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SPOTLIGHT

Feb 16-22, 2007

Friends In Need

**Politics : Aftermath Of Terai Turmoil
Arms Management : Picking Up Pace**

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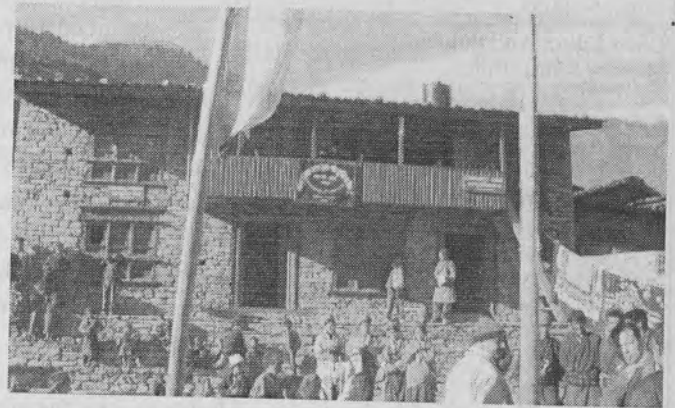
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SPOTLIGHT

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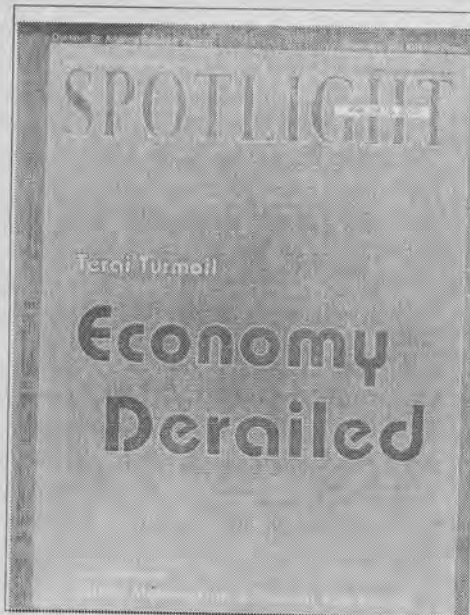
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The inaugural public speech of Maoist supremo Prachanda at the open Air Theatre at Tundikhel on 1st Fagun 2063 has set the tone of his future behavior. It is reported that the crowd, even though much short of expectations, was quite impressive. Their joining the main stream of Nepali politics has not only disturbed the political balance of the small Himalayan Kingdom but generated misgivings and apprehensions amongst many, inside and outside the country. Moreover, the loose and provocative statements of the supremo's lieutenants are only contributing to aggravate the situation. It surely does not mean that the supremo does not command complete control over his colleagues, subordinates or cadres. We do trust that Prachanda fully realizes the difference between idealism and realism. Flying in the sky may not take one anywhere. One could be simply circling the firmament. For making any headway forward one must walk the solid ground. Indeed the Maoists have not only struck fear in many Nepali hearts, those who have lost their homes, their near and dear ones do even hate them. As such, they have a stupendous job to do- win the hearts of their countrymen back. And it is not an easy thing to do. It needs lots of repentance, understanding and sincere god will. Only ambition will not take one to its goal. Prachanda must not have failed to read the portents in the Nepali political sky about the severe vacuum in the honest and patriotic political leadership in the country. The poor country has been groping for an honest and dedicated leadership ever since King Tribhuvan surrendered himself at the Indian Embassy nearly six decades ago. With a giant and powerful neighbor, always interested to destabilize politics in its tiny neighborhood, and the pliant politicians willing to dance to the alien tune, no wonder Nepal could not make any economic headway. Consequently, the prime urgency Nepal faces at the moment is of a leadership which can command respect from its countrymen and which will steer the country to speedy economic development defending the country's interests. This is not possible as long as total normalcy and peaceful atmosphere is not restored. And it needs not to be emphasized that no elections to the constituent assembly too could be possible if peace is not restored. The various ethnic groups that have raised their voices against injustice and discrimination have to be placated since most of their grievances are genuine and must be redressed. It is no longer a secret who is behind the ethnic unrest in the terai. So, its quick solution will not be easy. We must be able to impress upon India to extend its unstinted cooperation for the solution of the problem. And it is high time India too realized the urgency of changing their mindset. It is not easy to correctly predict what will happen in Nepal in the coming months. But, it can be visualized that Prachanda and his colleagues shall play an important role. Prachanda and party must understand that witch hunting will only embroil the country into further troubles. If they want to fight corruption, let them start with a fresh one. On what legitimate ground was more than nine million rupees from the public treasury spent on the treatment of one Nepali Congress executive? Is not this blatant example of Hitlerian corruption? What action will be taken against the culprit and when? So, the need of the hour is restoration of total peace and normalcy, not witch hunting. No more extortions, abductions, lootings and killings. It is time for Prachanda and party to win hearts and make friends. If they want to direct the course of the country's destiny, they must shun all kinds of prejudices and seek help and cooperation from all patriotic Nepalis. Will they list to reason?

Madhav Kumar Rimal
Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Economy Under Shadow

The cover story "Economy Derailed" (SPOTLIGHT February 9) pointed out the apparent lack of concern among our leaders over the economy. They all tend to think that economy does not need their attention and should, instead, be governed by the private sector. But they are totally wrong, economy does need their attention. Leaders must come forth with visionary plans about developing the economy of the country.

*Bishesh KC
Hattisar*

It's The Economy, Stupid

Nepal is caught in a time warp ("Economy Derailed" SPOTLIGHT February 9). Even as neighbors India and China continue to surge ahead by registering astronomical growth, Nepal continues to wallow amid instability, chaos, disorder and stagnation. The first few months after the cessation of conflict had generated high hopes among the people regarding their livelihood. However, as political agenda continue to overshadow everything else, there has been no improvement in economy.

*Bidesh Gautam
Lazimpat*

Neglected Poor

At present day Nepal, economy has been pushed to the backburner ("Economy Derailed" SPOTLIGHT February 9). There is an overwhelming obsession about politics. Everybody and every organization has come to the street demanding political identity and participation. For the last many decades, Nepal has been gripped by this unitary fixation over political issues. That is why, our country has ended up as one of the poorest countries in the world. There are millions of people here who struggle to meet their ends. Concerns of these people are economic not political. Perhaps after they get to eat stomach full,

they will then start talking about their political identity and so on. Unfortunately, as they are very poor and totally marginalized, there is not a single organization that has taken up their agenda. Instead, other communities of people who are comparatively in better condition have started agitating and hijacking the agenda of the poorest of the poor. The poorest section of the society has no one to turn to. They are simply too disempowered to be able to rise up and speak about their plight. But in their names, many other parties and organizations are advancing their own agenda colored with their vested interests. Go to any agitation organized by any outfit, you will find relatively better-off people – particularly from middle class and lower middle class section. Hardly any member from the downtrodden and economically marginalized class can hope to take part in such agitation. The protest demonstrations that one encounters in Sighdurbar or Maitighar or Ratna Park are all participated by similar kind of people. Perhaps these people do not have economic problems. Therefore, they are not found to be raising slogans demanding better economy. Otherwise, it is strange that in a country like Nepal where one half population are poor, there has not been a single day of Nepal bandh

demanding better economic policies. Such bandhs and strikes are announced at the drop of a hat – to press for concerns for transport entrepreneurs or to raise demands for ethnic identity. But no one is interested to call Nepal bandh by raising economic agenda. Does that mean, Nepalese people do not have economic problems? The answer is a big no. Then why nobody raises this agenda. That might be because the poorest people do not find any time to think about their plight. They are too busy trying hard to make their ends meet; trying to gather enough food to feed their families and so on.

*Diwas Gurung
Minbhawan*

Catastrophic Impact

The three-weeks-long unrest in Terai is bound to have catastrophic consequences for the national economy ("Economy Derailed" SPOTLIGHT February 9). As the experts have pointed out, the country will face both short term and long term impacts including rising inflation and lost opportunity of works. The paralysis of transport system and derailment of supplies will cast an ominous shadow over the livelihood concerns. Country will take a long time to return to economic normalcy.

*Sapana Bhandari
Gaushala*

Moderates Silenced

Apropos the article "Silent Moderation and Violent Extremism" (SPOTLIGHT February 9), it is pertinent to note that the majority of the population who have chosen to remain silent amid this brouhaha are actually very moderates. They are apprehensive of increasingly violent tone of politics at large. They want to see their country stable, peaceful, democratic and prosperous. But they are skeptical about the manner in which the top leadership is handling the country post Janaandolan II.

*Giridhar Thapa
Sanepa*

NHRC Flays Maoist Attack Against RPP and RJP

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has flayed the attack by the Maoists against the workers and leaders of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP). Issuing a statement on Sunday (Feb 11), the regional office of NHRC in Pokhara deplored the two separate incidents of attack by the Maoists. In Besisahar of Lamjung, Maoist cadres attacked a gathering of RPP on Saturday injuring 20 persons. Likewise, in Damauli of Tanahu, RJP leaders and workers were thrashed by the Maoists. The NHRC has deplored both the attacks saying they were the violation of human rights. Meanwhile, in Kathmandu, RPP has condemned the Maoist attack and asked the government to provide peace and security. At a press conference where people injured in Besisahar attack were also present, the RPP general secretary Deepak Bohara said the incident indicated that the elections of Constituent Assembly (CA) would not be held in free, fair and fearless environment. Saying that attack against peaceful programs were a dangerous portent, Bohara demanded action against the perpetrators.

nepalnews.com reports

Yadav Threatens To Intensify Terai Stir

As the ten-day ultimatum by the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) draws closer its chief Upendra Yadav has threatened to intensify agitation in Madhes. The MJF has put forth three pre-conditions before they will sit down for talks. The conditions include resignation of Home Minister Krishna Sitaula, probing of Lahan incident, and forming a high level commission to investigate Madhes unrest and atrocities against people. Yadav said that the MJF had only suspended their bandhs and strikes for ten days to allow the government to create conducive atmosphere for talks. He said that since 38 persons were killed and hundreds injured in the unrest, the Home Minister must take responsibility for what he termed as "genocide."

Compiled from reports

CIAA To Take Up The Rayamajhi Recommendations

The government has authorized the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) to probe and take action against persons implicated by the report of the Rayamajhi commission. The cabinet meeting on Thursday (Feb 8) decided to authorize the CIAA to take action against some members of the royal cabinet and then political appointees listed in the Annex-12 of the Rayamajhi Commission report. "We will not reveal the actual names of the persons as that could affect further proceedings by the CIAA," said Dilendra Prasad Badu, Minister of State for Information and Communication and government spokesperson. Badu said that the government has also asked the cabinet subcommittee led by Deputy Prime Minister KP Oli to expedite its study of the Rayamajhi commission report and submit its report. The cabinet meeting has also asked the government talks team headed by Home Minister Krishna Sitaula to continue coordinating with the Maoists till the completion of arms management. *Leading dailies report*

Thakur Committee Invites JTMM Factions For Talks

The talks committee headed by Minister Mahantha Thakur, which was formed to initiate talks with the agitating parties of Madhesi and Janjati community, has sent letters inviting the two factions of Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM). "We have delivered formal letter inviting them (both factions of JTMM including the ones headed by Jwala Singh and Jai Krishna Goit) for talks through contacts who said they would hand the letter to them," said Thakur. Meanwhile, the government has decided to cover the medical expenses of those injured during Terai unrest. *Leading dailies report*

ISG Urges Maoists To Cease Violence

The Industrial Security Group (ISG) has expressed its deep concern about

continued extortion, kidnappings, and violence by Maoists against businesses and industries across Nepal. "In Kathmandu, while Maoist extortion has continued all along, it appears to be soaring in the run-up to the Maoist rally on February 13. Once again, the Maoists are demanding money, lodging and food from the businesses and residences in the Valley. We call upon the Maoists to cease these activities immediately," the statement issued by the ISG, on Friday (Feb 9), said. The ISG comprises representatives of the Embassies of France, Germany, India, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the Delegation of the European Commission, along with their bilateral Chambers of Commerce. "The Maoists' continuing use of violence and intimidation is in clear violation of their commitments under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and at complete odds with their new status as members of the Interim Parliament," it said. "The business community deeply desires to contribute to the building of a prosperous Nepal and an inclusive democracy. The ISG welcomes efforts by the government to address the grievances of the Madhesi and hopes that these efforts will bear fruit. The ISG also welcomes government action to re-establish the rule of law nationwide. If Maoist abuses and trade union militancy continue, Nepal's private sector will be choked and investment will cease. If that happens, Nepal will be unable to generate the jobs and prosperity it needs to develop," said the statement issued by US Embassy in Kathmandu, in its capacity as the acting chair of the ISG. *Compiled from reports*

NA Initiates Action Against Brig. Gen Rana

The Nepal Army (NA), on Thursday, wrote to the Ministry of Defense (MoD) recommending necessary action against acting chief of the Western Division, Brigadier General Dilip SJB Rana, for marking controversial remarks. According to NA spokesperson Brigadier General Ananta Bahadur Thebe, Chief of Army Staff Rukmangat Katawal wrote a letter to the MoD recommending action against Rana as he has been found guilty of making comments that amounted to breach of military norms and tradition.

As the army headquarters cannot determine the quantum of punishment to its senior officials, General Katawal wrote to the ministry to initiate action in the case, Thebe added. In a written speech during a conference of NA divisions in Pokhara on Monday, Rana said there was a possibility of army mobilization to quell the unrest in Terai region if police agencies fail to maintain law and order. *nepalnews.com reports*

27 People Killed In Terai Unrest: NHRC

The National Human Rights Commission has informed that 27 people have been killed in the recent unrest in the Terai region. A preliminary field report by the commission said 21 protestors were killed in the course of agitation, 3 were killed by the Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha, two by unidentified people and one by the Maoists. The commission further said that the agitation in the Terai region is not peaceful as claimed by the protestors. "The protestors brutally murdered one sub-inspector of police, looted weapons of police and also vandalized public properties, so the protest is not peaceful as claimed by the protestors," the national rights watchdog said in its report. The NHRC also rapped the protestors for creating obstacles hampering the work of hospitals, ambulances, journalists and rights activists, adding, "Some journalists have been displaced from their workplace due to threats from protestors." The NHRC has recommended the government to immediately address the demands of Madhesi people by holding talks and maintain law and order situation in Terai districts. The NHRC also asked the government to provide appropriate compensation to the families of deceased, provide treatment to the injured and also provide appropriate compensation to the damages incurred during the protests. The NHRC also asked the government to file a criminal case against the Maoist who killed Ramesh Kumar Mahato in Lahan and take legal action against security personnel using excessive force against general people in peaceful demonstrations. *Compiled from reports*

US To Continue Aid To Nepal

The US Mission in Nepal has been authorized to continue providing economic and development assistance to the Government of Nepal and to the peace process here, even if the Maoists belong to the government, says a release issued by the US Embassy. The authorization comes in the form of a license granted to the US Department of State and US Agency for International Development (USAID). The license was issued February 5 from the US Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and is valid until February 28, 2008. US Ambassador James F. Moriarty welcomed the issuance of the license and noted: "This license enables the U.S. Mission to meet its commitments to continue supporting the people of Nepal and the peace process." The Embassy and its development arm, USAID/Nepal, requested the State Department and USAID in Washington to seek the license because of U.S. prohibitions against providing aid to terrorist organizations. The U.S. Government designates Maoists, who continue to use violence, extortion, and intimidation, as a terrorist organization. The U.S. Mission to Nepal provides most of its development assistance in Nepal through Non-Governmental Organizations. Some does go through the Government of Nepal, however, The Ambassador stressed that, if the Maoists enter the Cabinet without abandoning violence, the U.S. Mission will work to ensure that Maoists ministers cannot claim credit for U.S. assistance. In coming days, the U.S. Mission will be consulting with Washington on license requirements and also briefing USAID/Nepal contractors and grantees in Nepal on this positive development. *Compiled from reports*

15 Injured In Jhapa Clash

Over 15 persons were injured as activists of Federal Republican Forum (FRF) clashed with locals in different areas of Jhapa district on Sunday (Feb 11). The clash occurred in course of Jhapa district bandh. Demanding to announce regional autonomous areas for Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari districts, the FRF had called Jhapa district bandh for

a day. "Over 15 persons of both sides were injured in different places when FRF activists forced to shut down shops, factories and academic institutions in Surunga, Birtamod, Kakarvitta, among other places. The clash lasted for nearly one hour after the bandh supporters forced locals to close even the medicine shops in bazaar areas. The bandh organizers also vandalized vehicles and set one bike ablaze. They also misbehaved with journalists. *The Himalayan Times daily reports*

DV Victims Resume Strike

The DV (Diversity Visa) Victims' central struggle committee resumed its relay hunger strike from Monday afternoon after a meeting between its representatives and an American Embassy official failed to reach an agreement. The DV victims are on a strike since December 26 in front of the embassy. They had removed tents in response to the call of the embassy for holding a dialogue. The 'victims' resumed strike after the dialogue with Nicholas Dean, deputy chief of mission, failed to reach an agreement. The protestors said the embassy rejected their visas without explaining any reason. *The Himalayan Times daily reports*

Indian Minister's Visit Postponed

Indian State Minister for Commerce Jairam Ramesh's three-day visit to Nepal, which was scheduled to begin on Wednesday, has been postponed indefinitely after words from the Indian External Affairs Ministry that the time is not appropriate for a visit to Nepal, Ramesh's chief personal secretary B. Rajshekhar said. "High-ranking government officials wanting to visit a foreign country should seek clearance from the Indian External Affairs Ministry. A consultation was held with the ministry in the same line," he further said. According to government sources, Ramesh's Nepal itinerary included a visit to the Birgunj dry port and other infrastructure. "Since Birgunj and surrounding areas are steeped in turmoil, his visit there would not be appropriate," sources said. "Both countries are working again to finalize the visit," the sources said. *The Himalayan Times daily reports* ■



PM receives report of Ojha commission *Gorkhapatra*

PRIME MINISTER GIRIJA PRASAD KOIRALA received the report prepared by the panel formed to probe the atrocities committed by the dissolved Royal Commission for Corruption Control (RCCC) against the democratic leaders. The panel headed by Appellate Court judge Madhav Prasad Ojha has suggested the government to prosecute officials and members of the RCCC on the charges of corruption. In its report submitted to the Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, the panel has said that the officials of RCCC were involved in the misuse of power and took action against democratic leader on political vendetta. The report stated that the head of RCCC Bhakta Bahadur Koirala was involved in corruption and improper activities. The panel had interrogated all office bearers of the Commission. The RCCC formed during the royal rule had detained former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Minister Prakash Man Singh and also interrogated leaders of various political parties and top officials in charge of corruption and misuse of state resources. After receiving the report Prime Minister Koirala Sunday said that the government would take action against all as recommended in the report. The Supreme Court had dissolved the commission during the royal regime itself.

THE TWO-DAY CONFERENCE of the Asia Pacific Committee of Socialist International concluded on Sunday (Feb 11) after issuing a four-point Kathmandu Declaration. The Declaration, which was read out by its Secretary General Luis Ayala has appreciated the way social democrats are working for peace. Appreciating Nepali social democrats led by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, the Declaration has stressed the need to have sustained efforts to retain what has been achieved. The Declaration has appreciated the way the November 22 accord was reached between political parties to usher the nation into a new course even as it has stressed the need to enforce the accord fully. The Socialist International will send a team when the nation goes for the constituent assembly election. The nations about which the SI is concerned regarding setback to democracy are North Korea, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Pakistan.

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Louise Arbour, on Thursday, expressed her deep concern about the continued violence in the Terai region of Nepal which has taken at least 23 lives, caused countless injuries and the destruction of both public and private properties. "Our human rights officers who have been monitoring events in the Terai have observed violence by protestors, as well as incidents of excessive use of force by the Armed Police Force and the Nepal Police," she said. "Lessons have not been learnt from the security forces' handling of the April 2006 protests. The Government must abide by its international human rights obligations in dealing with the demonstrations, including holding police accountable for their actions. While I recognize the challenges that police are facing - including attacks on themselves - the security forces must employ force only in proportion to the actual threat faced." The High Commissioner further stressed that it was essential for the organizers of the demonstrations and their followers to employ only peaceful means of protest. Expressing her particular alarm over reports of human rights defenders and journalists being threatened or obstructed from doing their work, the High Commissioner said that "clear instructions should be given by police officials and by demonstration leaders that the work of human rights defenders and journalists are not to be impeded in any way. Medical personnel must also be able to function without hindrance." She added, "I am also calling on the leaders and their cadres to allow free access and freedom of movement to all UN staff to enable them to carry out their work in all locations and under any circumstances." She noted that ending discrimination and ensuring appropriate representation of excluded groups at all levels of decision-making during this critical time will be essential to the success of Nepal's political transition.

THE EUROPEAN UNION HAS EXPRESSED concern over the violence in the Terai region and urged concerned sides to find solution of Terai crisis through talks. A press statement issued by German Ambassador Franz Ring, current EU-Presidency in Nepal, has also urged all to refrain from violence and to seek peaceful solution. "It recognizes that there are genuine grievances which need to be addressed," the statement said, adding, "But violence cannot achieve this." The statement also welcomed the formation of a government talks team to hold dialogue in the issues raised by the protestors and urged for comprehensive dialogue to work for the inclusion of all marginalized and excluded groups. The German EU Presidency also urged all sides involved to show respect for human rights and to shun violence, and the police to show the necessary restraint and to avoid excessive use of force. "The EU strongly supports the work of OHCHR and their presence in the terai," the statement further said.

THE CHINA SOUTHERN AIRLINES (CSA) operated its maiden flight to Kathmandu on Monday night. It carried 160 passengers from Chinese city of Guangzhou. CSA, the largest Chinese airliner in terms of fleet size, will operate flights between n Guangzhou and Kathmandu. It operates flights to 110 cities across the world. It will be operating flights to Kathmandu twice a week. ■

"The government has already moved ahead by addressing the concerns raised by the people of Terai. You will now have to maintain law and order and protect people's lives and properties."

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, addressing regional chiefs of security bodies in Biratnagar, where he recently visited to attend the 13th day ritual of the death of his sister-in-law Nona Koirala.

"There has been genocide in Madhes. The Home Minister must own up the responsibility and promptly resign. Otherwise, we will not sit for talks and will intensify agitation."

Upendra Yadav, president of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), talking to media persons.

"I will resign as soon as the Prime Minister feels the need for it."

Krishna Prasad Sitaula, Home Minister, reacting to demands for his resignation.

"Home Minister's resignation will not resolve any problem. Besides, there is no need to make any change in this cabinet, which is soon going to be replaced by an interim government."

Janardan Sharma aka Prabhakar, Maoist MP, speaking at the parliament.

"The PM's address is like new wine in old bottle."

Jai Krishna Goit, chief of



Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM-Goit faction), reacting to the address by the Prime Minister, in Annapurna Post.

"He must take complete rest now."

Dr. Madhu Ghimire, personal physician of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, saying that the latter needs complete rest as he has been found infected by jaundice, in Kantipur.

"We will not reveal the actual names of the persons as that could affect further proceedings by the CIAA."

Dilendra Prasad Badu, Minister of

State for Information and Communication and government spokesperson, saying that the government has sent the names of some persons implicated by the Rayamajhi Commission report to the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) for necessary action.

"Politics is not the business of army."

General Rukmangad Katawal, Chief of Army Staff, Nepalese Army, addressing graduation ceremony of Command and Staff Course at army headquarters, in Gorkhapatra.

TRANSITION

FORMED: A five-member talks team headed by Dr. Om Gurung, by the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFIN). Other members of the team include Dr. Krishna Bahadur Bhattachan, Soma Rai, Bhulai Chaudhary and Kripasur Sherpa.

A six member advisory committee headed by Padma Ratna Tuladhar, by the NFIN.

An investigation team headed by Dr. Sarala Malla, director at National

Public Health Laboratory, to probe causes for spread of jaundice at the Prime Minister's residence. Around 17 employees at the residence have been infected by jaundice. Over half a dozen ministers including Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala have also been infected by jaundice.

DIED: Janak Prasad Humagain, litterateur, at the age of 69 years, of cancer.

APPOINTED: Ian Martin, as the chief of the United Nations Mission in Nepal, by the UN Security Council, as per the

recommendations of Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

Sitaram Agrahari, as the acting managing editor of Gorkhapatra daily.

WRITTEN: Letter by the Thakur committee inviting Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFIN), and both factions of Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM), inviting them for talks with the government.

AWARDED: Sudha Tripathy, litterateur, with this year's Yuddha Prasad Mishra Memorial award.

EARTHQUAKES AND NEPAL

▪ *BY Dr. AB Thapa*

Earthquake, shaking of the Earth's surface is caused by rapid movement of the Earth's rocky outer layer. Earthquakes occur when energy stored within the Earth, usually in the form of strain in rocks, suddenly releases. This energy is transmitted to the surface of the Earth by earthquake waves.

Most earthquakes result from the sudden slip along geologic faults. The faults slip because of movement of the Earth's tectonic plates. The rocky tectonic plates move very slowly, floating on top of a weaker rocky layer. As the plates collide with each other or slide past each other, pressure builds up within the rocky crust. Earthquakes occur when pressure within the crust increases slowly over hundreds of years and finally exceeds the strength of the rocks.

The convergence of the Indian plate northward into the Eurasian plate has resulted in the formation of the Himalayas. The Indus-Tsangpo suture (ITS) acted as the primary locale of plate interaction and convergence. There are two main faults running from east to west. Upper one is the Main Central Thrust (MCT) and the lower one the Main Boundary Thrust (MBT). It is regarded that the rocks between the ITS and the MCT, and the rocks between the MCT and the MBT represent successive slices of the Indian plate that have been accreted into the Eurasian plate.

It is considered that since the closing of the Indo-Tsangpo suture, the active plate boundary has shifted progressively southward, first to the Main Central Thrust and more recently to the Main Boundary Thrust. The more northerly MCT represents the older, presently less active boundary, while the MBT represents the present active plate boundary. Thus, periodic great earthquakes (magnitude 8+) occurring in this region are thought to have originated on the MBT.

Earthquake Damages

We all know very well how devastating earthquake can be. In the last 500 years, several million people might have been killed by earthquakes around the world. Earthquakes have also caused severe property and structural damages. The disaster in Tangshan in north-east China, which occurred on 27 July 1976, is reported to have killed no less than 650,000 people and the damage extended to at least 150 km from the epicenter.

The 1934 January 15 Bihar-Nepal earthquake had caused

very serious damages in Nepal. Studies of the Bihar-Nepal earthquake have been published by Dunn, Auden and Ghosh in the Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India (1939). The maximum intensity of X on the Modified Mercalli scale was assigned to a belt about 130 km long and 30 km wide, and two spots almost 160 km distant from the main belt, at Monghyr to the south and in the Kathmandu Valley to the north. The devastation at Monghyr was greater than in any other part of Bihar. The entire town was reduced to ruins, scarcely a house or hut escaped destruction or damage. The Kathmandu valley is formed by unconsolidated sediments resting on metamorphic and on partially metamorphosed pre-Tertiary series. The heavy damage was on the unconsolidated ground.

Earthquakes that occur in the area surrounding the Pacific Ocean, at the edges of the Pacific plate, are responsible for an average of 80 percent of the energy released in earthquakes worldwide. Japan is shaken by more than 1,000 tremors greater than 3.5 in magnitude each year. The western coasts of North and South America are also very active earthquake zones, with several thousand small to moderate earthquakes each year.

The destruction an earthquake causes depends on its magnitude and duration, or the amount of shaking that occurs. A structure's design and the materials used in its construction also affect the amount of damage the structure incurs. Earthquakes vary from small, imperceptible shaking to large shocks felt over thousands of kilometers. Earthquakes can deform the ground, make buildings and other structures collapse, and create tsunamis (large sea waves). Lives may be lost in the resulting destruction.

Reservoir Induced Earthquakes

Fault rupture is not the only cause of earthquakes; human activities can also be the direct or indirect cause of significant earthquakes. Injecting fluid into deep wells for waste disposal, filling reservoirs with water, and underground nuclear test blasts can, in limited circumstances, lead to earthquakes. These activities increase the strain within the rock near the location of the activity so that rock slips and slides along pre-existing faults more easily. While earthquakes caused by human activities may be harmful, they can also provide useful information. Prior to the Nuclear Test Ban treaty, scientists were able to analyze the travel and arrival times of P waves from known earthquakes caused by underground nuclear test

blasts. Scientists used this information to study earthquake waves and determine the interior structure of the Earth.

Scientists have determined that as water level in a reservoir increases, water pressure in pores inside the rocks along local faults also increases. The increased pressure may cause the rocks to slip, generating earthquakes. Beginning in 1935, the first detailed evidence of reservoir-induced earthquakes came from the filling of Lake Mead behind Hoover Dam on the Nevada-Arizona state border. Earthquakes were rare in the area prior to construction of the dam, but seismographs registered at least 600 shallow-focus earthquakes between 1936 and 1946. Most reservoirs, however, do not cause earthquakes.

Earthquake Scales

Earthquake size can be measured by seismic intensity as well, a measure of the effects of an earthquake. Before the advent of seismographs, people could only judge the size of an earthquake by its effects on humans or on geological or human-made structures. Such observations are the basis of earthquake intensity scales first set up in 1873 by Italian seismologist M. S. Rossi and Swiss scientist F. A. Forel. These scales were later superseded by the Mercalli scale, created in 1902 by Italian seismologist Giuseppe Mercalli. In 1931 American seismologists H. O. Wood and Frank Neumann adapted the standards set up by Giuseppe Mercalli to California conditions and created the Modified Mercalli scale. Many seismologists around the world still use the Modified Mercalli scale to measure the size of an earthquake based on its effects. The Modified Mercalli scale rates the ground shaking by a general description of human reactions to the shaking and of structural damage that occur during a tremor. This information is gathered from local reports, damage to specific structures, landslides, and peoples' descriptions of the damage.

Modified Mercalli and Richter Scales

The Modified Mercalli and Richter scales are used to rate and compare the intensity of earthquakes. The Modified Mercalli scale is somewhat subjective, because the apparent intensity of an earthquake depends on how far away from its center the observer is located. Rating intensities from I to XII, it describes and rates earthquakes in terms of human reactions and observations. The Richter scale measures the motion of the ground 100 km (60 mi) from the earthquake's epicenter, or the location on the earth's surface directly above where the earthquake occurred. The rating scale is logarithmic; each increase of 1 on the scale represents a tenfold increase in the motion of the ground.

All magnitude scales give relative numbers that have no physical units. The first widely used seismic magnitude scale was developed by the American seismologist Charles Richter in 1935. The Richter scale measures the amplitude, or height,

of seismic surface waves. The scale is logarithmic, so that each successive unit of magnitude measure represents a tenfold increase in amplitude of the seismogram patterns. This is because ground displacement of earthquake waves can range from less than a millimeter to many meters. Richter adjusted for this huge range in measurements by taking the logarithm of the recorded wave heights. So, a magnitude 5 Richter measurement is ten times greater than a magnitude 4; while it is 10 x 10, or 100 times greater than a magnitude 3 measurement.

Today, seismologists prefer to use a different kind of magnitude scale, called the moment magnitude scale, to measure earthquakes. Seismologists calculate moment magnitude by measuring the seismic moment of an earthquake, or the earthquake's strength based on a calculation of the area and the amount of displacement in the slip. The moment magnitude is obtained by multiplying these two measurements. It is more reliable for earthquakes that measure above magnitude 7 on other scales that refer only to part of the seismic waves, whereas the moment magnitude scale measures the total size. The moment magnitude of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake was 7.6; the Alaskan earthquake of 1964, about 9.0; and the 1995 Kôbe, Japan, earthquake was a 7.0 moment magnitude; in comparison, the Richter magnitudes were 8.3, 9.2, and 6.8, respectively for these tremors.

Minimizing Earthquake Damages

Earthquakes cannot be prevented, but the damage they cause can be greatly reduced. Adequate precautions, such as education, emergency planning, and constructing stronger, more flexible, safely designed structures, can limit the loss of life and decrease the damage caused by earthquakes. In response to the tragic loss of life and great cost of rebuilding after past earthquakes, many countries have established earthquake safety and regulatory agencies. These agencies require codes for engineers to use in order to regulate development and construction. Buildings built according to these codes survive earthquakes better and ensure that earthquake risk is reduced.

Geologists and engineers use risk assessment maps, such as geologic hazard and seismic hazard zoning maps, to understand where faults are located and how to build near them safely. Engineers use geologic hazard maps to predict the average ground motions in a particular area and apply these predicted motions during engineering design phases of major construction projects. Engineers also use risk assessment maps to avoid building on major faults or to make sure that proper earthquake bracing is added to buildings constructed in zones that are prone to strong tremors. They can also use risk assessment maps to aid in the retrofit, or reinforcement, of older structures. ■

Dr. Thapa writes on water resource

TERAI AGITATION

Short Relief

After the address by the Prime Minister conceding their demands, MJF has announced suspension of their strikes for ten days

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

After three-weeks of Terai turmoil, which was mysteriously generated and equally mysteriously spread across the southern plains, the country has once again returned to the semblance of normalcy. But there are enough fissures that could suddenly erupt anytime holding the whole country to ransom.

In his second address (Feb 7) to the people within one week, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala conceded to all demands raised by Terai demonstrators. The eight parties reached an understanding to meet their demands promising fresh delineation of electoral constituencies based on population and geographic appropriateness.

PM Koirala vowed to increase the constituencies in Madhes based on population and hold elections (for the Constituent Assembly) based on Proportional Representation system on the increased constituencies also. The constituencies in Terai will now be increased.

After his address, the eight parties have initiated efforts to amend the interim constitution to incorporate these new agreements. PM Koirala also expressed the government's determination to ensure participation of Madhesi, Janajati, Dalit, women and backward communities at all organs of the state.

The PM's address was drafted as per the written agreement signed by leaders of the eight parties. The signatories include Sushil Koirala, vice president of Nepali Congress; Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of UML; Maoist chairman Prachanda; Gopal Man Shrestha, vice president of NC-Democratic; Bharat Bimal Yadav, vice president of NSP (Anandidevi); Narayan

Man Bijukchhe, president of Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP); Amik Sherchan, president of People's Front; and CP Mainali, president of Left Front. Reacting to the media after the PM's address Rajendra Mahato, general secretary of NSP-Anandidevi said that this will fulfill the demands raised by people of Madhes.



Sitaula: Will he or won't he?

The PM's address, however, has not fully satisfied the agitators led by Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) – which spearheaded the three-week-long Terai unrest. The Forum has announced suspension of strikes and bandhs for ten days to give time to the government to create conducive atmosphere for talks.

MJF president Upendra Yadav said they still had reservations over the PM's address. "We take his statement positively though it still doesn't address our demands of inclusive federal republic system of governance with the right to autonomy and self-determination and proportional representation elections," he said. He also added that Home Minister Krishna Sitaula has to resign and a panel of investigation formed to probe incidents in Terai, where, he said, 38 people have lost their lives and over 200 have been injured during the unrest. "We are against the

idea of going for a separate state as accused by some quarters," he said.

On the other hand, the two factions of Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM) have not shown any indication that they would be laying down arms and ending their armed revolt in Terai anytime soon.

After three weeks of ceaseless violence and riots, parts of Terai reverted to normalcy after the PM's address. But it is not clear how long this stability will remain since the government has not yet sat down for talks with the MJF.

Yadav has already given a stern warning that they will not sit for talks if the Home Minister doesn't resign. "He has committed genocide in Madhes. His resignation is connected with the sentiments of Madhesi people," he said. Yadav's warning has not been heeded even after five days have passed over his ten-day ultimatum. Home Minister Krishna Sitaula – who enjoys wide support from a section of general public as well as the Prime Minister and Maoist chairman – has said that he will remain in the post as long as PM chooses.

The government's talks team led by Agriculture Minister Mahantha Thakur (and including two members: Rajendra Pandey, Local Development Minister and Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, State Minister for Water Resources) has already written letter to MJF, JTMM and indigenous organizations inviting them for talks. The Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFIN), too, has formed a talks committee headed by Dr. Om Gurung to hold talks with the government. However, the NFIN has said they will continue their street agitation along with talks. They have demanded federal autonomous state based on ethnic groups along with right to self determination; change in national animal; national color and so on.

Other organizations like Tharu Kalyankari Sabha (Tharu Welfare Assembly) and Federal Republican Forum (FRF) have also started their agitation. As the Constituent Assembly elections approach, the various demands and agitations by various ethnic organizations have become a serious problem for the government. ■

ARMS MANAGEMENT

Nearing Completion

Maoists inch closer to the interim government as UN says registration of weapons and first stage of registration of combatants will complete this week

By SANJAYA DHAKALA

If things go as planned, the Maoists could be included in the government as early as next week. The UN has said that the registration of arms and first stage of registration of its combatants will be complete by Friday, February 16.

Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary General, said that following the completion of the registration, he will report the full details about the arms and combatants to the government and the Maoist leadership and discuss with them how to make them public. "During this week, we will test the installation of 24-hour closed-circuit television surveillance," he said.

"I am satisfied with the arrangements I saw for the storage and monitoring of weapons at Kailali and Surkhet. The system is essentially the same as at other cantonments, with a 24-hour presence of Interim Task Force (ITF) and UN arms monitors living on site," said Martin who traveled to Kailali and Surkhet districts a few days ago to observe the registration process.

Martin, however, added that it was up to the government and the parties to decide what constituted the completion of arms management. As per earlier agreements, the Maoists will have to be included in the interim government after the completion of arms management.

When Martin addressed a press meet on Monday (Feb 12), the registration of weapons and combatants had been already completed in five of the seven cantonment sites. The registration was completed at main cantonment sites in Chitwan, Nawalparasi, Rolpa, Surkhet and Kailali districts.

In the second stage of registration of combatants, which will follow immediately after the completion of the first stage, the UN arms monitors will thoroughly verify the combatants regarding their age and recruitment. It has been agreed that only those combatants who have been recruited by the Maoists before May, 2006 and who

are over 18 years of age can be recognized and registered.

At the press meet Martin expressed dissatisfaction over the living conditions at the cantonment sites in terms of shelter, sanitation and access to basic services as water and electricity. "This is not a matter of direct UN



Martin visits cantonment in Kailali: First hand inspection

responsibility, but it will have a serious impact on our work if there are not rapid improvements," he said. Martin hinted that there would be serious problem in monitoring if the combatants start venturing outside the cantonments in search of better shelter.

There are now a total of 48 UN arms monitors who are working with the support of the ITF – which includes ex-Gurkha army personnel. The number of UN monitors will climb to 66 by the end of this week and reach 80 in total by the end of February. Approximately, 80 vehicles donated by the Indian government to the Nepal government to be used by UN team will also be arriving to Kathmandu this week.

Meanwhile, Martin expressed concerns about the delay in the formulation of necessary electoral legislations, which he said could affect the holding of Constituent Assembly

elections on stipulated time. "The agreement of the eight parties regarding extra seats for Terai constituencies must not allow us to forget that this and other aspects of the electoral arrangements have to be fully worked out so that they can be incorporated in electoral legislation, which is urgently needed to make feasible the timetable for the CA elections. In that regard, I would urge the political parties to heed the very timely call of the Chief Election Commissioner for urgent decisions and action in approving the much needed legislation, taking into account the need to address legitimate demands for inclusion," he said.

Martin also expressed concerns about reports of confiscation of voters rolls in some places. "The Election Commission has no power to act outside the law. The case for the law to be amended to ensure

greater inclusion is a matter to be pursued by members of the interim legislature which now includes Maoist representatives – not by party cadres taking the law into their own hands," he said.

Likewise, Martin also said he was concerned about attacks by the Maoists against workers of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP) recently in Lamjung and Tanahu districts, respectively. He said the UN can only regard an electoral process as credible "if people of all opinions are able to organize and campaign free of violence or intimidation."

"The UN played a role in defending that right during the People's Movement and we intend to do so just as uncompromisingly in the period to the CA election," he said, adding that the UNMIN and OHCHR will be closely monitoring the extent to which all parties respect the rights of others. ■

Foreign Aid

Friends In Need Friends Indeed

Internally, the politicians in power are totally confused about the sense of direction they need to have. However, the most fortunate thing in the present time Nepal is that the western developed countries have shown enormous concern for the Nepalese people providing institutional as well as economic support. At a time when Nepal, which is inevitably headed towards more political crises and mysterious uprisings by various brands and groups, is passing thorough a dangerous phase in its history presenting a gloomy picture, there are some signs of hope as well. For Nepal's economic development, the countries of Western Europe and Japan, which have no strategic and economic interest in Nepal – have been sincerely and purposefully providing aid. Despite losing political stability, peace and prospect for fast development, Nepal's internal institutional capability with reflection of popular opinion and support from developed west generates those hopes

By KESHAB POUDEL

The first European minister to visit Nepal following the successful People's Movement II was Norwegian Minister for International Development Eric Solheim who came with a package of financial and other supports. He was preceded by Richard Boucher, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia.

The next visitor was from Denmark.

State Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Carsten Staur came with the offer for Rs 2 billion assistance for alternative energy, peace process and constituent assembly. Then, European Union's five member delegation led by Neena Gill arrived in Nepal.

Similarly, Japanese senior vice minister for foreign affairs Yashuhika

Shiozaki came to Nepal with further offer for assistance. British government announced increase of financial assistance to Nepal by 10 percent to reach 4.29 billion through DFID.

Likewise, Finland government agreed to provide assistance worth Rs. 1.49 billion for the operation of drinking water and sanitation project.

According to annual budget for 2006/2007, the government is expecting foreign grants of Rs 23.72 billion and loans of Rs.16.9 billion.

Everything seemed to have been destroyed, but there is worldwide concern about troubles and miseries of Nepal when the concept of global village is being practiced even in Nepal and in the community of the countries of the world.

Although internal political scenario of present time Nepal indicates that a dark cloud is looming large over Nepal, this is not the only occurrence. One can also notice a silver lining around the dark clouds over that distant horizon.

"The most fortunate thing in present time Nepal is that the developed countries have enormous concerns for the people of Nepal and their well-being. Therefore, the help and contribution to Nepal in economic as well as institutional support has increased enormously even as, internally, the politicians in power seem disoriented," said a political analyst.

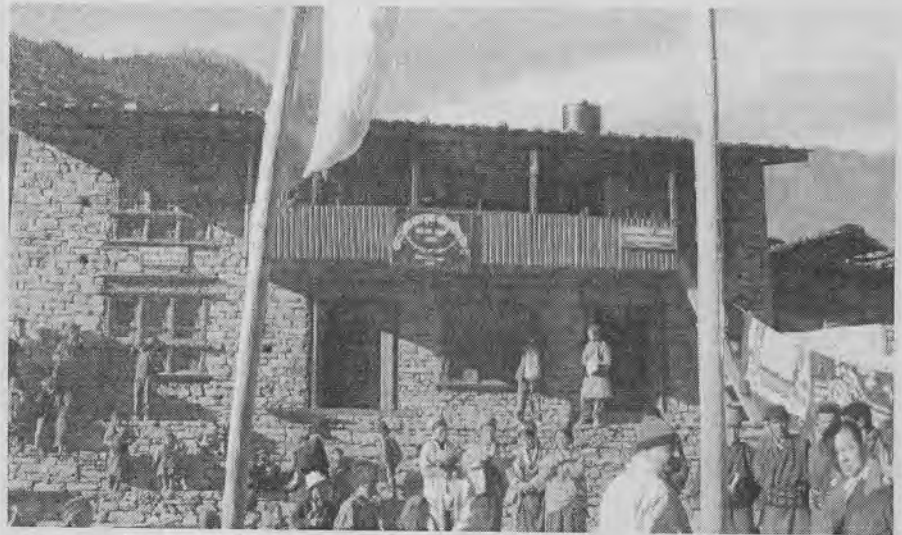
According to a senior official at the Ministry of Finance, the amount of foreign aid including budgetary support has gone up considerably compared with the previous years. "Some of the donors are even providing budgetary support for us at this juncture," said Rameshwor Khanal, acting secretary of Ministry of Finance.

"Many conflict-ridden countries in the world don't have that kind of continual support during their crisis period and in the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation, Nepal is yet a manageable country even amid its crisis," said the analyst.

Generous Support

According to the Ministry of Finance report on foreign aid, in the fiscal year 2006/07, these countries have offered valuable contribution in terms of budgetary support and other aid. Japanese under the DRF committed more than Rs1.89 billion and Rs 285.721 million under KR 2. British government through DFID committed Rs 1.16 billion. Germany under GTZ committed Rs 1.74 billion and through KfW Rs 155.65 million. Denmark has pledged Rs 548.87 million. Netherlands through SNV has committed Rs 48.12 million; Australia Rs 8.15 million, France Rs 37.22 million, Norway Rs 53 million and USAID Rs 7.88 million as budgetary supports.

Along with the budgetary support, these countries have also committed other kinds of aid including turn-key



Community center in Rasuwa: Rural tourism infrastructure

projects. In total Germany has contributed Rs 2.99 billion and Japan provided Rs1.89 billion through DRF, Rs 415 million through JICA and Rs 204.5 million through Japan and Rs 285.7 under KF2. Similarly, DFID provided Rs 1.25 billion, Denmark Rs 859.5 million, European Union Rs 134.22 million, Netherlands (through SNV) Rs 209.015 million and Nordic Development Fund Rs 65.70 million, Switzerland (through Helvetas) Rs 4.056 million and Rs 156.492 million through Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).

Although they are highly developed in terms of technology, the countries of western Europe and Japan are supporting Nepal in the areas of rural development and other sustainable development.

"Rural development and grass-root level institution building are two important areas where Nepal needs support. Having their early experiences in these areas, these countries can contribute a lot to build the basic institutions," said Dr. Shankar Sharma, former vice chairman of National Planning Commission (NPC). "Being a small rural based economy, people can benefit from small projects than the big ones. Donors know that."

With a population of 26 million, Nepal has many challenges for development. From reducing poverty to providing employment opportunities and offering education, Nepal is facing multi-pronged challenges.

Why these countries from western Europe and far east which have no strategic or economic interest in Nepal are so sincerely and purposefully involved in Nepal's economic

development? It is because they see growing economic disparity and challenges.

"Nepal's economic disparity, like all other underdeveloped world, is a concern of the democratic societies of the west. The ways the priorities are fixed up, one is amazed how these highly industrialized and high tech countries have been emphasizing upon improved traditional technology as well as intermediate technology for the present solution to Nepal's problems. Some of our politicians and planners are completely ignorant and had neglected that for long. If our planners and politicians are given to choose, they will definitely ask for latest and highly sophisticated technology for even non-productive sectors," said the analyst.

Even Sweden's International Development Agency is providing grant to Nepal. There are various other United Nations agencies and INGO also involved in accelerating the development activities.

One of the hopeful signs is that many western industrialized democratic countries are supporting Nepal to overcome the present challenges. Not only Nepal's two neighbors and regional military juggernauts India and China, there are many western industrialized developed countries and Japan continue to express their commitments for the development of Nepal through their financial contributions.

Compared with the contribution intermediate powers of western world, the contribution made by Nepal's two immediate neighbors is small. But that too is growing.

"Britain and Denmark are directly helping for budgetary support. Japanese

and German aid are focused on infrastructures and rural development but they don't allocate money for budgetary support," said a senior official at the Ministry of Finance. "India and China both Nepal's neighbors are now showing interest to contribute to budgetary support."

After the royal takeover in February 2005, Denmark withdrew major projects from Nepal. Denmark pulled out from community forestry program, which was one of the successful programs supporting the livelihood of millions of poor people of rural Nepal because of arrogance of then first vice chairman of council of ministers Dr. Tulsi Giri.

Of course, some countries attached certain conditions including the universal values like social inclusion, good governance and rule of law. These conditions sometime supported to derail democratic process of Nepal. In the name of good governance, the government was compelled to draft a draconian law creating an unaccountable anti-graft commission like Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority - which was used to destabilize the democratic process.

Hope and Despair

As Nepal's traditional legitimate institutions have been badly shaken and newly set up institutions are yet to take roots and/or build capability, the crisis often goes out of hand because of confused and directionless leadership.

The recent terai agitation showed how confusion rules the mind of Nepalese leaders. Amid these confusion in minds, anybody can create problem in the country. From Tharu to other indigenous groups and even student wings of political parties can unleash havoc any time.

"If the government does not accept our demand to set up a separate autonomous Tharuwan region in terai, we will paralyze the life of Nepal blocking all transport," said president of Tharu Kalyankari Sava. "This is a warning as well as suggestion."

At a time when Janjatis, Dalits, trade unions, transport entrepreneurs, women, farmers and other ethnic, religious and linguistic groups are in a queue to repeat the success by Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), Nepal's coming days are definite to be gloomy.

From street to political forum, contradictions and controversies are rampant everywhere. "Nepal is passing through a very difficult phase of its history as it has lost its political stability,

peace and prospects for development. Whatever was built up in the recent half century of history in the form of norms and values of political system have been severely damaged," said the political analyst.

Anarchy Step by Step

To put Nepal into the present unstable and anarchic shape, the political parties took several steps. First they destroyed a workable constitution through a parliamentary proclamation in April, 2006. The proclamation, among others, snatched all the powers of the monarch.

"The constitution, which was promulgated in 1990 after an extraordinary consensus of the popular political forces, with its unchangeable basic structure has been summarily abrogated by a reinstated parliament, which had neither legal nor moral authority to do so. Judiciary including the Supreme Court has been downgraded by an unaccountable executive power," said the analyst.

To consolidate the power snatched under parliamentary proclamation, Seven Parties Alliance and Maoists (SPAM) prepared an interim constitution cornering entire prerogatives with them. However, less than twenty-four hours after the promulgation of the present interim constitution, a mysterious uprising erupted in the southern belt of Nepal, which was successful to snatch away political concessions of a far reaching negative consequence.

"There is no visible center of power for ultimate decisions but things are happening everyday in a planned and orchestrated manner. People are brought into the street in a violent mood to face any consequence," said the analyst.

Without any debate in the parliament, leaders of eight parties under the leadership of octogenarian prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, who is not in good health, announce decisions whenever they feel necessary. Even prime minister Koirala announced the same decision twice in a week.

"But this is not end of the history of Nepal. Nepal still has capability to withstand challenges and onslaughts of time," said the analyst. "Be it the street or the seat of power, as long as organized



People wait for check up: Penetration in rural health

interest has free place in society, there remains a hope of ventilation of popular sentiments and public grievances. Though the leaders may not have the decisive power with them and thus succumb to the machinations of invisible centers, they are bound to reflect the organized opinion of their following masses."

Silver Lining

Every thing appears to have been influenced by an extremely negative pressure for a drastic change without any definite outlook and sense of direction. What Nepal had achieved in its long history of self governance and particularly under a democratic process initiated after great change of 1951, those elements are yet upholding the basis infrastructure and rules of governance. Though disorganized but their contribution to uphold the governance is yet to die. This is not complete break down of state power.

B.P. Koirala in his recent book King, Nationalism and Politics said, "I have learned the inherent strength of Nepal. Let whatever come, Nepal would survive."

"B.P. Koirala understood the instinct of survival of this country very well. B.P. reached to that conclusion by his long experience in his leading role in the politics of this country. Whether it is King Prithvi Narayan Shah or a commoner B.P. Koirala, both of them have left an inspiring legacy behind them," said the analyst. "Nepal has institutional support to get the popular opinion reflected

though that may not be carried on. In that inherent contradiction of organized political articulation, Nepal has a hope to tackle challenges of present time."

As the country's traditional power structures and political institutions are badly shaken and new institutions are yet to evolve, Nepal alone cannot carry out the development programs to meet the aspirations of people and achieve sustainable economic growth. Here the generous aid provided by western industrialized democracies are very much valuable.

Reorganizing the State

Nepal for quite a long time has been living a particular way of life as institution of monarchy was at the center of power. Though eight political parties scrapped all authority, monarchical opinion is overwhelming in Nepal. Even the revolutionary leaders of eight parties often express fear about the revival of the monarchists in Nepal, which indicate how influential the institution is.

"Every body in Nepal has one sentimental attachment with particular way of life and pattern of relationship among citizens and between citizens and state. Many values, norms and discipline have created useful conventions and laws. All of them have come into the melting pot of unexpected and unplanned state of change," said the analyst.

Nepal is in crisis of reorganization as a nation-state after a great shake up, which has not yet subsided. Nepal has a challenge of reconstruction of its economy, education and various infrastructures of such services.

"It is not only due to the monarchy Nepal remained as a unit but it is due to inherent emotional factors of unity that it lived with the different phases and characters of monarchy till now," said the analyst.

From regional to geographical and from ethnic to caste and linguistic to religion, there are several facets for the reorganization of the state. In a society based on subsistence agriculture, new challenges of reorganization could add more problems.

What Future Nepal has?

Nepal has been pressured too much by regional conflicts and rivalries. All the time it has shown its vitality as a nation.

One may dislike a strict communist ideology-based party as unjust, irrelevant

and outmoded. If one goes close to them, their ideology is just a tag. In fact, they are not much different than others.

Maoists, in the western countries' view seem to have metamorphosed from red-tagged terrorists to toothless refugees living in UN Charity. Perhaps western democratic governments have slowly and gradually reached to conclusion that theoretically they are terrorists who have now become toothless refugees. The previous logistic support to them seems to have dried up. They now seem to have been replaced by non-ideological based different regional agitators

Even the United States in its recent statement decided to continue to support Nepal even if Maoists join the government.

It is not only a question of economic aid and support to Nepal at its critical phase, there is a very serious challenge this country has to face in terms of maintaining national unity with peace, harmony and stability.

Nepal has lost its previous power composition and is in search of a new shape, which is not very clear to its leaders, elites and common people.

Many countries have passed through similarly difficult transitions. Soon after the end of II world war, there was a difficult period for the industrialized countries of the west to reorganize social, economic and political interests.

After the disintegration of Soviet Union and during the democratic wave of 1990s, some countries reorganized themselves remaining intact while others got disintegrated in the process. Countries like Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria remained intact; while Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were disintegrated into several parts.

"Whatever contents of disintegration were injected in the body



INGOs in health care: Precious contribution

of Nepal, it has yet endured all the hardships and challenges of disintegration because of a long history of emotional integration between regions and communities of this county. Even in this communist dominated Loktantra, the monarchy still has acceptability as one of the factor of integration though it has been left out of power in state authority," said the analyst.

Despite the recent regional turmoil, political crisis and uncertainty, there are silver lining in the horizon for prosperity and development for Nepal. Thanks to the support of western developed countries, Nepal is not alone when it is walking through difficult transitional period.

"If obstructions are not created from any direction, Nepal has enormous chances to rebuild its economy and infrastructures, popular and accountable government as well as vibrant economy. Whatever deficiencies are in the leadership, friends of Nepal tackle that wisely and skillfully," said the analyst. "Problem in Nepal may enlarge into a bigger dimension if it is not addressed promptly and properly." ■

"Tourism Should Be Sustainable As Well As It Should Support The Livelihood Of People"

Madhav Prasad Ghimire

MADHAV PRASAD GHIMIRE, Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, is a senior civil servant with wide range of knowledge on Nepal's economic and social issues. Ghimire, who did MS from Asian Institute of Technology, has completed Master in Business Administration from Tribhuvan University. Having served as consulate general in Nepalese mission in Honk Kong, Ghimire also headed the Foreign Aid Division in Ministry of Finance in the past. He talked about the situation of economy and tourism. Excerpts:

We need to replicate the lessons learned from this kind of program like TRPAP and there is a need to expand such programs in other districts also.

How do you see the state of tourism in Nepal?

First of all, tourism is one of the basic area of Nepalese economy. Whether it is in the short term or long term plan of the government, the importance of tourism is clearly mentioned. In terms of foreign exchange, the tourism has a major contribution as it is still one of the major foreign currency earners. In overall GDP, the tourism has made 2.5 percent contribution. In terms of employment, the tourism provides employment opportunity for large number of population. According to a study, a tourist provides direct and indirect employment opportunities for at least 12 Nepalese. In terms of investment, tourism has a leading role. Hotel sector, which is one of the major components of tourism, is one of the major sectors of investment.

What are the major concerns now on tourism sector?

Although it has made major contribution in economy, the debate is growing about how to give benefit to the large segment of the population. During the last 12 years of conflict, the tourism industry also suffered a lot. After the signing of peace treaty, there is growing hope of its revival. As it is in the revival stage, we must develop a plan to expand the tourism sector from urban concentration towards the rural. In the past, it was seen as an urban based business and its benefits were confined to certain key stakeholders like travel tour operators, airlines, hoteliers and traders. The perception of tourism was that it was just a business of blue collar class. Now, there is slight deviation in this concept.

What is the challenge now?

The challenge of tourism at present is how to tickle down its benefits to the broad stake holders at the grass root level. The challenge is now how to share benefit in fair and just manner. In other words, the challenge is how to make it pro-poor or to give benefit to broad stake holders including residents of far flung areas and rural parts of Nepal. In the past, tourists were taken to many parts of Nepal but local people did not have any say on benefit sharing. The local communities and people felt ignored and neglected in power sharing. People did not feel ownership. The time is now to broaden the area and benefit sharing and ownership. The community should get benefit as per their contribution in tourism sector. Now we are developing a policy for pro-poor or sustainable tourism. The tourism should be sustainable as well as it should support the livelihood of people. Along with its

contribution in GDP growth, we must work out a plan to trickle down the benefits of the tourism sector. It must go for far flung and remote areas.

As the government wants to widen the benefit of tourism in rural parts of Nepal, a pro-poor Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation program (TRPAP) is going to phase out soon. Does the government have anything in mind to extend it or consider another project similar to that?

If we see the plan documents, they always stress on the pro-poor based rural tourism. In practice, no such programs were implemented targeting the poor. When I was heading the Foreign Aid Division of Ministry of Finance negotiating the program, we proposed to UNDP, DFID and SNV to implement pro-poor tourism as a pilot program in six districts. TRPAP aim was to target the poor population of rural areas.

How do you see the implementation of TRPAP?

The implementation of TRPAP is satisfactory as it produced good results in those six districts where it was implemented. We need to replicate the lessons learned from this kind of program and there is a need to expand such programs in other districts also. This is donor-funded program so we are now discussing regarding the program. We are getting positive indications. TRPAP must be replicated and scaled up.

Mountaineering is still confined to certain areas, and we still have many new mountains to explore. Does the government have any plan to open up new mountain areas for expedition?

When we are talking about the tie-up of the tourism with poverty alleviation program, we must open new tourist areas including mountaineering. It can be most important instrument in terms of balanced regional development. Mountaineering is now confined to Khumbu region of Mt. Everest, Annapurna region and Langtang region and many other beautiful areas like in Dolpa, Humla, Rara of western and other areas in eastern parts of Nepal are yet to be explored. If we encourage tourists to visit these areas, poor people will benefit from them. Most of the visitors who come to visit Nepal do mountaineering in these areas only. It means the benefits are limited to these areas only. If you see average GDP of Khumbu region, it is about US\$1200. It shows how much tourism can benefit the people. We have to develop new products in other areas of tourism potential.

How many new products have been developed during the period of implementation of TRPAP?

TRPAP has made important contribution to

develop the new product in the remote parts of Nepal. In Dolpo of mid-west, the TRPAP has developed a new trekking circuit. Similarly, the project developed a Tamang Trekking Circuit and in Chitwan also. TRPAP is taking package for tourism development. From giving training to tour guide to building small infrastructures like information centers and community building and room for home stay tourists, TRPAP has made excellent contribution. TRPAP has also venture capital for promotion of tourism.

What are other contributions of TRPAP?

TRPAP has contributed to develop human resources as well as other infrastructures. It has made very important contribution in Rasuwa and Taplejung. We need to explore the potential of Rara, Khaptad and many other parts of far western and mid-western region. If we develop new venues, benefits will automatically trickle down. TRPAP helps create demand also. It also helps to institutionalize the rural tourism at the grass root level. It develops unit at village levels and district levels in the process of social mobilization. From Cs to central level at Nepal Tourism Board, it builds linkages. In all six districts, there are tourism units. This is very innovative and important steps to implement tourism program in sustainable way.

What are other problems faced by tourism?

It is easier to said than done. It is very difficult to develop new products. Dolpa and Rara areas are known for their bio-diversity but they have not yet been capable to develop as tourist destinations. Airline services are unreliable and there is a lack communication facility. We need to analyze minutely the supply and demand side.

How much money do you allocate to the local level?

Last year we generated about Rs.160 million revenue from mountaineering as a royalty and we allocated 30 percent of such resources to particular districts for the development of tourism related infrastructures and environment. Our aim is to provide the resources to grass root level. This is the way of sharing benefits. This will also give incentives to the local community.

At a time when there is a growing concern about pollution in mountaineering areas, what has government planned to clean up the mountains?

This is a very serious concern. The government is allocating additional resources to clean up areas like Mt. Everest and Khumbu region. We have made mandatory for expedition groups to carry out the garbage used during the climbing. Every climbing team has now to deposit certain amount of money for that. In case, some groups do not bring the garbage, their deposit money will be used to clean up the rubbish.

There is a complaint that the royalty of mountaineering is high compared with China. How do you look at it?

There are two schools of thoughts on that. Some groups believe that Nepal has unique



ecology so that the royalty is not high. Others hold the view that it needs to be reduced. In my opinion, we need to make our mountains attractive and competitive. Compared to peaks in Tibetan Autonomous Region of China, Nepal has higher fees and royalty. I think we need to review it. For instance, a tourist has to pay about US\$700 for ten days, whereas tourists from Tibetan sides are coming without paying such price. This is the area where we have to consider the pro-poor tourism policy. Our package needs to be competitive and attractive. Many restricted areas have already opened in Chinese side but we are still closing them. I know that some of those areas were very vulnerable in terms of geo-strategic interests in the past. Now the situation has changed.

Tourism entrepreneurs are complaining that the number of air seats available is very low. What do you say?

One of the major problems is the accessibility. There is a problem to get ticket during the peak tourist season. We have been suffering from this problem. The government has taken some important steps allowing international operators to add additional flights to Nepal. This was immediate reform action taken in the past. We also issued a public notice requesting private airlines to start the international flights. One airline has applied for that and it is in due process. We will upgrade it. Third step is to allow more international airlines to link Nepal. We also changed some air service agreement with certain countries.

Are any new airlines flying to Nepal?

Korean Air, China South West Airlines, and Air Arabia have already started their flight to Nepal. Air Sri Lanka is in process to begin its operation to Nepal. Orient Thai is also in the pipeline. We are also discussing with other private airlines in India to start the flight from different cities of India. We will do new agreement with India if necessary.

Do you have any plan to expand the fleet of Nepal Airlines?

Another important step will be to reform the Nepal Airlines. We have to reform its management side. For this, we want to turn it into a public limited company where the government will have majority share. This system will provide certain flexibility to reform certain things. Another important part of reform will be to increase the number of aircraft. Nepal Airlines has now two old aircraft to fly the international sector. Both the aircrafts have already completed 22,000 cycle and it has four twin otter. Keeping in mind, the growing demand, there is a need to increase the number of aircrafts. We have already formed a committee to do a feasibility study. Nepal Airlines need new aircrafts soon. We will proceed to purchase new aircraft following the hand over of the study ■

We need to make our mountains attractive and competitive. Compared to peaks in Tibetan Autonomous Region of China, Nepal has higher fees and royalty. I think we need to review it.

INFLATION

Looming Large

Not only in Nepal, inflation is surging in next door neighbor India, too, triggering concerns for the poorer section of society

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Inflation – that dastardly enemy of poorer communities as well as middle class families – has started raising its head.

After a brief respite last year, the inflation has started to rise up rapidly reaching nearly 8 percent. According to the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the rise in price of petroleum products, transport and food stuffs have triggered the rise in inflation. This data was revealed at a program organized by NRB recently.

The inflation for the fiscal year 2062/63 is said to have crossed 8 percent. Presenting a paper on the analysis of inflation, deputy director of Pricing Section of NRB Gopal Prasad Bhatta said that inflation was comparatively rising in the country. According to deputy governor Krishna Bahadur Manandhar, the rise in inflation will have adverse impacts on all other sectors of economy.

A report of the economic situation of the first five months of the current fiscal year, prepared by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) had showed that inflation had reached 7.3 percent during the period.

The concerns for the rising inflation has heightened since India – the largest trading partner with which Nepal conducts nearly 70 percent of its total trade – too is suffering from the same problem. The effect of increasing inflation in India is certain to cause serious consequences on Nepal, too.

The wholesale price index, India's closely watched cost-of-living indicator showed inflation at 6.58 percent, the highest reading since December 2004 and up from 4.04 percent a year earlier.

Even as India issued a fresh forecast that its economy would grow by stupendous 9.2 percent, the surging inflation – said to have been triggered by the rising cost of staple items such as garlic and lentils – is feared to hurt the poorer section most.

In the past 12 months in India, the cost of pulses has risen by 21 percent, food grains by 9.5 percent and fruits by 14.5 percent.

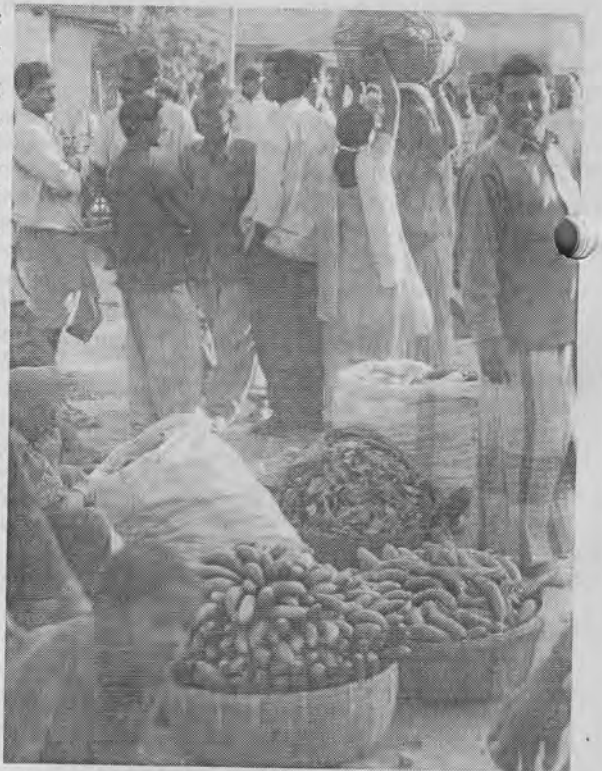
Needless to say, the rise in cost of food grains and lentils in India are certain to cause similar, if not more, growth of cost in Nepal.

Add this with the recent woes caused by prolonged Terai unrest. The paralysis of transport system and supplies facility had further caused hike in the price of essential items.

Even a full week after the cessation of unrest in Terai the normal supplies of petrol had not resumed as indicated by serpentine queues in the petrol stations. The shortage of fuel and essential goods are dangerous portent for the economy.

On the other hand, the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) still has over Rs ten billion to pay as outstanding dues to Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), which means there is also likelihood that the government could hike the fuel price anytime.

These are not at all rosy indicators as far as inflation is concerned. Inflation is regarded as the greatest enemy of poorer section of society



Vegetables: Prices pushing them off the menu?

whose earnings will not be able to sustain even their current level of life if market prices increase. Likewise, the middle class families with limited budget will also feel the pinch of soaring inflation.

Unfortunately, as political parties, civil society and the government remain fixated over political issues, unrest, agitations and the Constituent Assembly elections, the economic issues have been pushed to the backburner. As such, inflation is going to have a field day attacking the poor people of the country. ■

LEADERS' SPEAK

Without Comment

Various political leaders have made a variety of analysis on the agitation in terai by Madhesi Janadhikar Forum

The resignation of home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula is precondition to initiate the dialogue. Our forum is no different than political parties. Our organization is revolutionary" - Upendra Yadav, president of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum, Kantipur February 4.

"If the government cannot address our demands, we will demand separate Madhesh"- Upendra Yadav, February 5

"We are committed for integrated and united Nepal and there is no demand for separate state." Upendra Yadav, February 8

"The government can not escape by just blaming external forces and regressive forces behind Madhesi agitation. Resignation of Home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula cannot solve the problems of terai. It is the rebellion of people against the state"- Rajendra Mahato, general secretary of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP-Anandidevi), at Reporters Club, February 4.

"Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula should resign taking responsibility for killing in Madhesi andolan. His resignation will open the negotiations" - Rajendra Mahato February 12, Kantipur.

"Regressive forces are actively backing agitation in Terai. Our party also raised genuine demands like proportional representation and federalism but prime minister ignored them. Had other parties accepted our demand, the country would not have to face the present situation paving the way for regressive forces to make a comeback" CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal on Chhalfal weekly, February 4.

"Those leaders who charged Terai's agitation is part of conspiracy by the regressive forces are trying to devalue the rebel of Madhesis against state. The agitation of Terai was spontaneous and voices of rebellion" - Dr. Banshidhar Mishra, CPN-UML parliamentarian at Reporters Club, February 10.

"There are definitely some regressive elements and palace behind the vandalism in Madhesi Andolan. The elements from palace penetrate the agitation to discredit them" - Sushil Koirala, vice president of NC, in Nepal

Television, February 10.

"This is a time for revolutionary change. Thus, people's aspirations and expectations spontaneously burst. This is natural. There would be pain when there is change from one system to other but regressive elements always will try to take advantages in such agitation"- prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala in his first nation wide address on January 31.



Yadav: Comments flying thick and fast

"Terai's demands are genuine and they should be fulfilled. Had the government implemented the report of Rayamajhi Commission, the present problems in terai would not have erupted" - Nepali Congress general secretary Ram Chandra Poudel in Radio Nepal, February 3.

"People are dying in police firing and you are saying that they come from Bihar. Can Bihari come to face bullet of police and die for the cause of Nepali Madhesis? Leaders of political parties are ignoring genuine demands of Madhesis terming it as an agitation instigated by regressive elements" - Nepali Congress MP Surendra Chaudhari in Parliamentary meeting, February 4.

"People of Indian origins living in Terai in Nepal should not fear anything. The unrest is a conspiracy of the US and the Palace" - CP Gajurel, chief of CPN-

Maoist foreign department addressing a press conference in New Delhi (The Himalayan Times, February 4)

"The recent agitation in terai is backed by regressive forces and Hindu fundamentalists from India. The present agitation in Terai provides additional energy to fulfill the demands raised by our ten years long people's war"- Maoist supremo Prachanda in Kantipur, February 3.

"We are the first party to raise the demand of federalism but some deserters of our party launched the agitation with the backing from foreign elements and palace" - CPN-Maoist leader Ram Bahadur Badal, in Nepal Samacharpatra, February 11.

"We have seen the agitation in terai is spontaneous with participation of all level of people of different kinds. The

government has to show flexibility to fulfill the demands raised by the agitators in Terai" - Shyam Shrestha, leftist intellectual and member of civil society for peace and democracy.

"The regressive elements and some royalist elements infiltrated in the agitation in terai. As long as monarchy is there, palace will actively back these kinds of violent activities" - Krishna Pahadi, Channel Nepal, February 11.

"As long as Madhesias demanded their right peacefully, no political parties took any initiative. After Madhesias took the issue in street and forced the government to accept their demands with sacrifice of more than two dozen martyrs, all political parties are in the race to claim the credit" - Jaya Prakash Gupta Anand, Nepali Congress MP in Kantipur.

(Compiled by KESHAB POUDEL)

FOOD AID

Hunger Relief

The UN World Food Program extends food aid to cover drought-hit districts

By A CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) will extend its food aid operations in Nepal to communities in three drought-affected districts of the Eastern Terai – an area seized with political violence over the last month – as well as continuing assistance until the end of June to drought victims in the Mid- and Far-Western Regions, according to statement issued by the WFP/Nepal.

The extended operations will bring the numbers of WFP drought-affected beneficiaries to 400,000, double the number reached in the first phase of the operation. “The move follows a request for additional support from the Government on the basis of findings from a recently completed Government crop and food supply assessment mission, supported by WFP and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. The report warns of food grain shortages totalling nearly 190,000 metric tons,” the statement added.

The aim of the joint assessment was to estimate overall crop production in the country and to better understand impacts on household security in areas most affected by adverse weather conditions. The results are based upon the data gathered in 15 districts in the Eastern and Western Terai and the Mid- and Far-West Regions of Nepal in November of 2006. “The mission’s estimates of the number of people facing immediate food shortages prompted us to request WFP to extend its emergency food aid operations,” said Nepalese Agriculture Secretary Ganesh Kumar KC. “Given the uncertainty of the winter crop harvest, we wanted to take immediate action to reduce the impact of food grain shortages on poor people in Nepal.”

Since June of 2006, WFP has provided emergency aid to nearly 200,000 drought-affected people in eight

districts in Mid- and Far-Western Nepal. This was the first emergency operation of its kind in WFP’s 40-year history of working in Nepal.

Because many of the recipients live in Nepal’s most remote areas, 30 percent of the food had to be delivered via helicopter, requiring over 200 flights to complete the operation.

“During the first phase of the operation, the pilots and our NGO partners did a heroic job overcoming major obstacles such as bad weather, transportation strikes and extremely remote and mountainous terrain to get the food out,” said Richard Ragan, WFP Representative in Nepal.

“We learned a great deal about how to operate in such a difficult environment and are now much better prepared to start the second-phase of food aid relief for drought-affected families in the Mid- and Far-West at the end of the month,” Ragan added.

Through the extension, nearly 400,000 drought-affected people living in the Mid- and Far-Western Regions of Nepal, as well as communities in Saptari, Siraha, and Udayapur districts within the Terai will receive WFP food aid.

The WFP is appealing for US\$16 million for its drought relief operation in Nepal. Donors so far include the European Commission (US\$3.2 million), the United States (US\$2.2 million), the Netherlands (US\$1.2 million), Canada (US\$900,000), Germany (US\$650,000), Switzerland (US\$400,000), Australia (US\$400,000) and Norway (US\$20,000). A further US\$1.1 million has been received in multilateral contributions.

The WFP is the world’s largest humanitarian agency: each year it gives food to an average of 90 million poor people to meet their nutritional needs, including 58 million hungry children, in at least 80 of the world’s poorest countries. ■

FORMULATE LAWS FAST: EC

The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Dr. Bhoj Raj Pokharel has asked the political parties to expedite the necessary electoral laws if the elections for the Constituent Assembly (CA) have to be held by mid-June. “We cannot go ahead and stage a drama of election just on the basis of government order. You have to formulate necessary laws and create necessary environment,” Dr. Pokharel said at an interaction held by the EC by inviting top leaders of eight parties on Sunday (Feb 11).

Except PM Koirala and Maoist chairman Prachanda, all the top leaders like Madhav Kumar Nepal and S. Bahadur Deuba were present at the interaction. Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai and Dinanath Sharma also attended the program where the EC urged the eight-party leadership to take urgent political decisions to speed up preparation for the forthcoming constituent assembly election.

The EC has asked the parties to immediately formulate CA Elections Act and Political Parties Registration Act, among others.

The EC has also asked the Maoists to stop creating problems by looting voters’ lists. “There are reports that in some places the Maoists have asked (our employees) not to continue the process while in other places they have seized the document of voter’s registration saying they would return it only after clearing some issues,” Dr. Pokharel said at an earlier press meet.

The Maoists have been pressing the Election Commission to register temporary voters such as temporary residents, people who are living in rents in cities, laborers who are away from their homes and so on. The CEC has informed that EC can do nothing to these concerns since the Voters’ Registration Act does not allow it to register temporary voters. ■

Who will lead this nation?

-By Dr Brian Metters

Around three years ago I was on my regular climbing expedition to Nepal with a few friends, sat down on a rock above Lobuche and penned the following poem:

*Corruption and pollution, Maoist revolution,
Student agitation, tears apart the nation,
Economic suicide, businesses begin to slide,
Politicians cannot see,
they don't live in poverty.
Irresponsibility, uneducated anarchy,
Students are manipulated,
Law and order decimated,
Who will be the hero, indicate the way to go,
y above selfishness,
Lead us from this holy mess.*

It caught the mood of what we were all feeling, some of us regular visitors to this wonderful country, one of us married to a Nepali for 35 years, all of us amazed by the anarchy that seemed to be growing with no direction or leadership being shown by anyone. Worst of all, no "father of the nation" seemed to be emerging who would lead the country into something even resembling a unified state.

Three years later and I don't see much difference, politicians "fiddle while Rome burns", debating the constitution ad nauseum to the detriment of many other things around them. Fuel shortages, electricity outage, the Terai problem, all symptoms of a wider malaise ... no leadership.

In recent weeks, as I followed the news daily on the internet and from my wife who had visited her home for the wedding season, I have begun to think of comparisons in the last century of countries who faced national problems, in some cases even the risk of destruction. The first example is of Great Britain in 1939, with the rest of Europe overrun by the German army

their politicians had tried the policy of appeasement, then a half-hearted attempt to support the invaded French. The army defeated, supplies cut off, the country on the verge of invasion and from the depths of despair arose a leader, someone who gave confidence, who gave direction and spoke of hope. Winston Churchill rallied and organized the nation into a defiant and snarling bulldog who would not lie down.

As a second example not long after this, closer to home in Nepal, India was fighting against British oppressive rule and led by Mahatma Gandhi. Here was a man who "fought against" oppressive taxation and divisive discrimination. He led nationwide campaigns for the alleviation of poverty, for the liberation of women, for brotherhood amongst differing religions and ethnicities, for an end to caste discrimination, and for the economic self-sufficiency of the nation, but above all for the independence of India from foreign domination. His strategy was non-violent protest.

My final example, if one more were necessary, comes from the apartheid torn country of South Africa. Here was a country where the vast majority of people were an oppressed underclass, in most cases violently so. The black people of South Africa had no rights whatsoever, politically, economically, sociologically or within the justice system. Then in 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison and led the nation through a strategy of reconciliation and negotiation to a culture based on a multi-racial society. The fact that there was not widespread bloodshed is testament to his statesman-like leadership.

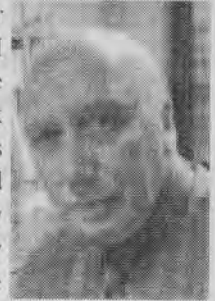
Now, it is not my purpose here to write a lengthy essay about these three

political leaders, far from it though I would encourage everyone to look more at the qualities they possessed and the strategies they followed. Simply put, in each case they were the right man for the right problem at the right time. Each of them understood the mood and needs of the nation. Each of them gave direction and organization to the change that was needed. Each of them inspired confidence in the people through their words and personal example. Each of them led their countries from darkness into light.

So how is Nepal to be led from darkness into light? My three examples would suggest I believe that there is a need for, and a lack of leadership in the country. Who is really the leader of Nepal today? Who stands for the nation? Who should the people most look up to?

The example leaders I have given were all incorruptible, untarnished and gave the people a clear vision of a better future. Can you say the same for GP Koirala or Comrade Prachanda? Are they giving the people a vision of a better future? Are they giving clear direction? Are they working on the right things? Do they have an untarnished past? From my position, I think not, and this is the real tragedy for the nation in the long term and the ordinary people in the short term. Someone MUST emerge to galvanize Nepal towards tomorrow or the future is bleak indeed.

(Dr Brian Metters, a UK citizen married to a Nepali woman, is an organizational psychologist and mountaineer. He can be reached at Brian@metters1.wanadoo.co.uk)
Courtesy: Nepalnews.com



BOOK

Nepal's Struggle for Existence

At a time when Nepal has been facing most serious challenges for its existence, Dr. Sharma's book highlights all important phases in Nepal's development

By KESHAB POUDEL

As Nepal has been facing one of the most difficult phases in its history for survival, Jagadish Sharma's book "Nepal Struggle for Existence" provides analytical information related with all those incidences.

Following the unification of Nepal by Gorkha's King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the country has seen many ups and downs and gone through crucial phases to survive as an independent nation.

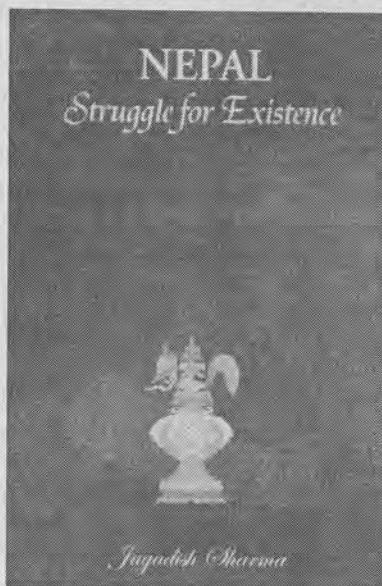
Sandwiched between two Asian powers India in the south and China in the north, Nepal's quest from the very beginning remains survival as an independent nation. In its course of struggle, though they are varied in forms but similar in nature, the country has paid heavy price.

Nepal's trouble began along with the formation of modern Nepal in 1768 by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, a great ruler of Gorkha, who unified different principalities and Kingdoms. Since the time of unification, Nepal continues to face two powerful nations in its two sides of boundaries. This is a great challenge as well as strength of Nepal.

This book is reprinted version with epilogue updates; it covers the situation from early phase of unification of 1768 to recent Janandolan II. "Nepal: Struggle for Existence, a seminal work being also the first of its kind, is reprinted to meet public demand. The epilogue updates the book by focusing public attention on the feasibility of assimilating the Maoist movement into the political mainstream post-Jana Andolan II," writes Sharma. "It will be recalled that the initial section of the book contains the dissertation that was written for fulfillment of partial requirement for a Ph.D. degree under the proactive guidance of late professor Leo. E. Rose and benign mentioning of Professor Bhuwan Lal Joshi at Berkley in 1966-68."

Sharma discusses all aspects of role Nepal has played between the Chinese and Indian civilizations and the impact it has had in creating a symbiotic culture are mentioned. The author also discusses relations with China along with an extensive coverage of relations with India. According to Sharma, movement away from a satellite relationship with India to a more independent status is the hallmark of the Ph. D thesis written under the guidance of Leo E. Rose and constitutes the first part of this book.

Sharma highlights episodes from the unification of Nepal, the 1950 Treaty with India, revolution launched against the Rana oligarchy, Delhi Compromise, resurgence of Nepali nationalism, anti-India movement, General Elections



Nepal Struggle for Existence
Written by:
Jagadish Sharma, Ph.D.
Published by:
CommInc, ICT Private Limited
Price: Rs. 999.00
Pages: 388

insetting parliamentary democracy and its ouster in 1960. Panchayat era, restoration of democracy in 1990, Royal Massacre, King's Coup and Janandolan II.

"A live instance of democratic exercise emanating from the synergy created by aligning the SPA with the Maoists may act as a trendsetter for South Asia. A contrary scenario of a very dreadful kind could emerge if the entire Himalayan subcontinent does have to pass through the present Nepali ordeal and the trauma the Chinese themselves have had to undergo in the last century. The American and Indian authorities would do well to take this factor into cognizance," writes Sharma. "A ceremonial role to the monarchy, if the Constituent Assembly so accords with the authority to determine the line of succession fully reserved in the parliament, would not just forge national unity but also boost Nepal's existence as a sovereign nation-state with an identity separate and distinct from that of India."

Based on Nepal's relations with China and India, this is very interesting book and for those who want to know the strategic interest of Nepal, this book gives in-depth and analytical information.

The book also highlights many important incidents such as Nepal's two neighbor's interest on Nepal. "The government of India itself did not hide its discomfort over Acharya's personal diplomacy in China. New Delhi did not, of course, officially object to Kathmandu's overtures towards Beijing but launched forth its own more to undermine Acharya's foreign policy. While prime minister Acharya was on his way to Kathmandu from his far eastern trip, K. I. Singh suddenly appeared in New Delhi where he was accorded a red carpet treatment and closeted with the India leaders. A day later, he met with Indian prime minister himself. Rarely has a nongovernmental Nepali leaders received as much attention as K.I. Singh did during this time," writes Sharma, pointing out instances of neighbor's interest.

As Nepal is still surrounded by its two neighbors India and China, Nepal's prime challenge remains how to pursue her foreign policy merely to survive as an independent nation. ■

Nepal's Hydropower For Mutual Benefit

At a time when Nepal and India both are facing shortage of power, the officials in Indian Power Ministry are said to be in mood to exploit Nepal's hydro potential for mutual benefit.

The India media reports have said that the Power Ministry has asked the External Affairs Ministry to open talks with Nepal to exploit some of its untapped hydroelectricity potential. In a letter to Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon last month, outgoing Power Secretary R. V. Shahi underlined the importance of utilizing Nepal's 44,000 MW hydroelectric potential, of which only 650 MW has so far been developed by Kathmandu, reported IANS.

The Power Ministry is also reported to have cited the successful umbrella agreement with Bhutan in July 2006, suggesting that the foreign ministry consider financing such projects. Shahi wrote: "Implementation of these projects will have a demonstrable effect as this would not only enable Nepal to meet its increasing energy requirements, but would also boost its socio-economic development through sustained income from sale of surplus power."

The power ministry has since floated an approach paper on cooperation with Nepal in development of hydroelectric projects. The paper has been sent to the Prime Minister's Office, Cabinet Secretary B.K. Chaturvedi and Water Secretary Gauri Chatterjee.

The power ministry argues that cooperation with Nepal would also be a confidence-building measure that could kick-start discussions on multi-purpose projects. Cooperation with Bhutan in hydropower has yielded good results, the letter said. Three projects — Chukha (336 MW), Kurichu (60 MW) and Tala (1020 MW) — have been implemented as mutual benefit projects. Projects taken up so far with Bhutan are run of the river projects fully financed by India through grant and loan funding. In addition to these three projects, discussions with Bhutan are at a final stage for taking up the implementation of Anatsanchhu I hydroelectric power project of 1095 MW capacity with Indian assistance.

The power ministry argues that a similar umbrella agreement with Nepal should start with run of the river projects because they have shorter gestation period. The ministry has already outlined a number of projects like West Seti (750 MW), Budhi Gandaki (600 MW), Arun III (400 MW), Upper Marshyangdi (121 MW) and Upper Karnali (300 MW) as possible for India-Nepal cooperation. Compiled from reports

The news report coincides with growing interest by private sector Indian companies like reliance, GMG and others to develop mega hydro projects in Nepal.

Nepal itself has been facing paralyzing load-shedding in the winter months. This year the state-owned Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has announced load shedding of up to eight hours a day during March/April. ■

Book List

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Interim Constitution & Constituent Assembly

-BY KUSUM SHRESTHA



We had previous experience of interim constitution promulgated in 2007 BS (1950 AD). That constitution was written by India and was in force till another constitution formulated by elected constituent assembly. That constitution remained in force for eight years amid various political upheavals. The constituent assembly could not be elected. However, a constitution formulated on the basis of understanding among the mainstream political forces and which followed the norm of constitutionalism was promulgated in 2015 BS (1958 AD). But this constitution, too, did not enjoy stability. Amid inexplicable conspiracies, the constitution was brutally annihilated.

Following three decades of guided constitution, a new democratic constitution, which also embraced the norms of constitutionalism, was promulgated and enforced in 2047 BS (1990 AD). However, owing to external influence, terrorism, subdued environment, compulsive situations, disunity, conflict, discord, intolerance, crisis of confidence and especially due to commitments and mandatory considerations made by the actors, harbingers and leaders of new change, we are yet again experimenting with the interim constitution and constituent assembly. Consequently, the 1990 Constitution, too, is facing the end from the permanency of the written constitution as the previous constitutions. Again, after half a century, we are returning to the same period of experimentation with interim constitution and constituent assembly.

Historic background cannot be dismissed even if one wishes to do so when building the structure of a constitution. Basically, a constitution is a living document. It is not something that is imaginary or utopia. The living document encompasses present reality, people's aspirations and spirit of time in the context of past experiences, lessons,

knowledge, instances, education, weaknesses and successes and failures. It espouses qualities of democratic constitution that can guarantee stability by drawing roadmap for future. In the context of Nepal, there are a few strands of seamless web that cannot be overlooked when writing a constitution. They are – national unity, democracy and constitutionalization of democracy. It is upon us to develop our country amid the inherent geo-political compulsions and characteristics such as multi-religious, multi lingual, cultural diversity of the people.

Our nation has specific sensitivity as it is a weak but strategically important nation located between two very big and powerful countries. Late Leo Rose has left behind an invaluable contribution in his *Strategy for Survival*. Perhaps, inspired by his work one Nepali intellectual has published this book. However, Nepalese want not merely to survive but also to develop their nation as a member of comity of civilized nations. Likewise, they want to develop their country as a democratic entity where the state sovereignty and final power will be vested on the people and where individual rights and freedom will reign supreme. But they do not wish for uncontrolled and binds democracy where inhuman and autocrat like Hitler could born. For the constitution to become lively legal norms, rule of law and constitutionalization of democracy are pre-requisites.

Basically, strands of seamless web mentioned above are inherent in our constitution. When a constitution that is going to be promulgated lacks these elements, the country may have to face unimaginable misfortune.

In this context, it is noteworthy to take notice of an article written by Jenik Randon, Associate Professor of Columbia University, which was published in *The Kathmandu Post* on June 17, 2006. That article was based

on the constitution written in South Africa after historic changes there. There, the new constitution was written by following the spirit of the existing democratic elements and setting aside demerits and unacceptable practices of apartheid regime. "The people of South Africa resisted the temptation to suspend the rule of law in their process of writing a new constitution and they have reaped the benefit. Under the oppressive apartheid regime the government reluctant to give up their power initiated constitutional reforms to meet the demand of the people, but 1983 constitution only re-entrenched the same internationally denounced apartheid system. And yet, even after the government's abuse of the rule of law, the equal rights crusaders and Nobel prize winner Nelson Mandela and his party did not abandon it entirely. Despite their revolutionary spirit, they distinguished between the ruling regime and the spirit of rule of law and drafted the new constitution heralded as one of the most progressive in the world, actually *The Act of 108*. A less glamorous title but it demonstrates that constitution came not *ex nihilo* but from a constitution enshrining South Africa's commitment to the rule of law, which resulted in the country's peace and prosperity of today."

Our 1990 Constitution was not a merciless document; neither was it written by a dictator. That was the result of the People's Movement and reflected people's aspirations. I only have one question: Why shouldn't we follow the even tiny footprint of Nelson Mandela?

(Excerpts of the article written by senior advocate Shrestha. This article is based on remarks he made at an interaction program by CiSAPR on December 07 2006)

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