura district on Sunday night (July 22). At the end of the first-ever major assault in the far-western region—from where Mr. Deuba hails, 17 policemen were dead and several others injured, with even greater casualty suspected on the part of the rebels. The news of Deuba's ascension to the power was pushed into shadow due to the continuation of attacks by the rebels.

In a swift move, the newly appointed premier issued two statements Monday calling the rebels to give up all their violent activities 'to create an environment of confidence before the talks.' He even called them friends and notified that the government had ordered all the security personnel to stop offensive against the rebels.

Within hours, top Maoist leader, Comrade Prachanda, issued a statement appealing his guerrillas to withhold all their pre-scheduled 'military activities' against the government forces while remaining in a position of 'active defense.' Saying that his party had taken the victory of Mr. Deuba "over the fascist Girija clique" as a positive development, Prachanda asked his cadres to remain alert against the reactionary forces which could conspire against the rebels by using the 'liberal' face of Mr. Deuba. He demanded that the government declare the whereabouts of the 'missing' Maoist cadres, exchange prisoners and reverse the policies against the Maoists introduced by the former GP Koirala government.

Though it will still take time for both

the sides to agree to a formal 'cease fire,' the latest development came as a much needed respite for the common people including the family of policemen—who wanted to see an end of violence without further delay.

"It is a positive development, though its too early to predict that the people's war will now come to an end," said Padma Ratna Tuladhar, a human rights leader who brokered a failed peace initiative between the government and rebels last year. "Now the government should create an environment of confidence and initiate serious efforts to win their confidence."

While the latest development may not have come as a surprise to many, analysts say the future steps of the government and

rebels will be much more important to determine the course the five-year-old insurgency takes. With nearly 1700 people killed since February 1996 when the little known ultra-left outfit declared its 'people's war,' the insurgency has emerged as the single largest problem for the government. While successive governments and political parties have diverse views regarding the issue of looking at the insurgency, former premier Koirala was known for 'strong-arm' tactics against the rebels.

Insiders say Koirala's resignation was precipitated by the apparent failure of the Royal Nepalese Army personnel to rescue nearly 70 policemen that they had abducted after raiding a remote police post at Holeri in the remote mid-western district of Rolpa in early July. Within a couple of days of the army cordoning, the rebels managed to escape taking advantage of bad weather and the rugged topography familiar to them. It was the first time that army personnel were pitched face to face against the rebels pushing the Maoists' morale to all time low.

"It seems that the army had moved to

Rolpa without studying the topography and contours of the hilly district," said Prof. Dhruva Kumar, a strategic analyst at the Center for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS) of the Tribhuvan University. "Of course, the Maoist insurgents can't fight the Royal Nepalese Army in a conventional type of battle. But, their main strength lies in the hit-and-run tactics employed by the guerrillas all over the world."

The latest attacks in Tehrathum and Bajura districts are seen as a rebel tactic to negotiate with the government from the position of strength. Knowing their limitations, the rebels, however, have not attacked the army throughout their rebellion. Instead, they released nearly two dozen abducted policemen as a goodwill gesture. Despite such gestures, outgoing premier Koirala, in his farewell speech to the nation last week,



Space Time

**A young guerrilla :** Revolution is the mantra

maintained that the insurgency was not only a conspiracy against the country's 12-year-old multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy, it was also a serious challenge to the national security.

Analysts say the rebels have been targeting the police posts all over the country not only to seize arms but also to physically eliminate and make defunct the 'first line of defense' of the government. As the 'Armed Police Force' is yet to be raised—its future still remaining uncertain, and the army said to be reluctant to engage in a domestic conflict due to unknown reasons, humiliating the security personnel at the frontline would serve the strategic interests of the rebels. By claiming that the Royal Nepalese Army failed in its 'search and rescue operation' in Rolpa, the rebels have been able to boost the morale of their cadres and buy some more time amidst changes in the government at the center.

Besides provocative articles written by top Maoist leaders calling upon the soldiers to stage a revolt, Maoist leaders are now making their plans public. Kantipur daily (on July 24) quoted a central leader of the Maoist party, Comrade Kanchan, as saying that his party was trying to sow divisions within the Royal

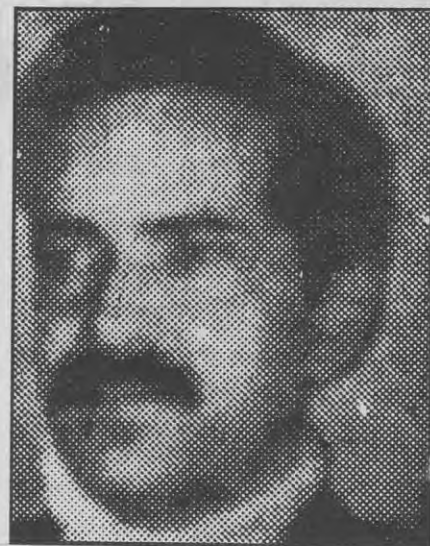
Nepalese Army. "We have been defeating the police so far and the fate of the army, too, will not be different," the Maoist leader declared at the ceremony organized to mark the announcement of the 'people's government' in Dolakha Sunday.

As such, experts say the government needs to closely watch the activities of the Maoist leadership in future. "If Mr. Prachanda's statement is to be trusted, the government should design its policy in accordance with that," said Prof. Dhruva Kumar. "We don't have any idea about the command and control system of the Maoists. So, we need to watch for some time more about their future move."

According to Prof. Dhruva Kumar, cease fire doesn't necessarily lead to peace. He cites the failed peace initiative in Kashmir by the central government of India at the end of its unilateral cease fire. In case of Nepal, both the government and rebels are under intense domestic and international pressure to give up violence and talk peace. But so far both the sides have remained apprehensive of each other's motives.

For the new Prime Minister, initiating a peace process with the rebels has been on top of his agenda (See: Cover Story). The

rebels, too, have said they are willing to negotiate with the new government. But analysts say finding a common ground with an insurgent group—that launched violent 'people's war' with a declared motive of turning Nepal into a Communist republic may — not be that easy. "While talking of talks (with the rebels), the government should clearly understand their ideology and outline its agenda," said Tuladhar. "In fact, dialogue is also an art and an opportunity for give and take."



Prachanda : Peace as a strategy

For the Maoists, their priorities are clear. While they want to stop any offensive from the army, they also want the ordinance on armed police force—that is yet to be passed from the parliament—dropped by the government. Their political agenda — that of calling a conference of "all sides," constituting an interim government and formulating 'people's constitution' under that government are all too clear. In the aftermath of the June 1 massacre of the royal family, the Maoist leadership is now talking of "institutionalizing the newly found republic in the country."

The government has, on the other hand, faltered on almost every step since the insurgency began. While it has failed to train and well equip the police, it has also failed to develop a good coordination among different security agencies. The much-talked about 'Integrated Security and Development Program (ISDP)' too has failed to make any visible impact so far.

Development works have come to almost standstill for the last few years. The government has allocated nearly 10 percent of the Rs 100 billion budget as security expenses in the current fiscal year. For a country, where nearly 50 percent of the 23 million population live on less than one US dollar a day, growing insurgency and spiraling security expenses don't bode well. For Mr. Deuba, challenges are paramount. While the rebels

## Lives Lost During The 'People's War'

(Between 13 Feb 1996- 17 July 2001)

Year	Killed by Police	Killed by Maoists
1996	59	22
1997	16	32
1998	334	75
1999	328	141
2000	179	219
2001*	63	199
Total	979	688

(\* till July 17, this year)

Total lives lost 1667

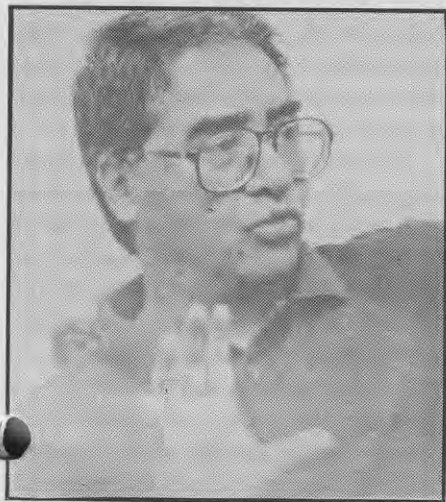
Suspected Rebels 919

Police 400

Others 348

(Source: Human Rights Year Book and Documentation Center/ INSEC)

would want to extract maximum concession from him so as to strengthen their positions for future encounters, the ruling Nepali Congress— that has been the target of the Maoists all these years—wants the government to deal with the insurgents firmly. For the main opposition UML, the Maoist movement has emerged as the greatest challenge to their supremacy among the leftist forces in the country. At the same time, there are security sensitivities of our neighbors that are likely to be hurt if the insurgency prolongs for too long. Chinese defense minister visited Nepal early this year and latest reports say, Indian government is deploying paramilitary forces along the Indo-Nepal border in the western Nepal so as to avoid any fall out of the Maoist insurgency into their territory. Interestingly, India—that never



Deuba : 'I want peace'

tires of blaming Nepal for allowing ISI activities from her soil— has not shown its serious will to check the free movement of Nepalese Maoist rebels in its territory, say critics. During his visit to New Delhi last year, then Prime Minister Koirala had raised the issue of Nepalese rebels getting training and supplies from different Maoist groups in India and discussed ways to check cross-border terrorism.

In such a context, whether the 'consensus approach' adopted by Mr. Deuba works or not, only time will tell. But if he chooses a 'populist approach' at the cost of national security that would be a great disaster for the entire country. ■

## 'Maoist Insurgency: A Conspiracy against National Security'

— By GIRIJA PRASAD KOIRALA



The country is passing through extremely challenging time as the 12-year-long democracy, earned through the hard way by Nepalese people, has been weakened because of differences among political parties, their adamancy in overlooking the parliamentary system and process, and the lack of political culture to solve issues of national interests through consensus and joint efforts. On the other hand, our parliamentary system has been tormented by those extremists and proponents of violence and terror who are attempting to destroy our constitutional framework.

I feel the only way out of these two attacks is to encourage in building a widespread consensus and joint efforts among the political parties, civil society and all Nepalese. I have tried to forge a national consensus among all the political parties through my 14-point basic program proposed before the Parliament. The 14-point program has reflected all the problems and painful experiences faced by all the prime ministers, ruling parties and the oppositions during the last 12 years.

So, my appeal for national consensus is not to save my chair but a safety measure for the future prime ministers and the prime ministerial system. It is also aimed at ensuring success and popularity of the parliamentary system against regression, violence and anarchy of the ultra-left. If all the political parties do not commit themselves honestly to the basic program of national consensus the democratic movement and its achievements could face a severe blow.

The mindless violence and terror being perpetrated by the Maoists now are not only against the present constitution and the democratic set up but also a preplanned conspiracy against the country's national security. This terrorism, nurtured both from within and outside the country, targeted at the innocent people and security personnel is as much condemnable as it is fatal to our nationalism and national unity. I feel that the primary agenda of the national unity should be to wipe out the terrorism by the mobilization of all the security apparatus of the country and bringing together all the responsible political parties and people.

I would like to praise the role of the police despite their limited means and resources to fight against the menace of terrorism. I believe the Royal Nepalese Army mobilized under the Integrated Security and Development Program would succeed in ending the Maoists' violence and insurgency. My major political agenda is to forge a broad national unity and to mobilize people's power against terrorism. I would put all my efforts on this issue no matter what role I might play in future.

The campaign that I started as the Prime Minister has reached a definite phase and this campaign must be pushed ahead to achieve a concrete result. I still feel it is my responsibility to channelize the energy wasted by the oppositions—by disrupting the parliamentary proceedings—toward a national consensus and to wipe out the terrorism from the country. There are challenges before me to save my own party, Nepali Congress, from aimless and endless conflicts. So, I have decided to resign from the post of Prime Minister as I have given preference to the new initiative and role to resolve the existing problems faced by the country to the continuation as Prime Minister. ■

*(Excerpts of the Speech delivered by Prime Minister G. P. Koirala on July 19 announcing his resignation)*

# GARMENT INDUSTRY Under Threat

Garment exports from Nepal come down drastically after the introduction of new policy by the United States

By A CORRESPONDENT

First it was the African bill. Now it is the Carrebean bill. The decision by the US government to give special facilities to the garment exports from African and Carrebean countries are bound to have a negative impact on Nepalese garment sector.

Garment is one of the major sources

Nepalese garment entrepreneurs believe that if the Nepalese government takes up its case before the American counterparts, Nepal, too, could enjoy such facilities.

"It is true that after 2005, we will not enjoy quota system. But if the government takes up our case we can gain financial strength in the meantime and be able to survive the WTO regime," said Udaya

garment products to the US. Germany remains a major market for Nepalese carpets.

Having joined World Trade Organization (WTO), most of the western countries are now in no position to provide special privilege for a particular country. This is the reason Nepal has to compete with other countries in the world.

"The government is well aware about the situation and is trying to diversify the Nepalese export market," said Bhanu Acharya, Secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies. "The present trend is just a temporary one."

According to GAN, exports to the USA declined by 30 percent in the first six months of the year 2001 compared to the same period last year.

In the first six months of the year 2000, Nepal exported 90.97 million US dollars worth garment apparels to the United States. This year, Nepal could export garments worth US dollar 70.97 million only during the same period.

"If the government does not make sincere efforts, the garment export to the USA will come down by more than 15 percent in the year 2001," said Kiran Prakash Sakha, President of the GAN. "We hope the government will take necessary steps to protect this industry."

As Nepal cannot influence the US government's policy to give similar customs exemption like the one enjoyed by the Caribbean and African countries like Nepal, what Nepalese entrepreneurs have to do now is to produce quality products to compete with the products from other countries.

"The bookings of Nepalese readymade garments has decreased drastically in the last few months. If the situation continues, Nepalese garment industry will have no other options than to close down," said Chandi Raj Dhakal, former President of GAN.

The garment entrepreneurs have pinned their hope on the visit of the US Assistant Secretary of State Ms Christina Rocca this week. They hope that the senior US official will be apprised of their concerns sympathetically and take initiative to extend facilities for Nepalese product. ■



Garment products : Uncertain future

of foreign exchange earnings. Garments worth more than Rs 13 billion are exported each year from Nepal. The lion's share of the Nepalese garments goes to the USA.

With African and Carrebean countries enjoying special facilities, Nepalese garments will lose its competitive edge in the US markets, say entrepreneurs. Till now the sector is surviving on quota. But after 2005 when the quota system will be revoked as per the WTO provisions, the sector is going to die.

Raj Pandey, general secretary at the Garment Association of Nepal (GAN).

Garment is one of Nepal's largest exportable items and decline of its export may have far-reaching impact upon the total exports. The export of carpets, another major exportable item, has also declined over the years because of recession in the European market, particularly in Germany.

The United States of America is the largest market for Nepalese garments as Nepal exports more than 90 percent of its

## G.P. KOIRALA

# A New Role

The former prime minister remains a central figure in Nepalese politics

By KESHAB POUDEL

Like in the past, former prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala returned his refuge at the house of nephew Dr. Shashanka Koirala, the younger son of late B.P. Koirala. The septuagenarian Koirala seemed to be heaving a sigh of relief after exiting the tense confines of the prime ministerial residence in Baluwatar on Sunday morning.

From endless agitation and outright confrontation with the opposition parties to the chaos after the June 1 royal massacre, Koirala weathered storms of all intensities before tendering his resignation to King Gyanendra last Thursday. Had his party and the opposition supported him, Koirala might have been able to produce better results during his 15-month tenure.

In his first term as prime minister in 1991, Koirala was largely inexperienced in governance. Heading an elected government was very different from organizing a party at the forefront of the struggle to restore multiparty democracy.

In a way, Koirala was allowed to make mistakes without serious opposition from his own party and outside. However, this time, when he tried to put the experience accumulated during three stints in Singha Durbar, Koirala could not get too many moments of relief.

Using everything between constitutional and extra-constitutional methods, the opposition and rivals within his own party made life difficult almost every step of the way. The escalation of the violent Maoist insurgency added to the problems of a prime minister confronted with meager resources

and an array of lobbies and constituencies to please.

Koirala survived for 15 months in the midst of endless confrontation and controversy. He passed through difficult times especially after the royal massacre.

Although Koirala tried to cast himself in an entirely different image in parliament and within the party during his fourth tenure, many people simply refused to believe that conciliation and Koirala could ever go together. In the end, the country witnessed a replay of the perennial drama to oust the prime minister. In parliament, forces from the left to the right were united against Koirala. From their jungle hideouts, the Maoist rebels

singled out the "Koirala camp" for their ire.

Having failed to see the "grand design" before it was too late, Koirala bungled his fourth inning. One of Koirala's weaknesses this time was that he turned a virtual blind eye to the forces of destabilization. In the end, he was reduced to another power-hungry politician in the public eye.

Although Koirala did not leave any legacy worth remembering during his fourth stint as prime minister, he definitely changed his behavior with colleagues and rivals. It's just that his personality transformation failed to impress enough people to have political meaning.

Despite the rigid approach maintained by the main opposition CPN-UML and other rightist parties towards him, Koirala visited many of his rivals at their homes. And these were the same people who called a three-day Nepal Bandh and blocked the proceedings of parliament for 64 days.

Koirala succeeded in showing greater magnanimity toward his opponents. He tried to act in accordance with the spirit of national reconciliation and may even have wanted to project himself in the statesmanlike mould of brother B.P. However, he was checkmated from the early days in power. Whatever position he holds — and he is still president of the ruling party — Koirala will remain a strong force in Nepalese politics.

"I have had a very positive experience while working with Girijababu, as is cooperative as well as compromising, and full of wit," said a senior official of a constitutional body. But Koirala rarely gets such warm words from colleagues in the party and other politicians.

Koirala survived for more than three years in his first tenure as prime minister when he was inexperienced and was influenced by shady characters. This time round, when he tried to be more accommodative and friendly, he was dismissed as just another power-hungry leader. Whether one like it or not, Koirala remains a central figure in Nepalese politics. ■



**Koirala** : Tough politician

# ROYAL NEPALESE ARMY

## Force For Unity

The army has played a major role in building modern Nepal under astute and skilled commanders like Kaloo Pandey

By AKSHAY SHARMA

“Nepal is known abroad for its feared Gurkha warriors and Mount Everest,” says Diego Mamambio, a tourist from Chile. Less known to foreigners — and many Nepalis, too — are the contributions of the Royal Nepalese Army to nation building.

When King Prithvi Narayan Shah embarked on his campaign to unifying petty principalities into modern Nepal, the top army personnel were known as Kazi, Sardar, and Kapdar. The Kazi played the chief role in the army and not every Kazi was given the status of commander-in-chief.

King Prithvi Narayan's reign saw the reorganization of the army. The Kazi was given the power of the commander-in-chief. Kazi Kaloo Pandey is said to have been the first commander-in-chief of the Nepalese army. The son of Bhim Raj Pandey, Kaloo was born in Gorkha. He had three sons, Bansharaj, Ranasur and Damodar and a daughter, Chitrawati.

Kaloo Pandey was a well-known tactician and had a clear understanding of the complexities of warfare. He was known to have contained the attack of the Chaubise kingdoms that stood in the way of the unification campaign.

In 1642, Kaloo Pandey set up a crucial meeting between King Prithvi Narayan and Lamjung's King Ripumardan Shah, which proved pivotal to the unification campaign. “This was possible because the king of Lamjung's son, Bir Mardan Shah, and Kaloo Pandey's son Bansharaj were childhood friends,” writes Bhim Bahadur Pandey. This meeting assured Lamjung's support for Prithvi Narayan Shah's unification drive.

During the third attack on Nuwakot,

Kaloo Pandey led the Gorkha troops by the Sinchet-Gorkhu-Mahamandal-Eksish route and emerged victorious. This laid the foundation for the unification of Nepal. The rag-tag Gorkha army that was just beginning to emerge before the unification campaign was trained by Kaloo Pandey.

Kaloo Pandey played an important role in containing the Kathmandu-Tibet trade route as part of his integration plan. By taking Sakhu and Nagarkot, Kaloo Pandey had the valley within sight of his musket. The troops were able to capture the territory from Panchkhal to Dudhkoshi.

The Chaubise kingdoms, which were against Prithvi Narayan Shah's unification policy, attacked Siranchowk, Gorkha in 1755. Kaloo Pandey is credited with

repelling the army and scaring away the Chaubise kingdoms for good, writes historian Baburam Acharya.

The Malla kings of Kathmandu valley were devising a plan to counter the Gorkha campaign. Kaloo Pandey believed the Gorkhalis should create a rift between the Malla kings before launching a full-scale attack. However, the young King Prithvi Narayan Shah ordered Kaloo Pandey to mount an attack on the city of Kirtipur right away. The combined forces of the Malla kings wiped out 1,200 Gorkha soldiers, along with Kaloo Pandey.

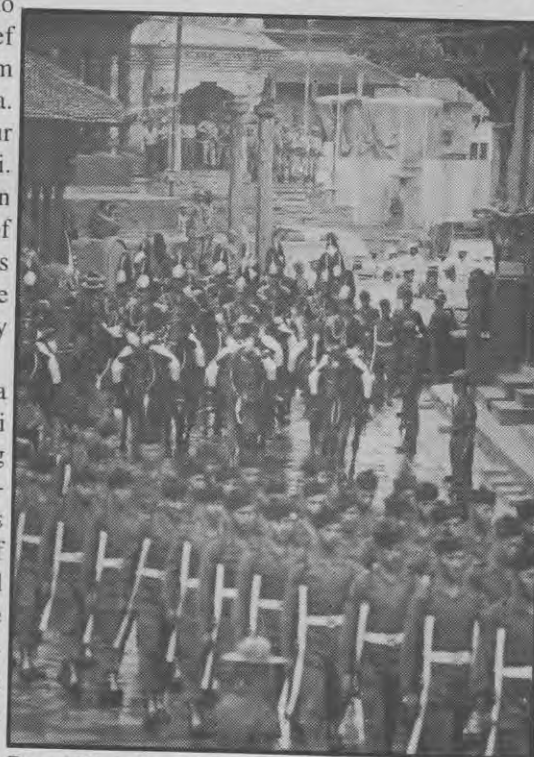
It is recorded that the King Kathmandu, Jaya Prakash Malla, took Kaloo Pandey's head. His weapons were hung in the temple of Bagh Bhairab at Kirtipur where they are said to be until this day. The Gorkha army took Kaloo Pandey's body and cremated it at Dahachowk.

Kaloo Pandey was a key aide to Prithvi Narayan Shah in the integration of Nuwakot, Belkot, Kaladom (the Nagarkot area), Thadhi and Dudhkoshi. He was a reputable citizen of the Kingdom of Gorkha. Prithvi Narayan Shah wanted to encourage closer relations between the rising courtiers of Pandeys and Shreepalli Basnyets.

Prithvi Narayan Shah decided to give Kaloo Pandey's daughter, Chitradevi's, hand in marriage to Shivaram Singh (Tripathi) Basnyet. Basnyet was killed in the unification drive at a place called Shanghachowk, north of Dolalghat in Sindhupalchowk.

So Kaloo Pandey's daughter was married to his son Kehar Singh Basnyet. It was from here that the famous proverb “the shield of a Pandey and the sword of a Basnyet” became popular.

Bansharaj, the eldest son of Kaloo Pandey, was born in 1738 in Gorkha. After the death of his father at Kirtipur, King Prithvi Narayan named him commander in chief. He had two sons, Kanak Singh and Rana Bam Pandey. Bansharaj fought valiant battles in Makwanpur, Timal and Sindhuli (1762), Kirtipur (1764), Chihandada (1766), Pauwa Gadhi (1767), Tanahu (1770) and Lamjung (1783).



Royal Nepalese Army : Glorious history



# EQUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS Help Or Hindrance?

Will the bill proposing to grant daughters equal rights to parental property solve the problem of discrimination?

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

It was the darling of women rights activists in the country. The bill proposing the 11th amendment to the Civil Code was termed as one that could go a long way in ending discrimination against women.

On July 17, the House of Representatives Law and Justice Committee gave the green signal to the bill. The bill was in the dock for the last four years because of differences over the practicability of granting equal rights to daughters. But on Tuesday last week, the committee approved the most contentious provision of the bill - that concerned with giving property rights to daughters even after marriage.

Prem Bahadur Singh, a member of the committee, said Tuesday's approval marks the end to the bitterest controversy in the bill.

Earlier Nepalese women could not stake claim to their parental property once they married. To get equal share of their parents' property they had to remain unmarried until 35 years of age. "This is a very positive step. We have been advocating for this bill for long," said Navin Singh, a program officer at Sancharika Samuha.

However, many question the practicability of the bill. Once it is passed by the House and takes the effect of law, it may cause disturbances in society, they say. According to them, the practice of giving

the share of parental property to daughters after marriage may invite difficulties during the actual distribution.

Singh does not agree. "Maybe in the short term there could be some difficulties, but this would end discrimination against women in the long run," he said. He believes that economic independence leads to equal status for women. Singh,



Nepalese women : Time to celebrate

however, concedes that the activists are yet to do enough research to predict how such a law would affect society in general. "This is not limited to dividing property like houses or land. It gives women a legal option to fight their case if they are neglected," Singh says.

In the last couple of years, there have been many attempts to pass a bill that recognized daughters as equal heirs to parental property. The House committee had travelled to some parts of the country early this year to gauge public opinion on the bill's provisions.

The granting of parental property rights to daughters has been one of the most debated bills in the country, with strong lobbies on both sides.

While those favoring the bill have

said it would end discrimination against women for good, others believe it could trigger more domestic violence. "Earlier there used to be fights among brothers only, now it will be among brothers and sisters alike," said Anup Bhattarai, a youth from Pulchowk.

Bhattarai points to the practical difficulty in transferring immovable property like houses and land as daughters are traditionally wed off to their husband's house. According to the bill's provisions, the daughter's share of property will be mixed with her husband's share and both will enjoy them equally.

The bill, if passed by parliament, is going to have far-reaching effects on Nepalese society — and all of them may not be positive.

While the proponents of the bill have termed it a success, opponents are concerned about the consequences, reiterating that the focus ought to have been on granting equal opportunities to women rather than on property. ■

## Women Skill Development

With the objective to support the underprivileged women through impartment of skill-oriented training, Bhotu-Indira Social Organization has been active for the last many years. The organization has different branches that concentrate on different aspects of upliftment of women. The chief objective of the organization is to support underprivileged women and improve their economic and social status, said Indira Sapkota, President of the organization. Among the economic activities that the organization gives training to needy women include making of incense sticks, embroidery and knitting of sweaters. Sapkota also heads Nepal Grihini Udyog where more than 200 women are involved in the knitting of woolen sweaters. These sweaters are exported to the USA. "Due to the lack of regular market, I find it difficult to give a constant employment to these women. But I am trying hard," said Sapkota.

SHER BAHADUR DEUBA

# Challenges For The Second Innings

Having garnered the overwhelming support of the Congress parliamentary party, Sher Bahadur Deuba has been appointed prime minister for the second time in 12 years of multi-party democracy. No prime minister has completed a full five-year tenure and the country has seen 10 governments under six political leaders. After winning the parliamentary party election, Deuba declared that he would complete the remaining three-year term of the Nepali Congress and would hold the next general elections. But few are willing to bet on what lies in store for the Deuba government, especially at a time when the opposition has set the precedent of removing the prime minister. In these uncertain circumstances, Prime Minister Deuba will have to rely more on the wishes of the minority in parliament than on his own party.

By KESHAB POUDEL

**W**hen newly elected leader of the Nepali Congress parliamentary party and prime minister-in-waiting Sher Bahadur Deuba declared that he would complete the remaining three-

year tenure of his party on July 22 following the announcement of parliamentary party election result, outgoing prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala and his predecessor Krishna Prasad Bhattarai gave each other a quizzical look while raising their hands in solidarity with Deuba.

The uneasiness of Koirala and Bhattarai was understandable. Both were forced to resign as prime minister before the completion of their tenure. Although the circumstances might have been different, both were pushed out of office amid growing political pressure.

The two senior Congress leaders



Deuba with Koirala : Victorious

and Deuba's rival in the parliamentary party election, Sushil Koirala, expressed whole-hearted support for the new prime minister. But words of good will would not be enough for the Deuba government's survival.

"I am behind Sher Bahadurji and the Nepali Congress party will fully support its own government," said outgoing Prime Minister Koirala. Added Bhattarai, "Deubaji is a capable second-generation leader and there is no question of the party not supporting him."

#### Condition of opposition

As important leaders of the ruling party publicly threw their weight behind Deuba, opposition leaders in parliament, Madhav Kumar Nepal and K.P. Sharma Oli, who were at the forefront of the campaign to force Koirala to step down, offered conditional support to the new prime minister. This means that communist and other opposition parties in parliament may choose to resume their disruption of legislative proceedings if anybody not acceptable to them found a place in the cabinet.

"Our party will decide the course it needs to take in the case of the Deuba government. We can support Deuba on condition that he chooses ministers hav-

ing an untainted record," said Oli, deputy leader of the main opposition CPN-UML. "Our struggle against the Nepali Congress government will continue. We will create hurdles in parliament if the government is packed with corrupt individuals."

It seems that Deuba's majority in his parliamentary party may not have much meaning if he is unable to abide by the terms and conditions put forward by the opposition parties, comprising five leftist and two rightist groups, in parliament.

The CPN-UML and four other communist parties have already set conditions for supporting the Nepali Congress government led by Deuba. "Deubaji must show that his government is different than Koirala's. It must be clean and efficient," said Lilamani Pokharel, a radical communist leader in parliament. "We will lay siege to parliament in the way we did during the tenure of Koirala if Deubaji fails to abide by our agenda."

Despite the support extended by his rivals in the party, it will not be easy for Deuba to muster support from the opposition. Deuba himself set a precedent of not cooperating with the majority group in the parliamentary party when he led

Congress dissidents in the house. Deuba did not speak a word in defence of his predecessor when Koirala came under constant attack from the opposition. Instead, he lent silent support to the opposition campaign to oust Koirala. The rival Congress camp led by Sushil Koirala may be anxious to return the compliment.

"The change of leadership is just a change of characters in a drama. Now Sushilda will take the place of Sher Bahadurji and Sherbahadurji is in the position of Girija Prasad Koirala," said a Congress leader on condition of anonymity. "As Sherbahadurji taught Congress dissidents how to behave like members of the opposition, he will have a very tough time in disciplining his own supporters."

#### Deuba's challenges

The situation before Deuba indicates that the road ahead is bumpy. Despite Deuba's call for a peaceful resolution of the Maoist insurgency, the rebels killed at least 15 policemen in the far-western district of Bajura, adjoining his home district, the day after King Gyanendra appointed him prime minister. This incident may indicate the kind of relationship Maoists are planning to develop with the new prime minister.

Personally, Deuba is regarded as one of the efficient and capable second-generation leaders of the Nepali Congress. Deuba's 72-40 victory margin against Sushil Koirala showed his popularity in the party. The flip side of that result is that general secretary Koirala, too, has proved that he is not a weakling in the party.

Koirala's stepping down as prime minister may imply that things would be easier for a Deuba-led Nepali Congress government.

#### Two bad precedents

The constitution was damaged twice in its twelve years long experiment. First it was in 1995 by the Supreme Court and now it was by minority opposition CPN-UML. The resignation of Koirala under pressure from opposition parties has set a bad precedent for an office that has seen a gradual weakening of authority.

# 'I Have A New Mandate And The Blessings Of Senior Leaders'

— SHER BAHADUR DEUBA

Newly appointed Prime Minister **SHER BAHADUR DEUBA** has laid down broad contours of his agenda. A second-generation leader of the Nepali Congress, Deuba is leading the country as prime minister for the second time. After his victory in Congress parliamentary party election, he spoke to journalists. Excerpts:



## How do you view your election as leader of the Nepali Congress parliamentary party?

I am very happy that I could receive the blessings of the two senior party leaders, Girija Prasad Koirala and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, as well those of members of parliament to win the elections. I was elected to the post following the resignation of our respected leader, Girija Prasad Koirala. Despite his majority in the parliamentary party, Koirala decided to resign to pave the way for a smooth political transition. This is one of his greatest contributions.

## Do you believe that all party leaders will support you?

They have already declared that they will support me. Girijababu and Bhattaraiji will support me. My respected brother and competitor Sushil Koirala will also support me. We will need to work together to strengthen the party.

## Do you think Sushil Koirala will support you?

Both of us are the members of the Nepali Congress party and we share a common ideology. There is no question to suspect that Sushilda will not support me.

## What will be your first priority?

As you know, the Maoist insurgency is one the major problems of the country. My first priority will be to work out a common strategy to end the insurgency.

## How will you work out a strategy?

To solve the Maoist problem, I will develop a common approach among the parties in parliament and outside. At a time when all major parties have agreed to the 14-point agenda presented by Girijababu, I will try to evolve a consensus among political parties to deal with the Maoist problem. I will initiate a dialogue with the major political parties for this purpose.

## How confident are you of solving the Maoist problem?

I am hopeful that the problem will be settled peacefully. First, I would like to discuss the issue with the main opposition party in parliament. When everyone is talking about the need to resolve the Maoist problem, I am sure I will get much-needed support from them. I will start an initiative only after negotiations with all the parties. And I will start very soon.

## As someone who led party dissidents during the tenure of Girija Prasad Koirala, how do you plan to accommodate all your colleagues?

I don't see any division in the party. You have already heard the voices [of support] of our party leaders, including Sushilda.

## You had expressed similar support after the election of Girijababu, but you did not support him. How do you believe you will receive your party's full support?

The situation has changed now and I have a new mandate and blessings of the leaders. I will abide by what my gurus Girijababu and Kishunji say.

## How difficult would it be to form the cabinet?

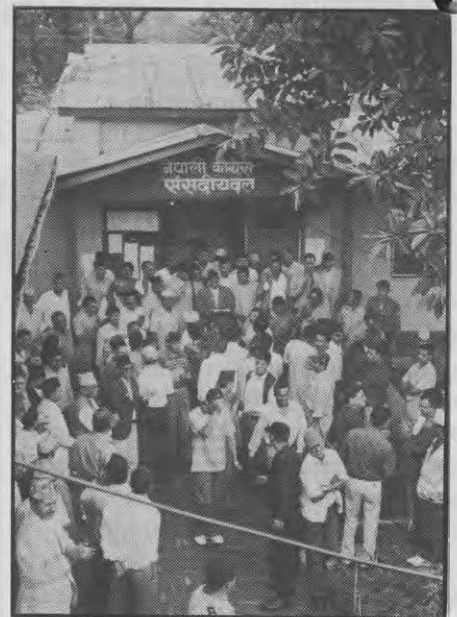
It is not difficult if you see all the MPs as your friends.

The Supreme Court's verdict of 1995, which set limits on the prime minister's right to dissolve the lower house of parliament, in effect turned the House of Representatives into full-term legislature.

By succumbing to the pressure tactics of the opposition, which obstructed the entire winter session of parliament and appeared set for a repeat performance during this session before Koirala decided to step down, the majority has lost its exclusive right to get the leader of its choice. The momentum towards the subversion of this core principle of parliamentary democracy has gathered pace with Koirala's departure.

At a time when the communist opposition parties and two rightist parties have formed an alliance in a perceived effort to distort the norms of parliamentary democracy, the country may need a miracle to preserve the existing system. "In a situation where the communist opposition is busy creating anarchy in the country, the very survival of parliamentary democracy has come into question," says a political analyst.

Patience, tolerance and respect for the rule of law seem to have lost their relevance to practitioners of parliamentary democracy in Nepal. By keeping open the option to use the streets and



Congress parliamentary party: Choosing their leader



**Bhattarai with party workers** : Election mood

the opposition. How long can Deuba expect to continue at a time when the form and content of the post have undergone a sea change since his last stint between 1995 and 1997?

Heterogeneous interests in the party may demand accommodation and compromises. If these are not done, Deuba may not be able to escape the fate

of Bhattarai and Koirala.

### Minority Rule

In a parliamentary system of government, the minority parties acquiesce to the will of the majority. When Nepal's political system uses the reverse standard, Deuba may have to start all over again to find his way through the maze of politics. The Nepali Congress parliamentary party may have given its decision on June 22, but the opposition hasn't delivered its stamp of approval yet.

house to destabilize the government, opposition leaders may be leading Nepalese politics straight into the eye of the storm. "Deuba must keep in the mind how we removed his predecessor, Koirala," said CPN-UML general secretary Nepal. As communist parties and rightist groups like the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and the Nepal Sadbhavana Party have embarked on an anti-parliamentary path, people and organizations that are against the current polity may find wider room for maneuver.

### Voices for alternatives

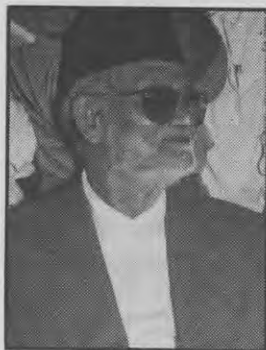
Voices are already being raised in favor of doing away with the existing political system. These voices are coming not only from the extreme right and extreme left of the political spectrum but also from the core of the vocal centrist intelligentsia. Some moderate politicians also have contributed to the questioning of the viability of the current system. However, no one is sure about the form and shape an alternative system should take.

"If a parliamentary government fails, there are other democratic systems that can replace it. There is an alternative to every political system," Professor Lok Raj Baral, a long-time advocate of parliamentary democracy during the partyless panchayat system, said at a recent seminar.

In such a situation, Deuba may find his new seat full of thorns. Girija Prasad Koirala, a seasoned politician, declared 16 months ago that he would complete his full term. But he ultimately had to step down under sustained pressure from

## 'After The Party Election, We Stand United Again'

— SUSHIL KOIRALA



*Nepali Congress General Secretary SUSHIL KOIRALA, who contested the parliamentary party election against Sher Bahadur Deuba, stresses the need to support the new government. Koirala spoke to SPOTLIGHT after the election:*

### How do you assess the election of the parliamentary party?

We have successfully completed the democratic exercise in the party. I accept the verdict of the election. After the election, we are united again.

### Does this mean you will support Sher Bahadur Deuba?

There is no question of opposing Sherbahadurji as prime minister. He has been elected in a democratic manner so it is my duty to support the Nepali Congress government.

### Do you believe Deuba's government will last its full term?

As the Nepali Congress has a mandate to govern the country for another three years. I think our government will serve out its term. I will support Sher Bahadurji to complete his three-year tenure.

### How do you see the election result?

I am very satisfied with the result, as such a large number of MPs voted for me. In a democracy, you have to accept the verdict of the majority. As some who has been campaigning very long for internal democracy in the party, it gave me pleasure to contest the election.

### Deubaji did not cooperate with Koirala's government. Don't you think that history could be repeated?

As I told you, I will fully cooperate with Deubaji. There is no question of following the path a particular individual may have taken.

### It is clear that your party is divided. What needs to be done to bring everybody together?

Frankly speaking, our party does not have any division. As a democratic party, there may be differences of opinion. After the election result, there are no more differences between us.

While this peculiar strand of Nepalese politics may amuse political scientists, it portends chronic instability for Nepal. When an acknowledged assertive leader like Girija Prasad Koirala could not survive in the midst of the fusion of forces on the left and

right, lesser mortals can expect challenges from day one.

Deuba may have to contend with some of the same problems Koirala faced during his stormy tenure. Within the Nepali Congress, Deuba may find many of his current colleagues turning against

him pretty soon. The first thing to watch for is the fallout of the announcement of the new cabinet.

Bringing the Maoist rebels to the negotiating table would be another tough task for Deuba. There are attendant risks. After all, it was Girija Prasad Koirala who drew leftists into the mainstream of Nepalese politics, but he found himself eventually edged out by them.

The people will be asking themselves many questions in the days ahead. Who has the right to choose the prime minister — the ruling party or the opposition? In a situation where logic and rationality have little meaning, anything can be justified as constitutional. If the CPN-UML starts choosing the leader of the Nepali Congress, wouldn't the Congress be entitled to naming the person it would like to see CPN-UML led by?

Parliament is now in the hands of the CPN-UML. If the minority is determined to embark on a destructive path, no majority can expect to survive. This is not a lesson from Marxism-Leninism but a page right out of the anarchism that passes for oppositional politics in Nepal.

#### Uncertain future

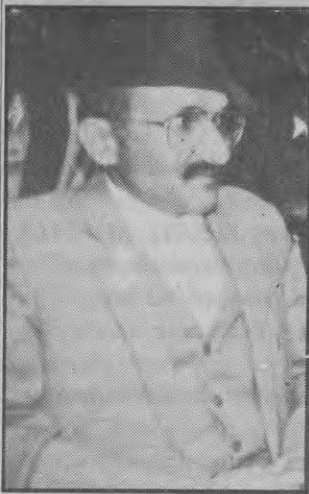
Is there any guarantee that new prime minister or leader of the ruling party will complete his full term without pleasing the main opposition party? What type of parliamentary democracy is Nepal exercising? What is the thrust of this democracy? Simply put, who rules whom?

Juxtapose this systemic chaos with the disarray the country is in. The budget and important bills have to be passed and ordinances have to be regularized. But the opposition is still on the offensive. It may be time to ask that big question: can the prime ministerial system function at all in Nepal? At the same time, Nepalis must realize that they cannot waste valuable time in experimenting with political systems.

The CPN-UML is competing with nine small communist parties to hold

## 'We Will Continue To Expose The Government'

— K.P. SHARMA OLI



*K.P. SHARMA OLI, deputy leader of the CPN-UML, was at the forefront of the opposition campaign to oust Girija Prasad Koirala. He spoke to SPOTLIGHT on various issues regarding the election of the new prime minister. Excerpts:*

#### How do you see the election of Sher Bahadur Deuba as prime minister?

The Congress parliamentary party has elected Deubaji. We had just demanded the resignation of Girija Prasad Koirala. I don't want to comment on Deubaji until his full cabinet is appointed.

#### What do you expect from the new prime minister?

We have already declared that he must include as ministers only those individuals who are not tainted. If Deubaji includes in his cabinet Congress MPs with a

blemished record, we will take our next action.

#### Do you think there are any individuals in the Congress that conform to your standards?

I see very few such people in the Congress.

#### Then what step you will take?

We will continue to expose them and their performance. Resignation of Koirala is not our ultimate goal. We will oppose all Congress governments on the basis of their performance.

#### What kind of action would you take?

We may take any kind of action, including disrupting parliament and street protests.

#### Do you mean you may launch an agitation against the Deuba government?

If he tries to correct the mistakes committed by the Nepali Congress in the last 12 years, we will support him. We don't have any bias against Deubaji. If he performs his duty honestly, we won't hesitate to support him.

#### How do you justify your act of disrupting parliament?

We blocked parliament only after Girija Prasad Koirala refused to abide by parliamentary procedures. Had he resigned after the letter sent by the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority in the Lauda Air deal, the nation might have been saved a lot of trouble.

#### Do you think disrupting parliament and launching street agitation is part of democracy?

In democracy, we can use every option, including the street and parliament. If the government refuses to follow the rules, why should we follow them?

the faithful. If the largest communist party continues positioning itself as a competitor with groups on the radical left, there will be further chaos. The communist parties have to learn to temper their desire for appeasing radicalism with their responsibility as participants of democratic system.

The political freedom in the country today cannot set such limits, so they have to engage in some self-discipline. Otherwise, the emergence of Pol Pot-like system in Nepal may become a vivid prospect.

### ● Radical in politics

From the hinterland to urban areas, the raw ideology of radical communists is forcing people to undergo needless suffering.

If the statements of CPN-UML leaders Nepal and Oli and other left leaders are any indication, parliament may once again turn into a venue for nasty scenes in case the Nepali Congress acts against the wishes of the opposition.

There is a dearth of logic in many statements CPN-UML leaders are making. Their words are breeding a sense of cynicism. Positive politics need not be an oxymoron. But if it doesn't establish a firm foothold, morality, quality of education and law-and-order will plunge



**Congress leaders :** Passing the torch

to new depths.

The radical populism from the left and the dubious role of the extreme right will worsened the situation.

As we have seen in the last 12 years, the Nepali Congress remains united because of certain common interests.

Party leaders seem to have reached a consensus on not to break the organization on the basis of leadership crisis.

To break away would mean eviction from power.

This was sufficiently indicated by results of internal elections over the last six months. Roughly the same number of MPs that opposed Deuba during the last parliamentary party vote have now turned out to support him. Permanent group loyalty has never been a defining feature of politics.

It's just that the drift in Nepal has been more pronounced. But shifting alliances based on the mutuality of interests risks eroding the constitutional process.

Interestingly, the last time Deuba was prime minister, the basic norms of parliamentary democracy were rendered irrelevant. Deuba was accused of showing a readiness to compromise on everything to continue in office. But those were the days of a hung parliament. Many expect Deuba to perform differently as the head of majority government. In the words of former prime minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Deuba is one of the most capable leaders in the Nepali Congress. To prove Bhattarai right, Deuba must demonstrate that he has the ability to break out of the business-as-usual mould. ■



**PM Deuba :** All smiles

## TOURISM

# Under Media Attack

Amid negative publicity in the national and international media, Nepal's tourism slips deeper into the quagmire

By A CORRESPONDENT

If one reads news about Nepal in the national and international media these days, it would take a great spirit of adventurism to make travel plans to the country. The incessant projection of Nepal as a hotbed of anarchy and mismanagement has taken its toll on the tourism industry.

Reporters and editors may not be unjustified in their coverage. The series of events in the country over the last few years — the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane; bird-hits at Tribhuvan International Airport; violence triggered by comments attributed to Indian movie star Hrithik Roshan which he said he never made and nobody recalls hearing; hotel strikes; growing Maoist attacks; and the June 1 massacre in the royal palace — make for a destination that only the brave can dare to venture into.

Interestingly, the tourism sector also made some fast recovery until the first four months of this year. After the royal palace massacre and the growing activities of Maoist rebels, June and July saw a drastic fall in tourist arrivals.

Tourist inflows in the first four months of this year were very positive. But the average increase in Indian and third-country tourist arrivals took a plunge in the following two months. "Even if the situation stabilizes, it may take years to recreate a positive image about Nepal in the international market," says Pradeep Raj Pandey, chief executive of Nepal Tourism Board.

Does the news media exaggerate what is actually happening in Nepal? Is the country any worse than other destinations in the region that still draw hordes of tourists? Tourism entrepreneurs still see Nepal as a peaceful destination.

"There is a war-like situation in Sri

Lanka and other South Asian countries have also problems of insurgency. But no one talks about them. I don't understand what prompts our media to go behind negative stories about the country," says Prasiddha Bahadur Pandey, general manager of Shangrila Hotel. "If tourism suffer, it will affect the entire Nepalese economy."

This kind of sentiment is hardly found in news coverage. Internet websites covering Nepal are full of stories about the Maoist insurgency, giving the impression that the country is in the grip of a civil war. Some foreign reporters that converged in Kathmandu following the June 1 royal tragedy soon began sending out stories about how Nepal was barely days away from Maoist rule.

"The national media needs to be more responsible and factual before publishing news on tourism-related issues," says P.T. Sherpa Kerung, executive director of Kathmandu Environment Education Project. "Coverage of the Maoist insurgency has created panic in the international tourism market."

After the hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight IC 814 from Nepal in December 1999, the Indian media launched a virtual crusade to portray a peaceful Hindu kingdom as a den of foreign-led anarchists.

The five-month suspension of Indian Airlines flights to Nepal drastically reduced the number of Indian tourists in the first six months of 2000. Indian tourists, who had started trickling in, were scared away again a year later following what is known locally as the "Hrithik Roshan episode".

"Tourism is a very vulnerable sector. We have to be very cautious, as it can be easily disturbed," says Birendra Bahadur Basnet, managing director of Buddha Air. "Nepal needs to make serious efforts to change the image of the country."

The contribution of the tourism industry to the national economy is pivotal and even a short-term damage will badly affect the country. The tourism industry must devise a way of overcoming this negative publicity before the sector slips beyond recovery. ■



Aeroplanes at TIA : Yearning for more passengers



## CIAA CHIEF

## Moral Dilemma

A high-level panel links the head of the anti-corruption watchdog to irregularities in an irrigation project

By A CORRESPONDENT

After the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) chief Surya Nath Upadhyaya was linked to irregularities in his earlier tenure as chairman of an irrigation project, does he



Upadhyaya : In controversy

Does he have the moral authority to continue in office? In a country where officials and politicians set their own standards of morality, what measure would Upadhyaya adopt?

When a high-level inquiry commission, formed in accordance with the directives of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the House of Representatives, pointed out negligence on the part of Upadhyaya as chairman of the Mahakali Irrigation Development Board and secretary to the Ministry of Water Resources, wouldn't Upadhyaya's remaining in office erode the credibility of the CIAA?

In order to execute the directive issued by the PAC, the government formed a three-member commission under the chairmanship of former secretary Dr. Bholachalise in accordance with the Com-

mission of Inquiry Act two months ago.

The PAC also issued a directive on the dispute pending before the International Court of Arbitration (ICA) and urged the government to take an appropriate decision keeping in view the national interest. As mandated by the government, the commission summoned senior officials, including Upadhyaya, to probe into irregularities committed in the course of implementation of construction work of Mahakali Irrigation Project by an international contractor, leading to the claim of about Rs. 150 million by the contractor.

The committee also sought to establish the circumstances that gave rise to such an unreasonable and illegal claim. It stressed that the official responsible by way of negligence, mala fide actions or irresponsible and irregular activities

whatsoever, should be thoroughly investigated and held responsible for the loss.

According to sources close to the panel, members saw negligence on the part of Upadhyaya in executing the decision and deliberately delaying the signing of the agreement for months. Because of negligence on the part of officials, the government had to lose nearly Rs140 million. This report will be submitted to the parliamentary committee and will ultimately be sent to the CIAA for criminal investigation and ultimate prosecution.

Ever since he was ap-

pointed to head the anti-graft watchdog last year, Upadhyaya has filed cases against several RNAC officials on grounds that the airlines lost more than Rs14 million because of their negligence. Three senior officials are behind bars because they were unable to raise the massive deposits the CIAA demanded. "If the same criteria is applied to CIAA chief Upadhyaya, he would have to face a fate similar to that of the RNAC officials," said an advocate.

How will the CIAA investigate its own chief independently and impartially? Although heads of constitutional bodies can be removed only through impeachment by parliament, they do not have immunity from probes into corruption and irregularities.

Although the report was presented two weeks ago, no one has made an effort to raise the question of morality of Chief Commissioner Upadhyaya. The main opposition CPN-UML and other opposition parties, which claimed to be on an anti-corruption crusade while pressing for the resignation of Girija Prasad Koirala as prime minister for months, remain silent over the report. It is now up to the PAC and the new government to take necessary steps on the 42-page report. ■

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## FOOD SECURITY

# Commercial Corn

From traditional Dhedo to munchy popcorns, the maize has become a commercially important crop

By AKSHAY SHARMA

**N**epalis love corn. In rural areas, they consume it in the form of dhedo (maize meal). In Kathmandu and other urban centers, the choice ranges from cornflakes to popcorn. Five hundred years after Christopher Columbus became one of the first Europeans to set eyes on it, corn has spread across Nepal's diverse terrain.

"It is the taste of the corn and the paste of salt, green chili, ginger that attract me," says Saloni Silwal of Swayambhu. But others are less enthusiastic about the roasted

fare available on the roadside. "They use left-overs from funeral pyres because there is a shortage of coal," warns 21-year-old Aditya Aryal of Hadigaon. "I prefer to take the corn home and boil it."

"It is safe to eat the roasted corns sold in the streets because the coal is immune to harmful bacteria," says Dr. Sameer Gharti. "It is the disgust of eating something roasted from the remains of funeral pyres that puts people off."

Popcorn has become popular in Kathmandu. Devendra Gurung, a shopkeeper near the Gopi Krishna Cinema hall in Chabahil, says: "It's one of the widely sold

items in my shop. Most of the customers are couples who like to munch a bag of popcorn with the movie."

Streets vendors like Dil Bahadur Gurung in New Road are doing brisk business with their popcorn carts. Naushad Ullah of Dilli Bazar is among the regular buyers. "I usually go to New Road to buy newspapers and get drawn by the aroma of popping corn."

Making popcorn to perfection is an art or sorts. "The quality depends on a number of factors," says biologist Layla Piya. "Generally, the more a popcorn variety expands after popping, the better the quality, as a greater volume produces a better texture. Most commercial varieties will expand 30-40 times their volume. Moisture content, drying procedure, and amount of damage to the pericarp and

endosperm also affect expansion. Other factors affecting quality include flavor, tenderness, absence of hulls, color, and shape."

Hamama Maharjan, a farmer from Sano Thimi, sees the commercial prospects of the crop. "White dent corn often receives a premium price from the dry-milling industry since yields are somewhat less than those of the yellow-dent corn hybrids," he says. "While the foliage and stalks of dent corn can be used to make a number of products, including silage and corn syrup, the kernels make dent corn an economic treasure."

Processed corn products are diverse, including cooking oil and various corn grits, meals, flours, and starches. Corn starches can be processed further into a variety of food and non-food products including fat substitutes, sweeteners, alcohol, paper, adhesives, paints, soaps, cosmetics, dynamite, tires, and oil-drilling materials.

"Corn is also used as a nutrient medium in making antibiotics like tetracycline, penicillin, neomycin, bacitracin, and streptomycin. Riboflavin (Vitamin B2) and cobalmeide (Vitamin B12) are two major vitamins produced from the fermentation of corn steep liquor and dextrose. Other important corn fermentation products include citric acid, glutamic acid, lactic acid, and lysine," says Dr. Gharti.

Sani Maya Magar of Raniban, Nuwakot, sits every morning on the pavement at Kalanki tending her baby and selling corn. "I earn about 150 rupees a day selling roasted corn. Some of the corn comes from our own land but we also buy it from other villagers. And we have to pay 50 rupees per day for the coal." And where does she get the coal? "I have a contract with the bakery shops and brick kilns."

"The land at our village does not yield enough to feed us around the year. Besides, there is a sense of insecurity," she says. "My husband and I came to Kathmandu in search of a better life. We have to pay 800 rupees a month in house rent in Kalanki. My husband works as a porter. "I want to give my children a better life I don't know how we are going to support them."

Such grains of truth might goad agriculture planners to find ways of harnessing the commercial prospects of corn both in terms of roadside business and national revenue receipts. ■



Women selling corn : Popular tiffin

# MARCHABAR CONTROVERSY

## Dam It

A year after triggering a row by constructing the Laxmanpur afflux bond, India does a replay at Marchabar

By A CORRESPONDENT

Just across the Indo-Nepal border in Marchabar area of Rupandehi district, India is busy constructing Rasiyabal Khurda Loutan Dam, supposedly to check the havoc the rivers Danav and Danda wreak on Indian villages in the vicinity during the monsoon.

However, the construction of the dam is going to have a serious impact on the Nepalese side, according to experts. They claim that the dam would result in inunda-

Indian side seems bent on having its way. During last year's monsoon, the construction of Laxmanpur afflux bond had led to inundation of several villages in Banke district in Nepal.

The Indian side, early this year, had proposed at the JSC meeting the construction of dam at least eight kilometers away from the border. However, the construction is taking place well within that limit. According to international norms, such dams cannot be constructed within eight kilometers of national border. But the Rasiyabal Dam is being constructed just 200 meters across the border.

According to Ramesh Man Tuladhar, the chief of the Rupandehi District Irrigation office, the construction of the dam near Marchabar area could lead to widespread destruction on the Nepalese side. Talking to a vernacular daily, Tuladhar said, "We tried to contact them (Indian officials) repeatedly, but in vain. In fact, they went on constructing the dam."

The Indian authorities had started the construction of the dam five months ago under the pretext of building roads. The Indian side claims that the two rivers inundate 85 Indian villages of Maharajgunj and Siddharthanagar districts.

The Nepalese side, on the other hand, claims that if the dam is constructed, 200 villages covering 2100 bighas of land in 18

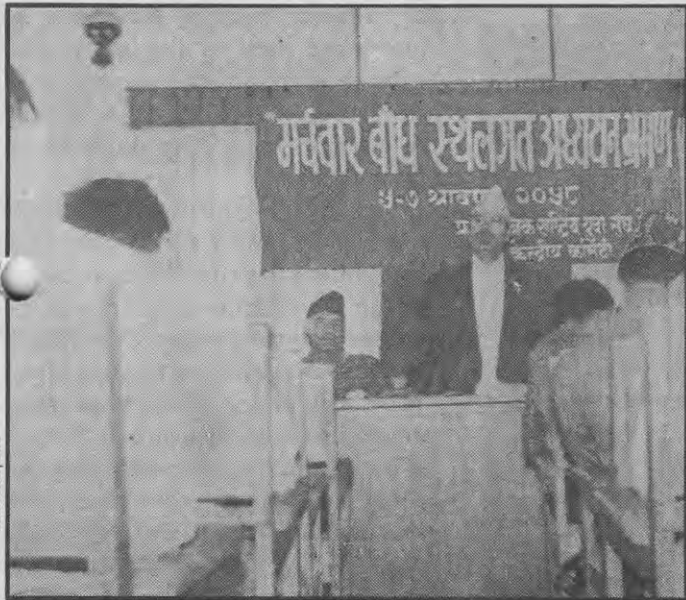
Village Development Committees of Rupandehi district will be inundated, affecting 100,000 people.

Although local government officials claim they briefed the concerned agencies about the problem in Marchabar area, the government is yet to make its stand public on the issue.

Meanwhile, a team of the youth wing of the main opposition Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML), Democratic National Youth Federation (DNYF), completed a field study of the area. The delegation had 45 members including members of parliament, youth activists and journalists.

Member of Parliament Gokarna Bista led the delegation. Upon his return, Bista said he would raise a strong voice against the dam, which could not only affect Nepalese villages but also inundate the Lumbini area, the birthplace of Lord Gautam Buddha.

Many think that the problem cannot be resolved at the local level. The Nepalese government ought to take up the issue with its Indian counterpart at a higher level, they say. However, as the government at the center seems busy in politicking, the important issue of inundation could once again be sidelined. ■



UML leader Nepal on Marchabar controversy : What next?

tion of several villages in Rupandehi district. It could even affect the Lumbini area, they say.

Last year, the Joint Standing Committee (JSC) - a panel formed to look after the problems of inundation along the Indo-Nepal border - had decided that the construction of the dam would follow a detailed study by the joint team. But the

## School Shutdown

Once again, radical leftist students affiliated to the Maoists ordered the closure of more than 34,000 public and private schools across the country on July 20. This time the reason was lower allocation for the education sector in the budget for this fiscal year. The budget for fiscal 2001/2002 has allocated 13.96 percent of total government expenditure on education. The radical students claim the amount is not enough. In the runup to the school strike, the students representing the All Nepal National Free Students Union (ANNFSU-Revolutionary), as usual, was involved in terror tactics. They damaged vehicles of a few private schools and manhandled some principals on the eve of the strike. To months ago, the student organization had shut down schools for a whole week. ■

## PENAL SYSTEM

# Blueprint For Reform

A book showcases the realities of Nepalese jails and proposes reforms

By SHOBHAKAR BUDHATHOKI

The physical and psychological conditions of all the prisons of Nepal are unfit for human beings. Most of the country's 73 prisons are old dilapidated buildings. Some walls and ceilings are on the verge of collapse, roofs leak and many of the rooms are damp and lack ventilation.

The foul-smelling toilets make life miserable for prisoners. The prisons are over crowded and some of inmates are suffering from communicable diseases. Adequate facilities have not provided by the authorities. The prisons are run under an outdated legal framework and successive governments have given little attention to improving management.

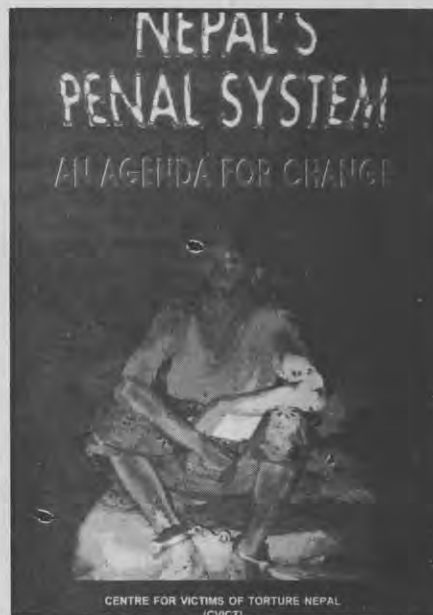
The recently published "Nepal's Penal System: An Agenda for Change" by the Center for Victims of Torture (CVICT) elaborates on the conditions of the prison and penal system of Nepal, undertaking an exploratory study. Prisoners should be treated as human beings and their fundamental human rights guaranteed by international instruments should be respected.

The study makes an extraordinary contribution to highlighting the conditions of prisons and prisoners to the general reader. The study was undertaken with the assistance of DFID and the book was published by the assistance of Enabling State Program (ESP).

The book is divided into six parts. The first and second parts contain an introduction and background information about the penal system of Nepal, discussing institutional and legal framework of the penal system and human rights obligation under international law and constitutional safeguards.

The third part relates to shortcomings of the criminal justice system, mainly arising from penal institutions and their laws, investigation of crimes, treatment of suspects and detainees, prosecution proceedings, adjudication process and the treatment of victims of crimes.

The fourth part is remarkable in its elaboration of the condition of Nepal's prison and prisoners. The book has also emphasized the need to reform prison conditions. It also addresses the management of Nepal's prison and Nepal's prison legislation and treatment of special types of prisoners, including government prison



*Nepal's Penal System:  
Agenda For Change  
Published by Center for Victims  
of Torture Nepal (CVICT) with  
the support of ESP  
Edited by Stephen Keeling and  
Rabindra Bhattarai*

reform recommendations.

The fifth part mainly enumerates the moves towards penal reform, covering the roles of civil society, donor, INGO and media. The sixth part concludes with an agenda for change. This part stresses the need of change in the application of law and institutional reform in the police, court, prisons and specifies the role of NGOs.

Nepal's penal system is generally administered by administrative authorities due to the lack of implementation of rules and regulation related to prison laws. However, the prison officer and other designated prisoners such as *chaukidar* and *naik* monitor it. Significant improvement has been made in the legislative framework since the early 1960s. Since 1990, the Nepalese government has committed itself to penal reform by ratifying all major international human rights covenants related to the field.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990 has also guaranteed fundamental human rights of the citizen, including the right to criminal justice. However, there are still several weaknesses in legal procedures on treating prisoners, violating their fundamental human rights.

According to the law, suspects should be brought to justice. At the same time, they have to be treated as citizens in prison. The prison authorities should respect the fundamental human rights of the citizen. The penal laws should not be manipulated and the penal system should be reformed through a multilateral approach.

Despite the improvement of legislative and constitutional provisions, implementation is lacking. The recommendation of commissions and committees on improving the prison system has not been implemented satisfactorily. There is a need of a strong advocacy group to reform penal laws. Prisons are not constructed for punishment. They are built to reform citizens.

Therefore, prisons should be developed as reform house and by reforming provisions of penal laws and existing penal system, says the book. ■

(Budhathoki writes on human rights issues.)

By M.S.KHOKNA



**TRANSITION**

**APPOINTED:** Professor Dr. Krishna Manandhar, the dean at the Faculty of Science and Technology, Tribhuvan University, as the Secretary of the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (RONAST), by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, in

his capacity as the Chancellor of RONAST and in accordance with the RONAST Act 1992.

**RESIGNED:** Binaya Dhoj Chand, from the post of chief whip of Nepali Congress parliamentary party.

**AWARDED:** Buddhi Narayan Shrestha, with the Madan Purasakar for the year 2057 BS, for his book "Nepalko

Simana" (Nepal's Border), by the Madan Puraskar Trust.

**Janakavi Keshari Dharmaraj Thapa**, senior poet, with Jagadambashree Puraskar for the year 2057 BS, for his contribution to Nepalese literature, by the Madan Puraskar Trust.

**Phanindra Raj Khetala**, senior litterateur, with **Bednidhi Puraskar**, by the Bednidhi

Puraskar Management Council.

**ELECTED:** Dr. Ram Prasad Pokharel, as president, **Kali Prasad Rijal** and **Dr. Shambhu Prasad Lakhey**, as vice presidents and **Madhusudan Dhakal**, as general secretary, of Nepal Netrajyoti Sangh (Ophthalmic Association), by the association's eighth general meeting. ■

## SMOKING

# Health Or Wealth?

The tobacco industry is a money-spinner for the state, but it is drawing the most vulnerable segment of society in a pall of deadly fumes

By AKSHAY SHARMA

The catchy cigarette advertisements have been off the air for some time. However, Nepalis seem to have become addicted to music contests and sporting events that carry the name of the sponsoring tobacco company in big banners.

Just like in the West, many here feel the case against smoking is not conclusive. "Smoking five to six cigarettes a day is a deterrent against the pollution in



**A young smoker** : Unaware of hazard?

Kathmandu valley," says an environmentalist. His argument is that nicotine would guard your lungs against the noxious city air. "It is good for the national economy," says businessman Bibek Sherchan. It's difficult to see where the banter ends in these comments.

But for a whole pack of other people, smoking was never something to laugh about. "It's almost like a disease. The most crucial part is for a person is to kick the habit," says a smoker who is halfway through kicking the habit.

The younger generation represents the largest segment of smokers around the world and Kathmandu is no exception, according to a study conducted by Jagriti. "But it's not only about health. It's about the effects of advertisements that can poison a young child's brain."

"Many smokers have successfully given up cigarettes by adopting new habits, without quitting "cold turkey," planning a special program, or seeking professional help," said Dr Prasant Barkoti told SPOTLIGHT.

Ask unsuccessful quitters and they'll tell you they've tried everything under the sun to get rid of the stick. "Remember that successful methods are as different as the individuals who adopt them," says Jagriti's spokesperson Dhiraj K.C. "What may seem silly to others may be just what you need to quit. So don't be embarrassed to try something new."

"Going back to one or even a few cigarettes doesn't mean you've blown it. It means that you have to strengthen your determination to quit, and try again — harder. Don't forget that you got through several days, perhaps even weeks or months, without a cigarette," a quitter-in-progress says.

"The tobacco industry is one of the most inexhaustible sources of revenue for a cash-strapped economy," says Sherchan. "Just by banning the youngsters from smoking or buying cigarettes doesn't mean you can drive away their craving for a drag."

In this clash between macroeconomics and medical care, there are those looking for a middle way. "It's wrong to promote advertisements that seem to suggest that it is smart to smoke," says Asish Acharya of Thamel. "In almost every publication, the first attractive display you usually come across has to do with cigarettes," he says.

"Cigarette companies think they can get away by publishing the statutory warning. But how many people do they think are influenced by letters that are so small that they sink in the midst of the colors and creativity of the advertisement?" Well, the world has been trying to figure that out since statutory labelling was made mandatory in the West. ■

## WAYS OF QUITTING...

- Switch to a brand you find distasteful.
- Change to a brand that's low in tar and nicotine a couple of weeks before your target date. This will help change your smoking behavior. However, do not smoke more cigarettes, inhale them more often or more deeply, or place your fingertips over the holes in the filters. All of these will increase your nicotine intake, and the idea is to get your body used to functioning without nicotine.
- Cut down the number of cigarettes you smoke.
- Smoke only half of each cigarette.
- Each day, postpone lighting your first cigarette by one hour.
- Decide you'll smoke only during odd or even hours of the day.
- Decide beforehand how many cigarettes you'll smoke during the day. For each additional cigarette, pledge a rupee to your favorite charity.
- Change your eating habits to help you cut down on cigarettes. For example, drink milk, which many people consider incompatible with smoking. End meals or snacks with something that won't lead to a cigarette.
- Remember: Cutting down can help you quit, but it's not a substitute for quitting.

*Now In Town*

**BOOK**

<b>Dynamics and Development of Highland Ecosystems</b> Ek Raj Ojha/1999	Rs. 995.00
<b>Hundred and One Poems for New Millennium</b> L.D. Rajbhandari/2000	Rs. 100.00
<b>Institute of Foreign Affairs : Poliet Study Series</b> Ifa/2000	Rs. 300.00
<b>Nepal's Foreign Policy : Issues and Options</b> IFA/1999	Rs. 300.00
<b>Nepal Missing Elements in the Development Thinking</b> Gunanidhi Sharma/2000	Rs. 472.00
<b>Palpa As You Like It &amp; Palpa Revisited</b> V.K. Kasajoo/2001	Rs. 250.00
<b>Reseunga The Mountain of the Horned Sage</b> <b>Two Districts in Central Nepal</b> Philippe Ramirez/2000	Rs. 425.00

**The Regional Paradox : Eassys in Nepali and South Asian Affairs**  
Lok Raj Baral/2000 Rs. 880.00

**Ritual, Power and Gender : Explorations in the Ethnography of Vanuatu, Nepal and Ireland**  
Michael Allen/2000 Rs. 960.00

**Selected Nepali Lyrical Poems**  
Rovin Sharma/2001 Rs. 300.00

**Small and Medium Enterprise Development in Nepal : Emerging Issues and Opportunities**  
Bishwa Keshar Maskay/2001 Rs. 400.00

**Who is the Daughter of Nepal? A collection of Eassys**  
Sangita Rayamajhi/2001 Rs. 315.00

**WTO Globalization and Nepal**  
Ananda P. Shrestha/2001 Rs. 160.00

**WTO Regional Cooperation and Nepal**  
Horst Mund/1999 Rs. 160.00

*(Source : Himalayan Book Center, Bagh Bazar, Kathmandu, Ph : 242085)*

**Video (English)**

- Meit Down
- Kiss of Dragon
- Aeiantis The Lost Empire
- Cats and Days
- Fast And The Forious
- Baby Boy
- Sabotage
- Dr. Dollittle II
- A.I
- Tom Raider



**Hindi**

- Tum Bin
- Aks
- Bas Itna Sa Khawaab Hai
- Mujhe Kuch Kehna Hai
- Love Ke Liya Kuch Bhi Karega
- Pagalpan
- Gadar
- Lagaan
- Avgat
- Ek Rishtaa

*(Source : Super Star Video, New Road)*



*“God is neither  
distant nor distinct  
from you.”*

**- SATHYA SAI BABA**

**BEETLE BAILEY**



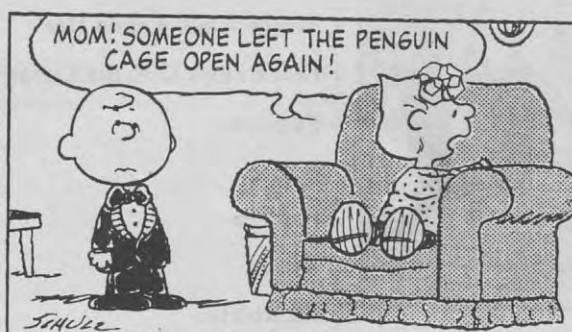
**B.C.**



**BLONDIE**

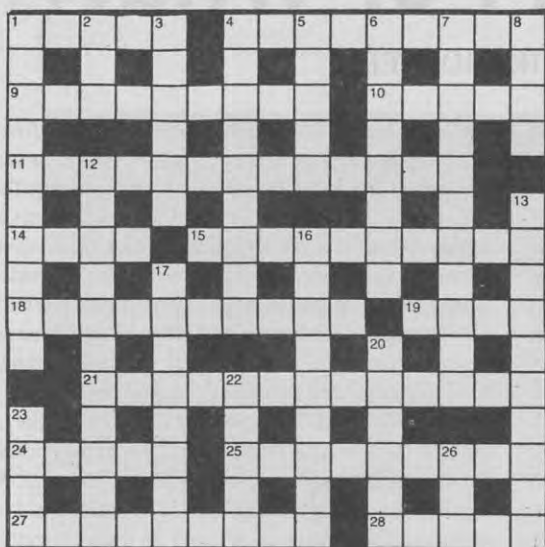


**PEANUTS**





# CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

1. Leading man appearing in a commercial (5)
4. Fabulous maiden living in Popular, perhaps (4,5)
9. Device held by Handel, say, to improve view of opera? (9)
10. Start as a statesman in Israel (5)
11. Old railways and competitors originally sharing amicable relations (13)
14. Is one bound to show such responsibility? (4)
15. Staff function, by the way, even provides fruit (10)
18. Captivated, then put out ñ everyone has colored clothing (10)
19. Long sentence in a biography (4)
21. Modernization of Barry's area down under? (3,5,5)
24. Backbone shown by Asians deprived of last quarters (5)
25. Arbitrary rule again becomes a real pain (9)
27. Superlatively powerful aircraft, one in height trial (9)
28. Contents of boat in front? (5)

## DOWN

1. So sailors could be clever, and threatened to capture island (4-6)
2. Part of corn requiring attention (3)
3. Boat of drab appearance smuggling hard drug (6)
4. Current source of power, possibly a force in the north (9)
5. They mark references, so priest can follow broadcast (5)
6. Small number glorify English aristocrats overseas (8)
7. Authoritative data about US fighters (11)
8. Manual laborer's part of deal (4)
12. Superior, but unsettled (11)
13. Play down position of those sub-servient to body politic (10)
16. Distinguished soldier possibly accommodating posh relative (5-4)
17. Attend summit as leader and bully (8)
20. Insists vessel should cross river (6)
22. British lightweight formally seizing unexpected opening (5)
23. Only penny off for pickle? It's a swindle (4)
26. Horned creature found in dwindling numbers (3)

**Across** : 1. Ahead 4. Wood-nymph 9. Lorgnette 10. Begin 11. Brotherhood 14. Duty 15. Mangosteen 18. Enthralled 19. Life 21. New south wales 24. China 25. Neuralgia 27. Mightiest 28. Sauce

**Down** : 1. Able-bodied 2. Ear 3. Dinghy 4. Waterfall 5. Obeli 6. Noblesse 7. Magisterial 8. Hand 12. Outstanding 13. Understate 16. Great aunt 17. Browbeat 20. Swears 22. Ounce 23. Scam 26. Gnu

# NOIUTOS

# BRIDGE

3-15

**NORTH**  
 ♠ K 10 6 3  
 ♥ A Q 8 6 2  
 ♦ K 9  
 ♣ 10 7

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

**SOUTH**  
 ♠ A Q 9  
 ♥ J 7 4  
 ♦ A 8 5 2  
 ♣ 9 8 6

Vulnerable: Neither  
 Dealer: East

The bidding:  

East	South	West	North
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	2 ♥
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT

 All pass

Opening lead: Club king

**“All men are the same. They take no notice of the stag in the thicket because they’re already chasing the hare.”**

— Jean Giraudour

“I played for K-x of hearts with West,” explained a defeated South. “Since he had bid spades and cashed four clubs, he might have held only two hearts.”

“Perhaps,” replied North. “But there was something you failed to notice. You overlooked an opportunity to get an accurate count.”

Trying to protect his spade queen from immediate attack, South bid two no-trump, and North raised optimistically to game. However, West led clubs, cashing all four clubs after East unblocked at each turn. West then shifted to a diamond, won by South’s ace.

A heart finesse to dummy’s queen was successful, and South visualized 10 easy tricks if West’s heart king were doubleton. So he cashed dummy’s ace and lost his game when West’s king did not drop.

What did South fail to notice? When dummy’s heart queen held, East dropped the nine. Was it a clever flashcard from 10-9-x, or was it from 10-9 doubleton?

To succeed, South cashes dummy’s diamond king and leads a spade to his queen. Gaining an accurate count of West’s distribution, South knows what to do. Holding five spades, four clubs and only one diamond, West must have three hearts. And instead of vainly trying for K-x in hearts, South takes his only chance and runs his heart jack. South’s jack obliterates East’s 10, and dummy’s heart suit runs whether or not West covers. South then wins five heart tricks and claims his ambitious game.

# Education For What?

By AMBIKA JOSHEE

Education for what? This is the question that should be answered by the top ranking educators of Nepal. The Government of Nepal has been trying seriously to modernize its education system without much success. The current education system of Nepal still has been strongly influenced by our ancient gur kul sikshya. Rote memorization is the rule in our schools. Teachers ask students to memorize materials from certain pages of the textbook and leave the class. This is one factor, but there are various other factors, which are responsible for holding back the education system of Nepal. The first and foremost among them is "Cheating in examinations" which forces me to ask the question "Education for what?"

Our literacy rate is below 40%. Women's literacy rate below 30%. Illiterate parents do not know the real value of education. They often send their children to school just because they have been told to do so. Their dream is to have their children graduate from high school or college and hope to see them land a prestigious government job. For them, there is no difference between educating their children for knowledge or educating them simply to pass the examination. The parents want their children to have the piece of paper that states that they have passed the certain examination. Even though that piece of paper does not guarantee any skill or knowledge, it serves as the "gate pass" to enter government service.

Parents go to school to argue with the teachers if their sons or daughters failed the examination. They do not care about the percentage of the student's attendance at the school. They do not care whether they do their homework or not. Many parents will be happy if their children come home from school a few hours early in order to help them with their house and farm work.

The teachers' job is crucial. They have a set curriculum and prescribed textbook that they have to teach within a school session. They are faulted if they don't complete the prescribed textbook within the year. They have to help the students pass the exam if they didn't complete the text. How can teachers help the students pass the exam without teaching them the prescribed text?

The teachers have a reasonable financial package in comparison to other government employees. Within the last few years the government has made provision for pension for public school teachers. Their salary is on par with government employees. Yet they continue to complain about their salary and benefits. Teaching is a part-time job for most teachers. They have their farms, their shops, tutoring for money at home and various other responsibilities besides teaching at school. Interestingly, private school teachers financial package is considerably lower than government schools teachers.

Besides all the above, every school has to pass certain number of students in their SLC examination. If not, the government may cut the funding that they are receiving. Not being regular, not teaching well at the school, fear of fund cut, who would not help the students to cheat in their examination? That is why the teachers are often at the examination hall and helping the students to copy from the book or from their note book. Sometimes we even see the teacher's writing the answers for the questions on the blackboard so that every student will be able to copy and pass the exam.

"If you don't understand, come to see me at home". You may have heard this statement from math, science and English teacher telling their weaker students. Many math, science and English teachers take tuition

classes at home for money. These are major three subjects in which students usually fail in their exams. Some teachers may not be that diligent at the school while they are teaching their students in the classroom. This way they can attract the students at home and charge money for tuition. If they are charging them money for tuition they certainly take the responsibility to help the students in their exam. This is why they help the students to copy in the exam.

In most of our Nepali schools, we don't have semester or terminal exam system. We have only half-yearly and annual exam. Students have to memorize every thing that had been taught for six months or a year for their exam. Homework is very rare and the teachers do not have the time to correct the homework. Even if they correct they do not have the time to explain the problems to the students. Paper writing is not required in schools and colleges. The students do not know how to do research. They do not know how to write a project proposal and how to write a report even after they pass their BA or M. A. examination.

Many schools have at least some science equipment. How many schools use the science equipment that they have? But if you talk to the science teacher, you will always hear them complaining that they do not have science equipment. There are a lot of educational materials or teaching aids that they can make from no cost or low cost materials available locally. Teachers either don't have time to even think about it or they have never seen a test tube during their whole school or college life. How do we expect them to do practical and or experiments in their classes if they have never done one before?

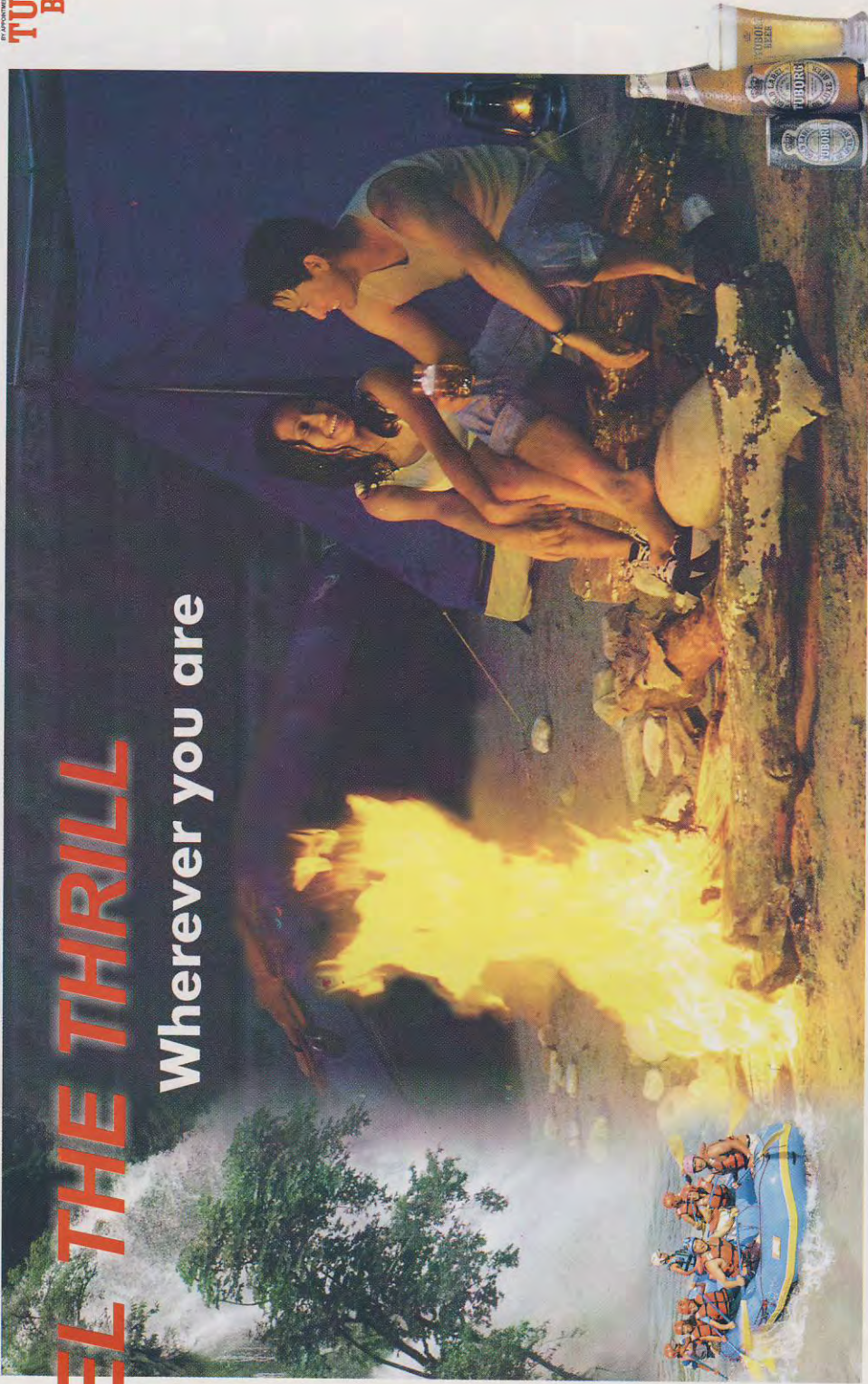
Teachers go to the class and lecture. Students are not encouraged to ask questions in the classroom. They may have not understood what has been taught, but they are afraid to ask questions. Our teaching is mainly teacher-centered not student-centered. Curious students don't get chance to express their curiosity. So when the exam comes, they will just copy from the book.

Students have been habituated from the primary classes to pass the exam by cheating. They are never taught that they are at the school to gain knowledge. The focus has been mainly on passing the exam. It starts from grade one and continues till they will be working for their Master or Ph.D. degree. The style and percentage of cheating will be different as they go in upper grades but cheating will continue. People even hire some one to write their thesis for their Master or Ph.D. degree. We have read the news in newspaper saying that the examinee has been caught in the examination hall while writing the paper for someone else.

The only remedy I can see is to educate the parents and the students. The concept of "Education for knowledge" should begin from grade one. Parents should know that just passing the exam does not do any good but their children should strive for the knowledge. Confidence should be build on the students from grade one that they will have the knowledge to pass the exam if they are regular in the class. Our Educators should think seriously about: "What is the target of the education?" Students should not be taught just to pass the exam but should be trained for certain job. What is the value of the M.D. or MBBS passed student if s/he does not know how to talk to a patient. It is high time that our educators work seriously before they sit down to revise the curriculum and it is high time for our teachers to educate the students and parents about the importance and value of education as well as the difference between "Education to pass the exam" and "Education for knowledge".

**FEEL THE THRILL**

**Wherever you are**



BY APPOINTMENT TO THE ROYAL DANISH COURT  
**TUBORG  
BEER**

# TURN CARDS INTO CASH



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Tahachal, Kathmandu  
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Fax: 977-1-271244  
E-mail: rdt@mos.com.np

**Casino Everest**

Casino Everest  
Hotel Everest  
New Baneshwor  
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Fax: 977-1-490284  
E-mail: everest@mos.com.np

**Casino Anna**

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Hotel de L' Annapurna  
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Tel: 223479  
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**Casino Royale**

Casino Royale  
Hotel Yak & Yeti  
Durbar Marg  
Tel: 228481  
Fax: 977-1-223933  
E-mail: royal@mos.com.np

Website: <http://www.casinonepal.com>