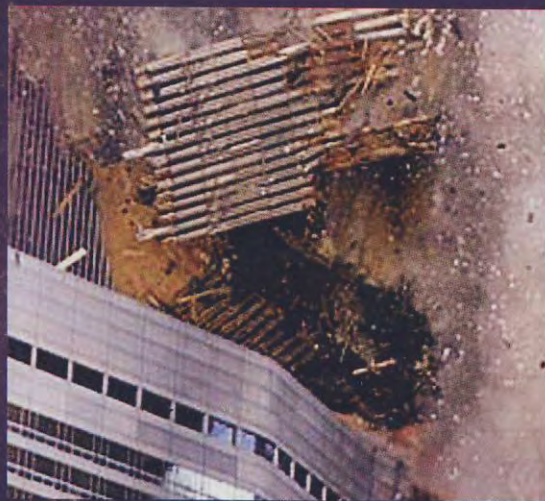
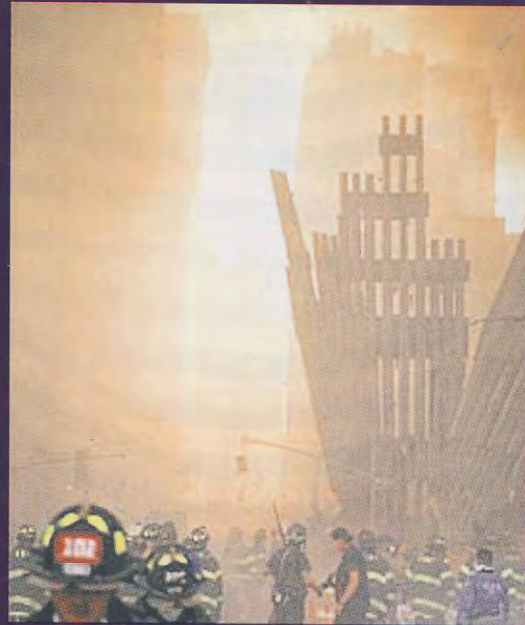


The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

21-27 Sept, 2001

Tremors of Terrorism



- JUDICIARY UNDER ATTACK
- GOVT - MAOIST TALK
- VASECTOMY STUDY

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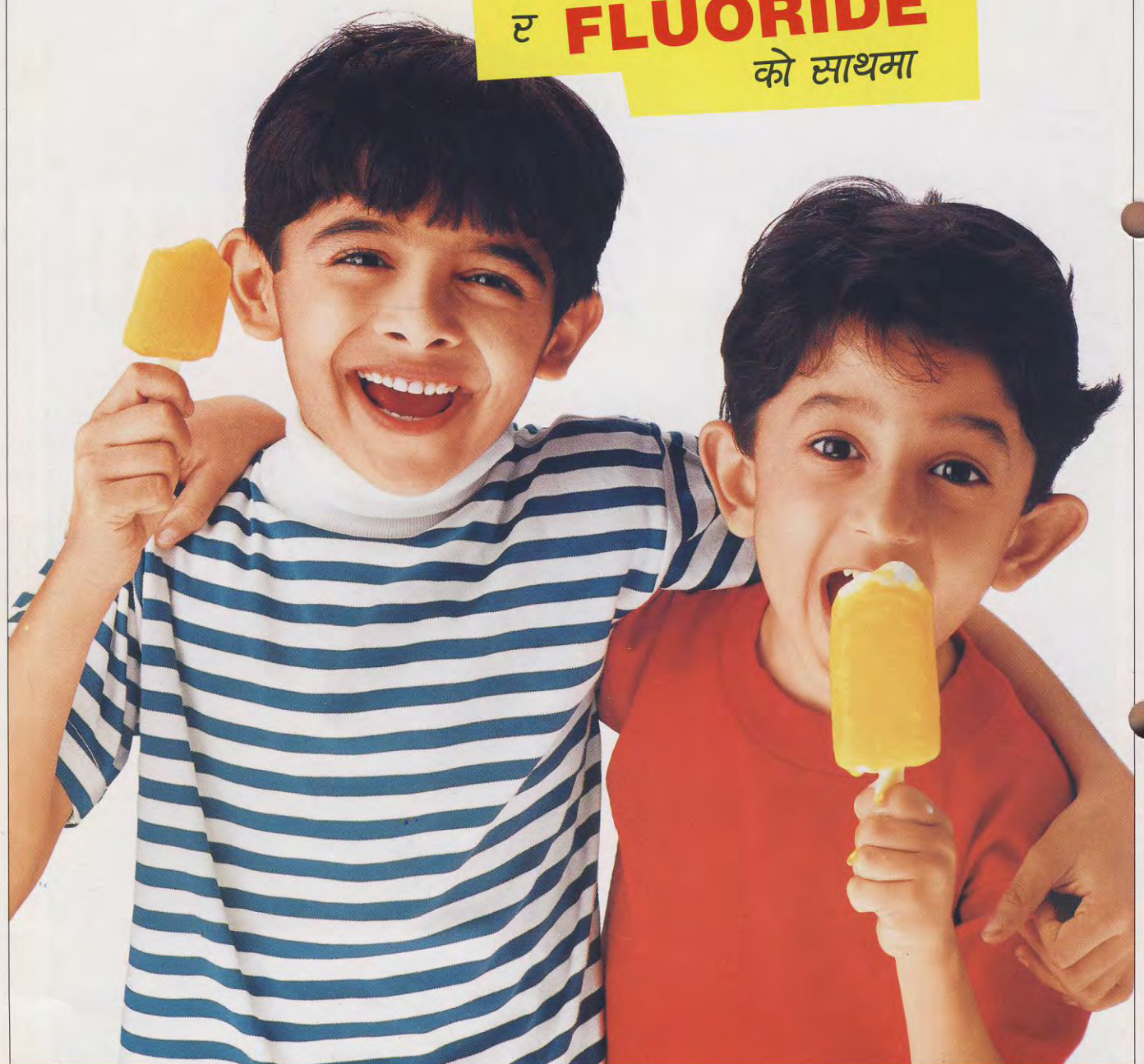
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COVER STORY : Tremors Of Terror

The September 11 terrorist attack on the US and the latter's subsequent vow to root out international terrorism is likely to trigger changes in the geo-political equations in South Asia which is experiencing terrorism of different sorts. Cover Photo Internet

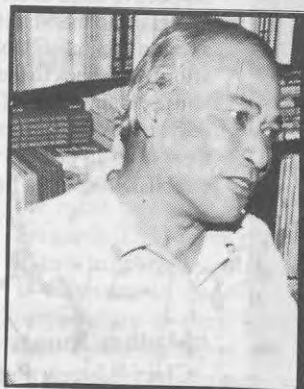
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GOVT. MAOIST TALKS : See You Again !

The government and rebels agree to continue their dialogue.

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INTERVIEW : Prof. Dhruba Kumar

Strategic analyst Dhruba Kumar talks about the terrorism in the context of the region

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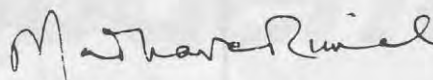
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EDITOR'S NOTE

The terrorist attacks on the twin World Trade Center towers and Pentagon in New York and Washington DC have proved that most unexpected and unimaginable things do happen in this world. Who would have ever dreamt that the United States would be attacked in this manner? The dastardly act that has cost thousands of innocent lives and billions of dollars must not go unpunished. The trauma generated by the inhuman acts of the terrorists, whoever they are, has left no alternative for George W. Bush, President of the United States but to take measures that would teach the miscreants a lesson which they will never forget. In this hour of great distress and disaster all those nations of the world who respect human values and cherish peace and prosperity for themselves and others have to offer their unstinted support to the President of the United States to root out the evil of terrorism from the face of the world. This could, indeed, be a very tall order. But no stone must be left unturned and twelve billion hands must be joined to totally eradicate this plague. And this is the most opportune time when countries who are helping, overtly or covertly, terrorists to destabilise situation in smaller neighboring countries stop their nefarious activities. Small Nepal is also suffering from the terrorism of the Maoists. And it is being reported that they are not only getting encouragement and safe haven in the friendly country of India but they are being supplied with all kinds of financial assistance and hardware. It is still not very clear whether the government there is involved. But, as a friendly neighbor Nepal expects the Indian government not to provide any kind of sanctuary to the Maoists. As it is, there is already enough bad blood, although not visible to unperceptive eyes, between the two countries who boast of having age old friendly relations. The free use of their territory to the Maoists the Indian government is permitting has established their tacit approval and support. At a time when the whole world is sitting up and making plans to crush terrorism wherever it has raised its ugly head, our friends in South Block in New Delhi will restrain from helping the terrorists in Nepal. Unless they cooperate with HMG of Nepal in suppressing the Maoist terrorism in the Himalayan Kingdom, their protestation of fighting terrorism will sound nothing but hollow. Consequently we do trust our friends in the South will not hesitate to extend their sincere cooperation to their smaller neighbor in the north to fight the terrorism they are being plagued with and prove their bona fide, not only to the Nepalese people but to the whole world. Any way, in this hour of unprecedented disaster we, the people of this small country are whole heartedly behind the United States in its endeavors to uproot terrorism. All we can offer is moral support and prayers. As such, we do pray to the Great God to grant courage and fortitude to all Americans who have suffered to bear their losses and success in their endeavor to rid the world of this deadly scourge.

* * *

The dialogue between the Deuba government and the Maoists seems to be lengthening for no plausible reason. Why cannot the Deuba government take a firm stand and force the Maoists to arrive at an understanding is becoming a puzzle? They must know that all kinds of negotiations must be carried out from the position of strength. Wobbling knees can never achieve success in any kind of dialogue. The changed global scenario regarding terrorism must have spelt a big setback for the Maoists. If the Deuba government cannot exploit the situation and bring the Maoists to a reasonable settlement, they have no justification to stay in authority. They should not prolong the dialogue purposelessly. We have, indeed, always advocated dialogue to solve this problem. But, if the Maoists resort to intransigence, peaceful dialogue might be jeopardized. Moreover, India's commitment to fight terrorism wherever that happens may lend a big supportive hand to solve the Maoist problem in Nepal. Nepal must ask India to stop providing sanctuary to the Maoists. All that Prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba needs at this juncture is a resolute mind and lots of guts — qualities which he lacks to the extreme. The Maoists cannot afford to go back to their violent activities. They have no alternative but to forswear violence and join the mainstream of political activities. The political leadership in authority is not only corrupt but hated by the masses. People are looking for an honest and patriotic leader - a messiah to deliver them from all these evil politicians. This is a golden opportunity for the Maoist leaders to firmly establish their bona fide. Can they rise up to the occasion?



Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher


FORUM: Koichiro Matsuura INTERVIEW: Amod M. Dixit

SPOTLIGHT

(14, 20 Sept, 2001)

DIABETES

A SILENT KILLER



- KOIRALA ON A WHIRLWIND TOUR
- GOVT - MAOIST TALK
- VIEWPOINT OF DR. HARKA GURUNG
- ENCOUNTER WITH DR. SHOLA RIJAL

Health Menace

Diabetes is becoming a major health menace for the urban Nepalese population ("A Silent Killer", SPOTLIGHT, September 14). Your cover story provided a glimpse into the actual situation of diabetes and how it is affecting our society. It appears that we lack credible information on the disease. The concerned authorities need to conduct studies that would help them come up with curative as well as preventive measures. The government may be indifferent to this disease thinking it affects only the affluent class. However, the scene could change and the disease could start making inroads into middle- and lower-class people. Therefore, it would be wise to be prepared for such a situation and, more importantly, to prevent it from materializing.

Sudan Maskey
Kalimati

war against international terrorism. The international community should support this war. Nepal, too, has been experiencing bad times thanks to terrorism unleashed by the Maoists. Thousands of lives have been lost in the last six years in the insurgency. Nepalis hope that India, where leaders of Maoists seemingly find refuge, as shown by the recent Silguri conference, will not extend any overt or covert support to elements that are spreading terror in its small friendly neighbor. The international community, too, should look at what is happening here and put pressure on anybody or any state that may be harboring terrorists.

Sailesh Bista
Chabahil

Bestial Deeds

The heinous terrorist attacks on the twin towers of World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington DC have rallied international opinion against such violence anywhere in the world. Nepalis, who have been enduring terrorism in the form of Maoist violence, are hoping that this global crusade will give them much-needed respite.

As both India and Pakistan have come out openly against terrorism, one can expect that the scenario in South Asia may change in the days to come. None of the countries would be able to provide sanctuary to any group claiming to be leading a rebellion in another country. From Kashmir to the North-east in India and from Colombo to Kathmandu, international opinion will condemn any form of violence. The Maoists, too, should take stock of the present international situation. As they know that they are going to face difficult days ahead, it would be in their interest as well to end their insurgency through dialogue.

Dinesh Rai
Sadbato

Good Issue

By focusing on health for your cover story ("A Silent Killer", SPOTLIGHT, September 14), you have done a good job. In fact, you should give greater priority to health stories as they inform readers about leading diseases and suggest ways to deal with illnesses they have or are likely to suffer from. Diabetes is taking a heavy toll around the world. We, in Nepal, should also prepare ourselves for the growing challenge this disease represents. Concerted efforts from all concerned are required to defeat this common enemy.

Hari Dhungel
Battispatali

of diabetes manifests itself in various forms like eye disease, heart and kidney ailments. Increasingly, the disease is affecting the relatively younger population who are economically active. Therefore, the government needs to make more serious efforts at controlling the disease and its deadly effects. Moreover, the urban population is not aware about the hazards of this disease and how it can be prevented. The Health Ministry should step up public awareness campaigns about this and other diseases.

Shridhar Mainali
Kalikasthan

Quake Calls

It has been reported numerous times that a big earthquake is inevitable in our country ("Advance Shocks", SPOTLIGHT, September 7). Still, the authorities are not paying any attention in terms of rais-

ing mass awareness.

They have failed to inform the public about the hazards of quakes and organize campaigns to make people adhere to the building code during construction. Poor as we are, the added burden of natural calamity could lead to an unthinkable situation in the country. There has to be a sustained campaign from the media also until the authorities start taking concrete steps.

Ganesh Bhattarai
Balaju

Scourge Of Terrorism

Last week's appalling terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC have exposed the fragility of security in even the most powerful nation on the earth. The loss of precious lives is irreparable and no word is adequate to condemn the perpetrators of such barbaric acts. Understandably, the US government has announced a

Cost Of Cure

Diabetes exacts severe costs not only in terms of a person's health but also the nation's economy ("A Silent Killer", SPOTLIGHT, September 14). The consequence

Congress Imposes Ban On Its Lawmaker

The ruling Nepali Congress parliamentary party (NCPP) has banned its lawmaker, Surendra Prasad Chaudhari, from speaking in House of Representatives proceedings throughout the ongoing 20th session of parliament for his alleged remarks against the party's and government's policy. Chief whip of the NCPP, Tek Bahadur Chokhyal, registered a notice to this effect at the parliament secretariat Thursday. He later told reporters that the NCPP had taken the decision as "Mr. Chaudhary had violated the parliamentary norms by speaking in the house against the government's land reforms program." The former science and technology minister and a supporter of party president, Girija Prasad Koirala, Mr. Chaudhary said the NCPP's decision was 'illegal' and against the principles of parliamentary democracy. This is the first time since the restoration of democracy 12 years that a political party has prohibited its legislator from speaking in the house. *Himalaya Times Sep. 14*

Nepali Businesses Likely To Suffer

As the biggest economy in the world is yet to overcome the shocks from the fierce attacks at its key installations last week, Nepal's economy, too, could suffer from the resultant uncertainty, a newspaper report said. According to the report, the United States is the single largest overseas market for Nepalese exports, consuming goods worth Rs 13.67 billion in the year 2056/57 B.S. Nepal's major exports to the United States include readymade garments, carpet, cotton towels, handicrafts, paper and leather goods, among other things. First Vice President of Nepal Overseas Trade Association, Akhil Kumar Chapagain, said the recent tragedy in the United States could hamper Nepal's foreign trade over the long run. As Nepal's major trade partners — India, China, Japan and South Korea — also depended on the health of the US economy, the terrorist attacks could also have compound effects on the Nepalese economy, he said. "Nepal can't remain aloof from

global trends like shortage of petroleum products, recession in the capital market, inflation, etc.," he said. *Himalaya Times Sep. 14*

Telephone Distribution Hampered

The withdrawal of US multinational company Titan Wireless from its operations in eastern Nepal citing 'security reasons' has left in the lurch an ongoing project to expand telephone services using Wireless Local Loop (WLL) system in 537 village development committees in eastern Nepal, a newspaper reported. According to the report, the American company decided to pull out of the project following a letter issued by the US Embassy in Kathmandu in June this year saying that there were threats to the safety of the US citizens in Nepal. Officiating Secretary at the Ministry of Information and Communications told the Development Committee of the House of Representatives Tuesday that the project — that aimed to expand telephone services in all the VDCs in the eastern region — would be delayed by up to two years due to withdrawal of the US company. The project was launched in accordance with an agreement between the government and World Bank under which the government had agreed to provide a grant of US\$12 million to the construction company out of the total project cost of US\$ 70 million. *Space Time Sep. 12*

Himalayan Distillery Issues Shares

The recent anti-liquor campaign by an ultra-left outfit could not deter a new company from going public. Himalayan Distillery Limited (HDL) announced it was going to issue public shares worth over Rs 173 million from Sep. 13. The company is issuing 42 percent of its shares, that is 1.73 million units of shares, with a face value of Rs 100 to the general public. Set up with an authorized capital of Rs 900 million and issued capital of Rs 413 million, the distillery is licensed to produce 20,000 liters of alcohol and ENA spirit per day. Its two plants can produce 110 and 60 bottles of products per minute.

Company officials said they have eyed India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Tibet autonomous region of China as well as overseas countries, besides Nepal, as their market. The public shares of what has been described as the biggest and most modern alcohol plant in the country will remain open for sale until September 21. *Compiled from reports Sep. 13*

'Tenth Plan To Focus On Poverty Alleviation'

Officials have said the forthcoming Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-07), too, would accord top priority to poverty alleviation in the country through more concrete programs. Addressing a workshop organized here Monday, Vice Chairman



Ligal

of the National Planning Commission (NPC) Prithvi Raj Ligal said the Tenth Plan would be much more broad based, goal oriented and more focused on areas like good governance and decentralization. Presenting the concept paper, NPC member Dr. Shanker Sharma said the plan has been targeted to achieve 6.5 percent of GDP growth and to reduce the level of poverty to 30 percent from an estimated 38 percent of the total population by the end of the Ninth Plan. Assessing the Ninth Plan, Dr. Sharma said the achievements were mixed. Some targets were too ambitious, priorities were weak, objectives and strategies were weakly linked and monitoring system was inadequate. *Compiled from reports Sep. 12*

Maoist Take Journalists Hostage

Human rights and media organizations have condemned the Maoist rebels for taking hostage half a dozen media persons and a human rights activist last week. According to Tuesday's Kantipur daily, five journalists — Yagya Bikram Shahi and Kashi Ram Dangi of Kantipur daily, Sudhir Sharma of Himal Khabarpatrika, Rajaram Gautam and photojournalist Nischal Chapagain of Nepal fortnightly — and an INSEC representative from Rolpa were taken hostage for three days. They were traveling in the Maoist stronghold to cover news about the reported meeting of the Maoist politburo in the remote hilly district. They were released later. The father of Himal reporter Sudhir Sharma collapsed after reading the news about his son in eastern district of Jhapa Tuesday and passed away while undergoing treatment. *Kantipur Sep. 11*

Maoists Stop Transmission Of Electricity

The Maoist rebels have prohibited transmission of power to Manma, district headquarters of remote Kalikot district, from the nearby village development committee of Sannigaon, a daily reported this week. The daily quoted chief of the Sannigaon micro-hydro project, Tripta Lal Chaudhari, as saying the project planned to transmit power from 150 KW power station to Manma. He said the rebels would not allow the power to be distributed in the district headquarters unless it is made available to surrounding 13 VDCs. "It would take up to Rs 70 million to distribute power to all these VDCs, but this year we have been granted the budget of Rs 4 million only," said Chaudhary. *Space Time Sep. 9*

Maoists Seize 2,000 Guns

Since the beginning of their 'people's war' nearly six years ago, the Maoist rebels have snatched away more than 2,000 out of 29,000 guns possessed by Nepal Police and have raised more than Rs 6 billion prior to the announcement of 'cease fire', a newspaper reported Tuesday, quot-

ing highly placed police officials. According to the report, the rebels have looted more than 62,000 rounds of bullets and several communication sets during raids on police posts in different parts of the country. An officer at the anti-terrorism cell at Nepal Police said the Maoists have been getting arms from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh states of India. "The Maoists could spend billions of rupees that they have collected to procure arms from other South Asian markets," the officer said. The rebels have continued their campaign to collect 'donations' even after the cease-fire. *Rajdhani Sep. 11*

Govt. Cancels BPC's Bid

Attempts to expedite what would be the biggest privatization offer received a setback Monday as a high-level panel recommended the government to initiate the process of re-tendering for privatization of the Butwal Power Company (BPC), reports said Tuesday. The Privatization Committee made the recommendation after it found that the bid of Interkraft Nepal — a consortium of seven Nepali investors and a Norwegian company —



Ministry of Finance

too low, said UML lawmaker Dilli Raj Khanal, who is one of the committee members. The sole bidder for the financial bid, Interkraft Nepal had offered Rs 730 million to buy 75 percent shares of the BPC — presently valued at Rs 1 billion. The government had opened the bid of Interkraft Nepal last month after the Finance Ministry disqualified the technical bid of the Chaudhary Group. One of the promoters of Interkraft Nepal, Gyanendra Pradhan, criticized the government's decision, saying they were not given any chance to clarify their position. *Kantipur Sep. 11*

VISIT OF NDC TEAM FROM INDIA

A 18 member team from the National Defence College (NDC), India, is presently on a four day visit to Nepal from Sep 16 to 19, 2001.

National Defence College of India is an apex institution engaged in the study of the higher direction of policy at the national and international level which senior military and civilian officials may be called upon to handle in the course of their careers. The course is attended by senior officers of the Indian Defence Forces and Civil Services as well as Armed Forces Officers of friendly foreign countries.

At present, Brig Gen Om Bahadur Pun of the Royal Nepalese Army, is also attending this prestigious course.

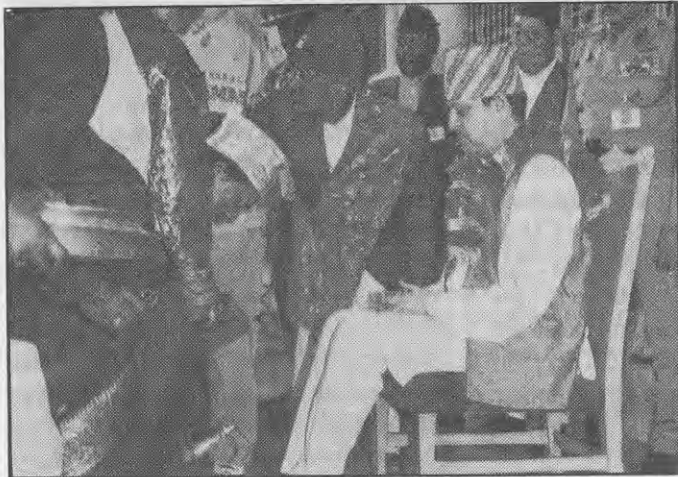
As part of their curriculum, the College organizes tours to neighboring and other foreign countries to enable student officers to interact with their counterparts and to acquaint themselves with the socio-political, economic, defence and foreign policy aspects of the countries they visit.

With this objective in view, the members of the NDC team will be exchanging views with senior civil and military officials during their current visit to Nepal.

The visiting team will pay a courtesy call on the Prime minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, Chief Secretary, Tirthaman Shakya, Foreign Secretary, Narayan Shamsher Thapa, Defence Secretary, Padam Kumar Acharya, Vice Chairman, National Planning Commission, Prithvi Raj Ligal, SAARC Secretary General, Nihal Rodrigo, and also meet General Prajwalla SJB Rana, Chief of the Army Staff of the Royal Nepalese Army.

A similar visit had taken place in 2000. The visiting NDC Team is headed by Air Vice Marshal Raghu Rajan, Senior Directing Staff (Air) of the College.

Besides Indian civil and military officers, the visiting team has officers from Bangladesh, Brunei, Oman, Myanmar and Nigeria.



King Gyanendra in a special religious function organized to invite him for voluntary Samyak Mahadana

NEPAL HAS BEEN ELECTED VICE CHAIR FOR THE 56th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the Foreign Ministry said. Besides Nepal, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan and Saudi Arabia have also been elected vice chair from Asia. A total of 21 vice chair are being elected for the ongoing session of the UNGA.

THE UNITED STATES HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE a grant assistance of \$18.7 million (approximately Rs 1400 million) to Nepal to implement two programs. Out of the amount, \$10 million will be used to support increased private-sector participation in environmentally and socially sustainable hydro-power development. The remainder would be used for strengthening governance of natural resources and selected institutions in Nepal. Madhav Prasad Ghimire, joint secretary at the Finance Ministry, and charge d'affaires at the US Embassy Larry M. Dinger and Joseph C Williams, acting director of USAID, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments and exchanged the notes Friday.

THE 15TH COMMERCIAL BANK IN THE COUNTRY, Kumari Bank Limited, formally launched its operations last week. Chief executive of the bank, Surendra Bhandari, said the bank has collected Rs 600 million and made a total investment of Rs 580 million over the past five months. The bank is going to introduce tele-banking, ATM and Internet banking facilities in the near future. Inaugurating the bank, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba urged bankers to invest in big projects in hydro-electricity, tourism and agriculture. Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, Dr. Tilak Rawal, brushed aside rumors that the authorities were considering devaluation of the Nepalese currency vis-à-vis the Indian currency. "The current peg is perfect," he claimed. He said Nepalese commercial banks had a total deposit of Rs 176 billion and total investment of Rs 110 billion at present.

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THURSDAY ratified the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 29 concerning forced or compulsory labor and Convention 182 concerning elimination of the worst forms of child labor. Earlier, presenting a proposal in the house, Minister for Labor and Transport Management Paltan Gurung said, as a member of the

ILO, ratification of the conventions was essential to indicate Nepal's strong commitment to human rights. Saying that Nepal has been selected as a model in terms of abolition of child labor in South Asia, Minister Gurung said the government was committed to abolishing the worst forms of child labor within the next five years and all kinds of child labor within the next 10 years. Members taking part in the discussion had drawn the government's attention toward weak implementation of several such UN conventions ratified by the government.

LAWMAKERS HAVE DEMANDED CLARIFICATION from the government regarding news reports that the government of India had decided to deploy a 70,000-strong elite paramilitary force along the Indo-Nepal border within a month. Speaking in the House of Representatives Monday, UML lawmaker Ananda Prasad Pokhrel said India might be trying to intervene in Nepali territory in the name of controlling Maoist activities. Lawmakers from different parties asked the government to furnish details about the reports of deployment of the Indian paramilitary force. Nepali Congress lawmaker Rajendra Kharel claimed that Maoist leaders had decided to hold talks with the government after realizing that India was trying to use them by providing them shelter.

THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC) OF THE House of Representatives has given the 'go ahead' to the government's proposal to buy two MI-17 Russian helicopters for the Royal Nepalese Army. PAC chairman Subash Nemwang said Monday that after investigations they found the proposed deal in accordance with financial regulations. The army has proposed to buy the choppers, complete with night vision and other equipment, at Rs 202.69 million apiece.

A NEW UNDERGROUND PARTY NAMED COMMUNIST Center of Nepal (Maoist) has been formed to launch an armed struggle based on the ideology formulated by Comrade Mao Zedong. Accusing the CPN-Maoist of heading in a corrupt way and suffering from individualist tendencies, the new party has called on all communists to move ahead in the path of armed rebellion. Meanwhile, 24 guerrillas including a local Maoist commander, Comrade Firoz, in the Terai district of Rautahat have left the CPN-Maoist, accusing the party leadership of ignoring their call for taking action against Maoist cadres involved in financial irregularities, reports said.

THE MAIN OPPOSITION UNIFIED MARXIST-Leninist party has disowned recent statements made by its top leaders. In a statement issued Sunday, party spokesman Pradip Nepal said the party did not own party general secretary Madhav Nepal and senior leader K. P. Sharma Oli's statement for forming an interim government and recruiting Maoist guerrillas in the Royal Nepalese Army and Armed Police Force.

SEVERAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HUMAN rights groups have flayed the government's decision to impose a ban on mass meetings, rallies, seminar, etc., for a month in the capital, saying the move infringed upon the people's fundamental rights to organize peaceful meetings. The local administration did not allow a couple of meetings, including one advocating peaceful resolution of the Maoist insurgency, to take place in the capital Sunday. ■

“Dialogue at jungles and resorts will not bear any fruit unless the country’s problems are resolved.”

—**Madhav Kumar Nepal**, leader of the main opposition and general secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist, referring to the government-Maoist talks at Godavari resort and Bardiya Wildlife Reserve, in *Spacetime Daily*.

* * *

“There is no alternative to dialogue before the Maoists.”

—**Ram Chandra Poudel**, former deputy prime minister, saying the rebels are gradually becoming isolated politically, in *Gorkhapatra*.

* * *

“I am ready for anything, even resigning from parliament. Membership of parliament is a very small thing for me.”

—**Surendra Chaudhary**, former minister and MP of the ruling Nepali Congress party, vociferously criticizing the new land reform bill, saying it is against the sentiments of the Terai people, in *The Kathmandu Post*.

* * *

“Import from the United States has decreased. The rate of decrease in the export of readymade garment has increased.”

—**Dr. Tilak Bahadur Rawal**, governor of the Nepal Rastra Bank, hinting



at serious effects on the Nepalese economy from terrorist attacks in the United States, in *Himalaya Times*.

* * *

“From a military viewpoint, the country made and three-nought-three guns

are not weapons for fighting. They are just for creating disorder.”

—**Kedar Bahadur Singh**, retired brigadier of Royal Nepalese Army, in *Jana Aastha*.

* * *

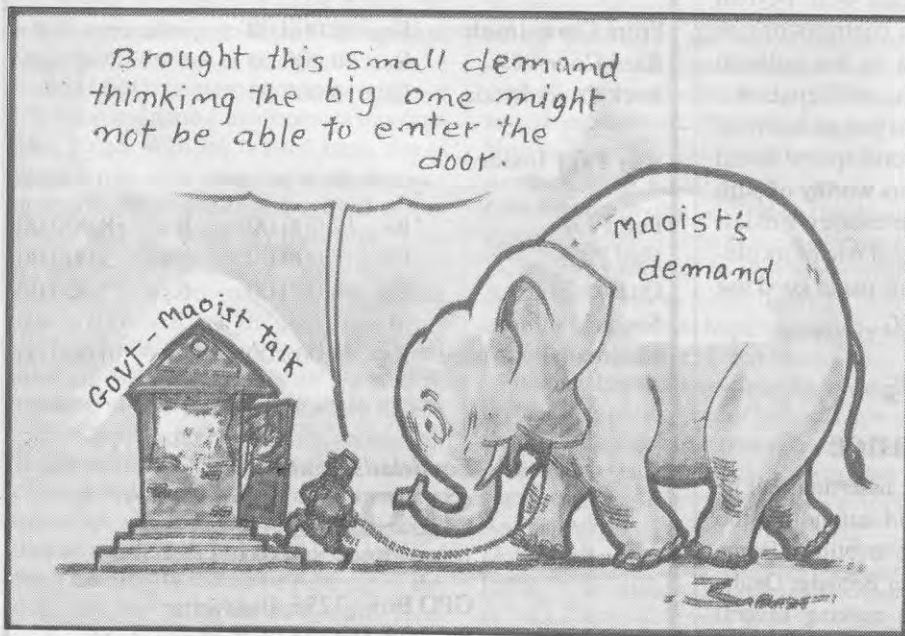
“My duty hour started from four in the afternoon. The incident occurred in the morning.”

—**Sailesh Shrestha**, a Nepali national who used to work in the restaurant called “Windows on the World” located in the 107th floor of the World Trade Center, recounting his fortunate escape from the deadly terrorist attack, in *Spacetime Daily*.

* * *

“That is nonsense. I am a person with democratic quality and I always tune myself to the wishes of my audience. It is only when producers insist that I sing myself.”

—**Shambhujeet Baskota**, popular musician, refuting charges that he himself sings all the songs that he gives music to, in *Gorkhapatra*.



Himalaya Times

My Pilgrimage To Badri And Kedar

— Madhav Kumar Rimal

Pilgrimage to Badri and Kedar is not an uncommon event for any devout Hindu. It is just like visiting Bethlehem to a Christian or Mecca to a Muslim. Consequently, it might seem crazy to some why have I decided to write about my pilgrimage. I was only performing the filial duty of a son to his dead parents. But some of the experiences I gathered on my travels to Badri and Kedar have been quite unique. I have no idea whether any of the millions who traveled to these places before me felt the same way I did or met the same kind of people I met or made same kind of observations I did. Generally most people are obsessed with the only idea of offering their oblations to their "Pitries" — dead relations — at the Brahma Kapali, the place where Brahma's fifth head had fallen. As the legends and beliefs go, the performance of "Saradha" at this place delivers the souls of the pitries from all bondages of rebirth. Except blind faith there is no other way to establish the veracity of such beliefs. And it is almost impossible to pinpoint the time and date these exercises must have started.

We chartered a mini-bus from Hardwar in Uttaranchal — the newly formed state in north India — which is supposed to be the gateway to the sacred pilgrim cities in the Deva Bhoomi — the land of the Gods. Since there were thirteen persons in our party — all family members — we needed this minibus. Passing through some breath-taking natural scenery which is a specialty of the Himalayan hills and some hairpin bends when our hearts came to our mouths, we arrived at Gauri Kund - the vehicle terminal to go to Kedar. The temple of Kedar Nath, situated at a height of about 14 thousand feet is fourteen kilometers walk — a very steep and narrow mountainous way from Gauri Kund. With my bruised knees due to osteoarthritis, my scaling that height even on a horse was out of question. So, I had to stay content at Gauri Kund. My frustration of not being able to visit Kedarnath was amply recompensed by my meeting a man in the late eighties at Gauri Kund. His great grand father had fought the British at Nalapani and had killed six British soldiers with his Khukri, Narrating the story of the war which he had heard from his father, he, at times, got excited. He told me that his great grand father's khukri was snatched away by the British and now must be lying in some museum in Dehradun. Even at great persuasion he did not agree to reveal his identity lest he be pestered by the authorities. He was very emphatic on the point

that majority of the people of Nepalese origin and many devout Hindus had great love and respect for Nepal and the Nepalis. The next interesting experience was on our way to Badrinathji. We had stopped at a way side restaurant that looked tolerably clean and ordered our lunch. The owner of the restaurant was very apologetic that he was unable to provide much variety of food. He was fidgeting all the while trying to make us as much comfortable as possible. The price of all the food and soft drinks we consumed came to a paltry few hundred rupees which the owner of the restaurant would not accept at any cost. He said that the Hindu Kingdom — the only one in the world — was pride to all Hindus and it would give him even greater happiness if he were able to show his respect in a bigger way. He left us no alternative but to give in to his request. We were, indeed, much impressed by

My frustration of not being able to visit Kedarnath was amply recompensed by my meeting a man in the late eighties at Gauri Kund. His great grand father had fought the British at Nalapani and had killed six British soldiers with his Khukri, Narrating the story of the war which he had heard from his father, he, at times, got excited.

his sincere manifestation of regard for our country and thanked him profusely. Even at the temple of Badrinath we were overwhelmed by the warmth and affection of the Pujaris. They took special time to explain to us the symbolic appreciation of the deity. Their spontaneous expression of affection and regard for Nepal was at times quite overpowering. I was so much taken aback by their simple and innocent sincerity that I invariably started comparing the behavior of the Indian media and the Indian policy makers. To what height would Nepal-India relations ascend if only the Indian establishment honored Nepal's sensitivity and shared the sentiments of their masses.

On our way back home from Badrinath we decided to spend a couple of days in Hardwar. Hardwar is a city of temples with many gorgeous temples built after India's independence from the colonial rule some five decades back. And one of them is that of "Bharat Mata — or Mother India". It was inaugurated by the then Indian Prime minister, the late Indira Gandhi in 1983. There is a big relief map of India in the

hall which shows only India and the Himalayas. I approached the temple authority and asked him what was the meaning of this map, why Nepal was not shown south of the Himalayas? A young man standing by the side of the authority insolently said, "It is in the belly of Bharat Mata." I was astounded by his impudence. I slowly turned towards him and told him very sternly "Young man, do you know the place you are standing on once was Nepalese territory. It was taken away from Nepal and given to you as a legacy by your colonial masters?" The young man was dumbfounded. The temple authority intervened saying, "Please, do not mind his senseless words. I really do not know why they have done it like that. It is, indeed, strange."

Another interesting happening in that sojourn was my meeting a Sadhu — a religious man who has renounced all worldly relations. He was well educated, highly versed in the philosophy of Hindu religion. After we exchanged formal courtesies he offered me a seat. Although I was in a hurry to accompany my fellow travelers, I could not turn down his request and sat down. We discussed the modern trends in the practice of Hindu religion. He seemed much frustrated at the distortions and aberrations that had engulfed the pristine religion. He was very critical of the rulers in India for not showing deserving respect for their religion. He was all praise for Nepal and the Hindu King. He said he found better peace, contentment and solace whenever he visited Nepal which he did frequently. He thought the real "Aryavarta" was Nepal and Nepal only could defend and preserve the Hindu religion in its glory and true form. I was much impressed by his uninhibited manifestations of regard for Nepal and sincerely thanked him and took leave to join my team.

This pilgrimage to Badrinathji and Kedarnathji was thus very rewarding for me. I could really feel the pulse of the overwhelming millions of Indians' regard for my small country. Even though religion is not a very strong bond in state to state relations, it will not be possible to totally ignore the indelible feeling of commonality that influence the thinking of hundreds of millions of Indians for Nepal. Let us hope the Indian officialdom will some day come to terms with reality and earn the regard of Nepalese people by according them the respect they command by virtue of being proud citizens of an independent and sovereign country and their next door neighbor. ■

CIAA AMENDMENT BILL

Threat To Judicial Independence

Against national consensus, the government has tabled a bill in parliament challenging the very essence of the independence of the judiciary

By KESHAB POUDEL

If both Houses of Parliament were to pass the Commission of Investigation and Abuse of Authority (CIAA) second amendment bill, the very essence of the independence of the judiciary would be undermined. To guarantee the independence of the judiciary by stopping the executive influence, the constitution has made separate procedures for justices and judges.

Under the amendment bill, a police authority can investigate and prosecute sitting justices and judges on any issue of misconduct and wrong behavior on the basis of a complaint. Although the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal does not grant immunity from corruption to any public official, including judges, it has made certain procedures within the judiciary to take action against individuals working in that branch.

Article 87 (7) of the constitution says the chief justice or any other judge of the Supreme Court shall be removed from his office if, for reasons of incompetence, misbehavior or failure to discharge the duties of his office in good faith, the House of Representatives, by a two-third majority of the total number of its members, passes a resolution for his removal and the resolution is approved by His Majesty the King.

Article 91 (3) has also made provision for the removal of the judges of appellate and district courts. If the Judicial Council recommends that a chief judge or any other judge of an appellate court or any judge of a district court be removed from his office for reasons of incompetence, misbehavior or failure to carry out the duties of his office in good faith, or it if recommends that it is necessary and expedient to initiate proceedings against such a judge in accordance with law for reasons of misbehavior, and if such recommendation is accepted by His Majesty the King, such chief judge or judge shall be removed from his office or proceedings

will be initiated against him in accordance with law.

The impeachment procedures in Article 87 are based on the English model where judges have held office during good behavior and not during the King's pleasure and where they can be removed by an address of removal presented by both Houses of Parliament. Prior to the execution of the new constitution, judges for fear of being dis-



CJ Upadhyaya : Tough time

missed by the King often gave verdicts in favor of the government in many cases. The proposed bill seems to be motivated by a desire to ensure similar decisions.

The constitution lays the grounds for removal of the head of the constitutional bodies. They can be removed under three grounds: incompetence, misbehavior, or failure to discharge duties of his office in

good faith.

The constitution also clearly spells out the role and duties of the CIAA in investigating corruption-related issues. Under the functions, duties and powers of the CIAA under Article 98 (1): The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority may, in accordance with law, conduct or cause to be conducted inquiries into, and investigations of, improper conduct or corruption by a person holding any public office: Provided that the CIAA shall not have jurisdiction over the following officials: (a) any official in relation to whom this constitution itself separately provides for such actions and (b) any official to be prosecuted under the Arms Act.

The government has proposed an amendment to Clause 2 (d) under which the CIAA can take action against the prime minister, minister and justices of Supreme Court, judges of appellate court and district courts.

"The constitution has not given any immunity to the judges for corruption and there is a constitutional provision to take action against justices and judges. Since the constitution lays the ground for the actions, every act that goes against the spirit of constitution will be null and void," said senior advocate Mukunda Regmi. "The bill seems to have been drafted by a person who has not even read the constitutional provisions. Otherwise no one would commit such a blunder."

"I have a serious doubt whether our politicians, ministers and bureaucrats have read the constitution that they have taken an oath to uphold and defend," said Regmi who was a member of the commission that drafted the present constitution. "It is shameful to see that legislators who have the authority to bring impeachment proceedings against judges are giving their authority to the police."

The amendment is not only against the spirit of the constitution but also against the concept of an independent judiciary. "It does not reflect the view of the majority party which is committed to complete democracy with all ingredients, including an independent judiciary. Power struggles in parliament have pressured the ruling party and leadership and the prime minister always feels unsafe and shaky," said a political analyst.

Kantipur, a leading Nepalese daily, said in a recent editorial an independent judiciary cannot be placed on the fear or

coercion of a certain commission. "If the essence of an independent judiciary comes under the scrutiny of a particular organization, democracy will be under threat," wrote Kantipur.

Having no power to go to the people through a fresh election, successive prime ministers have succumbed to unprincipled and opportunistic pressures. The elements of competition have been there but its dimension has been highly magnified through a great deal of propaganda. Putting aside all serious problems of the nation, elimination of corruption has been made the No. 1 issue.

To that extent, one can understand the utility of the anti-corruption bill pending in parliament. But the effort to undermine the independence of the judiciary defies comprehension. The provision of the constitution has been the same since a large bench of the Supreme Court interpreted the powers prescribed to the CIAA in a public interest litigation. The interpretation explicitly said that justices, judges and some other functionaries of the constitution were beyond the jurisdiction of the CIAA.

"Judges have their own procedures under the constitution to be removed from their position. By the process of impeachment by parliament, judges of the apex court can be removed and thus they can be made liable for the offence of corruption also," said a lawyer.

Until the judges are in their posts, they cannot be made subject to interrogation and investigation by an executive agency like the CIAA. Regarding the judges of district and appellate courts, the Judicial Council has been incorporated in the constitution that takes the responsibility of examining the conduct of judges.

The draft bill overrides the procedures established by the constitution. According to lawyers, the draft contains clauses contradictory to the constitution as well as the decision of the large bench of the Supreme Court.

The preamble to the constitution has been made some supreme ideals for the good of the state. These ideals are supported to inspire and integrate the whole nation into a full-fledged multiparty democracy with an independent and powerful judiciary. The proposed bill challenges the preamble of the constitution. Unfortunately, the task is going on under the leadership of a party that fought a three-decade battle to restore democracy.

Despite some grievances against the ju-

diary in Nepal, the past decade has seen landmark successes. One may disagree about the implications of its decisions, but it has asserted its power to the full limit in most crucial and sensational cases.

Whether it was in a case of interpreting the power of the government to enter a treaty on sharing water resources with another country or the power of the prime minister to recommend the King to dissolve of parliament or safeguarding the interest of the people, the Supreme Court has discharged its constitutional responsibilities with great accomplishment.

The role of the judiciary in Nepal may not look very prominent compared to its counterparts in the western democracies. But there are several countries such as China, Vietnam and Cambodia, which are com-

the CIAA has qualifications matching those of Supreme Court justices and some of the commissioners have qualification in administration, business management and auditing. Even chief commissioner himself is indicted for irregularities in the CIAA's report.

What is the motive behind the MPs of a democratic party to antagonize and show total disrespect to democratic values and the independence of the judiciary? When every student of law knows that the moment the amendment becomes law and is challenged in court, the legislation will be declared null and void on grounds of unconstitutionality.

Then why the futile exercise? It is interesting to observe that attorney-general of the government himself had advised against it at a stage of drafting and before the State Affairs Committee. Who are the official and



Supreme Court : Under threat

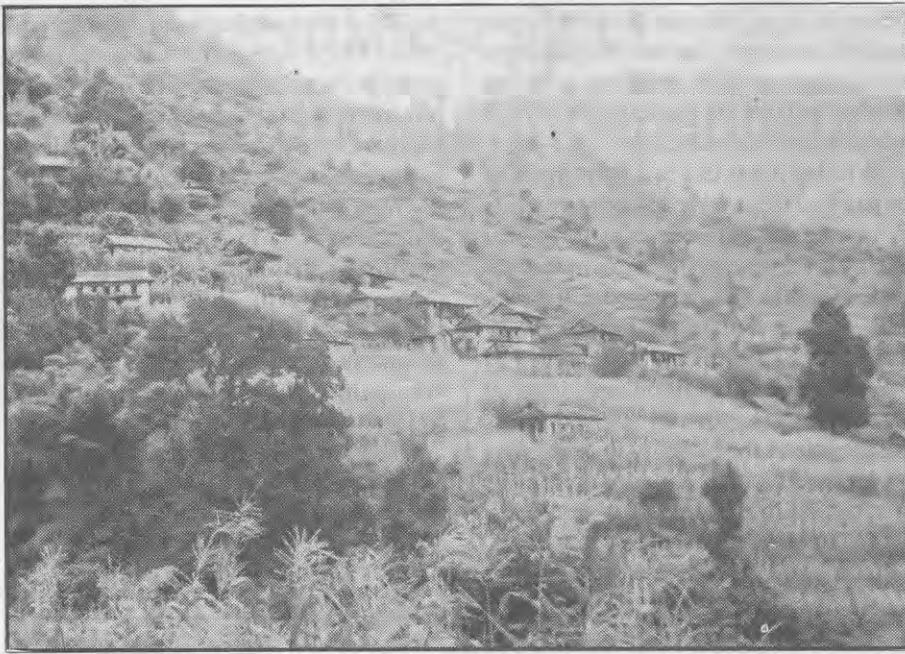
pletely unfamiliar with the basic concept of independence of the judiciary.

These countries are trying to build up the institution from the ground. The judiciary in Nepal has a proud history of more than 50 years. If judges are under the scrutiny of the executive and they will be disciplined by the executive like in the Panchayat days, when they were dictated to by the secretaries in the Royal Palace. The judiciary has suffered much in the past when judiciary was under the grip of the executive. It was always difficult for judges in the past to risk the wrath of the executive.

Seeing the performance of the CIAA in the recent past, one can easily guess how the CIAA will treat justices and judges. No one in

constitutional advisers to the government and legislature. Ultimately, who has to defend before the court in case of challenge? So whose interest does this disregard serve? Observers are at loss to understand.

It is a failure on the part of the legislative function of parliament as MPs seem to have no time to read the constitution and see the implications of their actions. Why would one want to antagonize and show total disrespect to democratic values by a democratically elected government is the million-rupee question. Is this because of their ignorance or is it an intentional effort to destroy a pillar of democracy the constitution has entrusted with protecting the rights of the individual? ■



A village in mid-west : Will the peace return ?

GOVT.-MAOIST TALKS See You Again!

Though the second round of talks turns inconclusive, both sides agree to continue negotiations

By BHAGIRATH YOGI

As the government's negotiation team finally greeted the rebel leaders, after waiting for the latter for nearly 22 hours in the posh Tiger Tops Resort within the Royal Bardiya National Park in mid-western Nepal last Thursday (September 13), things seemed to be rolling finally. However, after more than two days, nothing substantive came out of the secret parleys.

As soon as the talks were over Saturday afternoon, both sides rushed to the capital to tell their side of the story to the public. Talking to reporters at the Ministry of Information and Communications, chief government negotiator Chiranjivi Wagle said the government side had expressed serious disagreement with the Maoist demands for the abrogation of the country's constitution, establishment of a republic and formation of an interim government. He said the government also refused the Maoist demand to scrap the

Armed Police Force and withdraw the Integrated Security and Development Program being implemented in districts affected by the Maoist insurgency. "The government has, however, agreed to make public within a week the condition of those in police custody, in prison and those referred to as missing," said Wagle. "We have urged the Maoists to stop their activities, including organizing armed mass meeting, raising forced donations, threatening people, etc."

Within an hour, talking to reporters at Nepal Law Campus — the first press conference held by the underground party in the capital — chief Maoist negotiator Krishna Bahadur Mahara said his party was honest "in finding a new political way out for the country" through talks. "How can we come within the sphere of the present constitution against which we raised arms nearly six years back," said Mahara. He also denied charges that his party cadres were involved in extortion and other such activities.

As soon as the second round of talks was over, the chief district officers in Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts issued notices late Saturday — a government holiday — imposing a ban on mass meetings, rallies, raising donations, etc., for up to one month beginning September 15. Though the government notice said no programs that violated the constitutional norms would be allowed, authorities forced the cancellation of seminars intended to help the government-Maoist talks.

As part of its strategy to avoid direct confrontation with the government, the underground party withdrew two public functions scheduled to be held in the capital on September 17 and 21. They said the meeting of the student wing of the party would now take place on September 24 in the eastern town of Biratnagar and regional level mass meetings would be organized instead of the central meeting proposed to be held in the capital. Police, backed by military personnel, started raids on campus hostels, hotels, guest houses, etc., where they suspected that Maoist cadres had concealed arms and explosives ahead of their proposed mass meeting.

The Maoist leadership denied that they had any plan to use force during the mass meeting. Comrade Prachanda warned that the ongoing talks between the government and his party could collapse if the government did not withdraw the ban on mass meetings in the capital. In a statement issued Sunday, the top Maoist leader warned that the government would face violent retributions if it did not put a halt to the arrest of Maoist sympathizers. He also asked his guerrillas to resist security personnel in their own way.

Aware of the growing international opinion against terrorism in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, (See cover story), the Nepalese government seized the opportunity to put pressure on the rebels. As the Royal Nepalese Army worked hand in hand with Nepal Police in planning and executing security measures in the capital valley, it had a clear message for the rebels — fall in line or else.

Though the talks in themselves are least likely to find a common ground given the diametrically opposite stands of the Maoists and the government (See box),

analysts say both sides will find it more difficult now to break off negotiations. Thousands of people all over the country took out peace rallies last Friday to press both sides to find a peaceful solution to the insurgency, which has claimed the lives of more than 1,800 people and left nearly 1,000 people disabled.

"The government and Maoists must honor the nationwide public sentiment and should not indulge in activities that could jeopardize the talks," said Sudip Pathak, convenor of People's Solidarity for Peace Talks that organized the rallies. Agreed Mahesh Acharya, Minister for Agriculture and one of the members of the government's negotiation team, "At a time when all the political parties and popular opinion is against violence and

terror and the Maoists, too, seem to be in favor of a peaceful landing, the government is really encouraged."

A day after the second round of talks were over, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba convened an all-party meeting in Singha Durbar Sunday to brief them about the Maoist agenda. The government has also urged the political parties to give their official views on the issues raised by the Maoists. Sources said the government plans to formulate its official response to the Maoist agenda on the basis of consensus among the major political parties.

The government's move to isolate the Maoists politically seems to be paying as 10 left parties have joined hands to forge, what they call, broader left unity and have brushed aside the Maoist demand for constituent assembly and republic, saying that it is not relevant in the present context. In terai districts like

Banke and Parsa, local people started taking on the Maoists in an organized way and countering their activities. A Maoist supporter died in popular backlash in Parsa and one local person was killed when police intervened. Though local leaders and administration avoided the situation from turn-

ing into a communal conflict, the incident showed how volatile things could become if handled improperly.

Despite the face-off, analysts say both the government and Maoists have no viable option left than to try to find a negotiated settlement through talks. "The very fact that both sides have committed (themselves) to dialogue and none of them have said they would back off, is a positive development," said Prof. Kapil Shrestha, a member of the National Human Rights Commission. "Since total victory or defeat is not possible for either party, dialogue provides them the only win-win situation."

Prof. Shrestha, however, cautioned that the government should not be tempted to use the recent international developments for short-term use. "If dealt with determi-

nation, tact and diplomacy it will not be much difficult to deal with a force like the Maoists. But, unfortunately, the government doesn't seem to have done adequate homework on issues like rehabilitating and re-integrating Maoist cadres," he said.

As the Royal Nepalese Army is under great pressure to show its loyalty to the popularly elected government and the Maoist leadership can no more enjoy a safe haven in the bordering Indian towns amid the growing public opinion against terrorism, finding a peaceful solution to the protracted insurgency has become a must. "Maoists know very well that international opinion is not in their favor. So, instead of trying to attract thousands of people for their cause, going back to the jungle will be nothing but a suicidal move," said Krishna Pahadi, a human rights activist.

For the Maoist leadership, the regi-

Maoist Agenda

Main Political Agenda

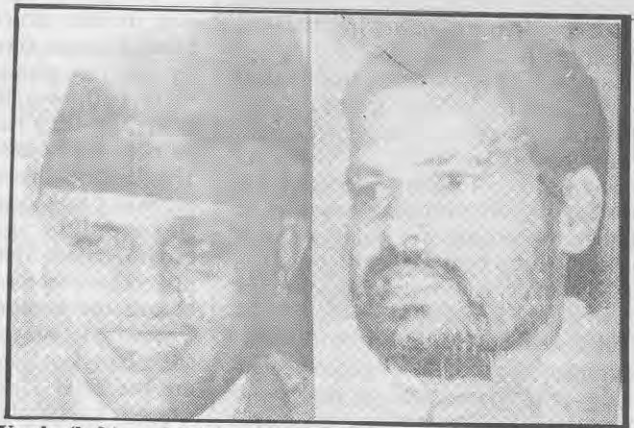
1. To abrogate the present constitution and empower the people to draft a new constitution.
2. To form an interim government to initiate a process by dissolving the present parliament and government.
3. To initiate a process toward institutional development of a republic.

Issues of Immediate Concern for the People

1. To annul all the unequal treaties including Nepal-India Treaty of 1950, Integrated Mahakali Treaty, to withdraw Indian troops from Kalapani and stop border encroachment.
2. To regulate and manage the Nepal-India open border.
3. To introduce the work permit system.

Proposal for Facilitating the Talks

1. To make public whereabouts of people missing from police custody, including Dandapani Neupane.
2. To release all prisoners including central committee member of the CPN (Maoist) Matrika Yadav.
3. To annul all the laws and regulations including Public Security Act, Armed Police Force targeted against the people's war.
4. To withdraw Integrated Security and Development Program being implemented against people in a "conspiratorial" way.
5. To send back to the barracks Royal Nepalese Army personnel deployed to terrorize the people under various pretexts.



Wagle (left) and Mahara : Opposite ends

mented orientation of their cadres and infiltration of anti-social elements in their rank and file of late may pose a great challenge in their move to join the national mainstream. They need some saleable points like constitutional amendments and participation in the government to convince their cadres. "Given the latest developments, an insurgency can't prolong in Nepal and it must come to an end," said Rajendra Dahal, editor of Himal Khabarpatrika. But it is common knowledge that the way to lasting peace is still a long way ahead. Much of it will depend on whether the Maoists choose to join the peaceful transformation of Nepalese society or continue to act as the agents of destabilization in this Himalayan kingdom as part of a 'grand design,' as believed by many. ■

NINTH SAF GAMES

Shadow Of Uncertainty

The imminent military strikes by the US in the region has thrown the 9th SAF games in uncertainty

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

US President George W. Bush has declared war on international terrorism following the heinous kamikaze attacks on the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington DC that took thousands of innocent lives.

The ripples of the deadliest terrorist attack ever have touched every sphere of modern civilization. With the prime suspect, Osama bin Laden, perched deep inside the mountains of Afghanistan, South Asia has suddenly come into sharp international focus.

Thousands of Afghans are fleeing their country fearing US military strikes. Already the Pakistani government, showing solidarity with the United States, has issued an ultimatum to the Taleban leaders of Afghanistan, who are providing sanctuary to bin Laden, to hand him over. Pakistan shares its western border with Afghanistan and it is among the three nations that recognize the Taleban regime in Kabul.

The United States has minced no words in warning of fierce military action against both the terrorists as well as those who harbor them. The clouds of war are slowly building above the Afghan sky. The Ninth South Asian Federation Games (SAFG) scheduled to take place in Islamabad, Pakistan, from October 6 to 15, too, seem uncertain.

Reports in the Indian media suggest that the Indian side may decide against participating in the games for security reasons. The Indian government has already suspended the Afro-Asian Games set to be held in Delhi next month, citing security reasons arising from the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

In case the Indian side refuses to take part in the SAFG, the games would have to be postponed. The games is held every two years and is participated by all seven members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

"As yet, we have not heard anything officially from the organizing committee on the cancellation or the postponement of the 9th SAFG," said Ramesh Khanal, spokes-

man at the National Sports Council (NSC).

Recently, New Zealand cancelled its cricket tour to Pakistan apparently for security reasons. Many believe the US military may use Pakistan as its base to launch strikes against Afghanistan in case the Taleban regime refuses to deliver bin Laden to the United States soon.

"Because we have not heard any official word regarding this, we are fully immersed in the preparations for the games," said Khanal. Nepal is taking part in all the 14 disciplines in the games.

The games that will be played in Pakistan include athletics, boxing, football, kabaddi, karate, shooting, swimming, table-tennis, taekwondo, volleyball, weightlifting, wrestling, badminton and squash. The Nepalese athletes, according to Khanal, are currently in close-camp training. Some players have been sent abroad for training. Taekwondo players are in Bangkok learning the final kicks, whereas karate players are in Iran for the same purpose. Boxers are in Pakistan sharpening their punches.

Nepal is sending 213-member strong delegation, including 157 athletes, to the Islamabad games. The government has already sanctioned the budget for the participation. The NSC estimates that it will spend a total of Rs 36.6 million for participating in the games.

"We expect to rope in as many medals as we did in the last 8th SAF Games," said Khanal. Nepal had bagged 31 gold medals, standing second in the medal tally behind

India in the 8th SAF Games held in Kathmandu in 1999.

As many as 28 of the 31 golds that Nepal won last time came from two disciplines of martial arts — karate and taekwondo — with female athletes chipping in with the bounty. Boxing and swimming had roped in the remaining three gold medals.


But this year, apart from losing the home advantage, Nepalese sports officials will face a reduced medal tally in martial arts — the mainstay of Nepalese sports in the region. In Islamabad SAF, the women karate discipline has been withdrawn. In taekwondo, too, only three weight discipline will be held for women.

On the brighter side, Khanal rejoices at the fact that the athletes selected in the martial arts disciplines this year include many new faces. "The development of martial arts has seeped into the grassroots level in the

country. There are so many good athletes to choose from, always," he said.

But all that could be meaningless if the games are cancelled. Although there is no official word yet, the fate of the Ninth SAF Games remains uncertain with the clouds of war hovering in the region. ■

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PRIVATE AIRLINES

Partnership Pursuit

To survive amid stiff competition, a new airline agrees to join hands with an old one

By A CORRESPONDENT

As competition among the major private airlines grows stiffer by the day, there is a clear contest for survival. Although efforts have been made by different airlines to coordinate their operations, none has entered any sort of alliance. Realizing the importance of partnership to survive, Shangri-La Air, a relative newcomer, and Necon Air, Nepal's oldest private airline, are coming close to a merger in the coming season.

In the first phase, Shangri-La Air,



Private airlines : Urge to merge

Karnali Air and Necon Air have agreed on an Interline Agreement. The agreement, many believe, will rescue these airlines financially. Following the drastic plunge in tourist arrivals in recent times, most Nepalese private airlines are facing a crisis of survival. Efforts toward building an alliance would affect the domestic operations of state-run Royal Nepal Airlines.

The partnership initiative was taken a few days after Narayan Singh Pun, a member of parliament from the ruling Nepali Congress, took over as chairman and managing director of Necon Air, which is said to be in serious financial trouble. If these three airlines unite, they will have two ATR-40, three Beech aircraft, two Twin Otters and some helicopters. "As there are

many problems, including rising fuel prices and other financial burdens, merger is only way to survive in the business," says Pun.

After the alliance, the airlines would be able to slash expenditure on such areas as transportation and employees. "The merger will not have any major impact in the air business, as there are still many carriers which prefer to go alone," says a civil aviation expert. Although the three airlines are said to have agreed in principle to enter some sort of alliance, they are yet to take a final decision.

"We have not formally taken any decision on a merger. We want to assess the situation before taking a decision," Tshering Lama, director of Shangri-La Air, told *Deshantar* weekly. The airline owns two Twin Otters and has leased three Beech aircraft.

There are more than a dozen private airlines operating in Nepal. Each year some old airline goes bankrupt and a new one steps in. At the beginning of this year, Flight Care Service, a private airline, suspended its operations. In 1992, when the government introduced an open-sky policy, it allowed three private airlines to run services. Two of them — Nepal Airways and Everest Air — have since folded, leaving Necon Air as the sole representative of the private-sector pioneers. Many other airlines are facing an uncertain future, as the government continues to promote private airlines without proper evaluation.

After the unification of these three airlines, other carriers are said to be considering similar proposals. Apart from RNAC, Karnali Air, Shangri-La Air and Necon Air, Buddha Air, Mountain Air, Skyline, Cosmic Air, Gorkha Airlines, Asian Airlines and Dynasty are serving the domestic sector. ■

SUDARSHAN GAUTAM
A Tale Of Courage

He could not wave to the cheering crowd with his hands. But what he performed with his legs was beyond the imagination for many. Within seconds of receiving keys of the Toyota Echo vehicle from Communications Minister Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta within the premises of Birendra International Convention Center Saturday afternoon, Sudarshan Gautam, took the cheering crowd spellbound by driving the luxurious car with his legs. Dozens of vehicles followed and preceded him as Gautam, a 21 year youth from central hilly district of Ramechhap exhibited the demonstration ride for nearly 40 minutes in the Kathmandu's streets. "I would like to fly an aeroplane with my legs if got an opportunity," said Gautam, who is always eager to keep records.

For Gautam, amputating of his both arms after touching a high voltage electricity wires in 1994 was the worst nightmare that could come true. After spending several months in the hospital he returned to his village only to be despised by his colleagues and relatives. After his classmates passed the SLC exams, he could no more resist. He then started writing with the help of his legs and passed the exams next year in second division.

A student of BBS third year at the Min Bhavan Campus in the capital, Sudarshan has reconciled with his fate to some extent. But he has an undying zeal for doing things, which even physically sound people would not dare to. "By recording my feats in the Guinness Book of World Records, I want to uplift the image of my motherland," said Gautam.

Promoted by Onlyatnepal.com, a private IT company, Gautam's records are only in the making. "We have many talents like Gautam which need to be explored and properly brought to the global attention," said Juni Sherchan, chairman of the company. "Nepal is at the crossroads. Its up to us whether we want to boost our image or live in the shadow post." For Gautam, the choice is crystal clear. He no more wants to live in the past and has zeal and commitment to chart his own course in the future. ■

WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

South Asia

On The

Front Line

After last week's devastating suicide attacks in New York and Washington, which killed thousands of innocent people, a markedly changed global approach against terrorism has come into sharper public focus. As the leader of the group suspected of involvement in the US attacks is based in South Asia, terrorist organizations in the region have difficult times ahead. In Nepal, the government and Maoist insurgents started peace talks a month before the suicide attacks in the United States. How quickly Nepal, which is mired in six years of terror stemming from the Maoist rebellion, can restore peace remains to be seen.

By KESHAB POUDEL

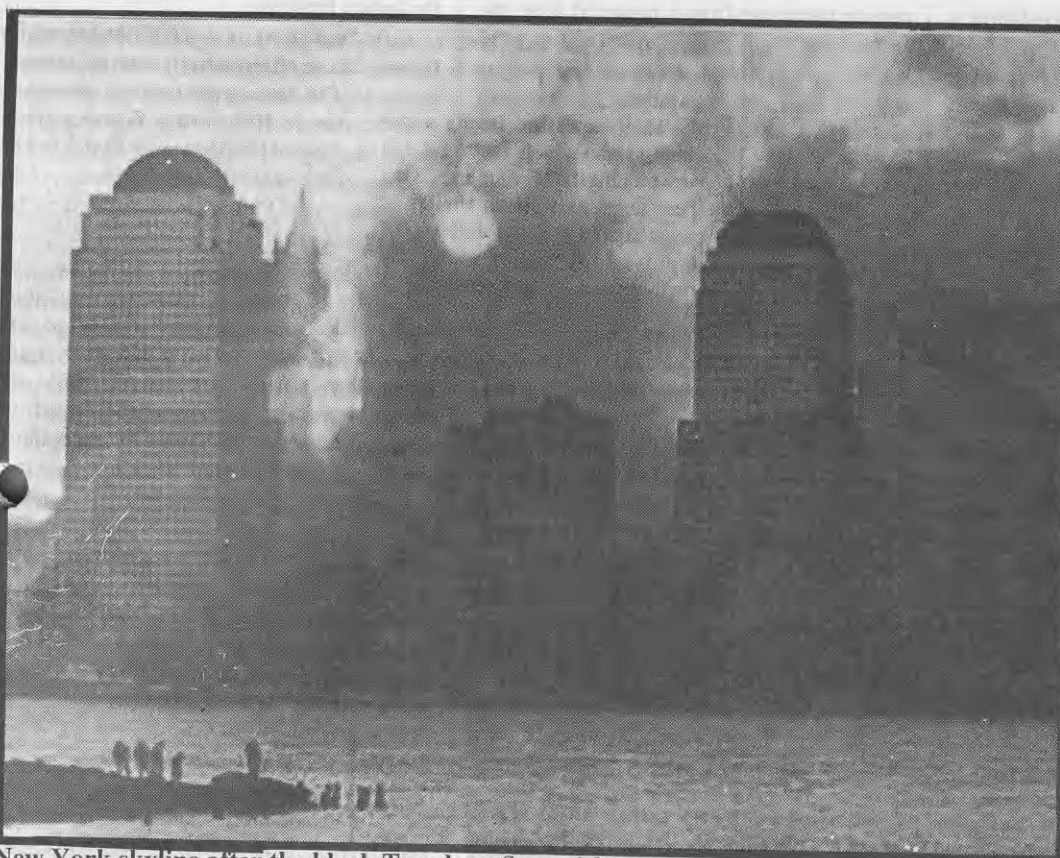
On Friday morning, the queue outside the US Embassy in Pani Pokhari was unusually long. Unlike regular business days, visitors ranged from rural people to the urban elite. Often calm, restless at other times, those outside the embassy were not visa applicants. They were Nepalis who had come to express their condolences and voice solidarity with the American people against the scourge of terrorism.

Although the voice of a small country like Nepal may not carry much weight in what is likely to be a drawn out international battle against terrorism, the symbolism of the crowd outside the embassy was clear. The attendance of people of various strata showed Nepal's commitment to promoting international peace and stability. For six years, Nepalis have experienced the trauma and agony of terrorism, which has largely gone unnoticed in much of the world. The Western media that have picked up the Maoist story in recent years have chosen

to portray it as a liberation war.

"I came here to express my sorrow to the families of the innocent victims of the barbaric act committed by a group of terrorists," said senior journalist Gokul Pokharel. "I want to show solidarity with the American people in wiping out terrorism from the world," he said.

Pokharel's sentiments were echoed by the hundreds of Nepalis who stood in the line. "Violence does not know any boundaries and it is always directed against innocent people. I was shocked when I saw the crumbling World



New York skyline after the black Tuesday : Scarred forever

Photo : AP/RSS

Trade Center towers and the cries of innocent people on CNN," said Padma Khadka, a resident of Budhanilkantha, who went inside the embassy to sign the condolence book.

The United States has always responded boldly against terrorism, but had never declared it an act of war. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 7, 1941 is remembered, in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's stirring words, as a day of infamy. That attack drew the United States into the Second World War. September 11, 2001 will be remembered as the day that changed the international response to terrorism.

US leaders almost immediately declared the terrorist attacks on the WTC twin towers and the Pentagon as an act of war against their country. The strong and instant international condemnation the attacks drew underlined the reality that they were also regarded as an assault on humanity. The stream of global denunciations reaffirmed the fact that the civilized world can never accept the killing of innocent people in the name of advancing any cause or redressing any grievance.

"We are working together with many countries, including Nepal, to bring the terrorists to justice. Senior Nepalese officials have expressed their commitment to support the United States by sharing information regard-

ing terrorism," said Larry M. Dinger, chargé d'affaires of the US Embassy. "The sympathy shown by the Nepalese people is incredible."

It will take time to establish who organized the attacks and whether there was any support from foreign governments. But the commitment shown by US leaders to hunt down those responsible for the dastardly acts and bring them to justice is aimed at deterring future attacks. President George Walker Bush's declaration that the United States would make no distinction between those who planned and carried out the attack and countries that harbored the terrorists marks a determined shift in the approach to the fight against international terrorism.

It has become clear that any delay by the civilized world to join hands to counter terrorism would make the planet more insecure. The international community seems to have realized the huge costs in terms of life, liberty and property people around the world have paid under terrorist attacks.

Earlier, even large-scale terrorist attacks were often forgotten soon. However, the scale of the September 11 attacks would make such disregard impossible. The likelihood of such an attack was widely predicted. In South Asia and the Middle East, suicide bombers have launched countless attacks and killed promi-

nent figures, but they were simply forgotten after a while. Sri Lanka lost a third of its fleet of aircraft in a terrorist attack at the country's main international airport a month ago. However, acts like last week's coordinated effort by suicide attackers using hijacked aircraft, however, had largely remained in the domain of fiction writers.

Whatever the precise motives behind a terrorist activity, one of the purposes is to gain publicity. Whether it is small group like Nepal's Maoists or larger and more sophisticated violent outfits, they always carefully plan their acts to draw maximum publicity in order to terrorize the largest possible number of people. After the attacks in the United States, even those who are secretly sympathetic to terrorists have been compelled to withdraw their support. As the United States, the world's only super power, has expressed its firm determination to destroy the network of international terrorism, the world has entered a new and

unpredictable phase of warfare where the enemy is not clearly visible.

Last week's attacks have highlighted the vulnerability of all modern societies in the world. It showed that almost all forms of infrastructure are open to attacks by groups and individuals that operate in the dark and strike at will. Suddenly many vulnerable buildings and installations around the world have come under increased threat.

Airlines are vulnerable to hijacking and no one has yet found a reliable way of making air travel 100 percent secure. It may be possible to improve defenses against particular terrorist techniques, significantly reducing known risks, but can such threats be eliminated altogether? Perhaps not. This makes concerted international action terrorism all the more vital.

Terrorism and Insurgency in Nepal

Nepal is an old victim of terrorism, having seen various phases of violent insurgencies in the past. The country's major political parties were responsible for launching such armed activities. Interestingly, all of these activities originated in India. Following the revolution of 1951, Nepal has seen nearly half a dozen insurgencies. The Maoist rebellion is by far the most violent one, having claimed nearly 2,000 lives.

Immediately after the 1951 revolution, a group of activists revolted in western Nepal under the command of K.I. Singh. Following the overthrow of the multiparty system in 1960, the Nepali Congress launched an insurgency, which fizzled out within two years. In 1968, the party organized another armed struggle. In 1973, the CPN-ML launched a "class struggle" killing some landlords in eastern Nepal. In 1985, a group led by Ram Raja Prasad Singh set off a series of bomb blasts in key Kathmandu centers. The country had a few years' respite before the Maoists launched their insurgency in 1996.

From today's ruling Nepali Congress to the main opposition CPN-UML, all political parties have used violence to overthrow the old political system. Interestingly, those behind such acts have been granted amnesties in the name of political reconciliation.

With the growth of democracy and the

receive patronage from a powerful state, the smaller states are in no position to bring the perpetrators to justice. Most of the terrorists and insurgent outfits in South Asia are promoted by one state to destabilize and undermine another.

During the Cold War, when India was allied to the Soviet Union and the United States backed Pakistan, the crises in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan appeared. India trained and supported the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels in Sri Lanka while the United States and Pakistan allegedly sponsored the Mujahideen to fight against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

The communist bloc led by the Soviet Union encouraged rebellions against governments in developing countries in the name of national liberation struggles. Later, democratic countries like the United States followed similar tactics in the larger scheme of containing

the Indian Embassy.

As South Asia has become the hotbed for the world's deadliest terrorist outfits, governments need to have a coordinated approach to curb the menace. If terrorist groups are continued to be allowed to operate, they would go on to create a major trouble for the region. If the insurgents from Myanmar, North-eastern India, Jammu and Kashmir, Nepal and Afghanistan establish strong links, it would be virtually impossible for any country to control them. Intelligence sources believe that most of the insurgents in North-eastern India are trying to join hands with Nepalese rebels. As the Maoists have already expanded their base from Darchula in far-western Nepal to Taplejung in the east, the possibility of other insurgent outfits infiltrating their rank and file cannot be ruled out.

"One cannot rule out the possibility that all terrorist groups may develop some kind of coordination and link. If all the terrorist groups in South Asia, from the hills to the sea, develop coordination, the nations in region may have to pay an unbearable price," said Dhruva Kumar, professor at the Center for Nepal and Asian Studies at Tribhuvan University, who is a leading strategic analyst of the country. "It is time for all South Asian countries to wake up and develop joint efforts to end terrorism." Moreover, if terrorist organizations in South Asia can coordinate attacks in a faraway country, it would obviously be easier for them to commit similar acts within the region.

As terrorist outfits have triggered panic across South Asian nations, can governments unite to end the menace? The region today spends large portions of national budgets to fight against insurgents. The economy of Sri Lanka is badly damaged by heavy spending on internal security. Other countries are facing similar financial strains.

Terrorism knows no borders and even a super power like the United States finds it difficult to deal with the menace alone. It is quite impossible for poor South Asian nations to tackle terrorism within its borders. Therefore, is this not the right time to revitalize the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and unite to fight against terrorism in the region?

Human Cost

Terrorism and insurgency carry huge human costs, which are very difficult to recover. The trauma triggered by terrorism is very difficult to forget. Many people lose their relatives and neighbors and some have to learn to survive with certain sense of fatalism. Both the state and society have to go a long way to recover from the wounds. In Nepal, the families of police personnel and the insurgents and



Violence in Kathmandu streets : Deplorable

availability of peaceful means of change in the post-Cold War era, terrorism and violence have lost any justification they may have carried. After last week's attacks in New York and Washington DC, violent means to achieve any end are less likely to be tolerated.

The nature of last week's attacks underscored the difficulties ahead in the fight against terrorism. The fact that shadowy terrorist networks working in different parts of the world can develop the capability to launch massive attacks at will presents an entirely new challenge to militaries that have been trained to fight enemies that can be identified.

As most terrorist outfits in South Asia

Soviet influence. The emergence of Islamic militant groups is a by-product of the Cold War, during which the West used religious zealots to contain communism.

A decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Cold War, powerful states continue to back insurgents and armed rebellions continue to pose threats to many countries. In the process, small countries like Nepal have suffered from unprecedented violent activities. Former prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala and leader of the main opposition UML Madhav Kumar Nepal recently accused India of supporting and sheltering the Maoists rebels, a charge strenuously denied by

those of the victims are surviving in such tragic conditions. More than 1,000 people in their teens have been forced to live with permanent physical disability.

Impact on Nepalese Economy

The September 11 tragedy came at a dangerous moment for the world. For Nepal, the prognosis is grim. The United States is the third largest importer of Nepalese goods, taking in products worth more than Rs12 billion every year. More than 40,000 American tourists visit Nepal each year. If there is any kind of fall in these figures as a fallout of the attacks, the Nepalese economy would be badly hit.

After the announcement of the cease-fire between the government and the Maoists, Nepal's tourism industry is gradually in the process of recovery. If the number of American tourists plummets, the economy will suffer. "The Nepalese economy may have to face some sorts of problems [from the recent attacks in the United States]," said Rajendra Khetan, second vice president of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI).

"South Asian countries need to develop a coordinated approach in fighting against terrorism," said Professor Pannakaji Amatya. "After the attacks in the United States, it is now certain that no country is safe from terrorism."

According to Boaz Ganor of the International Policy Research Institute, there needs to be a coordinated approach to wipe out terrorism from the world. Countries need to share intelligence, information and other logistic support in better ways.

Clashes of Civilization?

There are others who see the recent attack on the US as the beginning of the "clashes of civilization". According to renowned political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, the 21st century's war will be the result of inherent clashes between civilization. Huntington in his much-touted book, *Clashes of Civilization* clearly points out the possibility of conflict between fundamentalist Muslims, western democratic countries and assertive China.

As Muslims defeated first super power former Soviet Union in Afghanistan and now Bin Laden - one of the leader of the Mujahideen who had fought tooth and nail against Soviets — is attacking world's only super power, the USA, they predict, this will drag the humanity in a long-term conflict of civilization. Although Muslims and Arab world have backed USA in its vow to fight against the terrorism, it is yet to see how common Muslims will respond at a time when the USA may be attacking a particular country.

What is Terrorism?

The words terrorism, insurgency, civil war, revolution, guerrilla war, intimidation

Suicide Terrorism

There are more than a dozen religious and secular terrorist groups resorting to suicide terrorism in the name of Islamic revolution or simply for freedom of their homeland. Four are relatively quiet now - the Natzerit Socialist Party of Syria, Syrian Nationalist Party, Lebanese Communist Party and Baath Party of Lebanon. Some of the groups are active in South Asia.

1. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam of Sri Lanka carried out the largest number of suicide attacks in its quest for statehood. It is the only group to have killed two world leaders, former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa. Their suicide bombers have claimed the lives of the largest number of leaders in a short time. The LTTE was trained and supported by India in its early days.
2. Hezbollah of Lebanon is second to the LTTE in suicide operations, having pioneered suicide terrorism in modern times after its 1983 suicide bombings in Beirut, Lebanon against French and US military camps.
3. The Al Qaida network led by Osama bin Laden, based in Afghanistan, is the prime suspect in last week's attacks in New York and Washington. He used at least one Egyptian group in the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. He is said to have the largest and strongest terrorist network in the world.
4. The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) stands third in suicide attacks. Hamas is active in the West Bank and Gaza and has vowed to destroy Israel.
5. Palestinian Islamic Jihad acts in the same areas and also vows to destroy Israel.
6. Kurdistan Workers Party of Turkey uses suicide operations as part of the Kurdish separatist movement.
7. Some Kashmiri forces like Hizb-ul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba, which Indians accuse Pakistan of backing, are also actively involved in suicide operations.

and extremism are most often interchanged and used very loosely. What is common in all is violence. Terrorism is an organized system of intimidation. It is broadly defined as violent behavior designed to generate fear in the community, or a substantial segment of it, for political purposes. According to the Encyclopedia of Social Science, terrorism is a method whereby an organized group or party seeks to achieve its avowed aims chiefly through the systematic use of violence.

The US Central Intelligence Agency's 1980 definition of terrorism, duly accepted by the State Department, is: The threat of use of violence for political purposes by individuals or groups, whether acting for or in opposition, when such actions are intended to shock, stun, or intimidate a target group wider than the immediate victim. Terrorist acts are directed against persons who, as individual agents or representatives of authority, interfere with the consumption of the objective of such a group.

The former Soviet Union was deeply involved in supporting terrorist groups in many countries through the provision of weapons and training. But Soviet leaders often issued denials and said they supported only national liberation movements and freedom fighters. Almost all these movements committed widespread violence and killed innocent people. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union supported many terrorist outfits in the name of

national liberation movements. Even Western democracies promoted terrorists to counter the communists under the policy of containment.

Although the long-term objectives of terrorism, insurgency and revolution are similar, that is, overthrow of the existing regime or order, the short-term objectives and strategies or methodology may be quite different.

There is another form of terrorism, which is backed by one state against another. Whether it is democratic or totalitarian, most states have backed terrorist groups to overthrow regimes they don't like in another state. In South Asia, most terrorist and insurgent groups have received support from other governments.

According to the New Delhi-based Outlook magazine of February 1, 1999, there are nine insurgent groups active in North-east India, including the United Liberation Front of Assam and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland in Assam; the National Socialist Council of Nagaland and the Isaac-Muivah faction in Nagaland; United Nationalist Liberation Front and PLA in Manipur; All Tripura Tiger Force and National Liberation Force of Tripura in Tripura state.

According to Madras-based Frontline magazine of September 1, 2000, there are 11 terrorist outfits active in Jammu and Kashmir, including Hizbul Mujahideen, Al-Badr, Jamiatul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami, Harkat-ul-Ansar and Harkat-ul-

Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammadi, Tehreek Jihad-e-Islami, Muslim Janbaaz Force and Al-Jihad Force. Sri Lanka's LTTE, which is regarded by many as the most powerful terrorist group in South Asia, was originally backed by India.

Supply of Small Arms

Most of the terrorist outfits in the region have used all kinds of powerful and light weapons to wage war against the well-equipped government armed police and army. It is virtually impossible for small countries to continue their war against such outfits. Sri Lanka is spending billions of rupees each year to fight with insurgents and the situation in India remains similar. Even small terrorist outfits like the Maoist Communist Center (MCC) and People's War Group (PWG) in the Bihar and Andhra Pradesh in India have been using semi-automatic and automatic weapons.

South Asia Partnership (SAP), an organization with national offices in the subcontinent, has formed a South Asian Small Arms Network, aimed at sharing information and data on small arms and light weapons.

According to a study of International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), South Asia is currently experiencing a crisis in the proliferation of small arms. In some cases, the proliferation is linked to insurgencies and sectarian violence. The common elements of the crisis include growth of gun violence linked to organized crime and political movements. Distinctive elements of the crisis can be seen in the challenges faced by Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

The traditional stereotypes on South Asia have been: India and Pakistan are both suppliers as well as end-users of small arms; Sri Lanka is an end-user, Bangladesh and Nepal are transit routes. However, changes have occurred in these patterns, with Nepal and Bangladesh now joining the category of end-users.

South Asia's problems with small arms stem, in the first instance, from the extraordinary numbers of the weapons that emerged during 1970s and 1980s on both the eastern and western flanks. The war in Afghanistan and weapons delivered to both sides together represent the single most significant source of arms in the subcontinent. They have had a devastating effect on Pakistan and parts of India.

The end of the conflict in the South-east Asia, particularly in Cambodia, also made available large number of weapons, which have found their way into Sri Lanka and North-eastern India. In Sri Lanka, since the end of India's support for the LTTE in the late 1980s, Tamil rebels have developed a sophisticated international network for the procurement of arms with devastating consequences for the

people of Sri Lanka on both sides of the ethnic divide.

The situation seems to be fertile for the development of a strong terrorist network in South Asia, linking the north-eastern hills of India to Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. If the terrorist and insurgent outfits of northern part of South Asia and the LTTE are united, the South Asian terrorism network will pose a formidable challenge to the region as well as the world.

While the threat continues, the year 2000 saw the international community's commitment to counterterrorism cooperation and ability to mobilize its resources grow stronger than

by the billionaire Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden to the LTTE, many groups in Jammu and Kashmir, including Lashkar-e-Toiba, Harkat-ul Mujahideen, are active across the region. Smaller terrorist outfits are also active in Nepal and Bangladesh.

Nepalis Experience

In its modern history, Nepal had not seen hijackings and the killing of innocent people in such a large scale before the Maoist insurgency. The first hijacking took place in 1974 in which the perpetrators with links to the then banned Nepali Congress diverted a small Twin Otter aircraft on a flight from Biratnagar to Kathmandu to the bordering Indian city of



Nepal-India border : Open and vulnerable

ever. "Patterns of Global Terrorism 2000", a report published by United States Department of State in April 2001, suggests that the vigilance of all members of the international community is critical to limiting terrorist activities.

Although Nepal is yet to sign the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Financing, the country has already affirmed that it will not allow Nepalese soil to be used against any country. The convention creates an international legal framework for investigating, apprehending, and prosecuting those involved in terrorist financing and describes preventive measures to identify and choke off sources of income for terrorists and to restrict the movements of such funds across international borders.

There were 423 international terrorist attacks in 2000, an increase of eight percent from the 392 attacks recorded during 1999. In 2000, South Asia remained a focal point for terrorism and the trend of terrorism shifting from the Middle East to South Asia. From a network led

Forbesgunj and decamped with Rs 2.8 million in government money it was carrying.

The second hijacking occurred in December 1999. Indian Airlines Flight IC 814 was hijacked in mysterious circumstances as it was en route from Kathmandu to New Delhi, allegedly by Harkat-ul Mujahideen activists. Unprepared for such an event, Nepal was heavily criticized and punished by India in failing to provide security.

After the hijacking, Nepal has tried to further improve the security system in the airport and other installations. The government has recently set up an armed police force to provide security as a paramilitary force to fight against violent movements.

As long as the traditional rivalry between India and Pakistan continues and the dispute between China and India remains, one might not expect lasting peace in the region. But a resolute global fight against terrorism with deep roots in south Asia would represent a major step toward building regional stability. ■

MONSOON Cloudy Questions

Discussions on climate change and natural calamities acquire a new urgency amid the continuing downpour

By AKSHAY SHARMA

The storm clouds on the horizon bring two stories. The first is good news, especially for farmers that depend on rains. The bad news is the increase in natural calamities during the season.

"There were clouds so low that they seemed to touch the river Salli," said 14-year-old Ram Kumar of Palubari, south-east of the capital. "My friends and I want to fly kites, but the rain is a setback," he says.

The current downpour is an unusual phenomenon. The monsoon has come earlier and lasted longer than expected this year, say experts. The country has been suffering from diverse effects of the environment, as there has been little rainfall in western and eastern Nepal.

"The roads are all right," says Bhagwan Poudel, chairman of a village development committee in Bara district, south-east of Kathmandu. "I was surprised by the rainfall in Kathmandu valley during my two-week stay here."

"Nature welcomes us with so many things but it's been harsh on the farmers in our area.

Most of the people in my village are busy planting maize and wheat. This is one of the most important seasons for us. All the income expected from the crops we plant depends on nature itself."

Is this climate shift an effect of global warming? One degree Fahrenheit — one tiny mark on the thermometer. It doesn't sound like much, but it has served as the spark for an explosive debate. Scientists agree that the planet has seen an overall warming trend of about 1 degree Fahrenheit during the last century. Is the debate over? Hardly.

Scientists disagree on the phenomenon. Some say global warming is a natural process. Others say it could be beneficial. And still others say if humans don't do something to curtail their influence on the climate, the consequences could be serious. What makes global warming such a hot topic is that, in some ways, the evidence contradicts itself. Warming temperatures are most obvious in the world, and that trend is more pronounced during winter.

However, in recent decades, a cooling

trend has been observed in the fall across much of the central and eastern United States. Tree rings, sediment samples, and ice cores, have



Monsoon clouds : When will they clear ?

been used to study the earth's ancient climate record. These proxy records have revealed that history has seen more severe temperature swings than modern times.

Researchers have found that, over the course of the millennia, overall temperatures have swung as much as 10 degrees Fahrenheit or more in one decade. However, when comparing current records to proxy records, the data suggests that several years in the 1990s were the warmest in much more than a century.

But the records paint an unfinished picture. Modern-day information is, in many ways, substandard. The oceans, for example, are a largely unobserved abyss of information, as there are very few measurements able to be taken from its vast area. One way scientists compensate for this void is to use satellites.

Scientists also use computer models to help them predict the future of the planet. However, the inconsistencies are overwhelming. The computer models are in a state of infancy so the scientific debate is not surprising. Scientists do agree that that the planet is

going to be warmer. They disagree by how much.

If scientists can't even agree among themselves, what are we to think? This means many different components to the global warming debate have to be considered. To what extent are humans responsible for the current warming? How much warming has there been and will take place from this point forward? What are the specific impacts past, present, and future of climate change?

The patterns of rainfall have changed, agree experts. Today, scientists are measuring global climate change in the atmosphere and at the

surface, as well as analyzing the composition of greenhouse gases, which may be contributing to this change. These measurements help researchers determine what factors are influencing global warming, and provide them with an indication of how fast that warming is occurring.

While experts debate these issues through models, tests and scientific inquiries, Nepalese farmers have to work in the muddy fields and plant crops. "This season demands hard labor from us. Some of my sons probably will get sick working in this downpour," says farmer Rajan Subedi.

The newspapers, meanwhile, are full of stories of landslides and the resulting loss of life in different parts of the country, renewing the debate on the threats from deforestation and on ways of making rescue-and-relief work more effective. Teenagers like Ram Kumar have their own concerns. "Dasain is approaching and we are still getting rain. How are we going to fly kites?" ■

'Regional Initiatives Against Terrorism Required'

— PROF. DHRUBA KUMAR

In a small room with books scattered in a corner and a computer on his desk, Professor DHRUBA KUMAR, a research scholar at Tribhuvan University's Center for Asian Studies is busy writing his new book. Kumar, one of the well-known strategic analysts of Tribhuvan University, has written many books and articles on the strategic importance of Nepal. Following are excerpts from a half-hour conversation KESHAB POUDEL had with Kumar on various issues in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in United States and their implication for South Asia:

As the United States has declared a war against terrorism, how do you visualize the scenario in South Asia, including Nepal?

Terrorism has many dimensions in liberal society. People demand the right to self-determination. There is not only a human dimension but also a criminal dimension. One cannot justify the killing of innocent people to achieve ends. From the perspective of human rights, it is very difficult to explain terrorism, but killing people can only be termed as criminal activities. In a country like Nepal, even possession of arms itself is regarded as a crime. Even in the post-Cold War and pre-Cold War periods, the state has a monopoly

over the possession of arms. The demand to end the monopoly of state over arms is also growing. The world is in turmoil. If we take the case of Third World countries, it is not easy to define terrorism. Many groups are waging war against the state demanding the right to self-determination by killing innocent people. If we see the term terrorism in the South Asian context, the region endorsed liberation war during the period of de-colonization. There is also a demand for ethnic and religious revolution for self-identity. Some are waging holy wars.

How do you see the decision of the United States to 'wipe out' terrorism?

The United States is one of the democratic and open societies in the world. As an island-like nation cut off from the Atlantic on the East Coast and Pacific in the west, it has never entered major wars on its soil. However, in the context of globalization, the United States is also integrated with the world. Americans and Europeans are more dependent on technology. The terrorists' decision to hit the World Trade Center and the Pentagon both were symbolic in the changing context. The attacks showed how vulnerable even a technologically superb country like the United States is in front of terrorists. What is the use of National Missile Defense system at a time when a small terrorist outfit threatens a big country? The recent example shows that the world has become unsafe in the context of terrorism. It seems that the United States lacked mechanisms to tackle terrorism. The US-led coalition may bring positive results.

What would be the global effects of the war against terrorism?

It is very difficult to eliminate international terrorism but it can be contained. For the time being, the United States pursuit may reduce terrorist activities, as every state will watch it very carefully. Even countries of the world will watch the Maoist activities and lend necessary support to contain it. The government may receive support. If the United States moves with concrete proposals and determination against the terrorism, the number of cases of terrorism would drastically subside.

Were the recent attacks in United States terrorist acts or part of a larger war between cultures and civilizations assumed by Samuel P. Huntington?

If we see the case as defined by Samuel P. Huntington, it may be the beginning of the clashes of civilizations. He points out that the Third World War is going to be between the culture

and civilization. In the context when a Muslim group is attacking the United States, Huntington's assumption comes very close. I do not believe that terrorism is just a part of religion. When almost all Muslim countries have supported the US move to wage war against terrorism, Huntington's hypothesis may have long way to go. If we consider the identity of the hijackers and the perpetrators, we may say that it is a part of the clash of civilizations. Even the United States has declared it as a war. But the question is, how long will it sustain the battle?

South Asia is regarded as a hotbed of terrorism as many dreaded groups, ranging from the LTTE to Osama bin Laden's network, are said to be based in the region. How do you see the implications of terrorism in South Asia in the context of the US declaration to wage war against terrorism?

Experience and events have shown that the region is a hotbed for terrorism as all countries in the region are victims of terrorism. India is directly and indirectly accusing Pakistan and both nations have long relations of hostility. Will the countries of the region agree to a regional coalition? India has been engaged in international lobbying to declare Pakistan a terrorist state. The Pakistanis have been doing the same against India.

How do you assess India's role as the biggest country in the region?

We can see opportunism in the foreign policy of India in dealing with different aspects. When Sino-American relations witnessed certain deterioration, the Indians even supported the US National Missile Defense program. India is a very powerful and resourceful country of 1.2 billion people, but the approach and attitude of the Indian government has always been dubious. Indians are playing the role of surrogates of the Americans. India should develop a long-term policy rather than going for immediate expediency. Even America's foreign policy is not consistent. In its dealing with India, Pakistan and China, it is not easy to understand US foreign policy. There need to be consistency in the policy thrust. If Americans want to eliminate terrorism from the world, they must bring a firm policy against all kinds of terrorist activities in the globe, including in the region. There is no doubt that America needs to play an important role to wipe out terrorist activities from the region — whether it is allegedly backed by India, Pakistan or Afghanistan.

How vulnerable is South Asia to terrorism?

Undoubtedly, South Asia is very vulnerable to terrorism, as the deadliest outfits have been working in the region. If these different groups develop a network for close operations, they will change the course of the region. One cannot rule out the possibility of the LTTE joining hands with other terrorist outfits active in the region. The economic development and poverty alleviation of the region is not possible without wiping out terrorism. As long as India and Pakistan do not limit their military might, the future of the region will remain bleak. In Kashmir, the violence was not entirely an indigenous revolt, as veterans of the Afghan war entered the region through Pakistan.

How do you evaluate Indian policy regarding terrorism in the region?

The Indian state needs to develop a coherent policy towards terrorism. Just by placing paramilitary forces along the India-Nepal border, India can not stop infiltration. India needs to have clear-cut policy regarding neighboring countries. How does it see the insurgencies in the region as a whole? In many cases, India is mired in an unclear policy relating to terrorist activities in the region.

How do you assess India's own insurgency problems?

Until India fully democratizes its whole system, dissension will continue and will be expressed through violent means. Even the Jammu Kashmir problem, many Indian believe, can be

"Many groups are waging war against the state demanding the right to self-determination by killing innocent people. If we see the term terrorism in the South Asian context, the region endorsed liberation war during the period of de-colonization."

solved by allowing full democratic exercise in the state. The problem in India is not insurgency but democratization. Once the system allows expression of the aspirations of the people in the political system, insurgency will not find roots.

Almost every South Asian country is gripped by terrorism. Terrorists believed to have links in the region have penetrated the most powerful country in the world. How do you evaluate the situation of Nepal in the context of the Maoist insurgency?

We have to be very careful now. Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan are also facing the spillover effects of terrorism. In such a situation, it is strange that no government is taking the leadership to identify the problems. If we do not develop and activate the regional mechanism, we cannot stop the growing effects of multiple insurgencies. Because of the human rights dimension, even the state cannot use excessive power to suppress insurgencies. The state has to keep in mind international opinion. States are not able to teach internal and external opinion about the need to quell the insurgencies. In the Nepalese context, the government has not clearly defined who the Maoists are — whether they are a political force or terrorists. The government is now in political negotiations with a group that it earlier declared as terrorists. The Maoist insurgency surged because of the oppressive acts of the state in the early days. Had the state not taken extra-constitutional actions, the situation would not have been like this.

Do you see any possibility of a flare-up in the insurgency?

As the government and Maoists are sitting for dialogue, I do not think there is any possibility of a flare-up. The crisis will subside but it will take time. It is natural for Maoists to have links with various groups across the border. Most of Nepal's political leaders have certain links with India, as they received their higher education from Indian universities. There are also problems with governance. In the last 12 years, Nepal has had governments without governance. One can understand the situation in a state without governance. As Maoist and government have started negotiations, they will find out settlement.

What are your specific observations on the situation?

We are very fortunate that even in such a lawlessness situation, many ethnic groups are not assimilated with the Maoists and that the Maoists have been unable to generate popular sentiment. Our political leaders loosely accuse that terrorists are getting support from India. When two leaders recently opened their mouth, India also seems to have realized the apparatus because both countries have an open border. India is itself mired in terrorism and it has been facing a tough time.

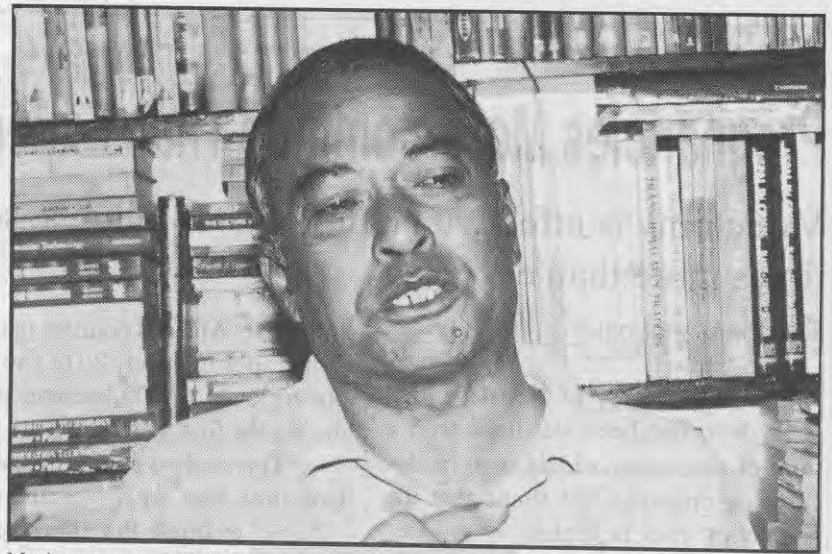
It may be one of the reasons why India posted large paramilitary forces along the border with Nepal. If we compare our situation with those in Kashmir and North-eastern India, where insurgents have declared war against the state, Nepal still seems to be in a position to contain it. It is up to the government to decide what support it needs from other countries to resolve the problem.

Do you see the possibility of any agreement between Nepal and India to combat terrorism?

India and Nepal often express commitment to stop terrorist activities in their border through official declarations. On many occasions, we can see this commitment in joint statements. But no one mentions what level of support Nepal would get from India and vice versa. The message must be conveyed to India that the flourishing of terrorism in Nepal will spill over into India as Nepal and India share a long open and natural border. We should have basic understanding in the operational and bilateral levels. We can even talk about it at the SAARC level, as there are a bundle of documents and resolutions on the suppression of terrorism.

How do you view the problems in the government?

There is confusion in the government. The government must conclude whether the Maoists are a political or terrorist problem. The government has to single out a policy on the Maoists. If it considers their activities as terrorism, the government can declare them as such and mobilize state power. The government can contain such problems as the legitimate body of the state, it can also ask for help from other states. The government has not shown its strength in social mobilization and administration. The government has problems of slackness. At a time when the world's only super power asks for global support against terrorism, what impact will Nepal have in the



Maoist movement? Globally all governments are now developing an anti-terrorism approach. Therefore, it is not going to be easier to wage violent acts in a country like Nepal. After the attacks in the United States, we can see concern growing throughout the world.

Don't you see the possibility of a stronger alliance and networking among South Asian terrorist groups?

This region can be a very fertile ground for terrorists. As you know, the Hind Kush mountains stretch from Myanmar in the east to Afghanistan in the west. If the terrorists of North-east India establish some kind of link with Afghanistan and the Golden Triangle and Mekong Valley and the state of Molucca in the east and the LTTE further south, terrorism will pose a great threat. As most Afghan warlords are now fighting in Jammu and Kashmir, one cannot rule out the possibility of their expanding links with insurgents in western Nepal. Because of the drug trade, they have an economy to sustain in the east. They don't have problems of weapon, as there are big weapons markets. It is not possible to control terrorism if it expands from east to west. Once the insurgents develop their capability and nexus between the northern part of India and Nepal, they will create havoc. Indians seem to be very suspicious now.

Why is it so difficult to contain terrorism?

In the hills, there is much rocky terrain and terrorists can hide in the many caves and river basins. The terrain is very suitable for terrorist groups. If these groups establish a network, I don't think technology and manpower alone would be enough to control the situation. The decision of the Indian government to deploy security forces along the border with Nepal may be a result of their suspicion on this score.

If you visualize such a grim scenario, is this not the right time to take initiatives to wipe out terrorism from the region?

This is the right time to wipe out terrorism. There is a global uproar against terrorism so we must exploit the situation for the benefit of the region as a whole. If we remove violent acts from the country and develop as a fort, Nepal can at least help to break the link between the insurgents group of the east and west. If ULFA and Bodos enter Nepal like they do in Bhutan, it will immediately flare up the problem in the region as a whole. If we can curtail the emerging nexus of various terrorist and insurgent groups, it will be major contribution for the region.

How do you see the Maoist problem in the changing context?

It must be contained, as this is the right moment to do something to resolve the problem. If the insurgency lasts longer, the insurgents will approach other groups for their survival. At a time when there is a global wave against terrorism, Nepal must take appropriate steps. As the government and the Maoists are expressing their commitment to peace talks, I think the insurgents would eventually come to the mainstream.

How do you visualize the future of Nepal?

Provided it exploits its manpower and develops a long-term approach, Nepal need not be worried too much. Along with geographical handicaps, we have many geo-strategical advantages. ■

"As most Afghan warlords are now fighting in Jammu and Kashmir, one cannot rule out the possibility of their expanding links with insurgents in western Nepal. Because of the drug trade, they have an economy to sustain in the east. They don't have problems of weapon, as there are big weapons markets."

VASECTOMY

Pregnancies More Common Than Expected

Vasectomy is effective but it, too, has failures, sometimes more than expected

By A CORRESPONDENT

A recent study of Nepalese men who had been sterilized with a form of vasectomy widely used in developing countries has found that the pregnancy rate is higher than previously thought. The study included 1,052 men who had had a vasectomy between one and four years ago.

The study, undertaken by Family Health International (FHI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, His Majesty's Government (HMG) of Nepal, estimated a first-year pregnancy rate of 17 per 1,000 among wives of men having ligation and excision vasectomies.

That is, among 1,000 couples using this particular form of vasectomy (male sterilization) for family planning, 17 women would become pregnant during the first year following the procedure. This contrasts with an estimated pregnancy rate of 1 to 2 per 1,000 vasectomies in the United States, where different vasectomy procedures are typical and where couples are older.

Compared with other forms of family planning, the vasectomy procedure used in Nepal is still quite reliable. For example, for couples using the Copper T intrauterine device, considered a very effective contraceptive method, approximately 8 women per 1,000 users will experience an unintended pregnancy during the

first year. And for couples using condoms, approximately 30 to 140 women among every 1,000 become pregnant during the first year.

"This study is unique in that it is the first time that we have attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of vasectomy in a large sample of men from diverse areas in Nepal," says Dr. Kalyan Raj Pandey, a research member of the study, President of the Nepal Medical Association and advisor to the Ministry of Health.

"The results of the study in Nepal are not very different from what we are finding in some other developing countries when simple ligation and excision are used," reports Dr. David Sokal, a member of



Dr. Thapa : Co-author

the research team and a medical director at Family Health International. "While a vasectomy procedure is an excellent method of family planning, it's important that couples understand there is a small but real possibility of pregnancy after vasectomy."

"The study findings have important implications for counseling, follow up and clinical training," notes Dr. Laxmi Raj Pathak, another member of the research team and director of the Ministry of Health's Family Health Division.

Vasectomy is a permanent form of contraception in which the vasa deferentia — the tubes that carry sperm from the testes — are occluded, either by ligation or other means. In developing countries, ligation (tying) and excision (removal) of a small length of the vas is the most common method of occlusion. In the United States and other industrialized countries where vasectomy is popular, cautery (burning) or metal clips are the most commonly used methods to occlude the vas.

Family planning handbooks typically describe vasectomy as nearly perfect, better than 99 percent effective at



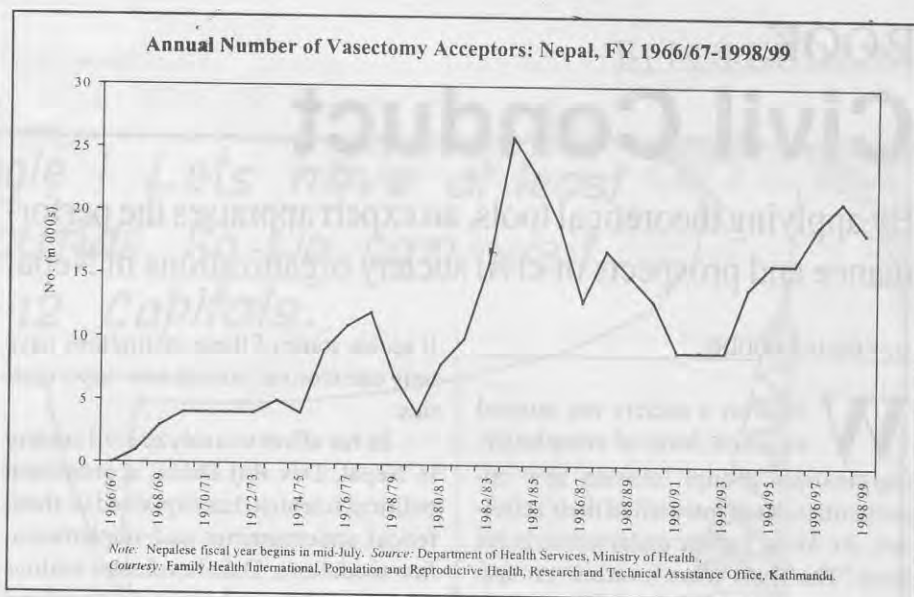
Men in queue for vasectomy in a hill district : Family planning

preventing pregnancy. However, different ways of performing a vasectomy may result in slightly different pregnancy rates.

In a related study, specifically designed to compare two different vasectomy techniques, preliminary results being released later this month show conclusively that sperm counts decrease more rapidly when a surgical technique known as fascial interposition is added to the simple ligation and excision technique. That study was conducted in Nepal and six other countries. Most of the men in the study announced today in Nepal had undergone vasectomy using simple ligation and excision, but without fascial interposition. Fascial interposition is a procedure in which the sheath covering the vas is pulled over one severed end and sewn shut to create a natural tissue barrier. The seven-country study looked at multiple sperm counts in each man, rather than pregnancy rates. A similar method called "foldback" technique is used by some surgeons in Nepal.

In the study reported today, researchers contacted men who had had a vasectomy one to four years ago, and asked each of them to provide a single semen sample for laboratory analysis. The men were also asked whether their wives had become pregnant. The men in the study were chosen from over 30,000 men who had had vasectomies between 1996 and 1999. The four Hill Districts of Bhojpur, Doti, Ramechhap and Tanahu were chosen randomly to represent the Development Regions. A proportionate sample of men were then selected randomly from within these districts. About 75 percent of vasectomies performed in Nepal are done in the Hill Region.

Twenty three men, or 2.3 percent, still had sperm in their semen, and 38 men reported that their wives had become pregnant during the years since their husband's vasectomy. A life-table calculation gave an estimate of a cumulative pregnancy rate of 4.2 percent at the end of three years (42 among every 1,000 women) or about 1 percent per year.



Most of the pregnancies reported in Nepal were probably due to recanalization — the body healing itself — rather than surgical errors. Also, most couples in this study were relatively young compared to couples having vasectomies in the US and other developed countries, which means they would be more fertile than older couples. Pregnancies were more common among the younger women in the study. Eight of the pregnancies occurred within three months of the vasectomy, before a vasectomy is considered to be effective.

The process of recanalization can begin when sperm from the open ends of the vas leak out and cause a mild inflammation. This results in a condition known as a sperm granuloma, which is part of the body's healing process. A granuloma is made up of white blood cells and other cells involved in the body's healing process. The healing process can lead to the formation of a honey-combed "bridge" that can sometimes connect the two severed ends. Viable sperm can then cross over and make their way to the other end.

Recanalization is often not a permanent condition. Often, the "bridge" will eventually solidify as part of the healing process, and scar tissue (fibrosis) will close off the recanalization. Simple ligation and excision appears

more likely to lead to recanalization than other vasectomy methods.

In Nepal, about 18,000 vasectomies have been performed in the 1990s annually, with some fluctuations over the years (see graph). Since semen testing is generally not available, men are advised to wait 12 weeks before relying on their vasectomy. Until that time, couples are advised to use other contraceptive methods, such as condoms.

This study, supported in part with funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development, included two special features: (a) rigorous quality control of the semen testing; and (b) Internet-based data entry. Semen samples obtained in the Hill Districts of Nepal were preserved and analyzed in Kathmandu, and then results were validated by a U.S. laboratory. To facilitate data collection and analysis, this study used an Internet link for data entry, from Kathmandu to FHI's office in North Carolina, USA. This was the first study that FHI conducted using the Internet in this way. "We found the application of the technology easy and extremely efficient to process data and ensure its quality," says Dr. Shyam Thapa, who is another member of the research team and senior scientist with FHI based in Kathmandu. Use of the technology reduced the time to process and verify data interactively. ■

BOOK

Civil Conduct

By applying theoretical tools, an expert appraises the performance and prospects of civil society organizations in Nepal

By KESHAB POUDEL

Whenever a society has jumped to a new level of complexity, marginalized groups, sensing new opportunities, have intensified their activities. As Alvin Toffler underscores in his book "The Third Wave", various groups, including intellectuals, are in a race to grab these new opportunities. Those excluded from the mainstream organize themselves to press new demands.

Following the restoration of democracy in Nepal, a new complexity has appeared in the social order in terms of political, ethnic, intellectual and professional association.

In the name of civil society, everyone has been talking about questions of morality, integrity, and honesty. How many people have the moral standing to raise such questions remains to be evaluated. Although Nepalese society has a long history of group dynamics, it is not like those of complex modern associations.

In the last decade, civil society organizations have played positive as well as negative roles as they have become increasingly involved in diverse areas. Some areas are of little direct concern to the Nepalese people. Unlike political parties, which are responsible to the people, civil society organizations have largely enjoyed freedom of action without accountability.

The functions and role of civil society in Nepal have helped generate a deepening public perception that personal motives rather than the national interest direct these groups. Compared to traditional associations, which were motivated by social interest and whose activities were service oriented, modern organizations are more prominent in rhetoric.

It seems some of these institutions have only one motive: to seize new opportunities.

In his effort to analyze civil society in Nepal, Dev Raj Dahal, a prominent political scientist, has explained its theoretical underpinnings and implementation modalities. Dahal evaluates various roles played by civil society in Nepal and their implications for the long-term growth of an open and participatory system.

"In Nepal, where both the political society and economic society have a common utilitarian motive of maximizing power and wealth, the non-profit sectors

— a world of the poor and powerless — are always being forsaken by concrete policy manifestation and by the democratization process. Paradoxically, many of these association, far from becoming an autonomous sphere, have become a part of the political society, political parties, institutions of elections, special interest groups and the state and, consequently, failed to perform civic functions," writes Dahal, in his introduction.

In a country like Nepal, civil society can play a very important part in the development and democratization processes. Civil society organizations also face challenges and problems similar to those of government agencies.

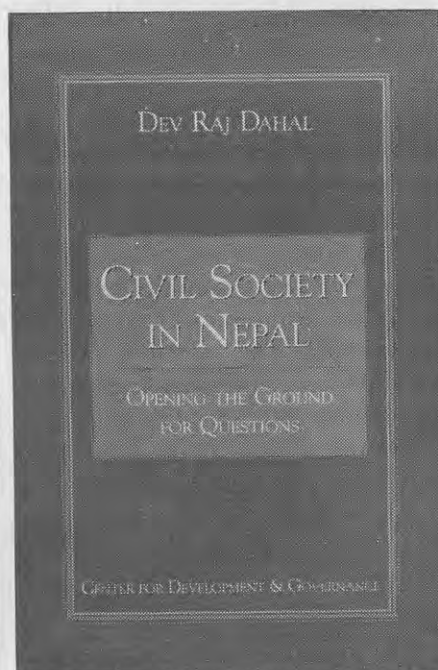
Although some non-governmental organizations are effective in influencing public policies on governance, a majority of them are mired in such problems as corruption, misuse of authority and unaccountability.

From poverty alleviation programs to human rights and from democratization projects to anti-corruption campaigns, civil society has been playing a high-visibility role. But are they really accountable, transparent and democratic in nature?

Although Dahal is critical of civil society organizations on some points, he seems more positive about their role in the execution and implementation of programs aimed at benefiting the people. "The civil society is expected to serve as a symbol of change for creating a modern, democratic and just state where rich and powerful are no longer above the law and where grassroots efforts to build social capital grow," writes Dahal.

One of the important parts of the Dahal's book is that it analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Nepal. As a political scientist, he seems to be more concerned with the power structure and institutional of the civil society in Nepal.

At a time when people are emphasizing the need to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of political parties and raising questions about the integrity and morality of leaders, can civil society activists remain beyond the pale of public scrutiny? ■



Civil Society In Nepal
Opening The Ground For Questions
 By Dev Raj Dahal
 Published by Center for Development
 and Governance
 Price: Rs.200, US\$ 10 (By airmail)
 Pages: 102

By M.S.KHOKNA



TRANSITION

ELECTED: Nepal, as vice chairman of the ongoing 56th general assembly of the United Nations.

APPOINTED: **Nirmal Gurung**, from Kaski, and **Ramesh Koirala**, from Kathmandu, as members of the Overseas Employment

Advisory Committee, by the Ministry of Labor and Transport Management.

Dr. Dwarika Nath Dhungel, as the executive director of the Institute for Integrated Development Studies.

AWARDED: **Satya Mohan Joshi**, cultural expert, with this year's Tribhuvan Pragma

Puraskar and **Hari Bahadur Thapa**, theatre artiste, with the Indra Rajya Laxmi Pragma Puraskar, by the Royal Nepal Academy.

Dr. Hari Prasad Pokharel, Bhagirathi Shrestha and Dipak Shrestha and Saroja Basel, two outstanding SLC performers from Palpa district, with the Noor-Ganga Talent Awards.

Radha Prasad Joshi and Jaya Prakash Rijal, cine journalists, with the Cine Journalism Award, by the Cine Journalists' Association.

LEFT: Navin Prakash Jung Shah, vice-chancellor of Tribhuvan University, for the Republic of Korea, to take part in an international conference organized by Kaem Young University.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Faster Focus

Put a faster film in your camera, and get sharper pictures

By AKSHAY SHARMA

It seems that ISO 400 (the speed of the film) color-negative film is quickly becoming the choice of amateur photographers. This film speed provides a great combination of image quality and increased f-stop/shutter-speed capabilities. It performs well in most any given situation.

"For many years, the standard film was ISO 100 and the increased grain and contrast, and decreased image sharpness discouraged photographers from using higher-speed color-negative films. The higher-speed films were used only as a last resort when light levels dropped and the slower films just couldn't do the job," says Mahesh Maharjan, a professional photographer.

Today new film technologies make the ISO 400–800 films as good as the ISO 100 films. Since the bulk of today's images never is enlarged beyond 4x6 inches, film of any speed would do an adequate job.

"The two basic principles of photography, namely f-stop and shutter speed, are directly affected by this increased film speed. It may not seem like much of a change from ISO 100 to ISO 400, but this two-stop increase can make a definite improvement in your photographic images," explains Dilip Bajracharya of Dilli Bazar's Bajra Studios.

Sometimes it is tough to get everything you desire in focus. A higher film speed allows you to select a smaller aperture, which creates a greater depth of field. What most photographers often don't realize is that the extended focus range is

not proportional on either side of the focus point, say experts.

"The ratio is actually 1/3 between the camera and subject, and 2/3 beyond your subject. As you step down your aperture to compensate for the exposure increase due to the higher film speed, your focus extends twice the distance beyond your subject. This allows you to focus on sub-

If you change films, the two or three extra f-stops may be all you need for success. If you still think that you must use ISO 100 film with your long lenses, you must ask yourself if you would rather have a grain less blurry image or a sharp image with slight grain when enlarged," is Era's professional advice.

jects close to the camera and still keep the area in the distance sharp," says amateur photographer Manish Sherchan.

Era Gharti, a graduate of Moscow's School of Photography, explains: "This is a great advantage when photographing a large group of people at varying distances. For example, with a 35mm lens and ISO 100 film, a depth of field from 4–7 feet increases to 3–12 feet when you switch to ISO 400 film and stop the lens down accordingly. That is quite a jump in depth of field considering that image quality changes very little. If you use ISO 800 film, the depth of field extends from 2.5–20 feet at the same focused distance, thanks to the ability to shoot at

the next smaller aperture. Of course this is assuming that your subject motion is under control and you are only changing the aperture to accommodate the change in film speed."

Says Sunil Bhatwal, who owns a camera shop in New Road: "Point-and-shoot cameras have become very popular, but they generally have small internal flash units with limited distance range. With a higher-speed film, the flash in your camera can pack a bigger wallop. Here's how it works. If your flash has a maximum distance of 8 feet with ISO 100 film, it can be extended to 11 feet with ISO 200, 14 feet with ISO 400, and 22 feet with ISO 800. This is why so many one-time-use cameras are loaded with ISO 400 or 800 films."

Era explains: "You will find that using higher-speed films will be an advantage if you own a more advanced camera system with an external flash. With higher-speed film, the scene doesn't require as much light to achieve a good exposure, so the flash will shut off sooner, recycle faster, thus saving battery power."

"Often when using long lenses, you don't have full sunlight, and you require more depth of field than is available with the lens aperture wide open. If you change films, the two or three extra f-stops may be all you need for success. If

you still think that you must use ISO 100 film with your long lenses, you must ask yourself if you would rather have a grain less blurry image or a sharp image with slight grain when enlarged," is Era's professional advice.

If we lived in a perfect world, then ISO 100 film would be the film for every photo situation. But we all know that photo opportunities arise where ISO 100 is inadequate. What you need to realize is that when you grab the higher ISO films, you are not compromising quality, but rather taking control of the situation. This allows you to devote your concentration on image aesthetics, rather than technical issues.

Now In Town

BOOK

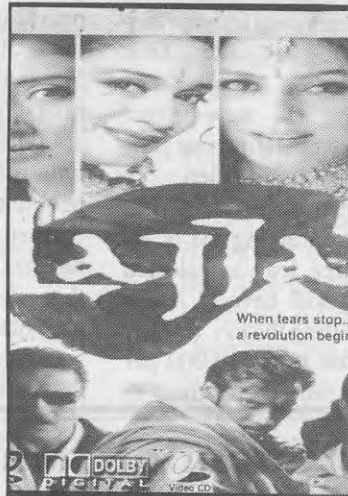
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WTO Regional Cooperation and Nepal Horst Mund/1999	Rs. 160.00

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

Video (English)

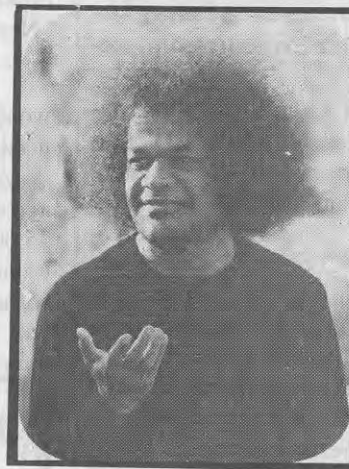
- American Pie II
- Ghost Of Mars
- Death Train
- About Outlaw
- American Out Laws
- atcher 3
- Species 4
- American Sweethearts
- About Adam
- Full Eclipse



Hindi

- Nayak
- Dil Ne Phir Yaad Kiya
- Dil Chahta Hai
- Lajja
- Yeh Raaste Hai Pyar Ke
- Hum Ho Gaye Aapke
- Yaaden
- Tum Bin
- Lagaan
- Gadar

(Source : Super Star Video, New Road)



*“Make the Mind
the Servant Of God,
not the Slave
of Senses.”*

- SATHYA SAI BABA



PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Train 'em Young

A government agency and a private IT company join hands to train and employ 1500 young people

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when unemployment— especially among the educated youth— has emerged as a major national problem, a private information and communication technology company has come up with a noble initiative. Unlimited Numedia Pvt. Ltd., a leading IT company, has joined hands with Employment Promotion Commission (EPC), a government agency, to train at least 1500 SLC graduates as medical transcriptionists and offer them attractive job opportunities after they complete their nine-month long training (including three month long internship) successfully.

According to Kiran Shakya, managing director of the Unlimited, 500 youths each will be trained in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Itahari and will later be offered job by the Company. After Himalayan Info-Tech Company failed to survive, Unlimited is the only company providing offshore medical transcription jobs to its US-based clients. Started in July last year, the Company already employs 140 people as medical transcriptionists.

One of the IT-enabled services, Medical Transcription (MT) is a process of accurately transcribing dictation by medical professionals into text. It includes activities like discharge summaries, operative reports, history and physical examination, chart notes etc. Thanks to the 12 hour time zone difference, efficient English speaking population available locally and quality at low cost (MT requires 98.5 percent or higher accuracy), Nepal has a very good prospects of gaining from the MT business. 'If we can bring in only a fraction of US\$ 6 to 10 billion a year MT job that is outsourced from the US, we could benefit a lot,' said Allen B. Tuladhar, an enthusiastic CEO of the Unlimited Numedia. 'We have a contract for the

next three years to provide high quality services.'

Unlike the usual tendency of Nepal-bashing in almost every sphere of socio-economic life, Tuladhar insists that Nepal is best placed in terms of offering IT-enabled services, if not the high-end software products. The favorable IT policy in the country, the lowest Internet rates in South Asia and de-regulation of high speed

No. of MT Companies	
India	80
Pakistan	20
Bangladesh	5
Nepal	1

would be an ideal government-private partnership model in Nepal,' said Allen.

As per an understanding, EPC has agreed to provide the training fee of Rs 25,000 as interest-free loan to selected trainees which they will have to return within a year after getting the job. As they will be drawing close to Rs 10,000 per month it will not be difficult for them to

pay back their loans in installments. 'The government will not only benefit from the taxes paid by the employees, it will also have a multiplier effect in the economy,' said Allen. 'We will be giving a new generation of people with the right work ethics.'

Officials too were gung ho about the new project. As the government alone can't provide jobs to thousands of youths partnership between the government and private sector is a must,' said Binod Bhattarai, member-secretary of the EPC.

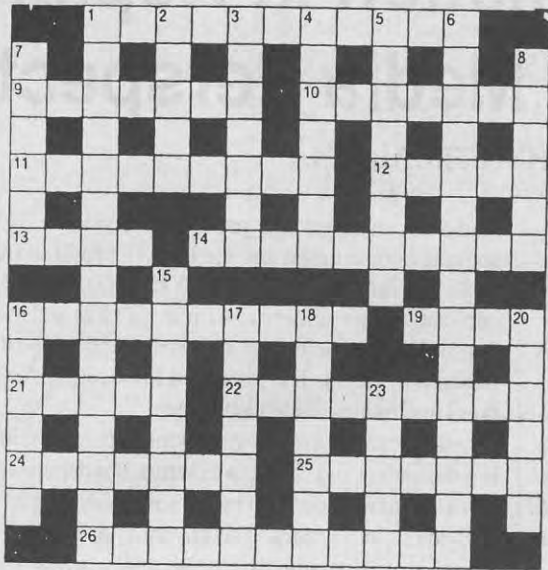
By taking up the challenge of imparting skills to young men and women and later offering them attractive jobs, Unlimited Numedia has presented a model to many private companies. The government agencies too need to come forward to practical programs like this rather than wasting millions of rupees every year in non-descript training that fail to employ people. 'We will encourage such programs that guaranty jobs to the trained people in different sectors and in different parts of the country,' said Dr. Shanker Sharma, member of the National Planning Commission. Though employing 1500 people a year will meet the need of only a fraction of an estimated 300,000 people that enter into the Nepalese labor market every year, at least the new venture has shown that it's better to do something for the country and society rather than blaming ourselves. Providing skills and employment is perhaps one of the most effective deterrent to insurgency. ■

Janak Education Material Center (JEMC) Is Proud To Announce Its 24th Anniversary On Ashwin 8, 2058 B.S. (September 24, 2001). We Reiterate Our Commitment Of Providing Quality Service To The People.



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SANO THIMI, BHAKTAPUR

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Dissenter turning many Tories puce (4-7)
9. Here in Jerusalem, bicultural still (7)
10. It's golden rain on New church! (7)
11. Forms a striking relationship (4,2,3)
12. A Trollopian inclination... (5)
13. ... Is the downfall of Lewis Eliot? (4)
14. Lowers in crates (4,6)
16. Transept that is constructed on Church Rock (5,5)
19. Fool many and many more (4)
22. Zestful failure (5)
24. Is one too drunk to notice Center Point? (7)
25. Whence animation is observed in an empty box (7)
26. Rash ascetic might use alibi for excuse say (11)

DOWN

1. Critic (see colum) savaged Stockhausen's oeuvre (10,5)
2. Potter's inspiration curtailed Mosaic enthusiast (5)
3. Coppers got up twice for a sweetener (7)
4. The death half loved by Keats has fellow united in support of art (7)
5. Scott's protector is human after all, almost to a T (8)
6. How like the bindweed: one find's nothing in it (15)
7. Quiet men only mount the "aw" factor (6)
8. A parliamentary setback (6)
15. Noxious missile is well under way (5,3)
16. A gesture of honour (6)
17. Recuperative effect of New castle, one finds (7)
18. Don Juan in Spain: demned cretin (7)
20. A letter from Helen Graham (6)
23. Primate inhabiting hill or island (5)

Down: 1. Electronic music 2. Rabbi 3. Sucrose 4. Easeful 5. Tallisman 6. Convolvulaceous 7. Pathos 8. Recess 15. Stink pot 16. Salute 17. Elastic 18. Enticer 20. Tenant 23. Loris

Across: 1. Euro sceptic 9. Alembic 10. Silence 11. Hits it off 12. Slope 13. Snow 14. Véal calves 16. Saint peter 19. Clot 21. Lemon 22. Antelucan 24. Tossport 25. Cartoon 26. Catachresis

NOIUTOS

BRIDGE

NORTH 3.20
 ▲ A 10 3 2
 ♥ 4
 ♦ Q J 10 5 3
 ♣ J 9 6

WEST
 ▲ J
 ♥ Q J 7 3 2
 ♦ 9 8 2
 ♣ K 7 3 2

EAST
 ▲ 9 8 7 5 4
 ♥ A 10 6
 ♦ K 7 4
 ♣ 8 4

SOUTH
 ▲ K Q 6
 ♥ K 9 8 5
 ♦ A 6
 ♣ A Q 10 3

Vulnerable: North-South
 Dealer: South

The bidding:
 South West North East
 1♣ 1♥ Dbl.* 2♥
 3NT All pass
 *Negative

Opening lead: Heart trey

BID WITH THE ACES

South holds:
 ▲ 9 8 7 5 4
 ♥ A 10 6
 ♦ K 7 4
 ♣ 8 4

North South
 1♣ 1♠
 3♣ ?

“There’s one way to find out if a man is honest - ask him. If he says, ‘Yes,’ you know he is a crook.”

— GROUCHO MARX

In bridge, each side is entitled to know about the opponents’ partnership agreements. Nevertheless, barring prior secret understanding, a player may legitimately deceive his opponents with bids or plays contrary to his announced agreements.

In a team match, both West players led a heart to East’s ace. South refused the heart return and won the third round, dummy discarding a diamond and a club. When south’s spade king dropped West’s jack, both declarers cashed the spade queen, inviting West to signal.

At one table, West craftily discarded the club deuce, attempting to persuade South to take the club finesse. However, South knew West’s tendencies, so he cashed his diamond ace and led another diamond to East’s king. A club shift went to South’s ace, and South could claim nine winners (three diamonds, four spades, a heart and a club).

In the replay, a cagey West discarded the diamond nine on the spade queen. Again the aim was to persuade South to take a club finesse. Nevertheless, South prevailed, making his game in a different way. He cashed two more spades, discarding a club, noting West’s discards of two minor-suit deuces.

Distrusting West’s deceptive signals, he took a diamond finesse and cashed his diamond ace. Triumphantly, he exited with his carefully preserved heart nine to West’s jack and claimed his game when West had to concede a free club finesse.

Not everyone practices deception. But it pays to know which do and which do not. ■

Right To Information In Nepal: Constitutional And Media Perspectives

BY RAM KRISHNA TIMALSENA

Right to information is an important prerequisite of a liberal democratic form of government. Without this right, democracy becomes a label without meaning and a form without substance. It is, therefore, the lifeblood of democracy. The right to information is necessary for individual fulfilment. It is necessary to make a good citizen; to participate into the governing process; to make wise judgment; to maintain human dignity and to uphold democratic process. It empowers the people; makes them responsible citizens; fosters human rights and helps create a just society by preventing clandestine transactions. It does not support only those who are educated, rich and capable of using the right. It also helps the uneducated and incompetent to be educated and competent. It bridges the gap between the haves and have-nots. It is a means of empowerment and a tool for sustainable development and good governance. Therefore, it favours glasnost in governmental decision making and supports the principles of accountability, transparency and positive change.

The right to information in Nepal is protected as a fundamental right. As such, it holds a special status. Ordinary laws cannot change it. The right to information is guaranteed not only by Article 16 of the constitution. Several other articles of the constitution give life to it. The preamble, which determines the spirit of the constitution, enshrines the philosophy of open government. People's sovereignty is the core value of the right to information that the constitution explicitly enshrines. Likewise, the democratic form of government designed by the constitution and the right to information are closely intertwined. The fundamental rights, other than the right to information, implicitly recognise the need of the right to information to exercise those rights.

The freedom of opinion and expression is another aspect of the right to information. The right to information cannot serve its purpose without the right to hold opinion and the right to impart information. It is possible through freedom of opinion and expression guaranteed under Article 12(2)(a) of the constitution. Likewise, the press and publication right serves some purposes of the right to information. The cultural and educational right is also necessary pre-condition for the meaningful exercise of this right. These are tips of the vast iceberg. Media plays vital role for the implementation of the right to information.

Being an intermediary between the people and the authorities, the media makes democratic governance real and effective. It informs, educates and entertains the people. As the fourth estate, the media is responsible to help build the nation, to implement the objectives of the constitution and to report the people about how these organs of the state are functioning. It is, therefore, the surrogate of the people. The freedom it enjoys under the constitution is for and on behalf of Nepalese society. It is not the freedom only of the owner or the editor or the producer. Freedom of the media is to be used for the benefit of the people. The media in Nepal has been roughly divided into two categories: the print and broadcast media. As far as the print

media is concerned, the press enjoys several rights and freedoms under the constitution and the law. The right to freedom of opinion and expression under the Article 12(2)(a), the freedom of press and publication right under the Article 13(1)(2) and the right to information under the Article 16 of the constitution are the foundation of press freedom in Nepal. The Press and Publication Act also provides the press institutional independence.

The legal status of press seems very strong in Nepal. Though it is independent and strong in its status, it is dependent in various ways. There are newspapers run by the government as well as by the private individuals and groups. The government-owned press is more beneficial in getting advertisements and newsgathering. The government provides advertisements to its own papers. The National News Agency is the only authorised agency in the country to collect and sell the information from within and outside the country, which is owned and controlled by the government. Though some policies have been formulated to overcome these problems, they have not been implemented properly. Without removing hindrances to the free flow of information, the press cannot stand independently. On the one hand, the press is not treated fairly by the government. On the other, it has its own problems. The press is urban centered, elite oriented and highly politicised. There is imbalance in access to information; community media is not well developed; quality of the press is very low; press has become lap dog instead of watchdog.

As the right to information act is necessary to provide effective access over information, a bill to meet the present need has been drafted by the Nepal Press Institute, which is being considered by the government. The bill provides right to access over official documents subject to specific exemptions. Under the draft bill, the public authority is obliged to justify any refusal of information. The reason for this is that a system that continues to be based on discretion will not bring any fundamental change. On the contrary, political advantage and administrative convenience will prevail. The right to information also involves defining information, providing the means to identify it, establishing the method of asking for it and an independent adjudicator in cases of refusal. All of these difficult problems can be solved by defining information in clear terms, by requiring public authority to maintain index and catalogues of their documents and information, by requiring applicants to specify in writing what they want to see and the public information officer to furnish reasons for refusals to grant access within a specified time and by providing for internal review by the head of department and an ultimate appeal to the courts. There are, of course, many other important points of details such as the treatment of computer-based records, the obligation of public authority to publish administrative codes, structures, protection for civil servants for actions done in good faith and overriding clause. ■

Timalsena writes on media issues

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