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COVER STORY: Clouds Of Uncertainty Whether the Maoists' demand for PR election system is accepted or rejected, the election might be postponed yet again

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POWER: Religious Role In A Secular State
PM Koirala shatters the myth of secularism by taking up the religious role of the monarch

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INTERVIEW: Dr. Anne-Marie Goetz
Senior official of UNIFEM, Dr. Goetz talks about the significance of implementing SCR 1325 in Nepal

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SPOTLIGHT

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

Vol. 27, No 8, October 05, 2007
Asoj 18, 2064

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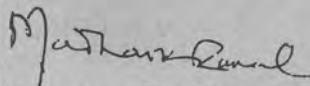
Cover Design : Digi-Tech Scanning & Pre-Press Pvt. Ltd.
P.O. Box : 1655, Jwagal, Kupondole,
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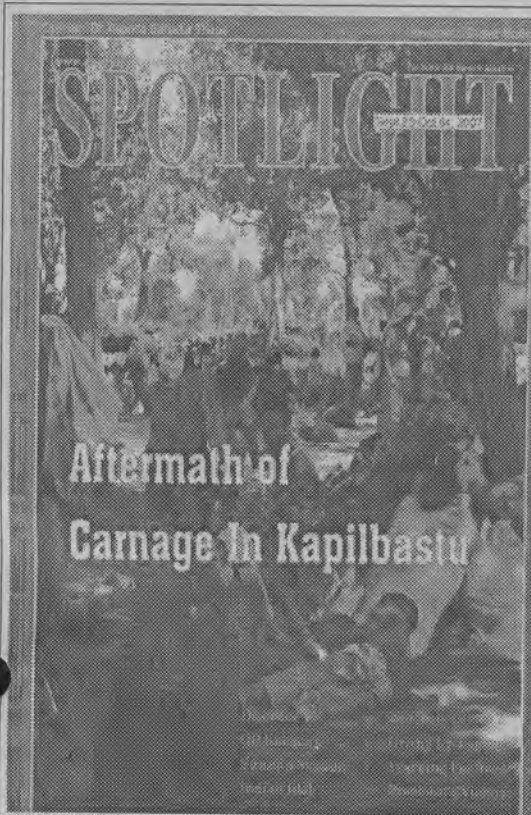
Distribution : R.B. News Paper Traders
New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Ph : 4232784, 2020247, 4244679
E-mail : rbnewspaper@hotmail.com

Printers : Printers World
Maitidevi, Kathmandu
Ph : 4423904, 4426520
E-mail : printerworld@wlink.com.np

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

After all, it is being clear now that there can be no elections to the Constituent Assembly on the scheduled date of 22 November of 2007. Leaders of almost all the leading political parties in the government, speaking privately on condition of anonymity, are firmly convinced that under the prevailing situation, elections could be a dream only. But they keep on shouting at the top of their voices that elections must not be postponed. This hypocritical behavior is only to avoid the calumny of becoming the spoiler of the elections. The Maoists, at least, are behaving honestly that unless their demands are met, they won't permit the elections to be held. *Dashain* and *Tihar* are knocking at the door, security situation in the country is totally non-existent, there is absolutely no law and order in the whole country. The Young Communist League are taking any person or organization hostage at their sweet will and the government is looking helplessly and the law enforcing agencies are being turned into a sham. The government has even failed to provide security to the leading media publications. How is one to be convinced that the government will be able to hold a free and fair elections in these circumstances? Moreover, in a few days the interim parliament is about to meet in a special session and how long it might continue is uncertain. If the interim constitution is amended by its special session, the elections shall have to be postponed. In this most volatile political situation, the politicians are not being honest with the people and taking them for a ride. What is most regrettable is that even the civil society and the intellectual community are not behaving honestly. All patriotic Nepalis would, without any doubt, want elections to the Constituent Assembly to be held at the earliest opportunity. And, if it is to be free and fair in real sense, the atmosphere must be favorable. The concern of the diplomats of leading nations accredited to Nepal for elections to be held at the stipulated date is quite understandable. But, whether elections are, at all, practical under the prevailing situation is altogether a different proposition. As such, the real issue behind the diplomatic concern is, how sincere are these diplomats? Would Nepal be in this unenviable situation if all these diplomats had used their good offices to stop the ten year long Maoist insurgency in the initial stage? As such, it is for the people of Nepal to decide what is to be done at this juncture. And we have, unequivocally suggested, time and again, that Nepali security forces have to act if the country's sovereignty is to be preserved intact. Indeed, the security forces must work under the directions of the government in power. But, if the government in power is impotent and cannot command the confidence of the people and is always subservient to alien powers, only aggravating the volatile situation and pushing the poor people to ever increasing miseries, it becomes the bounden duty of the security forces to bypass the government and come forward to defend the fundamental rights and interest of the common man. The country cannot be sacrificed to pamper the anti national politicians. Will our security forces rise up to the occasion before it is too late? And will our international friends too, try to help the poor Nepali people in choosing honest and patriotic leaders who will be able to defend the integrity of the country and work for the speedy economic development of their poor people.


Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Unfortunate Event

Your cover story Aftermath of Carnage in Kapilbastu (September 28-October 04, 2007) is very interesting and timely. It is very unfortunate to know that even after a week of such a bloody carnage the government has not shown any concern. At a time when the country men are living in distress and terror, political leaders seem to be busy to protect their own interests.

*Sonam Lama,
Dubai via E-mail*

Efforts Towards Destabilization

Efforts have been made to destabilize Nepal's terai region bordering India in the last few months. Kapilbastu is not the first case as more than two dozens Maoists cadres were brutally massacred in Gaur, district headquarters of Rautahat district. Like in Gaur, eyewitnesses clearly saw large number of people crossing the border from India to fuel communal violence. Guarded by India's strong paramilitary forces Special Security Bureau on the one side and Nepal's Armed Police from other, Nepal-India border is getting violent day by day. Nobody understands what Nepali Armed Police do when so many criminals openly enter from India killing and destroying Nepalese property. What about border security coordination committee which can ask help from Indian border police? The time has

come for Nepalese side to discuss this matter with India.

*Santosh Rimal
Montréal Canada, via-email*

No Order

It is reported that Home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula did not give order to local administration and police when the chief district officer sought the permission to tackle the violence in Kapilbastu. Instead, home ministry took actions against chief district officer and local police chief. If Home Minister is responsible for the incident, he should be punished in accordance with the law.

*Dinesh Gurung
Baneshwore*

Strong Comments

I am delighted to read very strong comments made by chief editor and publisher Madhav Kumar Rimal in his editor's note. I agree with you that this government does not have any legitimacy to rule. This is a government led by some illegal persons who neither have any

mandate of the people nor other legitimacy. It is very surprising to know why international community does not ask this question. I always find your editor's note eye opener. Country needs persons like you who have strong sense of patriotism.

Rabin Limbu,

Liverpool, United Kingdom via-email

Adoption Row

Your cover story on Adoption Row was timely. You exposed the government for ignoring human sentiment and emotional issues between mother and child. This is a crime against humanity. In a country where thousands of orphan children are compelled to live in streets, what is wrong to give some children for adoption in the western countries where human rights and other laws are stronger than in Nepal? Of course, some child rights NGOs may enjoy raising number of children in the streets because it will help them to raise funds. When more than 400 parents have been waiting to get clearance for their adopted children to integrate with them for such a long time, nobody is there to plead their emotional issue. It is shameful.

*Shila Shakya
Kuleshwor*

Infrastructure Debate

The article written by lawyer Sudheer Shrestha on laws relating to participation in infrastructure projects in Nepal was very interesting. At a time when the country has been passing through very critical time, people like Sudhir Shrestha show the way of hope and optimism. I agree with him that despite grim, divisive and conflicts prone political scenario, it was an encouraging sign of efforts by some renowned persons from private sector to float infrastructure development bank plan. Nepal needs more such efforts.

*Janak Subedi
Jawalakhel*

Police Make Public Four Arrested Over Kathmandu Blasts

Police made public, Sunday (September 30), four of the accused in the multiple blasts that hit Kathmandu city on September 2. Those made public by the police include Ram Lakhan Thakur from Bara district and three others – Jagat Narayan Thakur, Upendra Shah and Sanjiv Shah from Rautahat district. Upendra Shah used to work as a police constable in Kathmandu. According to Additional Inspector General of Police Keshab Prasad Baral, they were involved in providing support to the bombers. The police also said that nine others including the mastermind Kaushal Sahani alias Mr. John (who claims to lead an outfit called Terai Army), Ajaya Sahani, Babban Singh, Ramakanta Thakur, Raj Narayan Thakur, Jagat Shah, Rampriya Sahani, Dhuran Thakur and Parindar Baidha of Rautahat are at large. "The arrested men identify themselves as members of Terai Army," said Baral. He said the group outlined the plan in Rautahat and arrived in the capital on September 29. "The group had originally planned to carry out blasts at Singhdurbar, Gongabu bus park, and Nepal Bangladesh Bank. It later changed its plans due to the security that was in place at these places," said Baral. On September 2, three bombs had exploded, one each in Balaju, Tripureshwore and Sundhara killing three persons and injuring around two dozen others.

Leading dailies report

King Visits Kumari As A Commoner

Although Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala visited Kumari on the occasion of the last day of Indraajatra festival, King Gyanendra, too, visited Basantapur to seek blessings and receive tika from the Living Goddess on September 30. PM Koirala went there in his capacity as acting Head of State. The King, however, went there as a commoner for the first time in over two and half century. The King went to Basantapur at around 9:30 pm on Sunday night. There were some people who chanted pro-King slogans in the area.

Compiled from reports

Mahato Joins Anti-Poll Bandwagon

A day after Election Commission (EC) recognized the Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) led by Anandidevi Singh as legitimate on September 28, the dissident faction led by Rajendra Mahato has threatened to disrupt the Constituent Assembly election in Madhes. Mahato, who resigned from his position of Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies, has announced agitation program aimed at foiling poll schedule. Mahato and his party's two dozen activists were briefly arrested and then subsequently released on Saturday after they launched protest programs and burned effigies of election commissioners. The Mahato-led faction also refused to register as a separate party as requested by EC. *Leading dailies report*

Maoists Register Motion Demanding Special Session

The Maoists and two other left parties have jointly filed a petition demanding the special session of the parliament. They registered the application at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers on Friday (September 28) afternoon. Apart from 83 Maoist MPs, two MPs each of CPN (Ekikrit) and CPN (United Leftist Front) also have signed the petition. Maoists have been saying that they want the special session summoned to declare republic before the constituent assembly elections are held on November 22. As per the latest understating among parties, they have agreed to pass a commitment proposal on republic through the parliament. *Compiled from reports.*

Govt Speeds Up Labor Attaché Deployments

To address the mounting problems related to Nepal's overseas laborers, the government has speeded up the process of deputing labor attachés in the countries where a significant number of Nepali laborers are working, State Minister for Labor Ramesh Lekhak said on Saturday. He said that the ministry on Friday had decided to forward a proposal to the Ministry of Finance

asking for the necessary budget. The existing Labor Act requires the government to deploy labor attachés in countries absorbing more than 5000 Nepali workers. But so far, it has not done so for any of these countries. There are almost a dozen countries which have over 5,000 Nepali workers. In the absence of attachés, the concerned embassies are looking after the labor issues. "Labor attachés will be deputed on a need and priority basis in these countries," Lekhak said. He added that the final decision will be taken in co-ordination with the finance and foreign ministries. In yet another development, Nepal is likely to sign a memorandum of understating (MoU) with Malaysia soon. "Preparation for the signing with the South-east Asian country is in its final stages," he said on Saturday at an interaction program on Foreign Employment and the Media. Observing that the competition among unskilled laborers from different countries is intensifying, he underlined the need to produce semi-skilled and skilled laborers to meet the demand of the international labor markets. "It is an irony that we are still exporting unskilled laborer who are now facing a cut-throat competition. This has resulted in their wages declining," he said. Presenting a paper, Dr Bishwambher Pyakuryal said about 26 percent of the growth in convertible currency is from remittance, indicating its rising importance in the country's economy. Kiran Nepal, president of Society of Economic Journalists of Nepal (SEJON) said that foreign recruiting agents must maintain transparency and improve their behavior to minimize negative news in media as well as establish the profession as a dignified one. LP Sanwa Limbu, president of Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agents (NAFEA), expressed commitment to instill corporate culture and professionalism in the sector. Saru Joshi, regional manager of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) urged the government to make a legal framework to facilitate women talking up overseas jobs. *The Kathmandu Post daily reports*

SC Says Rayamajhi Commission-Accused Can Contest Polls

Nullifying a provision in the Constituent Assembly Member Election Act that bars those named as accused of suppression during People's Movement II by Rayamajhi Commission report from contesting CA elections, the Supreme Court (SC), on September 27, has said that the provision is against interim constitution. The five member bench decided in favor of petitioners on the basis of majority. Three judges Balram KC, Tapa Bahadur Magar and Kalyan Shrestha upheld the right of individuals to contest election whereas two judges Anup Raj Sharma and Damodar Sharma said that the decision by the parliament should not be overruled. The Rayamajhi Commission report had named 202 persons as accused of suppression of the uprising. Following the SC decision, former Home Minister during royal regime Kamal Thapa expressed happiness. He said that the decision would allow them to exercise their fundamental rights. *Leading dailies report*

Continuation Of Attacks Can Spoil Political Relation: Nepal

The UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal has said that the continuation of physical attack against his party's cadres by the Maoists will spoil the political relation between the two parties. After visiting the UML workers injured after they were attacked by Maoists in Dhading in the Teaching Hospital, Thursday (September 27), Nepal told reporters that he expected the Maoist leaders to come clean about their policy. "Either they should come clean or we would deduce that the workers have gone beyond their control," he said. On Wednesday, 30 UML cadres were injured after they were attacked by YCL cadres. *Compiled from reports*

NC Opts For Federal Republic

Ending months of speculations, Nepali Congress (NC) formally adopted the policy of federal democratic republic

by ditching its traditional policy of favoring constitutional monarchy. A day after NC and NC-Democratic united, the joint Mahasamiti meeting on Wednesday (September 26) approved the election manifesto and political resolution that have made federal democratic republic as the party's political line. According to Dr Prakash Saran Mahat, a central committee member, more than 90 percent Mahasamiti members stood in favor of the republican agenda. The Mahasamiti later reached unanimous decision following hours of debate on the draft manifesto. The election manifesto also commits to multilingual federal state, liberal economy, religious secularism and independent judiciary. It also proposes that the President as Head of State be elected by the central and provincial parliaments. *Compiled from reports*

Bhattacharya Severs Ties With Congress

Even as the unified NC unanimously adopted federal democratic republic as its official party policy, the only surviving founding leader of the party Krishna Prasad Bhattacharya has issued a letter on Wednesday (September 26) announcing that he wishes to part his ways for good. Kishunji who was given the second senior-most position in the unified Congress after party president and prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, has written a letter to party president and all the Mahasamiti members stating that they were involved in a "long but meaningless" exercise to adopt federal democratic republic line. Kishunji added that the exercise smacked of total disregard to the policy propounded by "evergreen leaders BP Koirala and Ganesh Man Singh." "Therefore, from now onwards, I will have no relation or contact with that party," Kishunji further writes. Kishunji has noted that he had attended the unification function on Tuesday by forgetting his health problems to be a part of unity celebrations. Kishunji had attended Tuesday's party function after a gap of five years. He had vowed not to take any side after Congress split into NC and NC-D five years ago. *Compiled from reports*

ANTUF To Launch Struggle

The sixth federal council meeting of All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF) affiliated with the Maoists has decided to intensify their protest after submitting 22-point charter to the government with a month-long ultimatum. The meeting has decided to begin a struggle against irregularities in the import and sales of petroleum products, government's conspiracy to sell state-owned industries and against bank frauds. The ANTUF has also decided to end all irregularities in cabin restaurants. According to a press release issued, Thursday, by the ANTUF, the federation would also take initiatives to open the industries that were closed.

Leading dailies report

Laxmi Bank Launches Email Banking Service

Laxmi Bank has launched a new automated service that allows its customers to bank through eMail. A first of its kind service in Nepal, eMail banking comes right to customer's desktop, providing them with instant updates on their financial transactions, according to a press release issued by the bank Thursday (September 27). Laxmi Bank customers who have signed up for the eMail banking services receive advice in the form of an eMail on a nominated email ID as soon as a debit or a credit transaction is made to their account, the release said. "This service allows our customers not only to get instant updates about their banking transactions but also provides alerts on loan repayments, eStatements for credit cards, exchange rates, newsletters, fixed deposit and credit card expiry details and update on the products and services of the bank," said Jiwan Limbu, Head IT, Laxmi Bank and the chief designer of eMail Banking. "Laxmi Bank eMail Banking service keeps customers informed and helps them monitor their accounts more closely. Introduction of this service reinforces the Bank's position as a leader in innovation and technology in the Nepali banking space."

Compiled from reports



Police make public four persons arrested on charges of their involvement in blasts that rocked the capital on Sept 2

MAHENDRA POLICE CLUB (MPC) lost in the finals at the AFC President's Cup in Lahore on Sunday (September 30) night. It lost 2-1 against Dordoi Dyanamo of Kyrgyzstan. The Nepali National League champions lost against the tournament favorites but not before putting up some fight. Azamat Ishenbaev and Roman Ablakimov scored for the defending champions while Jumanu Rai pulled one back one for MPC. MPC started their campaign with a goalless draw against Tatung of Chinese Taipei and went down 0-3 against Dordoi in the next league match. The Nepali team ensured their place in the semi-finals after their 6-4 win over Khemara of Cambodia. MPC ensured their place in final with a 2-1 upset win over former champions Regar TadAZ of Tajikistan 2-1. Despite the loss, MPC will get \$25,000 while the winner will walk away with \$50,000.

IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS of the current fiscal year, although the current expenditure has increased, the capital expenditure has declined. Finance Ministry's report shows that till mid-September, it has released Rs 12.93 billion for current expenditure (of which Rs 7.54 billion have been spent) while it released only Rs 1.69 billion for capital expenditure (of which only Rs 891.8 million have been spent). In this period, revenue collection reached Rs 12.41 billion, which is more by 15.4 percent compared to the same period last year.

THE TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL'S global Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2007 published on Wednesday shows that corruption in Nepal is growing over the past three years. Nepal ranks 131st in the list of least corrupt nations in the world, with a score of 2.5 on the 0-10 scale. Nepal's CPI in 2004 was 2.8. Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan have been listed as the most corrupt nations in South Asia with 2.2, 2.0 and 1.8 points respectively while Bhutan, with 5.0 points, ranks as the least corrupt country in the South Asian region. The TI report lists Denmark, Finland and New Zealand as the cleanest nations with 9.4 points each. African country Somalia tops the list of corrupt nations (1.4) while the military-ruled Asian country Myanmar ranks 168th with 1.4 score. With 3.5 points each,

neighboring China and India rank 72nd in the list of least corrupt nations while the USA stands in the 20th position with 7.2 points.

SENIOR TRADE OFFICIALS OF seven-member Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Trade and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) have come up with a draft proposal based on consensus to ink free trade area agreement, reports The Himalayan Times daily. With the package drafted comprising common issues of BIMSTEC member countries, intra regional free trade agreement (FTA) on trade in goods has come closer to a conclusion, after the governments of the member states endorse it. "Earlier each member country used to take their issues for the meeting, but this time the meeting of trade negotiation committee (TNC) drafted a package putting together common issues of all and forwarded back to the governments of the respective countries for approval," said Rabi Bhattarai, under secretary at the ministry of industry, commerce and supplies (MoICS), who led the Nepali delegation in the 15th TNC meeting held in Dhaka from September 24 to 26. The package proposes to downsize the negative list and value addition issue, which have been two most contested issues and major reason behind delay in reaching a consensus to finalize the FTA. In rules of origin issue, the package has proposed 30 percent value additional requirement for products by the least developed countries (LDCs) and 35 percent for developing members. "The member countries have almost finalized the issue of rules of origin," Bhattarai said. Although the issue of negative list is still dubious, the meeting agreed to downsize the list to 15 percent from 25 to 30 percent, he said, adding that the consensus was reached as a middle path to Thailand's proposal of reducing it to 10 percent and other members' proposal to maintain it at 20. Nepal had proposed 30 percent of the total 5,226 tariff lines in the negative list. If the governments of member states approve the package, the BIMSTEC FTA on goods would now have only 15 percent of the total 5,226 tariff lines in the negative list. This means, free trade rules will not be applicable to 784 tariff lines that the members would enlist in the negative list. In the transit related issues, Thailand agreed to provide transit for member countries under its domestic law, which LDC members including Nepal and others objected and asked to provide transit facility under regional FTA pact, said Bhattarai. The meeting also finalized the modalities for tariff cut, under which LDCs would be required to reduce their tariff in a span of 10 years and the developing countries would need to do that within three years. "This meeting has made significant breakthrough for drafting the accord for trade in goods. We are hopeful that the next meeting on November 12-16, in India will push it more closer," Bhattarai said. Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar are members of BIMSTEC. ■

"I have convinced many people. I will also convince Kishunji myself."

Prime Minister and president of Nepali Congress, Girija Prasad Koirala, promising party workers that he will convince Krishna Prasad Bhattarai to return back to the party fold.

"Congress has set on a long but meaningless exercise to adopt federal democratic republic line."

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, the only surviving founding leader of Nepali Congress, in a letter stating his intention to sever all ties with Congress since its current policy totally disregarded the policy propounded by evergreen leaders BP Koirala and Ganesh Man Singh.

"We can no longer change the election schedule any further."

Bhoj Raj Pokharel, chief election commissioner, at a press meet held after the EC put off nomination filing date by five days under government request.

"The Prime Minister Koirala is hobnobbing with royalist elements to corner us. The parties even proposed to put off the election till mid-April next year at the meetings."

Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Maoist spokesperson, addressing a mass gathering in Kathmandu.

"The deadlock continues as Maoists



and Nepali Congress have failed to demonstrate flexibility."

Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of UML.

"The group had originally planned to carry out blasts at Singhdurbar, Gongabu bus park, and Nepal Bangladesh Bank. It later changed its plans due to the security that was in place at these places."

Keshav Prasad Baral, Additional Inspector General of Police, at a press meet held to make public the four persons arrested on charge of involvement in September 2 bomb blasts.

"The Maoist fraternal organization

has started the work to collapse the publications economically and attack the press freedom in the name of fulfilling its demands."

Kailash Sirohiya, Managing Director of Kantipur Publications, in a press statement.

"We haven't seen such a serious attack on press freedom even during the direct censorship of media after the king's coup in February 2005."

The Editor's Alliance, in a statement issued to deplore pro-Maoist workers' obstruction in Kantipur Publication. The Alliance includes senior editors of newspapers and television media.

TRANSITION

RESIGNED: Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, the only surviving founding member of Nepali Congress (NC), from all positions in the party.

MADE PUBLIC: Police have made public four persons it arrested on charges of involvement in September 2 multiple blasts in the city, which killed three. Those made public by the police include Ram Laxhan Thakur from Bara district and three others - Jagat Narayan Thakur, Upendra Shah and Sanjiv Shah from Rautahat district.

REGISTERED: A motion demanding special session of the interim parliament, by the MPs of the Maoists and two other left parties - CPN (Ekikrit) and CPN (United Leftist Front) - at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers on September 28.

WON: Mahendra Police Club, the first runner up title at the AFC President's Cup in Lahore on September 30 after losing 2-1 against Dordoi Dyanamo of Kyrgyzstan in the final.

RANKED: Nepal ranks 131st in the list of least corrupt nations in the world, with

a score of 2.5 on the 0-10 scale. The list was published by Transparency International. The TI report lists Denmark, Finland and New Zealand as the cleanest nations with 9.4 points each. African country Somalia tops the list of corrupt nations at 1.4 points.

PUT OFF: The date for filing of closed-list of candidates for proportional representation based election, by five days (till October 5), by the Election Commission. The date for filing candidacy for direct election has been rescheduled for October 8.

DEVASTATION OF WATER RESOURCES: Upper Karnali

By DR. AB THAPA

There are only three mega hydropower projects in our country which might have installed capacity over 4000 MW. They are the Karnali Chisapani Storage Project, Kosi High Dam Project and the Upper Karnali Storage Dam project. Installed capacity of all other hydropower projects is far below 4000 MW range. Out of these three projects, the high head Upper Karnali Storage Project is the most attractive for the generation of cheap electricity. Unfortunately, our country might soon be dispossessed of this highly valuable project.

It now appears according to the news published in local newspapers that our Government is in the process of embarking on a plan in defiance of the opinion expressed in the World Bank financed study report to implement the 300 MW Upper Karnali Mini Project completely ruining the prospect to develop the 4,180 MW Upper Karnali Storage Project which undoubtedly is the best among all large hydropower projects identified so far in Nepal. The World Bank financed study report has clearly explained that the 4,180 MW Upper Karnali storage project and the 300 MW Upper Karnali mini project are mutually exclusive. It would be a terrible blow to our country's aspiration to use our hydropower resource for the uplift of our country's economy. Water Resources Ministry and the National Planning Commission should be sincerely concerned about it.

An Empty Rhetoric

Our grandiose national plans to develop our water resources to uplift the living condition of common Nepali would be nothing more than an empty rhetoric if our policy making institutions failed to intervene in time to save the 4180 MW Upper Karnali Storage Project which might be the best in the world for the generation of cheap peaking energy on a large scale. We should not hesitate to invite competent foreign experts for advice if we find ourselves not capable to make correct judgment on this very important matter.

Why Upper Karnali Superior To Karnali Chisapani?

The Upper Karnali Storage project and the Karnali Chisapani Storage project would be having waterways

quite comparable in length (about 2 km), but the Upper Karnali project would be operating at a head almost two times greater than that of the project at Chisapani. It makes the Upper Karnali project far more attractive for the export of cheap peaking power to India than the Karnali Chisapani project. Reasons for it are explained below.

Of all the site characteristics, head is the most important. Design guidelines, 1989 approved by the American Society of Civil Engineers (a document used throughout the world for the design of hydropower) has given some simple reasoning that would help to explain why the Upper Karnali project operating at a head about two times greater by comparison with the Chisapani hydropower could be built at far less per unit installed capacity cost. "Very simply if one doubles the head the quantity of water needed to produce a certain amount of energy is halved. Thus, for like site energy development the conduit area and reservoir volume are halved and further large cost reductions occur for powerhouse and machinery costs. This fundamental consideration is at the root of the large cost reductions that occur at higher heads." Needless to mention that the lower investment cost means the generation cost of the electricity would also be less.

Less Investment

By comparison with the mammoth 10,800 MW Karnali Chisapani Project the firm head of the Upper Karnali Project would be almost two times greater. It can be derived based on Stage A Optimization Study Data of the World Bank financed Karnali Project Study report that per KW installed capacity construction cost of the Upper Karnali Storage Project could be only about 70% of such cost of the project at Chisapani.

The Karnali River

The Karnali river makes a big loop in its lower reach near a place called Asare. From here the river flows in the south-east direction for about 25 kilometers, after that the river makes a complete reversal in its direction. The river comes back to a

point just two kilometers away from its earlier position near Asare. There is a drop of about 150 meters in Karnali river bed elevations between these two positions merely two kilometers away from one another. The project to utilize this bend for power generation was originally known as the Karnali Bend Project. Later on the name was changed to Upper Karnali Project.

Study Of The Upper Karnali Project

The Karnali basin is the first to arouse keen interest in Nepal's vast hydropower development study. There are several attractive sites for the generation of cheap hydroelectric energy in this basin. In early 1960s an agreement was signed between HMG of Nepal and the UNDP for providing assistance to conduct a survey of the Karnali river and its main tributaries culminating in a pre-investment report indicating hydroelectric potential of the river as well as the best sites for hydropower development. The final feasibility report and general basin development report were submitted in February, 1966.

In 1980s further studies of the two projects were carried out under the aegis of the World Bank. They are the feasibility study of the Karnali Dam Project (Chisapani) and the pre-feasibility study of the Upper Karnali Hydroelectric Project (Karnali Bend Site). Unfortunately, the scope of the Upper Karnali Project study was deliberately made very narrow. The size of the project was scaled down to be suitable to meet the Nepal's internal power requirement completely disregarding its vast potential to generate exceptionally cheap peaking energy for export to India. Thus there are at present two Upper Karnali projects. They are the 300 MW Upper Karnali Project and the 4180 MW Upper Karnali Storage Project. These two projects are mutually exclusive. In other words, it would not be possible later on to build the 4180 MW mega Upper Karnali Project without sacrificing the small 300 MW Upper Karnali Project. Though the Upper Karnali storage project study was not laid in the terms of reference, the pre-feasibility study report has clearly warned the government about the serious consequences if the 300 MW Upper Karnali project is implemented. The relevant excerpt from the WORLD BANK supported Upper Karnali project study report is presented hereinafter.

The 4180 MW and 300 MW Upper Karnali projects are Mutually Exclusive

The World Bank supported pre-feasibility study has disapproved of the small 300 MW Upper Karnali project. The relevant excerpt from the World Bank

supported study report is presented below.

"Even when assuming that the KR 1A run-of-river project (small 300 MW Upper Karnali project) is a sunk cost, it will be seen that a single large power plant (4180 MW) associated with the major storage project is less costly than the combined cost of smaller plant at the same location (3532 MW) and a second power plant at the foot of the storage dam (408 MW) discharging directly into the KR 1A run-of-river project head pond. Based on this assessment, it appears that the later development of the major hydro storage project at Site KR 1 (mega Upper Karnali Project)

At present India is experiencing an acute shortage of peaking energy. At the beginning of the Eight Plan, the total peaking shortage was 20% whereas the energy shortage was only 9% of the total power generation. The thermal and nuclear power stations are suitable to supply electricity to meet the base load demand of the system. It is not economic to use them to supply peaking energy. Gas turbines can be used to meet the peak load demand because of low specific investment costs and quick start up. However, the efficiency is limited due to the high exhaust gas temperature of the turbine.

would cause the KR 1A run-of-river project to be effectively discontinued. There may be limited opportunity for secondary energy generation during the periods of spillage".

Demand for Peaking Power in India

At present India is experiencing an acute shortage of peaking energy. At the beginning of the Eight Plan, the total peaking shortage was 20% whereas the energy shortage was only 9% of the total power generation. The thermal and nuclear power stations are suitable to supply electricity to meet the base load demand of the system. It is not economic to use them to supply peaking energy. Gas turbines can be used to meet the peak load demand because of low specific investment costs and quick start up. However, the efficiency is limited due to the high exhaust gas temperature of the turbine.

India is making every effort to improve the hydrothermal mix for ensuring better system operating condition. However, the share of hydropower in the overall power generating capacity has steadily declined since the last few decades. The share of the hydropower in the overall power generating capacity was 50.6% in 1963. But few years before it has come down to only 25.66%.

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

ARROGANCE OF POWER

A Religious Role In a Secular State!

By taking up the role of the King in traditional programs of religious importance, PM Girija Prasad Koirala shatters the myth of secularism. However, there is no single voice against him from the alliance of the communists or members of civil society

By KESHAB POUDEL

Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, head of the government of newly declared secular state, graced Indrajatra, Hindu festival, and worshipped Kumari, a living Hindu goddess on Monday evening. Though prime minister's role was basically against the spirit of secularism, nobody opposed his move. Even Shakya priest treated Koirala, a Hindu Brahmin, as equal to Thakuri Kings.

Although Nepal has been passing through debates on the issues of religion, culture and ethnicity in surface, opposite is happening in practice. From so called secular members of revolutionary communist parties, civil society, ethnic activists to religious groups, all have endorsed prime minister Koirala's presence at religious festivals of particular faith.

Where have these opinion leaders of religious, fundamentalists, revolutionaries and sectarians gone? Why aren't they aghast when Koirala is favoring a particular religion?

Under the pressure of Popular Uprising II, prime minister Koirala was appointed as a prime minister with the mandate to hold the elections for Constituent Assembly. However, Koirala declared himself as an interim head of the state through various announcements even placing himself in a position to play the role of the King. Unlike in the past, this time King worshipped Kumari as a commoner and ailing prime minister Koirala as the acting head of the state.

Though the Interim Constitution has a clear provision that the fate of monarchy will be decided by simple majority of the first meeting of Constituent Assembly, prime minister Koirala has already decided the fate of monarchy by presenting himself as a substitute of the King not only in political

sense but also religious and cultural sense.

Tendency of Power

Power has a natural tendency of arrogance and, thereafter, misuse. Previously, it was with King Gyanendra during his direct rule when he tried to project himself as a leader commanding popular support. From addressing the mass meeting to mingling with the people like a political leader, King Gyanendra tried to project himself as a replacement for popularly elected leaders. King Gyanendra visited religious festivals under a tight security but mingled with the people in political programs.

Although the King visited Kumari temple as a commoner this year, prime minister Koirala sought explanation from King's secretary Pashupati Bhakta Maharjan. "King

violated norms. I cannot tolerate these kinds of things. I will show the King what I can do to him," Koirala was quoted as telling the dissatisfied ex-presidents of Nepali Congress District Committees. "Prime minister Koirala has expressed his concern to the King through his secretary," said Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel.

Now prime minister Koirala - who has enormous power with no accountability to the people - is trying to exercise even religious and traditional power of monarch by attending the religious festivals.

"Situations are created by which neither he has to face general elections nor a house of elected representatives elected by the people and what he has

been exercising is enormous power with no accountability," said a political analyst.

After dissolution of parliament and dismissal of elected prime minister, similar situation was created in favor of King Gyanendra who exercised all the power without accountable parliament.

Whether it was the King then or the prime minister now, both of them do not enjoy popular support when they perform other's role. "When the King was reaping the power of elected parliament, he was unpopular. Now when prime minister is reaping the role of traditional monarch, he, too, is making himself unpopular," said the analyst.

This time people chanted slogans against prime minister Koirala when he arrived at the Kumari Temple in Basanthapur.

Kumari Festival



King Gyanendra in Basanthapur: In a different context Annapurna Post

Worshipped and revered as a Hindu goddess, the Kumari is selected from the Newari caste of Shakya goldsmiths, who are Buddhists. People of valley celebrate the festival of Indra, the lord of heaven and worship Kumari, a Living Goddess on the same day.

Traditionally, the King visits to legitimize his rule accepting Tika from Kumari. "During the Indra Jatra, which coincides with the Kumari Jatra in early September, the King comes to receive tikka from the Kumari and obtain from

her the right to rule for another year. In exchange, he presents her with a golden coin and touches his forehead to her feet," writes Desmond Doig, in his book *In the Kingdom of God*. "The King himself considered a reincarnation of Vishnu appears in the festival."

However, this year people found new incarnation of Brahmin prime minister performing the ritual practiced by Thakuri King. Unlike the monarch, prime minister needs to renew his legitimacy thorough popular votes under periodical elections and it is not the blessing of god but the vote of the people which legitimizes prime minister.

"Prime minister Koirala is seriously violating age old religious norms and cultural values of the country. Queen of England is also the head of church but chancellor of Germany and France cannot be the same. If United Kingdom goes to republic, it is unthinkable to see British prime minister becoming the head of the Church," said the political analyst. "If such trend set by Koirala continues, he may usurp the religious and cultural position exercised by the King. There must be self restraint to a person who exercises unlimited and unchecked power of the state."

Because of his age, prime minister Koirala seems to be in too much haste to fulfill his ambition to exercise the same power as the King. In fact, the King had not only the political authority but by the age old tradition, the cultural and religious authority. As a popularly elected person, prime minister has political authority but he does not have cultural and religious authority.

"It is a bad precedent on the part of prime minister Koirala, who always claims to be a popularly elected secular leader, to visit such a highly respected religious festival. In this sense prime minister violated cultural and religious belief," said the analyst.

This is not the first religious festival attended by prime minister Koirala. In the last one year, he has already graced Bhotajatara of Rato Machhindranath and visited Krishna Temple during Krishna Janmashtami. If he continues like this, he will have to grace Tika during Dashain and perform other religious rituals specifically assigned to Hindu monarch.

Positive Side

Although the move of prime minister Koirala violated the age old religious norms, this also showed that Nepalese society still holds centuries-old cultural and religious binding which brings all the



PM Koirala in Kumarighar: Religious role *Nepal Samacharpatra*

religious, ethnic and other groups together.

Whatever appears in the surface in terms of conflict, the reality is different. In depth, the people are similar having same social and cultural relations with each other. People don't have hatred against each other.

"Nepal's history is free from the stories of bickering and animosities which occupy a large portion of the religious histories of other countries. Nepalese are tolerant to other religions too. They took religion to be a matter of personal belief and not as a rigid dogma. Religious tolerance continues to be the special feature of life in Nepal even today. Not only Hindu King but a secular prime minister was allowed to perform King's role. Hindus worshiped Buddhist god and Buddhists worshipped Hindu's shrine," said renowned archeologist Saphalya Amatya in his book *Art and Culture of Nepal*.

"All old archeological and historical evidences point to the fact that both Hinduism and Buddhism have flourished side by side in Nepal. Nepal is the meeting ground of various religions and sects."

It is not only the militia, military or prospect of job that binds Nepal together but the unity and assimilation is still intact though some forces are trying to create confusion, hatred and conflict.

"Nepal is not a newly born society like several countries in the map of the world. In fact, it was founded first on cultural basis than it was founded on political basis..

The tradition-minded people took him in the same way as Shah Kings replaced the Newar Kings in the past.

Perhaps, their inner feeling was to accept Koirala as the new King of New Nepal!

"A rational man may not believe the traditional base of the King but as long as the mass of the people have faith in culture, religion and glorious tradition of society, legitimacy of the monarchy continues. This institution does not exist merely upon a piece of paper but upon the faith of the people. There is no other way to test the real opinion of the people except a method of direct democracy contrary to overthrow of power by revolution. Referendum is the only way to express the will of the people which is known as direct democracy," said the analyst.

Nepal has a long history of assimilation and coexistence. Whether there was Malla King or Thakuri King, people accepted every ruler. Though they were bewildered, people have maintained the tradition. Even this time they gave same respect to prime minister Koirala, a Brahmin. But it is unjustifiable that this traditional role assigned for the King has been usurped by prime minister of a secular state. Some people even shouted slogans against prime minister saying it was a violation of religious belief and practice.

Although geographically and ethnographically Nepalese people are separated from one another, culturally they are united. This is one of the strengths of Nepal to survive as an independent and sovereign nation. They who love Nepali culture have to take this into notice. There is a hope that given a wise political leadership, Nepal can yet be an ideal society to harmoniously live with various ethnic and religious groups.

CA ELECTION

Clouds Of Uncertainty

Once again, the Nepali people could be deprived of their fundamental right to elect their representatives to govern them. Given the acute political deadlock, the Constituent Assembly (CA) election does not look likely to take place on schedule on November 22. The Maoists' demands can effectively postpone the polls date – whether they are rejected or fulfilled. Their position on fully proportional representation based election system – if it remains unchanged – will put off the polls. If their demand is rejected, the Maoists have already warned to foil the election. Besides any CA election without their participation is certainly going to be meaningless as it was meant to be a political compromise to end the decade-long conflict. And if their demand is accepted, then the Election Commission has already hinted that it may not be able to hold the polls on time since the change in the election system would necessitate change in the constitution, electoral legislations, acts, laws, rules, regulations and guidelines. Moreover, the already printed voting materials might have to be changed.

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

When the Election Commission (EC) agreed to extend the deadline for filing of closed-list of candidates for proportional representation based election by five days to October 5, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Bhojraj Pokharel categorically stated that the EC would not be able to make any further change in its poll schedule.

"This change has been done in the national interest and for the sake of political process," said Pokharel after the EC was requested by the government and the seven parties to postpone the candidate nomination date. Likewise, the EC has also postponed the date for filing nomination for candidates for direct election to October 8.

The latest postponement came in the wake of Maoist demand for adoption of fully PR based election system. The Maoist demand has put the government and EC in a quandary as they are racing

against time to meet the election date of November 22.

Another election commissioner Dr. Nilkantha Upreti also aired similar views when he said that changing the election system is not as simple and quick as changing a car.

"Any change in election system will necessitate changes from constitution to act and from rules to guidelines," Dr. Nilkantha Upreti said. He hinted that such change would need to be followed by huge exercise including printing of different ballot papers, reviewing voters' education, reviewing training content and changing materials.

After the Maoists advanced 22-point demands – with particular emphasis on two demands of declaring republic from the parliament and adopting fully PR based election system – the CA has landed into yet another uncertainty. Although political leaders are said to

have reached a compromise on the first demand by agreeing to approve a commitment resolution on republic through the parliament (for which purpose the Maoists have already petitioned demanding special session of the parliament), differences continue to persist on PR demand.

At present, the interim constitution and CA Member Election Act stipulates that the CA election will be held on the basis of mixed system. Of the total 497 members of the CA, one half (240) will be elected on the basis of PR system and other half (240) will be elected on the basis of direct election. The remaining 17 members will be nominated by the cabinet.

Maoist Mystery

Even though the Maoists were a part of the government and the political team that discussed and finalized these laws, they have made a sudden about-face.

“Our earlier agreement was for the election on June. Since the CA could not take place in June, we have revived our demands,” said Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader.

In what appears to be their unflinching attitude towards compromising on their demands, the joint central committee and central secretariat meeting of the Maoists on Sunday (September 30) decided to stick with their demand for fully PR based election system for November election. It, however, called off national strike on October 4-6 after the Election Commission postponed the nomination deadline by five days.

The Maoists leaders have threatened that they will continue with protest agitation if understanding is not reached within five days. Addressing a mass gathering in Tundikhel on September 30, party spokesperson Krishna Bahadur Mahara accused the prime minister of hobnobbing with reactionary and royalist elements. He also accused that other parties had proposed to postpone election date to mid-April next year.

The Maoist obduracy was also seen during marathon meetings among seven party leaders on Friday and Saturday. After they could not reach agreement on Maoist demand for fully proportional representation based election system, the leaders of seven parties agreed to request the EC to postpone the date for nomination of candidates.

The UML, on the other hand, is projecting the current deadlock as a result of inflexibility by Maoists and NC. Its central committee meeting concluded that the polls must be held on time and asked the Maoists and Nepali Congress to become flexible to end differences. “The Maoists’ obstinacy and the NC’s inflexible attitude is responsible for the deadlock,” said UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal.

Nepal’s accusation has come in the wake of reports that PM and president of NC Girija Prasad Koirala refused to go for fully PR system at the current point of time when the EC has already made



Election Commission: In a quandary

all preparations for the November 22 election.

Adding to the uncertainty, a faction of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) led by Rajendra Mahato has also walked away from the coalition and has vowed to derail the election in Madhes region.

A day after Election Commission (EC) recognized the Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) led by Anandidevi Singh as legitimate on September 28, the dissident faction led by Rajendra Mahato held protest rallies and burned effigies of EC. Mahato who resigned from his position of Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies, has announced agitation program aimed at foiling poll schedule.

What Happens Next?

For all practical purposes, it looks highly likely that the election will have to be postponed once again.

But this time, the postponement is likely to attract harsh reactions from international community, which has been supporting the current government to the hilt in the hope of free and fair elections.

Several hints have already been made by Indian and other diplomats that the postponement of the election will raise the credibility and legitimacy

question over the currently un-elected government led by PM Koirala.

The international donors who have pledged millions of rupees of assistance for the election will certainly feel disappointed if it does not materialize on November 22.

Worse, the impending disillusionment, disappointment and frustration that will haunt the 23 million people of Nepal if the election is postponed yet again, is going to be the biggest and most serious fall-out.

At a time when over one dozen armed outfits have emerged in Terai and when various organizations are working overtime to create friction on ethnic, religious and regional lines, the postponement of the CA election will create a situation where all hell could break loose.

In a situation like this, the hopes of Nepali people and the international community is to see the CA election take place in free and fair manner on November 22 as scheduled. Any other decision could not only put this government in jeopardy but could also push the country towards highly unstable and divisive course. ■

ATTACK ON PRESS

Sinister Moves

The Kantipur Publication becomes the latest victim of Maoists' tactics to browbeat the free press

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

In an increasingly disturbing development, the pro-Maoist workers have stepped up their action against the Kantipur Publication.

The pro-Maoist union has already obstructed the publishing of two dailies Kantipur and The Kathmandu Post. On Monday, they even threatened to shut down the Kantipur Television as well.

Addressing a meeting of the workers held in front of Kantipur Complex in Minbhawan, Shalikram Jamarkattel, the president of All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF) –the trade union wing of the Maoists – gave a stern warning against the Kantipur Publications and Kantipur TV. "You just wait for four more days. We will shut down the television also," said Jamarkattel, who also happens to be an MP at the interim parliament. "I hope our worker friends do not have to force themselves into this building," he further threatened.

The pro-Maoist workers had resorted to vandalism in the Kantipur Publications and its press in complex in Minbhawan and its press in Koteswore on Sunday (September 30) evening forcing the two popular dailies – Kantipur and The Kathmandu Post – to stay off the news stands for the second time in last one week – September 28 and October 1.

Violating the decision by the Patan Appellate Court, the activists of All Nepal Communication and Printing Publication Workers' Union, which is affiliated with the Maoists, resorted to vandalism causing considerable damage in the press, according to reports. The workers also vandalized a vehicle belonging to the managing director Kailash Sirohiya. The workers have been engaged in agitation since last one week.

The Publication management has said that the workers have gone ahead with protests and vandalism despite their willingness to sort out their grievances

through negotiation. They have said the action of the workers constitute a grave violation of press freedom.

Reports say police have arrested around half a dozen activists for their involvement in vandalism.

The Publication has said that the union move was aimed at financially



Workers at a meeting in front of Kantipur Publication: Pressure Tactics Gorkhapatra

crippling the publication and attacking the freedom of press. The Publication had said that although earlier the All Nepal Communication and Printing Publication Workers' Union, which is affiliated with the Maoists, had agreed to sign an agreement reached with the management on September 9; they suddenly backed down and announced agitation by giving an ultimatum of September 25. The workers demanded increased pay and facilities, among others.

On their part, Maoists claim that their party has 'no policy of interfering in press freedom.' "We support press freedom," said CP Gajurel aka Gaurav, a politburo member of the Maoists. Referring to the problem in Kantipur Publication, Gajurel said, "That is an internal matter between the workers and management. They should settle their problems themselves."

Meanwhile, the Editors' Alliance on Monday (October 1) denounced the continued attacks by Maoists. The group of senior editors of Nepal's national newspapers and television said the action amounted to "a serious assault on the freedom of press and the public's right to information".

"The arson attack and serious damage to the printing facility of Kantipur shows that this is a deliberate and systematic assault on press freedom carried out in the guise of a trade union," the Editors' Alliance said in a statement.

The Alliance was formed in July because of what it said was "a sinister pattern of intimidation and threats against journalists by Maoist-affiliated organizations". The publication of *The Himalayan Times* and *Annapurna Post* were obstructed for more than a week in

August by a Maoist-affiliated union which entered the news room to physically threaten journalists. Production at *Nepal Samacharpatra*, HBC FM, *Drishti Weekly* were also disturbed.

"We haven't seen such a serious attack on press freedom even during the direct censorship of media after the king's coup in February 2005," the Alliance said.

The Alliance is made up of editors of *The Kathmandu Post* (Prateek Pradhan), *Nepal Samacharpatra*, (Pushkar Lal Shrestha), *Kantipur* (Narayan Wagle), *Image Channel* (Vijay Panday), *The Himalayan Times* (Ram Pradhan), Sudheer Sharma (*Nepal*), Shree Acharya (*Annapurna Post*), Yubaraj Ghimire (*Samaya*), Shiva Gaunle (*Himal Khabarpatrika*) and Kunda Dixit (*Nepali Times*). ■

WFP/UNICEF TO HELP RIOT-VICTIMS

The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Nepal will provide urgently needed humanitarian food aid and non-food items to 5,000 people displaced by communal violence across two districts in western Nepal.

WFP has mobilized more than 70 metric tons of food aid following a request by the Government of Nepal to provide emergency humanitarian food assistance to the displaced populations gathering in Kapilbastu and Dang districts while UNICEF will provide tarpaulins, water purification equipment, cooking utensils, hygiene kits and mosquito nets.

"Working in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Nepal Red Cross Society, we are doing our best to rapidly respond to this humanitarian emergency, but the security situation remains tense. WFP food assistance should begin arriving within the next two days as long as the security situation does not worsen," said Richard Ragan, WFP Country Representative in Nepal.

A reported 31 people have been killed, dozens injured or missing and thousands displaced after the death of a prominent local figure sparked days of communal violence in the western Terai region bordering India.

"UNICEF is extremely concerned about children caught up in this new cycle of violence. All schools in the area remain closed and in some instances schools have been razed to the ground depriving children of their fundamental right to education," said Gillian Mellisop UNICEF Representative for Nepal.

"Even more worrying is that children have witnessed or been subjected to terrible acts of violence within their communities, some have been injured and others are reported missing or separated from their families. We call upon all community leaders to end the unrest so that children can begin to recover from this tragic episode," said Mellisop.

Many of the people displaced because of violence and insecurity are from very poor and marginalized communities who have few resources available to cope with

the loss of their houses and livelihoods.

"WFP has been able to mobilize only enough funds to provide emergency food aid for one month. At this point, it is uncertain what rehabilitation and reintegration support may be needed, but we remain ready to provide additional humanitarian relief if necessary," said Ragan.

In addition to non food relief items, UNICEF and partners are working to restore educational systems, providing teaching and learning materials, and psycho-social care and support for traumatized children.

Despite UN calls for the Government to provide public security and appeals for calm and tolerance across the diverse communities in the region, some of the affected communities remain volatile. The UN human rights office, OHCHR, continues investigations into the violence and monitoring work of the human rights situation. It is expected that most of the displaced populations, some of whom have fled to India, will return to their homes when the situation calms down, except those whose houses have been completely destroyed.

PRASHANT PERFORMS IN NEPAL

The winner of Indian Idol singing talent hunt show, Prashant Tamang who hails from Nepali-origin community, who arrived in the capital on Friday met with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala on Saturday (September 29) morning.

PM Koirala praised Prashant's talent and said his victory had brought Nepal and India closer. PM also gave him a black Nepali cap. After the meeting, visibly elated Prashant said it was his longtime wish to meet with Koirala. "I was nervous. I just sought blessings," he told reporters waiting outside. Prashanta was accompanied by two other Indian Idol contestants Ankita Mishra and Deepali Kishore at the meeting.

On Saturday afternoon, Prashant



Prashant Tamang: Great craze

performed in a packed live concert in St. Xavier's School ground in Jawalakhel. He was accompanied by Ankita, Deepali and Nepali pop-star Neema Rumba.

Each of them sang half a dozen songs. Prashant wowed the audience by

singing a number of popular Nepali songs. He profusely thanked his Nepali fans for supporting him throughout his Indian Idol campaign. Thousands of his fans had gathered at the ground despite heavy rainfall. On Sunday, Prashant and the team performed live in Pokhara. ■

“Women Must Be Involved In Every Aspect Of Peace Process”

- Dr. Anne-Marie Goetz

The SCR 1325 is very explicit about humanitarian situation such as Internally Displaced Persons' camps. The government and the international community must do everything they can to protect women in the camps. The resolution is also very explicit about situation of women in cantonments or those associated with fighting forces. They deserve respectful treatment and they also deserve the same access to resources like men.

Dr. Anne-Marie Goetz is the Chief Advisor for Governance, Peace and Security, UNIFEM. She was recently in Kathmandu to take stock of the situation here particularly in reference with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which binds member states to ensure women involvement in peace process, among others. She spoke to SANJAYA DHAKAL on the state of implementation of the SCR 1325 in the country. Excerpts:

How is the SCR 1325 relevant to Nepal?

It is relevant to all countries in conflict, and those emerging from conflict. Nepal is in a very exciting phase resolving a longstanding civil conflict as well as moving towards deepening democracy. In any such context, women's previous exclusion and prospects for engagement are critical. In Nepal's context, even as the country is rich in women's civil society movement, there are actually very few women at top level. Therefore, women have not had chance to bring their concerns to public debate. Women in Nepal were affected by conflict quite severely. Women have been subjected to direct violence, often sexual violence; as have their children. Some have been displaced; their property rights have been abused. These things have happened to men as well but women have not been involved in efforts to resolve these conflicts. There was no woman in peace accord discussion. The women have not had a chance to resolve these problems. That is why SCR 1325 is so important to Nepal because this resolution binds the government of Nepal to respect Security Council agreement that women are relevant to and must be included in peace negotiation, post conflict governance, humanitarian response and post conflict reconstruction. Women must be involved in every aspect of peace process.

How do you find Nepal government's implementation of the resolution?

To tell you what I have seen, the electoral bill, and provisions of quotas in Constituent

Assembly are highly progressive. They show willingness to ensure women's participation as candidates, as voters and, hopefully, as elected representatives. Those elements show that there is a political willingness to engage women and to see women engaged. Other things like the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission and district peace committees also similarly show the political willingness. This demonstrates Nepali government takes women's participation seriously. However, society is often slow to change. It is one thing making rules and laws, its another thing for political parties to field the correct number of candidates, and its another thing to meaningfully involve women in peace negotiation. So there is a lot to be done. If the government is seriously committed to this issue, it has to do a lot more than write bills and resolutions. It has to ensure safety, adequate policing and, at some point, they may need to announce measures against parties that don't comply with quota provisions.

What hopes does SCR 1325 hold for suffering women?

At one level, it may just be a piece of paper for them. At another level, it should be a piece of paper they can invoke or that they can refer to, to say that their situation is not adequate and demand better response. The SCR 1325 is very explicit about humanitarian situation such as Internally Displaced Persons' camps. The government and the international community must do everything they can to protect women in the camps. The resolution is also very explicit about situation of women in cantonments or those associated with fighting forces. They deserve respectful treatment and they also deserve the same access to resources like men.

What are the consequences for member states that do not comply with the SCR 1325?

To put it bluntly, there are very few consequences for non-implementation. I consider this to be a shortcoming. And my own job at UNIFEM is to seek to improve accountability mechanism so that there are consequences.

What is the role and responsibility of UN agency like UNMIN to ensure the implementation of SCR here?

As far as UNMIN is concerned, reporting is mandatory for them and reporting on gender issue is encouraged. The first thing UNMIN should do is, since it has offices to do so, it should analyze the political and security situation and its staff members should be attuned to women's experience of political and security problems. And those women's experiences are relevant to report, especially as in the case of recent violence (in Kapilvastu) where women did suffer a particular form of attack – the sexual attack. This should be of grave concern to the government as well as the UN system. On the issue of what UNMIN should do to implement the 1325, I can say that it should do a lot. It has gender unit and gender advisor. The UNMIN is actually doing a lot in the sense that it is setting up the necessary structures to respond to women's needs. About half of UNMIN staff, I believe, is here for electoral assistance. They have the obligation to make sure that women are treated equally. There is so much to do like ensuring polling stations are safe for them; making them aware; making sure that voters' education reaches them; making sure that election code of conduct are respectful of women and so on. On the other hand, in relation to the process of separation of arms, UNMIN should definitely ensure that women ex combatants and women associated with the fighting force are included in any process of integration or other agreements. I am sure they will do that since they have a strong guideline. In relation to transitional justice, I think OHCHR will be more responsible to ensure that women get proper attention.

We see governments and parties paying only lip-service to women's issues. What do you say?

Despite showing political willingness and commitment to include women, when it comes to forming committees or filing candidate sheets, often decision makers claim that they did not find enough suitable women. This can be disingenuous and this can be a denial of candidates that are there. This can also be a failure to recognize talent. But also the women's movement has the responsibility to provide a list of qualified women to decision makers so they cannot use that excuse.

Do you have to be a woman to represent woman's views and concerns?

Of course, not. What matters is not so much quantity but the quality of leadership. I must say quantity is important in a situation where historically there have been so few women in public office. Quantity is very important when the lack of women in public space makes women think that they have nothing to do with politics. Many studies have shown that if you have at least 30 percent women in office, they will feel confident in representing women's issues. Quantity is important for democratic justice.



In South Asia we have seen women become presidents, prime ministers and senior leaders. But still the situation of women in the region has not improved. Why?

This illustrates that it is not the gender identity of the politician that necessarily shapes their interest, - its party politics. In South Asian countries – like in many countries - women's interests have never driven the party policy. Women are just emerging as political force in many parts of the world. As women develop more political leaders, they are going to be able to shape party politics.

Even in the UN system, we do not find many women in leading positions as much as we would have expected. Any comment?

I am also very surprised with this situation.

How do you find the women's movement in Nepal?

Nepal is well known for its strength of women's organizations and their diversity. They have been involved in development and political movements. I respect their role. But one gets the impression as an outsider that there may be a sense of a lack of confidence as what can be achieved through state. I hope I am not misrepresenting. I feel this is a good moment for women in civil society to review that and focus on governance reforms and democratization. They should focus their energy to achieve inclusive, democratic and peaceful country.

(Courtesy: Nepalnews.com)

It is not the gender identity of the politician that necessarily shapes their interest, - its party politics. In South Asian countries – like in many countries - women's interests have never driven the party policy.

SUPREME COURT

Landmark Verdict

Supreme Court declares a Clause of Constituent Assembly Election Act 2007 ultra-vires giving respite to politicians

By A CORRESPONDENT

With the decision of full bench of Supreme Court, more than 200 politicians indicted in the Rayamajhi Commission Report have heaved a sigh of relief as the court declared the Clause 19 (h) of CA Act 2007 as ultra-vires.

Under a writ petitions filed by a number of persons including former home minister Kamal Thapa, Keshar Bahadur Bista, Niranjana Thapa, Tanka Dhakal, and Bhuwan Pathak, the full bench headed by justice Anup Raj Sharma, Bal Ram K.C. Kalyan Shrestha, Tapa Bahadur Magar and Damodar Sharma declared the provision made in the 19 (h) of Constituent Assembly Elections Act 2007 ultra-vires.

After two days of hearing, justice Bal Ram K.C., Kalyan Shrestha and Tapa Bahadur Magar declared the clause null and void and issued the writ. However, justice Anup Raj Sharma and Damodar Sharma dismissed the writ.

Although the decision was taken under the majority of 3-2, apex court's landmark decision once again enhanced the faith of the common people in the judicial system and judiciary. "This shows that the court is still independent and capable to deliver the justice for a person like me," said petitioner Kamal Thapa reacting to the judgment.

Justice Anup Raja Sharma - who got much prominence during the Royal regime on a judgment declaring Royal Commission for Corruption Control as unconstitutional - stood with minority this time. Sharma duo justified the restriction imposed in the clause to bar politicians on the basis of Fact Finding Commission Report.

The article 141 of Interim Constitution clearly stipulates that no person and individual can be barred from contesting the elections on the basis of

many progressive provisions, which clearly says that no individual shall be discriminated on the basis of ideology, political thought and individual belief.

On the side of petitioner, senior advocate Ganesh Raj Sharma, advocate Bishnu Bhattacharya, advocate Bal Krishna Neupane and others pleaded. The lawyers pleading the petitioners argued that the act was regressive in comparison with the progressive articles of the constitution.

According to them, the Rayamajhi



Supreme Court: Far-reaching decision

political ideology, philosophy, or political programs. The article restricts to make any kind of act which will violate the clause.

Despite strong opposition from some prominent members of Nepali Congress party including senior advocates Radheshyam Adhikary, Harihar Adhikary and Homenath Dahal, the clause was included in the CA Act whereby those indicted by the fact finding commission's report were barred from contesting the election.

From the preamble of constitution - which calls for competitive pluralistic politics - to article 13 (2) of right to equality, the interim constitution has so

Commission is just a fact finding commission and one cannot be indicted on the basis of its judgment. But, the government placed the clause to bar certain politicians.

According to the Clause 19 (h) of Constituent Assembly Act 2007, those persons who were indicted by fact finding commission constituted to inquire abuse of authority, loss and damage in popular uprising in April 2006 will be barred from the elections for Constituent Assembly.

The court's recent verdict has shown that it still protects the rights of the people and guarantees individual freedoms. ■

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE LOW: WB REPORT

Rigid labor regime, high taxes and red tape are eroding confidence in Nepal, one of the deteriorating places to do business in South Asia, a study by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) stated, according to *The Himalayan Times* daily.

The research — which ranked 178 countries around the world on the basis of trade, taxation, business start-up costs, labor laws and legal procedures — has placed Nepal at 111, lower than in its previous report. Some South Asian neighbors did better in their overall rankings, with the Maldives ranked at 60 and Pakistan 76, Sri Lanka 101 and Bangladesh 107. Nepal, however, scored ahead of Bhutan (119), India (120) and Afghanistan (159) in the 'Doing Business 2008' report by the IFC, a World Bank

member that promotes private sector investment in developing countries.

It also ranked countries in individual problem areas. Nepal has been ranked at 155th most expensive country in the world to employ workers, as restrictive labor laws make it costly to dismiss staff. Companies must pay 90 weeks of salary to lay off a worker. The report further states that Nepal's situation in starting business, registering property, getting credit, protection of investors, paying taxes and trading across borders worsened this year.

While, dealing with licenses, employing workers, enforcing contracts and closing a business remained static, Nepal came 92nd on tax environment list, which is relatively better compared to its neighbors in the region, with firms

having to set aside 32.5 per cent of their profits to pay taxes.

However, Nepal is rated worst in terms of tax paying hours, as it takes 408 hours, almost double of an average of 287.6 hours in the region. Nepal is also ranked 97th in terms of allowing firms to access credit from banks. The report states that Nepal has been found to be one of the worst in terms of time taken for dealing on licenses and permits and completing required notifications. It takes about 424 days to complete all procedures, whereas it is 238.3 days in the region and 153.3 days in OECD states. When it comes to winding up a business, Nepal ranks at 95. Creditors spend on average five years to recover money and only get 25 cents on the dollar.

However, South Asia picked up the pace of regulatory reform over the past year to become the second-fastest reforming region in the world, on par with the speed of reform in the countries of the OECD. ■

TRAFFICKING ON THE RISE: UN

At least 10,000 to 15,000 girls are being trafficked from Nepal to India, the data revealed by the UN Regional Office for South Asia for Prevention of Drugs and Crimes said. They are allured to India of good job and sold there, head of the regional office, Gary Lewis, said on Tuesday.

He said illiteracy, poverty and Nepal's long armed conflict and other economic and social causes are behind it. The office, which stands as guardian of the UN protocol

against the trafficking, has continued to provide training to the police who are working to check the human trafficking and other human crimes, he said.

"We are actively involved in the programs like implementation of the laws, capacity building, rehabilitation of the victims in South Asia, including Nepal," he said. According to the project coordinator of the office Ajit Roy, the number of displaced has surged in Nepal, problem of internal

migration has worsened and Kathmandu has prospered as a centre of trafficking of women and children due to the long armed conflict. "The women and teenage girls who come to Kathmandu in search of the jobs become soft targets for the pimps," Roy added.

Saying that AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases were on the rise due to the trafficking, he said the recent study conducted by a US institution showed that 40 percent of the sexual workers returning to Nepal from different Indian cities carried HIV/AIDS.

HEALTH

Heart Beating

With the change in the living style, the number of population suffering from heart diseases rise alarmingly

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although Nepal has been celebrating the world heart day annually, the number of heart related diseases continue to rise.

Given the existing numbers of patients, Nepal needs to increase more facilities to meet present challenges.

Some of the important progresses have already been made in the last few years as the facilities for surgery and other emergency services have increased in the urban city like Kathmandu but it is yet to be expanded beyond the capital.

Till a few years ago, heart disease was considered as disease of rich class but it is now gradually showing signs that this is a disease of poor class people also. As specialized facilities for the heart patients increase, a large number of population with heart ailments have been diagnosed.

According to a study, there are 4 million people suffering from heart ailments. A decade ago, the number was around 800,000 and there has been five fold increase in the number of heart patients in Nepal.

With the high economic growth and rise of urban population, the life styles of people have drastically changed. The consumption of fat products increases as the decline in the interest of physical exercise. Most importantly, the consumption of meat products has gone up. Heart specialists argue that these are some of the factors contributing to increase the number of heart patients.

The health studies have shown that among the patients admitted in the

hospitals in the valley, 40 percent have coronary heart problems, 28 percent have rheumatic heart disease and 20 percent have high blood pressure.



Rally held to mark World Heart Day: Mere Ritual Photo: NS

“Coronary heart diseases, rheumatic heart diseases and inborn defect in the heart and high blood pressures are some of the major heart diseases,” said heart specialist Dr. Prakash Raj Regmi.

The heart disease is not confined to the urban areas only. It is also a major problem in rural parts of the country. Recent studies have shown that the number of heart patients are rising alarmingly in rural parts of Nepal. According to a study, among those admitted in the hospitals, 75 percent patients come from rural parts of the country.

“Among 417 patients admitted in Ganga Lal Heart Center, the age below 15, more than 70 percent patients came

from remote parts of Nepal. This shows the general tendency in Nepal,” said Dr. Bhagwan Koirala, director of the center.

Although the number of heart related disease continues to rise, the government is yet to provide heart specialists in all the regional hospitals in the country. According to the Ministry of Health, heart specialist services are available only in Pokhara and Biratnagar.

According to Nepal Heart Disease Prevention Center, more than 25 percent of deaths are related to the heart failure. Heart experts argue that if the treatments do not increase, heart failure is going to be number one killer in Nepal.

Along with Bir Hospital, Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, National

Gangalal Heart Center, two private nursing homes - Norvic and Medicare - also have specialized service for heart patients.

With more than 30 percent population living below the poverty line, the heart disease is costly for majority of the population. A cost of heart care ranges from Rs.100, 000 to 300,000 depending

upon the nature of disease.

Although the facilities are available in three government hospitals, the pressure is now more on Gangalal National Heart Center. “We are over pressured as there is a queue of people. One has to wait months to get appointment for surgery,” said Dr. Koirala. “Keeping in mind the number of manpower, the situation is more complicated and challenging.”

In the year 2006, Gangalal Hospital checked more than 60,000 patients. Out of them 496 were related to heart attack. Number of casualty is about 28 which are very nominal. According to Dr. Man Bahadur K.C. cardiologist of the center, out of total patients, 20 percent are below the age of 45 years. ■s

BOOK

Micro Impact Analysis on Economy

Professor Bishwambher Pyakuryal and Rabi Shanker Sainju analyze the impact of conflict in Nepalese micro-economy

By A CORRESPONDENT

Following the signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement between Maoists and the government, twelve years long internal conflict came to an end in Nepal.

However, Nepal has to face the implications of the conflict for a long time to come.

From destruction of infrastructures like roads, schools, bridges and local level health and political institutions to other financial institutions like banks, twelve years long Maoists conflicts touched almost all the areas. The delay in the project implementations and disruptions in development efforts, too, affected much.

One can judge the damage due to the conflict in the infrastructures but the cost of overall disruptions in other economic areas is going to be long run and severe. One can analyze the costs of damage but the micro-level loss is difficult to assess.

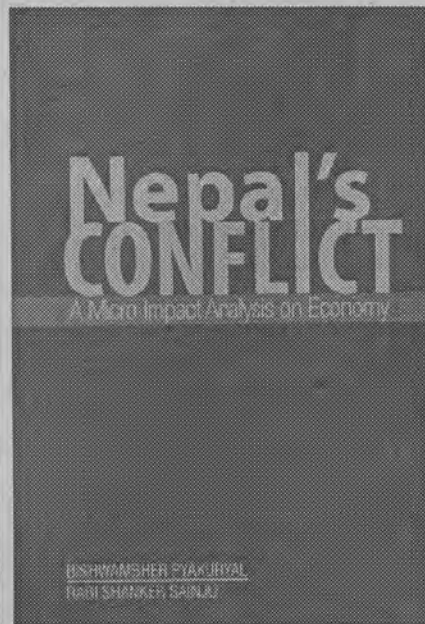
Despite complexities and difficulties in assessing the overall impacts, Professor Bishwambher Pyakuryal and Rabi Shanker Sainju have done a very commendable job to look into micro-economic implications of the conflict.

Although more than a year has already passed, the government is yet to assess the worth of infrastructures damaged during the twelve years long conflict. According to an estimate, national economy has lost Rs. 66.2 billion. National Planning Commission too has done some estimation but it is yet to completely analyze it. There are several estimates made by individuals and donor agencies but all of them have different ways to assess it.

Before the inception of conflict, Nepal's annual GDP was growing

between 4-5 percent but the GDP went down to negative when the conflict intensified at its peak. During the whole period after the dissolution of elected government and intensification of insurgency, Nepal's GDP fell to minimum level.

"Except for the negative growth in 2002, Nepal has survived and maintained minimal growth and human development even during the



NEPAL'S CONFLICT
A Micro Impact Analysis on
Economy

By: Prof. Bishwambher
Pyakuryal and Rabi Shanker
Sainju

Price: Rs.350.00

Published by: Authors

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Pages: 120

significant political instability of the last decade. The greatest threat was political. This continued street protests and increasing political uncertainties may again deprive the Dalits and indigenous groups in the under-resourced hills of the mid and Far-Western regions of the advantages of public services," write the author duo.

Along with the loss of human life and property, the conflict has inflicted huge damage in Nepal's economy. Many books have already been published in the market by various bilateral and multi-lateral donor agencies to I/NGOs but this is the first book, which focuses its attention on micro impact analysis on economy.

"There are significant number of studies available on the macro-level impact of the conflict in Nepal but the study of micro-level impact was inadequate. We feel privileged to fill this gap by assessing the consequences of the on service delivery programs, local economic growth and people's livelihoods. These issues are analyzed by taking into consideration the inter-linkages between low human development and the conflict. As the findings of this study may not necessarily represent the nation as a whole, the recommendations should be taken with caution," write authors duo in the acknowledgement.

Despite signing the peace agreement with major faction of the last twelve years of conflict, Nepalese society is yet to feel relief from all kinds of unstable and chaotic situation. Nepal's southern plain saw unprecedented rise of violent insurgent groups in one or other forms. Similarly, political instability continues to affect day to day life.

Professor Pyakuryal, one of the renowned economists of Nepal, and Sainju have come up with a very interesting and useful book for the policy makers and other parties interested to know about the impact of conflict in Nepalese economy. This is a very timely and authentic book showing the true cost of conflict in Nepal. ■

NEPALI CONGRESS

On The Red Bandwagon

Will Girija Prasad Koirala realize that the immoral and unprincipled politics is not cricket?

By NARAYAN KARKI CHHETRI

Politics makes strange bedfellows. That is a common refrain. Last week, an uncommon scene surfaced on the political stage of the country's largest party.

As the Nepali Congress got reunited after about six years, the party ended its six-decade-old policy.

Girija Prasad Koirala presided over the party's conversion into a republican outfit.

The constitutional monarchist centrist party thus rode on the long-standing communist bandwagon.

The younger brother of the party's founding leader, the late B.P. Koirala, bade adieu to the policy of national reconciliation.

But another founding leader, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, bade good-

bye to the party over the party's abandonment of the late Koirala's time-tested policy.

Prime minister and de facto head of state Girija Prasad Koirala deemed it opportune to preside over something he had opposed throughout his life, in the earnest hope that the move would ensure his continuation in the office.

Bhattarai thought it immoral to remain in the party that apparently chose to defy him (see: box).

If the subsequent events are any indication, Koirala's hopes look less likely to materialize.

Jolting his hopes are none other than the Maoists whom he wanted to please by riding their republican bandwagon.

The Maoists are now pressing him to go a step forward: declare the country

a republic without a popular verdict. They also want him to turn back on a previous agreement: the mixed election system.

Koirala would perhaps be not averse to the fresh Maoist demands. But he has resisted himself, because he is no longer sure of the next move of the former rebels.

One is not sure if he has learnt a hard lesson at the fag end of his long political innings: immoral and unprincipled politics is not cricket. It can get you out anytime no matter how you play your shots.

On the wrong side of the eighties, time may be running out for him - physically. But it is not too late yet for the veteran politician to correct himself and his party.

Let wise sense re-dawn upon him to revert to the national reconciliation as called upon by his long-time colleague, Bhattarai.

A nation of 25 million people sandwiched between the rival nuclear powers with a billion people each can simply not afford a head-on confrontation between the country's traditional and modern forces. ■

APPEAL BY KISHUNJI

Dear Mr. President and all members of the Mahasamiti,

I had felt great happiness at the unification of our dear organization, the Nepali Congress, which had remained split since a long time. That's why I forgot my physical handicap for a day, attended the unification conference and stayed there for long and expressed support (for the unity).

Despite that, this historical organization has totally forgotten the country's all-time leaders, the late B.P. Koirala and Ganesh Man Singh, in the name of a total and meaningless

slogan of a federal democratic republic. So, I will have no relation or contact whatsoever with this party. With a

heavy heart, I am bidding a goodbye to you all colleagues for ever.

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai
Bhainsipati, Sept 26, 2007

Handwritten Nepali text, likely a translation or commentary on the appeal, starting with 'प्रधानमन्त्री' and 'संसदीय'.

Handwritten Nepali text, likely a translation or commentary on the appeal, starting with 'संघीयता' and 'संसदीय'.

MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

The Nepal Multilingual Education Symposium jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Sports, Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies and Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University, UNESCO, and SIL International opened ON October 1.

The symposium was organized with the purpose of bringing key stakeholders from both the government and I/NGO sector involved in primary education together in order to build a common understanding of Nepal's multilingual educational needs, states press release by UNESCO.

The symposium discussed issues including why students from minority language are at an educational disadvantage, what are the benefits of multilingual education and what steps are needed to ensure that students from minority languages are able to complete their education.

The Department of Education reports that 44% of all children have dropped out of school by class 5, and among the Dalit community 92%. Research indicates that language is considered a significant factor compounded by the issue that in many classrooms multiple languages are spoken.

Research conducted in many countries with multiple languages show that unless a child learns to read and write in their own language they are unlikely to learn to read and write a second language (such as Nepali) or even a third language (such as English) well.

"Those children who do not speak Nepali as their mother tongue face enormous challenges when they go to school and are taught by a teacher in a language they don't speak and who uses textbooks in a language they don't understand. The result is that many of these children stop going to school at an early age and are deprived of economic opportunities as they enter adulthood. Not only is this a huge disadvantage to them personally, and since only about 50% of Nepalese speak Nepali as their first language it is a significant problem for the nation as well."

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENCE

Remembering Mahatma Gandhi

At a time when the cases related to violence have increased around the world including in South Asia, the global community celebrated the first International Day of Non-Violence by remembering Mahatma Gandhi.

For a country like Nepal, Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence is very important as the society is gradually heading towards more extremism and violence. Organized by Indian Cultural Center, Embassy of India and B.P. Koirala India-Nepal Foundation, many speakers spoke on the theme Universal Relevance of Non-violence at a function organized in Kathmandu to mark the day.

"Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence is very relevance for a country like Nepal which is embracing peace and democracy," said Indian ambassador Shiva Shanker Mukherjee, who has worked as an Indian High Commissioner for South Africa where Mahatma Gandhi experimented his non-violence and public disobedience campaigns.

Gandhi said, "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills." There are only a few followers in Nepal who can really abide by Mahatma's non-violence.

Throughout his life Gandhiji spoke about tolerance which is one of the basic things of non-violence. At a time when Nepal has been passing through a violent phase there is growing sense of hatred and revenge. According to Gandhiji, one has to embrace love against hatred and peace against violence.

Although Gandhi was born in India, his philosophy of non-violence has global significance. That is why, the United Nations declared October 2nd as the Day of Non Violence.

SOSHANA'S PAINTINGS

Love Of Nature

Austrian artist Soshana's paintings depict various phases of her life

By A CORRESPONDENT

Every artist has their own way of expressing their imagination. Austrian artist Soshana also has her own way. Her works depict life and her paintings portray peculiar characters of human beings.

Nepal has certain unique natural quality which always inspires foreigners. Austrian artist Soshana is one of them. Although she visited Nepal back in 1956-57, she seems to have a long lasting impression on her mind.

This might be the reason why artist Soshana sent her paintings to Nepal to display to celebrate her 80th birthday.

From early childhood to adolescence, artist Soshana portrays various stages of life. There is humane feelings as well as good combination of natural surroundings and vivid imaginations in her paintings.

Having traveled to different parts of the world, artist Soshana has learnt various skills and ways of paintings. After her visit to China, she learned Chinese calligraphy from the Chinese artists. She also learnt how to paint with ink on rice paper and try to say everything with one stroke. "My China trip changed my way of painting. I used to paint figuratively before. Up to this day I am still influenced by what I learned from the Chinese artists," said Soshana.

Austrian artist Soshana has also recalled experiences of Kathmandu and its surrounding. "In 1957, when I

first came to Kathmandu I flew also to Pokhara which was very quiet, serene and beautiful. In fact, I was entranced by Nepal and I wanted to reside there, but I had to continue with my travels and exhibition plans," said artist Soshana.

Although many things have changed in the last five decades in Kathmandu as it transformed from a very mundane city to city of concrete jungle, Soshana's still remembers so much about the past of this city.

Although she didn't come to exhibition, her son Amos Schueller brought her paintings in the capital city. The paintings displayed in Kathmandu contains a selection of her works in oil, acrylic, various mixed techniques and ink. The thematic representation of the works deal with Soshana's inimitable expressionistic style of antagonism and duality, lights breaks through dense girds and bars open themselves into the bright world of freedom.

Organized by Siddhartha Art Gallery, Soshana's paintings will be displayed in the gallery till October 2007. Her curious nature has led her

to absorb many figurative and symbolic elements, such as the commemoration of the Holocaust. Her paintings reveal the evolution of an artistic personality and characterizes the varied experiences of her life. Her paintings narrate loneliness and innocence. Her depiction of realistic life can be seen in the paintings in which she portrays the grimace distracted with pain.

Soshana decided to visit Nepal in 1956-57 when she was traveling to India. But, her determination was further strengthened when her art dealers described the beauty of Nepal. "In fact, I went to see many other



Gurus in India including the Mother Benaraes and Sai Baba in Bangalore and Puttapurty but I didn't stay with anyone of them for a length of time. I also met my friend Lain Bandel in Paris in those days. But, it was my art-dealer in Zurich, Switzerland, Mr. Max Bollag, who incited the fire in me to visit Nepal. He depicted it in such a beautiful way that the desire grew and grew until I finally made the trip to this Himalayan Kingdom," said Soshana.

To mark her 80th birthday, a collection of 32 works selected from a huge oeuvre of about 3,000 paintings have been selected. ■

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