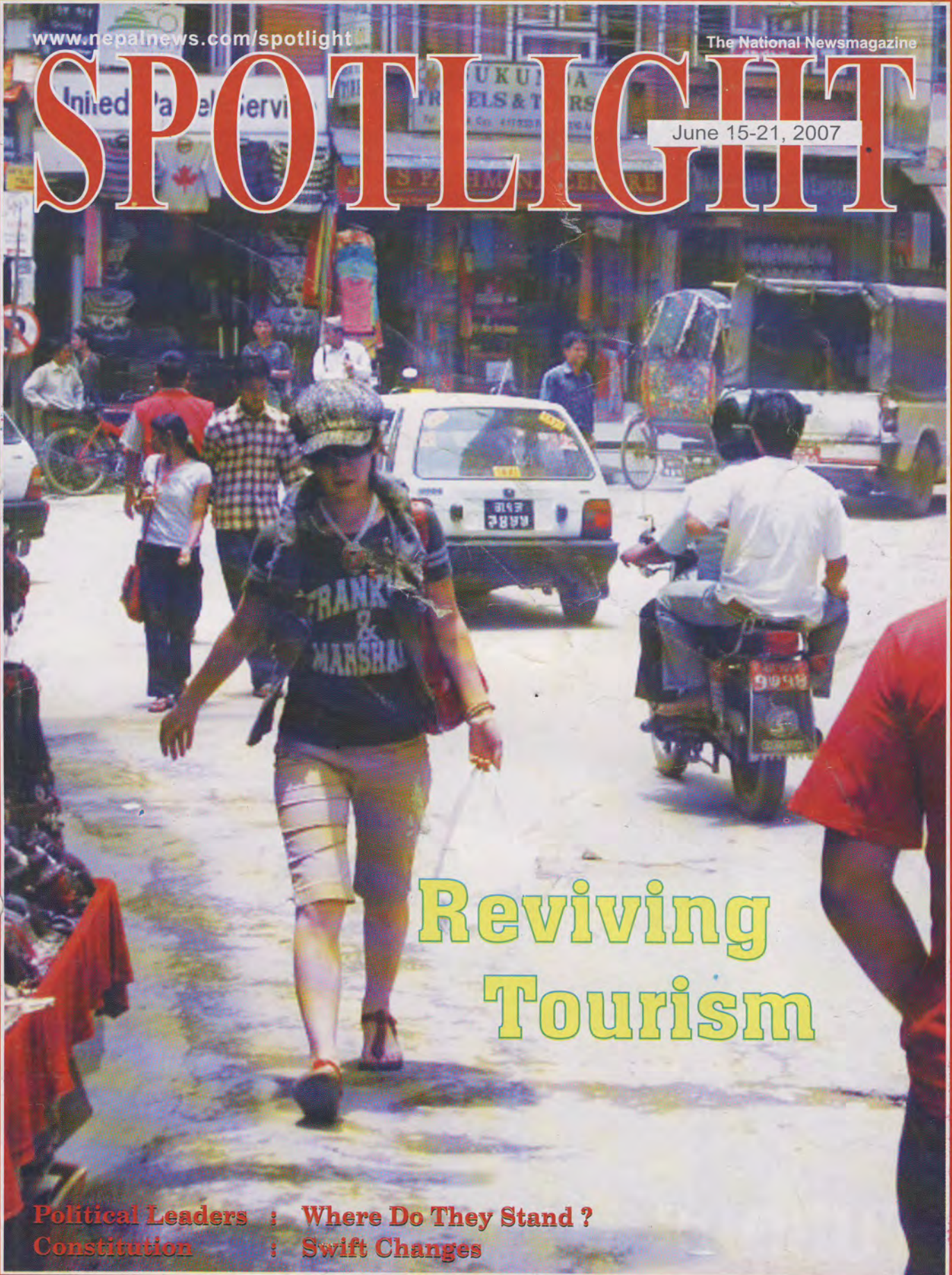


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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

June 15-21, 2007



Reviving Tourism

Political Leaders : Where Do They Stand ?
Constitution : Swift Changes

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India..... IRs.
Bhutan..... Nu.

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All for one, Tuborg for all!



TUBORG
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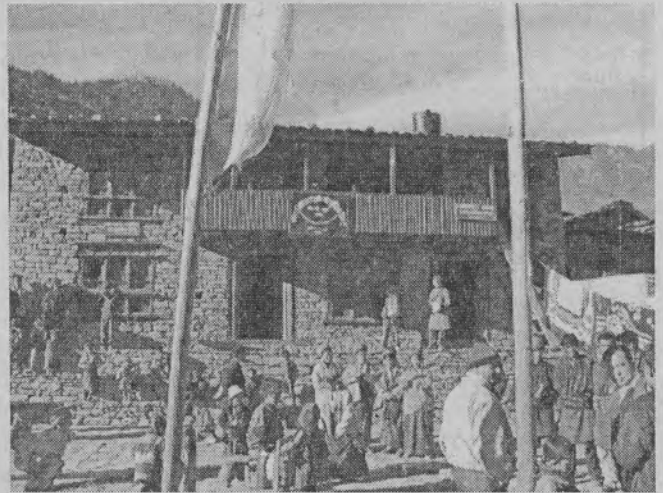
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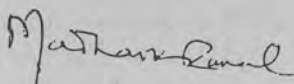
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In the total absence of honest and dedicated political leadership Nepal's future is very dark and very grim. That the events of last two decades have brought this miserable country to such a cross road which runs only to *cul-de-sacs* is for everybody to see. But the leaders do not tire to take the people for a ride. Now they are talking about a "New Nepal". Indeed. A New Life for themselves, a new life of luxury and no want. And if that is not "New Nepal", what is? But the poor millions are facing only disillusionments, destructions, destabilizations and disintegration. The bigger parties of the eight party government are busy with charges and countercharges against each other, with no trust in each others' protestations and always scheming to outsmart their rivals. As such the government has been caught in a great stalemate. Appointments to vacant high positions have become spoils, each party trying to grab the most precious prizes. Consequently, the administration is in a fix. Even the country's scores of diplomatic missions have become dysfunctional in the absence of the heads of the missions. Blinded by their own nefarious interest how these unscrupulous politicians sideline the nation's concerns can be easily seen in such a behavior. The different ideologies represented in the government are bent on implementing their own policies which generate fierce tug of war. Nine times out of ten no policy beneficial to the country is implemented. The country has stood still for a over a year, the economy taking a real back seat. The politics of bandhas and chakkajams has only aggravated the hatred and disappointments of the common man against the government due to their unbearable miseries. Parallel governments are functioning all over the Kingdom. Extortions, kidnappings and loots continue with total impunity. The home minister and the prime minister have become silent spectators. They cannot enforce the laws of the land to stop all these illegal activities. The politics of violence by the Maoist has instilled the people's heart with fear. The general people don't seem to have any love or respect for the extremists. If the Maoist think they can secure a majority in a free and fair election, they are living in a fool's paradise. Because, firstly, no body believes there will be elections in six months and secondly, with their terrible experiences the people will not vote for them. And if they think they can grab the country by force, it must be said, they are too naïve to understand global politics. As such, it is high time the Maoists changed their behavior and policies and focused on winning the people's hearts and sympathy. Only then they will be able to influence the destiny of this poor nation.

That Nepal's politicians neither possess any national pride nor any self-esteem has been proved a thousand times to need any repetition. And Nepal's so called donor friends refuse to accept the reality because their interest in Nepal has always been impelled by their global constraints and not by any humanitarian considerations. Consequently, the millions of poor Nepalis have to wake up and face the music themselves if they are really desirous to improve their lot. Since they are the real power behind the nation's politics, they must not delay in making another determined effort to sweep off all unscrupulous politicians and lay the foundation of a "Real New Nepal." Only then they can expect to see better days for themselves and their progeny.



Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Changing Weather

The cover story "Climate Change: Effects on Nepal" (SPOTLIGHT June 8) is a very relevant topic, indeed. This is one issue, which is haunting the whole of humanity and threatening it with dire consequences. If the human beings want to continue their lives in the planet earth for infinity, they must act with enough prudence and wisdom so as not to fatally disrupt the environment on which they survive.

*Bikrant Joshi
Lagankhel*

Hence in view of the asylum / refuge provided to Dalai Lama and his millions of Tibetan people for the last almost half century (which puts India under legal obligation towards Tibetans, China & UN), Government of India ought to take the initiative and proactive action for the formation of "Indian Forum for Human Rights & Rehabilitation of Tibetans" (IFHRRT) as given below:- (1)- In this IFHRRT not only persons from India & some Tibetans but eminent Human Right activists from other countries and some eminent persons from China ought to be included. (2)- Without allowing any prejudice against china (by the back drop of 1962 Indo-China war & China's consistent support to Pakistan on Kashmir), India ought to insist on UN that China, being its permanent member, is under legal obligation (more than any other ordinary member of UN) to not only honor ICCPR & ICESCR but also the optional protocols ICCPR-OP1 & OP-CAT which entitles UN to intervene in case China violates these rights and resort to Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to Tibetans (this will fortunately constrain India also to sign ICCPR-OP1) (3)- India ought to approach UN / OHCHR:- (i)- For creating a special cell to monitor the progress of Human Rights & Rehabilitation of Tibetans (UNCHRRT) (ii)- For granting recognition to this IFHRRT so that under superintendence of UNCHRRT it can visit Chinese territories / Tibet in order to facilitate Human Rights & Rehabilitation of Tibetans. (4)- Meanwhile India ought to immediately approach China to allow and facilitate socio-religio-cultural organizations of Tibetans from both sides to visit India & China across the border for organizing and conducting religious functions, festivals and cultural programs of Tibetans.

Hem Raj Jain

*208, Supriya, Plot #20
New Delhi, INDIA.*

Nepal Should Be Alert

The cover story "Climate Change: Effects on Nepal" (SPOTLIGHT June 8) is very contextual in today's Nepal situation. Even as we remain engaged in political and economic issues, the environmental issues such as climate change could catch us unaware. It is unfortunate that though Nepal does not produce green house gases, it is going to have to suffer from its worst consequences. As Nepal has fragile geological structures like mountains, and glaciers, the effect of climate change is going to be more severe here. The western countries are morally bound to help Nepal in this issue.

*Bimal Sharma
Kantipath*

India To Stop Humbug On Tibet

This refers to controversy reported in Indian media about visit of Dalai Lama to Australia where China objected Dalai Lama's meeting with Head & Ministers of Government and other political leaders of visiting country. But India's silence on this issue is deafening and India's behavior violates the tenets of International law as given below especially in view of the fact that as per

information available on the webs site <http://www.tibet.com> Dalai Lama is running Tibetan Government in exile on the soil of India at Dharamsala:- (i)- When India has already accepted Tibet as apart of China and when Dalai Lama himself does not seek Tibet's independence then how can India allow Tibetan Government in exile on its soil? (ii)- Moreover, is the example of Pakistan Administered Kashmir not enough (where possession of territory by Pakistan for the last 60 years is practically irreversible) to enlighten India that similar long possession of Tibet by China is also irreversible? (iii)- When Dalai Lama himself is reportedly seeking merely 'autonomy' (whatever it may mean to him) where Tibetan culture, language, environment, economical interests etc. shall be preserved then- (A)- Why is India allowing Dalai Lama to talk any thing beyond this which impinges on China's territorial integrity? (B)- Why is India not facilitating this 'autonomy' to Tibetans especially when these rights are already enshrined in UN International Covenants on civil, political, economical, social, cultural rights (ICCPR, ICESCR)? (iv)- Why is India not taking worthwhile interest in rehabilitating ousted Tibetans in their home land?

PM Meets With Prachanda, Agree To Clear Differences

After the meeting between Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Maoist chairman Prachanda on Sunday (June 10) morning, the two leaders have agreed to resolve their differences and continue to proceed with the peace process with singular focus on Constituent Assembly elections. The two leaders discussed about the issue of YCL, republic, CA elections, PLA verification and so on. According to Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, who accompanied Prachanda in the meeting, the leaders have agreed to sort out differences through talks and not through resorting to public war of words. *Leading dailies report*

India Terms Refugee Issue An International One

In an interesting development, India has for the first time stated that Bhutanese refugee issue is an international one. This is a change from their earlier stance that it is primarily a matter between Nepal and Bhutan. Indian External Affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee has said the refugee stalemate has become an international problem. He said so to the reporters after meeting with the chief minister of West Bengal Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee on Saturday evening. Mukherjee said "it is an international problem" and that the government of India was trying to work out a solution. The 45-minute long meeting in South Kolkata centered on 'solving' the Bhutanese refugee issue with Bhattacharjee saying that the stalemate has created problem of law and order in his state. "Bhattacharjee told me that it was creating serious problems in the law and order situation in Bengal and it was unacceptable to the state government," reports quoted the Indian External Affairs minister as saying. "Nepal claims that these are not Nepalese citizens and Bhutan is also not ready to accept them. The refugees want to enter Bhutan and they want to pass through Indian territory," Mukherjee said further. He also told the media that the West Bengal chief minister urged him to initiate a dialogue between Nepal and Bhutan to find a solution to the crisis. "We are in

friendly terms with both countries. The issue of Bhutan refugees cropped up 11 years ago and as far as I know there are about 100,000 refugees in the camps," Mukherjee added. He, however, claimed that the repatriation of the Bhutanese refugees to their homeland would cause demographic imbalance in Bhutan. "The population of Bhutan is about 600,000. If these 100,000 people (Bhutanese refugees) enter Bhutan it would create a demographic imbalance," Mukherjee said. *nepalnews.com reports*

Prachanda Blasts India, UML Says No Need To Suspect

In response to reports that Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh advised top UML delegation to strengthen unity with Nepali Congress (NC), Maoist chairman Prachanda has said that it smacked of conspiracy to 'finish' Maoists. Talking to reporters in Butwal, Prachanda said it pointed to the conspiracy by foreign and domestic reactionaries. He added that the reactionaries were hatching plots to derail CA elections, which he said will not be held if monarchy is not deposed. Meanwhile, senior UML leader KP Oli, who was in New Delhi in a UML delegation led by its general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, said that Indian PM had not talked about separate alliance by isolating Maoists. "The fact is the Maoists have to improve their behavior as a democratic force," he said. Added Bharat Mohan Adhikary, another UML leader in the delegation, "The Maoists should not suspect us. Prachanda, too, had visited India (in the past). We did not comment about that. Besides, UML does not want to talk about our internal politics in foreign soil." The UML delegation had met with Indian PM in New Delhi on Tuesday. Meanwhile, on Wednesday, the UML delegation held separate meetings with Congress president Sonia Gandhi, former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, opposition leader Lal Krishna Advani and Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee. "In all our meetings, Indian leaders emphasized the need to hold CA elections by November and the need to

shorten the transitional phase," Adhikary said. *Leading dailies report*
Yadav Warns Of Terai Revolt

A senior Maoist leader and Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation Matrika Yadav has warned of unleashing "People's War" in Terai. Minister Yadav said such revolt will occur unless the state addresses the concerns raised by people of Terai. Condemning the recent baton charge by police against Madhesi MPs on Thursday in front of Singhdurbar 'at the direct order of Home Minister,' Minister Yadav also threatened to agitate against Nepali Congress (NC). Over one dozen persons were injured during the baton charge after police prevented the agitation by Maoist-affiliated Madhesi National Liberation Front and stopped Madhesi MPs from entering into Singhdurbar to submit a memo to the Prime Minister. Yadav said that the people have the right to rebel if the government does not work in their interests and address their concerns.

Compiled from reports

Nepal To Purchase 40 Mw Power From India

For the first time Nepal and India have agreed to power trade on purely commercial basis. With the objective to resolve load-shedding problem, Nepal will import additional 40 MW electricity by this winter. The power will be transmitted from Duhabi-Katiya transmission line in Biratnagar. This was decided during the eighth meeting of the Nepal-India Power Exchange Committee (PEC) that concluded Friday. A joint press statement issued after the meeting stated that India had agreed to upgrade the Duhabi-Katiya transmission line, which will enable Nepal to import additional 40 MW electricity. "Currently, Nepal has been importing 50 MW of electricity through the transmission line. The upgrade of transmission line will enable Nepal to import an additional 40 MW of electricity," the statement said. The upgrade of the transmission line is expected to be completed by October. As per the agreement, Nepal will also export 40 MW of electricity through the Gandak-Ram Nagar line during the rainy

season at a competitive price. The issue of revision of power tariff, which had remained undecided since 2003, has also been resolved, with Indian and Nepali officials agreeing on annual tariff hike of 5 percent for January 2004 to June 2008 against the annual tariff hike of 8.5 percent. Likewise, the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) can sell 70 million unit of electricity Nepal gets from Tanakpur to India. India has also decided to remove five out of 21 electricity exchange lines, which have fallen into disuse. The PEC meeting, which is supposed to be held every year by rotation in India and Nepal, had taken place after four years. The last meeting held in the year 2003 had ended inconclusively after the two sides had differences in issues related to revision of power tariff. *Compiled from reports SMEC To Give 75 Mw*

Electricity For Free

The builder of West Seti hydropower project Snowy Mountaineering Engineering Corporation (SMEC) will build 75 MW reservoir type power project free of charge to Nepal government. In lieu of permission to generate 750 MW power from West Seti project located in Doti district and to export it to India, the SMEC has agreed to provide 75 MW power to Nepal government. Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat said that since it was technically not possible to connect the electricity generated from West Seti project to national grid, the SMEC had proposed to build a separate 75 MW project. Speaking at the Natural Resources Committee of the parliament, Thursday (June 7), Dr. Mahat said the government was positive to its proposal. The SMEC is to begin construction of West Seti from coming winter. It had said it was open to both options – payment of royalty or supply of free energy. Dr. Mahat added that government stressed on free energy rather than royalty. He said the government could give 127 MW Upper Seti to fulfill SMEC's promise of free energy. Japan government had helped conduct feasibility study of Upper Seti project – which is a reservoir type project located in Damauli of Tanahun district. *Kantipur daily reports*

Maoists Says Confusion Over India's Advice Has Ended

Following his meeting with the Prime Minister, Maoist chairman Prachanda issued a statement on Sunday (June 10) saying that the discussions went ahead largely positively. Interestingly, in his statement, Prachanda said that the suspicions that arose after the media reported that India had advised the UML to tie up with the Nepali Congress have now been cleared. "We want to make clear that we [parties] now don't have mutual suspicion that arose after the Nepali media reported that India, a country whose positive role is specially expected right from the signing of the 12-point agreement to the entire peace process and the CA election, had advised for special relation between the UML and the Nepali Congress," Prachanda said in a statement. The Maoist chairman had immediately objected to the India Prime Minister's 'advice' to a senior UML delegation for unity between the UML and the Congress. However, the UML leaders had refuted the reports of such an advice, but they revealed that the Indian side had expressed concern over the forceful activities of the Maoists. Prachanda in his statement also stressed that the eight-party unity must hold in the current fragile situation. He said his party was firm in its commitment to holding constituent election for establishing democratic republic. He also indirectly admitted the wrongdoing by his cadres in some cases, but claimed that the stoning of American ambassador's vehicle in Jhapa recently was something his party "does not even think of doing". He said his party had already asked the government to take action against those involved in the attack. In the statement Prachanda recalls that no foreigner was hurt during the entire decade-long conflict period.

Dr. Bhattarai Rejects ULFA Charges

Following a statement by a surrendered leader of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) that the Indian separatist outfit had links with

Nepali Maoists, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai rejected the charges. "Our party's clear position is that the struggle of various organizations in India is their internal matter. We have no direct or indirect link with any of them." He added, "We have never been in contact with this organization called ULFA. While this kind of propaganda has started now, it could have been motivated by a vicious intention. We request all to be cautious about this." He further said, "Our simple guess is that some elements who are trying to disrupt the ongoing process for peace and democracy might be engaging in this kind of propaganda." Bhattarai was reacting to Indian media reports that quoted surrendered ULFA leader Ghanakanta Bora as saying that the ULFA had established some bases in Nepal with the help of Maoists and that the outfit was preparing to shift a large number of cadres and leaders to Nepal. Bora also said the ULFA had turned to the Maoists for weapons. "We have been in touch with Maoist groups in Nepal and procuring arms, ammunition, and explosives for the ULFA," he told reporters after the surrender on Tuesday. *nepalnews.com reports*

SAC Discuss CA Bill

Moving closer to passing the important CA Member Election Bill, a task force of the State Affairs Committee (SAC) of the parliament, on Wednesday (June 6), finalized the Bill overcoming the hurdles in proportional electoral system by ensuring 50 percent representation for the women. The bill ensures equal representation of 6.5 percent for Dalit women and men; 18.8 percent each for the men and women from the indigenous minorities; 15.6 percent each for the Madhesi men and women; 1.8 percent each for the men and women from the backward regions; and equal representation of 14.3 percent for the men and women from other categories. "The parties have been granted liberty to give 40 to 60 percent representation to women while deciding their candidates," said lawmakers representing the task force. *Leading dailies report*



Leaders of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandidevi) after unification Kantipur

THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER for Human Rights Louise Arbour announced, Friday, the appointment of Richard Bennett as head of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR Nepal) and her Representative in the country. According to a press release by the OHCHR-Nepal, Bennett will take up his position by the middle of August 2007. He will be replacing the current OHCHR-Nepal chief Lena Sundh. "I am confident that under Mr. Bennett's leadership, OHCHR will continue to provide the highest level of support and assistance to Nepal to address human rights issues in the context of the peace process, to develop its capacity to protect and promote human rights, and to end impunity," Arbour has said. Bennett has been serving since August 2004 as the Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Afghanistan and Chief Human Rights Officer in the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan. He has extensive experience in human rights protection both domestically and internationally.

THE GOVERNMENT, ON THURSDAY (June 7), handed over a cheque of Rs 92.5 million to Information and Communication Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara following refusal by the Maoists to go ahead with the second stage verification unless they received monthly salaries to their People's Liberation Army (PLA) combatants. The money was handed over by the Combatants Monitoring and Management Committee at the rate of Rs 3000 a month per PLA member. The money would be handed over to PLA members in 28 cantonments through local construction committees and the receipt of the same would be provided to the Committee. Maoist PLA commander Baldev has said that the second stage verification will now proceed as planned. Earlier, the meeting of Joint Monitoring Coordination Committee (JMCC) – which is represented by UN, Nepali Army and Maoist Army – on Thursday had failed to reach consensus after the Maoist side repeated its stance that the second stage verification should start only after the government implements past agreements including providing a monthly salary of Rs 3000 to each combatant and other facilities. Although the May 21 meeting of JMCC had decided to start second verification stage from June 10, three successive JMCC meetings had failed to break the deadlock. Thursday's meeting also discussed ways to deactivate the unexploded ordnance abandoned in different parts of the country.

MINISTER FOR WORKS AND PHYSICAL PLANNING

Hisila Yami has said that the government is willing to talk on all issues with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to continue with the Melamchi project. At a press meet on Thursday (June 7), Minister Yami said that the government was open on alternatives such as signing new management contract, floating new tenders, allowing Nepali management to handle valley's water distribution system or even accepting Severn Trent Water International with some changes. Yami said that the cabinet meeting, on Wednesday, had decided to request the ADB to proceed with Melamchi project based on mutual understanding with the government. She said the government has also requested ADB to send a mission team for discussion on the project. Earlier, ADB had warned that it could decide not to renew its funding commitment on the multi-million dollar Melamchi Water Supply Project after the commitment expires on June end unless the government abides by previous understanding to allow British company Severn Trent to manage valley's water distribution system. Minister Yami's decision not to let 'discredited' company manage valley's water had prompted the ADB to issue the warning. ADB is the principal donor of Melamchi where it has agreed to provide \$120 million loan - of the total \$500 million required for the project.

THE NEPAL STOCK EXCHANGE (Nepse) index touched five year high, on Wednesday (June 6), by reaching 549.96. The index of the country's only secondary share market gained 5.82 points on Wednesday to break the five year record. The surge was propelled largely by the increase witnessed by share prices of commercial banks. According to Rewat Bahadur Karki, general manager of Nepse, the increase has come towards the end of fiscal year with expectations of announcement of bonus by the companies.

THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID) organized a fair to celebrate its 56 years in Nepal. Inaugurating the fair, US ambassador James Moriarty said, "Through much sweat and dedication by USAID and its partners, Nepalis now have vastly improved health care and education services. We are very hopeful that the current political climate will allow more Nepalis to take advantage of USAID programs so that they may benefit and be empowered to improve their own lives." On the occasion, USAID/Nepal Director Don Clark thanked USAID's partners "whose efforts, commitment to Nepal, and professionalism, have translated the will of the American people to help people worldwide, into reality." He also emphasized that it is USAID's partnership with the Government of Nepal, and the Nepali people that have led to some remarkable development achievements since the 1950s, such as the eradication of malaria in the 1960s, and more recently, a 45% drop in the infant mortality rate in the last 10 years. The one-day celebration at "Rabi Bhawan" highlighted the challenges and successes of USAID's programs in health and family planning, economic growth, education, democracy and good governance, peace-building, and humanitarian assistance. ■

"I think they are Young Criminal League."

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, in an angry response to the abduction and public trial of controversial businessman Sitaram Prasain by Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL).

"Prim Minister himself is the leader of criminals and corrupt persons."

Prachanda, Maoist chairman, reacting to PM's charge against YCL, which he said was fighting against corruption and crime in the country.

"They are spreading YCL terror."

Sushil Koirala, vice president of Nepali Congress.

"The population of Bhutan is about 600,000. If these 100,000 people (Bhutanese refugees) enter Bhutan it would create a demographic imbalance."

Pranab Mukherjee, Indian External Affairs Minister, saying for the first time that refugee problem is an international one after his meeting with Chief Minister of West Bengal Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee.

"Our party's clear position is that the struggle of various organizations in India is their internal matter. We have



no direct or indirect link with any of them. We have never been in contact with this organization called ULFA."

Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader, reacting to a statement by a surrendered leader of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) Ghanakanta Bora that the Indian separatist outfit had links with Nepali Maoists.

"We want to make clear that we [parties] now don't have mutual suspicion that arose after the Nepali media reported that India, a country whose positive role is specially expected

right from the signing of the 12-point agreement to the entire peace process and the CA election, had advised for special relation between the UML and the Nepali Congress."

A statement issued by Maoist chairman Prachanda after his meeting with PM Koirala.

"Melamchi will come in a new way."

Hisila Yami, Minister for Works and Physical Planning, saying that the government has requested Asian Development Bank to continue with the Melamchi project, at a press meet.

TRANSITION

NAMED: Richard Bennett, to head the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR Nepal), by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour.

CELEBRATED: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), its 56 years of presence in Nepal.

TABLED: The Bill for Second Amendment of Interim Constitution at the Legislature-Parliament.

LEFT: Ramesh Lekhak, Minister of State for Labor and Transport

Management, for Geneva, Switzerland, to attend the International Labor Conference by ILO.

The standing committee member of UML, Amrit Bohara, leading a delegation of MPs including Rakam Chemjong, Tanka Rai, Uma Adhikari, Suprabha Ghimire and Dharmashila Chapagain, for Sweden, on a study visit to learn about democratic development, social security and political affairs.

RETURNED: A UML delegation led by its general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, from a weeklong visit to India.

Chief Justice Dilip Poudel, from Malaysia, where he attended the Asia Pacific conference on judicial reform.

APPOINTED: Keshar Jung Baral, co-professor, as the vice chancellor of Pokhara University. Prof. Dr. Saubhagya Jung Karki, as chairperson of University Grants Commission. Dr. Krishna Manandhar, Prof. Shanti Devi Sharma and Prof. Bharat Jha as members of UGC.

Om Sharma, as the executive chairperson of Gorkhapatra Corporation, by the government.

PRESENT- DAY NEPAL AND GLORIOUS PAST

▪ *By Laxmi Thapa*

We have good reason to be proud of our glorious past though our generations failed to live up to the greatness of our ancestors. World marvels at the utmost bravery and sacrifice of our ancestors, who succeeded in saving our country from falling into the clutches of the colonial powers. Nepal was in the forefront among the countries succeeding to defend themselves from the threat of being enslaved by colonial powers. At that time there was no other country to help us. Our country alone had to face the intruder many times superior to us in strength. In this struggle a large number of patriotic Nepali had to sacrifice their life

Unfortunately our country is one of the poorest in the world. Those of us living now should be ashamed that we could not live up to the expectation of our forefathers to transform Nepal into a reasonably developed country despite the fact that the present world situation is very conducive to carry out works to accelerate socio-economic development works of any country.

Worst Days in Nepal's History

It was early 1810s. Great Britain was the most powerful country in the whole world. Its vast empire stretched across all five continents. At that time it was ruthlessly expanding its empire in the South Asian Sub-continent. Britain was tempted to make Nepal also its colony. Nepal was attacked without formally declaring war. Britain hoped that Nepal could be quickly subdued in a blitzkrieg invasion.

Needless to say that those were the worst days in the history of our country. The war stretched over a period of three calendar years in sharp contrast to the expectation of the British Government. Nepal bravely defended its independence. Britain was forced to abandon its grand design to enslave Nepal though we lost some of our territories.

Our forefathers were able to protect the honor of our country while almost all other countries in Asia and Africa failed. Nepal was able to defend its independence because of our forefathers' great sacrifice. They must have visualized that their great sacrifice would be paid off. They might have been hoping that their descendants would not have to be humiliated by colonial rulers of those days if they bravely defended their country

Dreadful Plight of People in Colonies

Jawaharlal. Nehru has expressed in an extremely touching way the pitiable condition of Indians under the British rule in this famous book "The Discovery of India" first published in 1946. He has written that the Indians were living in

enslaved condition in their own country until 1947 when India became a free country. The text from his book is presented hereinafter.

"In Bombay there is a well-known club which did not allow and so far as I know, does not allow, an Indian (except as a servant) even in its visitors' room, even though he might be a ruling prince or a captain of industry."

"Racialism in India is not so much English versus Indian; it is European as opposed to Asiatic. In India every European, be he German, or Pole, or Rumanian, he is automatically a member of the ruling race. Railway carriages, station retiring-rooms, benches in parks, etc., marked "Europeans Only". This is bad enough in South Africa or elsewhere, but to have to put up with it in one's own country is a humiliating and exasperating reminder of one's enslaved condition."

"Bengal had the first full experience of British rule in India. That rule began with outright plunder and a land revenue system which extracted the uttermost farthing not only from the living but also from the dead cultivators."

"A gold lust unequalled since the hysteria that took hold of the Spaniards of Cortes' and Pizarro's age filled the English mind. Bengal in particular was not to know peace again until she has been bled white. It was pure loot. This process was called trade later on but that made little difference. And it must be remembered that this lasted, under various names and under different forms, not for a few years but for generations."

Expansion of British Rule

The way new territories in South Asia were brought under British control and ruled in those days had provoked even the British public. British Parliament went completely against it.

The Marquis Wellesley became in 1798 the next British Governor-General of India. In 1798 the French fleet was defeated by the British admiral Horatio Nelson significantly weakening its strength. After the 1798 naval victory British rulers in India must have felt that France would not anymore be able to pose serious threat to further expansion of the British Empire in South Asia. Britain started the task of further expansion of its territory.

Governor General Wellesley played decisive role in the expansion of the British Empire in India. Colonel Wellesley, the younger brother of the Marquis Wellesley, had also come to India. Colonel Wellesley afterwards became Sir Arthur Wellesley, and then Duke of Wellington who defeated Napoleon in Waterloo Battle. Later on he became the Prime Minister of the Great Britain.

Oude Nawab Cedes Do-ab to Britain

Governor General Wellesley used every possible means

to expand British Empire in South Asia. Wellesley asked the Nawab of Oude to agree, like the Nizam, to cede to Britain some of his territories in exchange for British protection. At first the Nawab would not agree, but at length, when he saw there was no use of trying to resist, he gave in. British army was sent to Oude, and to pay for it the Nawab gave up the Do-ab or the country between the Jamuna and the Ganges. Meanwhile Wellesley turned his attention to Delhi. In 1803, General Gerard Lake captured Delhi and Agra.

It was very clear that British rulers in India did not want Nepal to become a strong power. They must have realized that sooner or later they would have to wage a war against Nepal. British rulers must not have liked to risk getting caught in battles against Nepal in unknown high mountain terrains without penetrating into Nepal's defense system in advance.

British- Nepal War

The British actively began preparation for the war from the time when F.R. Hastings- Earl of Moira landed in India as Governor General and Commander-in-Chief in 1813. The actual declaration of war against Nepal is recorded as 1 November, 1814, though the war began from middle of October. The decision to declare war had been made six months earlier so the territorial dispute appears to be only a pretext. British force had marched into Nepal across a frontier of more than 1500 km to attack at several points simultaneously. The eastern British flank was moving north from the Teesta area whereas the farthestmost western flank from the Sutlej river area. It was virtually a modern type warfare extended over a period of three calendar years and necessitating to protect the entire region bordering the enemy held territory. The British invasion force, in comparison with Nepalese, had absolute superiority in cavalry, pioneers, and at least the superiority of 10 times in infantry and 100 times in artillery. They also had the advantage of maneuverability in movement of their fighting force.

War Prolonged

British had expected a blitz-krieg victory. It is said that the Governor General Hastings had planned to win the war in one mighty sweep in one to two months in end 1814 but certainly before the Christmas. He was badly mistaken in his assessment. We Nepalese fought very bravely. In early months of the war the initial British invasion was completely beaten off. British offensive ended in complete failure. Nepalese force stationed within the shelter of the fortress were not only able to defend their position against an invading enemy many times superior in strength but they even shocked them by their dreadful counteroffensive that used to be accompanied by big losses on British side. The British rule in India was at a risk of falling apart.

After the initial defeats the British changed their strategy to avoid their casualties. They started to deploy long range guns to level the fortification and force us to flee. This strategy paid off. The British were able to

advance quickly into the territory under our control. They even used elephants to carry heavy guns across the mountains.

Bravery of Nepalese People

Bhakti Thapa at the age of 74 had led a counterattack against the British force entrenched at Deothal on April 15, 1814. It was 3.15 a.m. when a force of 400 under Bhakti Thapa marched out of the Malaun fort. The British column had taken position at Deothal on reverse slopes. The cannons of 6 pounders were properly concealed. There were two Indian battalions, the Grenadiers companies of the Light Battalions and some 1000 Irregulars. The British strength was up to about 3,500 troops and weapons.

Bhakti Thapa and his followers in the counterattack had vowed to fight to the death. It was a bloody battle Bhakti Thapa laid down his life in the battlefield. Every one who fought from the Nepalese side was either killed or wounded. The British casualties were also high.

Bhakti Thapa who sacrificed his life at an age of 74 in a counter attack in Deothal Battle against the British became a legend even in the eyes of his enemy. Historian CB Khanduri writes quoting various contemporary British historians "The euphemism of the BRAVEST OF THE BRAVES had been used by Napoleon for Marshal Ney, whose bravery during the retreat from Moscow in 1812 was one of the highest. BRAVE LES BRAVE, said Napoleon of him. British then used this citation for the Gorkhas during and after the Anglo-Nepal War. Such was the bravery shown by Bhakti Thapa that the next legend of the Bravest of the Braves had been created on the day-16 April 1815 at Deothal. ■

(Thapa writes on history)

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POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Where Do They Stand?

With frequent shifts in their alliances and changing words, political forces in Nepal do not know where they stand

By KESHAB POUDEL

“**A**merican imperialists and Indian expansionists are interfering to break the unity of eight political parties in Nepal. It will be unfortunate if India changes its earlier policy and work to weaken unity of eight political parties,” said Maoist Chairman Prachanda in Butwal, 300 miles west of Nepal. (Gorkhapatra 7 June)

However, Prachanda changed his stand on India in less than 72 hours. According to June 11 issue of The Himalayan Times, Maoist supremo Prachanda said his party has no doubts on India’s intentions. Prachanda has rapped India after reports appeared that India favored an alliance between Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML.

His stand on prime minister Grijja Prasad Koirala also did not last for long.

“Girija Prasad Koirala is a kingpin of criminals. If Koirala does not stop speaking against the YCL, he would be finished along with King Gyanendra.” (Prachanda in Gorkhapatra June 7)

“Our dispute with prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala on YCL is over. We will no more raise such issue now. My meeting with prime minister Koirala settled all the matter,” said Prachanda (June 10)

Following CPN-UML leaders’ high level delegation to India led by general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, who



Prachanda: Swift shifting of gears

met Indian leaders including prime minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in New Delhi last week, the new political crisis appeared. As soon as UML delegation leaked the concerns expressed by Indian leaders regarding the activities of Maoists, the latter were prompt to react and launched anti-Indian tirade.

Young Communist league organized a mass meeting in Kathmandu condemning India as an expansionist force and prime minister Koirala as a leader of criminal. “By building schools and roads in various parts of Terai, India provoked Madhesis. India’s activities are against the interests of Nepal,” said Hitman Shakya, YCL leader in Basantapur. (Gorkhapatra June 7).

Uncertain Alliances

The uncertainty of political leadership is not only on the statement but there also over their alliance. The political alliances change frequently. Seven political parties and Maoists had forged a new alliance by signing 12 points agreement in New Delhi against Royal regime in November 2005. Previously, there was an alliance of parliamentary parties against the Maoists and nobody knows when the new alliance will be formed.

“Our leaders in society are very innovative and imaginative in interpreting same situation every day from different perspective and decide their roles similarly. Stability and continuity in their views are the rarest things. They forge alliance with one force against the other one day and next day that might be changed,” said a political analyst. “This has deteriorated the standard of political behavior and has established a very bad precedent which is being followed by many ambitious and aspirant persons in the present politics of Nepal.”

Persons who burnt the rubber tires in the streets disturbing the education calendar, locking up factories and shops and paralyzing capital and the rest of the country turn by turn are in the forefront of leadership. The present set of politicians in power did all these things to grab power. Now others are on queue to make them unseat.

“There is no question of ideology, values and ethical codes to be respected. A committed pluralist democrat is hands and gloves in power with persons of totalitarian ideology. That also does not remain stable,” said the analyst.

In his utter frustration by the behaviors of alliance parties, the Maoist party chairman, charged India that it was

going to use NC and CPN-UML to wipeout the Maoists from Nepal .

When the parliamentary democracy collapsed in the face of political instability generated by insurgency, as a stop gap arrangement an inexperienced King had assumed all power of the state and ignored the pitfalls in the road.

"Yesterday, it was the loss of the royal rule. Today Maoists are apprehensive about losing everything they have. In the next phase, others may feel about similar fate," said the analyst.

When there was an operation going on against the country, it was taken as operation against the Royal order. Today, the Maoists are feeling the brunt of a deal against them. They are scared of the intention of their previous allies India , Nepali Congress and CPN-UML. Till a few months ago UML leaders were expressing the same fear from the rest of the allies that they were being isolated.

India's Barometer

Along with internal political forces, there are frequent ups and downs of political barometer of India. It was not very long ago when India's politicians and diplomats stressed on two pillar theory for political stability. They viewed the King and democratic forces were most important twin pillars of stability in Nepal as well as Nepal-India relations.

When King Gyanendra- whose government accepted decade old Indian proposal to establish Indian Consulate General office in Birgunj - allowed Indian investment in media sector and signed new extradition treaty. But as soon as he indicated a certain tilt towards Nepal 's northern neighbor proposing China 's observer status in SAARC, Indians helped

democratic forces and Maoists to reach into an agreement to dislodge the previous arrangement. Instead of its earlier policy, India supported Maoists and seven party alliance.

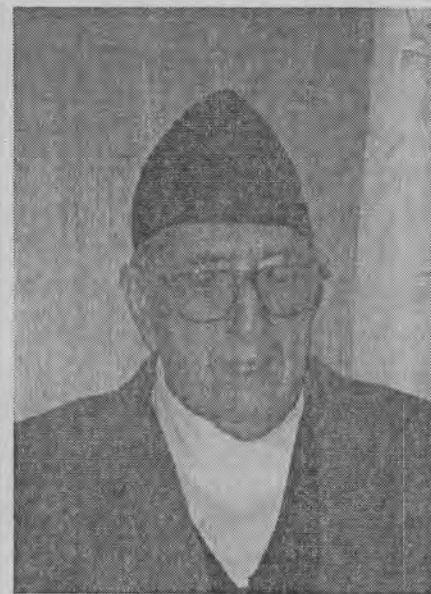
Nepal's southern neighbor India, which has the highest security stake in Nepal – seems to be changing its stand on Nepal now. Last November, Maoist leaders Prachanda and Dr. Baruram Bhattarai who attended Leadership Summit in New Delhi were hailed as great rebel leaders of South Asia when they met almost all senior leaders and former prime minister of India .

Among many other politicians who praised the Maoist leaders, former Indian prime minister I.K. Gujral was the most forthright. "I have survived to see the great revolution in Nepal ." Can Gujral express similar compliments to Maoists now?

New Delhi-based correspondent of Kantipur Daily Gopal Khanal in his article of June 11 indicated Maoists' recent activities were causing great concerns to Indians. The Indian leaders apparently are seeing Maoists differently now.

" India very lately seems to have realized its mistakes to back up an ideology based communist insurgency against a democratic system of Nepal in 1996. It is too late now," said the analyst. "The casualty of this covert operation was a parliamentary democracy in which the monarchy was just a ceremonial figure. One has to look behind series of events of the last few years, shifting of positions and changing of alliances that have taken drastic turns one after another," said the analyst.

Even Indian security officials pointed out that Nepal is turning out to be the latest sanctuary for separatists of the outlawed United Liberation



Koirala: Changing alliance

Front of Assam in cooperation with Maoist guerrillas.

"CPN-Maoist leaders at present may be left behind and fade away but the ideology of extremist violence may remain a major problem not only for Nepal but others too. It is just like the rise of Muslim extremists, as Taliban which was instigated and aided by Americans in the beginning later on became their number one problem. Nepal's Maoist ideology – which was legitimized through 12 points agreement in New Delhi - is going to be major problem for India. There are now indications that Maoists will be India's number one problem in days to come."

China's Response

Sandwiched between two Asian powers India and China , Nepal 's peculiar geo-political situation does not allow single power to be decisive. Although China sent a high level delegation in March 2006 before the launching of movement to suggest both the King and leaders political parties to reconcile with each other, it did not intervene in the political crisis.

However, after political change of April 2006, China was quick to respond to new situation and pursued its policy by establishing new nexus with all political forces including Maoists. According to Nepal Weekly on its issue of June 10, Chinese have developed overtly and covertly new nexus with Maoist party through scholars and diplomats.

The paper revealed that one of the senior colleagues of Maoist leader Prachanda, deputy commander of Maoists Ananta is going to China for his third visit along with son of Prachanda.

These new developments seem to have created concerns in New Delhi. "India's new worries came into surface through the much publicized recent meetings of Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh with UML delegation," said the analyst.

Even after signing the comprehensive peace agreement, Maoist activities in Nepal have not changed much as extortion and violence continues to exist. American ambassador to Nepal has been raising these issues for a long time but Indians just ignored them.

"Yesterday's ally became enemy today and enemy of today may turn into an ally the next day. When Maoists were fighting covert war in the high Himalayan terrains on the extreme north to establish a communist order of Maoist precepts, they were subsequently found in the high security area of New Delhi signing 12 points agreement with seven parties along with the leader of oldest party," said the analyst. "It may be due to the fact that they were only Maoists and not pro-Chinese that they were found under the protection of that kind."



Nepal (left) with Indian PM Singh: Significant tete-a-tete *Kantipur*

Political Contradictions

One can read many contradictions in twelve years of Maoist movement. In initial phase, Maoists' main enemy was the parliament. However, King Gyanendra was their main target in second phase. In early days, republic was their slogan but they were highly impressed by the role of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of modern Nepal and lately the liberal King Birendra, which has been adequately explained by Dr. Baburam Bhattarai in his book.

Few days back Maoist Supremo Prachanda disclosed his contact with late King Birendra regarding him as a liberal feudal. "After late King Birendra said that the Maoists' movement was in line with people's wishes and expressed willingness to talk, the discussion were held at party meeting to recognize King as a ceremonial head," said Prachanda. (THT, June 6).

Another Maoist leader Dr. Babauram Bhattarai in his book *Monarchy Vs Democracy* hailed the role of King Birendra and described him as a liberal and patriot. "Whatever your political ideology might be, one thing every honest Nepali nationalist

has to agree with this: King Birendra's relatively liberal political character and patriotic sentiments were seen as a weakness and had become a crime in the eyes of the expansionist and imperialist powers."

"All these unstable and shifting alliances indicated that no political forces in Nepal, however, strong and resourceful, can maintain peace and order in Nepal without broad based consensus and trust. Even a very insignificant power can disrupt the peace and stability of any country but restoring stability and peace is a very difficult task," said the analyst. "It is very lately realized turn by turn by all political forces that in politics there is no permanent friendship. It is merely the interest which counts most. Orderly state behaves according to that time tested rules. But they who are ignorant and too short-sighted will always lose the game," said the analyst.

It is never too late to learn a lesson. The middle way is not only a way of life but it is the wisest political way out. Whether it is Buddha's *Samyak* or Chinese philosopher Tao's thinking and practice to overcome hardness with softness or B.P. Koirala's national reconciliation, all are the expressions of middle path. ■

CA ELECTIONS

Poll Points

As former US president Jimmy Carter is set to visit Nepal this week, the Carter Center in Kathmandu has asked the stakeholders to expedite poll preparations

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

In mid-April this year the Elections Commission (EC) had come out with a letter bombshell stating its inability to hold the elections by the stipulated time of mid-June. It had stated that it needs threshold of 110 days to prepare for credible polls once the date of election is announced and all necessary legislations are in place.

The EC's announcement had taken everyone off guard. But no one was really surprised deep down because of the lackadaisical manner in which the government and the eight parties were proceeding with the promulgation of electoral legislations. Moreover, the situation of law and order had worsened.

Two months later, the situation is not really different. Although the parties have agreed to hold the CA polls within the month of Mangsir (mid-Nov to mid-Dec), the legislations are yet to be promulgated and the situation of law and order is yet to be improved.

As such, the Carter Center – which has been invited by the government and the eight parties including the Maoists – to make independent observation of elections in the country, has come out with a statement appealing to all stakeholders to expedite poll preparation in order to avoid the repetition of date debacle.

On Friday (June 8), the Carter Center's International Election Observation Mission team informed that former US president Jimmy Carter is scheduled to visit Nepal from June 13 to 16.

He will meet with Prime Minister, political leaders including Maoist chairman Prachanda and other officials

during his brief visit aimed at taking stock of polls preparations.

The Center has called for sustained focus on electoral preparations. "The Carter Center is encouraged by the recent Eight Party agreement regarding a late November/early December timeframe for the constituent assembly election as well as the resumption of business in the interim legislature-parliament. Furthermore, the June 7 registration of a second bill to amend the interim constitution and discussions in the state affairs commission on the constituent assembly electoral system indicate that the political deadlock of the past several months is potentially coming to an end."

The Center has, however, reminded all that the 110 day threshold the election commission has requested will expire in early August.

Importantly, on the issue of electoral system, the Center has urged the political leadership to reconsider the issue of ranked candidate lists in the proportional representation system.

"The system presently being discussed would allow parties to give elected seats to any candidate within their proportional representation candidate list after the election result has been declared, rather than allocating the seats starting from an already ranked candidate list. The former system, if adopted, would remove the ability of voters to know who they are likely to elect from a given party and would provide political parties with disproportionate control over their candidates. As both systems will allow for quotas for marginalized groups presently being discussed to be

preserved, the Center encourages the political leadership to select the process which will be most transparent for voters," the Center states in its statement.

The Field Director of Carter Center in Kathmandu Darren Nance, at the press meet, also expressed hopes that the situation of law and order will be restored by talking to various agitators and marginalized communities.

The Carter Center's international



Carter: Taking stock, first-hand

election observation mission in Nepal has deployed 13 long-term observers (LTOs) in March, 2007 representing nine different nationalities throughout Nepal to assess the political and electoral environment in the period leading up to the constituent assembly election. "The Center's observers have now visited more than 70 of Nepal's 75 districts, reaching not only to district headquarters but also to the village level," said Nance.

As the Carter Center celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2007, its co-founder and former US president Jimmy Carter will be visiting Nepal.

As he is visiting in the capacity of the co-founder of the Center, he will also meet with the Maoist leadership – even as the US government still considers Maoists as terrorists.

A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization, the Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide. ■

TOURISM

On Revival Path

A year after the cessation of Maoist conflict and restoration of democracy, tourism sector is beginning to experience growth in the number of tourist arrival. Flights in and out of the country are almost packed and the occupancy rates of hotels, too, have increased. However, many tourism entrepreneurs feel that the country has not been able to lure quality tourists as much as it should have. While the arrival of Free and Individual Travelers (FIT) has surged, the arrival of high-end organized groups has not been as expected. The incessant bandhs, sporadic violence and instability have not helped in generating tourists. Likewise, the lack of product development has held back the growth of tourism.

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

According to the recent report by the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), the number of tourists coming to Nepal in the month of May increased by 50 percent compared with the same month previous year.

In fact, the number of tourist arrival has been increasing in a sustained manner in the last couple of months. In February, March and April, the tourist arrival increased by 62, 33 and 78 percent respectively.

A total of 27,759 visitors entered Nepal during May. "Indian market showed a healthy growth of over 27.9 percent for this month compared to last year's May. Statistics also shows a remarkable growth in the non-Indian sector," states a press release by the NTB. Around 12,558 Indians visited the country in May.

In May, European arrivals scored one-third market share, with encouraging growth from major generating markets

like UK (86.3 percent), France (94.6 percent) and Germany (48.4 percent). The Australian and USA market too, increased by 30.9 percent and 71.1 percent respectively.

"Despite the increased demand for Nepal as a preferred destination, the shortage of air seats to Nepal continues to hamper further growth. The industry sources say many groups have not given up complaining about air seats availability," states NTB.

Reports say that in the first five months of 2007, a total of 143,630 visitors traveled to Nepal – which is higher by 43 percent compared to the same period last year.

In the last one year, Nepal's image tarnished by the decade long violent conflict has been gradually improving. Many western countries withdrew their strict travel advisories.

However, in the subsequent months, Nepal has been faltering in the peace

process. Particularly, the intense Madhes agitation in southern plains since early this year has damaged the image of the country and some countries like the US have once again imposed travel advisory.

The fact that there is a perennial instability and difficult transition going on in the country has also worked against tourism prospects. But hopes are still high that Nepal will steer towards peaceful, democratic and prosperous set up.

If Nepal is to successfully reach to that destination, development of its economy is going to be fundamental prerequisite. And tourism being one of the basic element of Nepali economy where it has comparative advantages, its progress and development will pave the way for building new Nepal.

Mixed Picture

Even as the number of tourist arrival shows impressive picture, many tourism entrepreneurs are not too satisfied.

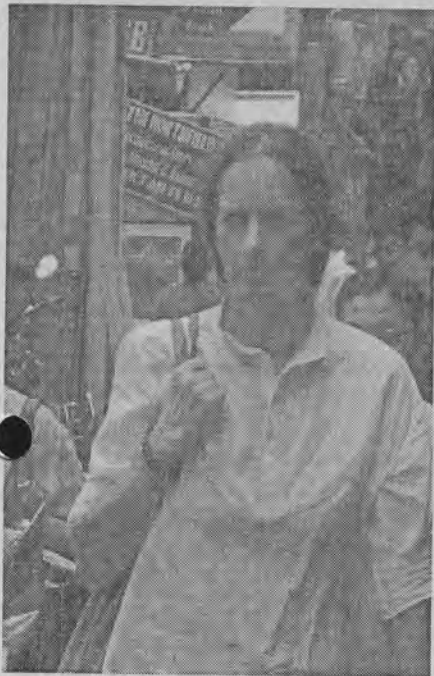
"Yes, there has been increase in

number of tourists visiting the country. This can be seen by crowded flights, and higher occupancy of hotels, but the majority of the tourists are backpackers who do not add substantially to our income," said Bishnu Prasai, a tourism entrepreneur and a director at Nataraj Travels.

Prasai said that the country is not able to lure big groups with tourists who are willing to spend a lot. "However, there definitely has been a rise in number of Indian tourists who also spend a lot," he said.

According to Prasai, there is a growing trend of individual tourists coming lured by cheaper rates.

The increased arrival of backpackers is not at all bad news though. The category of Free and Individual Travelers who make for over 50 percent of the total incoming tourists has been keeping the tourism sector afloat even during the times of conflict. More importantly, it is the individual travelers who inject the much-needed money into the local grass-



A Tourist: Positive growth in number

root level and directly into the hands of people.

What is not good news is the inability of the country to attract more high-end travelers who come in organized groups and spend a lot.

According to prominent hotelier



Ethnic culture of highland: Can become new tourist attraction

Yogendra Shakya, the failure to attract such travelers lies squarely on domestic authorities and entrepreneurs.

"In fact, what we see is that the same bunch of tourists who are willing to pay Rs 15,000 per night in a five star hotel in India, pay only Rs 1500 here. We should be blamed for this situation," Shakya said.

He said that because of increase in tourists, the average occupancy rate of hotels in the country in recent months have risen to around 35 percent. "You must not forget here that even during the year of 1999 – when half a million tourists visited Nepal – the occupancy rate of hotels had not increased beyond 40 percent. We, in fact, need 1.2 million tourists to acquire 100 percent occupancy," said Shakya.

Interestingly, according to Shakya, as many as 75 percent of visitors staying in big hotels these days comprise of conflict managers, aid workers and development experts.

"They are the long-term visitors and include conflict management workers, aid workers, human rights workers, UN and embassy staffs," said Shakya.

The constant bandhs are a big headache for tourism entrepreneurs. "The bandhs that are announced suddenly and bandhs that run into days have hurt us.

In fact, there is not a single day that passes without some incident in some section of highways," said an entrepreneur.

Besides, as Shakya puts it, there is also a need to go for product development. "It is very difficult to substantially increase the number of tourists if we only focus on niche markets. We can attract big number of tourists only if we are able to attract families for vacation and for this, we need to develop our products accordingly," he said.

Along with product development, Nepal also needs to focus on infrastructure development including enhancement of air seat capacity. The only national flag carrier Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) is in dire straits as it only has two functioning Boeing jets. The addition of new flights like Korean Air, South China airlines, Bangladesh's GMG airlines have helped resolve this problem to a certain extent. But they cannot be an alternative to a strong national carrier.

As the country meanders through the transitional phase, the potentials of tourism could be realized only when there is enough room to hope for stability. ■

NRB REPORT

Signs Of Distress

Remittance income growth has declined and trade deficit widened

By A CORRESPONDENT

There are some signs of distress in the economy. The growth of income from remittance – the pillar of national GDP – has declined substantially while the trade deficit has widened uncontrollably.

According to a report by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) about the state of economy in the first nine months of the current fiscal year, the rate of growth of remittance income has plummeted substantially.

The remittance earning increased by 8.4 percent in the first nine months of the current fiscal year – compared with 48.9 percent growth it had witnessed during the same period previous fiscal year.

In recent years, remittance earnings have had immense impact on national economy contributing up to 20 percent of GDP. The NRB report states that the country received Rs 72.39 billion as remittance income during this period.

The central bank says that the decline in growth rate is due to absence of substantial increase in the number of workers going for overseas and stagnant wage overseas. Furthermore, the appreciation of Nepali Rupees compared with US dollar, too, has affected the remittance earnings. While a year ago, 1 US dollar was equivalent to Rs 72; now it has come down to just over Rs 65.

Meanwhile, the report says that because of sustained increase in imports, trade deficit has soared to over Rs 70 billion during the first nine months of the current fiscal year 2006-07.

The report released early this week states that total exports fell by 2.9 percent in the first nine months, while imports registered a growth of 7.4 percent. Total exports in the corresponding period in the previous year had risen by 9.1

percent and a 21 percent rise was recorded on imports.

While exports to India declined by 2.3 percent in 2006-07 as against a significant increase of 15.4 percent in the same period of 2005-06, exports to other countries fell by 4.2 percent in comparison to a decline of 2.6 percent in the preceding year. The responsible factors for the dismal performance of the export sector included the unfriendly investment climate, worsening security situation, load shedding and the Terai bandh, among others.

The report adds that the decline in exports to India was ascribed to the decline in exports of polyester yarn, cattle-feed, plastic utensils, G.I. pipes and readymade garments. Likewise, the decline in exports to other countries was due to the decline in the export of readymade garments, pashmina, woollen carpets, and handicrafts and tanned skin.

On the other hand, total imports from India increased by 9.5 percent in the review period compared to a higher growth of 26.4 percent in the corresponding period last year. Similarly, imports from other countries registered a rise of four percent compared to a growth of 13.4 percent a year earlier. The rise in total imports during the period was attributed to the rise in imports of vehicles and spare parts, petroleum products, cold rolled sheet in coil, electrical equipment and cement, among others, from India as well as a rise in imports of crude palm oil, computer parts, chemical fertilizer, zinc ingot and medicine, among others, from other countries.

The overall balance of payments (BoP) posted a surplus of Rs 10.79 billion in the first nine months of 2006-07. In the corresponding period of 2005-06, the BoP surplus was significant at Rs 17.15 billion. In the government budgetary operations, the total expenditure, on a cash basis, increased by 13.3 percent to Rs 68.68 billion. During the review period, total revenue grew by 22.2 percent to Rs 56.65 billion compared to a growth of a mere 0.1 percent in the previous year. Revenue collection grew on the account of



Highway route: Bandh affects the lifeline

adjustment in customs and excise rates, improvement in customs valuation, increased tax compliance, a rise in corporate income tax and value added tax as well as an increase in some non-tax revenue. In the review period, the government incurred a cash budget surplus of Rs 2.50 billion in contrast to a deficit of Rs 5.99 billion in the corresponding period last year.

Meanwhile, the total foreign exchange reserve has increased by 5.2 percent to reach Rs 173.67 billion. The NRB used \$570 million to purchase Rs 40.97 billion of Indian currency during this period. ■

STATUTE AMENDMENT

Rush For Change

No sooner the eight parties have decided to introduce second amendment, the Janajatis are clamoring for third amendment of the constitution

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

“There must be third amendment of the constitution to address our demands for ethnic population based proportional representation,” said Dr. Om Gurung, coordinator of talks team of Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFIN).

Dr. Gurung made the comment on Monday (June 11) – one day ahead of scheduled three-day discussions at the legislature parliament. Speaker Subas Nemwang has set aside the three days for discussions on the Bill for Second Amendment of Interim Constitution.

After the eight parties approved and promulgated the Interim Constitution on January 15 this year, it was followed by an intense agitation in Madhes demanding recognition of Madhesi community as well as federal restructuring of state and proportional representation based electoral system.

Subsequently, less than two months after it was promulgated, the eight parties introduced First Amendment of the constitution by including provisions like federal restructuring and adoption of mixed electoral system for Constituent Assembly (CA) elections.

And now less than five months since its promulgation, the eight parties have decided to bring about the second amendment by including a provision whereby the parliament can abolish monarchy by two-third majority, among others.

But even this second amendment is

now inadequate as is evident by the manner in which the Janajatis have launched their agitation. In their meeting with the government talks team on Monday, NFIN leaders said they wanted to ensure proportional representation based on ethnic population so that all ethnic communities will be properly represented.

The government talks team led by Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel has agreed to discuss their demands with the eight parties.

Meanwhile, the discussion on the Bill on Second Amendment of Interim Constitution is set to begin from June 12.

The bill was approved by the cabinet a few days ago. The second amendment adjusts the new date of CA elections (for November).

The bill also includes the provision that allows the parliament to depose monarchy by two-third majority if it is found to be conspiring against CA elections. Likewise, it also allows the parliament to move no trust motion and sack the Prime Minister by two-third majority.

The amendment also has a provision whereby the Prime Minister will have to fix date and time of parliamentary session if one-fourth of MPs make a written demand.

Furthermore, the amendment proposal also has a clause which states that the provision of opposition party and leader will be as stated by the law.



Nemwang: Busy in amendment

It bans suppressors of Jana Andolan II named in Rayamajhi Commission report from contesting CA polls. It also includes provisions about reviewing the report of Electoral Constituency Delineation Commission (ECDC). The bill also proposes to cancel requirement of parliamentary hearing for ambassador-nominees.

The second amendment had become urgent since the current constitution carries a clause which states that the government will hold CA elections by mid-June. Earlier, the parties had already prepared a draft for second amendment stating that the CA elections will be held on June 20. But after Election Commission's statement regarding its inability to hold the polls by that time, this draft had to be further refined. And in order to stave off the constitutional crisis, the parties have agreed to approve the bill within June 14.

Dozens of MPs belonging to UML, Maoists, People's Front, RPP and Nepal Workers and Peasants Party have registered amendment on this bill – which has been introduced as per the decision of eight party leaders. They have demanded clearer position on monarchy, allowing parliament to decide if the monarchy is conspiring against CA election whereupon they can depose it and so on.

However, since parties like NC, UML and Maoists have already issued whips to their MPs to attend discussion session and approve the second amendment bill, chances are dim that MPs' suggestions for further refinement of the bill will be entertained. ■

India caught in a ring of fire

-Dhruba Adhikary



Relecting growing anxiety in New Delhi about ongoing conflicts in the neighborhood, a leading Indian publication, India Today, led its May 28 edition with a cover report headlined "Neighbors on fire". Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal are four countries covered by the magazine.

Although they are very much part of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the publication has conspicuously left out three countries: Afghanistan, Bhutan and Maldives.

Perhaps New Delhi thinks these three can't afford to antagonize the rulers of India.

Political instability of an unprecedented kind has gripped the South Asia region, and the reasons for this range from armed insurgency to communal animosity and political obduracy thereof. Fears are being expressed that rapidly unfolding events and trends might place the basic principle of - and popular faith in - democracy at risk. Does India, the world's largest democracy, stand to gain from such a scenario? How will it be useful to India, not very far from China, to watch transparent political systems turning into opaque regimes in countries in its vicinity? Anyhow, when its immediate neighborhood is on fire, what should be India's reaction?

New Delhi, of course, could take some pleasure if it were discreetly assisting those responsible for setting the fires in the neighborhood. The other alternative, as the publication suggests, is to start worrying about the fallout for South Asia, where India is a dominant power. "India must ensure," said Aron Purie, the chief editor of India Today, "that it plays a part in making sure its neighbors are able to put out their fires."

In other words, India should help

neighbors to help themselves - confine its role to that of a facilitator. It should play the role of mother India, not that of a big brother. But it seems unlikely the Indian establishment will do this, and New Delhi is sensitive whenever issues in public debate involve the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Defense.

This is explained in a book, *Making News*, published in 2006. In a chapter contributed by Rajdeep Sardesai, a noted television journalist, there is a description of how journalists who do not want to toe the official line have to run the risk of being called anti-nationals. He tells how journalists are expected to "follow hook, line and sinker what the ministry is saying".

Unlike other issues, matters involving foreign relations are not regularly discussed in Parliament. Officials find it expedient to convince their political masters that it is beneficial to keep issues in the domain of external relations and diplomacy secret, in effect taking the agenda away from the public on whose behalf the government is expected to be working. This is what India is today, decades after renowned American scholar John Kenneth Galbraith (1908-2006) said India was a functioning anarchy. (He also served as US envoy in New Delhi under president John F Kennedy.)

India Today has culled the opinions of experts criticizing the authorities for "ad hoc-ism". One is Brahma Chellaney, a strategic analyst, who said, "It is odd that Delhi does not have a clear neighborhood policy." It means that India has conducted its relations in the neighborhood in a haphazard manner without any coordinated, clear-cut policy since it ceased be a British colony in 1947. These include the wars with Pakistan, the clash with China, support to the movement to "liberate"

Bangladesh, the annexation of Sikkim, and the landing of Indian troops in Sri Lanka to protect the Tamil population. And, in a more recent case, pitting Maoists, democratic parties and the monarchy against one other - thereby destabilizing Nepal.

Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon admitted, in front a New Delhi audience on April 10, that South Asia "remains one of the least integrated regions in the world".

Should not India, the largest country in the region - and currently the chair of the SAARC - do some introspection where its measures have failed to create a conducive atmosphere to build "interdependencies", as Menon alluded to in his speech at the Observer Research Foundation?

There is a need for dispassionate study to find out why India's relations with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal have remained less than cordial. Surely, India alone cannot be right and others all wrong.

As has been pointed out by experts and tacitly admitted by authorities - New Delhi is working without a policy on its neighborhood. It ostensibly is guided by assumptions, presumptions, perceptions and intelligence reports that are inherently flawed because of preconceived motivations. Menon, as quoted by India Today, said diplomacy "is to get other people to do what I want but get them to think that I am doing what they want".

Since Menon is the head of India's diplomatic service, it would be fair to assume that the country's envoys - be they in South Asian capitals or elsewhere - perform their roles on this basis. This

leads one to consider what Indian Ambassador Shiv Shankar Mukherjee in Kathmandu - and in the border town of Birgunj - has been doing.

In earlier times, the Maoist leadership waging a war against the Nepali government was led to believe that Delhi was acting for their benefit. Once the Maoists decided to join mainstream politics and become a part of Parliament as well as the government, Indian diplomats found it expedient to entice one or two breakaway Maoist factions and extend them support, on the basis of which they have launched a separatist movement in the southern plains called Terai. One of the leaders at the forefront of this "Madhesi" movement, Upendra Yadav, is a Maoist renegade who in 2004 was arrested on Indian territory with two of his comrades.

New Delhi quietly handed over the two to Nepali authorities but set Yadav free while he was still in Indian territory. There is a widely held perception that Yadav, who physically resembles the people of the nearby (to Nepal) Indian state of Bihar, is being used to sustain a hate campaign against Nepalis of "hills" origin.

This is presumed to be based on an Indian interpretation that most Maoists are of "hills" origin, and that by getting them evicted from the plains India can keep its porous borders safe and also prevent the Maoist movement from spreading to adjoining Indian states. Clearly, it is an attempt to create a buffer within a buffer - which is Nepal. It is becoming clear that Yadav is being groomed to take a role akin to that of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran's in Sri Lanka.

If Prabhakaran can obtain Indian support for his fight for a separate Tamil state, Yadav's expectations for similar support from New Delhi for a "Madheshland" look logical. Some analysts tend to see these initiatives as an example of the double standards that India has applied for decades, citing military repression in Kashmir, the northeast and elsewhere to quell separatist movements.

The Indian stand on the Maoists has been inconsistent. When the Indian Foreign Office was led by Jaswant Singh, New Delhi labeled the Maoists as terrorists. Later, it reversed this approach and started to assist them, despite their violent methods. More than 13,000 lives have been lost in the decade-long insurgency that began in 1996.

Yet New Delhi was instrumental in making them a party to a 12-point agreement with the Nepali Congress-led front of seven political parties. One agreement led to another, and eventually the Maoists fully joined the constitutional process, finally becoming a part of the interim government on April 1 this year.

But now India sees them as a deadly menace, a sort of Frankenstein's monster. But the stinging question is: Who supported them so that they could be

officials on numerous occasions. In response to a US Congress committee query on March 22, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice conceded that "our closest international partner in working on affairs in Nepal is India". She also described Nepal's conditions as "somewhat tenuous", at the same time praising her ambassador, James Francis Moriarty, for his performance in Nepal. Rice's remarks serve as an indicator that Moriarty and his Indian counterpart Mukherjee are working in tandem. Their frequency of visits, conducted separately, to the residence of interim Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala create enough room for conjecture that the external influence on crucial decisions he makes is pervasive. Apparently, Delhi has argued with Washington as well as with countries in

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where they are now? The Maoists have ambition, as is evident from this observation of top Maoist leader Pushpa Kamala Dahal, aka Prachanda, reproduced in the May 18 report of the International Crisis Group: "Even if we are a small country in South Asia, we think our revolution can have impact all over the world."

Prachanda stresses the "great" experiment Nepal is about to undertake, saying that the country will be a beacon of hope for the rest of the world. Communism may have died elsewhere, and the Shinning Path movement in Peru isn't there to provide them inspiration any longer, but Nepali Maoists claim that they have become a force to be reckoned with. In a broader context, India is jittery over possible Chinese inroads into Nepal through the Maoists; here the interests of New Delhi and Washington converge. That the United States and India consult on Nepal has been made public by their

the European Union that they should remain in touch with the Indians whenever the West intends to make substantive offers to Nepal. The reason: it is India that has to face the resulting consequences, pick up the pieces. Moriarty and Mukherjee could, if they wanted, have met Koirala and the chief of the Nepal Army, General Rookmangud Katawal, at the same time. Analysts say Mukherjee wants to protect himself from embarrassment because the government in India is based on a coalition to which communist parties provide important support. This leaves the task of condemning Maoist violence to Moriarty, who receives condemnation for being the meddlesome ambassador of an "imperialist power". Maoist leaders no longer publicly denounce India, which used to be seen as an "expansionist power". (In private conversations, the Maoists, like any other political leaders, resent New

Delhi's growing interference in Nepali politics.) In the words of analyst Upendra Gautam, the Americans' approach to issues is usually direct and straightforward - they say what they accept and what they reject. The Indian style is different, and it is often difficult to fathom what New Delhi means or wants. "There is a visible lack of sincerity as well," Gautam said, referring to the usual Indian hesitation in implementing various agreements on trade, transit and water resources with Nepal. Gautam also agreed with those who think that while the Indians and Americans may be working jointly to contain China, India often goes further and goads the US to do things for which it has to face public anger. One recent incident in eastern Nepal provides an example. Outside a Bhutanese-refugee camp, Moriarty faced

with China, especially after Beijing recognized Sikkim as a part of India, there is apparently no ground for New Delhi to be over-sensitive. Meanwhile, Nepal remains politically unstable as interim government leaders and feuding political parties work overtime to find a date for proposed November elections for a constitution-making assembly. There are rumors that New Delhi is contemplating sending in troops, as it did in Sri Lanka in the 1980s. Speculation also includes a possible bid to dispatch Indian soldiers under UN command. But there are hurdles. How will, for instance, the 50,000-plus Nepalis currently employed by the Indian Army react when they know that their motherland is being invaded by Indian forces? Observers mention such aspects to discount fears of direct military intervention by India,

constitution in effect suspended King Gyanendra by way of transferring his official responsibilities to the prime minister. By directing its new ambassador, Zheng Xianglin, to present his credentials to Koirala (April 19), Beijing issued a pithy message that its past linkage with the monarchy was not a permanent one, or that it would go against the wishes of the Nepali people. Zheng became the first ambassador accredited to Nepal to break the tradition of seeking an audience with the king for the said purpose. In addition, Beijing has invited Koirala to pay an official visit to China, this is likely to be next month. Meanwhile, a number of delegations, including official ones, have arrived from China in the past few months. And a senior member in the Maoist hierarchy, Barshaman Pun (aka Ananta), has been to China twice in the past six months. Media reports said in recent weeks that if approached by Nepal, China could make arrangements for a limited supply of petroleum products for Nepali consumers who have to date been fully dependent on supplies from India. Some of these developments seem to have set off jitters in New Delhi, prompting it to look for alternatives. What could these be? First, India has to develop an integrated foreign policy for the neighborhood with a specific pledge to support democratic processes in all countries. Second, it needs to stop getting involved in internal political competitions, and develop friendly and transparent relations with governments elected by the people. Third, it could lift all restrictions on trade and transit facilities and begin treating neighbors on the basis of equality and respect. By taking such measures, India would win the goodwill required to project itself as a genuine regional power. This is preferable to entertaining the idea of coups to install "friendly" regimes. (Courtesy atimes.com. *Dhruba Adhikary, who has been a Dag Hammarskjold fellow, is a Kathmandu-based journalist*)

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a stone-throwing crowd he had gone to meet to make an offer for resettlement of about 60,000 refugees. Mukherjee, on the other hand, has not encountered any hostility, although it is his country, India, which has assisted the Bhutanese royal regime in evicting the more than 100,000 Nepali-speaking Bhutanese nationals who have taken shelter in United Nations-run camps since the early 1990s. (The diplomatic corps in Kathmandu issued a statement last weekend expressing concern for the safety of diplomats accredited to Nepal.) A news report published in The Australian newspaper on April 12 said the central plank of India's impatience and concern stems from a perception that the Chinese influence on Nepal is on the rise - not only through the Maoists, who have joined the government, but also by China's reported interest to extend its Tibetan railway to Nepal. Since India enjoys a close and improved relationship

also because the mission to Sri Lanka turned out to be a fiasco (and led to the assassination of prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991). The other important deterrent is China, which obviously does not want to see undesirable activities in a country bordering Tibet. Beijing's concerns of instability in Nepal may not be found in the daily media, but it would be wrong to presume that the Chinese are indifferent toward happenings in the vicinity of Tibet. Unlike India, China does not take too much interest in who comes to power in Nepal; its policy has been to deal with whoever has been accepted by the people of Nepal. In the past, China maintained contacts with the monarchy; since April 2006 it has worked with first the caretaker and then the interim government headed by Koirala. In a concomitant gesture, China changed its ambassador after Nepal's interim

CHINESE BOOK FAIR

Knowledge From North

The recent Chinese Book Fair showed Nepalese people's growing interest in culture, development and transformation of their northern neighbor China

By KESHAB POUDEL

When Eleventh Nepal Education and Book Fair 2007 was in full swing at South of City Hall, with the collections of tens of thousands of books including more than five dozens of book publishers from Nepal and India, Chinese Book Fair at City Hall, which was relatively less publicized, made a record in terms of selling books and number of visitors.

As the response was so high, the stalls at the Chinese book fair were empty and the exhibition was closed one day before schedule because of lack of books to sell. According to organizers, more than ten thousand people visited the two day exhibition.

"We had not realized that such a large number of people would show up to read Chinese books. We just brought about 4000 books which were sold within two days of fair," said Qiao Hui Xian, vice manager of China International Book Trading Corporation. "Large number of people have shown interests on books on China. We want to share our culture and tradition with people living in Nepal."

Organized by China International Book Trading Corporation in association with Nepal World Cultural Net and sponsored by General Administration of Press and Publication of People's Republic of China, the book fair has shown growing interest in Nepal about China.

In the last one decade, the book reading habit of Nepalese have changed drastically as large number of Nepalese students are now studying in China and many others are willing to go there.

Not only the books on Tao and

Confucius, legendary Chinese thinkers, books at the stalls of Chinese Book Fair were also full of messages of Abraham Lincoln to Jefferson on democracy, freedom and rights of the people. The modernized China's book exhibition



Visitors at the fair: Lured by knowledge

showed that they are gradually moving towards more liberal society with right to dissent.

This is what one can remarkably see as distinctive feature at the recent book exhibition. Unlike in the past when the books were more related to Mao and his success story and other such propaganda materials, this time Chinese stalls were full of books on liberal values, Chinese history and values of Tao and Confucius.

The Tibetan stalls were also full of books related to Tibetan Buddhism and monasteries. There were also books about the modernization of Tibet and books on the transformation of Tibet.

In the last few decades, the economic prosperity has brought the transformation of Chinese society from more regimented to open and transparent one. It is

common to read many books denouncing Cultural Revolution by Chinese scholars. The book exhibition also showed the rich and long history of Chinese culture and language.

Almost all 4000 books were related to culture, history, literature, traditional medicine, martial arts, short stories, and children's books in Chinese, English and Tibetan languages.

Inaugurated by Minister for Information and Communication Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the book fair has shown that there is growing interest on China in Nepal. "China and Nepal have a long history of friendship with mutual respect, understanding and trust, exchanging

culture and art. But the citizens of both the countries are eager to know more about each other, and this book fair will help to know more about China, her people and their culture and tradition," said Chinese ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xianglin.

Although China is known for Mao and some Nepalese Maoist leaders are boasting about the ideology of Mao, the Chinese stalls, interestingly, had only one book on Mao and that was also not related with his ideology - but a book titled 'Mao Good not a God.'

From books with critical commentary to condemnation of culture revolution, one can see gradual opening of Chinese society and its economic transformation has made great contribution to it. ■

ART

Vision And Art

A young artist Shrestha comes up with his first solo exhibition showcasing his vision

By A CORRESPONDENT

A young artist Kailash K. Shrestha has announced his entry into the field with aptly titled "A Shift of Vision" solo painting exhibition.

The exhibition showcases his depiction of his feelings and his reaction to his surrounding world. As a young and budding talent, Shrestha is able to impress the audience with his deft strokes and artistic articulation.

"Over the past three years, the way I have seen how the world has changed my life. Every corner, every angle, every moment of silence has been important for me," says the artist.

He has used canvas, paper, newspaper, cartoon board, jeans and sheet to create his paintings. His exhibition is hosted at Nepal Art Council.

"These paintings are a product of a process of growth. Each brush stroke, line, texture and edge is something that arose in the midst of a dialogue among myself, my paintings and the world," said Shrestha who is happy to share his feelings through the artworks.

Amid a plethora of talented artists and painters of Nepal, Shrestha will need to prove his mettle through consistent hard works and untiring devotion to art.



"Kailash Kumar Shrestha, a young budding artist in our context, precisely seeks to assert the truth in a forceful way through his series of works. To make it a point, Kailash has chosen some very

common forms or angles from his own surroundings (eg hanging roof eaves, or windows or doors conversing towards and unknown infinity etc) as the basic elements of his work," writes artist Madan Chitrakar.

Shrestha's solo exhibition was organized with the help of Kathmandu University and Lalitkala bi-monthly.

Rajendra Kumar Khetan, executive director of Khetan Group, inaugurated the exhibition on June 6. Addressing at the inaugural ceremony, Khetan said, "Shrestha's works are reflections of the contemporary time."

Adain Warlow, founder director of Arts and Design Center of KU, also praised Shrestha for his hard work. The exhibition will continue till June 12.

CORPORATE FELICITATION

Everest Insurance Co. Ltd of Khetan Group has felicitated young mountaineer and leader of the Loktantric Everest Expedition Team, Ang Nima Sherpa.

The Everest Insurance was among the sponsors of the "Loktantric Everest Expedition Team". Rajendra Kumar Khetan acting Chairman of Everest Insurance, speaking on the occasion, said that the Nepali Corporate Sector will continue to celebrate the achievements by youths.

He said that the company will do more to help uplift youths in future.

Khetan stressed the significance of hard work by the youths in order to make the current transition successful and build a prosperous new Nepal.

At the program to felicitate Snerpa, youth leader Gagan Thapa said that although the political situation looks precarious at the moment and the country's future gloomy, the people can turn their dream into reality through unity and perseverance. "If we look back at the spontaneous peoples'



participation during the Janaandolan-II, we can observe that if the youths unite once again, we can easily turn our dreams into realities."

Thapa praised the endeavor of a private company to encourage people to turn their dreams into realities. ■

OPINION SWINGING IN FAVOR OF REPUBLIC

The republican setup has far more takers now than it had in 2004, a survey on the State of Democracy in Nepal has revealed. The survey was conducted by the Nepal chapter of South Asia Democracy Study Group in collaboration with the International IDEA, reported in The Himalayan Times daily.

The findings of the survey were made public Thursday (June 8). About 59 percent of the respondents favored a republic, while 41 percent were in favor of monarchy. Only 15 percent of the respondents favored the idea of a republic in the 2004 survey, which gauged the opinion of the same group of people.

About 58.7 percent of the respondents said the monarchy should be retained, while 41.3 percent wanted it abolished. The respondents favoring the continuation of monarchy said the king should be given space as he is the protector of the Hindu religion. Only 39.2 percent of the respondents supported the parliamentary proclamation of the secular state; 68.8 percent backed the recognition of Nepal as a Hindu state.

The survey was conducted between March and April in 162 polling stations of 23 urban and 139 rural areas spread over 41 parliamentary constituencies of 40 districts. A structured questionnaire was administered through face-to-face interviews with a nationwide sample of 4,089 respondents.

Presenting the findings of the survey, political analyst Krishna Hachhethu expressed optimism about the expansion and deepening of democracy in Nepal due to increased political awareness and participation in the political process.

Democracy is understood in popular terms as 'rule by the people and for the people' by 38 percent, while 32 percent equated it to 'equality, liberty and freedom', the survey found. Over two-thirds of the respondents said 'democracy is preferable to any other kind of government'.

A majority of respondents (92 percent) believe that 'democracy is suitable for Nepal'. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents said they do not know what a constituent assembly is. But 62 percent of them believed that CA polls can be held in a fair and free manner.

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
- Ecotourism in Nepal with theoretical concepts and principles Damodar Prasad Bhatt\2006.....Rs.675.00
- Development planning in the Era of Globalization. Govind Nepal\2006..... Rs. 110.00
- Human Rights yearbook 2007 Kundan Aryal\2007.....Rs.500.00
- Insurgency Affected People of Nepal Rehabilitation. Ujjwal Upadhyay\2006.....Rs.100.00
- Mass Media in Post -1990 Nepal Pratyous ontal\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 \Warburation \ Hatley \2007..... Rs. 250.00

SARANGI SANGEET

Commonality And Diversity

Sarangi performers from Nepal and India show how commonalities bind them together

By A CORRESPONDENT

Divided by the political boundaries, there are many commonalities in culture, music and other social aspects between Nepal and India. Organized by Embassy of India and B.P. Koirala India-Nepal Foundation, the performers of special Sarangi concert showed the harmony between the two countries in music.

Performed by Hari Sharan Nepali and Shyam Sharan Nepali from Nepal and India's renowned Sarangi performer Ghulam Waris, the two hour show performed in Hotel Yak and Yeti was extraordinary.

Waris has long relations with Sarangi as he is the 7th generation scion of Sainia Gharana of Rampur India which traces the tradition of its music back to Mian Tansen, the legendary vocalist in the court of Mughal Emperor Akbar in the 16th century. Apart from rendering innumerable solo performance at a young age, Ghulam Waris also performs in India and abroad.

Veteran Nepali Sarangi player, Hari Sharan Nepali has spent almost all his life learning and playing Sarangi, the only string instrument of Nepal, creating music, producing new varieties of the instrument and carrying out research. Thanks to his contribution, Sarangi is in forefront of Nepali music.

In contemporary modern music, Shyam Sharan Nepali has established Sarangi as an important component of Nepali music. When he performed at the show, he proved that Nepali Sarangi has capability to lure audiences. The sound of Sarangi is very compatible with other modern musical instruments also.

Along with performing at Hotel Yak and Yeti, they also performed concert in Bandipur Bazaar, Pokhara and Phaktapur. At a time when modern musical instruments are gradually disappearing, this kind of show helps to revive the traditional music of Nepal and India.

The performance displayed at the exhibition showed that Sarangi has a unique quality to lure minds and hearts of music lovers. Although Sarangi is one of the oldest musical instruments of Nepal constantly touching the heart of

Shanker Mukherjee, Nepalese team led by Shyam Sharan Nepali performed some interesting Nepalese folk tunes Sarangi. Hari Shanker Nepali started the performance depicting the power of Nepali Sarangi.

High class and professionals, India's team led by Ghulam Waris captivated the crowd sending them into a lull when he played with the strings of Sarangi. His colleagues backed him demonstrating the perfect Tabala play.

Sarangi is famous as a string instrument whose sound resembles human voice most closely. It is a traditional musical instrument common to both Nepal and India and has grown in each of the countries b independently and through constant interactions. Having roots in folk tradition, Sarangi has been featuring in music and dance performance in an accompanying role since centuries.



Music Maestros: Art of Enthralling *Gorkhapatra*

rural folks, it is now coming to compete with commercialized market.

The musicians showed that there are no boundaries between them and they shared almost everything. In the last few years, B.P. Koirala India-Nepal Foundation has made very important contributions by inviting musicians from both the countries to remind cultural similarities between the two countries.

At the recital program inaugurated by Indian Ambassador to Nepal Shiv

“This is my first performance in Nepal. I was really impressed by the response given by the crowd in different parts of Nepal. I found that Sarangi's music penetrated the heart and mind of people,” said Waris.

Political relations between the two countries have seen many ups and downs but the commonalities of culture are always major assets to bring people of Nepal and India together. One cannot ignore these commonalities of culture.

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