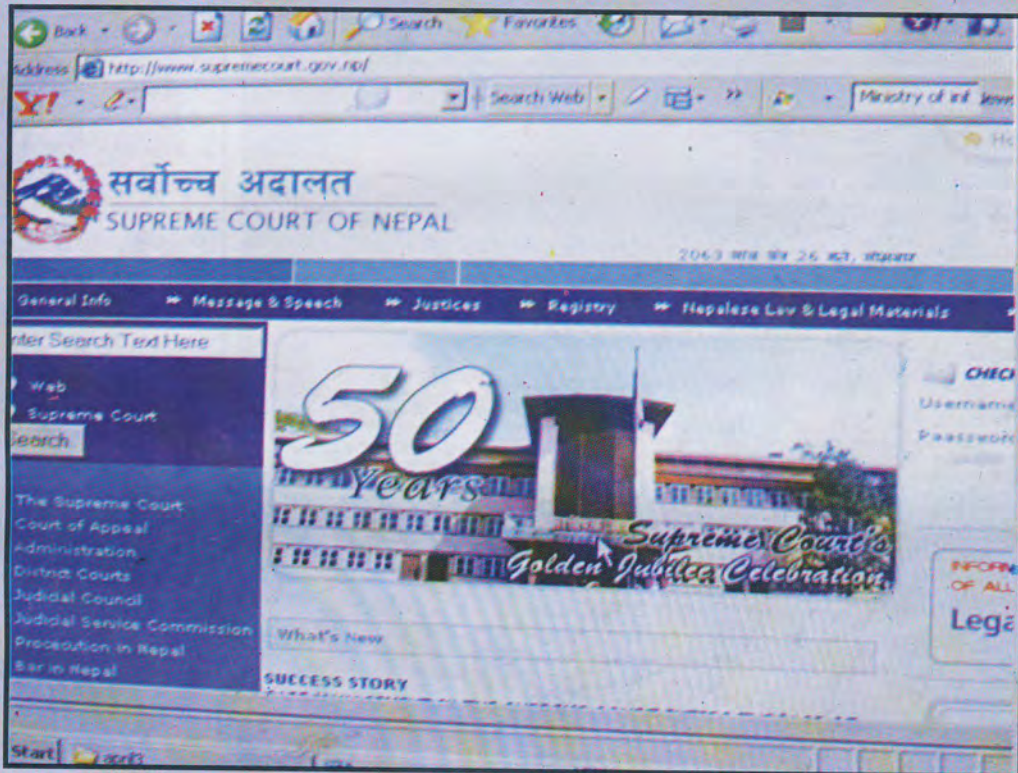


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The National News Magazine

SPOTLIGHT

April 13-19, 2007



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CA Polls : Date Debate

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Lotus

बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकले तपाईंहरूको विश्वास र चाहनालाई ध्यानमा राखि फेरि ल्यायो जीवनभरको लागि मात्र रु. १,०००/- मा लोटस बचत खाता । यो योजना नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकका सबै शाखाहरूमा लागू हुनेछ ।

विस्तृत जानकारीको लागि नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकको शाखाहरूमा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला ।



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SPOTLIGHT

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As the first anniversary of the Peoples' Movement II that demolished the King's authority to be substituted by a vicious dictatorship of the Eight Political Parties, is nearing, while the poor people of Nepal are getting utterly disillusioned with the new democracy that is working in Nepal. Since the demise of the Panchayat era, the democracy initiated after and the democracy that came after the downfall of the king, both have failed to satisfy the aspirations of the people. Most Nepalis residing in the United States of America are giving second thoughts to the rise of the Maoists and their participation in the government. Some even confided to this scribe, that if this is what the people of Nepal had bargained for, they sure are awaiting a great disaster. The Panchayat era or even the king's autocracy would have been a much better regime than this Eight Party dictatorship that knows neither any constitution nor follows any rules. At least they would have been less subservient to the alien power than that is presently dominating Nepal's politics. Neither would they mortgage the Nation's Pride to satisfy the individual politician's nor their partisan interests. Not only that, a profound skepticism is harrowing them that the Eight Parties ruling the country at the moment are not at all serious about holding elections to the constituent assembly at the stipulated time. They are just taking recourse to high sounding rhetoric, playing a game of blaming each others' intentions regarding the elections and taking the innocent Nepali people for a ride. Since all the Eight Parties are enjoying the sinecure and luxury of authority and power that satisfy all their wants and desires, they are in no immediate mood of holding the elections. Moreover, they need a lot of capital to finance the election and holding on to their official chairs for longer period of time to amass the required funds. And since there is no power in Nepal that can dislodge them while the international community has been supporting them to the hilt, they don't have to worry or fear for anything at all. As such, they are sitting pretty in the gallery of the interim parliament. When twenty six million poor Nepalis are stifling under a new form of dictatorship looking for ways of deliverance, the lone super power thinks "Nepal's democracy has taken a long stride after the peoples' movement." No wonder in a country where one lone man can thwart the decisions of the majority by using his undemocratic veto, the regimes' views about the situation in Nepal would be perverted. Even stranger is the view expressed by the US Ambassador to Nepal, James F. Moriarty, when he praises the "new interim government in Nepal as the servants of the Nepali people." Poor Nepalis have never experienced this concept that rulers can become servants of the people. May be the Ambassador made a slip of the tongue. And poor Maoists, they have not yet tasted the fruits of their blood bath and the American Ambassador wants to turn them into servants. What could be a greater irony than this? When his own statesmen fail to follow the footsteps of their great ancestors like Jefferson and Lincoln, how can one expect Nepal's politicians to behave like a true democrat? If the Americans can really rise above their evident self interest and sincerely want to help the poor people of Nepal, they have to help Nepal find honest and patriotic leadership in the country. Perhaps this can only be possible if the U. S Government is courageous and sincere enough to tell their Indian friends that India should immediately stop patronizing and using the Maoists to destabilize the poor country, Nepal. Otherwise, their hypocritical rhetoric will not help the poor Nepalis get over their unbearable miseries. They are facing very dark days ahead and they want their good friends to come to their rescue without undue delay. Let us hope that U. S. will wake up now and follow a common sense political course towards Nepal, otherwise Nepal is heading to become a communist state in near future.

Madhav K. Rimal
Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Parched People

The cover story "Empty Taps" (SPOTLIGHT March 30) raised a burning issue faced by the people of Kathmandu valley. Lack of drinking water has been haunting the people of the valley for last many years. But, still no solution seems to be in sight. In fact, the absence of water will lead to stagnation of this metropolis because no one would like to come, live or invest in a place where there is not enough water.

*Jitendra Basyal
Ghattekula*

On Loktantra

The article "Stable Democracy or Volatile Dictatorship?" (SPOTLIGHT March 30) has brought to the fore very serious issues facing Nepali nationhood. Despite its weaknesses, democracy is the best option for Nepal. Only in democracy can grievances of all the communities and regions be adequately and appropriately addressed. And democracy has inbuilt mechanisms to correct mistakes. It might be a noisy and messy system, but it is a good and self-correcting system. As Winston Churchill once said, democracy may be the worst form of governance but best among those ever practiced. Nepali people realize the importance of democracy more than anyone else. They have fought three revolutions and countless struggles in the last six decades for the sake of democracy. So it is wrong if anyone thinks that democracy is volatile and dictatorship is stable for the country.

*Diwakar Shrestha
Patan*

Consolidate Democracy

Apropos the article "Stable Democracy or Volatile Dictatorship?" (SPOTLIGHT March 30), it is important for the political leaders and the people to work together to consolidate democracy in the country. After 1990, corruption emerged as the single-most dangerous factor, which derailed the functioning democracy. After 2006 change, the issue of security and stability is now similarly hurting the prospects for democracy. Therefore, all the people of Nepal including Madhesis, Janjatis, Dalits, women and anyone else with grievances must try to make their struggle peaceful and orderly so as not to disrupt the consolidation of democracy. Because through its consolidation only their demands can be met.

*Bikas Basnet
Maharajgunj*

Water Woes

Thousands of people of the capital city are forced to wake overnight just to wait for taps to come alive ("Empty Taps" SPOTLIGHT March 30). Drinking water has become one of the scarcest commodities. But the people have no hope. Leaders are busy on political issues. Basic necessities and socio-economic problems have become nobody's concern. As such, people have no alternative but to continue facing all the difficulties they are suffering from now – just for those few precious drops of water.

*Jeeban Lama
Chabahil*

Where Is Melamchi?

Every dry season people remember the dream of Melamchi ("Empty Taps" SPOTLIGHT March 30). But that dream seems to have turned into nightmare since the much-touted project is still as distant as it was in the past. If the project was never to be completed, why did the leaders give that promise to the people? Even after restoration of Loktantra, parties have not come together to resolve problems faced by essential projects like Melamchi. It is also the duty of donors to warn the authorities if the latter do not show attention or commitment to implementing such multi-million dollar projects.

*Krishan Joshi
Bhainsepati*

Alternative Path

At a time when drinking water has not become a topic that warrants any concern from our leaders ("Empty Taps" SPOTLIGHT March 30), the people have no option but to take recourse to alternative path. As mentioned in the article, rain water harvesting can be a feasible alternative. But this system has to be made practical for all households to use. It should also not be expensive to install. At present, people have little or no knowledge about this concept. The NGOs have the duty to spread the words.

*Lalit Bista
Kaushaltar*

Give Priority

As the cover story ("Empty Taps" SPOTLIGHT March 30) suggested, there is a need to give priority to the issue of increasing the access to water and sanitation not only in city areas but also in remote regions. It is one of the targets of UN Millennium Development Goals also. But it is not enough to just increase the access to water; there is a need to increase the access to safe drinking water. This can lead to sharp reduction in water-borne disease – which have huge socio-economic costs for the country.

*Durgesh KC
Satdobato*

Election On June 20 Not Feasible, Says Martin

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon's Personal Representative, Ian Martin, on Sunday, told Prime Minister Koirala's Advisor on Foreign Affairs Dr. Suresh Chalise that it is not "technically and politically feasible" to hold the CA polls on June 20. Citing the Terai and Janajati issues Martin was quoted as saying: "It will take little time to address the Terai and ethnic issues, and we don't have much time (if the polls are to be held on June 20)." "Martin told me that it was not feasible to hold elections on the date if the issues of Terai and ethnic minorities remain unresolved," Dr. Chalise said. Martin is learnt to have raised the same issue in his meeting with Maoist chairman Prachanda and UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal. The UNMIN headed by Martin has the mandate to assist Nepal in holding free and fair CA elections. Martin also had discussions with Chalise on the conditions of cantonments, which the Maoist leaders are not satisfied with, and the process of demobilizing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) living in those cantonments. Chalise was also told that the Maoist chairman wanted about a week before the UNMIN begins its 'second phase' of verification. The verification would determine the real adult strength of the PLA, and also identify if any minor has been recruited. Chalise was told about the 108 UNMIN monitors, who are already on the ground, and the process of Nepalese Army locking up an equal number of arms as the Maoists have locked up. The process will begin on Tuesday, Chalise said. *The Himalayan Times daily reports*

India To Bring Train Up To Nepal Border

India is planning to expand railway network up to five Nepal border points. Following, China's start of railway service up to Lhasa last year, the Indian railways ministry has given 'top priority'

to this plan, according to international news agency AFP. "Railway Ministry has given top priority to this after Chinese plan to expand Tibetan railway up to Nepal border," the AFP quotes Indian Express daily as reporting. The plan to link Nepali border points with Indian railways had begun three years ago. At the commerce secretary-level Inter Governmental Committee (IGC) meeting, India had agreed to build broad-gauge railway line up to Jogbani and Sunauli points. Nepal had proposed to India to expand those lines up to Biratnagar and Bhairahawa cities – which would have linked Indian railway with the dry ports there like in Birgunj. In Birgunj, trains have started to come carrying cargoes. Officials here believe that Indian plan is aimed at Chinese market. Since long time, India had asked Nepal to provide transit route to China. Although Nepal government has agreed to this request, in principle, nothing has been done at ground level. Likewise, China, too, has taken this proposal in positive manner. China constructed 1142 km long railway line linking Qinghai province with Lhasa of Tibet. China has shown interest to expand this line up to Nepal border. "Lhasa-Nepal railway is not feasible in technical and economic manner. But it has high strategic value," the AFP quotes a senior official at Indian Railways as saying. According to AFP, China plans to expand railway line up to Chhomo city near the border with Sikkim in next ten years. Last year, India and China had agreed to open Sikkim route for bilateral trade. It had remained closed since last 44 years. *Kantipur daily reports*

Prachanda Says Maoists Have Not Given Up People's War

Maoist chairman Prachanda has said that his party has not altogether abandoned the long-term people's war strategy. Only the form and front of struggle has changed, he said speaking at a gathering of intellectuals close with

Maoists, on Saturday (April 7). He added that his party was following the dictum of Mao Zedong that struggle does not end even if the party joins government. Prachanda was also highly critical of the United States. "We have changed the form of struggle, which the US knows," he said, adding that it could trigger waves across the world. Prachanda also mocked the remarks made by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala recently at SAARC Summit in New Delhi. "He said that he has mainstreamed terrorists but it is clear that the coming days will show who has (mainstreamed) whom," Prachanda said. He also termed seven parties as spineless. Interestingly, Prachanda also revealed that his party had held talks with former prince Dhirendra and were preparing to talk with late King Birendra before the royal palace massacre. "At that time we were considering proposing Sinhanouk-kind of role for Birendra," he said. However, in June of 2001, all members of then King Birendra's family as well as Dhirendra were killed in a palace shootout. *Compiled from reports*

RJP Drops Monarchy From Its Statute

Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP) has decided to omit constitutional monarchy from its statute and documents. The meeting of the central working committee of the RJP has made the decision to orient RJP as neutral towards monarchy in the run up to the elections for the Constituent Assembly (CA). The RJP's central working committee made this decision ahead of its preparations to register the party at the Election Commission (EC) on Sunday. The party led by former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa has said it will follow the May 18 Declaration of House of Representatives. *Leading dailies report*

FNCCI President Dhakal Summoned By RID

The Revenue Investigation Department (RID) has summoned Chandri Raj Dhakal, president of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and

Industry (FNCCI) to answer to charges that he evaded revenues by forging documents. He is facing charges that his company Memento Apparels forged bank guarantee documents while importing goods, thereby evading Rs 8.6 million of revenue. However, Dhakal did not honor to the department's summon order saying that he was unable to attend for a week due to health reasons. He had promised to produce himself by Friday but he did not honor that promise, as well. After he did not respect RID's order, Finance Secretary had contacted Finance Minister who was then in New Delhi for further instructions. Finance Minister, in turn, had talked with Prime Minister who said they should proceed as per the law. Dhakal needs to deposit the evaded amount along with double that amount as fine. This totals to Rs 25.5 million. Meanwhile, Dhakal has said that he is not involved in the whole affair. He said his staffs must have made some mistakes. "I will report to the government very soon," he said. *Kantipur daily reports*

SLC Paper Leak Row; Probe Panel Formed

After the cadres of Young Communist League (YCL) handed over two teachers from Bhaktapur district – Keshav Shrestha and Prakashman Shrestha – charging them of selling question papers of SLC, the Education Ministry has cancelled Thursday's test on Nepali subject in Bhaktapur district. The question paper seized from Shrestha duo matched with the actual question that was provided to students on Thursday (April 5). Pradeep Nepal, Minister for Education and Sports, told media that all officials of the Office of Controller of Examinations (OCE) have been recalled and brought "under the purview of investigation." Ministry's joint secretary Arjun Bahadur Bhandari has been deputed to take charge of OCE. Likewise, three-member panel has been formed to probe the leakage incident.

The panel is headed by Kedar Prasad Poudel, joint secretary at the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. Other members of the panel include Superintendent of Police Navaraj Silwal and joint controller of examination at Tribhuvan University Anup Kumar Shrestha. The panel will start its investigation beginning Sunday and will submit its report within 15 days. Apart from today's test in Bhaktapur district, all other tests will resume as per the schedule. *Compiled from reports*

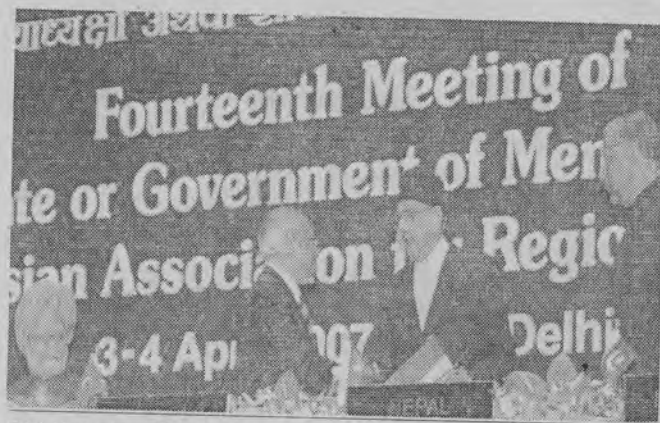
NC Will Decide On Monarchy Ahead Of CA

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has said that Nepali Congress (NC) will make a decision on its position vis-à-vis monarchy ahead of CA elections. Talking to reporters in New Delhi on Thursday (April 5), Koirala said NC's position will be a 'spice' of the election. When reporters asked him if King Gyanendra would allow the CA polls to be held, Koirala said, "What did you say? Gyanendra or King Gyanendra? Minus the King, only say Gyanendra." He added, "(NC's) decision on monarchy will be the spice of the election and will create an environment that will catch the attention of all." On Terai issue, he said he will hold talks with agitators. He said India, too, has assured of cooperation in this regard. Koirala said Nepal's image in international level had heightened after Maoists were roped into the government. Koirala said that unification of NC was now his priority. "NC unity is a must. I will talk with NC-D immediately after I return," he said. On Thursday, he separately met with former Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee. PM Koirala said the SAARC Summit was successful. "I said that the resources of the LDCs in the region should be utilized," he said. *Kantipur daily reports*

Indian Company Comes Up With Attractive Proposal On Upper Karnali

An Indian company GMR has offered

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) 33 percent share in the Upper Karnali project without it having to make any investment. Of the investors showing interest to develop the 300 MW project, GMR has offered largest share to the NEA. It has also offered the government 7.5 percent of energy for free. The government had invited offers from prospective investors on three mega projects including Upper Karnali, 600 MW strong Budhi Gandaki and 402 MW strong Arun-III. The government has received 14 proposals from various companies from India, China and Netherlands. A committee formed by the government and headed by former finance secretary Bhanu Prasad Acharya is studying the proposals. Meanwhile, other two Indian companies who have shown interest in Upper Karnali – Reliance group and KSK – have offered 15 percent share to NEA. They have also offered 7.5 percent energy free to the government. Another Indian group Jindal has offered 12 percent free energy. Likewise, Satya group has offered 15 percent share while Larsen & Toubro has offered 8 percent free energy. Those companies who have offered more free energy and more shares to the government do not have experience in hydropower development. However, four companies who have experience in hydropower development have not offered any share or free energy. They include Kovec of China, Sinohydro of China, JP Group of India and National Hydropower Corporation (NHPC) of India. The Upper Karnali project is said to be the most economical project with the Rate of Return calculated at 20.87 percent. Since its site is close with India, estimates say there will be only 2 percent technical loss when transporting it to India – as per the book Hydropower Pricing in Nepal. The book states that the total investment of the project would be around \$828.4 million or Rs 58 billion. *Kantipur daily reports*



PM Koirala at SAARC Summit Photo: D&L, Basanta Chitracar

A TASK FORCE HEADED by Appellate Court judge Lokendra Mallik, on Sunday (April 8), suggested the Supreme Court issue directives to the government to enact a retrospective law ending impunity and to punish security personnel involved in disappearing people in the past. The task force submitted its report to the SC after a five-month-long investigation on four missing persons. The panel has indicted army, police officials and former assistant CDO of killing one and says there is no hope of finding three others alive.

THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER of Saptari district has been abducted by Janatantrik Terai Mukti Moreha (Goit faction). DEO Nibharaj Joshi was abducted from his residence – on the top floor of the building where the district education office is located – at 3 am on Saturday (April 7) morning. The district security council meeting was held following his abduction. Joshi has been abducted at a time when School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exam is going on. A person named Shyam claiming to be an activist of Goit faction of JTMM had telephoned local media owning up the responsibility of his abduction. Meanwhile, in Siraha district, unidentified persons shot to death one Thakur Koirala. Districts in Terai are still reeling through unchecked violence and unrest.

THE NEWLY CREATED MINISTRY OF PEACE and Reconstruction will act as a focal point and single door for all the activities related with peace and reconstruction. "All peace and reconstruction activities being carried out by various ministries will be integrated and this Ministry will carry out peace campaigns and reconstruction efforts together," said Ram Chandra Poudel, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction. At a press meet, Friday (April 6), it was informed that the Ministry will collect data on the conflict-victims; and damaged infrastructures. All party peace committees will be created in districts. The management of the government Peace Trust Fund will also be shouldered by the Ministry, Poudel said. "Peace trust fund, camp management, reconstruction, rehabilitation and coordination with other agencies will be done by the Ministry," he said.

SITASHMA CHAND HAS BEEN CROWNED Miss Nepal 2007 at a Beauty Pageant held on Saturday (April 7) evening at Birendra International Convention Centre (BICC). Bandana Sharma and Shweta Shah were crowned first and second runner-ups, respectively. Likewise, several title awards were also given away. Chand also won the title of Miss Personality and Miss Best Walk. Likewise, Sharma also bagged the title of Miss Photogenic while Reecha Sharma bagged Miss Beautiful Smile and Sabitra Shrestha won Miss Natural Talent titles. Earlier, activists and women leaders close to Maoists staged protest in front of BICC. They said that women were being exploited for commercial purposes in the name of beauty pageants. A few persons were even injured in a scuffle with the police.

EXPRESSING ITS WILLINGNESS TO HELP resolve refugee impasse, India has proposed that Nepal allow those refugees who want to be resettled to United States or Australia. According to Foreign Minister Sahana Pradhan, Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told her that "repatriation could be considered after the number of refugees comes down to size." "After the refugees go to US and Australia, their number will come down to size. Then after, we will help repatriate the rest," Pradhan quoted Mukherjee as telling her during the meeting between the two. Pradhan said she told Mukherjee that the issue of Bhutanese refugee was a trilateral one involving Nepal, Bhutan and India and it deserved trilateral initiative.

THE BRITISH EMBASSY IS OPENING a new Visa Application Centre (VAC) at Lazimpat in Kathmandu from 26 April. A press release issued by British Embassy in Kathmandu said, the VAC will provide a convenient, fast and accessible way for applicants to apply for visas for the United Kingdom. "From 26 April the VAC will be the only location in Nepal where visa applications for the UK may be made. Visa applicants in Nepal will be required to make their applications in person at the VAC," the statement added. The UK is also introducing biometric data collection in Nepal from April 26. Applicants will be required to provide their biometric data for collection (finger scans and digital photographs) when submitting their applications. The VAC will forward all applications to the Embassy where, as now, Embassy Immigration Officers will take the decision on whether an applicant qualifies under the UK Immigration Rules for processing, the statement added. "I am delighted that we can now offer our Nepalese clients an even higher standard of service. Having a well designed and fit-for-purpose building will make the whole application process simpler and smoother and a pleasanter experience for the applicant," the statement quoted British Ambassador Dr Andrew Hall as saying. ■

“(NC’s) decision on monarchy will be the spice of the election and will create an environment that will catch the attention of all.”

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, talking to reporters in New Delhi.

“He (PM Koirala) said that he has mainstreamed terrorists but it is clear that the coming days will show who has (mainstreamed) whom.”

Prachanda, Maoist chairman, at a program in the capital.

“(Ian) Martin told me that it was not feasible to hold elections on the date if the issues of Terai and ethnic minorities remain unresolved.”

Dr. Suresh Chalise, Foreign Affairs Advisor of Prime Minister Koirala, quoting UNMIN chief Ian Martin as advising on polls date, in The Himalayan Times.

“Foreigners have said that they support the elections. It is only from domestic regressive forces like the palace that there is danger to the elections. That is why, the government



is preparing to move another amendment in the constitution whereby two-third majority of parliament can abolish monarchy if found conspiring against the elections.”

Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Minister for Information and Communication and government spokesperson, at a press meet.

“Maoists were brought into the government in a wrong manner.”

Binaya Dhoj Chand, central leader of Nepali Congress, in Jana Bhawana.

“We don’t believe in republic as floated by communists because the communists want to establish authoritarianism.”

Khem Raj Pundit, a leader of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), after the RPP dropped constitutional monarchy from its party statute, in Nepal FM.

“We have no remorse.”

Dev Gurung, Minister for Local Development, saying he did not regret the destruction of infrastructures during the Maoist insurgency, in Nepalgunj.

TRANSITION

APPOINTED: Maoist leader and Minister for Information and Communication Krishna Bahadur Mahara, as the government spokesperson, by the meeting of the Council of Minister. Mahara is also the spokesperson of his party.

FORMED: A three-member committee led by Peace and Reconstruction minister Ram Chandra Poudel to hold talks with Madhesi and Janjati agitators, by the cabinet. The committee includes Minister of State for Water Resources Gyanendra Karki and Minister of State for General Administration Ram Chandra Yadav as other members.

A five-member combatant management committee, headed by Peace and

Reconstruction Minister Ram Chandra Poudel, by the cabinet. This committee includes Information Minister Krishna Mahara, Finance Minister Dr Ram Saran Mahat, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Prithivi Subba Gurung and Minister of State for Water Resources Gyanendra Karki as members.

RECONSTITUTED: Five member panel headed by Appellate Court Judge Hari Prasad Ghimire, to probe Gaur carnage incident, by the cabinet. Other members of the panel include officer of National Vigilance Center Ram Sarobar Dubey, deputy attorney general Tika Bahadur Hamal, Jumla district court judge Ananta Raj Dumre and Deputy Inspector General Ramesh Chand Thakuri.

EXTENDED: The tenure of

Constituency Delineation Commission by four more days (from April 8), by the cabinet.

REGISTERED: Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), Nepali Congress (NC) and Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP), at the Election Commission for the purpose of CA elections.

ROUNDED UP: Four key members of “Black Spider” group, which was involved in extorting huge amount of money from business community, bankers, foreign employment entrepreneurs and medical college operators, by the police. The arrested persons include Bir Bahadur Khatri aka Akash KC, Kedar Shrestha, Ganesh Kumar Lama and Manoj Tamang. Constituency Delineation Commission by four more days (from April 8), by the cabinet.

TINY INPUT AND GIANT OUTPUT:

Marshyangdi Project

-By Dr. AB Thapa

It has been reported in a local newspaper on March 20, 2007 that the Marshyangdi Hydel Project, which had been shut down for 10 days, resumed its operation. After the renovation, the project has been able to generate 4 MW more electricity. The project is now generating 73 MW power. The news helped to refresh our past memory: how we were able to bring about a gigantic enhancement of the scope of the Marshyangdi Hydel Project without any additional investment only by simply spending a week time to conduct hydraulic calculations. Our recalculations carried out on behalf of the Ministry convinced the German consulting team, who had done the final design works in Frankfurt, Germany, that the ultimate capacity of the proposed civil structures involving about 2/3 of the total project cost can be considered to be adequate to generate up to 75 MW against the originally adopted 63 MW capacity. Thus, our tiny input contributed to a giant output.

Marshyangdi Project Cost

In early 1980s the final design works of the 63 MW Marshyangdi Hydel project had been completed. The LAHMEYER International of the Germany was the consulting firm that had done the design works. At that time the global economy had not still been able to recover from the shock of the past high inflations. The authorities in the World Bank were worried that the total amount pledged to implement the civil work component of the Marshyangdi Project might not be adequate. However, the consulting firm LAHMEYER International was found to be absolutely certain that the final civil works cost would not exceed the estimated amount. Certainly the Government was in a dilemma. At that time I had joined the Ministry of Water Resources to look after the Project Monitoring Section.

A New Exercise

I spent about a week time to go through the final reports of the Marshyangdi Project to explore the possibility to find out some way to bring down total project cost. I finally came to the conclusion based on the full study of the feasibility and design reports that the size of the Marshyangdi Project tunnel to be provided to deliver water to the power house from the head pond could easily be reduced by about 20% without adversely lowering the installed capacity of the hydropower station originally fixed at 63 MW.

The head office of the LAHMEYER International at Frankfurt Germany was responsible for design works on the Marshyangdi Hydel Project. My revision calculation sheet was sent to Germany for the opinion of the consultants. At first the LAHMEYER was not prepared to agree that there is

any room to justify to amend the finalized design. In subsequent next phase of correspondence they agreed that there might slight be a possibility to make variations but its net effect would be dismal. Finally they yielded to my suggestion.

Consensus on Increased Capacity

By this time it had become clear that the cost estimate of the Marshyangdi Project prepared by LAHMEYER is more or less accurate. There was no need for seeking additional fund to meet the civil works cost. The LAHMEYER forwarded us a new proposal. Why not we decide to raise the installed capacity of the hydropower instead of reducing the size of the conveyance tunnel? It was decided to raise the installed capacity to 69 MW though it would have been possible to raise further the installed capacity up to 75 MW. It was agreed to provide electro-mechanical equipments with enough excess capacity to generate 69 MW.

We are very much impressed by the sincerity of the German consultants. They on their own further raised the capacity of the electro-mechanical equipments to generate 75 MW totally following our suggestions.

The Marshyangdi Hydropower Project was able to generate 75 MW power immediately after the completion of project. At the beginning some hydro-dynamical problems were observed at higher velocities in the draft tubes. It is a normal phenomenon that vortexes are formed in the draft tube leading to instability in electricity generation if the shape of the draft tubes are not properly designed. It was later reported that the consultant rectified this problem with the help of the manufacturer.

Nowadays Public Interest Is Unashamedly Sacrificed

The Melamchi Water Supply Project is in the focus since a long time because this project is lifeline for more than a million people living in the capital Kathmandu and its environs. It is quite unfortunate that even such a strategically important project has not been spared from being mishandled.

The Melamchi Project feasibility study report prepared with the assistance of the UNDP explains that around the time 2011 the total system demand for water supply (in Kathmandu valley) is expected to reach the total supply from in-valley surface sources and Melamchi. Thereafter the next stage of the development of the Melamchi will be required. This entails diversion from the YANGRI and LARKE rivers that flow to the east of the Melamchi. Water would have to be diverted by tunnels to a point upstream of the Melamchi intake. The total length of the delivery tunnels is expected to be over 12

kilometers.

The Larke and the Yangri are the main tributaries of the Indrawati River. After the diversion of the Yangri and Larke rivers into the Melamchi there would hardly be any flow in the upper reach of the Indrawati River during the dry season.

It saddens any common Nepalese to learn that the Indrawati River has been recently leased out to private developers to build a cascade of hydropower. One hydropower is already completed and the others are at planning stage. We see no justification for the decision to lease the Indrawati River to private developers to build a cascade of hydropower. Could not we find some other suitable rivers any where in Nepal to be leased out to private hydropower developers?

Please Save Hydropower Component

There exists a *big potential to generate cheap electricity* by using the diverted flow of the Melamchi River. The elevation of the Melamchi intake weir is 1715 m and the inlet to the treatment works near Sundarijal is 1409 m. Thus there is an enormously big gross head of 306 m. *The UNDP report has clearly stated that the net increment in investment (the cost of the powerhouse located near Sundarijal with electromechanical equipment) needed to implement the hydropower element is relatively small as the intake headrace tunnel and penstock are already in place for conveying water to the treatment works.* According to the feasibility report of the Arun-3 Project operating at a head of about 300 meters (same as the Melamchi

Hydropower) the cost of electromechanical equipments and power station civil works is only about 30% of the total project cost. **The UNDP study has concluded that it would be worth constructing the hydropower and it could make a contribution to reducing the cost of drinking water to Kathmandu.** The UNDP report explains that even before the diversion of the Yangri and Larke rivers the total annual generation of the Melamchi hydropower would be 60 GWh and out of it the firm power generation would be 40.5 GWh.

The Melamchi hydroelectricity generation would be close to 50% of the annual generation of the Kulekhani No.1 hydropower project. After the diversion of the Yangri and Larke the electricity generation of the Melamchi hydropower plant would have been further increased.

It surprises anyone to learn that the Melamchi hydropower component has been dropped. Even the alignment of the tunnel has intentionally been slightly modified to preclude the inclusion of the hydropower component later on. The Planning Commission should seriously look into this matter to find out why the power component of the Melamchi project was allowed to be dropped despite the fact that the UNDP report has concluded that the power station would be worth constructing and could make a contribution to reducing the cost of drinking water to Kathmandu residents. *It is still not too late to reintroduce the hydropower component.*

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

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CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY POLLS

Date Debate

As leaders do nothing but repeat their commitment to hold the CA polls on time, the EC has been left in the lurch

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The Chief Election Commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel is a very worried man these days. Frustrated at the lack of pace in the enactment of necessary legislations and preparations of groundwork by the government, Pokharel has been airing his comments from time to time.

But last week he broke his silence when he told the new ministers that mere decision by the government to hold the polls is not adequate.

Summoning all the ministers of the interim government at the office of Election Commission at Bahadur Bhawan, Pokharel advised against hasty announcement of polls without preparations.

He said that there was no adequate security and lack of preparations on essential prerequisites.

"Even our own offices are closed in some Terai districts," he said, adding that security was the number one prerequisite for holding free and fair polls.

In the wake of agreement among eight party leaders to hold the elections for the Constituent Assembly on June 20, chief election commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel said, "Let no one think about postponing election once its date is announced. That would send negative message across the world and hurt credibility."

Pokharel also said that the EC must be consulted when the government decides any date. Enlisting a number of matters that needed to be sorted out before the polls, Pokharel said there should be acts and rules in place; code of conduct

should be ready; election procedure must be clearly determined; and there must be free, fair and fearless environment for conducting the polls before any date is announced.

However, despite his cautions, the government ministers present at the meeting repeated the rhetoric that polls will be held at any cost. "Preparations will be done on war footing to hold the polls on time," said Home Minister Krishna Sitaula.

Likewise, at the meeting between Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Maoist chairman Prachanda, on Sunday (April 8), the two expressed commitment to hold the polls on June 20.

The UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, on the other hand, has been making a numerous statements threatening that this government will lose all justifications if it fails to hold the polls on time. In the wake of reports that UNMIN chief Ian Martin said that hasty polls could lose credibility, Nepal urged the foreign diplomats not to comment on whether the CA elections can be held or not on time. "Elections will be conducted by the government. The Prime Minister has been expressing commitment to hold it by third week of June. It is not appropriate for diplomats to be speaking otherwise at this juncture," he said. He charged that UN, US and India were second guessing the poll prospects.

Even though the leaders have been expressing commitments, the crucial electoral legislation like CA Members Election Bill, Political Parties Bill and



CEC: Tough talk

CA Court Bill still remain to be enacted.

Moreover, the unrest in Terai has not subsided as government presence has been shrinking in many southern areas. The armed groups like JTMM have continued their activities. They even abducted District Education Officer Nibhraj Joshi from Rajbiraj Saptari last week.

Besides, there have been a couple of media reports that Martin told PM Koirala's Advisor on Foreign Affairs Dr. Suresh Chalise as well as Maoist chairman Prachanda that it is not "technically and politically feasible" to hold the CA polls on June 20.

Martin is said to have pointed at the need to resolve Terai and Janjati issues first to create conducive environment.

Clearly, the eight parties are in a real fix over the announcement of CA elections date. If they stick with June 20, then they will face an uphill task of completing the whole logistics and other procedures in next two months. If they want to postpone it, they will have to jump over the monsoon period as well as festival season and fix the date sometime in November.

This, perhaps, explains the Maoist leader's growing emphasis on passing the second amendment of constitution to have a provision whereby the interim parliament, itself can declare republic if the monarchy is found to be plotting to derail the CA polls. Once such a provision is incorporated in the constitution, the comrades may feel comfortable with even putting off the polls. ■

SAARC SUMMIT

Walk The Talk

As the regional leaders have themselves conceded, the time for SAARC now is to walk the talk

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

From SAFTA to poverty alleviation, various commitments, pledges and promises made by the regional leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have bitten the dust due to lack of political will to implement them.

Plagued by conflicts of political interests among key members of the region, the SAARC has been unable to provide "SAARC Dividend" to the people of the region as noted by Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz at the recently concluded 14th Summit in New Delhi.

At the end of two-day summit (April 3-4), the leaders had one common resolve – to implement the promises they have made in the past. The regional leaders have emphasized that "In its third decade of existence, there was an urgent need to move SAARC from declaratory to implementation phase."

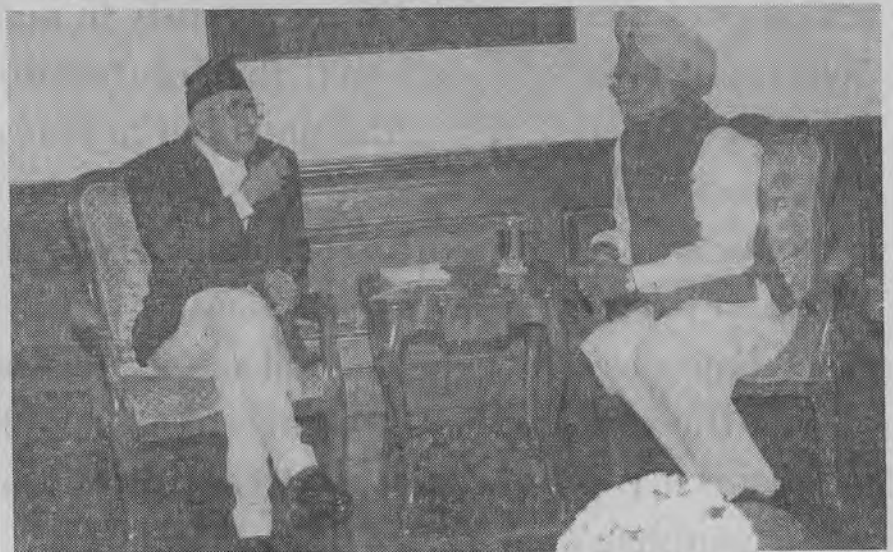
The 30-point New Delhi declaration states that the heads of governments have "directed that the focus of SAARC should be on implementing collaborative projects that are concrete and effective."

"With the welfare of the peoples of South Asia uppermost in their mind, they (heads of state or government) agreed to build a Partnership for Prosperity and work towards shared economic cooperation, regional prosperity, a better life for the people of South Asia, and equitable distribution of benefits and opportunities of integration among the peoples and the nations," the declaration states.

This year, the membership of SAARC has grown from seven to eight as the leaders welcomed Afghanistan as its eighth member. The leaders agreed to work together for poverty alleviation

and enhance geographic, economic and people-to-people relations.

Addressing the opening session of the Summit in Bigyan Bhawan, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala talked at length about the ongoing peace process in Nepal. He said he had gambled with



PM Koirala meets with Singh: Friendly talks Dol, Basanta Chitrakar

60 years of his political career to bring the Maoists into political mainstream. "Now I am happy that the Maoists have joined the government," he said.

PM Koirala expressed full faith in the SAARC process laying emphasis on the alleviation of poverty by reducing inequality and utilizing abundant resources of the region.

Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had said that India realizes that it will have to bear "asymmetrical responsibilities." He said India is ready to allow duty free access to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) of SAARC. "I announce that India will gradually reduce the customs duty for

LDCs in the Indian market and the same will be reduced to zero by the end of this year," he said.

Meanwhile, foreign ministers of the member states signed two separate agreements during the closing session – one on establishing SAARC Food Bank and another on commencing South Asian University. In the SAARC Food Bank, member states will keep around 200,000 tons of rice and wheat to be used during the time of natural disasters, famine and so on. The South Asia University will be set up in New Delhi. It will give preference to students from disadvantaged backgrounds from the region.

As Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh noted that "a new

dawn was breaking out in South Asia," the sea of humanity that call this region their home are looking forward to the keeping of the promises.

On the sidelines of the Summit, PM Koirala held a number of bilateral meetings with his South Asian counterparts. In his meeting with Bhutanese Prime Minister Khandu Wangchuk, Koirala urged the Bhutanese government to involve refugees in its ongoing efforts towards democratization. Likewise, he also met with Richard Boucher, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia. The senior officials of EU, US, China, South Korea and Japan had participated the Summit as observers. ■

E-GOVERNANCE

Tool

For

Transformation

With the introduction of e-Governance, the efficiency, transparency and timeliness have improved tremendously in many areas of government delivery system showing that the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have the potential to transform subsistence-based rural society and traditional working pattern of civil service of Nepal into effective and efficient system of modernity. From rural farmers living in remote parts of Nepal to traditional government institutions like postal office, land revenue office, general administration, district administrative offices, there are waves of changes to see. What is now required are programs to replicate these models in various institutions turning Nepal into a complete model of e-Government

By KESHAB POUDEL

Kabir Shrestha, 40, had hardly imagined that he can check the letters and other mails in his post box from his home through the General Post Office Online service. Persons like Kabir had to go to general post office to check his or her post box till a few years ago but now one can do so through the clicking of some keys.

With the infrastructures built centuries ago and persons working in traditional pattern, the service of postal office used to be very cumbersome and time consuming. Even one had to spend at least an hour to post the letter to foreign countries by visiting a couple of counters. However, one can now see drastic changes in this traditional-based

organization, which handles more than 6.9 million letters and parcels every year.

Gone are the days when everything was done in paper - every action from entry of letters to their exit. The letter posting and registering was done on the basis of human memory. This often resulted in the misplacing of letters and mails.

Following the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), old system has been computerized integrating the whole thing. One can track down the status of letter and its destination now.

e-Government

The term e-Government is very new

to Nepalese people as overwhelming number of them have no knowledge about it. Experts define Electronic Government or e-Government refers to a situation which can improve productivity in administrative services, realize a networked government, satisfy its people's demand in administrative services, and enhance the national competitiveness through proactive services.

According to Rajesh Shakya and Dr. Shailendra Sigdel, e-government is "the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to transform the traditional government by making it accessible, transparent, effective and

accountable. E-government does not mean putting more computers on the desks of government officials. And e-government is more than just a government website on the Internet. Political, social, economic and technological aspects determine e-Governance."

Although country's almost all government ministries and departments are equipped with computers and have their own websites on the internet, they are yet to fill them with updated information usable to all. As yet, they serve no other purpose than displaying the achievements of those ministries.

Drastic Change

With the introduction of communication technologies, there is a drastic change in the General Post Office. "This is a miracle for us as our whole system is now so efficient and transparent," said Chiranjibi Timilsina, section officer and coordinator of Information and Communication Technology Section. "We are planning to expand our system. From next week, there will be cyber-center in the GPO and we are also making efforts to develop e-mail delivery system in rural parts of the country. "For instance, if some one wants to write letter from Ilam to his relatives in nearby villages of Dadeldhura, e-mail letter will be faster than the traditional letter."

With more than 4000 postal service centers around the country, the Postal Department has nation wide network. Following successful results in enhancing efficiency, the Postal Department is now planning to expand the e-Governance service in its Postal Deposit scheme.

"After the beginning of this system, a rural relative of Nepalese working in foreign lands can draw the money few minutes after he/she deposits the money in any post office," said Timilsina.

Like in other parts of the world, Nepalese government is also trying to establish e-Government to change their national administrative system for greater work efficiency. "To keep pace with this global trend, Nepal a developing country, would broadly utilize the ICT to solidify economic development, strengthen democratic norms and values, improve the quality of life and thus reduce poverty," writes e-Government Master

Plan Consulting Report.

From delivery of letters to other postal management, the work efficiency of General Post Office has drastically increased. "Our staffs feel relaxed and customers also have similar experiences. Our system in the mailing counter is so prompt that it will take hardly five minutes to register a letter now," said Achyut Prasad Poudel, under secretary and chief of the division at General Post Office.

Every one can see this transformation at GPO, Nepal's oldest institution, with centuries old system of letter delivery and posting following introduction of e-governance. GPO, which remained as an institution supported by human labor - has transformed as an efficient and capable institution.

Cases of Success

GPO is not the only successful case in Nepal. After the introduction of e-governance, Supreme Court, another oldest institution related with common people, also has taken big strides in this direction. The apex court has its own online system under which one can see the cause list and written decisions of the court. A petitioner does not need to go to Supreme Court to see the cause list and decisions. Every day Supreme Court's decision is put in its web site allowing people to read it. This paves the way for greater transparency in the court system.

Ministry of General Administration is now preparing to work under complete communication technologies. It has already introduced e-governance in certain areas like in promotion, appointment and maintaining the record of more than 100,000 civil servants. Under the support from Asian Development Bank, the office of Civil Servants Record has already placed all the details from appointment to promotion and transfers in computer.

"E-governance has already transformed traditional system of keeping written papers. Every civil



Singhdurbar: Traditional pattern of service delivery

servant now gets his/her information within a matter of minutes," said spokesman of Ministry of General Administration. "As it is computer based, e-governance is most efficient, effective and transparent system. We are planning to issue the transfer letter and other such services through online."

Under the Ministry of Finance, Financial Control General Office also has developed its own system to access the budgets of all 75 districts. It can also monitor the status of annual expenditures of various district based organizations.

At a time when Nepal Telecommunication is planning to issue more than 3 million mobile phones and large number of CDMA lines, the country's infrastructures will improve drastically for e-governance. The increased use of solar power and access to electricity in the urban areas has added facility.

As Nepal's half a dozen of district headquarters are yet to be linked by road, the communication network has already united Nepal. This has increased the possibility for e-governance. As e-governance increases so does the knowledge.

Although private sector has been using electronic and communication technologies to make their service efficient and effective, the government sector has been slow to adopt. Some government officials argue that the e-government will make more employees redundant and destroy the secrecy of civil service.

In a conflicting scenario about the utility of e-government, some of the government offices have already shown that this is an effective and transparent system to integrate information from one office with another.

ICT In Public Offices

Despite widespread use of Information and Communication and Technology (ICT) in private sector, the government has shown interest in it since only a decade ago. With the introduction of computers in government offices, the e-governance concept also entered.

At a time when people often complain about time consuming and inefficient system in district based land reforms office, department of transports, district administration, tax and health institutions, the use of ICT can bring relief to the people.

People have to spend a lot of time to get citizenship, passport, real estate documents, vehicle registration, tax, health, immigration as they still use traditional based system. In the process of paper writing, people have to rely on brokers to get things done. Similarly, in big public utilities like, electricity and drinking water, the process of introducing e-government is still in preliminary stage.

Prepared by Korea IT Industry Promotion Agency (KIPA) under the support of (KOICA), e-Government Master Plan Consulting Report reveals that 89 percent of Nepali people visit the government office in person to get administrative services while only 6 percent use the phone and 4 percent use the internet. From birth certificate to death certificate and citizenship certificate to land owner certificate, people have to visit by person in the government offices.

As most of the work is paper based, one has to spend a lot of time as well as energy. In many cases, it is alleged that the common people have to bribe the

officials to get things done quickly.

Geography No Handicap

As Nepal's geography is said to be difficult with hilly and mountainous terrain, it was not easy to establish Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) in all 4000 villages of the country. But, in recent times some noticeable changes have occurred in urban centers or district headquarters. With the supply of electricity through various modes and introduction of satellite telephone and CDMA, the access of people to internet has drastically increased.

As Nepal Telecom has announced an ambitious plan to expand CDMA as well as mobile phone throughout the country, the e-Governance is gradually coming up as feasible alternative to change the traditional pattern of governance by making the service more effective, transparent and timely.

"e-Government is the priority sector of the government," said Purushotam Ghimire, spokesman of Ministry of Science and Technology. "It is now reality in almost all district headquarters." At the central level, many ministries have their own system of information and communication technology. "For instance, Ministry of General Administration is developing a system on which all the civil servants working in various parts of Nepal will have direct access to their own record."

Transforming Rural Life

Supreme Court, Ministries and government Departments are not alone benefiting from the use of Information Communication Technology to make their work efficient, transparent and effective. The technology is also bringing the change in the life of rural population.

In the district headquarters with access to telephone and electricity,



Solar power in rural area: Penetration of power

every one is benefiting from the new technology. The more the access is given to the people, better results they generate.

"Virtually in all the countries around the world, there are increasing community expectations for improved services and for greater participation in government affairs. These transformations cannot be delivered through traditional means of service delivery. This is the case for poor country like Nepal or even for well developed western countries. You cannot deliver improved services to remote communities, to village communities by using traditional service delivery methods. Technology must be incorporated in service delivery if people, particularly in remote areas, are to truly benefit from public administration," said Dr. Paul R. Schapper, team leader Asian Development Bank Technical Team working in High Level Commission for Information Technology.

Nepal's past experiences have shown that only efficient, capable and transparent administration can bring about tangible change in the overall living conditions of people. As Nepal is struggling to fight against poverty, the recent experiences of GPO and other offices show that ICT can be boon for the country. ■

E-Governance for Good Governance in Nepal

Rajesh Shakya
Dr. Shailendra Sigdel



Shakya



Dr. Sigdel

What is e-Government?

E-government is the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to transform the traditional government by making it accessible, transparent, effective and accountable. E-government does not mean putting more computers on the desks of government officials. And e-government is more than just a government website on the Internet. Political, social, economic and technological aspects determine e-governance. It establishes a relationship between government officials and citizens, providing greater access to government information and services by making the government accessible online; promoting citizen participation by enabling citizens to interact more conveniently with government officials, such as by requesting government service and filing required documents through website; increasing government accountability by making its operations more transparent, thereby reducing the opportunities for corruption; and supporting development goals by providing business, rural and traditionally underserved communities with information, opportunities and communications capabilities. E-government is not only used in developed countries. Some of the most innovative uses of the Internet in governance are being successfully used in the developing countries, as well.

E-government will not be successful just only buying more computers and putting up websites. It's not sufficient to automate administrative practices from the paper system to digital system. Rather, e-government is a process of transforming government; it requires planning, political will and a sustained dedication of resources. Success of e-government will not be guaranteed with the mere purchase of advanced technology or the direct automation of complex procedures until it can increase the rate of citizen participation there by bringing about the greater effectiveness in government. Technology introduction can not change the mentality of bureaucrats who do not view the citizen as valued customer of government or an important participant in decision-making.

Why e-Governance?

We are in the process of building "New Nepal". "New Nepal" should not become only a popular slogan but really the "New Nepal" with all the positive values and aspirations of its citizens geared towards the peace and progress. There are many dimensions streamlined and drivers identified to make our "New Nepal" dreams

come true. One of such dimensions is the reformation of the government. Governance and its service process should be well reengineered to fulfill the aspirations of its citizens. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its tools can help its effective and efficient transformation.

With the advent of the information age, the ways we work, study, and live have been experiencing dramatic changes. Due to the influence of economic and information globalization and the rise of the digital economy, governments are "reinventing" themselves to meet new expectations and the priorities of citizens and businesses. These dynamics are compelling many governments to create a new vision for its relationship with businesses and citizens and to create a new organizational structure to fulfill its mandate. E-Government can fulfill the mandate of government formulating a new vision of how government views its citizens, employees and businesses, and building a citizen-centered, service-oriented, public-participative government with efficient, accountable, transparent and performance government system. ICT based online service is the most democratic and unbiased service system. It offers equal opportunity to all races, genders, ethnic groups.

E-Government breaks the barrier of geographical diversity and makes the government services handy to all citizens at villages who are even not connected by roads and opens up many opportunities, provided Internet connectivity is available either through wireless communication, fiber optic cables, dial-ups, VSATs or whatever other medium.

Besides providing service to citizens, it's important to empower and motivate government employees to expect better service from them. E-Governance should transform the government workers into empowered knowledge workers. Nepal should not miss the benefits of global economy and specially the benefits offered by Internet.

Strategic Objectives of e-Governance:

The strategic objective of e-governance is to support and simplify governance for all parties - government, citizens, businesses and its employees. The use of ICTs can connect all three parties and support processes and activities. There may be two major objectives of e-governance:

1. Service to the Public: This objective of e-government is to satisfactorily fulfill the public's needs and expectations on the front-office side, by simplifying their interaction with various online services. The use of ICTs

in government operations facilitates speedy, transparent, accountable, efficient and effective interaction with the public, citizens, business and other agencies.

2. Efficient Government: In the back-office, the objective of e-government in government operations is to facilitate a speedy, transparent, accountable, efficient and effective process for performing government administration activities. Significant cost savings (per transaction) in government operations can be the result.

For implementing these strategies into reality, government must be subjected to transformation.

The transformation process is not so easy and not so simple. It requires a coherent strategy and should begin with an examination of the nation's regulatory environment and the ability of the population to make use of planned technologies. The primary driving factor for e-government reform should not be the potential it offers to save money and reformation does not mean cutting staff. The savings incurred from e-government initiatives most often benefit the businesses and citizens utilizing the improved system more so than the government agencies that invested in them to begin with. In order to realize the benefits of transformation themselves, governments must develop a citizen-centric model involving key stakeholders outside of government—community, businesses, professional associations, scientists, academics and NGOs. Without their input and demand, even e-government projects that focus on internal government processes may not prove successful because citizens are unlikely to use a system that does not respond to their needs.

Process reform, leadership, strategic investment, collaboration and citizen participation are essential elements in the transformation process. Once government makes strategies to transform the governance process, it must prepare to meet the significant challenges and opportunities that will arise during implementation. The implementation process should address the issues of infrastructure development, law and public policy, e-literacy, accessibility, privacy, security and workforce issues. Awareness, education and rollout programs are also needed. To make the e-governance initiative successful, a good marketing program is required through out the country to encourage citizens to make use of them.

“The Old Methods Of Government Have Not Addressed Poverty”

-Dr. Paul R. Schapper

In virtually all countries around the world, there is increasing expectations of communities for improved services and greater participation in government affairs. These transformations cannot be delivered through traditional means of service delivery. This is the case for poor country like Nepal or even for well developed western countries.

Dr. PAUL R. SCHAPPER is the team leader of Asian Development Bank technical team on e-governance. Schapper, a New Zealander, came to Nepal in November 2006 and has been working at the High Level Commission for Information Technology. Schapper spoke to KESHAB POUDEL on various issues regarding the importance of E-governance in Nepal. Excerpts:

At a time when Nepal is trying to introduce e-governance, can you tell us what it is all about?

E-governance is about using modern technology to improve the management of public administration and the delivery of public services to the communities. It has many dimensions and tool as it is driven by need for greater effectiveness in service delivery, greater transparency of process and much greater need to increase community participation in the process of government. So, e-governance is not about only technology, which is one of the greatest misconceptions. It is technology but it is also about the transformation of the relationship between the communities and public administration.

With the low literacy rate and traditional subsistence based society, why e-governance is necessary for Nepal?

In virtually all countries around the world, there is increasing expectations of communities for improved services and greater participation in government affairs. These transformations cannot be delivered through traditional means of service delivery. This is the case for poor country like Nepal or even for well developed western countries. You cannot deliver improved services to remote communities, to village communities using traditional service delivery methods. Technology must be incorporated in service delivery if people, in particular in remote areas, are to truly benefit from public administration.

Having worked for five months in Nepal and interacted with various people from different areas, what impression have you got?

In every country, quite often there is a similar reaction to the introduction of new technologies. Quite often people are curious to know about what it can do for them. They are also somewhat cautious particularly people in the government can feel that they are going to be replaced by computers. And also people are worried because they don't have the skill to manage this technology and they feel that they become marginalized. Firstly, in relation to concern about the people being replaced by computers, this certainly is not the case. This never happens anywhere in the world. Certainly, job gets redesigned because of technology but it is not the case that the e-governance replaces a lot of people in the government. People have to do things differently and much more effectively and by exploring technology they are adding greater values. So they are in fact securing their jobs more.

What people need to learn?

It is true that the people need to learn more skills as required by e-governance. But it is not difficult to learn them. You don't have to be a technical person or have technical background, you just need to be prepared to listen and understand what the issues are and everything will become very simple. So, an e-governance program is all about trying to develop new understanding and do away with fears people have. I think it is quite natural to have fear. But, generally when people come to understand the issues more they become much happier with what is going on.

In a country with rampant poverty, how do you justify investment in e-governance?

It is quite clear that to seriously address much of this poverty, the new technology must be brought to bear. The old methods of government have not addressed that poverty. Despite hundred or more years of traditional administration, poverty is there. The new ideas need to be brought to build new capabilities and that capability is to particularly use the new technology. Most poverty alleviation program world wide begins with the idea that the best

way to address many aspects of poverty is to give people knowledge and information- which are power of people how to do things differently and find a way out of poverty. Information technology is extremely good at bringing knowledge to people whether they are in the remote areas or in more developed areas. This is what it is all about. Information technology is about information and information is a key to alleviate poverty.

How is your work going on in Nepal?

I am really enjoying Nepal. I have worked in more than 20 countries and Nepal is a very nice place to live as people are relaxing, and friendly to deal with. It is a good place to be.

As a country where access to electricity is less than 40 percent and telephone service is yet to cover large areas, how do you see the possibility of e-governance?

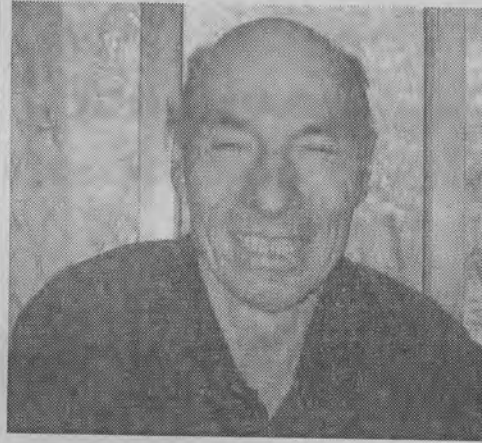
Well, part of our proposal includes how to bring technology into areas where there is very limited power supply. We are concerned about that but we need to solve their problems and we have various ideas on that. I think that there would be proposals within our framework for investment into that area.

How do you see your experiences in working in other countries to introduce e-governance?

Most countries around the world engage, in one degree or another, in some aspects of the e-governance. A lot of governments are doing it in a small way and some of them have done it tremendously well like in India. A lot of things are happening in Bangladesh and a lot of things are happening also in Pakistan. Major investment is also going into Sri Lanka. In south Asia region, a lot of things are happening. This would be quite common world wide. Many countries are doing quite a lot in e-governance. E-governance is not something which comes in a box. There are various ways of going about this. One thing is clear, there is increasing awareness world wide that if governments want to solve the problems of their communities, old methods no longer can deliver. We really need to bring to bear new technologies as much as possible. These technologies bring information and knowledge to the communities and that is such a major aspect of poverty alleviation program.

How do you see the stage of experiment in Nepal on e-governance?

Some of the ministries have already done a very good work. We hope in a program we will support those initiatives. In fact, we have been talking to those ministries where things have been happening



and asking how we can help build on what they have already started. It is much more easier and much more effective to build on what people have already started and tried.

Some of our ministries have already launched e-governance program. What are your observations about them?

There are encouraging signs as there are people within the ministries with real initiatives who have started this program and many of them are very good programs and those are the ones which we are looking to single out and give additional support and additional investment. We have no interest in taking them over and we want the ministry and people to continue to take responsibility. So they can get the credit. We just want to see what else we can do to help them along with those initiatives. There will be a couple of areas where less is happening. We are giving a very serious consideration for the areas such as village connectivity at the moment - looking at what we can do for the remote areas.

Are our infrastructures enough for e-governance to connect villages with the center?

So far as infrastructures are concerned, there are enough infrastructures in much of the country for us to make a good start. One thing is that you really need to try to build on infrastructures as well as build on e-governance at the same time. A lot more still needs to be done on infrastructure front and we are looking at infrastructure investment plan as a part of this program. ■

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DEMOCRACY

Inclusive or Exclusive?

Democracy does not need any qualifying as it incorporates all the basic elements

By KESHAB POUDEL

“No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst forms of government- except all those other forms that have been tried form time to time,” said Winston Churchill explaining the nature of democracy.

As Churchill said, democracy is neither partial, complete, absolute, inclusive, exclusive, party-less, people’s, etc. What it denotes is system of governance with certain basic elements. According to Abraham Lincoln, democracy is the government of the people, by the people, for the people. One of the most important characteristics of democracy is that it is for the people.

In western countries, where democracy functions, no one tries to add adjective before it. However, the situation in countries like Nepal where chances of practice of democracy are negligible, every one considers himself as a messiah of democracy when they add certain adjectives in front of it.

From prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, who claims to have gambled his whole life to preserve democracy, to Maoist leader Prachanda, whose party preaches one party authoritarian government, and Communist Party Of Nepal- Unified Marxist Leninist leader Madhav Kumar Nepal, all of them are talking democracy adding adjectives like inclusive democracy, people’s democracy and absolute or full

Nepal has past experiences about this. During the Panchayat period it was a partyless democracy and therefore some vital elements of democracy was missing from that,” said a political analyst.

“The change of 1990 came out with a democratic constitution without



PM Koirala: Inclusive Democracy !

democracy.

New Brand But Old Model

Whatever adjective is added in front of democracy, the interim constitution drafted by them have so many articles which gives privilege to certain group of political parties and bar opponents and critics of different ideologies in taking part in making and unmaking government.

During the last thirty years of Panchayat - which was actually autocratic system where people of opposite views were barred to enter – also claimed itself as a party-less democracy.

“Democracy does not need any adjective. Whenever adjectives are added into it, democracy denotes the curtailment of some vital elements.

added adjective. Thus, the democracy was visualized in the constitution with all basic ingredients of democracy which required patience and persistence to make it successful. But, it was abruptly ended in its experiment and Nepal was again thrown into situation of uncertainty and confusion about democracy”.

“One is not sure where the decisive power lies in the politics of Nepal. Outwardly, it is the syndicate of eight parties as a unit despite their inner contradictions. And the syndicate is considered as a decisive force - as a privilege political force to be in the power. Interim constitution, which is promulgated by this syndicate, has a provision which clearly deprives a section of opinion to emerge as a

political party and contest for power," said the analyst.

According to article 141 (3) of Interim constitution, a political party whose objective is against the letter and spirit of the preamble of the constitution shall not be eligible as a party to be registered by the election commission. The article 38 (1) said the government will be formed with the political consent of eight political parties qualifying those eight political parties which signed political agreement on November 8, 2006. The party includes Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, Nepali Congress (Democratic), United People's Front, Nepal Peasants and Workers Party, Nepal Sadbhvana Party United Left Front and CPN-Maoist.

The preamble of the constitution says: "We the people of Nepal in exercise of sovereign and inherent state power promulgate and declare this interim constitution 2063 prepared on the basis of political understanding for such time until Constituent Assembly promulgate a new constitution institutionalizing the fruits and achievements of people's revolution in Nepal."

However, Article 166 (2) contradicts the statement of preamble. The article states that the constitution will be promulgated by the House of Representatives and approved by legislative parliament. From preamble it appears that the present constitution is enacted, promulgated and proclaimed by the people. However, article 166 (2) says that it was promulgated by the dissolved House of Representatives and approved by new Legislative Parliament. "If preamble is correct, the article 166 (2) is incorrect and if 166 (2) is correct then preamble is incorrect," said a renowned constitutional lawyer and former attorney general.

Restrictive Clause

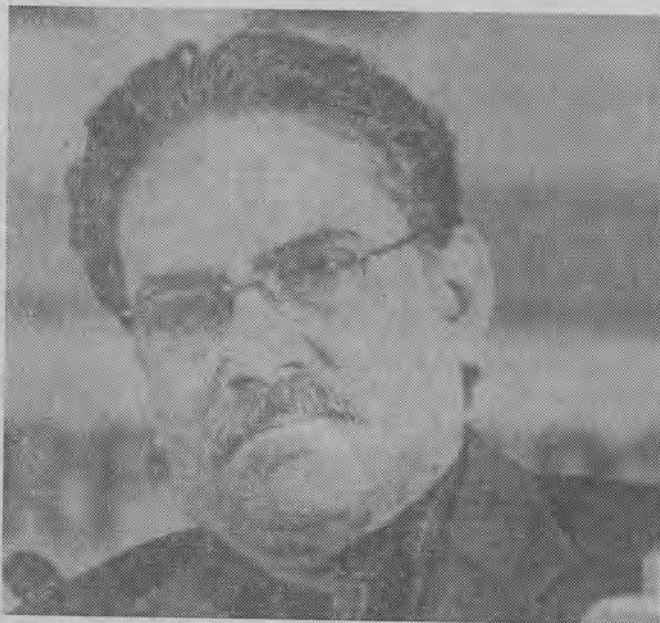
As this democracy has added objective of inclusiveness, it goes in contradiction with that provision. Further curtailing the entry of political parties, the interim constitution makes a provision requiring signature of 10,000 persons as proposals to register the

political party in the Election Commission. According to article 142 (5), a political party needs application with at least 10,000 signature of voters to register as a party. The same article, however, gives privilege to those political parties represented in the legislative parliament as they don't have to produce signatures to register at EC.

As has been the experience in the past, the office may require verification of signatures. Ordinarily, parties with 10,000 persons are considered as big. Any politician who is able to bring such a crowd in the office of Elections Commission will have to bring the crowd in the roads in front of EC office.

Here again, if that party stands for opposite views, then physical clashes with syndicate parties may not be ruled out. If that party stands for previous patterns of constitutional monarchy with multi-party democracy like the party led by Rabindranath Sharma, or others like him, one can very easily guess there will be counter measures from the extremists.

"At a time when prime minister Koirala to Prachanda, all have the habit



Prachanda: People's Democracy!

of pointing at the threat of revival of monarchists, one can very easily guess how they will deal with them. So, the inclusiveness in the constitution is a decorative and attractive term to look at but it is particularly impossible to have in practice," said the analyst. "The constitution guarantees the political freedom to those who did participate and supported last April uprising but for those who were critical to this political arrangement are denied such rights."

However, practice of democracy in western countries show that democracy guarantees the right of even those whom the persons in power hate.

A universal concept of democracy has emerged into the practice from which Nepal cannot remain alienated. It would be like repeating the same mistakes the authoritarian Panchayat system committed, through one party form of campaign called Go Back To Village by excluding critics and opponents of mainstream politics. It is high time to amend the restrictive provision of the interim constitution like procuring 10,000 signatures and

parading huge crowd in front of election commission.

Reconciliation: Safe Model for Democracy

Nepal cannot have any safer model of democratic experiments than that of change with continuity. The traditional forces of the country may have to go into a gradual transformation to the stage of modernity but there must be continuity. Reformulation and abrupt changes brings instability and instability invites further instability and chaos which is being experienced everyday in Nepal one after another.

Before Maoists were pacified, Madhesis have been aroused. Different areas in hills have different patterns of destabilizing forces in operation. It is, therefore, the reconciliation which was politically espoused B.P. Koirala that alone could be the alternative to this chaotic situation.

"The concept was not new in Nepalese politics as the historic call for national reconciliation by B.P. Koirala emphasized upon the reconciliation between traditional and modernizing forces. The basic elements of Nepalese society include a vast majority of traditional minded people who in due course of time gradually may reach into the moderation. That kind of tolerant view is not valid in the eyes of the present leadership in power," said the political analyst.

The basic characteristic of a traditional society is it's basically a rural economy based upon traditional tools and arrangements. More than 80 percent of the population lives in a close community life in villages.

The majority of that people live in a joint family system which has long since vanished from western industrial society. Social beliefs and social interactions are also a traditional nature in Nepal.



People: No democracy!

Role of Traditional Force

The institution of monarchy not only symbolizes the traditional forces but is also institution of continuity of change. Whether it is in Afghanistan or in Cambodia even though the institution of monarchy was abolished, the modernizing forces were compelled to reconcile with the traditional force. Afghanistan needed King Jahir Shaha to assure the Loya Jirga that the change has his free consent.

"Similarly, modernizing new regime in Cambodia, the preacher of change restored the institution of monarchy to create congenial atmosphere for reconciliation with the traditional forces of the country. It is not necessary for each country to repeat same mistakes and correct it later on. Nepal has not yet reached to that stage of alienation of modernizing forces with traditional one. Whatever is being experimented in the name of interim constitution, it should not be at the cost of one against other."

For example, the article 159 (3) of

interim constitution says the first meeting of CA will decide the fate of monarchy but prime minister Koirala's derogatory remarks at the institution issued from Biratnagar and recently from New Delhi says otherwise. These kinds of utterances have no political justification except as an expression of vengeance and super ego.

The most sensible thing could have been to observe the discipline of the constitution, to which they owe allegiance. Taking into the consideration of the hard reality of the country, its history, socio-cultural relationship and geo-political compulsions, Nepal has no better alternative than synthesis of all those elements.

Reconciliation between the traditional forces with modernizing can alone guarantee the smooth functioning of democratic society. And democracy cannot exclude the part of social forces from the mainstream of the politics. Democracy in that sense cannot be exclusive. ■

LANDMINES & IEDs

Operation Clean-up

The UNMIN has said it is willing to help in the disposal of landmines and IEDs which have been killing unsuspecting people, particularly kids

By A CORRESPONDENT

The UNMIN chief Ian Martin has said that his office is committed to assist both the Maoist army and the Nepal Army in the safe storage and destruction of mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). "Since the registration of combatants and weapons began in January this year, the Maoist army has safely stored thousands of kilograms of explosives and a further thousands of IEDs in sites a safe distance outside its seven main cantonment sites," he said at a program organized to observe International Day of Mine Awareness.

UNMIN experts have visited all these sites in the past three weeks, offering advice on safe storage methods and discussing plans with regional commanders for safe destruction. UNMIN is also assisting the Nepal Army to meet its commitment to clear all landmines and other sites sown with explosives.

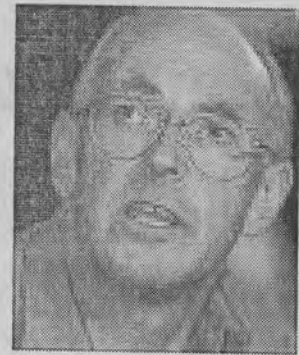
"This assistance will include further training on safe methods of clearance. The UNMIN experts will also have a rapid response capacity, in order to assist in the safe management of IEDs when they are located," he said. "As the latest casualties in Nepal show us, and as the statistics in Nepal prove, it is so often children that suffer from IEDs and mines. And as we sadly know, it is often after the war is over that civilians and especially children bear this brunt. Nepal has a tremendous opportunity

to ensure that it is safely rid of the explosive remnants of war."

Martin said that as the people of Nepal take stock of their achievements in the peace process over the past year, a major highlight must be the removal of thousands of kilograms of explosives and thousands of socket bombs and pressure cooker bombs from the community, and their safe storage in guarded sites. It is said landmines and explosive remnants of war continue to claim over 15,000 new victims each year in over 80 countries.

"Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon stated in his message for this day that landmines and explosive remnants of war continue to claim over 15,000 new victims each year in over 80 countries. 12-year-old Jage Darji died in Kalikot on 29 March, last week, when he handled an explosive device in his village. His 14-year-old friend, Dil Bahadur Shahi, was seriously injured. The day before, 10-year-old Arjun Sunuwar was seriously injured when he picked up explosives inside a Nepal Army site. We must remember the terrible human cost of each such accident. And we must all act together to remove these hazards forever and to prevent such accidents occurring," Martin stated.

UNMIN is in the process of bringing in an expert team to be based in the regions and to offer regular advice to Maoist commanders, as well as training on safe destruction



techniques. These teams will offer technical advice and assistance to the Maoist army so that it can safely fulfill its commitment to destroy all IEDs and explosives. The UNMIN is also assisting the Nepal Army to meet its commitment to clear all landmines and other sites sown with explosives. This assistance will include further training on safe methods of clearance. The UNMIN experts will also have a rapid response capacity, in order to assist in the safe management of IEDs when they are located.

In his message, the Secretary-General highlights the international legal framework in place to address the issue of landmines and the explosive remnants of war. "Nepal is in a position to take action to cement its commitment to peace in this regard. The Interim Government could make a significant signal of its commitment to remove these threats forever from Nepal by acceding to the anti-personnel mine-ban treaty, known as the Ottawa Treaty, as well as the new Optional Protocol Five to the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention, which relates to addressing the humanitarian hazard of the explosive remnants of war. It could also take a major step toward caring for survivors of IED explosions by being an early signatory to the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which opened for signature on 30 March this year," Martin said. ■

U-TURN

About Face Politics

Politicians in Nepal have the habit of making U-turns

By KESHAB POUDEL

Nepal's two politicians are now in two different positions but they seem to have exchanged their roles by issuing similar line of arguments. Then vice chairman of

the King-led Council of Ministers Dr. Tulsi Giri was diehard opponent of foreign

countries, particularly the western European and America when the latter had asked to hold credible elections with participation of all political forces.

"Who are they to teach us how to hold the elections and who will take part in the elections. We don't need their prescription," said Dr. Tulsi Giri addressing a press conference. (See Gorkhaptra 21 December 2005) "It is none of their business to advise us how to hold the elections and who are going to take part in the elections," he had said.

"It is the right of Nepalese people to choose their representatives through the elections to run local government. It is strange to see foreign ambassadors from democratic countries interfering when government wants to hold the elections," said Giri.

Giri's remarks came following reports that the US ambassador to Nepal



Dr. Giri: Right turn

James F. Moriarty's had held two hour long meeting with King Gyanendra on December 16.

According to Kantipur, ambassador Moriarty had advised the King to stress more on

reconciliation with the parties than the municipal elections.

During that time CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal was in opposition. "Giri's arguments give the impression that he has gone out of mind," said Nepal in his public statement. "We will not participate in a hurriedly organized elections and we will call people to actively boycott it," Nepal said.

Seventeen months later, the situation has taken a U-turn as CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal has now assumed the position of Dr. Giri.

When government, particularly prime minister and leaders of eight parties are insisting to hold the elections for Constituent Assembly in June, foreign

countries are showing concern over the lack of preparations to make the CA elections free, fair and credible.

At a time when even



Election Commission is Nepal: U-turn tactics

reluctant to hold the elections in a situation when law and order situation has deteriorated further and Maoists are yet to fully disarm, diplomats comments were only the statement of obvious. However, CPN-UML general secretary does not like it.

"It would not be correct on the part of diplomats to assert that CA polls cannot be held within the slated time. Prime minister had already pledged to hold it by June 20 no matter what," said Nepal (see The Kathmandu Post April 9, 2007) "The suggestions of the UN, US and India over the timely holding of CA polls are meaningless in the present context, especially since the PM has stated that he would resign if he fails to conduct the polls in time."

According to TKP, venting ire on the UN Mission in Nepal chief Ian Martin for his reported statement doubting the prospect of timely CA polls and questioning its credibility if held forcefully, Nepal challenged UNMIN chief to specify why and due to whom the elections was doomed. It is interesting to see how the role and position of persons in power have changed. ■

INDIA'S PROPOSAL

Railway to Nepal

India offers to link Nepal with its railway network

By KESHAB POUDEL

"The Kingdom of Nepal where India faces China," writes American scholar Hamilton Fish Armstrong in his article observing Nepal's position in south of Himalayas. Though he made the observation a long time back, this is still true in Nepalese context.

At a time when Nepal's northern neighbor China has shown interest to expand its railway network up to Nepal's border, Nepal's southern neighbor India came out with a proposal to link Nepal by its railway network.

While on his first official trip to China in September last year, foreign minister K.P. Sharma Oli requested Chinese officials to bring railway to Nepal. He also reportedly proposed to bring train in two places either to Panchkhal of Sindhupalchok, 50 miles east of capital or Betrabati, 40 miles north of capital in Nuwakot district.

Interestingly, Indian officials announced the new proposal to link railway in Nepal. According to recent report, Indian government is considering to

propose Nepal to link Indian railways in four points including Nepalgunj, Bhairawa, Jogbani and Kakadvi. Indian officials also cited the request made by Nepal's then foreign minister and deputy prime minister K.P. Sharma Oli.

Even King Gyanendra had proposed to make Nepal as a transit point between Asia's

two giants neighbors, India and China. His government even proposed a proposal for discussion.

Sandwiched between two major powers of Asia, Nepal has opportunities for economic prosperity as well as challenges to survive peacefully in a volatile geo-strategic position as it is located between Indian Gangetic plain and Tibetan plateau. ■

SECURITY STEPPED UP FOR MARWARI COMMUNITY

Following media reports that a number of Marwari businessmen were kidnapped for ransom, the Metropolitan Police has stepped up security at Marwari settlements. "We have directed all the police offices inside the Valley to keep high surveillance in the areas where Marwaris live in a majority since Sunday," said AIG Deepak Thangden, Metropolitan Police Commissioner told The Himalayan Times daily.

Earlier, Nepal Samacharpatra daily had revealed that criminal gang/s specializing in kidnapping had kidnapped 20 businessmen from Marwari community in the past two weeks from the capital. The daily quoted Tolaram Dugar, president of Nepal National Marwari Council, as saying that none of the kidnapper could be nabbed by the police.

"After they started kidnapping people from Marwari community selectively, we met with district police chief as well as Inspector General of Police. But the police has not been able to free the abductees or arrest the abductor. How can the country move ahead in this situation?" asked worried Dugar.

Pashupati Murarka, executive member of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), questioned how new industries can be set up to build the nation at a time when Marwari community were being victimized. Marwari is a leading business community of the country.

With the increase of incidents of kidnapping for ransom, many people of the community have even stopped going on 'morning walks.' Dugar added that since police became unable to nab the culprits, the community has stopped complaining to the police and were handling the matters themselves.

However, commissioner of Metropolitan Police Office AIGP Deepak Thangden said that the police did not get cooperation from victim's families. "We are unable to receive cooperation from family of victims. They just put down the phone asking us not to poke our noses in the affairs and saying they will handle it themselves," he said. The daily also quoted a Marwari businessman recently freed by abductors as claiming that the kidnappers usually keep victims in Koteshwore and Sinamangal areas and free them after getting ransom money.

On the other hand, Superintendent of Police at Crime Investigation Department of MPO Keshav Adhikary claimed that this year they only received 14 complaints of kidnapping. "We received none of the complaints of those 20 in the past two weeks," he said. ■

Book List

- Fateful Interview, Madhav Kumar Rimal,Rs. 400.00
- Beyond The frontiers Women's stories from Nepal Padmavati Singh/2006.....Rs 200.00
- Bonded Labour Kamaiya in Nepal. Padma Raj Lamichhane/2005.....Rs. 350.00
- Dhoopee "The Juniper" A Long Poem. Toya Gurung/ 2006.....Rs. 185.00
- Distribution of goods and Services in Nepal's Conflict Ananda P. Shrestha \Hari Uprety\2006.....Rs. 200.00
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- Mass Media in Post -1990 Nepal Pratyous onta\2006Rs.200.00
- My Life Story Ramhari Sharma Nepal \ 2006 Rs.....250.00
- Nepal -Japan Relation, Ram Kumar Panday\2006 Rs. 2000.00
- Nepal Struggle for Existence -Jagadish Sharma\2006 Rs.999.00
- Nepal Postage Stamps Catalogue 2005, Chandra Kumar Stapit \Deepak Manandhar \2005 Rs. 150.00
- Nepal 's conflict and its impact on Public Ananda P. Shrestha \Hari Uprety \2006.....Rs 150.00
- 15. Peaks and Pinnacles Mountainering in Nepal Harka Gudung\2004.....Rs. 500.00
- The Sakyas, Ajaya Kranti Shakya\2006Rs. 350.00
- Simple Convictions My Struggle for Peace and Democracy Girija Prasad Koirala\2006.....Rs. 250.00
- 18 Uncertainty on a Himalayan Scale, Thompson \Warburaton \ Hatley \2007..... Rs. 250.00

JAWAD AHAMAD

Singer From Pakistan

Pakistani singer Jawad Ahamad won the hearts and minds of Nepalese audience

By A CORRESPONDENT

As soon as Pakistani singer Jawad Ahamad started singing, the jam-packed theater at the Birendra International Convention Center (BICC) seemed to be swayed. Audience felt soothed to listen to combination of his songs and music.

From his popular songs to some Nepali numbers, Ahamad made a thrilling performance. His voice was so powerful and rhythmic that the audience ranging from young to old enjoyed it thoroughly.

Organized by the Embassy of Pakistan, the musical evening of Pakistan's popular singer Jawad Ahamad provided different taste of Pakistani music. Being countries of South Asia, there are many commonalities and similarities in music between Nepal and Pakistan.

Jawad Ahamad established himself as a force to be reckoned with after proving his depth and musical range with his excellent debut "Bol Tujhe Kya Chahiya". When he sang the song, audience melted and started to back him appreciating his performance.

Jawad had a rare kind of voice. The entire generation in the swirl of Sufi rock reels under the compatibility of those tunes and songs of yore with the most pervasive genre of music.

According to music critics, his beautiful fusion of traditional Bhangra and pop makes his songs a rare treat for the soul. His landmark son, Uchiyan Majan Wali, is a pumping, thumping, swirling, joyous

combination of bhangra and pop that makes Jawad so different from others in the subcontinent.

After Uchiyan, Kaise Kahoon is one of the most interesting compositions. Guitar and flute direct in and out. But it is the subtleness that marks this song, and what really do it are the lyrics penned by Jawad himself.

In his two-hour-long performance, Sufi rocks with the local music won the hearts and minds of audience who can rarely see these kind of performance in the city. From words of songs to combination of musical instruments, the singer proved that he is a singer of his own brand.

Along with wining the hearts of audience, singer Jawad also showed how the field of music is growing in Pakistan.

From Bol Thuje Kya Chahiye to Kaise Kahoon and Uchiyan Majajan Wali, singer

Jawad sang with the combination of sings, music and vocal rhythm. Although his songs were popular in Nepal also, this is for the first time many of Nepalese musicians saw him in front of them singing in his original sound.

Under the cultural exchange between the two countries, Embassy of Pakistan annually brings musicians to Nepal. Well known for Sufi music and Kabbali, Pakistan music have special place in Nepal. Jawad Ahamad's program also proved that.



For the Nepalese musicians, Jawad's message is clear as one can make music the most powerful with fusion of traditional and modern musical instruments. By mixing traditional Pakistani with modern Pop, Jawad produced most attractive and modern songs.

NA ARMS MANAGEMENT BEGINS

The arms of Nepali Army (NA) will be stored in containers beginning Tuesday (April 10) as per the arms management pact. The UNMIN will verify and monitor NA's arms, which will be stored in containers in Jagadal battalion in Chhauni. Earlier, the UNMIN had verified and stored the weapons of Maoist army in different containers. The Maoist army has stored 3428 weapons and registered 30,852 combatants. After NA's arms are stored, the UNMIN will start the second phase of verification of Maoist combatants to check their age and eligibility. The UNMIN has stated that any minor found in the cantonments would be automatically disqualified.

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