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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Mar 10- 16, 2006

Rural Tourism Fighting Poverty

C.D.O. Regd No. 151/039-40
Regd No. 200601-61

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Bush's Visit : New Political Wave
Tourism : Branding The Nation

सुखी परिवारको लागि सानो लगानी

प्रस्तुत छ... **...परिवार वचत खाता**

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COVER STORY : Rural Tourism

The initiative by TRPAP in promoting rural tourism for poverty alleviation is showing signs of success even during conflict period

Cover Photo by: Keshab Poudel

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Rajdhani

Bush Visit: New Political Wave

US President George Bush's visit to South Asian region creates a new political wave

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ENCOUNTER:

Sher Bahadur Deuba

Former PM Deuba speaks his mind on various issues in an interview he gave to KTV this week

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SPOTLIGHT

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

Vol. 25, No 27, March 10, 2006
Fagun 26, 2062

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Cover Design : Digi-Tech Scanning & Pre-Press Pvt. Ltd.
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Distribution : R.B. News Paper Traders
New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Ph : 4232784, 2020247, 4244679
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Printers : Printers World
Maitidevi, Kathmandu
Ph : 4423904, 4426520
E-mail : printerworld@wlink.com.np

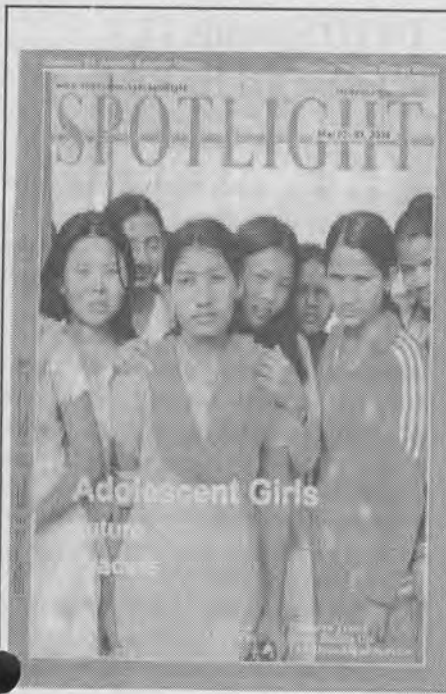
C.D.O.Regd. No
151/039-40
Postal Regd. No
42/61/62
U.S. Library of Congress
Catalogue No. 91-905060

Leaders of political parties are almost everyday in the news declaring that the King must handover power to the people but, in the same breath, they decline holding dialogue with the monarch till he hands over the power to the people. How the King is understanding these languages is a different matter as these statements have been made in the public and for the public consumption. One fails to understand how the problem can be discussed and solutions accomplished without starting dialogue with the King. People have been dependent upon organized political parties either through ballots or through rallying behind them. If political parties do not want to meet and have dialogue with the King, how would the power be handed over to the people? Which person will be there to take over that power? What will be the standing of that person while receiving power from the King? No one is asking these questions and no one is questioning in public the non-compromising posture of the political leaders.

Supposing that the King is fully convinced and wishes to give back the power, which in the first place should have been with the representatives of the people. If these politicians are not going to talk with the King, how and when the King will rest his burden of power? Considering the King's position, he desires to hand over the power to the elected representatives of the people. The recent municipal elections, though very controversial over the question of its legitimacy, was a test case. Almost all major political parties actively boycotted that and they have declared that they would do the same thing if elections for parliament are held next year. Neither they want to talk nor they want elections to be held, then how, when and where the power will be transferred to the people.

The constitution does not have any provision to handover power directly to the people. It transfers power to the people through their elected representatives. As there are no elected representatives in the parliament, only ad-hoc arrangements to handover power can be made. Constitution cannot have elaborated procedures and modality for this kind of extraordinary situation. There can be a political arrangement if agreements are reached upon by negotiations in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. For that both the sides must share the same concern about the situation. The commonality of interest must emerge to serve that purpose. But, unfortunately, what is emerging in the public is merely contrasts and conflicts of interests. The King may not have used appropriate and suitable words to show the commonalities of interest by saying that patriotism be a meeting point. That can be improved with terms, for example, like letting patriotism and democracy become the meeting point. These things can always be improved upon by political leaders if they sit together. The tragedy of the situation is that it is not the King who refuses to talk with the politicians but politicians, who are supposed to represent the people, are refusing to represent the people in the meeting with the King. The present political deadlock would one day become a history of the country. One can well guess what the harsh judgment of the history would be like. ■

Keshab
Keshab Poudel
Managing Editor



Germane Issue

The cover story about the involvement of girls in creating awareness about reproductive health was very informative "ADOLESCENT GIRLS' CONGRESS: Making Future Leaders" (SPOTLIGHT March 3). I learned about the activities of Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA/ Nepal) and how the adolescent girls were playing a leading role in disseminating information about reproductive health and population control through the detailed and analytical write up. As you have written, quoting the CEDPA president, girls are assets of the society and they can be very powerful tool in transforming the society through awareness raising programs.

Reeta Dhungana
Basantapur

More Training Required

Reproductive health is one of the major problems of the adolescents in the rural areas of Nepal "ADOLESCENT GIRLS' CONGRESS: Making Future Leaders" (SPOTLIGHT March 3). Parents, teachers as well as the youths themselves are still not very open to issues related to sexuality. Even though, educational materials related to reproductive health and population studies are included in the school curriculum, such issues are only limited to classroom teaching. So, the youths, particularly the girls are quite ignorant about reproductive health. In my opinion, the most effective way to bring change to such situation is through social mobilization. Therefore, there is a need to widen the horizon of such training programs so that more adolescents can benefit from the programs of non-governmental organizations.

Hemant Shrestha
Kuleshwore

Parliament Must Be Restored

As Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat has told in his interview with your magazine in

the recent issue, restoration of the parliament is the first step towards rescuing the country out of the current quagmire "The US Envoy's Remarks Intended To Alert Us" (SPOTLIGHT March 3). The constitutional process of state administration has derailed due to the absence of parliament. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990 clearly envisions monarchy as a revered institution, which does not take part in politics and day-to-day administration of the country. Therefore, the king should handover the power to the people as soon as possible. The best way to do so would be to hold elections of the House of Representatives. But, the prevailing situation of insurgency that has largely worsened since the midterm polls could not be held in 2002, does not make election at present possible. So, the only option left to handover the power to the people is to restore the dissolved House of Representatives. The king should abstain from active politics and it is up to the parliament to decide what strategy the country should devise to rescue the country out of the crisis.

Tirtha Nyaupane
Rabi Bhawan

Follow The 12-Point Pact

As you have written Maoist violence has been escalating in the recent days "MAOIST VIOLENCE: Red Alert" (SPOTLIGHT March 3). Ironically, the Maoist cadres have increased violent activities as their leaders have signed a 12-point pact-which includes agreements to reduce violence-with the leaders of seven agitating parties. Whatever may be their strategy behind the recent activities, it is the people who will suffer from violence. Speculations of blockades to the capital and general strikes are making the people panic further. The Maoists should follow the 12-point pact and stop violence immediately. That way they will garner enough public support and, in fact, their revolution will be even more powerful with public support.

Kedar Dhital
Baneshwore

Let's Explore More Prospects

It is very good to know that we can now earn money by adopting clean environmental practices "CARBON TRADING: Gaining Momentum" (SPOTLIGHT March 3). The story about carbon trading that appeared recently in SPOTLIGHT provides information about how emission reduction can be traded with money and the updates of what is happening in Nepal in that sector. By replacing the use of fossil fuels or fire-woods by cleaner options reduce the emission of carbon-dioxide. This benefits us in two ways. On the one hand, air pollution reduces and, on the other hand, we can make money by selling the emission reductions. To benefit more from such provisions, we should first expedite the projects that have started or are on the pipeline. We should also seek for other prospects where we can develop projects that replace the use of fossil fuels by clean mechanisms. This way, we will also be able to conduct sustainable development activities in our community.

Tara Subedi
Chabahil

Maoists Attack Ilam

Maoists launched a big attack at district headquarters of Ilam on Sunday night (March 5). Local people said thousands of Maoists entered the city on several vehicles. They launched targeted attacks against security posts. The Maoists who entered the city at around 9:30 at night cut electricity lines plunging the region into darkness. For hours, the local peoples could hear sounds of firing and explosion. The sound subsided after 3:00 in the morning. The Maoists are said to have destroyed government offices located there. Details of the casualties and damages are yet to emerge. *Compiled from reports.*

NC, UML Leaders In New Delhi To Meet Maoists

Two leaders of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Jhal Nath Khanal and Bamdev Gautam have reached New Delhi separately whereas Nepali Congress (NC) spokesperson Krishna Sitaula and leader Dr. Shekhar Koirala are already in the Indian capital where they are scheduled to meet with top Maoist leaders, reports Kantipur daily. At a time when debates have raged on the parties-Maoists 12-point understanding, the party leaders are expected to further discuss on the pact with the Maoist leaders. Meanwhile, The Himalayan Times daily reports that the meeting of the top leaders of seven parties alliance to be held today is expected to appeal to the Maoists to announce a ceasefire and thus demonstrate an "unflinching commitment" to peaceful resolution of the protracted constitutional crisis. "We have not discussed much at the task-force level. But chances are the top leaders could issue such an appeal," said Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandidevi) general secretary Anil Jha. This appears likely since there has been stepped up telephonic conversation between the rebel leaders and NC president Girija Prasad Koirala, adds the daily. *Leading dailies report.*

Govt. Rejects Rs 350 Million Of Aid

Citing technical errors, the government has rejected Rs 350 million

worth foreign aid. The Finance Ministry has rejected the aid for democratic development pledged by British DfID and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). "The aid was stopped because (the donors) who had earlier agreed for a different program, were going to present a separate program," said a highly placed government official. The official added that the government approves foreign aid depending upon their necessity. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

RNA Notice On UN Task

The Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) has recently sent circulars to all its units reminding them that soldiers, who have been indicted of human rights abuse, would not be allowed to take part in the United Nations' Peacekeeping missions abroad. "The policy of not sending those violating human rights for peacekeeping missions was already in place, but we have recently sent a reminder to the units," said Brigadier General B.A. Kumar Sharma, the chief of the RNA's legal department. The army's policy on the UN missions was published in the "Military Orders" on Wednesday (March 1). The RNA also said it is re-investigating those disappearance cases, which were not solved after earlier probe. High level task forces coordinated by a Colonel in the mid-western, central and valley divisions are working on it. "The task forces will submit their reports within a week," said a senior army official. *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

Maoist Toll In Palpa Clash Reaches 33

The number of Maoists who were killed in clash with the security forces in Panena area near border between Palpa and Arghakhanchi district has reached to 33 after 14 more dead bodies were found in the area. Security forces are still searching the area for more bodies. During the clash that occurred since Monday till Wednesday, 11 security personnel were also killed. Meanwhile, Maoists have issued a statement claiming that 30 security personnel were killed in the incident. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

DFID Spends 12.4 Percent Of Its Budget

The UK Department for International Development (DfID), a major bilateral donor in Nepal, has spent Rs 3990 million during the year 2005, which is only 12.4 percent of the allocated funds for the year. Though DfID had allocated Rs 31,620 million for the year, due to adverse working condition in the country, delivering effective services and carrying forward development initiatives at an acceptable cost was challenging. This has also constrained the use of the total allocated amount, DfID Annual Report states. The purpose of the report is to enable people throughout the country to understand what DfID is trying to achieve and the type of projects and programs it supports, states a press released issued by DfID, quoting Mark Mallalieu, head of DfID in Nepal. Peace building, livelihoods, basic services and governance and social inclusion are the major projects and programs of DfID Nepal where Rs 530 million, Rs 1180 million, Rs 1410 million and Rs 810 million have been spent respectively in the year 2005. *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

Consultations Aimed At Searching For Resolution

King Gyanendra has started consultations with a section of politicians and aides in search of ways to resolve the political crisis. Those who were granted audience by the King have informed that the King not only listened to their views but also asked their advice on the possible way outs. "Perhaps the King has started consultations after becoming serious with the (latest) American position," said Speaker of the House of Representatives Taranath Ranabhat, who met with the King on Wednesday morning. "I found the King serious for resolution," he said, adding that the consultations were not aimed at changing the composition of the current government but at negotiations with the parties. Ranabhat added that he told the King that restoration of parliament or formation of all party government based on broader political dialogue could resolve the situation. Likewise, RPP

leader Rabindra Nath Sharma, who was granted audience on Tuesday night, said that he told the King to immediately start dialogue with the mainstream parties. "The King replied that the search for resolution was on," Sharma told reporters. On the other hand, Rajeshwore Devkota, chairman of RPP (Nationalist), said he told the King that the fresh election of parliament was the only alternative. King Gyanendra, who is currently stationed in Ratna Mandir palace in Pokhara has held consultations with over three dozen politicians in the last two days. *Leading dailies report.*

Moriarty Analysis Correct: Thapa

The Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP) president and former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa has backed the US envoy to Nepal James Moriarty's stance on the current political situation labeling the statement as "purely based on the genuine realities" of the country. Thapa said, "What he (Moriarty) said is based on reality. His comment is unbiased. He spoke the right thing." Talking to reporters after the two-day central working committee meeting of the party, Thapa, however, said the 12-point understanding has both 'plus and minus'

points. He, however, showed concern over the Maoists' not abiding to the understanding. Even though the 12-point understanding was born 'illegally', it has become the nation's property, he said. Thapa said the King has to take the initiatives in creating the environment so that the parties can respond to it. "It is the King who should take the initiatives and then others (parties) will respond to it," he said. Thapa, however, rebuffed the idea of playing the role of a 'medium' saying, "RJP will not do that .. the parties can go by themselves if the environment is created." On recent royal audience to some political figures, Thapa said he took it as 'usual happening.' *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

12-Point Triggers Dispute In NC-D

A dispute is raging within Nepali Congress (Democratic) about the 12-point understanding with the Maoists. While the party establishment faction led by president Sher Bahadur Deuba has called for 'additions and deletions' in the pact, the dissident faction is pressing for abiding by the pact. Bal Bahadur KC, a central member and a leader of dissident faction, said that Deuba's remarks against the 12-point understanding is his 'personal

opinion.' "Before making any remarks against the pact, there should be dialogue within the party," KC said. Another central member Manmohan Bhattarai, however, said that the Maoists have breached the 12-point understanding. Furthermore, the two factions are also not in the same wavelength regarding the possibility of party unity. While the establishment side has called for 'honorable unity' and said the process would take time, the dissidents leaders have called for immediate reunification. *Leading dailies report.*

Explosives Seized

A huge cache of explosives was seized from Bhairahawa on Tuesday. The explosives were being brought to Nepal from India via Sunauli point. They were discovered when police conducted a search on a truck with Indian number plate. The truck was carrying coal on the surface but underneath was a huge cache of explosives including 10,200 detonators; 29,030 detonator caps; 7500 m fuse wire; 475 kgs of Emulsion Explosive Class 2 (Nepolite); and 2500 kgs of gelatin. Police suspect that the explosives were smuggled by the Maoists. Truck driver fled after police started to search the vehicle. *Leading dailies report.*



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King Gyanendra unveils the statue of late King Birendra in Shantibatika, Pokhara

Gorkhapatra

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IN A PRESS STATEMENT issued on Thursday, stated that Nepal considers Taiwan as an integral part of the People's Republic of China. "The Government considers the recent decision of the leader of the Taiwan Authority to cease the function of the National Unification Council and the application of the National Unification Guidelines with serious concerns. Nepal condemns this initiative that will have far-reaching implications undermining peace across the Taiwan straits," the release said.

MAOISTS DETONATED BOMBS IN THE OFFICE OF THE World Food Program (WFP) and three government offices in the eastern district of Jhapa Thursday morning, causing heavy loss of property. The Maoists first bombed the Nepal Telecom's office in Damak at around 11:00 a.m. Minutes after the blast in the Telecom office, simultaneous explosions took place at the WFP office and Land Revenue Office and Agricultural Development Bank, reports said. The blast badly damaged the Land Revenue Office while other three offices suffered minor damages. There were no reports of human casualty in the explosions. In collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the WFP has been providing food assistance to Bhutanese refugees living in Jhapa and Morang districts.

IN ORDER TO EXCHANGE NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCE IN conflict resolution, Embassy of Norway, in cooperation with Nepal Council of World Relations, held an interaction program by inviting Norwegian conflict resolution experts. The experts said that the international mediators could only provide technical and moral support. The main thing is the willpower among the conflicting parties to resolve the dispute peacefully, they said. Talking to reporters after the program, Norwegian ambassador Tore Toreng said that his country is ready to consider if conflicting parties request for their mediation in Nepal. He, however, added that the program was primarily intended at sharing international experiences of conflict resolution. Norway has been involved in conflict resolution and peace process in places like Sri Lanka, Philippines, Sudan, South Africa, Guatemala, Middle-east, Colombia, Haiti and so on.

THE NEPAL ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY (NEA) HAS announced further and more crippling hours of load shedding across the country. Citing severe shortage of power as water level in Kulekhani reservoir is dipping dangerously down thanks to lack of rainfall along with most other hydropower projects operating under-capacity due to drying up rivers, the NEA has announced five-hours of load shedding everyday. Authorities say that in the month of Falgun the demand has surged to 8.2 million units per day – up from

the expected demand of 7.8 million units. Whereas Kulekhani project is generating 92 MW – although its water level is also reducing sharply – most other projects are running on 44 percent capacity. According to NEA, it is running deficit of 1.3 million units of power a day.

THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF THE CURRENT FISCAL year has witnessed the number of Nepalese workers going for overseas works increase by whopping 41 percent. During this period 105,223 Nepalese left for overseas compared to 74,636 in the same period previous year. The number of workers going for Malaysia and the Gulf countries has grown by double digit. Destination of first choice Malaysia registered increase of 42.9 percent in the period. Malaysia occupies 50 percent of the total market share of Nepalese overseas workers. During the review period 53,392 Nepalese went to Malaysia. Likewise, the number of workers going to Qatar also increased by 54 percent – from 20620 in the corresponding period previous year to 31,000 this year. Furthermore, the number of women migrant workers has also increased substantially by 131 percent during the review period. It increased from 299 a year ago to 691 this year.

IN ITS ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE COMING FISCAL YEAR, Indian government has cut down the level of assistance to neighboring countries including Nepal. The budget for the fiscal year 2006/07, which was announced on Tuesday by Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, reduced the assistance to Nepal to IRs 65 crore from IRs 66 crore a year ago. Likewise, India has also reduced its assistance to Bangladesh, Bhutan and the Maldives. The assistance amount for Sri Lanka has not been changed. For Bangladesh, India has reduced the assistance from IRs 52 crore a year ago to IRs 50 crore. Bhutan, which has been enjoying Indian assistance in various development projects, too, would get less than IRs 11.31 billion this year. Maldives will see the assistance go down from IRs 13 crore a year ago to IRs 6 crore. Indian budget has, however, increased assistance level to Central Asian countries and Myanmar. In the last fiscal year, India had set aside IRs 41.82 billion for foreign assistance – the amount has come down to IRs 36.95 billion this year.

THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR Refugees (UNHCR) said the Pro-Public is its new implementing partner for providing care and assistance to urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Nepal. "Pro-Public, with the funding, support and coordination of UNHCR, will provide care and assistance to urban, mandate refugees and asylum-seekers in accordance with policies and guidelines developed by UNHCR," a statement quoted Abraham Abraham, UNHCR's representative to Nepal as saying.

OF THE TWO NEPALIS WHO HAD BEEN ABDUCTED BY unidentified groups in Kabul, Afghanistan, one has been set free while another has been found dead. According to reports, Jeet Narayan Pun died while in the captivity of the criminal gang whereas Thaman Singh Rana has been released unhurt.

WITH THE INTENTION OF COUNTERING THE PROPAGANDA spread by the Maoists, the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) is preparing to operate mobile FM radio stations. According to security sources, the Ministry of Information and Communication has already approved the RNA for operating the FM stations. The RNA is preparing to operate six FM stations with the power of 250 watts and four stations with the power of 1 kilowatt. The meeting of central security committee chaired by RNA chief General Pyara Jung Thapa, which was held nine months ago, had decided to operate FM radio. Since last two years, Maoists have been operating their mobile FM stations in rural areas. The government has waived license fees to the RNA for operating the FM. The source said that the "Strategic Mobile FM" will counter "Maoist propaganda" and communicate "scientific and positive propaganda." ■

“The country cannot continue in the current state for long. In order to prevent the country from becoming a failed state, the King needs to take one step forward and start consultations with political parties.”

Taranath Ranabhat, speaker of the House of Representatives, speaking to reporters after royal audience in Ratna Mandir, Pokhara.

* * *

“It is ridiculous to talk about dialogue when democratic people are being detained. The royal audience will be meaningful only when the King decides to handover the government to the parties.”

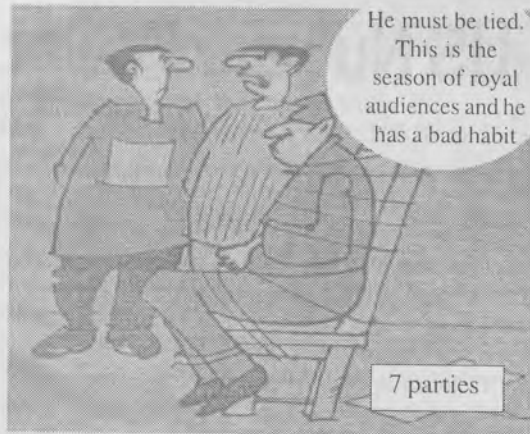
Sujata Koirala, leader of Nepali Congress (NC) and daughter of former prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, in response to the recent royal audiences to various leaders, in Rajdhani.

* * *

“There is no alternative to talks if we expect to solve the problem. If that is so, both sides must go ahead, not lag behind.”

Lokendra Bahadur Chand, former prime minister, speaking at a program in Kathmandu.

* * *



Bimarsha

“Although we have been recommending to the government to make public the whereabouts of disappeared persons, the government hasn’t responded.”

Nayan Bahadur Khatri, chairman of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), addressing a press conference in the capital.

* * *

“The government has indulged in a barbaric act by resorting to indiscriminate atrocity against people who are struggling for survival.”

Amrit Rai, director of Nepal Association of the Blind (NAB), responding to the police atrocities against the blind persons who were on a peaceful demonstration to attract government attention

towards their demands, in The Kathmandu Post.

* * *

“We cannot hold talks and reconcile with the King only on the basis of the comments by the American Ambassador unless the parliament is restored.”

Bharat Mohan Adhikary, leader of the Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML), in Rajdhani.

* * *

“I found the King flexible for talks. I found him interested to solve the national problem through reconciliation with all sectors.”

Shree Kant Adhikari, political analyst and former member of parliament of the 2015 (B.S.) parliament, after a royal audience in Pokhara, in Jana Bhawana.

* * *

TRANSITION

APPOINTED: Hari Gopal Gorkhali, as the general manager of the Agricultural Development Bank Limited, by the government.

PROMOTED: Dhan Singh Karki, as the additional chief officer of National Investigation Department, by the government.

HONORED: Journalist Shiva Regmi, with ‘Literary Journalism

Award 2006’, and columnist Jaya Dev Bhattarai, with ‘Literary Column Writing Award’, by Information and Communications Minister Shrish Shumsher Rana.

AWARDED: Bal Krishna Basnet, legal reporter of Kantipur daily, with this year’s NBA Legal Journalism Award, by Nepal Bar Association (NBA).

Sujit Mundal, chief executive director of Standard Chartered Bank, with the ‘Best Management Award-2005’, by Management Association of Nepal (MAN).

ELECTED: Rajendra Bahadur Raut as the president unopposed, Khila Nath Dahal as the senior vice-president, Rama Poudel as the woman vice-president, Arun K.C., Radha Kant Dev, Chandra Prasad Dhakal, Hari Om Raghubanshi and Yagya Raj Bhatta as the vice-presidents, Hari as the general secretary, Ayodhya Prasad Yadav and Rishav Dev Ghimire as the joint – general secretaries, and Dhruva Chandra Gautam as the treasurer, of Democratic Confederation of Nepalese Trade Unions (DECONT), by the general convention of DECONT. ■

Indo-US Nuclear Power Accord And Nepal

By DR AB THAPA

Signing of an accord to provide assistance to India in development of civilian nuclear power projects has been regarded by press across the world as the main focus of the present visit of the US President to South Asia. It has become quite remarkable that the US Government has decided to provide such assistance in breach of the existing rules that prohibit transfer of nuclear technology to countries, like India, that do not allow their nuclear facilities to be inspected and monitored by the IAEA to ensure that they are being used strictly for non-military purposes. Quite serious is the charge against India that it had already violated the treaty to ban any type of nuclear bomb tests. As a result, quite a large number of the US politicians are critical of such a deal. Against all these odds the USA has taken the decision to provide assistance to India to establish nuclear power stations. According to President George Bush such decision is in the interest of the United States.

We may not know for sure that the US decision to provide assistance to India to establish nuclear power stations is prompted by the desire to keep at bay the highly publicized plan to lay pipeline from Iran to India to deliver natural gas to meet the soaring demand for power needed for India's fast growing economy. Such switch over from the natural gas to nuclear power would greatly reduce the dependency of the South Asia for energy supply on Iran which has been identified by the United States as its greatest enemy. It might equally be possible that the US energy giants might have pressurized the US Government to open for them the fast growing India's energy market.

India has already developed a highly ambitious plan to develop power stations to generate nuclear energy based mostly on its indigenous technology. Now India must be having every reason to hope to get the US technology and investment to realize its plan after the deal with the United States. The works to generate nuclear energy on a big scale can be expected soon to gain momentum. At present the USA is the biggest producer of nuclear energy in the whole world.

It does appear that in future India is going to be heavily dependent on the use of nuclear energy. Nuclear power stations are operated to meet almost exclusively the base load demand. This type of power generation must be supported by hydropower to meet the peak load. Nepal must keep a close watch on India's nuclear power development plans. It would be highly desirable to plan our hydropower projects in line with India's nuclear power development plans if we want to derive maximum benefits from the export of electricity to India.

Iranian Gas Pipeline

Iran is a country in the middle east very rich in oil and natural gas. In 1999 Iran's annual oil production was 1.3 billion barrels; two-thirds was exported. Iran also has the world's second largest reserves of natural gas; these are exploited primarily for domestic use. Turkmenistan too has very large reserves of natural gas. Turkmenistan's gas and oil is currently exported through Russian-controlled pipelines to countries within the former Soviet Union. Turkmenistan wanted to diversify its market. In 1997 the first new pipeline opened,

connecting gas fields in Turkmenistan with northern Iran. Now Iran is looking forward to export natural gas to South Asia. The question is, how to transport the natural gas to South Asia.

Natural gas occupies 600 times more volume as a gas than as a liquid, as a result, it is not practical to transport natural gas in a container. Natural gas turns into a liquid at -160°C . It can be stored and shipped as a liquid at that temperature. Liquefied natural gas is transported primarily by ship. Despite the fact that the natural gas can be transported by ships in liquefied form, it would be far more economic to transport the Iranian natural gas to South Asia through pipeline.

Already for quite some time talks are going on to lay a natural gas pipeline from Iran to India through Pakistan on the Iranian initiative. Iran is very much interested to implement the pipeline project connecting its gas refineries with the countries in South Asia.

India's Nuclear Energy Generation Plan

It is reported that the importance of nuclear energy as a sustainable resource for the country was recognized at the very inception of the India's atomic energy programme five decades ago. India has only limited uranium deposits but this country is very rich in thorium deposits which can be used for the generation of nuclear energy. It is said that about 33% of the world's thorium deposits are in India.

India had formulated three-stage nuclear programme. The first stage comprised setting up of Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR), Boiling Water Reactors (BWR) and Pressurized Water Reactors (PWR). The second stage involved setting up of Fast Breeder Reactors (FBR) backed by reprocessing plants and plutonium based fuel fabrication plants. The third stage of the Indian nuclear power programme will be based on the thorium-Uranium-233 cycle.

Worldwide Use of Nuclear Energy

In 1998 a total of 437 nuclear plants operated worldwide. Another 35 reactors were under construction. Eighteen countries generate at least 20 percent of their electricity from nuclear power. The largest nuclear power industries are located in the United States (107 reactors), France (59), Japan (54), Britain (35), Russia (29), and Germany (20). In the United States, no new reactors have been ordered for more than 20 years. In many developed countries public opposition, strict building and operating regulations, and high costs for waste disposal have made nuclear power plants much more expensive to build and operate than plants that burn fossil fuels.

In 1996 about 22 percent of the electric power generated in the United States came from nuclear power plants. In the aftermath of the Three Mile Island accident in Pennsylvania in 1979, safety concerns and various economic factors led to suspension of additional growth of nuclear power plants in the United States. No orders for nuclear plants have been placed in the United States since 1978, and even some of those plants that had been completed have not been allowed to operate. France occupies the topmost position in use of nuclear energy. At present France generates 80 percent of its electricity from nuclear power.

Varieties of Nuclear Reactors

There are varieties of nuclear reactor types in operation worldwide. They are characterized by the type of fuel, moderator, and coolant used. Nuclear reactors have been built throughout the world for the production of electric power. In the United States, with few exceptions, power reactors use nuclear fuel in the form of uranium oxide enriched to about three percent Uranium-235. The moderator and coolant are highly purified ordinary water. A reactor of this type is called a light-water reactor (LWR). This type of nuclear reactors had been built from the very early period in the USA and the former USSR.

In the pressurized-water reactor (PWR), a version of the LWR system, the water coolant operates at a pressure of about 150 atmospheres. It is pumped through the reactor core, where it is heated to about 325° C. The superheated water is pumped through a steam generator, where, through heat exchangers, a secondary loop of water is heated and converted to steam. This steam drives one or more turbine generators. Afterward it is condensed, and is pumped back to the steam generator. The secondary loop is isolated from the water in the reactor core and, therefore, is not radioactive. A third stream of water from a lake, river, or cooling tower is used to condense the steam. In the USA this type of nuclear reactor was developed by Westinghouse.

In the boiling-water reactor (BWR), a second type of LWR, the water coolant is permitted to boil within the core, by operating at somewhat lower pressure. The steam produced in the reactor pressure vessel is piped directly to the turbine generator for the generation of power. Thereafter it is condensed and pumped back to the reactor. Although the steam is radioactive, there is no intermediate heat exchanger between the reactor and turbine to decrease efficiency. As in the PWR, the condenser cooling water has a separate source, such as a lake or river. In the USA this type of nuclear reactor was developed by General-Electric.

In the initial period of nuclear power development in the early 1950s, enriched uranium was available only in the United States and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The nuclear power programs in Canada, France, and the United Kingdom therefore centered around natural uranium reactors, in which ordinary water cannot be used as the moderator because it absorbs too many neutrons. This limitation led Canadian engineers to develop a reactor (PHWR) cooled and moderated by deuterium oxide (D₂O), or heavy water. The Canadian deuterium-uranium reactor known as CANDU has operated satisfactorily in Canada, and similar plants have been built in India, Argentina, and elsewhere.

In the United Kingdom and France the first full-scale power reactors fueled with natural uranium metal, were graphite-moderated, and were cooled with carbon dioxide gas under pressure. These initial designs have been superseded in the United Kingdom by a system that uses enriched uranium fuel. In France the initial reactor type chosen was dropped in favor of the PWR of U.S. design when enriched uranium became available from French isotope-enrichment plants. Russia and the other successor states of the former USSR had a large nuclear power program, using both graphite-moderated and PWR systems.

The power level of an operating reactor is monitored by a variety of nuclear instruments. Power output is controlled by inserting or removing from the core a group of neutron-absorbing

control rods. The position of these rods determines the power level at which the chain reaction is just self-sustaining.

Nuclear Reactors in India

Currently there are 12 PHWR in India. Earlier two BWR were set up at Tarapur, Maharashtra, in 1969. The total installed capacity of all these 14 reactors is 2,770 MW. It is said that at present six PHWR are under construction in various parts of India. Similarly two LWR each of 1,000 MW capacity are being constructed at Kundankulam in Tamil Nadu with Russian collaboration.

It is reported that an indigenous 40 MW Fast Breeder Test Reactor using the unique mixed uranium-plutonium carbide fuel has been operating at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu since 1985. In September 2003, the Government of India approved the construction of a 500 MW Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor.

Fast Breeder Reactors

Uranium, the natural resource on which nuclear power is based, occurs in scattered deposits throughout the world. Its total supply is not fully known, and may be limited. The main disadvantage of the LWR nuclear power system is its very low efficiency in the use of uranium: only approximately one percent of the energy content of the uranium is made available in this system.

The key feature of a breeder reactor is that it produces more fuel than it consumes. It does this by promoting the absorption of excess neutrons in a fertile material. Several breeder reactor systems are technically feasible. The breeder system that has received the greatest worldwide attention uses Uranium-238 as the fertile material. When Uranium-238 absorbs neutrons in the reactor, it is transmuted to a new fissionable material, Plutonium.

The breeder system that has had the greatest development effort is called the liquid-metal fast breeder reactor (LMFBR). In order to maximize the production of plutonium-239, the velocity of the neutrons causing fission must remain fast. Any moderating materials, such as water, that might slow the neutrons must be excluded from the reactor. A molten metal, liquid sodium, is the preferred coolant liquid. Sodium has very good heat transfer properties, melts at about 100° C, and does not boil until about 900° C. Its main drawbacks are its chemical reactivity with air and water and the high level of radioactivity induced in it in the reactor.

Development of the LMFBR system began in the United States before 1950, with the construction of the first experimental breeder reactor, EBR-1. A larger U.S. program, on the Clinch River, was halted in 1983, and only experimental work was to continue. In the United Kingdom, France, and the former USSR, working breeder reactors were installed. Experimental works continued in Germany and Japan. The first large-scale LMFBR plant for the generation of electricity, called Super-Phénix, went into operation in France in 1984. An intermediate-scale plant, the BN-600, was built on the shore of the Caspian Sea for the production of power and the desalination of water. The British have a large 250-MW prototype in Scotland.

The LMFBR produces about 20 percent more fuel than it consumes. In the LMFBR system about 75 percent of the energy content of natural uranium is made available, in contrast to the one percent in the LWR.

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

BUSH'S VISIT

A New Political Wave

The US President's visit to South Asia creates a new political wave

By KESHAB POUDEL

Just twenty-four hours after the departure of US president George W. Bush from his maiden visit to South Asia - when he and Indian prime minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, publicly called on the Maoists to abandon violence in Nepal, the insurgents attacked an eastern border town of Ilam destroying precious infrastructures.

The Kantipur daily, the largest circulated newspaper, on its March 6 issue revealed that senior Nepalese political leaders are in Indian capital New Delhi to meet with the Maoist leaders and discuss ways to make the agitation effective. According to the report CPN-UML leaders Bamdev Gautam, Jhal Nath Khanal and Nepali Congress spokesman Krishna Prasad Sitaula and Shekhar Koirala are reportedly in New Delhi to discuss to further clarify the 12-point understanding that was signed between Maoists and seven parties in New Delhi in November 2005.

For Nepal, which has been fighting with violent insurgency without popularly elected government, the recent visit of U.S. president George W. Bush to South Asia has brought no immediate positive outcomes.

Although Nepal's recent political development and violent insurgency was publicly figured out in the joint declaration of US president Bush and Indian prime minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, it is yet to be seen how concerns raised by world's only super power will be addressed.

Although the US and India publicly acknowledged the need to bring peace in Nepal, these two incidents (Ilam attack and Delhi meeting) have shown that Nepal will have to face violent insurgency and political instability for a long time to come.

"It was shocking to read the news in Kantipur regarding the scheduled meeting of Maoists leaders and seven parties in New Delhi where leader of world's only super power and leader of regional power

just recently had publicly mentioned Nepal's problems. It is difficult to ignore the issues that were publicly raised by the US president Bush in his visit to India. As such, it is not easy to see the revival of democratic process and normalcy in Nepal," said a former foreign minister.

Some foreign relations experts are disappointed by the (lack of) outcome of the visit and the incidents that followed the visit in Nepal. "The visit has little meaning to Nepal as the American president George W. Bush followed India's policy vis-à-vis Nepal's ongoing insurgency and political problem," said a political analyst. "The news published in populist daily newspaper regarding the meeting of Maoist insurgent leaders and seven political parties showed India's real intentions. Indian political leaders are helpless in front of hawkish and notorious secret agencies regarding the policy formulation on its neighbor."

"Indian prime minister Dr. Singh, a person of academic and bureaucratic background, had no significant appeal in the masses but he had a goodwill of the western strategists to coordinate the needs of India with a capability of the west. That way the western governments, particularly the USA, appeared to be much closer with India to an extent that the neighbors could be disappointed. The way Pakistani people demonstrated their anguish was a result of that and such kinds of apprehensions are there in Nepal also," said a political analyst. "Mentioning of Nepal's ongoing problems in their joint deliberations needs to be explained yet. Whatever goodwill American ambassador James F. Moriarty has created by demonstrating US independent policy for Nepal, the US and India joint deliberations regarding Nepal's affair has blurred them. It seems that the US assured India that

it is not going to deal with India's neighbor by ignoring India."

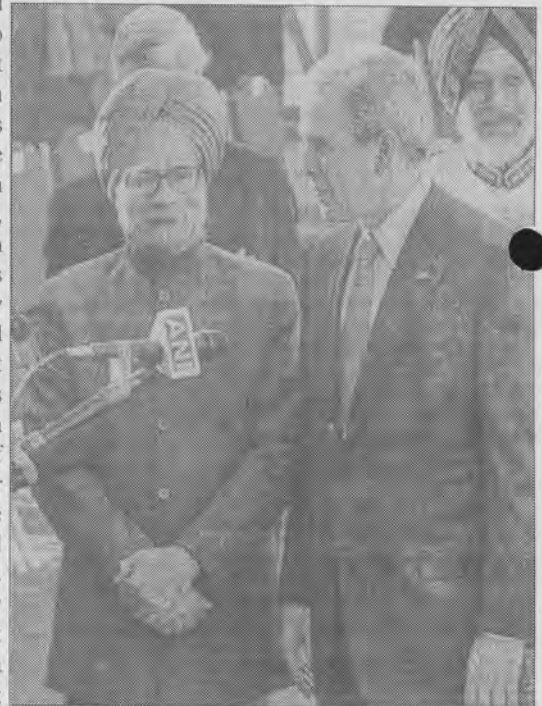
New Political Wave

Despite a wave of demonstrations and oppositions, U.S. president George W. Bush's five-days visit to three south Asian countries India, Pakistan and Afghanistan have created a new political wave. After this visit, the United States and India are found on completely the same board. Soon after the independence of India and Pakistan in South Asia, there had begun a rivalry between two superpowers - the USA and erstwhile USSR - to get a foothold for their strategic interests in various regions including the South Asia.

Although it is a democratic country, India slowly and gradually entered into the Soviet influence, though there was a facet of non-alignment in its overall policy. Pakistan, which could not share democratic processes consistently and continuously, entered into the western security arrangements.

There have been protracted and tragic conflicts between India and Pakistan in this region in which democratic west was found to be close with non-democratic and militarist Pakistan and democratic India was closer with a totalitarian communist power bloc.

The 1990s were a turning point in the world politics as well as South Asian politics as the communist totalitarian power



PM Singh (left) and President Bush: Heralding a new era
Rajdhani

bloc collapsed, mainly by its own contradictions. The world had since then been in a unipolar shape having USA with a decisive role; and the structural and psychological barriers of the cold war period politics of South Asia is slowly and gradually changing. The recent politics of South Asia is an example of the change of power equation.

Till a couple of years ago, American South Asian expert like Strobe Talbot were proposing a theme to keep India engaged with an obvious purpose of demolishing the barriers evolved during the cold war period. The last general election of India – which was a routine democratic affair, has produced unexpectedly a new power equation in India. Congress president Sonia Gandhi proposed Dr. Manmohan Singh, who has a background as western trained economist, as a prime minister with political acceptability among the competing groups in his party and coalition partners.

So far as India is concerned, it has taken a U-turn compared to its long history of anti-west and anti-US policies. Despite some opposition, which pressured American not to press present Indian government, India's overwhelming majority of middle class support India's closeness with the USA. Economically, too, both the countries have enormous opportunities to work together.

"The major concern for countries around India is regarding the role India is going to play with the western goodwill and support. So far as the present political leadership of India is concerned, prime minister Dr. Singh has a different image than previous prime ministers. It would not be unrealistic to expect from prime minister Dr. Singh that he would prefer to go in a democratic relationship than hegemonic with India's neighbors but it will take a long time to bring change in the British tradition of apolitical Indian bureaucracy – which has a rigid and outmoded mindset towards its neighbors," said the political analyst. "With the long involvement of dissolved Soviet Union security system, India has a security services deputed mainly against its neighbors to manipulate and interfere in the internal politics of these countries."

Indian Press:

Anti-Nepal Wave

When there was democratically elected government and parliament,

Indian press did not spare any time to condemn and criticize them to the extent of instigating the King. Now the same Indian newspapers have been launching crusade against the present establishment and monarchy by publishing all kinds of news and views in recent months.

"Whenever Nepal's relationship with China comes into the news, its immediate reactions are seen in the Indian newspapers headlines. Alarmists in Nepal have their views that India has a design against Nepal. As long as the situation remains same, Nepal would not be able to benefit from Indo-US closer relations," said the analyst.

"Though Nepal has a great access to India and deeper traditional, cultural, religious ties, it is due to interest of self-preservation, Nepal has been forced to tilt towards China. "The western countries and the US, too, have been unable yet to assure the country like Nepal that they can be reliable at the time of hard needs," added the analyst.

Forthcoming Visit of Chinese High Level Delegation

In a very critical time and after observing the role of the USA in India in the context of South Asian politics, the Chinese deputy prime minister has opted to come to Nepal as he is scheduled to arrive on March 14.

It is going to be a very significant visit - which will be watched by Indian strategists in a microscopic manner. China has generated a new expectation by its pragmatic political approach with its neighbors with heavy emphasis upon economic build up and cooperation.

A question comes, will China be able to perform the role – which American seems to have ignored? The role is to create an environment of trust and cooperation on both the sides of Himalayas. The expression of King Gyanendra's proposal Nepal as a transit point between the two neighbor seem to have been guided by a real assessment of the needs and aspirations of two big neighbors.

Despite serious differences in their political systems, the top leaders of India and China generate a hope in Nepal that Nepal can be really a zone of peace and a transit country between these two big powers. However, as the violence continues, they appear a lofty dreams at present. ■

Youth in Development Partnership

Association of Youth Organizations Nepal (AYON) launched Youth in Development Partnership (YDP) 2006 under the theme "Yuwa Aba Hamro Palo, Desh Bikash ko lagi Hatemalo" in partnership with Poverty Reduction Strategy Resource Center. YDP is an award program that promotes youth involvement in development and supports innovative projects from youth-led organizations and groups from all over Nepal. The project aims to support 7 youth projects with a maximum grant amount of Rs 3,00,000 in the following thematic areas: Education; Health; Employment; Youth Participation; Agriculture; Conflict Resolution; Infrastructure and Environment.

Launching the program amidst a function in the capital, Program Director of the YDP 2006, Sudyumna Dahal, said that the program is first of its kind in Nepal in mainstreaming youth of Nepal within national focus as not only the beneficiary but also a key partner in development and planning. He also said that this was an opportunity for youth and youth groups and all the stakeholders to initiate and foster inter-agency collaboration as a vehicle for outreach and youth participation.

Rajeev Upadhyya, the Focal Person for Youth in South Asia at the World Bank said that no matter how big the challenge is in development efforts in Nepal today, the challenge can't be barrier to those who are really committed, transparent and inclusive in development efforts. Therefore he emphasized that as YDP is an opportunity for young people, it is also a challenge for young people to show whether they are really serious about development and nation or not. Madhav Ghimire, Secretary at Ministry of General Administration, inaugurating the program applauded young people's efforts in projects like YDP and said it is directly linked to HMG/N's three-pronged approach to development especially in creating space for development efforts. Rajendra Mulmi, President of AYON said that programs like this needs more support from the government and donor agencies to keep it going in the long run. He further added that young people should be encouraged more and more into youth service and development. There aren't enough opportunities for young people in the development field and the Youth in Development Partnership hopes to encourage the participation and involvement of more young people in development. ■

TRPAP

Generating

A

New Hope

Despite the intensification of Maoist insurgency and absence of elected representatives at the local level, Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Program (TRPAP) has become a boon to the conflict prone areas of Chitwan district. The successful implementation of TRPAP in hilly areas of Chitwan shows that the active participation of local community can make a lot of difference even in conflict hit areas. At a time when the government agencies are unable to execute the development projects in many rural parts of the country, the TRPAP has won overwhelming supports from the local people including all political sides. As new infrastructures have already been constructed and institutions are established, three hilly villages of Chitwan can become a model on how tourism can help to alleviate the poverty

KESHAB POUDEL, in Shaktikhor village of Chitwan

Although the escalation of the conflict has stalled the flow of tourists, Hugdi, 90 kilometers west on the side of Pokhara highway, and Shaktikhor, a foot hill of Mahabharat range, 20 kilometers north east of Bharatpur, have already been linked as a trekking route between mountain and

plain up to the Royal Chitwan National Park bringing opportunities to transform the lives of people living in four villages of Chitwan district.

From Sirachuli mountain peak, from where one can see splendid view of sunrise, to Chepang Hill Trekking trail and houses of Gurung, Magar, Chepang and Tamang cultures, one can find all kinds of rural tourist attractions in this area before entering to the Royal Chitwan

National Park to enjoy the nature and wildlife.

Ignored and neglected from the mainstream development for long period of time, no one can imagine that the living standard of the area – which is mostly inhabited by Chepang, an indigenous tribe with daily income of less than one dollar – can be transformed by establishing link with Royal Chitwan National Park. From economic upliftment



Chepang village in Chitwan: Unique destination for cultural tourism

to social and cultural change, the four northeast villages of Chitwan district are now in the process of complete transformation.

Under the programs supported by TRPAP, the poor villagers living in the remote parts of Chitwan have many things to boast as they have learnt new ways to grow off-season vegetables, commercialization of agriculture, values of educations, sanitation and health. Most importantly, one can see a holistic change in Chepang community as well.

"I have never imagined in my life that we could grow vegetables on our own. There were no places for vegetables in our daily food," said Ramji Maya Chepang, 48. "We were always afraid to see people from other community around us but now the situation has changed."

As Shaktikhor is developed as an entry point of tourism route, lives of many other men and women like Ramji Maya Chepang is also changing. After the completion of the infrastructures development by TRPAP, there are enormous opportunities around the villages.

If the situation were normal, the economy of the region would have transformed in a much faster rate than the present one. Despite uncertainty, more than 100 Nepalese and foreign tourists passed through the Shaktikhor

village this year and the farmers are making money selling off season vegetables and local handicrafts.

From accommodating tourists under home stay programs to guiding trekkers, growing vegetable and making handicrafts, local people are equipped with new skills to intensify their economic activities. They have also learned the ways to prepare all kinds of primary facilities required for the rural tourism.

The project - which has been implemented at the worse period of political crisis - was launched just a few months after the Royal Palace Massacre in June 2001. Since then it has already passed many critical phases in the face of drastically declining tourist arrival.

Designed to be implemented through the local elected bodies, the project, however, saw all political mobilization stalled following the expiry of tenure of office bearers of Village Development Committees and national parliament in year 2002. The electricity, drinking waters and school buildings were constructed before 2001. Local people still remember then Minister of Water Resources Govinda Raj Joshi for supporting the electrification of their villages.

Despite lack of locally elected representatives, the TRPAP has achieved

major successes what many other projects failed to achieve thanks to its way of mobilizing communities at all levels. Because of community mobilization, the project did not encounter a major hurdle in implementing infrastructure activities.

"We follow transparency in program implementation and all the projects are designed and implemented after taking consent from the communities. When programs are directed to whole community and their benefits, the local people themselves defend them," said Lal Bahadur Chepang, a resident of Shaktikhor Village Development Committee. "This project is ours and all of us irrespective of political ideology are stakeholders."

The approach of community mobilization has made a lot of difference. "In initial year, there was certain level of uncertainty but when the community began to shown overwhelming response, even insurgents had to support the project," said Jit Naryan Shrestha, vice president of Nepal Red Cross Society village committee. "This program has transformed the lifestyle of general population."

One of good approaches of the project is that it does not intervene in the project implementation. From project selection, to implementation and execution, local committees are given complete control.

Whether it is the construction of public toilet or drinking water, construction of trails or, irrigation, the TRPAP has brought everything necessary to uplift the life of rural people. As people realize the importance of consumption of vegetables and its market value, there is growing trend to plant the off-season and on-season vegetables.

Transformation in Lifestyle

The life of Lal Bahadur Giri, 36, secretary of Sustainable Tourism Development Committee of Kaule Village Development Committee of north eastern Chitwan, has changed a lot as he is earning Rs. 3000.00 (US dollar 40) monthly making handicrafts using the locally available materials. "My income is enough to buy kerosene, oil, salt, books and stationary to my two children," said Giri who visits Chitwan at least twice a month for trekking.

Situated in the middle hill of Chitwan bordering Dhading district, all the residents of Kaule know the way for income generation but conflict continues to block their way to prosperity.

With an objective to promote tourism in the rural parts of Nepal to alleviate poverty, TRPAP has introduced a number of changes in the local mind set, infrastructures and physical outlook in four remote villages Siddhi, Korak, Shaktikhor and Kaule of Chitwan district, 150 miles north east of Kathmandu.

Till a few years ago, people of the region hardly knew about the important issues. In the last couple of years many local people got training in the area of small hotel management, local tour guides, cooking, banking, tourism and environment awareness program and management capacity enhancement and handicraft making.

After receiving handicraft training, Giri, who is also the secretary of Sustainable Tourism Development Committee of Kaule, and many of his villagers are busy producing handicrafts using local raw materials. "We don't have problems of market as demands for local handicraft are high in Chitwan," said Giri. "If the situation returns to normal, we will see many trekkers in our villages and the income of local people will go up."

As half of the population of these four villages are Chepang, an indigenous ethnic group, there is a greater tourism potential in the region as Chepang has unique culture and way of living. TRPAP financially supported to construct Chiwan-Chepang Hill trails for trekkers.

"If we have greater market access, we will produce more vegetables. For instance, I have to sell tomato at less than Rs. 2 per kilo. If I carry it up to the main market, I will get better price," said Lal Bahadur Chepang. "If the number of tourists increases, the market of my vegetables will come to my own village."

Covering 20,731 square kilometers, the TRPAP covers 4119 households with population of 23,737 including 12,464 Chepangs. For social mobilization, altogether 39 new community committees, working groups, 10 cultural groups and 69 consumer groups have already been set up in the four villages. In the process towards institutionalization, four Sustainable Tourism Development Committee have already been set up along with regulation of Sustainable Rural Tourism Fund and Management Plan of Participatory District Tourism Development.

As the main goal of the TRPAP is to reduce the poverty through the development, promotion and marketing

of new tourism models in the areas and institutionalize tourism in local self-governance, the project focuses its attention to launch more income generating activities offering enormous opportunities.

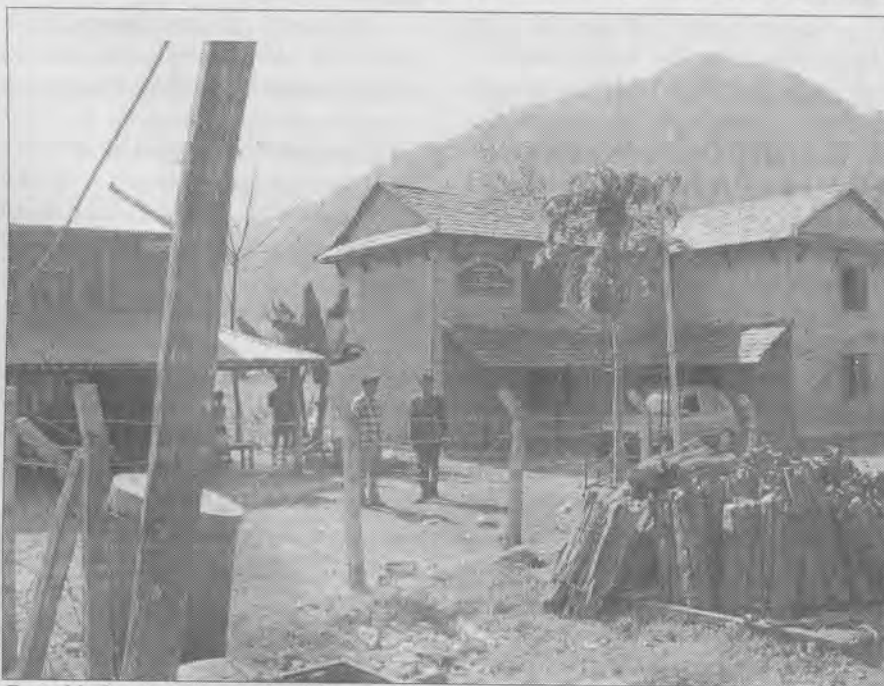
"I am proud to say that the TRPAP is one of the highly successful programs in the district. In the last three years, most of our other programs had hardly spent 30 percent of development budgets but the committees working under TRPAP have proved that they are the pioneer by spending over 95 percent of annual budget in development works," said Binod Prakash Singh, Local Development Officer of Chitwan District. "As there is massive involvement of local community in planning and project implementation, no one can stall the program. TRPAP has taught us a lesson on how to make progress in the program initiated in the remote villages."

According to the district, till the end of July 2005, TRPAP has already spent Rs. 1,49,18,834.03 or about 94 percent. On the other hand, spending by local bodies are very less. "Our village has sanctioned more than Rs. 200,000 for other projects in villages but no community has shown any interest to implement it. Less than 30 percent of our annual budget were spent last year," said Bharat Babu Kanel, secretary of Siddhi Village Development Committee, one of the VDCs covered by TRPAP. "Since TRPAP spends money through the grass root level organizations, communities take care of every thing."

New Breed Entrepreneurs

Setimaya Chepang, a resident of Shaktikhor village, has seen many changes in her village. A woman from underprivileged and economically backward ethnic group, Setimaya had hardly imagined that she would one day be running small lodges for home stay program. She did not know that her village had such potential for tourism development.

Setimaya, 50, has recently built a small house to offer home stay package to the tourists. Along with neat bed, Setimaya also offers food with organic vegetables produced in her garden. "I can accommodate three tourists at a time



Rural infrastructures: Building a base

as I have three beds in my new house, along with utensils and other facilities,” said Setimaya, who has already hosted two groups of Nepalese tourists. “I received loan financial support from the TRPAP to build the small house and buy the utensils to cook food.”

Under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, United Nations Development Program, DFID, SNV-Nepal and Nepal Tourism Board are providing financial and technical assistance to implement TRPAP projects in six districts of Nepal. Chitwan is one of them.

“Within three years period, we have been able to implement the programs in a community with no history of socialization,” said Rabi Jung Pandey, national program manager of Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Program. “One of the main aspects of our program is the community involvement in planning, program designing and implementation. Despite all kinds of uncertainties, we have already built infrastructures to sustain tourism in these remote villages of northern Chitwan. If we are able to divert a small percentage of tourists visiting Sauraha to these villages, it will bring a lot of changes in their livelihood.”

Although the Village Development Committees are defunct, the District Development Committee is a main partner of the project.

In absence of elected bodies, a large number of new community organizations were formed in all the districts to carry out the infrastructures development projects. More than 100 community organizations were formed in three districts Dolpa, Chitwan and Solukhumbu. In Chitwan alone there are 20 such organizations with total members numbering 200 with half of them from specially targeted groups.

Institutionalization of rural tourism started from the year 2004. The program envisioned that the Sustainable Tourism Development Committees (STDCs) would be independent tourism sub-committee within the VDCs, responsible for the development and promotion of tourism products of their respective villages as well as for developing infrastructures.

“Because of physical threat by the Maoists, we have been working from District Development Committees. Our report is that the Sustainable Tourism Development Committee of Siddhi village has already completed number of projects through the mobilization of local communities,” said Bhimsen Devkota, secretary of Siddhi Village Development Committee. “District Development Committee has already sanctioned more than 70 percent of the budget allocated to the infrastructure development in the village.”

P o v e r t y Alleviation

After implementation of several programs including capacity enhancement to skill development and improvement of infrastructures, TRPAP has caused substantial change in the number of people living below the poverty line.

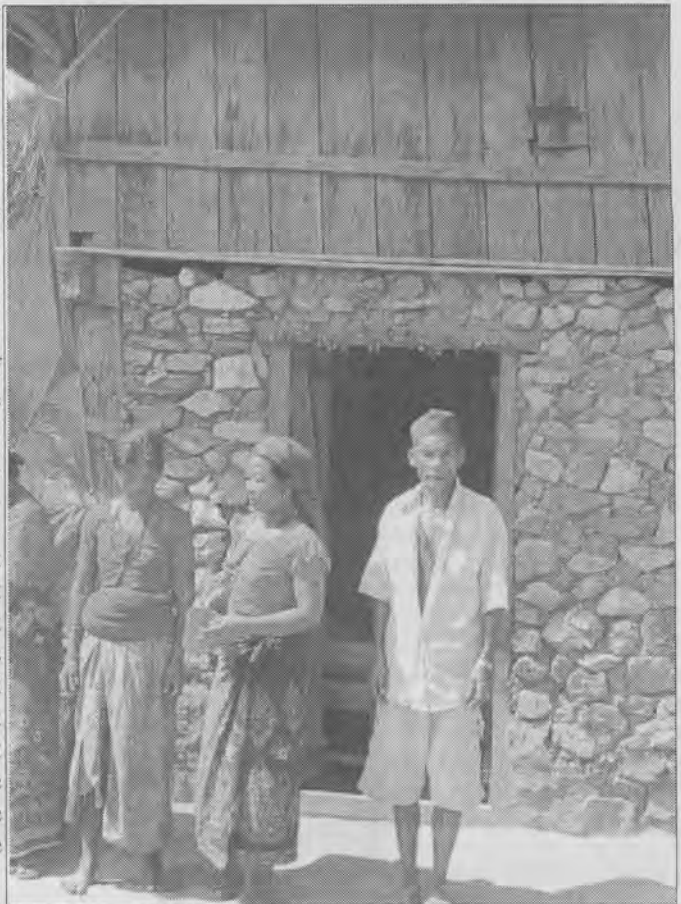
In all four villages, one can see tangible changes in the income of local population. Along with this immediate impact, the long-term impacts of the project in the area of poverty alleviation are much greater.

As number of infrastructures have been already built, local people are in position to offer minimum facilities to the tourists who want to visit their villages. This is a major asset the villagers have acquired.

Challenges For Future

As the project is running in the final year, people are uncertain about the future. This uncertainty is quite high among people living in the remote parts of the country.

At a time when there is no sign for early peace, people don't have any option



Villagers: Waiting to welcome guests

now other than to continue to work to improve the existing condition of their life. Despite conflict and lack of government programs, the TRPAP has given new hope to them proving that involvement of international communities through the participation of local communities can bring about substantial changes.

However, there are worries whether it will continue or not. “This is the only hope in our village through which we have made a lot of changes in our communities,” said Setimaya Chepang. “We want to see continuation of this project.”

For the past four years of its implementation, TRPAP stood as the hope of the rural poor of Chitwan. In a situation when the situation is still abnormal, people want to see the continuation of the project for some more years.

The TRPAP has also taught a lesson to the policy makers and planners that community's involvement is prerequisite to successfully implement infrastructure development projects in conflict prone areas. ■

FSU POLLS

Students At Center-stage

The traditionally powerful parties like NC and UML re-affirm their popularity as their student wings sweep FSU polls

By A CORRESPONDENT

Student unions like Nepal Students Union (NSU) – which is affiliated with NC –

In an indication that the traditionally powerful parties like Nepali Congress (NC) and Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) have not lost their touch with the people despite the gap of years without election, the student unions affiliated with them have swept the Free Student Union (FSU) polls held in hundreds of campuses across the country on February 28.

The results showed that despite claims by the extreme leftists and extreme rightists, the people are still with the parties in the democratic center.



Students: Victorious

Photo by: Guy W. Kitchens

and All Nepal National Free Students Union (ANNFSU) – which is affiliated with the UML swept the polls in the FSU elections held in public campuses across the country.

Poll results show Nepal Student Union (NSU), which is affiliated with NC, has won in Padma Kanya Campus, Pashupati multiple Campus, Public Youth Campus, among others. Likewise, ANNFSU has won in Mahalaxmi Campus, Ayurveda Campus, Pokhara Nursing Campus, among others. In campuses like Balmiki Bidyapeeth, Tribhuvan University Central Campus and Nepal Law Campus, mixed panels have bagged the FSU seats. Tribhuvan University alone had 132 affiliated colleges in which the polls were held.

Even though eight student unions affiliated with the mainstream political parties had decided earlier to contest the FSU polls jointly, they later had to fight what they called 'friendly competition.'

The FSU polls were held less than a month after the fiasco of municipal polls that were boycotted by all the major parties. The campus elections saw over 60 percent voter turn out. The student unions had announced that they would utilize the FSU polls to strengthen the ongoing democratic movement.



नमस्ते मोबाइलबाट पिक आवर समयमा हुने अन्तरदेशीय ट्रुङ्क कलमा विशेष छुटको अवधि थप

लागू हुने मिति : २०६२ चैत्र मसान्तसम्म

अन्तरदेशीय ट्रुङ्क कलमा विशेष छुटको अवधि थप

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नेपाल टेलिकमको रि-चेज मोबाइलबाट नेपाल टेलिकमको सेटअपमा	५/५०	५/५०

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नेपाल टेलिकम

नयाँ नेवा बिदेशमालय

नेपालको मोबाइल नमस्ते मोबाइल

"Lets Worry About Nepal And Democracy"

— SHER BAHADUR DEUBA

Former prime minister SHER BAHADUR DEUBA is known for making candid remarks. In his recent interview with the popular talk show in Kantipur Television, Deuba spoke to VIJAYA KUMAR PANDEY on various issues. Excerpts:

Lets start from your dismissal. Did you have any prior indication about your dismissal by the King?

There were rumors but I had no indication about the King's decision.

Why did the King dismiss your government?

When the King is ambitious, there is no need for any reason. From the very beginning, the King was busy giving interviews to the press that he would not remain silent. He said he was a king with eyes and ears. These statements show that the King is ambitious and wanted to grab the power.

Was your relation with the King not good?

I had made every effort to make the King happy. My perception was that the monarchy and democracy must go side my side. Even my party colleagues criticized me for being too soft towards the King. But I was not in a position to compromise at the cost of democracy and people.

What was your observation when the King dismissed your government and took over power on February 1, 2005? Were you surprised by the action?

I had a feeling that the King would dismiss me but I had not imagined that he would form a government under his chairmanship taking over all the powers.

When did you know that the King took over the reins of government himself?

After listening to his nationwide pronouncement through radio.

You mean you did not know before the Royal Proclamation and you were not informed by police and army?

(Laughs) Why would he tell me about my dismissal? I had information that the King was going to remove me but I did not realize that he had such a plan.

What was your imagination?

My calculation was that the King would appoint another politician as a prime minister.

After Royal proclamation of February 1, King took control all state power. What did you feel then?

After that I realized that the King wanted his direct rule in the country.

Since you have long association with the King, couldn't you see the ambition of the King?

I read his many interviews where he tried to project himself as being different than his brother. He openly declared that he is not like his brother. These kinds of indications were there. But the King had never expressed his ambition with me in personal communication.

You are such a clever person, how come you did not realize the King's intention?

Sometimes you say I am clever, sometimes you say I am a simpleton. I don't understand

your observation. How could the King have informed me about my dismissal?

You were dismissed twice through the announcement in television. How do you look at it?

Both the times, the King unconstitutionally removed me. In October 2002, I was dismissed when I recommended the postponement of elections as per the agreement of seven parties. When major political parties expressed that they would not contest the elections, I could not hold it like the recently held municipal polls. So, I recommended for postponement.

What are the differences in your two dismissals - one in October 2002 and another in February 2005?

It was unconstitutional both the times. I was elected prime minister in October 2002 and prime minister of multi-party government in 2005. I was restored second time through the people's movement.

You are said to be unhappy with the 12 point agreement with Maoists? Do you want to amend it?

Many other political leaders like Narayan Man Bujchhe, United People's Front and other Congress leaders also had expressed similar kinds of reservations stressing the need to improve it. But why am I being singled out? It definitely needs certain additions and deletions. I will put my viewpoint seven party meeting. I will fully abide by the decision of seven parties.

How do you see 12 points understanding between seven political parties and Maoists?

The understanding aims to bring the Maoists to the mainstream politics. Nepal's current political problems cannot be solved without bringing Maoists to the political mainstream. This is one of the main objectives of the understanding.

Are you confident that Maoists will give up arms and join mainstream?

I am the first prime minister who initiated dialogue with the Maoists. I am confident that the 12 point agreement will bring peace in the country.

If you are again offered to be a prime minister, would you accept it?

I will do what the seven parties alliance decides. I will not compromise at the cost of democracy.

Some even accuse you that because of your flexibility, the democracy was derailed?

It was not my flexibility but the King's ambition that derailed democracy. I recommended for the postponement of elections under the suggestion of seven parties. Was it my crime to accept the suggestion of seven major parties? The elections would not have received the legitimacy if it had been held without the participation of political parties.

Don't you think sometime that you were made a pawn in exercise to fulfill the King's ambition?

I had never been a pawn. It is just the King's personal ambition.



How do you see the situation after Royal takeover?

After the Royal takeover, one of the main losers in politics has been the King. Everybody respected the King and he was out of controversy when elected prime ministers were there. Look

at him now, how unpopular he is. After my removal, the King became most controversial. I was a politician who pleaded about respecting the constitutional monarchy. I often had disputes with coalition partners on this issue. I ran the country balancing democracy and constitutional monarchy. There were huge support from western donor countries in all fields. During my period, there was huge flow of foreign assistance. After my dismissal, the term absolute democracy was coined.

How do you see the seven parties alliance?

I am completely with the seven parties alliance and there is no question to break it. I will abide by the decision of seven parties. I have never betrayed anybody. Tell me have I betrayed anyone - Girijababu, Madhav Nepal, People or the King? They betrayed me always.

Some even term your party as a Royal Congress. How do you look at it?

Since the party's formation, Nepali Congress remained committed to the constitutional monarchy. If I was blamed as a Royal Congress for my commitment to constitutional monarchy, I don't have anything to say. Nobody is safe from such accusation. Media accused even B.P. Koirala and Girijababu when they pleaded for constitutional monarchy.

There is a rumor that you are going to be prime minister again?

I will abide by the decision of seven parties.

What is your opinion of sovereignty?

People are the source of power and the sovereignty is vested upon people. I don't want to compromise at the cost of democracy with anybody.

How do you see the possibility of dialogue with the King?

Seven parties will decide what they have to do. I will abide by it.

How do you see the recent call by the King for dialogue?

It was merely a formality to show to the world community that he is committed for dialogue. I don't think King is genuinely interested to hold the dialogue. He closed all the doors and just made a lip service to start the dialogue. We should not worry about the King. Lets worry about Nepal and democracy. Let the King worry about himself.

Don't you think the possibility of any dialogue?

The King did not respond to the call of all major powers like the USA, India, Britain who have been stressing for reconciliation between the King and legitimate political parties. The King is in no mood to reconcile with legitimate political parties.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

International Solidarity

The Conference of International Freedom of Exchange has expressed strong solidarity with media community in the country

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Over 100 free expression activists from around the world, who took part in the annual general meeting of the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) in Brussels, have expressed extreme concerns towards the press freedom and freedom of expression situation in Nepal since the royal takeover on February 1, 2005.

Hosted by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the conference welcomed the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) as new member of the IFEX. The Center for Human Rights and Democratic Studies (CEHURDES)—a Kathmandu-based freedom of expression monitoring group, which is already an IFEX member—was elected as the council member.

General Secretary of the FNJ, Mahendra Bista, and vice chairperson of CEHURDES, Khadga Sen Oli, took part in the conference and also presented a paper on the challenges to press freedom and freedom of expression in Nepal. Leading free expression groups around the world are members of the IFEX.

Adopting a resolution on Nepal, the four-day conference (Feb. 20-24) noted with concern what it called the incidences of on-going attacks, threats and detention of Nepali journalists and free expression activists in the country over the last one year.

Expressing its wholehearted solidarity with Nepali journalists and free expression activists in their fight for democracy, human rights and freedom of expression in the country, IFEX has called

upon the royal government to lift all types of restrictions on media including ban on airing of news from FM radio stations. Similarly, the IFEX has called upon the Nepal government to cease all direct and indirect forms of censorship on media, instruct security personnel in clear words to respect freedom of expression and press freedom across the country, immediately abrogate the controversial Media Ordinance

and not to draft or promulgate any new legislation including Broadcasting Authority or Media Council through ordinances so as to further limit press freedom and freedom of expression.

Similarly, the gathering also called upon the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) rebels to respect pluralism and freedom of expression and not to target media personnel and free expression activists under any pretext, and not to damage, shut down or remove media facilities and infrastructure. The IFEX has also called upon the international community to reaffirm their support to peaceful pro-democracy movement in Nepal and pressurize the royal government to respect people's right to peaceful assembly and other fundamental rights and return to broad-based and inclusive democracy at the earliest.

राष्ट्र निर्माण हाम्रो लक्ष्य


बजेट कल

स्वस्ती मूल्यमा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय ट्रंक सेवा
(स्वाकॉ राष्ट्रकृष्ण बाहेका)

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* माथिको दरमा श्री १ को सरकारको कर समावेश गरिएको छैन।



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Police rest on the side of Exhibition Road in Kathmandu on March 3, 2006.



Men line up to protest the rights of the media in Kathmandu on Sunday March 5, 2006.



View of Swyambhunath, the Monkey Temple in Kathmandu, on Wednesday March 1, 2006. Photos by: Guy W. Kitchens



A young boy chases pigeons near Durbar Square in Kathmandu on Friday March 3, 2006.



A man selling goods pushes his bicycle down a street in Thamel in Kathmandu on Saturday March 4, 2006.

Why Reforms When There Seem To Be Bigger Problems?

By KEN OHASHI

As many of you know, the World Bank is a development institution and it does not get involved in political issues. So, let me begin my speech on a safe ground, like February 1.

The views about February 1 have been sharply divided from the beginning. When it happened, however, I think many Nepalis did hope that February 1 might, just might, somehow lead to resolution of the Maoist conflict, restoration of a better functioning multi-party democracy, and a sharp departure from Nepal's lackluster performance in reform and service delivery. It was a trump card of sorts, to settle the crises Nepal faced quickly. The developments over the past year have not measured up to such expectations. The highest card Nepal's ruling class had up its sleeve was not high enough. The lesson I draw from this is that there are no shortcuts to solving the deep-rooted problems of Nepal, for they arise from the entrenched, feudal nature of society—a feudal mentality that permeates across all facets of Nepali life: at home, in the office, in the villages, in the cities, in the political parties, in the civil service, in the private sector, and even in civil society.

Thus, the development challenges of Nepal must be seen in the context of fundamental transformation—social, political, and economic—that the nation is going through. It is a process in which the traditional feudal values and forces are gradually overtaken by the more liberal and, in a fundamental sense, 'democratic' values and forces. There is no question this is a long-term process. And there is no question that the main driving force for this transformation has to be reform and development. Development is what changes people's values and attitudes. Better educated and economically more secure citizens will demand social equity, more responsible politics, and better public administration.

In Western Europe, such a change took several centuries. With the benefits of well established liberal and democratic norms to emulate, the late starters, like Japan and South Korea have been able to compress this process in terms of elapsed time. Still, the transformation is not a matter of decades, but more like a century, at least. It clearly requires generational changes. This is why I believe Nepal should not relegate the reform and development agenda to the backseat. Yet, that is where it has been for the last few years. I recall a story about a man who saw a magnificent oak tree and decided he wanted such a tree in his garden. He asked his gardener how long it would take for such a tree to grow. The gardener said about 100 years. Thereupon, the man said I want the tree planted before the end of the day. When you are on to a long-term endeavor, there is no time to lose.

Yet, many would argue that Nepal should first resolve the political and security crises, and then address the development agenda. They give two reasons. First, they argue these are such serious crises that they have to be the central agenda for Nepal now. Second, without resolving these larger crises, you cannot have effective development in any case. Most of Nepal's political leaders seem to subscribe to this thinking. I disagree.

Development remains possible

The two stage approach may seem sensible. Unfortunately, things seldom happen in such a neat, compartmentalized way in reality. If we accept that the current political crises are really part of the longer term transformation of Nepal, there is no telling how long it would be before they are resolved, and when Nepal might come to that next phase of addressing the development agenda. I argue, therefore, Nepal should not defer the development agenda. There are many things that Nepal can continue to do in the way of development even in this very difficult environment. I will come back to this in a minute. Beside, it is quite possible that faster economic growth is a necessary condition for Nepal to break out of the current 'conflict trap,' i.e., the vicious circle of low

growth, high unemployment, and conflict, which are mutually reinforcing. It may also be critical for laying the foundation for durable peace and a functioning democracy.

But, many say the 'development space' has narrowed so much that it is almost meaningless to talk about development. There is no doubt development has become more difficult, but fortunately not impossible. I believe there are broadly three types of development work that Nepal can still pursue, and should pursue, today. First, even in conflict affected areas, most of the truly community based programs have shown considerable resilience. There are several successful programs already, but there is a scope for promoting this agenda more forcefully. Community based programs are slow in the beginning, but their impact is cumulative and deep. This is part of the long-term transformation Nepal is going through. Second, there is a set of actions that will strengthen the state institutions. Regardless of the evolution of the political process in Nepal, there is little doubt that the country needs more effective public institutions. When there are rules for transparency and accountability, and institutions enforce them, arbitrary and corrupt actions and inefficiencies are reduced. Nepal can act on a number of important pending reforms in this area and deepen on-going reforms. Third, Nepal should continue to build core physical infrastructure and improve economic policies to promote economic growth. Roads and power generation capacity are two critical areas. There is much that can be done to improve the investment climate from the regulatory aspect as well.

The real conflict behind the conflict

Now, let me turn to the assertion that the on-going Maoist conflict is so important that it is absurd to think of anything else as more important. You might say the notion that this is only a part of the much larger, long-term transformation is an interesting historical perspective, but let's get real. How could we ignore the bloody conflict that has already killed some 13,000 people over the last 10 years? Yes, this conflict has been deadly and tragic. I would not for a moment suggest otherwise.

Nevertheless, I would also argue that the other conflict is not just an interesting abstraction. This larger conflict is perhaps even more deadly. To make that point, I would like to walk you through a small thought experiment. One of the sharpest ways in which one can observe this larger conflict is in the form of poor governance. What we call poor governance in Nepal is typically a manifestation of the feudal value system persisting in the public institutions. That is what allows misuse and abuse of public resources, and makes public service delivery poor.

Let me get more concrete. In Nepal, the infant mortality rate remains around 64 per 1,000 live births or, for every one thousand children born, 64 die before they reach the age of one. In Bangladesh, it has fallen to around 59. Among better performing Indian states, it is 42 in Maharashtra and 43 in Tamil Nadu. In Kerala, it is as low as 11. I would not argue that Nepal's infant mortality rate could be easily as low as 11, but I would argue that, had Nepal been more aggressive in improving public sector governance over the last 10 years, the infant mortality rate could have been easily lower by 10, making it 54 per 1,000 live births today, instead of 64. What would that mean in terms of absolute numbers? Roughly 800,000 babies are born in Nepal each year. Therefore, about 8,000 lives are being lost unnecessarily every year because of inadequate efforts to improve governance. At that rate, you lose 80,000 infants in 10 years. Does anyone still think this is not such a serious problem? Poor governance kills.

Again, I am not for a moment implying we should ignore the Maoist conflict. I am merely saying that, just because we are so used to seeing many children die in Nepal, we should not get complacent about the larger

conflict. In a sense, the slow progress in that battle has sparked the bloody insurgency. It is a stark reminder of the danger of failing to deal with the underlying conflict.

MAN's role

What does this all mean for the MAN? If I understood correctly the founding spirit of MAN, I must say I feel comforted that there were people who recognized at least one of the central battle grounds between the old forces and the new. They may not have thought about it in the kind of historical perspective I have tried to present. Nonetheless, I think they knew instinctively they were dealing with an important issue. The lack of transparent and professional management in many organizations is a very clear indication that the feudal values remain strong. It is not only government institutions that suffer from this. Many private corporations are not much better. Even NGOs, many of which I am sure think of themselves as the antitheses of the corruption-ridden, inefficient government organizations, are more often than not run like fiefdoms, with the founding leader acting like a feudal lord. Seen from the long-term perspective, that should hardly surprise us. The battle line between the feudal values and the more modern values runs through every aspect of Nepali society. Naturally, you cannot simply sweep all government institutions on one side and NGOs on the other, for instance. If anything, with a number of recent transparency and accountability measures in place, government institutions may in fact have a better management structure in place than many private and civil society organizations. So, we need to set aside gross generalizations and prejudices, and look closely in every area to see where the fault line is.

We at the World Bank have come to appreciate the central importance of this long-term conflict. Reform and development is about the more liberal forces gradually overcoming the old forces. When you think of some of the key reforms that have taken place over the last several years, this should be evident. Financial sector reform was in significant part about cutting off influence-based loan making. The medium-term expenditure framework has tried to shift resources to pro-poor spending and bring outcome focus. Transfer of public schools and sub-health posts to community management has been an attempt to make public service providers accountable. The Poverty Alleviation Fund tries to put development resources directly in the hands of the very poor. The strengthening of CIAA, the new Procurement Act, and the Governance Act have all been about improving the transparency and accountability in the government institutions. Naturally, the vested interests have resisted. There has been a fierce, pitched battle on many of these. We believe it is terribly important always to be conscious of this battle line, and try to put our weight behind those who are fighting on the right side of that battle.

When you think about it, all these reforms have been as much about improving governance as about improving efficiency of the system one way or another. This is the domain of MAN, is it not? Although the mission statement of MAN rather innocuously emphasizes improvement in management professionalism, I hope the members of MAN today would see that this goes far beyond putting business school lessons into practice. It is about breaking through the feudal mindset and changing Nepal. I believe this long-term transformation, from a feudal society to a more open and liberal society, still has a long way to go, perhaps decades. There are no short-cuts. But, MAN members have a very special role to play, because you are on the front line of this battle. You fight with ideas and leadership. Every time you succeed in bringing more transparent and professional management practice into whatever organization you work in, you are pushing the other side back a few steps.

When seemingly larger conflicts rage on, worrying about management professionalism may seem embarrassingly pedestrian and trivial. It is not, if you see that there is indeed a much larger conflict behind the conflicts that grab most of the newspaper headlines. I hope you will continue your fight in that battle ground, because only when that battle is won, a true democracy can thrive in Nepal and peace will not be threatened again. ■

(Excerpts of keynote speech delivered by Ohashi, the country director for Nepal, World Bank, at the Silver Jubilee meeting of the Management Association of Nepal)

EXPOSITION

Ball Stories

A creative Dutch artist uses balls to depict the situation of Nepal by performing an installation art

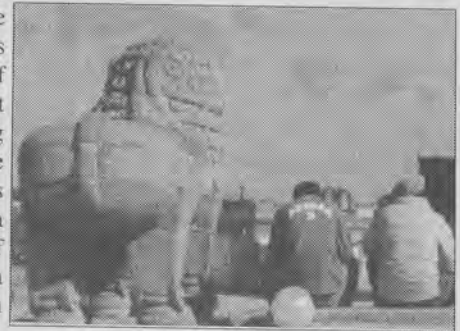
Balls can be toys; balls can be bombs.

An innocent child uses balls to play around. A sportsman uses it to play football, basketball, cricket etc. However, the shape used for sheer entertainment is also used as a destructive weapon to kill people as bombs.

Probably touched by the tragic scenario of violence in Nepal, a Dutch artist Peter Schrader has put his creative mind to perform installation arts using balls. During his short stay in Nepal, he has performed three installation arts, two of which extensively using balls.

After 'Hiding The Balls' in Bhaktapur, Durbar Square, on February 28, 2006 - which successfully attempted to study the varied reaction of general people towards balls - Schrader put up 'Performance Blowing up The Balls' at Siddhartha Art Gallery Sunday (March 5, 2006).

During the performance, three supporting artists exploded dozens of balls with different colors and sizes using a tyre pump. The performance was coupled with a poignant melody of Sarangi played by a minor Bhim Gandharva.



Schrader's performance shows that 'sky is no limit' in creativity.

The balls inflate and explode after they cannot bear the pressure. "Everything explodes when too much pressure is applied to it," says Devendra Thumkeli, a student of art, interpreting the performance.

Through his performance, Schrader says he has tried to raise the voice of the children. "Many children, who are at the age of playing and studying, are suffering the brunt of violent insurgency in the country," says Schrader. "But, nobody has shown any concern towards their needs."

Why is it that he uses balls so extensively?

"I was brought up playing with balls and so I have a deep sentimental attachment to balls," answers Schrader. "But, I am depressed to find that the Nepalese children have not been able to enjoy in the same way. Instead they are at risk, from objects similar to the shape of balls (bombs)."

Moved by tragic scenario in Nepal, Schrader adds, "Many people want peace, but, many people are preventing it through their activities."

Earlier, Schrader had put up many shows using balls in other countries including floating several balls in river and raining of plastic balls in Mexico.

Schrader, who had come to Nepal fresh without any pre-conceived ideas, claims to have developed ideas quickly after he saw the natural beauty and the tragic fate the country was going through. Before putting up the installation arts with balls, he had performed an art using more than 40 boats together at the Phewa lake of Pokhara depicting how different the world would have been and how much the developing countries would have benefited had their been only one currency. ■

BOOK

Democratic Moments

Historian Dr. Rajesh Gautam's book reveals the role of Nepal Praja Parishad in the democratic movement of Nepal

When, during the early 20th century, many parts of the world was experiencing different kinds of democratic movements fought to establish the right of people, Nepal, a small Himalayan Kingdom, was out of world's contact. Under the ruthless rule of Rana, Nepalese citizens were denied all kinds of basic rights.

The history of democratic movement in Nepal is just more than seven decades old. Following the Kot massacre in 1903, Rana rulers ruthlessly suppressed Nepal for more than a century denying the basic political rights to the people. In 1940, Nepalese people had for the first time realized what the basic political right meant but then democratic movement was suppressed. Eleven years after the formation of the first political party Nepal Praja Parishad, Nepal saw the establishment of democracy in 1950s after joint struggle led by Nepali Congress party.

In the course of political movement, some individuals challenged the Rana rule through writing books and raising voices regarding the plights of the people but most of them were suppressed by force. Isolated from the world for long, only a few people were in a position to demand political rights.

The history of Nepalese democratic movement is full of ups and downs and many Nepalese sacrificed their life in Nepal to establish the right of people. Nepal Praja Parishad is the first political party that demanded the political rights of the people. Although some other smaller parties were also established calling for the establishment of political rights to

the citizens, Nepal Praja Parishad was the first of its kind with nationwide organization and appeal. Four of its members were executed by the Rana regime while dozens of its members were sentenced for life imprisonment including its president Tanka Prasad Acharya who went on to become prime minister of Nepal years later.

Only a few historians and scholars have attempted to write the history of Nepalese political movement citing documents. Dr. Rajesh Gautam, a

historian, is one of them. Although he has already published a number of books regarding the phase of Nepal's democratic movement, this book has its place in Nepalese history.

Published by acting president of Nepal Praja Parishad and former mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan Keshav Staphit, the book helps to understand difficulties faced by the democratic movement, its leaders, role of Nepal Praja Parishad and its president.

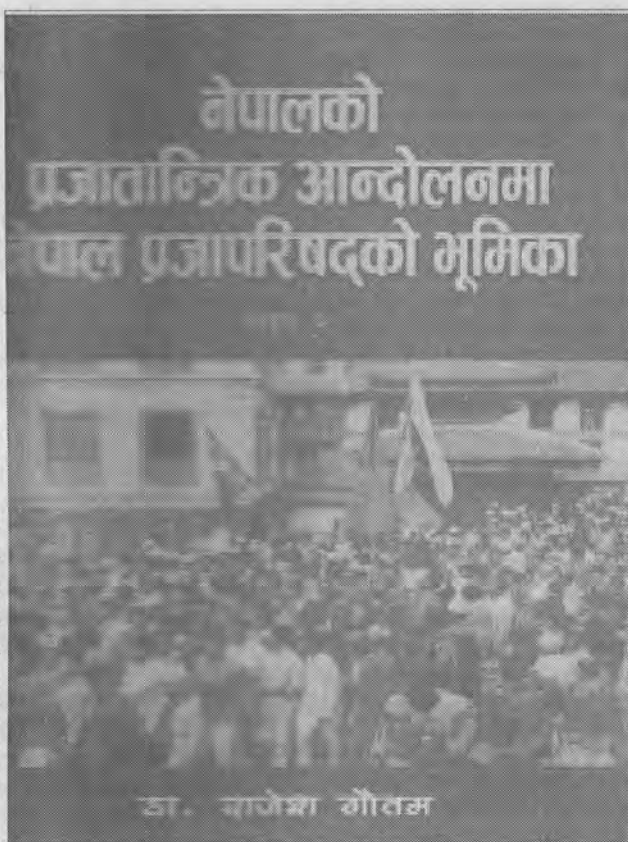
The book cites dozens of valuable documents including the letter written by president Tanka Prasad. The book, therefore, is reliable and authentic compilation of historic information.

By collected various documents, letters and correspondence, Dr. Gautam has made every effort to put the fair and objective history of Nepal before the Nepalese leaders. Although it is a tedious work to read documents and manuscripts, Dr. Gautam has done it through sheer hard labor.

As a historian Dr. Gautam is impartial and objective in analyzing historical moments and leaders of different phase. Dr. Gautam also explains the role of Tanka Prasad Acharya from different perspective till his death. Acharya's first role was a political prisoner and later as a prime minister of Nepal. After dismissal of democratic government in 1961, former prime minister Tanka Prasad Acharya remained as an ardent supporter of then King Mahendra's move.

In the context of explaining various phases of political process, Dr. Gautam also mentions all important events of history of Nepal. Although it is written focusing on Nepal Praja Parishad, the book speaks volume of Nepalese history of the period.

The book opens new chapter revealing many new documents and writings. For Nepalese who like to know about their country's history, Dr. Gautam's book will prove to be important and interesting. ■



*Nepalko Prajatantrik Andolanma
Nepal Praja Parishad Ko Bhumika
The Role of Nepal Prajaparishad in Democratic
Moment of Nepal (Part 2)*

By: Dr. Rajesh Gautam

*Published by: Keshav Staphit, acting president
Nepal Praja Parishad*

Price: Rs. 450.00

10TH LAWYERS CONVENTION

The Obdurate Leadership Sans Judiciary

By SUDHEER SHRESTHA

Whether the 10th lawyers' convention concluded on March 4th with the opening speech of twenty eight persons was a success persistently puzzles me.

The gruesome question that put me even more in the state of disarray is whether the convention was successful taking into consideration of the relative benchmark of total number of representatives (participation of lawyers), or the various issues dealt, notably that of constituent assembly, or whether the ability of the organizers that have been able to make the conference boycotted by the whole judiciary during the four day convention made it more successful.

The multi-million aided conference felt empty albeit the density of the crowd. *The theme of the conference which voiced the major issues such as "inclusive democracy" contradicted the conference deliberations. The Conference was dreadfully exclusionary in nature*

Intolerant to extremity to any different opinion on the issue of constituent assembly.

The session on the constituent assembly held in the Nuptse Hall was abysmal and the atmosphere unequivocally supported only those who spoke for the session subject. It was so in the full session of concluding day, as well. Anyone who dared to refute the idea of constituent assembly became the instant subject to unbecoming hooting by the "other" section of lawyers who would have been aptly mentioned as hoodlums in the attire of lawyer by any impartial observer. Even the very, very senior lawyers like Sarbagya Ratna Tuladhar and Devendra Nepali, to name

the few, were not permitted to speak their opinion. The pluralism of opinion was put to death, which should indeed be jealously guarded by the Bar. What surprised me most was that only selective people were given the privilege to interpret their views. Incidentally, it seemed the conference was run by the vested interest and was for their followers hitherto.

The declaration was self contradictory. On the one hand, the conclusions empathetically called for the observation of the present Constitution, on the other hand it demanded for the constituent assembly to kill the Constitution. The professionals' conference clearly crept into politicking by unequivocally supporting the political demands brought forward by the political parties. Granted, professional organizations also being formed of the members of society cannot completely detach themselves from the socio-political issues. But the Bar's role would have been more contributory if it would have analyzed the pros and cons of the constituent assembly and

educated the people truly enabling them to choose the right course according to their conscience, and presented the alternate methods for constituent assembly if the people choose for that. So far the parties are concerned they already had demanded for the assembly. It was not necessary for Bar to become the mouthpiece of political parties. Its commitment to democracy would have exhilarated had it guarded the opposition view. But the scene clearly showed the fear of rise of one totalitarianism against another totalitarianism.

The organizers started the conference in the relatively bad note and portrayed their oppressive self by deciding to boycott two prominent figures of Supreme Court as these figures did not suit or support their interests. They did not invite Chief Justice to the Conference. The result was devastating. Ironically, the national level lawyers' conference started without the Chief Justice Dilip Kumar Poudel and the whole judiciary. The other person they did not invite

The theme of the conference which voiced the major issues such "inclusive democracy" contradicted the conference deliberations. The Conference was dreadfully exclusionary in nature and intolerant to extremity to any different opinion

on the issue of constituent assembly..... The organizers started the conference in the relatively bad note and portrayed their oppressive self by deciding to boycott two prominent figures of Supreme Court as these figures did not suit or support their interests..... Perhaps, the organizers who are actors of law themselves failed to empathize that Chief Justice was an institution and deciding not to invite him they were making the mockery of the institution itself. The lawyers were never put to a defensive position as in present for the deeds of the obdurate Bar leadership. The unfortunate faux-pas created by the organizers will remain a blemish in the judicial history of Nepal.

was Justice Pawan Kumar Ojha, former Attorney General and a champion of legal field. The retributive slant of the organizers was that the Chief Justice didn't oblige to as directed by the Bar in appointing Justice Ojha. According to them, he argued for Royal Commission for Corruption Control while he was Attorney General. In fact, he should have been censored if he had spoken against the Commission for defying the professional ethics. It does not need to be mentioned that the legal profession, in itself, is a conflicting occupation. One of the parties before the court is always a culprit. I have not heard any lawyer arguing before the bench that his client is a wrongdoer. One party

always loses. Shall the loser's license be ceased? There are many judges in the Supreme Court who has not contributed a single page to Nepalese legal literary. On the other hand Justice Ojha is a prominent academician with visible contributions. Shall the judges always be appointed on the behest of political parties or the Judiciary shall be comprised of efficient legal brains? It is also implausible how some judges appointed by the same process by the King have legitimacy and the others don't have. *Perhaps, the organizers who are actors of law themselves failed to empathize that Chief Justice was an institution and by deciding not to invite him they were making the mockery of the institution itself. The lawyers were never put to a defensive position as in present for the deeds of the obdurate Bar leadership. The unfortunate faux-pas created by the organizers will remain a blemish in the judicial history of Nepal.*

(The writer is a noted corporate lawyer)

PRAKASH GURUNG

Destined Music Director

Guided by a strong desire to become a good music director, Gurung has enriched Nepali music industry with hundreds of melodious compositions

By THAKUR AMGAI

A boy, hardly in his post teens, from Darjeeling was working in rhythmic composition for one of the albums of Narayan Gopal and Gopal Yonjan, being produced from Ratna Recording in 1972. His aptitude in playing music impressed senior music directors Shiva Shankar and Nati Kaji of Radio Nepal so much that they did not let the boy return to Darjeeling after the completion of the album. "After they started persuading, I started working at Radio Nepal as a musician," said Prakash Gurung.

For the next two years Gurung worked at Radio Nepal. In the meantime, he composed the song 'Bhawisya Mero Sabailai Bhanchhu' sung by Meera Rana. This is the first song on record in Gurung's composition.

After the stint at Radio Nepal, Gurung started composing music for more songs. Songs like 'Ma Samjhanthen Malai Matra Ho Ki', 'Sunchandi Bhandha Mahango Yo Jyanlai' sung by Om Bikram Bista became particularly popular in the initial days of his career.

Before coming to Kathmandu and settling here, Gurung had already identified himself as promising talent in music in his hometown Darjeeling. Whether at the contests in his school or other social and cultural functions, Gurung used to participate actively in singing or strumming guitar and mandolin.

Born in 1951 in Darjeeling, Gurung was brought up in a musical ambience. The city of Darjeeling-which has given birth to dozens of veterans in Nepali music industry-itself was a source of inspiration. In particular, he got inspired towards

music from his father Hari Man Gurung, who was a pundit of classical music.

In his early childhood, Gurung used to listen to songs by senior Nepali singers like Master Mitransen Thapa and Dharma Raj Thapa from Radio Nepal and from his father's disc records at his home. Later he learned to play musical instruments like guitar and mandolin and humming songs of his choice in rhythm.

The close affinity with the veterans of music in Darjeeling Gopal Yonjan, Karma Yonjan, Sharan Pradhan, Amber Gurung, among others, further strengthened his passion towards music and nurtured his ambition to become a good music director in future.

"Some how, since the time I could think about my career, I had strong ambition

to become a good music director," reveals Gurung.

Five decades down the line, Gurung has established himself as a popular music director in Nepali music industry. With more than 800 songs on record in his composition, Gurung has enriched the Nepali music industry with his creative melodies and earned great respect and love from the Nepali audience.

During his schooldays, Gurung was equally adept in both music composition and singing. When he was barely in his high school he composed and sang a song 'Timi Afain Netrahin Chhau, Bato Dekhauna Najau' written by Man Bahadur Mukhiya. His very first composition won the 'best music director' award in one of the contests at the Kharsang station of All India Radio.

After he entered the music industry formally, however, Gurung ceased singing and started focusing on music composition of music.

Recently, after 35 years, Gurung has re-ventured into singing. "I felt why shouldn't I fulfill my desires when I have the ability and means both to do so," said Gurung. His first album 'Preyasi' - in which all the songs are sung and composed by Gurung himself was released a few years back and is doing a good business in the market.

Gurung is now preparing for his second album with some old songs and some new ones. In addition, he is also preparing for an album partnering with Karma Yonjan,

Gurung, who learned classical music from Guru Rang Rao Kadamba for a year, is currently a music teacher at Sadhana Kala Kendra and a musician at the Royal Nepal Academy. He had joined the Academy shortly after he left Radio Nepal and he has been teaching at Sadhana Kala Kendra since last one decade.

Gurung says he feels that Nepali music-which has benefited a lot from the evolution in recording technology is going out of control. "The media is not distinguishing between original/quality songs from flash-in-the-pan songs," he laments. "The quality of Nepali music has degraded because of the crass commercialization."



Gurung : Life of melodies

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