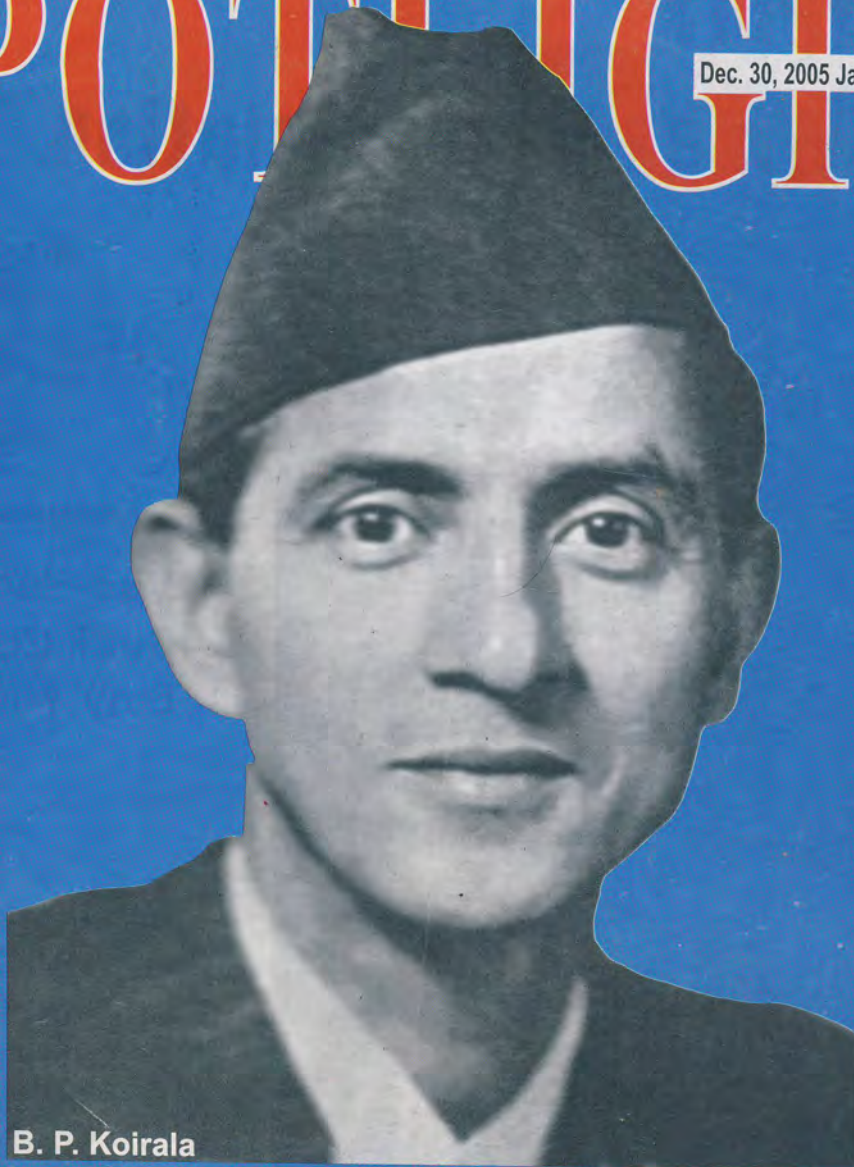


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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Dec. 30, 2005 Jan. 05, 2006



B. P. Koirala

National Reconciliation A DAY TO REMEMBER

Reporting from Sunsari
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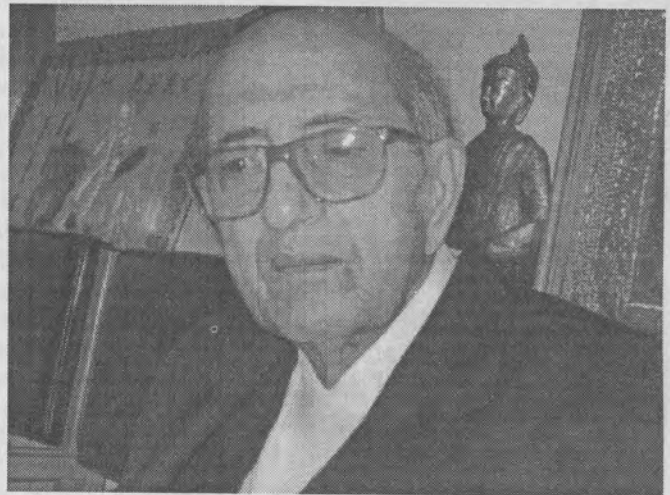
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COVER STORY : National Reconciliation

It is appropriate to remember the National Reconciliation pro-
pounded by B.P. Koirala as the country stands in a difficult
crossroads

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SPECIAL FEATURE : Empowered People

In the liberal political system, the grassroots health service
has flourished

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Executive Director of SAWTEE
talks about the implications of the
recent WTO meeting on LDCs like
Nepal

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SPOTLIGHT

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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This week the country is celebrating thirtieth national reconciliation day remembering B.P. Koirala, greatest figure in Nepalese politics. On December 30, 1976, B.P. Koirala returned to Nepal from seven years long exile in India calling for national reconciliation.

In his statement, Koirala stressed the need for national unity between country's two major forces: traditional force of monarchy and modern force of political parties, to protect Nepal's national sovereignty and independent identity. What he then perceived as threat from regional rivalry in South Asia to Nepal's existence is very much relevant even now. Thus, the importance of national reconciliation is today as much, if not more, relevant than ever before. Whenever serious crisis the country faces, silent majority remembers the name of B.P. Koirala and his ideals of national reconciliation. As more days pass, many familiar names in Nepalese politics are fading out of memory of common people; but the name of B.P. Koirala – who always firmly stood for the unity between the patriotic democrats and patriotic monarchists – still instills certain noble ideals and commitments. The country is once again facing a serious crisis but it does not have a leader like B.P. Koirala who could take a courageous decision and turn the political course. From the point of view of geo-strategic location to the cultural and ethnic diversity, Nepal's political forces have to recognize each other's existence and the nation demands unity among them to survive as an independent and sovereign entity among the comity of nations. Despite growing bitterness between the monarch and the liberal democratic forces, the two institutions are now under the leadership of brothers of two greatest personalities - late King Birendra, who sacrificed even his life for his adherence to liberal democracy and national independence - and B.P. Koirala who stood strongly in his conviction that reconciliation between the monarchy and liberal democracy is necessary for national independence. Since King Gyanendra, despite the pressure he must be feeling within his camp, continues retreating for reconciliation; and Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala, despite his alliance with extremist communists-dominated front, too continues expressing his inner feeling for reconciliation, there are hopeful signs for returning to the phase of reconciliation. The question of personal likes or dislikes is insignificant before broader political context given the existing realities of the nation. Pursuing the policy of reconciliation will restore harmonious relations between the monarchy and the liberal democrat – which are not antagonistic forces to each other. For this, the country needs functional parliamentary democratic process. Had B.P. Koirala not returned to Nepal calling for national reconciliation, the country would not have seen the restoration of democracy in such a short period of time with sovereign functional parliament patronized by the institution of monarchy. Whatever some politicians say, past experiences have shown that Nepal's destiny can be secured only through the cordial relations between the institution of monarchy and democratic forces. More there is conflict, greater there will be devastations in the country. Thus, this is the occasion to remember and renew once again the support to the spirit of national reconciliation. The appeal issued by B.P. Koirala upon his arrival, is more relevant this time than any time before. Therefore, we have taken the liberty of re-publishing the full text of his statement in this issue as well.

Growing conflict is not only a matter of worry to the silent majority of Nepal but also Nepal's traditional western friends. As the gap is widening between the monarch and the leaders of organized political parties, the representatives of Nepal's traditional western friends including the United Kingdom and the United States have been stressing for reconciliation between the monarch and the political parties through the activation of the parliament. They are Nepal's proven trustworthy allies whose representatives in Nepal always assist the monarchy and the political parties to come closer with a view to activate the parliamentary politics. However, some narrow-minded persons in the ruling side have apprehensions that the reconciliation between the King and the leaders of political parties would boost the arrogance of some harsh-speaking leaders. On the contrary, such political leaders go unrestricted in absence of the parliament. Once the parliament begins to function, it is the people who would control the politics of the country, not the leaders. The power of the people comes into play by the elections and through the parliament. Three subsequent experiences of the past parliaments are there to prove it. Therefore, the reconciliation between the King and the political parties is mooted with an expectation that the elections will be held and parliament begins its functions. And members of the parliament will have to look downwards to the people with hopes of being reelected. The real reconciliation through the parliament between the monarch and the political parties will deny extraneous elements to fulfill their own narrow interests. It is difficult but not impossible to see reconciliation materializing between the monarch and the liberal democratic forces.

Keshab
Keshab Poudel
Managing Editor



Relevant Issue

The cover story you covered this issue was very informative and relevant "REMITTANCES: Benefiting All Sectors" (SPOTLIGHT December 23). It provides the real situation of the Nepalese economy at present. Truly, you have written the Nepalese economy would have collapsed by now had it not been for the remittances sent home by the youths working in foreign land. I hope to see the coverage of similar stories in the forthcoming issues.

Ramesh Adhikari
Kalimati

Working Abroad Should Not Be Promoted

Nepalese have a long history of going abroad for work "REMITTANCES: Benefiting All Sectors" (SPOTLIGHT December 23). Earlier they used to go to India, Burma, Bhot (now Tibet) for work. Now, many countries of the globe add to the list in addition to the traditional destinations. The common destinations work these days have been Malaysia and gulf countries like U. A. E., Qatar and Kuwait. There is one common feature in all the youths who vie to fly abroad to work. That is the unavailability of opportunities at home. And this lack of employment in the country is because of the unstable government and lack of planning. While the contribution of the remittances to the national economy can hardly be exaggerated, the trend of going abroad for work is not good in the long run. It should be taken as a transitional strategy only and for the long run policies to provide employment to the youths in Nepal itself should be formulated.

Minendra Shrestha
Jaisidewal

Informative Interview

I read the interview with Dr. Shankar Sharma and found it very informative "Remittances Are Going Into Rural Areas And Preventing Crisis" (SPOTLIGHT December 23). It is good to know that the remittance sent from foreign countries are benefiting the rural people of the country and helping to uphold the economy.

Pratima Nepal
Balaju

Different Viewpoint

I do not fully agree with the theme of your cover story or the versions of your source Dr. Shankar Sharma that the remittances are going to the rural areas "Remittances Are Going Into Rural Areas And Preventing Crisis" (SPOTLIGHT December 23). It is, however, true that it is preventing crisis in the rural areas. The real picture is that the larger chunks of remittances are mobilized in the urban area and smaller portion goes to the villages. Ironically, the people sending the remittance are mostly people from rural areas. Their family uses the money they send back home in cities, whether it may be for the day-to-day cost,

education, purchasing assets or investing. These days the activity of purchasing assets and investing has virtually stopped in the rural areas. And there is again very little place to spend money in day to day activities in villages. So, it is common sense that money does not remain in the villages. Somehow it will be mobilized in the urban areas.

Pukar Lama
Chhetrapati

Discrimination Against People

The party leaders, lawyers, intellectuals, Human Right activists, journalists, student leaders, NGOs and others are engaged in full swing to restore complete democracy in Nepal are busy in commenting, criticizing and cracking down at the government. In Asian countries, it is a common culture to retaliate by using force rather than intellect. My main surprise is that these people who claim to be dedicated for the restoration of peace and prosperity of the people close their eyes when Maoists abduct and or kill general public, but raise voice against them when the people to be abducted or killed happen to be their relatives or cadres. Does that mean that there is a clear-cut discrimination between the cadres of political parties or their relatives and general public, who are there ultimate voters? If they are fighting for the people, as they claim to be, is it right to keep mum on the issues of general people? Doesn't it mean that the activities of those mandated to work for the people, whether they may be the people at the government or the leaders chanting slogans in the streets, are guided by their vested interests and work for the same in the name of ignorant and poor people? If they had used the energy they are using for agitation for good cause without the interference of foreign force, it would have largely helped them to reach the hearts of the people. However, the people have always been the puppets of the ruling as well as the opposition parties and are always deprived of basic necessities such as a square meal and fearless life.

Pragyan Shrestha
Via E-mail

Withdrawal Of Polls Could Create Environment For Talks

Nepali Congress (NC) president Girija Prasad Koirala has said that the decision to withdraw the forthcoming municipal polls by the King could create an environment for talks. Talking to reporters at his residence in Biratnagar on Sunday (December 25), Koirala said there was no possibility of talks with the King at the present situation. Koirala said that the King has not controlled his steps towards hijacking people's rights, which is widening the rift between him and the parties. "If he wants to have talks, the responsibility of creating a favorable environment is also his," Koirala said. He also vowed to intensify the parties' peaceful boycott of the polls. He also added that the King's decision to withdraw the polls could also provide the parties with the basis to make new request to the Maoists to continue their ceasefire. Koirala added that the parties had done understanding and not agreement with the Maoists. He also termed as unfortunate the lack of initiative by the King in the aftermath of parties-Maoists pact. Meanwhile, upon returning to Kathmandu, Koirala told Kantipur daily that the parties were currently on the edge of sword. "If the Maoists extend their ceasefire, the King will hold election and gain recognition. On the other hand, if the Maoists start killing people, the (parties-Maoist) understanding will be disturbed and lead to difficult situation. We are on the edge of sword," Koirala said. When asked how he will respond if the Maoists start 'people's action' Koirala said he could respond depending upon the nature of such action. *Leading dailies report.*

Snow Blocks Highway In Far West

Thousands of passengers and hundreds of vehicles remain stranded following heavy snowfall that has blocked Sahukharka, Gaira, Hagulte and Ghanteshwore road sections of Dhangadhi-Bhimdutta highway in Dadeldhura district. Around 400 soldiers of far west regional division headquarters

of Royal Nepalese Army and technicians of Road Department have been working hard to clear the road that remain blocked since the snowfall in Thursday (December 22) and Friday. Due to snowfall, electricity poles have uprooted at various place disrupting the supply of electricity to the region. Likewise, rural areas of Darchula, Baitadi, Bajhang and Bajura districts, too, have been covered by snow. The snowfall is reportedly the most heavy witnessed in last 40 years. Meanwhile, farmers in Jumla are pleased with the snowfall. They claim that the snowfall will help increase the production of barley, millet, wheat and potato, among others. Jumla airport is out of order due to snowfall and the VSAT connection of telephone has also been affected. *Kantipur daily reports.*

Govt. Never Expected Maoists To Cooperate With Its Poll Plans: Home Minister

Home Minister Kamal Thapa has said that the government did not announce the polls expecting cooperation from the Maoists. "Therefore, their threats of disrupting the polls was not entirely unexpected," Thapa said, adding, "The government has made all necessary arrangements to ensure security to the polls." Speaking at Bahas program in Kantipur Television, Home Minister Thapa said that the political parties now faced 'real test.' He warned that the government "would be forced to act as per the law if anybody tries to hijack the people's right to vote." He also claimed that the parties were now trapped in Maoist ploy. He said since the 12-point understanding (between the parties and the Maoists) talked about jointly disrupting the polls, it would seem like the parties have given license to the Maoists to do whatever they want. *Compiled from reports.*

State Will Be Responsible If Violence Erupts: Leaders

Leaders of the seven parties have said that the government will be held responsible if the Maoists resort to violence to disrupt the polls. "We are not in favor of asking the Maoists to hold ceasefire. It is meaningless to help the King

conduct the drama of elections by having the ceasefire," said Amik Sherchan, president of People's Front (PF). Nepali Congress (NC) spokesperson Krishna Sitaula said it was essential to make the election failure. He urged the King to immediately withdraw polls if he wants to prevent bloodshed in the country. Bharat Mohan Adhikari, standing committee member of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), said that he expects Maoists to disrupt the polls in a peaceful manner. Adding that the Maoists had agreed to join peaceful politics in the recent understanding, Adhikari said no one should reach to the conclusion that 'the Maoists would start beheading.' Dr. Narayan Khadka, of NC (Democratic), said that the polls was becoming a testing event for both the King and the parties. He said his party had never supported violent activities of the Maoists. *Kantipur daily reports.*

Security Check Of Envoy's Car Causes Tension

On Friday (December 23) night, tension erupted at the parking area of Hotel Yak and Yeti for few hours after security personnel posted at the American Center tried to search the vehicle of Chinese ambassador Sun Heping. Ambassador Sun Heping stays at the seventh floor of the hotel. The American Center is also located at the same hotel. After the envoy raised objections, the security personnel invited personnel of Armed Police Force (APF) who also demanded to search the vehicle. According to witnesses, the envoy then left the vehicle and went away saying on whose order his vehicle, which is not searched anywhere in the Kingdom, was being searched. Later, Additional Inspector General of APF Rabi Raj Thapa reached to the site. The counselors of both embassies also reached there and they ended the tension by agreeing that their vehicles would not be searched in the future. *Kantipur daily reports.*

Maoists Signal Ending Of Ceasefire

Signaling that they could end their unilateral ceasefire, Maoists have

announced programs to disrupt the forthcoming municipal polls. In a joint statement issued by Maoist chairman Prachanda and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, Maoists have said that the government took ceasefire as their weakness and 12-point accord as ploy. The statement came two days after vice chairman of the Council of Ministers Dr. Tulsi Giri claimed that the government had broken the back of terrorism. The Maoists have also urged the United Nations and other international community to stop all kinds of assistance to the current regime. Meanwhile, leaders of major political parties have said that following the King's indifference to the parties-Maoists accord, the nation is heading towards dangerous situation. *Leading dailies report.*

Nepal Terms Giri's Remarks As Aimed At Splitting Seven Parties

General Secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Madhav Kumar Nepal has said that Dr. Tulsi Giri's remarks are aimed at splitting seven parties agitation. On Tuesday, Dr. Giri, vice chairman of the Council of Ministers, had said that while the Nepali Congress (NC) mass meeting in Biratnagar drew only 7 to 8 thousand people, the same by UML had drawn 25 to 30 thousand people. Dr. Giri indicated there was mystery in that. "Giri's arguments give the impression that he has gone out of his mind," Nepal told reporters. Likewise, NC leader Ram Chandra Poudel, speaking at Reporters' Club, said Giri had spoken the mind of the palace by making it clear that the State is not in favor of peace but confrontation. Jhal Nath Khanal, of UML, countered Giri's arguments that February 1 move was not a coup. "What do you call army men breaking into media houses?" Khanal asked. *Leading dailies report.*

RPP Face Further Dissensions

A dissident faction with the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) led by its vice president Padma Sundar Lawati and Home Minister Kamal Thapa and including half a dozen central working committee members have applied pressure on the party establishment to accept the municipal

polls. The dissident faction, dissatisfied over the indication of the party establishment led by president Pashupati SJB Rana that the party might not take part in the polls, has called for special general convention of the party. They have given the ultimatum of nine days for calling the same. Analysts predict that the RPP could face another split on this issue. *Leading dailies report.*

Health Act To Be Amended

Even as the government is preparing to introduce an ordinance to amend the Health Service Act, stakeholders related with public health service have claimed that the move could be counterproductive. The amendment aims to bring down the service age of public health professionals and doctors by two years, which in turn could lay off 4000 skilled manpower within one year. "This amendment, which is being introduced without any consultations with stakeholders, proposes to transform provisions related to transfer, promotion and age-limit of the professionals," said a source at the Ministry of Health. The amendment plans to bring down the age limit from existing 60 years to 58 years for the public health professionals. At present, there is one health center in every VDC, one hospital in every district, 15,228 centers for immunization, 3190 sub health posts and 698 health posts. There are acute shortages of skilled health workers and doctors in remote districts. Observers say that in such a situation, the state will lose if available professionals, too, are made to retire earlier. *Kantipur daily reports.*

Chinese Arms Worry India, Says Pranab

India is worried about reports that China and Pakistan are giving Nepali military help, Indian Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee was quoted as saying on Tuesday in New Delhi. "There is a problem," Mukherjee said when asked for comment on military assistance from China and Pakistan to Nepal to help its army crush a Maoist insurgency, The Asian Age newspaper said. This is the first time India has said publicly that it is concerned over Chinese and Pakistani military aid to Nepal.

New Delhi is trying to settle the issue at the diplomatic level, the newspaper quoted the minister as saying. "Let's see how we can resolve it," he said. New Delhi, which had been Nepal's biggest weapons supplier, cut off non-lethal arms shipments to Nepal after King Gyanendra sacked the government and took over in February. Analysts have suggested that New Delhi has become increasingly alarmed over growing Chinese and Pakistani influence in Nepal. India, along with Britain and the United States, has suspended arms supplies. *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

UML Leader Receives Death Threat From Maoists

Despite the 12-point understanding, Maoists have threatened a UML leader of Nuwakot district. Binda Dhungana, member of UML Nuwakot district committee, has been threatened by the Maoists who blame her as being informer. At a press conference organized by All Nepal Women Organization – women wing of the UML – president Bidya Bhandari condemned the Maoists for such threats. "The Maoists must change their policy and practice as per their commitment," Bhandari said. *Leading dailies report.*

Election Symbols Of Only National Parties Will Be Secure

The election symbols of many parties are under threat after the Election Commission (EC) decided that only the symbols of national parties will be made secure. Other symbols will be distributed to independent candidates at the forthcoming municipal polls. After finding that its symbol is under threat, Nepali Congress (Democratic) has termed the move as a conspiracy. It has urged the EC to reconsider its decision. Meanwhile, reports say that the EC will distribute election symbols to independent candidates except those of the four national parties including the Nepali Congress (NC) and UML. EC spokesperson Tej Muni Bajracharya, however, added that these symbols will be made secure for the parties in parliamentary polls. *Kantipur daily reports.*



SPOTLIGHT Family extends best wishes to Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev on the auspicious occasion of his 35th birthday

THE UNITED NATIONS HAS WELCOMED THE RECOGNITION by the Maoists of the Basic Operating Guidelines (BOGs) of the UN and bilateral donor agencies operating in Nepal. "UN welcomes the Maoist statement, which has noted that their cadres had been instructed to adhere to the UN and donor agencies' BOGs," Matthew Kahane, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Kathmandu said on Thursday. The BOGs are based on international law and established humanitarian principles. They protect the interest of conflict-affected populations and the safety and security of staff working for the UN, donor agencies and NGOs. The government earlier this year had recognized the BOGs. "Adherence to the BOGs by the government and the Maoists will enable the international community to more effectively implement development and humanitarian initiatives in conflict-affected areas," Kahane said. The Maoists, on Thursday, issued a statement committing themselves to BOGs. "We appreciate in principle the BOGs of the UN and other development agencies operating in Nepal and have instructed cadres to cooperate with them," it said. The Maoists also appealed to the international community and development agencies to work in "regular consultation and cooperation" with the party and its representatives to execute the development programs. Asked about this condition, Kahane said, "I am not convinced there is any condition." The UN system in Kathmandu had to suspend movement of its staffers in 10 districts in the past.

IAN MARTIN, CHIEF OF THE UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal, has issued a statement seeking clarifications what the Maoists mean by 'Jana Karbahi' (people's action) and 'Bishesh Karbahi' (special action) against the candidates and election officials in the forthcoming municipal polls. The statement says that the Maoists program could mean killing, demeaning the status or abductions of people not taking part in the conflict, which, it said, would be against the international human rights law and norms. Maoists had unveiled their program aimed at disrupting the polls. They had vowed to conduct special action against poll officials and candidates.

TWO CIVILIANS WERE KILLED AND TWO OTHERS critically injured when a landmine exploded at the Phungling area in Taplejung district on Friday (December 23) morning, reports The

Himalayan Times daily. According to Raj Kumar Niraula, the Chief District Officer (CDO), the landmine was planted by the Maoists targeting security forces. Those killed have been identified as Darinjen Sherpa, 38 and Phurba Sherpa, 53, of Dhungre Sandh VDC. Following the incident, people's movement and traffic in the area came to a halt. The Maoists have been imposing night-time curfew in the area every day. Meanwhile, reports say that one of the three persons abducted by the Maoists one and a half month ago from Banamare of Baglung district has been found dead. Maoists had abducted Bhakti Bilas Upadhyaya, his wife Jamuna and son Devnarayan one and a half month ago. The dead body of Devnarayan, 21, was found near Chhisti VDC.

THE INDIAN OIL CORPORATION (IOC) HAS ASKED NEPAL Oil Corporation (NOC) to pay interests on the delayed settlement of import bills. Since long time, NOC has been unable to pay its dues to IOC on time as it has been unable to raise enough resources. At the joint review meeting of NOC and IOC held in Kathmandu, the IOC officials have asked NOC to pay interest. The two sides have reached an understanding, in principle, regarding this. "The IOC has said it will submit a separate modality clarifying the rate of interest at payment procedures," said a source at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies. As per the tradition, NOC needs to settle its dues on the 15th day of every English month. But lately it has been paying dues in three installments every month.

THIS YEAR THE PRODUCTION OF TEXTILES IN THE country could increase by 40 percent, according to entrepreneurs. According to Gopal Prasad Chhetri, president of Nepal Textile Manufacturers Association, the production this year could increase following the new tax policy by the government. He said that the decision by the government to change the Value Added Tax (VAT) policy leading to solution in the problems seen due to smuggling in border areas and custom under-valuation would result in the production surge. He said that Nepali manufacturers had been reeling under intense pressure generated by cheap clothes that used to be smuggled. "The new policy has given positive indications," Chhetri said. He said that current manufacturing industries in Nepal have the capacity to produce 150 million meters of clothes. "They can turn profit even if they can produce 50 percent of their capacity," he added. Every year, 350 million to 400 million meters of clothes are consumed in Nepal. Actual domestic production is around 20 million and legal import is around 50 million. Rest come from smuggling, he said. In recent years, 60 percent of textile manufacturing industries have closed down in the country unable to face unhealthy competition.

THE PREMIER FIVE-STAR HOTEL YAK AND YETI WAS empty even as other hotels in Kathmandu are bustling with Christmas holiday-makers. Tourists who were staying in the hotel have been asked to go elsewhere. They were the victims of long-running conflict between the workers and the management. The management has issued a statement blaming the workers for non-cooperation leading to obstruction in the operation of hotel. It has said that due to non-cooperation it was not possible to serve the guests and security of management team was also under threat. On the other hand, workers have said that they had not organized any strike. "We had been wearing black bands since Wednesday," said Chhabi Pandey, president of the Hotel's trade union. This week the hotel was 80 percent booked. The dispute between the workers and management could not be resolved even after the labor tribunal made a settlement a month ago. The hotel, which has 270 rooms, employs 350 staffs. ■

“Parties are on the edge of sword. If the Maoists extend their ceasefire, the King will hold election and gain recognition. On the other hand, if the Maoists start killing people, the (parties-Maoist) understanding will be disturbed and lead to difficult situation.”

Girija Prasad Koirala, president of Nepali Congress, in Kantipur.

* * *

“Giri’s arguments give the impression that he has gone out of his mind.”

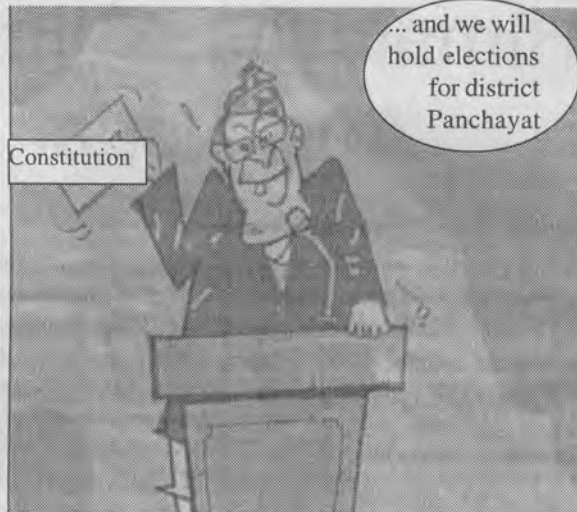
Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of the Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML), talking to journalists about the recent press conference of vice-chairman of the council of minister.

* * *

“Although the King has said that he will become democratic or abide by the constitution, (Tulsi) Giri has conveyed his true intention of remaining a dictator.”

Ram Chandra Poudel, speaking at a face-to-face program organized at the Reporters Club Nepal.

* * *



Party (NSP- Anandidevi), talking to journalists at a function in Kathmandu.

* * *

“To boycott the elections is also a democratic right.” **Laxman Prasad Aryal**, former judge of the Supreme Court and one of the draftsmen of the 1990 Constitution, speaking at a function in Biratnagar.

* * *

Bimarsha

“Currently, some people are in the cabinet saying that they represent the Congress. But it is as clear as daylight that they are not congress.”

Yog Prasad Upadhyaya, a leader of Nepali Congress and a former minister, in Jana Astha.

* * *

“It is the choice of the people to vote or not to vote. Nobody has the right to stop the voters from exercising their rights.”

Keshav Raj Rajbhandari, the chief election commissioner, speaking at a seminar organized in Pokhara.

* * *

“There is no need to actively boycott the elections, the King himself will postpone it.”

Hridayesh Tripathi, general secretary of Nepal Sadbhawana

“Elections should be held, votes should be cast but not to prolong the King’s rule.”

Krishna Pahadi, prominent Human Rights’ Activist, speaking at a program in Banepa, Kavre.

* * *

TRANSITION

APPOINTED: Rajendra Kumar Bhandari and **Tapa Bahadur Magar**, as the judges of the Supreme Court, by the King, in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990, and as per the recommendation of the Judicial Council.

ACCREDITED: Prajwal SJB Rana, the Royal Nepalese Ambassador to France, also as the ambassador to Greece, by the King, in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990.

Abblais Thakurai, the Royal Nepalese Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, also as the ambassador to Jordan and Bahrain, by the

King, in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990.

Dr. Ram Bhakta P. B. Thakur, the Royal Nepalese Ambassador to Arabian Republic of Egypt, also as the ambassador to Kenya, by the King, in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990.

PRESENTED: Ivan Nometh, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Hungarian Republic; **Khalaf Awas Khalaf El Faudari**, the newly appointed Ambassador of Kuwait; and **Graham Charles Waters**, the newly appointed Ambassador of New Zealand, their credentials, to King Gyanendra.

ELECTED: Dinesh Bahadur Bista, as the executive chairman, and **Bhola Bikram**

Thapa, Ganga Bahadur KC and **Rabi Bhakta Shrestha** from Soaltee Enterprises Private Limited, **Rajiv Sharma** from Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG), **Gautam Das Shrestha** from Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation (RNAC), **Bijay Bahadur Shrestha**, **Niranjana Kumar Tibrewala** and **Shashi Raj Pandey** from the public, as the members of the Board of Directors, by the 31st annual general meeting of the Soaltee Hotel Limited.

APPOINTED: P. Kharel, as the chairman of Rastriya Samachar Samiti, **Dhruba Kumar Deuja**, as the chairman of Gorkhapatra Corporation, **Shambhujee Baskota**, as the chairman and general manager of Nepal Television and **Krishna Malla**, as the chairman of Nepal Film Development Board, by the government.

Himalayas, Climate And Nepal

By DR. AB THAPA

According to the recent theory of plate tectonics the Indian plate moved north against Eurasia and pushed up the thick pile of geosynclinal sediments in the Tethyan sea in between and formed the Himalayan range. The Himalayan range has a great influence upon the climate of Asia and also the Northern Hemisphere, since its topography has a direct bearing on the atmospheric circulation. Thus the pattern of rainfall, temperature and wind velocity in Nepal and Indian Sub-continent is greatly influenced by the Himalayan mountains.

The formation and development of the glaciers in the Himalayas depends on the hydrological cycle related to the atmospheric circulation. Therefore, the glaciological studies of these glaciers are important step towards better understanding of the relation of glacier variations to climatic changes. It is very important to know the state of glaciers in the Himalayas and their current variations in order to understand the relation between glaciers and the climate and also water resources development.

Need for the glaciological studies of the Himalayas had been felt since a long time. In 1973, in cooperation with the International Hydrological Decade (IHD) 1965-1974, which was promoted by the UNESCO, observation studies of the glaciers in the Himalayan mountains within the Nepal territory were initiated by the Japanese Society of Snow and Ice. The studies were rewarded with good results. In 1980s, Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (RONAST) was striving to set up an international center for the study of snow and ice primarily concerned with the glaciological studies in the Himalayas to promote sustainable economic and social development in Nepal and in adjacent countries.

Himalayan Glaciers

Glaciers occur exclusively in mountainous regions above the snow line. Mountains below the snow line only carry seasonal snow. Precipitation occurring at great heights gets solidified as snow. All the great peaks of Himalayan mountains are, therefore, covered with snow. The snowline, the lowest line on a mountain at which snow exists throughout the year, is about 5,490 m at the equator and only 610 m in Greenland.

As successive snowfalls occur, pressure on the lower layers increases and the snow becomes granular ice. When the weight of ice increases, the depth of ice being more than a critical value, it begins to move and is known as a glacier. The movement is attributed to the lubrication effect produced by water which exists at the bottom-most layer of the glacier as ice (occupying more volume than water) turns into water under pressure. When the volume is decreased due to

pressure, water is formed. The rate of movement of the glaciers per year varies considerably.

The snow line of the Mount Everest is approximately 5,800 to 6,000 meters above the sea level, but the mountain rises 3,000 meters above the snow line, where snow accumulates and glaciers originate. Constant avalanches of snow from the slopes feed the upper reaches of the glaciers, and, as a result, the surface layers of ice and snow grow increasingly thicker. The glaciers begin to slide under this weight and enter the valleys like tongues of moving ice. In that part of the glacier, which is below the snow line, the ice melts and evaporates (the ablation zone). Because ablation and intake of ice at the glacier tongue are generally in equilibrium, the positions of the termini of the glaciers are fairly constant.

Classification of Glaciers

According to the classification of glaciers proposed by Watanabe; Endo and Ishida (1967), the glaciers in the Nepal Himalayas can be classified into two groups – Nepal type glaciers and Tibet type glaciers. The Nepal type glaciers are located on the southern slope of the Great Himalayas, and the Tibet type glaciers on the northern slope. The lowest elevation of the glaciers of the former type is lower than that of the latter type. The length of the glaciers of the former type is longer than that of the latter type. In the case of the both types, it is found that the length of glaciers in the Nepal Himalayas is longer in eastern Nepal than in western Nepal.

The glaciers formed at a temperature not far below its melting point are described as temperate or maritime. Owing to the higher temperature of the ice, its pronounced plasticity and its larger volume, the velocity of these glaciers is greater than that of the continental type. Whereas the flow of continental type glaciers generally does not exceed 100 meters a year, the temperate glaciers have been recorded as moving at a rate of 300 to 400 meters a year.

Tibetan Glaciers

Himalayas are in effect a huge barrier that arrests the wet monsoons of the Indian Ocean from the south, leaving the interior of the Tibetan Plateau extremely cold and dry and snow accumulations on the glaciers very scant. The water equivalent of the annual snowfall is only about 500 to 800 mm. Such a thin layer of snow melts rapidly in the summer. In such circumstances perennial snow can stay and glaciers appear only at very high altitudes where the temperature is very low. The snow line on the northern slopes of the Himalayas reaches 6,200 meters, the highest yet found in the northern hemisphere. The glaciers here exist only because of the extremely low temperatures. They are therefore referred to as cold or continental glaciers. In sharp contrast, snow falls in abundance in the vicinity of the bend of the

Brahmaputra in the southern part of the Tibet, owing to the influence of the Indian Ocean's monsoons. The annual layer of neve snow in this part of the Plateau often reaches 2,000 to 3,000 mm in water equivalent. This substantially lowers the snow line. In the Bomi-Zayu area in southern Tibet, the snow line is frequently between 4,500 to 4,800 meters, more than 1,000 meters lower than in the Mount Everest region.

Climate

The most overwhelming aspect of the Himalayan environment is the cold. In January, the coldest month of the year, the average temperature at an altitude equal to that of the summit of the Mount Everest is about - 36 C, and it may drop to an extreme of - 60 C. Even in the warmest month July, the average temperature is - 19 , and at no time of the year does it rise above freezing. The intense solar radiation that brings welcome warmth, however, is in itself a hazard. The strong ultraviolet rays and the dazzling reflections from snow and ice present the constant danger of red and swollen eyes, unbearable pain and even snow blindness to a climber without sunglasses.

The glittering, fantastic landscapes of the Himalayan peaks are as beautiful as any on earth, but alien as any on the moon. Man, attempting to assault the heights of the Mount Everest or any other high peaks, can survive only with the help of modern technology by overcoming for a brief time the three deadly natural obstacles - cold, wind, and rarified air.

As for the wind, the second great difficulty with which the mountaineers have to face. Only in the month of October, and again from March to May, is the weather sufficiently calm enough for climbing. From June to September, the Himalayan region is under the influence of the monsoons that blow in from the Indian Ocean. The mountain tops disappear in the seas of clouds, and violent snowstorms are too frequent. From November to February, the global southwest jet stream moves in from the north, battering the high summits with winds of hurricane force that may reach a velocity of about 90 meters per second. Anybody facing the winds of this speed would be subjected to a pressure of 100 kilograms. Even in the summer climbing season suddenly strong winds may arise. When a storm comes up, often whirling not only snow and ice but also sand and stones, the climbers would be facing unimaginable hardships and the greatest danger.

Water Resources

The Himalayas comprises one of the mountain areas of the world where water supply from glacier melting plays a significant economic role. The glaciers of the Himalayas act as reservoirs of frozen water. They are the fountainheads of several large rivers. Among them are the major rivers flowing into the South Asia - the Indus, Sutlej, Ganges, Karnali, Kali-Gandak, Arun, Brahmaputra and few others.

With the advent of summer, the glaciers release meltwater to swell the rivers and streams. Glaciers melt during the hot months(March to June) and give rise to large summer flows in the Himalayan rivers.

In Conclusion

The state of a glacier in relation to its geographical position is an important indicator of climate and the variation of glaciers accordingly provides a measure of climatic trends. In addition, glaciological observations in the Himalayas are also of critical importance to a fuller assessment of the water resources and their more rational use to provide water for irrigation, hydro-power and domestic supplies. As basic data for this purpose, the amount, distribution and variation of glaciers and their melting processes should be continuously observed in the glaciated areas. An international center devoted to glaciological studies of the Himalayas could help to promote sustainable economic and social development in Nepal and in adjacent countries. ■

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

Conference On Mulk Raj Anand

Eminent Nepali and Indian litterateurs gather to discuss the contributions of Mulk Raj Anand

Litterateurs of Nepal and India got together in a conference to discuss about the contributions made by eminent Indian literary figure Mulk Raj Anand. On the occasion of birth centenary of celebrated Indian author Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, the Literary Association of Nepal (LAN) organized the two-day conference with the support from B.P. Koirala India-Nepal Foundation and Embassy of India, Kathmandu.

The conference titled "Mulk Raj Anand : Writing for Social Change" was held on December 26-27. In a unique program, ten distinguished academicians from India as well as eight academicians from Nepal presented papers on Dr. Mulk Raj Anand and his works. During the Conference, a documentary and an interview of Dr. Mulk Raj Anand was also screened.

Inaugurating the conference, Shiv Shankar Mukherjee, Ambassador of India to Nepal, said Anand was a catalyst for change in Indian society. Mukherjee said that Anand used his pen in favor of poor and backward people. "People often called him Daridranarayan i.e. god of the poor and underprivileged." Mukherjee chaired the inaugural session of the Conference.

The Vice-Chancellor of Tribhuvan University, Professor Dr. Govind Prasad Sharma said that Anand was successful in reflecting the Indian society through his writings. Professor Sharma added that Anand's views are more relevant today than in the past. Dr. Mohan Prasad Lohani, president of LAN, termed Anand as one of the most excellent writers.

The gathering of eminent literary figures from Nepal and India provided an unprecedented opportunity to deepen the literary relations between the two South Asian neighbors. The sharing of literary experiences can help to enrich the disciplines of each other. ■

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION DAY

A Day To Remember

Three decades have already passed since the return of B.P. Koirala, the greatest figure in Nepalese politics, from his seven-years-long exile in India. Caught in conflict and facing challenges for its survival from within and outside, national reconciliation propounded by him was not only relevant for yesterday's Nepal but is equally, if not more, applicable today and will also be pertinent tomorrow

By KESHAB POUDEL

“In the history of every nations there comes such moment when its people have to risk their lives to safeguard the national identity. We think, such a moment has come in Nepal today. Our well-wishers had advised us not to return Nepal seeing the dangers involved in it. We would like to tell them that we have to take this historical decision because the likely danger to our lives is nothing compared to the danger to nation.” said B.P. Koirala in the statement he gave on return from exile on December 30, 1976. (See box)

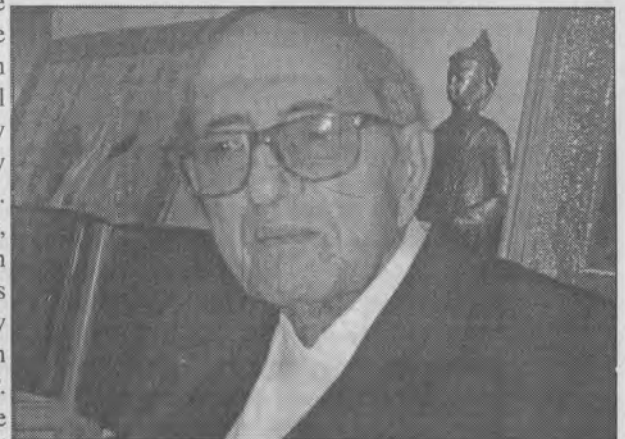
When B.P. Koirala, one of the popular political leaders, returned home on December 30, 1976, there were virtually no hopes for open and liberal democracy as the political process was completely under the grip of hardliners and South Asian regional situation was alarmingly hostile because of cold war and the future of Nepal was also in crisis.

With his full determination and dedication to his cause, B.P. Koirala – who had never compromised his faith and ideal of patriotism and liberal democracy - returned to Nepal ignoring even the capital punishment on him. Koirala saw national crisis and identity of Nepal was more important than his own personal safety. There are only a few leaders now like B.P. who can show such courage and guts.

When B.P. Koirala returned from his exile, Dr. Tulsi Giri was prime minister and through the second amendment in then constitution, political system had been virtually turned akin to one party communist system. Twenty-nine years later, the country is again in a severe national crisis but what is lacking now is a political leader with a high stature of B.P. Koirala to defend the nation and comprehend the situation.

His own brother and Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala – who is the last leader in his party with inner understanding of the spirit of national reconciliation - frankly admits that he cannot be like his elder and legendary brother B.P.

“A leader is made by certain circumstances. B.P. was a leader made for a particular situation. I cannot claim to be a leader like B.P. But, I have been following



G..P. Koirala: Reconciliation in his mind

the path shown by him," said Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala.

As years pass, many familiar names in Nepalese politics are going out of the memory of the people. Many of them had gone through great suffering and made sacrifices for the cause of democracy and the national independence but the name of B.P. Koirala is still instilling noble ideals and commitments.

B.P. Koirala was the real leader of the change of 1951 - which ushered a multi-party democracy in Nepal - but he got hardly 18 months to lead the first elected parliament and run the government.

Changing reality of the geo-politics of that time created the situation which abruptly brought to an end the parliamentary democracy and put B.P. Koirala under almost eight years of continuous detention. History is yet to be read in true perspective to understand why the King who had high respect for Koirala's dedication to the nation - which then King Mahendra had confided to different persons like G.P. Koirala, Bishwobandhu Thapa, Shailendra Kumar Upadhyaya and many others who are still living witnesses - took the decision to detain him.

After long political exercises behind the curtain, B.P. Koirala was released from the prison. Though he was publicly exploring the possibility of creating an environment of reconciliation between democratic forces and the monarch, the unperceived situation pushed him away from the country into mysterious trap. Koirala was instigated to raise the arms against the regime but he was not permitted to launch full-fledged actions for that.

"B.P. felt that he was used as a bargaining chip in which the greatest loser would be the people of Nepal. After a serious consideration of the regional politics, he took a drastic decision to return back to the country ignoring even the safety of his life. The situation in the region, like the formation of Bangladesh and annexation of Sikkim by a big neighboring country prompted Koirala to return with the policy of national reconciliation," said a political analyst, who



Mass in public meeting: Listening to leaders

was very close to B.P. Koirala. "The horrifying Vietnam war had just concluded. As a political analyst, he visualized a new area of confrontation or conflict between two warring camps of the cold war. He reached to a conclusion that the next area of conflict between the forces of cold war would be South Asia. In such situation, he made a very lucid and epoch-making statement while coming back to Nepal. He gave a call of national reconciliation and did not wait for response from the King of that time. The appeal was to the nation involving all including the King and the people in general."

In his statement B.P. Koirala said, "In this hour of national crisis, all of us should get united by forgetting and ending the past unhealthy debates, experiences and differences. Our program should be directed by the feeling that we will no more exist in the absence of our nation. I don't know what fate awaits me after I return to the country."

Along with that statement he came back to the country unrepentant and without any bitterness of animosity. Many see his statement was balanced, dignified and farsighted in outlook. Whenever there is crisis, all these things come to the mind of the people who look up to see similar kind of upright and bold leadership. The people in Nepal, at present, sincerely feel that sometimes leaders are the product of the situations and sometimes situations are the results of the leadership.

B.P. Koirala is remembered as a person who molded the situations of his time for almost four decades though he was in power for less than 18 months - his statement recorded in the parliament

shows how superb his period was when even opposition leader of that time Bharat Sumsher Rana did not mind to support the government.

As a person of strong commitment and belief, he firmly stood on his own ideology despite the difficulties he had to face individually. "The question that is uppermost in my mind is whether the coup of 1960 has permanently and definitely and irreconcilably alienated the democratic forces and monarchy from each other. I hope and pray that in spite of everything,

it is not so, and the breach is not final. My endeavor will be towards the national reconciliation of these two elements in our national life. If they are not irreconcilable, statesmanship, as distinguished from political chicanery, personal aggrandizement and advancement of petty temporary gains, calls for a large hearted approach to the problem of reconciliation. The democrats will see, I hope, that there are other dangers to democracy more serious than monarchy. I also hope that the King will also see that there are dangers to monarchy more serious than democracy." (See B.P. Koirala's Jail Journal Page 262-263)

"It is not only the power which makes a person as a leader. In real sense, B.P. was the leader of the nation. The response from late King Birendra to him was, in the words of B.P. Koirala himself, "heartbreakingly slow" but late King Birendra fulfilled all his commitments, which was made to Koirala in their first one-to-one meeting. "Sacrifices of politicians are much eulogized. Unfortunately, monarch like late King Birendra who sacrificed even his life for his adherence to liberal democracy and national independence remain in oblivion," said an analyst based on his personal contacts with the King and Koirala.

This is the occasion of the day to remember and renew support to national reconciliation. The appeal issued by B.P. Koirala upon his arrival is more relevant this time than any time before. As Nepali Congress is celebrating 30th national reconciliation day, the time has come for its leaders to show courage to correct their mistakes.

Nationalism and Democracy

The statement B.P. Koirala gave on return from foreign exile on December 30, 1976:

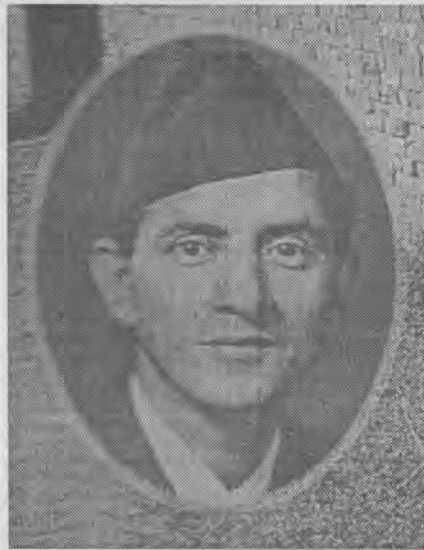
After a pretty long period of exile, we are returning to our country. On this occasion, I would like to say a few words to the countrymen.

Today, our country is in a national crisis. All have realized that this crisis is getting heightened since the last few years. As a result, the very national identity has been endangered. Others have also admitted this. All including the King have from time to time referred to the danger posed to national identity. We are returning to home after realizing this grave reality. We think that the lack of national unity is a major factor for such a national crisis as a result of which foreign elements have started to become successful in playing their dirty games and making Nepal a center of international conspiracy. National unity can be achieved only through a collective campaign and efforts of all Nepali people. Such a collective campaign does also lay the grounds for the institutional base for the emotional unity of the Nepali people. If the sloganeering alone could do this, the national unity would not have suffered so much nor our country would have landed in such a miserable condition in the last sixteen years. Today, there is selfishness, communalism, individualistic practices and the tendency to have external-tilt is rampant in the country. In such circumstances nationalism becomes the first casualty.

Till yesterday, our struggle was confined to the attainment of the people's democratic rights. That's why, we emphasized more on the democratic side. Today, there is a new dimension added to it. A dual responsibility has befallen the Nepali Congress. This second responsibility is, safeguarding the national identity. We have visualized two fold faces of today's Nepal: Nationalism and Democracy.

It means the Nepali people should take the responsibility of restoring

democracy as well as safeguarding the nation. If we talk of only one responsibility we will be following the wrong track by being one-sided. And, if we emphasized only on the restoration of democracy, we will not be contributing to addressing this national crisis. Moreover, we may even fall into the trap of the foreigners by such one-sided action. Similarly, if we talk of the nationalism only, we will be repeating the same 16-years-old hollow slogans of nationalism, and will be siding with the



authoritarianism. Such a hollow slogan of nationalism cannot generate an internal willpower in the countrymen to safeguard the nation. Therefore, we need now to understand that the national unity can be built on the foundation of democracy only. And the foundation of the democracy can be cemented by the economic development and the just economic system. Therefore we feel that nationalism, democracy and economic development are interdependent on each other.

It is well known that the Nepali Congress has taken historical and serious decisions from time to time in the national interest. The decision to wage the 1951 revolution and its executions are some examples. After finding that there was conspiracy to put off the elections forever, it took the leadership

of national campaign for the holding of the elections. We received the cooperation from various parties in that campaign. Nepali Congress launched the resistance movement for democracy after the cruel and the fatal blow dealt to democracy in 1960. And today, we have taken this historical decision seeing the crisis the nation is facing. This is in accordance with the tradition of the Nepali Congress.

In the history of every nation there comes such moment when its people have to risk their lives to safeguard the national identity. We think, such moment has come in Nepal today. Our well-wishers had advised us not to return Nepal seeing the dangers involved in it. We would like to tell them that we have taken this historical decision because the likely danger to our lives is nothing as compared to the danger to the nation. The workers of Nepali Congress have also shown the example of unprecedented courage and love towards nation by returning to the motherland following the party directives.

In this hour of national crisis, all of us should get united by forgetting and ending the past unhealthy debates, experiences and differences. Our program should be directed by the feeling that we will no more exist in the absence of our nation. I do not know what fate awaits me after I return to the country. Through this statement, as the Chairman of Nepali Congress, I would like to appeal to the entire countrymen that let us all unanimously unite in the pious task of defending the nation, its progress, happiness and prosperity of the people. If I get an opportunity, I will put forth my feelings before His Majesty also. The responsibility to save the nation is the common responsibility of all.

Jai Nepal!

Bishweswar Prasad Koirala
Dec.30, 1976

(This excerpt has been reproduced in order to re-emphasize the importance of national reconciliation)

RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

Power In The Parliament Empowered People At The Bottom

With mobilization of grassroots level government health infrastructures, Nepal Technical Assistance Group's (NTAG) technical experts are implementing primary health care programs to prevent the pre-natal and post-natal problems in Sunsari district. Established in various stages of liberal political system, these grassroots level health institutions and their medical staffs are working, hand in hand, with NTAG's technical experts in Sunsari district reaching out to almost all households in the areas through Take Home Model

By KESHAB POUDEL
Reporting from Dewanganj, Sunsari

When Raj Kumar Shrestha and other NTAG's technical experts camping in Kaptangunj village a remote part of Sunsari district, 500 miles south-east of capital were informed that a woman in Ramnagar Bhutia Village has delivered a child, next morning they rushed to the house of the newborn baby taking health workers and paramedical staffs from nearby health post.

Along with his other colleagues, a local Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) and a junior medical staff of Ramnagar Bhutia Health Post knocked the door of Shana Khatun, 20, who had been treated for night blindness during her pregnancy. After brief conversation with her parents, the health workers weighed the newborn baby and took a blood sample. They

found that the condition of mother and children was normal.

This was not a first case for Shrestha, a health monitor of NTAG,



Mother and child in Sunsari village: Benefiting from health mapping

and other government's paramedics, of visiting the households to check the situation of newborn babies and pregnant women. Shrestha and the team regularly visit and monitor the households with pregnant women. They have already visited almost all households in the area in the last 10 months.

As soon as Lukiyadevi Ram, a resident of Ramgunj Balgachiya village of Sunsari district, 15 kilometers south-west of Biratnagar, an industrial town of eastern Nepal, gave birth to a child, she sent

her cousin to Sitagunj Health Post to inform the health supervisors of NTAG working under a take home program implemented to provide post-natal and pre-natal check up in the Ramgunj Balgachiya.

With the support from the government health posts and sub-health posts and local FCHVs, NTAG is currently treating pregnant women with night-blindness, worms and other common diseases in Ramnagar Bhutaha Health Posts, Ramgunj Balgachiya Health Post and Dewanganj Health Posts in southern parts of Sunsari serving more than 100,000 women.

Through the health posts, sub-health posts and FCHVs, NTAG collects information regarding health status of all households in their area including the number of married couple, health status of pregnant women and her health record.

"We also locate pregnant women through the mobilization of FCHVs but most of the cases are referred to us by health posts where we are given a room to establish lab," said Shrestha.



Consultations at the health post: Rural outreach of health services

Local health officials, too, agree that the partnership with organization like NTAG helps them to increase their outreach. "Under Take Home Model Pilot program, we are receiving technical as well as other support from NTAG," said Omprakash Mehata, chief of Chimdi Sub-health post in Sunsari. "We have seen a lot of change through this partnership program."

With the implementation of Take Home Model Program, a pilot health program run under the collaboration of University of Arizona and NTAG to provide the basic treatment and medical advise to the pregnant women, the women living in health posts of three areas each of Sunsari and Parsa districts are receiving a special pre-natal and post-natal care.

Supporting the government health posts and sub-health posts, the NTAGs staffs, equipped with some basic medical equipment including Night Vision Threshold Test and microscopy and others, test blood, tools and eyesight of pregnant women under the reference of health posts and sub-health posts. If pregnant women

require any medicine, they will be administered free of cost.

In the three southern areas of Sunsari district, health posts and sub-health posts have already mapped the total household and the population of all ages.

"We have already mapped the household in our area," said B.B. Kattel, chief of the Sitagunj Health Post. "We have records about the different status of households including the number of pregnant women."

Similarly, other health posts and sub-health posts have similar kind of record keeping system. Collected by FCHVs working in the area, the information regarding the health status of women helps to provide the pre-natal and post-natal services.

In a country with one of the highest maternal mortality ratio - 740 per 100,000 live births - and high under-five child mortality ratio and where only 11 percent of total births are attended by skilled attendants, such programs reaching every household is significant. According to the work plan for the year 2004/05 of the Department

of Health Services, there is a program to initiate treatment of night-blind pregnant women with low dose of vitamin A capsules in selected districts.

According to the Annual Report of Department of Health Services, 2061/2062, NTAG provides logistic support, training, supervision and IEC materials for each new district for two supplementation rounds before passing on the responsibility to the district health staff of the Ministry of Health.

Thanks to the long experience of working in the community along with government's health professionals, NTAG has developed its own mechanisms and a committed group of experts to carry out any kind of works.

"Our technical experts work under the government health posts and sub-health posts as facilitators," said Ram Kumar Shrestha, executive director of NTAG. "One of the aims of this program is to save women from maternal complications. We mobilize the government staffs and utilize existing infrastructures to carry out the programs."



Rural Children: Health is wealth

Initiated by the United States Operation Mission (USOM) in 1952, community health system evolved under the Public Health Service

Model. "The largest health project during this year period was the \$1.1 million Assistance to Public Health Services - the first of many efforts to develop a nationwide delivery system for basic health services," writes Half-a-Century of Development 1951-2001, the History of U.S. Assistance to Nepal, published by the USAID. Started in 1952 as Local Health Service, the project provided technical advisors, participant training, commodities and local currency support for hospitals, health centers and clinics throughout Nepal.

Empowerment at the Bottom

With the restoration of democracy and opening up of the political system in 1990, Nepal's government health network has extended all over the country. From the FCHVs at the bottom of the village to the center, there is a strong network of health throughout the country with a capacity to administer Vitamin A and Polio drops to more than 5 million children regularly.

The development of health infrastructures and health manpower working in remote villages of Sunsari and Morang districts show that the power in the parliament has empowered the people at the bottom.

It is not denying the fact that the progress was also made during the Panchayat period. There was Rastriya Panchayat as a parliament - which had nexus at the grassroots democracy. Like in Sunsari, these kinds of health networks are helping to carry out any kinds of health campaign throughout the country.

The decentralization of power from the center to the grassroots level has drastically changed the situation. Like all other sectors, different acts including Local Self Governance Act and Social Service Act, evolved in the



A healthworker at a health post: Need for more such human resource



Health technicians: Monitoring the mothers

Shrestha, executive director of NTAG, who was recently recognized by international TIME magazine as one of the key global health professional working to make a change in the world.

Past experiences have shown that only through allocating the power from top to the bottom will bring about drastic change encouraging local communities to take care of themselves. The vacuum created by the absence of elected bodies at the grassroots and parliament at the top has already created problems for the local-based development

perfectly alright," said Ranjita Khadka, 23. "She is still receiving services given by the NTAG's Take Home Model Project."

Among many communities of Sunsari district, it is still a dream to have skilled birth attendants. Most of the births are still attended by family members, neighbors, with only a relatively small number of deliveries assisted by health workers.

Kamala Devi Maghi, 22, a resident of Amaduwa village, is pregnant with third child. Since she has already lost one baby, Maghi, a woman from so-called untouchable caste, does not know whether her third child will survive.

With regular visits to the health posts and NTAG's clinic for check-up, she is expecting that this time she would give healthy delivery with assistance from trained attendants and post-natal care. "We cannot afford money to go to hospitals and it is very difficult to come to health posts," said Maghi.

Under Take Home Model Program Maghi like many other women living in the area can receive all kinds of pre-natal and postnatal care. Their problems to have skilled birth attendants, however, are yet to be fulfilled.

According to Nepal Millennium Development Goals progress report 2006, in Nepal over 80 percent of deliveries take place at home. Family members and neighbors, with only one fifth of deliveries attended by health workers, assist most of the births. Birth attended by birth attendants (doctors, nurses, and auxiliary nurse, midwives) is low as 10 percent.

Although the number of trained health workers and trained attendants has increased, there is a need to take certain steps to motivate them to visit the sites. "We can benefit a lot from existing health facilities and health care system. We are yet to exploit existing facilities," said Shrestha.

Sunsari's model shows how government and NGOs like NTAG's model is helping to increase services utilizing existing government health services and health manpower and bringing about a lot of change in delivery of health facilities to women and children. This partnership also shows that power in the parliament empowers the people at the bottom. ■

last four decades though two different constitution and political systems, encouraged local people to take part in the decision-making.

Despite major changes in the health sector, there are still many things to do to make the local health infrastructure effective. "Inadequate access to health services for rural households and limited community involvement in education, motivation and promotion of basic health services are the major bottlenecks to significantly increasing the efficiency of the Primary Health Care System," writes annual report of Department of Health Services 2060/61.

To support the extension of existing health network and activate the manpower, the NGOs like NTAG played a key role. "The country has manpower and nationwide health network. What the organization like ours is doing is to energize government health workers and support them in their works," said Ram Kumar

works.

Take Home Model

Introduced as a pilot program, take home model has shown that it can help to activate the grassroots level health institutions and health workers to monitor and observe conditions of pregnant women and newborn child in their vicinity with all kinds of medical records.

At a time when the government is planning to reduce maternal mortality rate, there is a need to increase services given to the grassroots level. Although it is just running as a pilot program in few health posts, it shows how record of pregnant women can be maintained and how they can be encouraged to visit health posts.

"My first baby was died few hours after my delivery at home. Thanks to the services provided in nearby Sitagunj health post for pregnant women, I get all kinds of pre-natal check up now. My two-months baby—born in Kosi Zonal Hospital, is now

WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION

Shining Input

Even though they constitute only six percent of total migrant workforce, Nepalese women contribute 11 percent of the total remittances

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

In the recent years, remittances, without a ray of doubt, have held the economy of Nepal together and prevented it from collapsing. The blood and toil of hundreds of thousands of Nepalese youths shedding their sweat in far-away foreign lands have helped their motherland from collapsing economically. The hard-earned money these workers send as remittances have pumped in precious resources and capital into the conflict-shattered economy of Nepal.

Even though till now people perceive that only Nepalese male youths are responsible for sending remittances, it is becoming clear now that women have not fared behind in coming to the rescue of their nation and society. In fact, the contribution of Nepalese women migrant workers – in relative terms – are higher than that of men.

Because of their higher propensity to save earnings, Nepalese women contribute relatively more than their male counterparts in the remittances. Dr. Chandra Bhadra, a gender expert, said that while the number of women migrant workers is only 6 percent of the total Nepalese migrant workers, they contribute 11 percent of the remittances received by the country.

"They tend to save more," she said, speaking at a recent program on Empowering Migrant Women Workers of Nepal organized by Sancharika Samuha and UNIFEM on the occasion of International Migrants Day.

In her research titled "Mapping Women Migrant Workers" Dr. Bhadra has come up with some startling findings. Dr. Bhadra said that while the trend of Nepalese women working as migrant workers in global scale is a

relatively new phenomenon, the jobs (most) which they do in foreign lands are not at all alien to them.

"Nepalese women are mostly engaged in what is known as care economy that demands low or semi-skilled workers in low-paying jobs that are mostly associated with providing care in houses or care institutions," she said giving examples of works like domestic workers, nurses, child care providers and so on. "In the developed world and oil-rich Gulf states, the women



A lady: Work not valued at home

there have bigger opportunity cost and go for higher paying jobs outside the realm of their houses. And they attract poor workers from third world to provide care to their children, home, elderly and so on."

Interestingly, Dr. Bhadra adds that these 'care' jobs are the very same ones in which Nepalese women are engaged within the country as well. "They are engaged in household chores and care-giving jobs round the clock in their

homes. But these jobs are not recognized by the larger community as it does not lead to earnings. But now as migrant workers, these very women doing same jobs can now earn money. They can now become a meaningful economic entity. Their job transforms from unpaid, unrecognized and unvalued into the valued one."

The findings of Dr. Bhadra's research were similar to the findings of a research on economic aspects of Nepalese migrant women workers conducted by Society of Economic Journalists of Nepal (SEJON) and UNIFEM.

According to Bijaya Ghimire, president of SEJON, the country now receives between Rs 100 to Rs 130 billion in remittances from overseas workers. "And the contribution of women is 11 percent which is equivalent to 2 percent of GDP," said Ghimire highlighting the findings of the research. Remittance is now second only to agriculture in terms of its contribution to GDP. While the agriculture contributes 40 percent of GDP, remittances contribute 18 percent. The growing remittances have helped in increasing the foreign exchange reserve, making the balance of payment positive and increasing deposits in banks.

"Women's contribution to the national economy is undeniable. It is now for the government to create necessary atmosphere to promote and secure such jobs for women," Ghimire added.

The research also found out that most women do not know about government's concessionary loans for prospective migrant workers. "Women are paying between 18 to 140 percent interest to traditional money-lenders to raise money required by them to go overseas," the research suggests. "Most women go overseas due to family and economic compulsions and they wish to make money to run their household expenses and provide good educational and health care to their children."

The improvement in social and economic status of returnee women has helped in encouraging more women to pursue overseas jobs. ■

“It Seems The Interests Of Developing Countries Have Been Addressed”

—NAVIN DAHAL

NAVIN DAHAL is the Executive Director of South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), an NGO, which is actively working to promote fair trade. Dahal, who recently attended the Sixth Hong Kong Ministerial of World Trade Organization (WTO) as a member of the Nepalese government delegation, spoke with SANJAYA DHAKAL on various issues regarding the achievement of the Hong Kong meet with special reference to Nepal. Excerpts:

What were the major achievements of Hong Kong meeting?

Achievements can be viewed at different levels. The adoption of ministerial text is itself an achievement if you compare with what happened in Cancun meeting. At another level, we can analyze it based on what LDCs like Nepal got from it and whether the issues of developing countries and developed countries were addressed. Broadly speaking, we find the Hong Kong meeting has been development-friendly. It seems the interests of developing countries have been addressed and most of their demands have been either fulfilled or promised to be fulfilled in a time-bound manner. In that sense, I would say that Hong Kong ministerial was successful.

So, how would you describe the Hong Kong meeting, then?

As per the basis of Doha development round, there will be intense negotiations in the coming three/four months. As it is, I describe it as positive.

How was the participation of Nepal in the meeting?

Just like India and Brazil were leading the voices of developing countries, Zambian minister Deepak Patel assigned to take up the voices of 32 LDCs. There was a separate meeting room for LDCs. Patel used to take part in all smaller meetings. He used to come back and constantly brief other LDC ministers and get their feedback. I think Nepal was quite effective despite the fact that it was the first time Nepal was taking part in WTO as a full-fledged member. The roles played by ambassador, Prachanda Manji and Posh Rajji in the LDC front were significant. Within many limitations, they were much prepared that many other LDCs.

How beneficial was this meeting from the viewpoint of Nepal?

When looking from our perspective, it would be appropriate to assess what gains were made by the LDCs. Among the achievements for LDCs, include the addition of Annex F on the basis of Special & Differential Treatment (S&DT) that gives duty free and quota free access to 97% of LDC products to developed markets. In fact, the LDCs were demanding 100% access but countries like the US had reservation. They said that when Bangladesh exports garments worth \$2.5 billion and Cambodia exports garments worth \$ 1 billion, they could not be called uncompetitive. In the end, the LDCs agreed for 97%. In addition, they have promised to fulfill this commitment by the end of 2008 or the end of present development round of negotiations.

How crucial is this duty free market access for Nepal?

Well, already we are enjoying duty free access to European countries under the initiative of EBA (Everything But Arms). We are getting similar facilities under GSP from the US (but it does not include garments). Likewise, Canada, Japan and Australia had been giving us different types of GSP (Generalized System of Preferences) facilities. Therefore, in the immediate future, it might make no difference. Furthermore, for us Rules of Origin is of equal importance when we get such duty free access. The time, in the Annex F it has been added that the preferential Rules of Origin should be ensured to contribute to trade facilitation. Lets hope that Rules of Origin will be simplified.

Does this mean Nepalese garments will now get the duty free access to US?

This is still not clear. Developed countries have not made clear which goods will be included in the 3% (of LDC products), which can still be excluded from duty free access facility. If garment is excluded then, Nepal may not benefit. According to the principle of MFN, such facilities need to be uniform to all LDCs. However, there are opinions that Nepal can align with like-minded land-locked LDCs of Asia and request for further preference. But nobody is sure about this yet.

What other achievements did the LDC win?

They also have enjoyed further policy flexibility. In the TRIMS (Trade-related Investment Measures), LDCs are now allowed to impose local content

“Developed countries have not made clear which goods will be included in the 3% (of LDC products), which can still be excluded from duty free access facility. If garment is excluded then, Nepal may not benefit.”



requirement and export balancing requirement on foreign investment. However, our domestic legislations are already much liberal and we do not have such impositions. Another important achievement is that the LDCs can now seek cooperation and consideration by announcing that it is unable to implement certain WTO provisions.

What about the agreement on Aid for Trade?

The developed countries have committed to provide aid to help increase trade for LDCs. Such aid may be both in form of hardware or software. In fact, Japan, EU and the US have committed to provide \$10 billion, Euro 2.7 billion and \$2 billion for this purpose. Likewise, World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) would also help LDCs through Enhanced Integrated Framework. Now it is up to us to make use of these offers. We need to negotiate bilaterally to enjoy these benefits.

What happened to the issue of farm subsidies being provided by European countries?

There were two issues related to farm subsidies – domestic support and export subsidies. Developing countries have been asking for the elimination of these subsidies, which they say is distorting trade. As far as domestic support is concerned, the issue was not even discussed in Hong Kong. It has been agreed that detail workout

will be done on this issue by April 30 next year. On the issue of export subsidies, the European countries have agreed to eliminate them by 2013.

How would it affect Nepal's agricultural exports?

Most of the export subsidies are given on meat and dairy products. There is no basis to say that those products have come into our country in a big scale and distorted our market. In fact, by eliminating such subsidies, price of such products will go up and for a Net Food Importing Country like Nepal that could mean inflated import bills. On the contrary, there is also a remote possibility that Nepalese farmers could get motivated by the opportunity for competing in the western markets and be able to export their produce. But this is still a far-fetched notion.

How would the multilateral negotiating process move on from here?

In the coming months, there will be intense negotiations. By April 30, it has been agreed to develop 'full modalities.' Judging the mood in Hong Kong, I found that there was a general consensus on the need of multilateral trading regime. I am hopeful.

How do you see the rush toward signing Bilateral and Regional Free Trade Agreements in the coming months?

I think this rush will lose some steam. But if the agreement on farm subsidies elimination is not reached within time, then the rush could re-start. For a country like Nepal, it is better that we join a strong multilateral regime than venture into un-chartered territory of BTAs and RTAs, which have several pitfalls like WTO-plus provisions that could further restrict our policy space. In multilateral regime, we can safeguard our interests by aligning with like-minded developing countries and groups. But in bilateral agreements with bigger countries, we would have to lose out on various issues and face stricter provisions on intellectual property rights, investment, environment and labor standards, so on and so forth.

What should Nepal do now?

Nepal needs to prepare its roadmap to take advantage of the benefits it has been offered. We have to make our plan on how to make use of the Aid for Trade provisions and how to benefit from duty free access and so on. ■

“Most of the export subsidies are given on meat and dairy products. There is no basis to say that those products have come into our country in a big scale and distorted our market. In fact, by eliminating such subsidies, price of such products will go up and for a Net Food Importing Country like Nepal that could mean inflated import bills.”

Golden Years Of NBA

By KUMAR REGMI,

This year, Nepal Bar Association (NBA) is celebrating its glorious Golden Jubilee. On 2013/9/7 B.S., the seed of NBA was planted by 10 (ten) legal practitioners with one line resolution that says "today's meeting unanimously decides to establish Bar Association". Those legendary individuals were Senior Advocate Devnath Prasad Varma, Advocate Yogendra Prakash Malla, Advocate Padam Raj Bista, Advocate Purna Lal Shrestha (Jhochhe), Pleader Heramba Prasad Upadhyaya, Pleader Indra Bahadur Pandey, Pleader Purna Lal Shrestha (Taud), Pleader Ganga Prasad Timalsina, Pleader Narayan Prasad Shrestha and Pleader Maya Nath Upadhyaya. On January 11th 1957, nine-member First Executive Committee was formed and Senior Advocate Devnath Prasad Varma was appointed its President. Today, none of them are with us. But their memory will remain forever. We pay our homage with deep sense of respect to all these pioneering fathers of NBA whose idea and vision have grown into a strong organization of more than 25,000 lawyers organized under 81 Bar Units all over the Country and dedicated to the quality legal service. Apart from that, the NBA's unflagging commitment for the cause of rule of law, democracy, independence of judiciary, and the supremacy of Constitution even in times of autocracy and darkness has elevated its position as a trusted and towering civil society organization in the country.

The life and quality of a Bar directly depends on the life and quality of the Court. Since Nepal was totally closed from the outside world till 1951 revolution as it remained under the rule of autocratic and dictatorial regimes, the concept of independence of judiciary and right to consult and be defended by a legal practitioner was an alien idea. In such environment, it is mentioned by many, that the credit for initiating legal practice in the Nepalese Courts goes to the distinguished Chief Justice Hari Prasad Pradhan, who brought his rich and cultured lawyer's background from India and introduced that in our Supreme Court in 1952. He was brought to Nepal by B.P. Koirala to introduce and strengthen the newly established Judiciary under the infant democracy. When we did not even have a separate law for lawyers, Chief Justice Pradhan liberally interpreted section 16 of Court Procedure Chapter of Old *Muluki Ain* (Country Code). Under that section a party to the case was allowed to bring an individual, knowledgeable of his/her case, at witness deposition and discussion of the case. Chief Justice Pradhan started taking application from such individual and asked and encouraged to plead on behalf of his party. He taught how to argue and present the case before the Bench. Apart from drafting, it opened entirely a new avenue for retired court officials and law graduates and they began gathering at the Court premises. Slowly, Law Firms started to open and organized method of legal services got underway. Hence, it would not be exaggeration to call Chief Justice Pradhan the first Guru of Nepalese Lawyers and indirect but strong contributor for the establishment of the NBA. Under his active initiative, then government agreed to formulate the first law for lawyers, which was drafted by Shambhu Prasad Gyawali (later he joined in legal practice and became Senior Advocate and President of NBA in 1982) in the Supreme Court Regulation, 1956. That was further advanced and legal profession was made more professionalized under the Law Practitioners Act 1969. Today, we have Nepal Bar Council, established by the Nepal Bar Council Act 1993 as an independent statutory body devoted to

promoting, protecting and regulating the activities of the law practitioners.

It is interesting to note that even though the NBA was established in 1956, it did not have its Constitution and was not registered till 1962. Around March 1962, a meeting of 20 lawyers at *Hiti Darbar* under the initiative of Pramod Samsar J.B.R. decided to select Forth Executive Committee and appoint recently retired civil servant Krisna Prasad Ghimire (who later become Senior Advocate) the President of NBA and Madhu Prasad Sharma (who later become Senior Advocate) the Secretary. Besides that, the meeting entrusted these two individuals, along with Krisna Prasad Bhandari (father figure of the Bar and Senior Advocate), responsibility to draft the Constitution of NBA and register it with government. It is said that because of President Ghimire's individual friendship with then Zonal Administrator, the NBA was finally registered in 1962 under the *Rastriya Nirdeshanayala Ain* (National Direction Act) 1961.

Even though, NBA was established in 1956 and legalized in 1962, it did not have its own building and separate premises till Norwegian Bar Association decided to support the NBA from 1987. The support became possible with international exposure and leadership of distinguished Senior Advocate Kusum Shrestha. His personal rapport and friendship with Alfa Skugli of Norwegian Bar made it possible to receive substantial fund. The construction of NBA building started in 1993 when Radheshyam Adhikari (Senior Advocate) was the President and Advocate Prakash Osti was the Secretary. In this endeavor, Advocate Osti's tireless work has been lauded by many contemporary lawyers. His contribution to Nepalese legal literature and research also cannot be forgotten. Today, NBA has five-story building with a good amount of resources at its disposal.

The history of NBA is full of events and to discuss them all even briefly would not be possible in this short article. To protect its dignity, independence, and in search for liberty and freedom, the NBA has never hesitated to take toughest decision even in the days of autocratic *panchayat* regime. When then Chief Justice Bhagwati Prasad Singh showed rough and unacceptable behavior against the President of NBA Krisna Prasad Ghimire, the NBA decided to ask all lawyers to boycott the Bench of the Supreme Court from August 23, 1964. This was the first boycott called by the NBA, which was called off on August 27, 1964 when on that day then Registrar of the Supreme Court went to the Executive Committee meeting of the NBA and the matter was resolved. To protect its independence and democratic stance, the NBA has not hesitated to remove its President, Yachchha Harsha Bajracharaya, with no confidence vote, for supporting the first amendment to the Panchayat Constitution in 1966 by terming it "highly democratic". This unacceptable act of supporting undemocratic system and its Constitution created hue and cry and Mukunda Regmi, Senior Advocate, even resigned from the post of Secretary of NBA in protest.

The beginning of three-days National Conference of NBA every three years started from May 7-9, 1977 and has added a new dimension to the bar history. The Conference has become the largest forum for NBA members to sit together, discuss and plan for future actions as

well as raise their collective voice on various national problems and give concrete opinions. In one of the Conferences, when Senior Advocate Laxman Prasad Aryal was the President and Subash Newang was the Secretary of the NBA, it became the first organization, which institutionally demanded the end of one party *panchayat* regime and restoration of multi party democracy. It was a historical unanimous decision declared at the end of its Forth National Conference held in Kathmandu from September 23 to 25, 1988. To achieve that goal, the members of the NBA actively participated in 1990 people's movement for democracy with number of demonstrations and arrests, which replaced the undemocratic *panchayat* system in which sovereignty of Nepal was vested with the King, with the multiparty system in which sovereignty of Nepal was vested with Nepalese people guaranteed by the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990. To support the movement, the NBA decided to boycott all the Courts of Nepal on February 20, 1990.

Similarly, it is known to all that the NBA has been fighting for the clean, independent, competent, and impartial judiciary. The relation between the Bar and the Bench needs to be cordial and focused towards justice. However, when the Courts, specially the Supreme Court, tend to ignore the cry of the people for justice and against the suppression of fundamental rights of the people by the government, the NBA has raised protest flags against the Court and reminded the Judges their constitutional responsibilities. By following the foot steps of predecessors, the NBA has raised its loudest protesting voice against the undemocratic and unconstitutional move of the present King of Nepal since October 4, 2002 and demanded the restoration of constitutional order. The NBA has been in forefront to protect the rule of law, sovereignty of the people and their fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and international human rights laws. The present leadership of NBA under the President Sambhu Thapa and Secretary Madhav Basnet has proven not only to the Nepalese people but to the world that lawyers of Nepal will not be cowed down and will fight every battle for democracy, rule of law, independence of judiciary, and supremacy of the Constitution without any compromise. The entire Executive Committee of NBA has made us proud. ■

(Regmi, LL.M (Toronto) and LL.M (Pune) is an advocate)

EXPOSITION

Korean Photography Exhibition

The exhibition is expected to enhance the cultural relations between the two countries

By THAKUR AMGAI

The pictures hung on the walls of Siddhartha Art Gallery last week had showed the quintessence of the Korean tradition and culture of past and present.

From the huge skyscrapers of the Seoul, the Korean capital, to the animal-pulled sledges at the highland plains

an understanding to facilitate the cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Inaugurating the function, minister of state for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Yankila Sherpa expressed the view that cultural events are the best medium to bring the people of the world closer together.

Minister Sherpa further said that while many youths had benefited by

getting employment in Korea in the recent years, the Korean market of tourism remains unexplored in the three decades long relations between the two countries.

"The recent visit by the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess to the Korean Republic has added a chapter to our



Korean photography

covered by snow, the exhibition had photographs of two different situations.

Jointly organized by the Korean Embassy and Nepal Korea Friendship and Cultural Association at Siddhartha Art Gallery from December 21 to 23, the exhibition had sixty photographs pictured by over a dozen different photographers.

"The photographs depict the Korean landscapes, culture and lifestyle," said the Korean Ambassador to Nepal Park Sang Hoon. "It helps the viewers compare the similarities and differences between Korean culture and Nepalese culture."

Hoon expressed hope that such exhibitions would help to strengthen and further develop the relations between the people.

A cultural pact was signed between the two countries earlier this year with

(Korea's and Nepal's) bilateral relations," minister Sherpa said.

President of Association Rabi Bhakta Shrestha said that photo exhibition would strengthen the friendship between the two countries and urged for more events of cultural exchanges.

The photographs at the exhibition show modern lifestyle with skyscrapers, wide roads and crowded market places. Children, men and women clad in colorful dresses are depicted engaged in various activities of day-to-day life or recreational activities. The bright smiles can be seen in the faces of the people whether they are playing, dancing or worshipping.

Other photographs depict the difficult mountain lives, rituals such as bull fighting and the landscapes of tea plantations. ■

BOOK

Fifty Years With The UN

The book highlights the role of Nepal in the United Nations

MAfter joining United Nations five decades ago, Nepal has made a lot of contributions to strengthen the world body. From taking part in the international peacekeeping operations to other activities directed toward world peace, Nepal, though a small country, has made tremendous efforts.

In its five-decade-long presence in the United Nations, Nepal was elected twice as a temporary member of security council and has had distinguished participation in UN peacekeeping as Nepal is the 6th largest troop-contributing country in the United Nations peace keeping operation.

Based on the papers presented at the seminar on Nepal and the United Nations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Nepal joining the United Nations, the book is a first of its kind consisting of articles written by many important scholars, former Nepalese diplomats and other experts.

"There are insightful papers authored by some of the best brains of Nepal related to the UN. Some of our paper writers have had long association with the various organs of the UN and carry not only knowledge and experience but also the foresight to enhance further Nepal's participation in the UN," said Nishchal N. Pandey, executive director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs. "As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the UN, there have been debates and discussions on how best to re-energize and restructure the UN to make it more suited to confront the challenges of the 21st century."

Other scholars highlight the importance of MDGs. "The

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions – income, poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion –while promoting gender equality, education and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights, the rights of each person on the

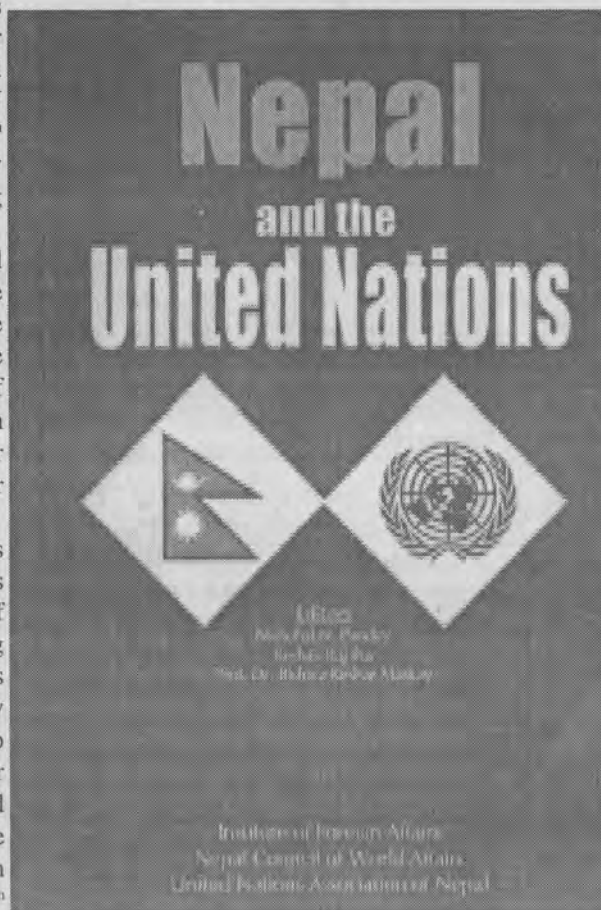
planet to health, education, shelter and security as pledged in the universal declaration of Human Rights and the UN Millennium Declaration," writes Dr. Bishwokeshar Maskay in his article on Nepal and Millennium Development Goals.

During the last five decades, there have been mutuality of interests between Nepal and the UN. Nepal's contribution to the UN peace making, peacekeeping and peace-building missions around the world are substantial.

Despite being a small nation, Nepal's creative contribution in the norm-based policies of the UN has made it the most relevant fora in the international community and, in turn, ensured its own security, sovereignty and independent identity in the community of nations.

"50 years is not a long period in terms of history of nation, neither of the world, but the birth of United Nations, after the devastation witnessed by humanity during the World War II, with the main objective of preventing wars, upholding human rights in conditions of equality and promoting international justice in a large freedom is still crucial for members of the body in 21st century," writes Keshav Raj Jha. UNESCO, as one of the 14 United Nation's bodies, was founded in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II as well, with a specific mission to lay the foundation of international peace and the common welfare of humanity by promoting cooperation among nations through education, science, culture and communication, promoting the values of freedom, dignity and justice and facilitating access to and sharing knowledge.

Other authors include former foreign secretary professor Biswa Pradhan, Lt, General (Retd) Krishna N. S. Thapa, former permanent representative to the United Nations Jaya Raj Acharya, Dr. Rita Thapa, Banmali Prasad Lacoul and Y.K. Silwal. This book helps to understand Nepal's role in the United Nations in the last five decades. ■



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POLITICS

Polls Provoked

Provocations and counter-provocations have further soiled the environment for fair elections

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The current Nepali political spectrum is soiled by provocations and counter provocations by extremists. Amid this pendulum play, the prospects for widely participated polls have further dampened.

On the one hand, there are people like Parshu Narayan Chaudhary, chairman of Raj Parishad Standing Committee, and Home Minister Kamal Thapa who are bent on bull-doing the government determination to hold the municipal polls (on February 8) come what may.

"It is our duty to show to political parties that people are with us by successfully holding the elections," thundered Chaudhary at a recent meeting of the Raj Parishad. Even Home Minister Kamal Thapa, a well-known centrist politician, is harping the threatening tone of the government by warning the parties who have called to actively boycott the polls.

Even the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Keshab Raj Rajbhandari seems to have joined the political fray by making a number of statements saying that the polls would be held under any circumstances as it was necessary to 'show to the international community.'

On the other hand, leaders like Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) and Ram Chandra Poudel, general secretary of the Nepali Congress (NC), are making harsh comments against the polls.

"The poll has no meaning. We will intensify the agitation and achieve the goal of democratic republic within this year," clamored Nepal at a recent public meeting in mid-west. Poudel has termed the polls as 'drama' and vowed to disrupt it.

As far as the Maoists are concerned, nobody really expected them to favor elections anyway. They have already

announced series of programs aimed at disrupting the polls through the use of violence.

Amid the brouhaha, it is intriguing to note how the polls have become such a political hot potato among the parties – whose existence depends on the regular elections. It is equally amusing to note who needs this election – while the current regime that is widely called by the political parties as being authoritarian and undemocratic seems hell bent on holding the polls, the very parties are vowing to boycott the polls. But it would be unfair to lay the blame on only one side. As senior politician Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani recently said, the government is pursuing 'take it or leave it' policy when it does not have the overwhelming power to subdue other forces in the country.

At a time when even former prime minister and president of Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP) has declared his party would boycott the polls that is not participated by NC and UML, it has exposed the failure of the government to create conducive environment.

Sadder part is nobody is talking about improving the environment. Everybody is busy either supporting or boycotting the polls. So, the end victim could be the election itself – which is the lifeline of democracy. ■



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YADAV KHAREL

Aspiring Higher

After having written hundreds of songs, dozens of which have become very popular, Kharel feels that he has not achieved anything in life

By THAKUR AMGAI

*Yasto Pani Hundo Raichha Jindagima
Kahile Kahin
Kasailai Maya Garnu Euta Bhoole
Garen Maile*

The writer of this song is Yadav Kharel. He was merely in his early twenties when he wrote this moving song. The song is equally popular even today. It was sung by Fatteman.

Kharel has multiple facets in his life. He started a career as a Radio Presenter. He passed the voice test of Radio Nepal and joined as a program producer merely in his teens.

Kharel was interested in literature since his childhood. But he did not practice writing, singing or playing music. It was when he joined Radio Nepal that he started writing songs. "The ambience of Radio Nepal was very musical, so I started writing songs," says Kharel.

His first song was 'Jalyo-Jalyo Tan Jalyo' sung by D. B. Mahesh. Kharel was hardly twenty when he wrote this song. He wrote more songs as he continued serving at Radio Nepal and mingling with singers and musicians. It can be inferred that the musical environment and the circle of friends made Kharel a song writer.

After serving for eight years at Radio Nepal, Kharel joined the BBC Nepali service and came back after two years to handle the portfolio of chairman and general manager of the Royal Nepal Film Corporation. He also became the executive chairman of the National Film Development

Board immediately after its inception six years back. Currently, he is an academician of the Royal Nepal Academy.

Kharel was born in Kavre. His early childhood was spent in the hills of Kavre and he was brought to Kathmandu for schooling. He says, he never thought he would come this far as a song writer or a film maker, but had always thought that he would excel in whatever he did. Probably, because of these aspirations Kharel does not feel that he has achieved much in life, even after many of his songs as well as films have become very popular among the audience. However, he enjoys his life thoroughly in retrospect. Kharel says he will focus on writing after retiring from his responsibility at the Royal Nepal Academy.



Kharel: Popular lyricist

Kharel writes whenever mood strikes. He expresses others' feelings equally well as he does his own. Kharel says that a song is 'the condensed form of one's feelings.' It's a kind of poem – a short and a lyrical one. Kharel also claims that songs should express the high intensity of one's feelings in the simplest form.

He has directed a number of films. A feature film 'Prem Pinda' based on the popular epic of playwright Bal Krishna Sama had become very popular. He also wrote songs for the film like 'Gairi Khetko Sirai Hanyo' and 'Sapana Ho Yo Bhanedekhi Sapanimai Marun.' Those songs are classic and are equally popular these days. In addition to the songs in this film he has written songs for more than forty other feature films.

He expresses the moods of different situation through his songs. The songs like 'Nau Saya Khola Tarera Jane, Birsane Po Ho Ki Malai Birsane Po Ho Ki' sung by Tara Devi and 'Yastai Rahechha Yahanko Chalan' sung by Devika Pradhan express the feelings of distress, while the songs like 'Udun Ki Gudun Ma, E Chari Sarara Udna Sikaide' express the feelings of a happy mood.

Kharel has over half a dozen published books to his credit. He published 'Ani Euta Lahar Biujhinchha' about forty years ago and other anthology songs and poems in the latter years. Likewise, he has written script for several feature films including Prem Pinda and for many educational and awareness creating documentaries.

In recognition to his contribution to Nepali music industry, he has been awarded with several honors and awards including 'Chhinnalata Geet Puraskar' and 'Ratna Shree Padak'. His contribution to the film industry has earned him several other awards including the 'Prakhyat Trishakti Patta' and 'Prabal Gorkha Dakshin Bahu'.

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