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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Nov 23-29, 2007



Health For All

- Referendum : Direct Verdict Of People
- UNMIN : Searching A Role
- NIBL : Steady Growth
- Viewpoint : Dr. Tilak Rawal

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Nepal..... NRs.
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अब... १* रु. १ मै बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंक बढी भन्दा बढी
नागरिकहरुमा बैंकिङ्ग सेवाको पहिलो अनुभव
धर्त बाली बस्न सकोस भन्नाका लागि सजोरब
प्रस्तुत गर्दछ... **मात्र रु.१ मा**
“आफ्नै बचत खाता”
सम्पूर्ण अन्तराष्ट्रिय स्तरको सेवा सुविधा सहित ।



जीवनका पहिला पलहरु देखि बचतको बानी
सुरक्षित भविष्यको लक्ष्यती

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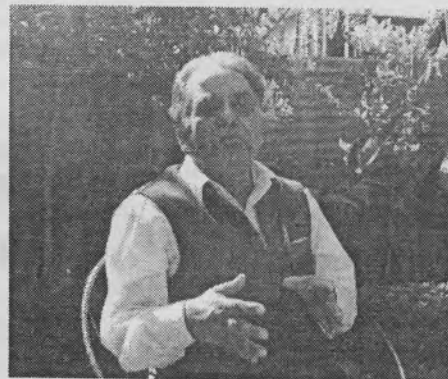


COVER STORY: Health For All Now that the health manpower and facilities have expanded, it is time to promote community and family ownership of health system Cover Photo Courtesy : NTAG Page 12



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INTERVIEW:
Daman Nath Dhungana
 Former Speaker and senior advocate Daman Nath Dhungana says election is the only way out of the current crisis



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SPOTLIGHT

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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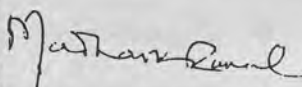
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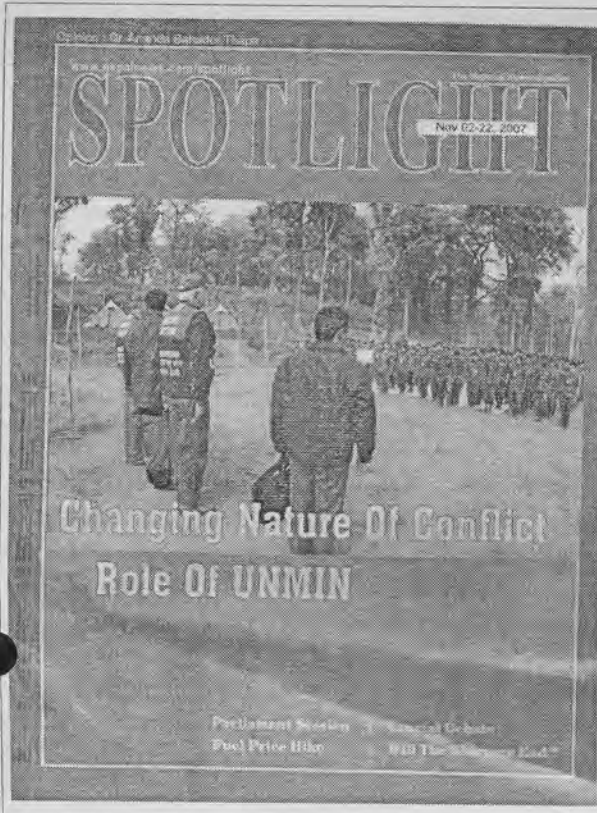
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The political uncertainties in Nepal do not seem to be heading towards any agreeable solution. Rather they are getting more acute. The special session of the parliament has only contributed to push the country towards greater political chaos and confusion. The two postponements of the elections to the constituent assembly have not only exposed the insincerity of the seven party coalition government but also tarred the CPM(Maoists) too with the same brush. Knowing fully well that their proposal for declaration of the republic from the floor of the House will never happen, their insistence for the declaration as a precondition to the elections is a clear indication that the Maoists too are not keen for the elections. That is only a ploy to queer the pitch. The illusion some Nepali intellectuals had harbored that the Maoists leaders would be different than other Nepali politicians has been shattered to pieces. There is hardly any difference between them. The Maoists too are made of the same mettle like other Nepali politicians. It has generated a greater sense of frustration amongst the Nepali people that there is practically no politician worthy of the name to lead the nation. In the last eighteen months since King Gyanendra was divested of all his royal authority and prerogatives, there is absolutely no semblance of authority, law and order throughout the country. Fissiparous tendencies are having a hey-day. The communal spurt in the terai has totally disrupted the social fabric and in some districts houses and properties of non-madheisas are being captured by lawless elements forcing the owners to flee the districts. The government has turned into a helpless spectator. Girija Prasad Koirala, the Prime minister and acting Head of State manifested his utter helplessness to solve his country's problems when he had no compunction to say that "India could solve this problem in a jiffy" He could not pluck the courage to go a bit further and say "since these problems have been created by her." Even though he could not say that in so many words, many here believe, he did imply this. Indeed there is no speck of doubt whatsoever that the various political organizations that have sprung up in the terai in recent times like rainy mushrooms have the blessings and cooperation of the great neighbor. What has come as a big surprise to most of the Nepalis is that even Girija Prasad Koirala has failed to impress upon his friendly neighbor to give a new shift to their Nepal policy. Even though Nepali politicians in power are quite servile to the Indians, the overwhelming majority of the Nepali populace are not happy with India. And it is being rumored in knowledgeable circles here that India is seriously thinking of assessing her policy towards Nepal. Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala has always shown extreme politeness and courtesy towards all of the Indian statesmen and bureaucrats he comes in contact with. And it has been reported that he even set an example of humility recently while meeting an Indian bureaucrat, unheard and unseen in diplomatic history. It has become the talk of the town. People think this must be the Zenith of his achievement and it is time now for him to retire - a most deserved respite form the onerous responsibilities. Since there is hardly any other politician in the present parliament who can replace Girija Prasad Koirala and the Maoist leadership have failed to make themselves acceptable without being tested in a general elections, the only one option open to Nepali people is to organize a big round table conference represented by all sections of the society irrespective of their size and political affiliation. And let this conference choose a caretaker government whose one and only mandate would be to hold the elections to the constituent assembly at the earliest possible date. As it is, the SPAM will never come to a consensus to hold the elections and the country will gradually slide to become a failed state soon.



Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



UNMIN'S Role

It is in the better interest of people to send back UNMIN. There is no record in the world where UN has settled the internal conflict. I don't think they will settle conflict in Nepal. Nepalese people are able to settle their own problems. In the last one year, UNMIN has recruited staffs on arbitrary manner misusing fund. I would like to congratulate India and leaders of seven political parties for realizing their past mistakes for inviting UNMIN in Nepal. This is good news.

Subodha Kharel
London Via-email

as it is in Nepal to provide security to Nepali people.

Jamuna Gurung
Pokhara Via-email

Long Gap

It is very unfortunate that Spotlight Newsmagazine did not come out for four weeks in the last one month. Of course, there are reasons for stopping the publication as it was the period of Dashain and Tihar holidays. But, I don't think there is any reason to discontinue the popular magazine like Spotlight for such a long time. As a reader, it was a great loss for me. I hope from next year you will not discontinue for such a long time.

Ali Miya

Via-email from Jeddha

Debate Over UNMIN

It was very interesting to read the analysis on the role of United Mission to Nepal (UNMIN). In the initial phase, UNMIN came as a messiah for all round development. Finally, people have now realized that it is not true at all. In early days, those reasonable and rational people, who opposed the idea to invite UN mission in Nepal, were treated as a bad guy or followers of regressive forces. It seems that from our neighbor India to political parties, who had backed UN Mission, are now uncomfortable with UN Mission. The way Nepali political leaders and Indian media are harping anti-UN slogan shows that UN is attracting problems for them. Whether India or our political leaders like it or not, UN is now reality of this country. If India and leaders of political parties want to see eviction of UN earlier, they must create proper atmosphere to hold the elections for constituent assembly. After holding the elections for CA, UNMIN will have no role to play.

Ganga Thapa
Via email

UNMIN Should Stay

I appreciate the role played by UNMIN in the country in the last one year. UNMIN has not only been exposing the parties involved in the conflicts but it also worked to hard to bring all the political forces to the mainstream. By meeting some rebel leaders of Terai in their hideout in India, UN officials had done right thing. Some Indian media and pro-Indian media in Nepal have been accusing UN officials who went to India to meet rebel leaders. Had India, which has deployed more than 60,000 men strong Special Security Bureau in border, not allowed the rebels to use Indian Territory to destabilize Nepal, UN officials would not have to go to India. It is not the UN but India to be blamed for all the problems. What UN officials have been simply doing are helping bring peace in the country. Every Nepali needs to back the UN. If it is necessary, one must organize rally supporting UNMIN

Frustrating Interview

I am very frustrated to read interview of politician like Govinda Raj Joshi. I have not seen anything new in his views as all know his past background. We don't need his advice and suggestions regarding the kind of political system Nepal needs.

Pushkar Thapa
Dubai via-email

Reconciliation Needed

Although he has committed many mistakes in the past, Congress leader Govinda Raj Joshi has rightly pointed out the need for reconciliation between country's political forces including the King. When persons who secured all the privileges from the King, are now calling to abolish monarchy, politicians like Joshi, who faced political humiliation during Royal regime, is coming to defend the monarchy. As Joshi said, country needs reconciliation not confrontation.

Binod Gurung
Naxal

Maoists Come Up With 'Concept Paper'; Raise New Demands

The Maoists have raised a number of new demands including immediate reshuffling of the interim cabinet, dissolution of the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, and early integration of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the Nepal Army. Presenting party chairman Prachanda's concept paper at an interaction with a cross-section of the society including representatives of various political parties in the capital Friday (November 16), senior Maoist leader Dr Baburam Bhattarai said the government must be restructured as early as possible in order to make it more representative. He demanded that the peace ministry be replaced by a powerful Peace Commission represented by all the parties to peace process. Bhattarai said his party wants early integration of the PLA into the Nepal Army. He also demanded that the government start procedure to implement the proposals on establishing republican order and adopting proportional voting system that were passed by the special parliament session. *Compiled from reports*

Maoist Hand Behind Thakuri's Disappearance: Rights Bodies

Human rights organizations have concluded that Maoists are responsible for the disappearance of journalist Prakash Singh Thakuri. A team of rights organizations including representatives from INHURED, INSEC, IHRICON and Advocacy Forum had initiated the probe in response to request made by Janaki Thakuri, the wife of the journalist who has been missing since July 5 from Kanchanpur in the far west Nepal. The report by the team has concluded that there are adequate proofs and evidences to point at Maoist hand behind the disappearance. Earlier, the police had arrested a local Maoist leader Pom Lal Sharma for his alleged involvement in the abduction of Thakuri. But he was later released after he told police that he had only shown the house of Thakuri to some YCL cadres. The report by rights organizations has urged the authorities to initiate detailed investigation. Even though Maoists have said Sharma is not

associated with their party, the report says that he is still working as a Maoist member at the Mahendranagar City Development Committee. Four days after he was abducted, a hitherto unknown outfit calling itself National Republican Army had issued a statement owning up the abduction and claiming that Thakuri has already been killed because he was a 'royalist.' But the police have said that no such organization is in existence. *Compiled from reports*

Sujata Talks About Reviving 1990 Constitution

A central leader of Nepali Congress (NC) Sujata Koirala has said that the 1990 Constitution should be revived to resolve the current problems faced by the country. She said that reviving the 1990 statute without the King's power and authority and including provisions

Reporters Club, Saturday (November 17), she said that the parliament cannot declare republic. *Compiled from reports*

YCL Nabs 'Criminals'

The Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) has nabbed five members of a criminal gang, including two women, and handed them over to the police. Before handing them over to the police, YCL leaders organized a press conference and presented the gang members before the media. The five persons are: Bharat Rai, Sabin Rai and Pratima Karki of Khotang, Dinesh Kharel of Kavre and Shikha Devota of Gorkha district. Bharat Rai, leader of the racket, admitted that his gang had killed contractor Deepak Bhandari in Kathmandu few months earlier. YCL leaders said they gang was involved in murder, armed robbery and extortion. They claimed that this gang was also



to accommodate Maoists is the need of the hour. After the success of 2006 movement, the 1990 constitution had been scrapped and replaced by interim constitution of 2007. Sujata also accused the Home Minister Krishna Sitaula of 'ambushing' the party and the country. "In the hope that the Maoists will improve, the NC gave up all its stands. And now Sitaulaji has ambushed not only the party but also the country," said Sujata, who is also the daughter of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala. She made the allegations pointing at the role played by Sitaula - who is also an NC leader - in reaching understanding with the Maoists on many occasions. Speaking at an interaction at the

involved the serial bomb blasts in the capital on September 2. However, the gang members said they were not connected with the bombings that had killed three persons and injured over dozen two dozen others. *Compiled from reports*

UML Leaders Give Dual Signals

A key member of the ruling alliance, the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), is giving out conflicting signals regarding the way to resolve the current political deadlock. Two senior leaders of the party gave contradictory signals over whether the party is in favor of or against the idea of changing the government leadership. While general secretary Madhav Kumar

Nepal, Thursday (November 15), asked his party's ministers to stop defending the prime minister, another senior leader KP Oli said it was no time to think about changing the government's leadership. Nepal has urged Nepali Congress to consider changing the leadership of the government. On the other hand, Oli has said that since the reason for the current crisis is Maoist, there is no meaning in changing prime minister. They were talking to journalists separately. **Leading dailies report**

Donors Urge Transparency

Representatives of donor community have complained that the expenditure from the Peace Trust Fund were not transparent and have asked for the details of the spending. At an interaction held at the Finance Ministry to discuss about the Fund, donor representatives complained they were in the dark on how the resources were being spent. The government had set up this fund to implement peace agreement. Eight projects are being run under the Fund at present. The total expenditure from this fund has reached Rs 1.55 billion. Largest chunk of this amount has been spent to manage camps of Maoists. At a time when the government had complained that the Maoists were not providing with satisfactory expenditure details, the donors, too, have voiced their concern. The government has already provided around Rs 1.37 billion to the Maoists – through the party or other means. The fund money is also being used to provide Rs 50,000 assistance per family for the internally displaced persons. **Leading dailies report**

Diabetes Hits Urban Nepal

Diabetes is becoming a significant public health problem, particularly in urban areas of Nepal, according to Nepal Diabetes Association (NDA). As the world observes World Day against Diabetes, Wednesday, the NDA has stated that its studies carried out in urban areas throughout Nepal have shown that there is a diabetes prevalence of around 15 percent among people aged 20 years and above and 19 percent among people aged 40 years and above. The NDA has said that there is diabetes prevalence of 2 percent in rural areas among people aged 20 years and above. The association has informed that 246 million people are

living with diabetes globally. It has asked the health authorities to formulate appropriate policies to ensure prevention of the disease. People living sedentary lifestyles are said to be particularly vulnerable to diabetes. This disease is not curable but only can be managed. Diabetes can lead to serious ailments in eye, kidney and heart if not taken care of properly, according to doctors. Meanwhile, in order to create public awareness on this disease, Dharahara will be lit up in blue colour on Wednesday to mark the first UN World Day against Diabetes. The blue color is a symbol of diabetes circle. The NDA has informed that famous world landmarks such as Sydney Opera House, Tokyo Tower and Taipei 101 Tower will be similarly lit up in blue to mark this day. **Compiled from reports**

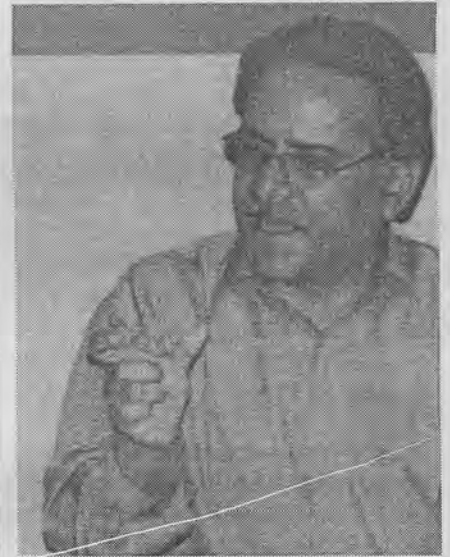
Blocked Child Adoption Files To Be Cleared

Following the joint appeal by the Prime Ministers of Spain, France and Italy, the government has decided to clear the blocked files on inter-country child adoption. The files in which 'matching' of parents and children have already been finalized will be cleared. "There is instruction to clear the blocked files as per old rules," Punya Prasad Neupane, Secretary at the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, said referring to cabinet decision. The process of inter-country adoption had been halted since March after reports that children homes were pocketing thousands of dollars from interested foreign couples came out. Last week, Prime Minister of Spain Jose Luis Zapatero, Prime Minister of Italy Romano Prodi and Prime Minister of France Franco Fillon had written a letter to Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala requesting for clearing the blocked files of 340 parents (whose matching have already been finalized) on humanitarian grounds. The Ministry, however, is preparing to implement new terms and conditions to regularize the inter-country adoption process. Spain, Italy, United States and France are major countries for adopting children. Of the blocked files 171 involved Spanish parents, 83 involved Italian parents, 53 French parents, 45 American parents and 90

parents from other countries. **Kantipur daily reports**

Big Powers And Neighbors Conspiring: Prachanda

Maoist chairman Prachanda has claimed that big powers and neighboring country are conspiring to disintegrate Nepal. Speaking at a program in the capital, Monday (November 12), held by Newa National Liberation Front to mark the New Year 1128 of Nepal Era, Prachanda said that Terai incidents are a result of conspiracy of foreign powers and neighboring country. "Ten year long people's war brought about awareness for ethnic liberation. In course of new



process on that basis, foreign power and neighboring country are conspiring to disintegrate the country," he said.

Kantipur daily reports

Maoist MPs Get US Visa

Two MPs representing the Maoists have been given visa by the United States Embassy, say reports. According to Kantipur Television, Maoist MPs Janardan Sharma aka Prabhakar – who is also a deputy commander of Maoists' People's Liberation Army (PLA) – and Nanda Kumar Prasai – who had recently joined Maoist party – have been given visa to travel to the US to attend the United Nations General Assembly.

The third Maoist applicant, Suresh Ale Magar, however, is yet to receive a visa. Magar had been denied visa six months ago as well. The Maoists are still listed as terrorists by the US government.

Compiled from reports



A girl carrying fruits and delicacies on the occasion of Chhath festival

Kantipur

THE NEPAL ARMY (NA) HAS STARTED CLEARING the landmines it had planted during the Maoist insurgency. The NA completed removal of the landmines planted inside the premises of Khimti Hydropower Project in Dolakha during the conflict period under the supervision of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) officials Friday. NA's bomb squad took 15 days to remove 174 landmines planted inside the premises of the Khimti project in a manner that a mere pressure of 15 kilos on top of it would set it off.

IN YET ANOTHER HIGH POINT FOR THE COUNTRY'S only secondary capital market Nepal Stock Exchange, the index crossed 900 points mark in its 14-year long history. Led by the commercial banks, development banks, financial institutions and hydropower groups, Nepal Stock Exchange (Nepse) index on Wednesday (November 14) crossed 900 points mark and created a new history. The Nepse this week opened at 882.45 points on Monday and continuously increased to reach at 915.38 points at the closing day. However, the market watchers are amazed by the increase in the commercial banks' share prices and especially of those banks, whose promoters' other businesses are in loss. "The same promoters' other businesses are not doing well but their banks are posting profits and the share prices of their banks are high," one investor, without wanting to be quoted, said, adding that he does not know what it indicates to.

CABINET MINISTERS WERE BRIEFED by the chiefs of Nepal Police, Armed Police Force (APF) and National Investigation Department (NID), Thursday (November 15), on the security situation, particularly in Terai region. Ahead of suspected increase of violent incidents after Chhath festival, the security chiefs briefed the ministers and also discussed future security arrangements. The informal cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala reviewed the current security scenario and discussed a detailed security plan with the police chiefs, it is learnt. The police chiefs stressed that the seven parties form a common vision on security so

that it would be easy for the security agencies to execute the plans, minister Jagat Bahadur Bogati informed. This was the first time that ministers were briefed on security by police chiefs. Reports say that the police chiefs complained to ministers that workers from ruling alliance member parties themselves are found involved in activities such as bandh, shut-down strike and so on. They said Maoist workers were creating mess in security situation in many places as they had still not improved their behavior. They also appealed for

clear policy to deal with over 26 armed outfits that have started launching violent activities in Terai region.

STUDENTS WITH LOW INCOME, particularly Dalits, Janajatis and women, will be given financial assistance for pursuing higher education from the next academic year. Initially, the assistance will be given to 600 students — 300 of the higher secondary level and 300 bachelor-level students from the mid and far-western regions. The assistance will be extended across the country next year. Next year, the assistance will be given to 1,000 students of the higher secondary level and 800 students of the bachelor level. The financial assistance will be Rs 16,000 for two-year course of the higher secondary level and Rs 40,000 for three to four-year bachelor-level course. Dr Ramdev Tiwari, executive director of the Student Financial Assistant Fund Development Board (SFAFDB), said the assistance is aimed at increasing the underprivileged students' access to higher education. The funds will be given through a commercial bank. The bank has short-listed Nepal Rastra Bank, Nabil Bank, Bank of Kathmandu, Kumari Bank and NIC Bank for the purpose and will select one bank out of them to make the transaction. The World Bank has granted \$4 million for the project, which will phase out in 2013.

IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2063/64 (2006/07), the volume of foreign trade has increased by 16 percent, according to Trade and Export Promotion Center. During that period, trade worth Rs 256.75 billion were carried out. Of the total foreign trade, exports have decreased while imports have increased. The Center says that exports declined by 1.2 percent to reach Rs 59.07 billion whereas imports increased by 23 percent to reach Rs 197.68 billion. In the total foreign trade, India occupies the lion's share of 62.2 percent while overseas countries occupy 37.8 percent. In export front, India occupies 70.9 percent while in import front, India occupies 59.6 percent. The United States occupies 32 percent share among overseas exports followed by Germany (15 percent), UK (6 percent), France (5 percent), Italy (4 percent) and Japan (3 percent). ■

"If India so wants, the problem in Terai can be resolved within two minutes."

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, at an interaction in Biratnagar.

"There is no problem in even postponing the elections by two years. First, there has to be conducive atmosphere to hold meaning election."

Maoist chairman Prachanda, saying that he gives more priority to declaring republic than holding election, at an interaction with civil society.

"Since the reason for the current crisis is the Maoist, it will be meaningless to change the government's leadership."

KPOli, standing committee member of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML).

"In the hope that the Maoists will improve, the NC gave up all its stands. And now Sitaulaji has ambushed not only the party but also the country."

Sujata Koirala, central leader of NC who is also the daughter of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala.

"The press is threatened more by non-state actors now."



Pradeep Gyawali, former minister and senior UML leader.

"Since the UN was called by both the government and the Maoists, any decision regarding its term extension would have to be taken by the seven parties."

Sahana Pradhan, Foreign Minister, talking to journalists.

"This requires not just the setting of a date, but agreement on a road-map which will ensure that there is not yet another

failure to hold the election on whatever new date is agreed."

Ian Martin, UNMIN chief, spelling out pre-requisites to ensure CA election, which he said is critical for the success of peace process.

"Now, the parties should announce the election date after serious deliberation so that there will not be another postponement."

Bhojraj Pokharel, chief election commissioner, talking to journalists.

TRANSITION



APPOINTED: Manohar Prasad Bhattarai, as acting general secretary at the Parliament Secretariat, by the Speaker of Legislative Parliament.

LEFT: Prithivi Bahadur Subba Gurung, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, for London, United Kingdom.

FORMED: A team, by the government, to probe the whereabouts of journalist Prakash Singh Thakuri, who has been missing since last four months.

SUBMITTED: A report by the Commission led by Supreme Court judge Khil Raj Regmi, which was formed to probe the cause and effect of Madhes agitation early this year.



APPOINTED: Industrialist Basanta Chaudhary as Morocco's Honorary Consulate General for Nepal.

COMING: Former US President Jimmy Carter, on his second visit to Nepal in last six months, on November 21.

BETWEEN LAND'S END AND KATHMANDU: *Traveling Across the UK*

• *By Laxmi Thapa*

For us from Nepal traveling this summer across the Cornwall, which is on the southwest corner of the England, was an unforgettable experience. The traveling was the most delightful time for us and it also was a great opportunity to acquaint ourselves with natural surroundings completely different from our high mountainous country Nepal. The age old history of Cornwall also fascinated us.

Cornwall is the most remote of English counties. Its eastern boundary, on the River Tamar, is some 200 miles distant from London. The administrative county comprises six districts.

Tourism, capitalizing on the attractive physical environment, has become a very important source of income for the people of Cornwall. Our country Nepal could learn a great deal from the experience of tourist resorts developed relatively recently since the early 20th century. Before that many resorts like the St. Ives were stinking small fishing ports. Rural resources also contribute to the economy. The valleys afford excellent pasture for dairy cattle, and the moorland has large areas for rough grazing. Market gardening is important in coastal districts, the mild winter encouraging cultivation of delicate and early crops. Cornwall is a favourite county for second homes and retirement, which, together, are causing basic changes in the social structure of rural areas. Many coastal towns are active ports.

Natural Surroundings and Climate

The main upland areas of Cornwall are a series of granitic intrusions that form distinctive moorlands. A geologically recent rise of sea level resulted in the drowned river valleys of southern Cornwall, including the Tamar, Fowey, and Fal estuaries. The ultimate effect combined with the variety of rocks is an attractive coastal landscape that is subject to increasing pressures by the demands of recreation and tourism.

The climate of Cornwall is closely affected by the proximity of the sea. High winds and sea mists are common; and rainfall is frequent and heavy, especially on high ground. Temperatures are warm in summer and relatively mild in winter. As a result, the vegetation is luxuriant, especially in coastal areas.

Celtic Christians

Metal ores, especially tin, attracted prehistoric settlers to the metalliferous zones around the granitic intrusions of Cornwall, and there is a wealth of stone relics such as megalithic dolmens, monoliths, and circles. Subsequent settlement in England caused an associated migration of Celtic Christians to Cornwall, where they resisted the Saxon

advance for 500 years, acknowledging Saxon overlordship only in the 10th century. The county's isolation aided the survival of the Celtic language known as Cornish, although it has not been spoken as a living language since the 18th century. Celtic place-names are much in evidence. After the Norman Conquest (1066) the indigenous manors of Cornwall were taken over to form the basis of an earldom; since 1337 they have belonged traditionally to the eldest son of the English sovereign, who acts as duke of Cornwall

Saint Ives

Our first destination was Saint Ives. This coastal town in Cornwall bears the same name as the Saint Ives in Cambridgeshire which is linked to the life of Oliver Cromwell, who was the leader in the English Revolution and the first commoner to rule England. In 1620 Cromwell had married Elizabeth Bouchier, daughter of a prominent London merchant, and they lived a quiet life together, first in Huntingdon and then at Saint Ives in Cambridgeshire.

In old days the St. Ives in Cornwall was a small harbour town. Clustered around the harbour is the old town of winding streets and colour-washed stone cottages housing fishermen, artists, and potters. Fishing and tin mining were important until the late 19th century; since then the mild climate and sandy beaches have attracted vacationers, and tourism has become the economic base.

The climate of Cornwall is closely affected by the proximity of the sea. High winds and sea mists are common; and rainfall is frequent and heavy, especially on high ground. Temperatures are warm in summer and relatively mild in winter. As a result, the vegetation is luxuriant, especially in coastal areas.

It was a fine clear day in late summer. After departing from the main motorway we reached Saint Ives by car well ahead of the sunset following narrow roads crisscrossing the landscape covered with bushes and meadows. At one point we even lost our way that abruptly ended deep into bush forest.

We checked at a hotel by the side of the main road. From the hotel the main road descends to the harbour area down below. We lost no time to get a good glimpse of the exotic winding streets, further down the entertainment areas in front of the harbour of the Saint Ives, and the vast expanses of the

Atlantic Ocean before it is totally dark after the sun sinks into the distant horizon.

We moved around the harbour. The beach near the jetties and piers were completely dry. Boats remained grounded. But not far away from the shore large tidal waves were seen rolling towards the harbour which gradually submerged the entire beach areas around the piers. The westerly wind from the Atlantic Ocean gradually gaining strength was sweeping across the whole town area. It was becoming quite chilly.

We decided to have fish and chips for the supper. It was quite enjoyable to have supper sitting on benches provided on the jetties. Some seagulls were attracted towards us. We threw few pieces of fish and chips towards them. They swallowed them. They were quite emboldened and came very close to snatch away more foods from our hands. Fortunately we had enough surplus potato chips to feed them. They flew away from that place after their stomach became full.

A New Romantic Destination

The following day we left our hotel early in the morning immediately after the breakfast to return back to Saint Ives only in the evening. We had planned to visit Land's End- an

We even saw the photograph of the former US President Bill Clinton, which had been taken some times back when he visited this place. We too did not like to miss this opportunity. We were also photographed. The signboard showed that the distance between the Land's End and Kathmandu is 4835 miles.

exotic tourist destination of the Cornwall.

The sky was completely clear. We were driving in a car on a narrow road passing through the sloped moorland by the side of the Atlantic Ocean. The blue water of the Atlantic Ocean was glittering under the early morning sunrays. Except the light murmuring of the sea waves, there was almost a complete silence all along the road to the Land's End which is about 30 miles away from the Saint Ives. The weather condition happened to be so favourable that the breathtaking charm of the surroundings must have left an unforgettable impression in the minds of all those who visited Land's End on that day.

Between Land's End and Kathmandu

Land's End, westernmost point of the island of Great Britain, on the southwestern coast of the county of Cornwall, is a turf-covered granite slope that terminates in rugged cliffs 18 to 30 m high. The headland is pierced by a cave 46 m long known as Land's End Hole. The irregular, rocky shoreline abounds in natural arches and rock piles called sea stacks. Also on Land's End is the Longships Lighthouse, a structure built in 1793 to mark the Carn Bras reef group, one of the many dangerous reefs that surround the promontory. The Isles of Scilly lie 42 km southwest of the promontory.

We had arrived at Land's End ahead of many other tourists

coming by buses and private vehicles. At that time there were only few visitors. It was quite chilly when we came out of the car. Morning cold breeze from the Atlantic was sweeping across the surroundings of the Land's End.

Land's End, as said, is one of the world's best loved landmarks. It is a place of almost mystical beauty where the might of the Atlantic meets the towering cliffs of Cornwall. We were able to watch a show in Land's End that brought ancient tales of heroism, skullduggery and adventure. Certainly all visitors to this place will cherish a memory of the visit forever.

Soon there were busloads of tourists tripping up over each other, crowding around the souvenirs and queuing to have their photo taken. There was a professional photographer to photograph tourists wishing to be photographed in front of a specially marked signboard showing the distance between the Land's End and the cities of respective group of tourists. We even saw the photograph of the former US President Bill Clinton, which had been taken some times back when he visited this place. We too did not like to miss this opportunity. We were also photographed. The signboard showed that the distance between the Land's End and Kathmandu is 4835 miles.

Sea Lion at Falmouth

We drove to Falmouth from the Land's End before returning back to Saint Ives. Falmouth is an important port of call for sailing ships and ship repair. It has developed into a resort town after about 1870. A huge building of the National Maritime Museum is located just opposite to the harbour. It is said that this museum displays Europe's only underwater tidal zone and journey through time. We were hard pressed for time so we were unable to take this opportunity to visit this interesting museum.

We were enjoying the taste of delicious ice creams while looking around to get a panoramic view of the port area. Suddenly our attention was drawn to a sea lion basking in the warm sunshine near the wharf where we were standing. We came to know that the National Seal Sanctuary is located in the vicinity of Falmouth.

Cornish Pastry and Cream Tea

On our way back to Saint Ives we dropped into a typical Cornish restaurant where we greatly enjoyed the unique taste of the Cornish pastry and cream tea. We learnt that there are special recipes for the preparation of Cornish pastries and cream tea.

The pastry derives its typical shape from its origin as the daily meal of Cornish tin miners. It is available in all restaurants and food stores. Cornish cream tea is perhaps the most important local delicacy. It is said that Cornish cream tea is a must for anybody visiting Cornwall. Its ingredients are scones, clotted cream and jam.

Back to London

The following day we left Saint Ives in the morning to drive back to London. On our return journey we dropped into Bristol and Bath.

(Thapa writes on history)

POLITICAL CRISIS

Silence Speaks Louder

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala knows where the problem lies, but is unable to pinpoint it

By NARAYAN KARKI CHHETRI

The question time with the Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala aired on Kantipur TV last Monday revealed a number of important points of external dimension.

At his ancestral house in Biratnagar, the prime minister looked relaxed and jolly while answering questions from the audiences and the journalists' panel.

But the TV viewers could see his face hardening and voice resolute at least on three counts.

On all occasions, the issue was related to Nepal's external front.

Although the questioners - the audience and the panellists - did not grill the PM on foreign relations, Koirala himself brought the issue to the fore.

The most important point he made was on restoring order in Terai. His answer to a question from a Terai audience grabbed newspaper headlines:

"The Terai problem can be resolved within a minute with the cooperation of India."

Koirala referred to what he said was consultations with the Indian government for such a cooperation. His answer would indicate that such a cooperation had not been forthcoming so far.

Answering a subsequent question on Terai he vowed that he would not

But he has repeatedly been proved powerless in keeping his promise of holding elections.

So, who is this superpowerful force that even failed the all-powerful prime minister of Nepal?

Koirala again refused to be specific. But even as the Maoists have been unanimously condemned for putting a



PM Koirala : Breaking silence

compromise with anybody on Nepal's national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It was obvious that he was implying a threat. But pressed to be specific if he saw a threat, Koirala refused to explain. "I will not comment, it is up to you find it out."

His refusal to be specific had told it all, however.

Koirala's consternation resurfaced on the issue of the deferral of the constituent assembly elections.

As prime minister of a seven-party ruling alliance and de facto head of state in the opposition-less nominated parliament, Koirala is seen as the most powerful leader in Nepal's history.

last-minute hurdle to stop the election, the seasoned prime minister appeared to point fingers at other quarters.

"Whoever has foiled the elections in Nepal will one day realise that it will also not remain immune to the fallout of the poll deferral. It is bound to spill over."

The repeated postponement of the CA polls is seen as a spark for an explosive situation in Nepal in terms of instability, chaos and disorder.

Strategic analysts do not need to delve too much into who will be affected the most by an unstable Nepal, with India being the only country to share more than 1700 km open borders with it. ■

REFERENDUM

A Direct Decision of the People

By holding the referendum, the country can get a direct decision of the people on forms of government

By KESHAB POUDEL

Despite scrapping the previous Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 and promulgation of new Interim Constitution, the political dispute is yet to be over.

As several attempts to hold the elections for Constituent Assembly (CA) have failed, it is the time now to give people the chance to decide for themselves whether that previous constitution had to be rejected or revived for further democratic development of the country.

"There are two ways in politics in which people directly decide their faith – one by revolution and other by referendum. Revolution has to be legalized by legal process and therefore even after the revolution a legal process is followed to legitimize the popular aspiration. Referendum is the most democratic way of getting consent of the people on the form of governance," said a political analyst.

Till now all the political parties have expressed commitment to go to the people to procure their consent. So, the consent of the people has yet been regarded as supreme. Whether it is through the election for CA or for parliament, all the political parties have to seek the democratic way to resolve the present deadlock of non-representative governance.

"The most appropriate and suitable way to resolve the present crisis would be to put the previous constitution of 1990 into a referendum. The constitution of 1990 has not yet been fully abrogated," said the analyst. "The abrogation of previous constitution by interim constitution morally holds only the parties who agree to promulgate it. The valid and legitimate way of abrogating the previous constitution can be mainly done through referendum or the Constituent Assembly."

The country has been deprived of a stable and legitimate allocation of power by a popularly backed constitution. "The previous constitution of 1990 had a

popular consent behind it under which several elections had been held from parliament to the local level. That was a constitution based upon popular consent. The interim constitution which replaced that is in fact the constitution of eight parties. This was never put into popular test for the consent of the people," said the analyst.

From Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala to former speaker of House of Representatives Daman Nath Dhungana, all of them are raising the issue of 1990 constitution. Even prime minister Koirala publicly expressed regret that it was his mistake to abrogate the previous constitution. "It was our mistake to abrogate previous constitution. In the race of populism, we promulgated new interim constitution," said Koirala to Nepal Magazine.

The consent of the people in democracy need to be procured by popularly held elections. The people cannot be subjected to an unrepresentative government for indefinite period.

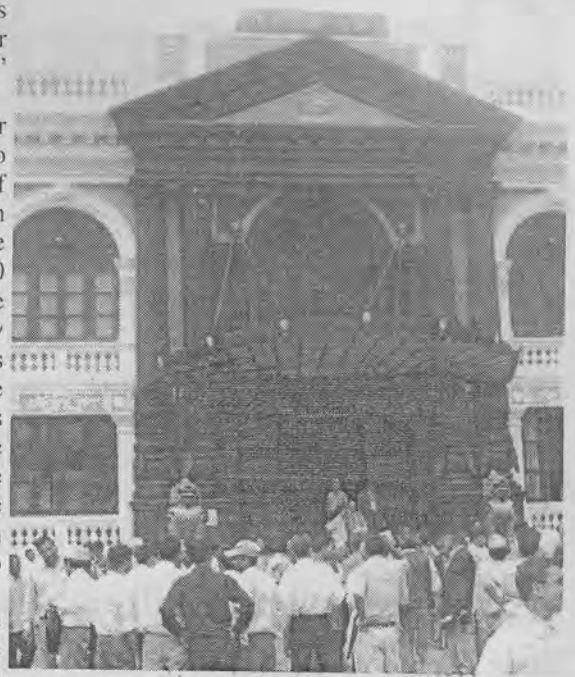
Others, too, agree that the interim constitution does not provide legitimacy to the government for indefinite period. "Interim constitution is for interim period and it cannot decide country's major issues," said Dhungana. "If they failed to hold the elections for CA, we must prepare to hold the periodical elections through previous system."

As the election has been postponed for indefinite period, there is an opportunity again to find out another democratic process to come back to the normal functioning of the constitution. People have lost faith upon the parties and political leaders in their commitment for holding the elections for CA. This

kind of faithlessness and pessimism may invite any kind of extreme alternative.

"Recently in the parliament, there was a reflection of this kind of extreme polarization of political forces. The alliance of communist of several banners and brand names reached into an agreement and delivered a message to the people through their resolution - though that was numerically a majority opinion of the house but technically it was non-enforceable. This has however enhanced the morale of more communist cadres all over the country including those who are in hibernation in the cantonment."

They have their own followings all



Parliament: In consensus building

over the country that were rejuvenated by their political showdown in the parliament. Nepali Congress – the largest non communist force of the parliament – may be facing pressure from behind to come out differently. They also have their own following all over the country that needs a message to withstand the leftist upsurge.

"If the parties failed to lead the sentiment of their following, the other alternative may be an immature and harsh leadership. Several instances have been there in the world history where an extreme action from one political force provokes another extreme force to come forward - emergence of Hitler was one such example. This is an inevitable tragic result of undesirable polarization," said the political analyst. ■

HEALTH

Developing Community Ownership

With the mobilization of community, Nepal has proved that community level networking can make a difference in overall health. With the capacity to mobilize millions of population of the village for a particular health related program, community based Nepal's health institutions have drastically changed the overall health situation in the country. Despite prolonged political instability and deadly insurgencies, Nepal's health system has shown the resilience and has continued to serve the people. Despite such improvements, the health system is still unable to reach millions of Nepalese people. The time has now come to utilize existing health structures and manpower to link the service with the community

By KESHAB POUDEL

In 1951, public services were limited to a handful of doctors dispensing simple drugs in compounded form. No injections were available; likewise, there were no nurses and paramedical workers, no health posts and no service delivery system for the rural population.

Infant mortality, always a revealing indicator of a population's overall health status, was 225 per 1,000 in 1951. One-third to one-half of children died before reaching adulthood, and this high figure contributed to Nepal's exceptionally low life expectancy rate - 28 years,

according to a 1952 estimate - Half-a-Century of Development, The History of U.S. Assistance to Nepal (1951-2001).

In 2007, Nepal has made a comparatively big stride as its health network is extensively expanded so deep to the community level that in a single day, Nepal's health system is capable of administering Vitamin A capsule, polio and other vaccinations to more than five million children.

Whether it is in the health, education, transportation, agriculture extension and rural development, most of today's

institutions are the result of concerted domestic efforts aided by support from donor such as the US government in the early 1950s.

Now the country has 5 district hospitals, 5 regional hospitals, 11 zonal hospitals, 14 district public health offices, 62 district hospitals, 62 district health offices, primary health care centers in 188 out of 205 electoral constituencies, 698 health posts, and 3129 sub-health posts. At the community level there are 48,307 Female Community Health Volunteers; 15,553

Traditional Birth Attendants; 14,769 Primary Health Care Outreach Clinic and 15,833 Expanded Program on Immunization Outreach Clinics.

With the expansion of health institutions up to lowest ward level and introduction of the Female Community Health Volunteer Programs, coverage of Nepal's health network has increased in the country improving overall health situation in the country.

Under the Ministry of Health's facilities like Sub-health Posts (SHPs), Health Posts (HPs) and Primary Health Care Centers (PHCCs) and its health personnel including Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) have contributed to transform the overall health status in the country. They have been promoting available health services by educating local mothers and other community members.

New Challenges

Despite such a success in meeting the objectives by reducing the infant mortality rate, child mortality rate and maternal mortality rate with a capacity to mobilize millions of people routinely, Nepal's health system has to make major differences at family level.

The use of contraceptive is still less than 20 percent; less than 2 percent of women received antenatal care; one in four births received no antenatal care at all. An overwhelming majority of 81 percent of births were delivered at home. Only 35 percent of women and 70 percent of men aged between 15-49 know where to go to get HIV test. Similarly, the proportion of women receiving iron supplements is just 59 percent.

"As we have already launched programs successfully mobilizing community in health sector, the time has now come to develop community ownership in health system so that family can use the existing facilities," said Ram Kumar Shrestha, executive director of Nepali Technical Group (NTAG) and renowned public health expert who has effectively mobilized FCHVs in administering Vitamin A capsules to millions of children. "Our programs alone reduced child mortality by 30 percent by high dose Vitamin A Capsules

Supplementation."

Thanks to the expertise of institutions like NTAG, Nepal's community based health system has already received international recognition. At a time when all of Nepal's Millennium Development Indicators are running behind, Nepal is in a position to achieve MDG target in child mortality by 2015.

"In the last 15 years, we have made a lot of efforts to mobilize and train FCHVs to administer Vitamin A capsules

Initiative of FCHV

As a result of a successful trial project in Jumla in 1980s launched to prevent Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) under United States International Development (USAID) support, the significance of community health volunteers were realized. The USAID funded research had demonstrated that community health workers with limited training could reliably manage childhood pneumonia-



US officials on a tour of health camps: Continued aid

Photo: NTAG

to children. Now we need to mobilize these workers in community to bring the family to the health service centers," said Shrestha, who received international recognition as a Vitamin A Sherpa last year in Time Global Health Summit. "As health institutions have already expanded up to the grass root, the time is now to develop community ownership in the health sector so that family and health system can be integrated. If we develop these new relations, the slogan of health for all can be met."

The government is also planning to implement new health policy focusing on community. "The government is now planning to increase community participation in the health system. The government just wants to be a facilitator and it is the community that needs to run the system," Health Minister Giriraj Mani Pokharel told SPOTLIGHT. "We are formulating a new plan in line with this new concept."

considered to be one of the main causes of deaths of children under five years old.

"The results of the Jumla trials encouraged health authorities to include a community based component in the national ARI control program, and helped to overcome the medical establishment's initial reluctance to allow Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) to administer antibiotics," writes the book *Half-a-Century of Development, The history of U.S. Assistance to Nepal (1951-2001)* published by USAID.

The project recruited functionally-illiterate local men to diagnose pneumonia on the basis of respiratory rate. When a case of pneumonia was detected, these village health workers gave the parents, free of charge, a course of the appropriate anti-biotic and instructions for treating the child.

Recognizing the importance of people's participation, especially

women's participation, in health of the people, the government initiated Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHVs) in fiscal year 1988/89. Starting from all the 19 districts of the Central Development Region and eight districts of mid-western development region, it was later expanded to all 75 districts of the country in a phase-wise manner. According to Annual Report of Department of Health Services, 2005/2006, there are a total of 48,307 FCHVs actively working all over the country.

FCHVs are focused on motivation and education of local mothers and community members for the promotion of safe motherhood, child health, family planning and other community health services. According to the Department of Health, with support of health personnel from the SHPs, HPs, and PHCCs, the FCHVs are promoting available health services by educating local mothers and other community members. Additionally, the FCHVs re-supply pills and distribute condoms, ORS packets and Vitamin A capsules. They also treat pneumonia cases and refer more complicated cases to health institutions. They also distribute iron tablets to pregnant women in Irion Intensification district.

During the fiscal year 2005/06, FCHV's distributed 293,182 cycles of oral contraceptive pills, condoms to 11,57,774 persons and 844,026 packets of ORS. FCHVs distributed 27 percent of pills, 7 percent of condoms and 32 percent of all ORS packet. A total of 4.8 million persons had contacted FCHVs for



Children in medical camp: Increasing access

information and services related to family planning, SM, ODI/ARI in the year 2006.

In addition to the above activities, FCHVs have provided Vitamin A Capsules to 97 percent of children (age 6-59 months) and polio drops to 4.2 million children age (0-59 months). They have also detected and treated over 150,000 pneumonia cases (children age 2-59) in 18 community-based pneumonia program district.

Change In Health Status

As a strong health network has already extended nationwide, the country has seen drastic reduction in the infant mortality rate. This results in increasing awareness at the community level.

Published by the Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2006 reveals that at current mortality level, one in every 21 Nepalese children dies before reaching age one, while one in every sixteen does not survive to the fifth birthday. Data from the 2006 NDHS show that infant mortality has declined by 41 percent over the past fifteen years from 82 deaths per 1,000 live births to 48. An even more impressive decline was observed in under-five mortality, which declined by 48 percent from 117 deaths per 1,000 live births to 61. The corresponding declines in neonatal and post neonatal mortality, respectively, over the 15 year period are 33 and 55 percent respectively.

In the last five decades, Nepal has seen drastic change in the health sector. From a handful of manpower and virtually non-existent infrastructures, Nepal's health system has increased its coverage. As Shrestha said, Nepal now needs to develop sense of family ownership in health facilities.

After successfully mobilizing millions of people through the mobilization of community based volunteers like FCHVs and using the health infrastructures and manpower, NTAG has already sown the seeds of ownership in the people. "If we develop this sense, family will bring their members to the health facilities. Thus making Nepal's health system demand oriented" said Shrestha. ■



Vitamin A Campaign: Nationwide reach

UNMIN

Searching For Role

A year after it came to Nepal, UNMIN is increasingly finding itself facing difficult customers

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

A year ago, when the United Nations set up UNMIN in Nepal, there was widest possible support for its role. From radicals to liberals, all supported UNMIN's arrival and heralded it as a guarantor of peace in the country.

But now, increasingly there are growing murmurs against UNMIN especially after the latter made it clear that it was willing to shoulder 'enlarged role' to implement the peace agreement.

So much so that even the apparently routine task of extending its tenure beyond the one-year has generated debates.

Last week on November 14, when Foreign Minister Sahana Pradhan emerged from cabinet meeting, she told the waiting journalists that while the cabinet was ready to okay the proposal extending the tenure of UNMIN by six months after it expires in January, the final decision, however, would have to be taken by the seven parties together.

"The cabinet alone cannot decide (on extending tenure of UNMIN)," Pradhan said, adding, "Since the UN was called by both the government and the Maoists, any decision regarding its term would have to be taken by the seven parties."

Moreover, the cabinet did not decide on widening the mandate of the UNMIN. In fact, none of the major political parties have come forward supporting the idea of enlarging the mandate of UNMIN. This has happened at a time when Indian media have reported New Delhi's 'displeasure' over the UNMIN officials crossing over to the Indian side to hold talks with some representatives of armed Terai outfits. That apart, there

national sovereignty, Martin said the parties had asked the United Nations to support the peace process by providing assistance in creating the conditions necessary for a free and fair Constituent Assembly election. "This is the basis for our arms monitoring, our electoral assistance and our ceasefire monitoring work," he said.



Ian Martin : UNMIN in focus

have also been reports of Prime Minister expressing his dissatisfaction over UNMIN taking up the issue of ethnic groups.

On Friday (November 16), Ian Martin, UNMIN chief and Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, said his organization would work within the existing mandate if it is not enlarged. But he clearly said that the UNMIN would continue to work with 'marginalized communities.'

"In mandating UNMIN, the Security Council affirmed its recognition of the need to pay special attention to the needs of women, children and traditionally marginalized groups in the peace process, as mentioned in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement: we have been doing this, and must continue to do this," Martin said.

Stating that UNMIN's presence at the request of the parties to the peace process does not represent external intervention or any sacrifice of

According to Martin, the Constituent Assembly election remains an integral element of the peace process.

"As Nepal enters a crucial period of its peace process, I appeal to all Nepalis to commit to tolerance and non-violence to help consolidate peace in communities across the country. I am dismayed at the regular killings, abductions and extortion in parts of the Terai. I have also repeatedly expressed publicly and privately my concern at reports, which have again increased, of abductions and extortion, as well as some killings, by cadres of the CPN(Maoist) in different parts of Nepal. Political and community leaders have a responsibility to ensure that their followers pursue their objectives peacefully. It is essential that all democratic forces work together to strengthen law and order across the country."

As UNMIN looks forward to extension of its tenure, if not its role, the political crises in the domestic front seems to have worsened.

'Let There Be Periodic Election (For Parliament) If Not Constituent Assembly Elections'

-Daman Nath Dhungana

Former Speaker of House of Representatives DAMAN NATH DHUNGANA is a well known politician. He played a role as a mediator during the two rounds of peace talks between the government and the Maoists in the past. The senior advocate was also a member of drafting committee of the 1990 Constitution. As constitutional crisis deepened after repeated deferral of the constituent assembly polls, Dhungana spoke to KESHAB POUDEL on Sunday. Excerpts:

What implications do you see following the postponement of the Constituent Assembly elections for the third time?

Postponement of the election invites a prolonged political uncertainty in the country. As the election has been indefinitely postponed, there is uncertainty everywhere. Since the present constitution is for interim period only, the country needs a new constitution and for that early election is a must.

Who do you blame for present situation?

The Maoists, of course. They used to say that their bottom line is the CA election. But, they themselves created hurdles at the last minute when the country was closer to their bottom line.

But Maoists say, they are not against the polls. Their only condition is that the declaration of a republic should precede the polls.

Had elections been held on time, the monarchy would have been abolished through a popular mandate. Whatever their demands may be, the end result is that Maoists gave longevity to the monarchy. I don't see any logic behind it.

Is there a political solution, now?

Political solution is still there. What is required now is honesty on the part of all the parties to fulfill their commitments. Political forces have to agree on the agenda where the country's independence and sovereignty will be the focal point with guarantee of human rights to its citizens.

What is the status of current interim constitution?

This constitution was formulated on the basis of a consensus. If the consensus starts to break down, this constitution automatically becomes non-functional.

Do you mean that after the recent voting in the parliament, the consensus has been broken?

Yes, the voting in the parliament did divide the parties. Despite their ideological differences, they had signed a comprehensive peace accord, proclaimed interim constitution, constituted interim parliament and interim government. But the voting has undermined all these efforts.

When did the differences first appear?

After the postponement of the elections in June, the differences surfaced. After the Maoists joined the government, the differences further widened. Once the parliament became divided, the whole thrust of consensus was shattered.

How do you see the role of the CPN-UML?

The role of the CPN-UML is like that of a half opposition and half ruling party. They supported the motion against the government although they are still a part of the government.

Do you see any possibility of patching up the differences?

They might patch up the differences temporarily but I do not see how this can go for a long period of time. Because the Maoists have shown that they don't believe in judiciary, parliament, government and economic policies, this alliance will not last long.

What should be the priority now?

One of the main priorities now should be to hold the elections for the CA. If we cannot hold the CA elections, then we must hold the periodical election (for parliament). I am very much concerned about the way political forces are creating obstructions against elections.

Why are you stressing so much on election?

Election is a process to go to the people and seek their legitimate mandate to rule the country. It is the people whose votes will decide the role of the political parties, either ruling party or opposition. One cannot rule the country for a long time without getting a mandate from the people

So, shouldn't CA be the priority?

I am not saying that we should give up the election for CA. The CA is our top priority. But if the situation does not permit holding the election for the CA and it is postponed time and again, there must be periodic election for parliament.

The election was at the door step, why was it postponed?

Nobody knows why the election was not held. Maoists shifted the goal posts when the ball was rolling towards it. I have categorically said that it is the violation of trust.

How do you see the present situation of Nepali Congress to which you belong?

With good intention, Nepali Congress has sacrificed almost everything to woo the Maoists but has gained nothing in return. All the parties agreed to hold the election on the basis of a mixed election system but now the Maoists have changed their stand and started demanding a complete proportional representation system of election.

Have you met any Maoist leader recently and have you suggested anything to them?

In my recent meeting, I had suggested to them they must abide by their commitment. I told them that they must develop a consensus to hold the election before April.

Do you think the Maoists will allow the election?

There is no guarantee that they will hold the election even after their demands for proclaiming Nepal a republic through the parliament and fully

It is the people whose votes will decide the role of the political parties, either ruling party or opposition. One cannot rule the country for a long time without getting a mandate from the people

proportional representative system for election are accepted.

You were a person who had supported the Maoist demand to hold the CA election quite early on. Do you now think that you misjudged Maoist strategy?

My only aim was to help end the armed struggle between the Maoists and the state because the Maoists are also Nepalis and they had fought the war knowingly and unknowingly. The war affected the pace of national development and democratic process.

Do you now think it was wrong to trust Maoists?

It is not a question of trusting or distrusting the Maoists. I trust all Nepalis and we need to trust Maoists more. When you have trusted the Maoists with full confidence and they continue to attack you, then in that case, one has to reconsider. Trust is a civilized treatment and the Maoists, too, need to show that they are civilized.

What next, then, now that the Maoist have breached the trust?

A roundtable conference in which civil society groups, professional groups, Dalits, Madhesis and Janjaitis should be included. I want the prime minister to take initiative for such a meeting. The Maoists have already organized that kind of round table meeting, but that did not have legitimacy.

Who will summon such meeting?

Under the sanction of the state, an all party meeting should be summoned by the prime minister. Priority of such meeting should be to fix a new date for elections for CA. Since this is an interim constitution, we need another constitution. If we cannot agree on the election model for CA, we can follow our own election system – the first past post – for periodical election. This is universal.

Of late, some people have been pointing out the need to restore the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990. Do you see such a need?

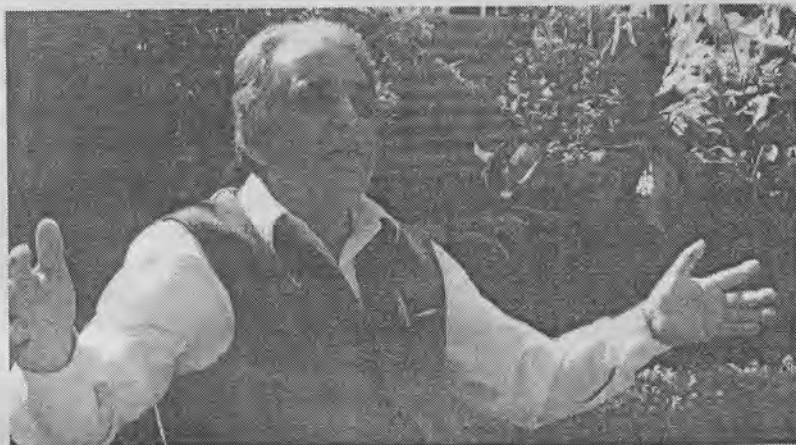
Yes, it is myself who have brought the 1990 constitution into a fresh debate. My point is that mainstream parties joined hands with the Maoist only after they had been snubbed by the king. Otherwise, the mainstream parties had not totally abandoned their love for the 1990 constitution.

Recently in an interview prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala also revealed that it was his political blunder to proclaim interim constitution and throw the 1990 constitution to the dustbin.

I don't want to comment on the prime minister's statement. What I can say now is that it is good on the part of prime minister to have realized that he was trapped. I want to suggest him not to get trapped again.

Don't you think it was his own trapping?

If you are committed to your ideology and commitment and you don't have lust for power, there is no question of getting trapped any design. If you put democracy and democratic ideals at central stage, you don't have to sacrifice your ideology. If and when it is necessary, a politician must be prepared to give up power. By blaming the chairman of interim constitution drafting committee for creating the present situation, the prime minister has exposed his



own weakness.

When there are growing disputes and debates over the modality of a new constitution making process and the revival of old constitution, how would you react to an idea to put 1990 constitution into referendum?

It can be one of the suggestions. There will be many suggestions. Every party and individual has his/her own suggestion. What we need now is to accept a civilized system to settle the differences.

Don't you think changing the electoral process will pave the way for election?

This is not a time to generate debate over forms and modalities of election. The elections date was set in the interim constitution as per the Maoist request. Actually, interim constitution was the demand of Maoists.

You were a speaker after the restoration of democracy in 1990. How do you see the role of the Speaker who assumed the chair after the recent democracy movement?

I don't want to comment on the role of Speaker.

Don't you see the political parties have a mandate to rule?

They have been ruling us on the basis of the mandate of people's movement of April 2006. How long can they rule us in the name of such mandate. Such mandate is given for just a limited time.

Maoists claim that they are winner of the armed struggle?

I don't think they defeated the state. From every angle, the Maoists have been disturbing the whole process. The country is now in a stateless situation. It is unfortunate to say that the parliamentary parties neither defended the previous constitution nor are they defending the interim constitution now. There are contradictions everywhere. In Nepali Congress, there are overwhelming members who are opposed to NC's move to go for a republic. However, it was declared that party's Mahasamiti endorsed it unanimously. The party members were not allowed to discuss and debate such an important issue. To please the Maoists, prime minister even bulldozed his party leaders, not allowing them to vote.

Do you see the possibility of election without participation of Maoists?

I don't want to see the Maoists boycotting the election but we must hold the election even if Maoists continue to create obstructions. How long can we wait for them?

I don't want to see the Maoists boycotting the election but we must hold the election even if Maoists continue to create obstructions. How long can we wait for them?

NEPAL INVESTMENT BANK LIMITED

Heights Of Success

The NIBL attains remarkable success by sticking to quality and professional service

By A CORRESPONDENT

Amid the around two-dozen commercial banks in operation in the country, Nepal Investment Bank Limited (NIBL) stands out because of its continued achievements.

When it marked its 21st Annual General Meeting on November 8, the bank came up with even more impressive figures.

Presenting the Board of Directors Report, Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Account for the financial year 2006-2007, the Bank's Chairman & Chief Executive Director Prithivi Bahadur Pandé expressed satisfaction that the continued delivery of quality service were now bearing fruits.

According to its annual reports, the Bank has increased its deposits from Rs 18,927 millions to Rs 24,488 millions in FY 2006-2007 (a growth of 29.39 %). Similarly, during the year, loans and advances of the Bank grew from Rs 13,178 million to Rs 17,769 million (a growth of 34.84%). The net profit of the Bank for the year under review was Rs 501 million, a (growth of 43.25%) over last year.

The bank even distributed 25% bonus share, 5% cash dividend from the profit of the fiscal year 2006/2007(2063/2064) to its shareholders. The bank also decided to call a 20% Right Issue (one share for each five share) on Banks paid up capital after issuance of bonus share.

The NIBL has 17 branches with the opening of its Nepalgunj Branch on 8th April 2007, Thamel branch on 7th June 2007 & Kalimati branch on 12th October 2007. All the new branches of the Bank are linked online through ABBS to all other branches of the Bank and provide complete banking services.

Nepal Investment Bank Ltd. was

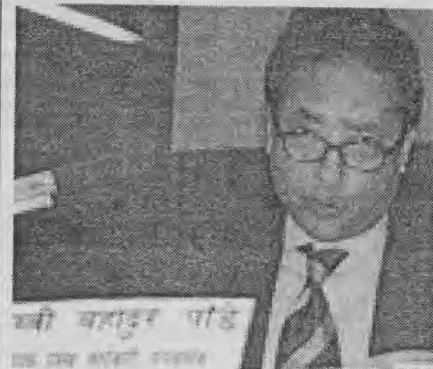
awarded the "Best Presented Accounts award - 2006", in the banking sector by The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal (ICAN) for meeting the stringent benchmark criteria set by ICAN.

In order to attract customers, the Bank has launched Rs 1.00 Saving Scheme "Afnai Bachat Khata" across all its 17 branches starting August 17, 2007. "The scheme is targeted towards the population with low disposable income. Customers can visit any of the branches of the bank and open a saving account with a minimum balance of Rs 1.00 All customers will be issued with a Visa Electron Debit Card with an issuance fee of Rs 200. It is an opportunity for people with low disposable income to start banking relation and have access to the services of one of the leading banks in Nepal and thereby avail all international services and privileges associated with it," states a press release by the Bank.

The Bank has also launched a saving scheme called "Lotus Bachat Khata" across all its 17 branches. "Customers can visit any branches of the bank and open a saving account with a minimum balance of Rs 1,000.00 All customers under this scheme are entitled to an interest of 2.25% p.a. Clients will be issued with a Visa Electron Debit Card with an issuance fee of Rs 200.00 e-banking and ABBS services (Kathmandu Valley only) are free for all clients."

In order to provide efficient & convenient services at the Corporate office in Durbar Marg (Annex 1) building, the Bank has expanded the customer service area by adding additional 1800 sq. ft. area.

"In terms of electronic deliveries, the Bank has issued over 85,000 Visa Electron Debit Cards to its customers and



CEO Pande : Scaling new heights

deployed 600 point of sales (POS) terminals all over Nepal. For the first time in Nepal the Bank has started Mobile Top Up services from the Banks ATMs & NIBLe-Banking. Through this services customers can recharge their Pre-Paid mobile worth Rs 200/-, Rs 500/- and Rs 1000/- The Bank has installed additional ATMs at Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Bouddha, New Road, Birgunj branch, Putalisadak branch & Narayan garh branch. The total ATMs of the Bank has gone up to 15 numbers."

The bank is also engaged in social activities. It organized the first "NIBL Annual Marathon 2007" on March 17, 2007. As a part of its social responsibility, NIBL, through its first Annual Marathon, had taken an initiative to support Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT) to raise funds for the restoration and conservation of Patan Durbar/Sundari Chowk. The Bank managed to generate Rs 50 lakhs from various individuals corporate houses & World monument fund from this initiative. "NIBL contributed Rs 900,000 to United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR's) Nepal Program, as part of its corporate social responsibility. The fund is to be utilized to fund the primary education needs of the refugee Bhutanese students."

In an endeavor to promote growth and development of football in the country, NIBL has renewed the agreement with Friends Club, Kopundole. As per the Agreement, NIBL has provided additional sponsorship amount of NPR 800,000. Friends Club Kopundole shall play football wearing the jerseys bearing joint logos of Nepal Investment Bank Ltd. & Friends Club Kopundole. ■

Emergency In Pakistan

- M.K. Rimal

The imposition of emergency in Pakistan by President Gen. Pervez Musharraf has generated worldwide criticism apart from vigorous protests from the opposition parties in his own country. In this twenty first century, when interdependence has become unavoidable for healthy survival for any nation, big or small, such important developments cannot and should not be viewed in isolation. Even though it is entirely an internal affair of Pakistan, it is bound to have wider ramification, and generate ripples, smaller or bigger, both near and far. Anyway, no one should jump to hasty conclusions and condemn the Pakistani ruler for the action he must have thought was most vital for his country. It might be a set back to democracy for those who think democracy only can give bread and butter to the world. But, our experiences of democracy in most of the countries of the Asia and Africa have not been very happy. Even in our own country Nepal, the twelve years of the democratic regimes could not instill similar faith in the people as it does in the peoples of affluent countries. Indeed, a handful of politicians have become millionaires overnight but the miserable fate for twenty-five million poor people has not improved at all, rather worsened. Democracy could, indeed, be the best form of government in the hands of men of integrity and character, loyal to the country and people. But for the politicians who don't mind selling their souls for personal gains it could prove to be a curse, as evidenced by current politics in our own country.

Even though a big country and the nuclear power now, Pakistan has been facing very difficult times since it was born in 1947. And it is not the first time emergency has been imposed in Pakistan and neither is Musharraf, the first ruler to resort to such a strategy. What is it that drives Pakistani rulers to impose emergency? Not that they love to do it or they want to become despots. They must be confronting certain unavoidable compulsions. With a contentious and

difficult province, a big unfriendly neighbor in the northwest, a strong opposition group with extreme fundamentalist inclination having a large following and an inimical neighbor that is not only a strong nuclear power but harbors the tendency to disintegrate its smaller neighbors also, no regime in Pakistan could ever have a smooth sailing and no Pakistani ruler could ever have enjoyed the luxury of a sound sleep. Besides, Musharraf's very close relations with the United States of America, despite the overwhelming anti-American populace in his country, has already inspired quite a few attempts on his life. The most recent one, they say, was quite close. Musharraf's tough stance and vigorous campaigns to root out Islamic terrorism have not made life easier for him and his nation. A senior political analyst opined that this step had become imperative for Musharraf. The next attempt on his life was sure to be fatal. Musharraf, he said further, was left with no other option. The sudden spurt in the activities of the RAW in close collaboration with the Talibans to destabilize Pakistan and annihilate its president must have expedited the extreme action of imposing emergency for Musharraf, added the analyst.

The smaller countries of South Asia believe India does not want political stability neither economic development in the smaller countries of the region. As such, she has to continue the destabilization process so that her grip on the region does not slacken. And whenever a strong leadership emerges in any country, it tries to break the stranglehold even by imposing emergency or martial law. Consequently, as long the destabilization process in the region continues, emergencies will be imposed whenever and wherever necessary. Therefore, if the world community wants that all the smaller countries should not resort to emergency, they must see that they are not pressurized by a bigger and powerful neighbor to follow policies that are detrimental to their own interests. They must come

forward to protect and defend the legitimate interests of the smaller and weaker nations. But, it never happens. This has been clearly proved by our bitter experiences of recent years when our poor country was being ravaged and devastated by the violent activities of the Maoists from the safe sanctuary of the most friendly neighbor for ten long years, who kept on aiding and abetting them all the time and the whole world just looked on as if enjoying our discomfiture. But Pakistan is not weak, neither small. It can meet any exigency on its own.

Pakistan could ever have a smooth sailing and no Pakistani ruler could ever have enjoyed the luxury of a sound sleep.

The security of a nation, safeguarding its integrity and sovereignty is the prime job of the government in power. Pakistan has already been forced to lose a big chunk of its territory - its whole eastern wing. It continues to face vicious subversive machination from its arch enemy. It is reported even after sixty years a big part of the more than a billion Indian population is yet to reconcile to the creation of Pakistan. We do strongly believe that this is Pakistan's internal affair and as long it does not affect any country directly, there should be no interference from any quarter. Since opinions do vary, there is a big concern over President Musharraf's imposition of emergency in his country. Pakistan is being threatened of suspension by the Commonwealth and aid cuts by the U.S. Since this is not the first time Pakistan knows well how to face such threats. Those who are demanding that President Musharraf should step down are doing a great disservice to Pakistan. Since this emergency is just a passing phase, well wishers of Pakistan need not be concerned. Moreover, Musharraf has already committed that by January

elections will be held in Pakistan and has already taken steps to meet his commitment. There is no reason why his words should be doubted. Pakistan has also experienced the regime of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. All opposition parties behave in that fashion and want to grab power. So, there is nothing new in the opposition upsurge in Pakistan. As a matter of fact Pakistan had never experienced such a wonderful growth rate and economic development as she has done under Musharraf's rule.

It is very strange that a few misdirected elements in Nepal have started opposition campaigns against Musharraf's imposition of emergency in Pakistan. Those who cannot control their own house are trying to interfere in others. Why can't they realize that their miserable fate is due to the continued destabilizations from a friendly neighbor? Why cannot they work to bring down the unconstitutional seven party government's authoritarian regime that has taken their poor country to the verge of destruction? Granted that Pakistan has not made any serious efforts to build up more intimate relations with Nepal. But Pakistan has never done anything to hurt Nepal or the Nepali sentiments. As a smaller partner Nepal should have taken more initiatives to cement the bilateral relations. King Mahendra and King Birendra had made some feeble attempts. But the restoration of democracy in 1990 started a lopsided and submissive policy that blocked all the paths of developing strong bilateral relations even with other smaller partners of the SAARC. It should be clearly visible to discerning eyes that the campaigns started by some Nepali groups against a friendly country's internal affairs have been clearly inspired by alien and anti-national forces. The Pakistanis are not that naïve not to understand that.

We do trust president Musharraf will not be swayed by the motivated and subjective criticisms of his recent measures to safeguard the integrity of his country as well as to guard against further attempts on his life. It is for the people of Pakistan to decide who rules them. To those who can't see their own faults but don't hesitate to find fault with others we would like to say "Physician, heal thyself."

Diabetes: A common problem

Diabetes occurs because the body can't use glucose properly, either owing to a lack of the hormone insulin, or because the insulin available doesn't work effectively.

The full name 'diabetes mellitus' derives from the Greek word 'diabetes' meaning siphon - to pass through - and 'mellitus' - the Latin for honeyed or sweet. This is because not only is excess sugar found in the blood but it may also appear in the urine, hence it being known in the 17th century as the 'pissing evil'.

Diabetes has been a recognized condition for more than 3,500 years.

More than three-quarters of people with diabetes have what is called type 2 diabetes mellitus. This used to be known as non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) or maturity-onset diabetes mellitus.

The remainder have type 1 diabetes mellitus, which used to be known as insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.

What's the difference?

- In type 1, the body's unable to produce any insulin. This usually starts in childhood or young adulthood. It's treated with diet control and insulin injections.
- In type 2, not enough insulin is produced or the insulin that is made by the body doesn't work properly. This tends to affect people as they get older, and usually appears after the age of 40.

Normal blood sugar control

The body converts glucose from food into energy. Glucose comes ready made in sweet foods such as sweets and cakes, or from starchy foods such as potatoes, pasta or bread once they're digested. The liver is also able to manufacture glucose.

Under normal circumstances, the hormone insulin, which is made by the pancreas, carefully regulates how much glucose is in the blood. Insulin stimulates



cells to absorb enough glucose from the blood for the energy, or fuel, that they need. Insulin also stimulates the liver to absorb and store any glucose that's left over.

After a meal, the amount of glucose in the blood rises, and this triggers the release of insulin. When blood glucose levels fall, during exercise for example, insulin levels fall too.

A second hormone manufactured by the pancreas is called glucagon. It stimulates the liver to release glucose when it's needed, and this raises the level of glucose in the blood.

Insulin is manufactured and stored in the pancreas, which is a thin gland about 15cm (6in) long that lies crosswise behind the stomach. It's often described as being two glands in one, since in addition to making insulin it also produces enzymes that are vital for digestion of food.

These include lipase, which helps to digest fat, and amylase that helps to digest starchy foods. It also releases 'bicarbonate of soda' to neutralize any stomach acid that may otherwise damage the lining of the gut. ■

Nepal: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

- Shirish Ranabhat, Ph.D.

The 2006 mass movement, popularly known as "Jana Andolan-II", against King Gyanendra's autocratic rule in Nepal has created several unimaginable. First, the Maoists rebels gave up their 10-year-long guerrilla war and joined the government; second, all political parties joined hands for the first time in the history for a good cause of restoring peace and democracy in the country; and third, Nepali people exonerated the political leaders, who have nearly two decade long record of corruption and incompetence.

Historically, Nepalese have long been suppressed socially and politically, and deprived economically. Nepalese have experienced over a hundred years of autocratic Rana regime and a party-less Panchayat system for over 30 years. After the adaptation of parliamentary democracy in 1990, Nepalese have been exposed to a democracy.

Post-1990 era has become the worst nightmare for Nepalese. Thousands of Nepalese lost their lives during a decade long Maoists' guerilla war. One of the poorest countries in the world has become a 'gold mine' for corruption. Nepal has observed a worst law and order situation in last two decades. Nepal has become the safest transit to smugglers and the best hiding place for international terrorists and criminals. Social abuses have increased exponentially. Kidnapping, extortion, homicide/public massacre, destruction of public and historical properties have become child's play.

Nepalese have had enough when King Gyanendra assumed full executive power. They wanted a complete social and political reform. Nepalese actively and enthusiastically participated in Jana Andolan - II to topple down the King's direct rule. And, they succeeded. The King surrendered, and handed over the executive power to the Nepalese people.

The agony of Nepal did not end with the end of direct rule of the King. A new phase of conflict and confrontation related with ethnicity, racial and lingual issues, sectarianism and social-cultural disputes has arisen. Total absence of the rule of law, violation of human rights, increasing criminal activities and prevailing scale of impunity show that this situation is more dangerous than the Maoists' guerrilla war or the autocratic rule of the King. The structure and dynamics of these new conflicts can be very difficult to resolve, if not timely, wisely and honestly addressed. Many of these dynamics have their roots in the political, sectarian and ethnic

polarization. One should be clear that polarization can lead the country to a grave danger.

The rise of the Maoists, an ultra-communist group, has added complexity to the peace, harmony, and the political structure of Nepal. Their intentions of imposing a harsh federal republic system under an authoritarian rule, and use of war as an instrument of political consolidation have served to widen the gap between national and democratic forces and hence, hindered the quest for the peace process.

Nepal is a very diverse country. We have ages-long experience of unity, tolerance and harmony among geographical, racial, lingual, religious and cultural diversities. However, none of them was a problem in Nepali politics until the popular movement of 1990, when democracy was restored. A sort of political balance evolved among the various groups and all of them were allocated spaces and opportunities within the constitutional and democratic system of governance. Unfortunately, Maoists rebel started a political-cum-sectarian war involving various ethnic groups. The war ended after a decade with a heavy toll of innocent people.

Nepal is yet to count the thousands of people who have been killed during Maoists' war, ethnic and sectarian conflicts. Nepal has yet to assess the cost of damage to the infrastructure. The responsibility to restore peace in the country lies primarily with the Nepali people and political parties, which represent them. But it is tragic that all Nepali political parties start with the demand for a share of power and leave the central issue out of the debate. Prospects for peace will remain bleak until the political parties can evolve a common agenda and tie-up themselves in unity and confidence for reordering the Nepal polity.

After a decade long anarchy and rebellion, now, for the second time (first in 1991) the Maoists have exercised full financial, administrative and political privileges. Maoists' representation in a coalition government and interim parliament gave a positive message to the nation. The political and legal commitment of all the parties and their consensus on holding CA elections to decide the fate of the monarchy and to draw up a new constitution gave the people an assurance of lasting peace and political stability in the country.

Almost all political parties changed their ideals and policies in favor of a republican system of government. With the recent withdrawal of Maoists from the coalition government, the CA elections have been

postponed indefinitely. Apart from the political instability, worst law and order situation, weak and collapsing economy,

involvement of Maoist's sister organization Young Communist League (YCL) in abduction, murder, ransom, illegal tax collection, destruction of public properties, and illegal control of private properties, rise of ethnic conflicts, separatist movement in Terai, and above all impunity to guilty of murder, destruction, and corruption have made the situation more complex than before. The moral of civil servants and security personals is badly damaged. Sovereign people, the ultimate and supreme power of the land, are terrified and upset.

Maoists' irrational and unreasonable demand and main stream politicians' inability and poor vision to lead the country, Nepal's future for peace and prosperity is uncertain. In last one-and-a-half-year, after overthrowing the King's direct rule, Nepal has experienced bitter impacts of political instability, massive anarchism, serious ethnic and cultural conflicts, deadly sense of sectarianism and external pressure. Nepal seems on the verge of losing her independent identity and national integrity.

The political wind of Nepal began to change its direction with the Maoist's new demand to abolish the monarchy immediately and declare Nepal a republican state by the interim parliament. This U-turn proves that Maoists do not believe in people's judgment and they do not have faith in multiparty parliamentary system of government. The reality in Nepal, which has to be clearly grasped and understood, is that all the responsible political parties must compromise on reasonably rational grounds. They should not forget that it is Nepali people who can settle their disputes; can save their national unity and integrity; can consolidate their multiparty democratic system and the rule of law; can build their fate and future solid and bright. So, all political parties, civic societies and all stakeholders should have trust and believe in sovereign people. They should not invite a worst situation with more confusion and uncertainty. They must show commitment to accept the verdict given by the people.

Executive Member, Nepali Janasamparka Samiti (NJS), USA, and Coordinator, Policy and Research Department, NJS-USA.

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Confusion in Nepali Politics

-Dr. Tilak Rawal

The special session of the parliament summoned to deliberate and decide on the Maoists' twin proposals of a) declaring Nepal a republic before the now uncertain looking polls to the constituent assembly, and b) adopting a fully proportional electoral system, has unfortunately created more inter and intra party divisions. This is not what the frustrated Nepali expected. The Maoists succeeded in garnering majority support in favor of their proposal but not enough, two-third majority, to effect a change in the interim constitution. It is clearly understood, therefore, that any directive of the parliament with regard to implementation of these proposals will have no binding on the current government of which Maoist is still believed to be a part. With the Maoists' determination to get these parliament passed proposals implemented and NC along with a strong section of UML now remaining opposed to these, UML sided with the Maoists in the voting. It looks like instability is bound to aggravate in days to come. The bloody violence carried out in a limited scale in Terai by some armed groups trying to be recognized politically, may spread to other parts of the country as was the situation before the forging of the alliance between the Maoists and the seven parties and signing of the 12 point peace accord by them. If Maoists decide to take resort to arms formally, which let us hope is unlikely, the new scenario will be entirely different from the previous one when Maoists were the only recognized and equipped rebels with the demonstrated ability to inflict injury on individuals and institutions at a time of their choice. The envisaged scenario will have not one but several armed groups with matching resources and ability, sometimes cooperating and

mostly competing with each other for supremacy: the sufferer will be as usual common people and the already injured economy, which has begun to show some signs of improvement despite appreciation of national currency and increase in oil prices.

Let alone a resurrection of armed struggle by the powerful Maoists, stability wanting Nepali would hate to see them taking to the street even in the so called peaceful manner. After emerging victorious in the special session of the parliament, therefore, Maoist leadership may wish to show some flexibility in the current session of the parliament, convened on November 19 and immediately adjourned till 29, by agreeing to let the sovereign people of Nepal decide on monarchy. Further, a solution could be worked out on the type of electoral system to be followed, giving due consideration to individual right and freedom. Nepalis do not want either party in current conflict to be adamant on the positions taken with respect to monarchy and the type of electoral system: NC citing constitutional provisions and Maoist showing parliamentary majority in their favor. On the issue of republic declaration by the interim parliament the continuity of which is likely to be questioned in a serious manner should the adjourned session of the parliament fail to clear the impasse, the general feeling seems to be that the people should not be deprived of the opportunity to give their verdict on this issue of vital importance. Let us not forget this verdict will be weighty and a legitimate one and will have to be obeyed not only by the political parties but also the monarch who has maintained a low profile in recent months and does not look much different from a well-to-do private citizen of this poor nation. Maoist supremo

Parchanda and their learned man Dr. Bhattari may kindly recall their very justifiable anger and agony when the parliament



and the government created after the popular movement made major proclamations and decisions on major issues of national importance. Without Maoists' representation in these bodies then, such acts were thought to be intended to deprive due share of credit to them who had played an effective role in concluding the movement in a meaningful manner. People sympathized with them and were happy to see their inclusion as proclaimers in parliament and major decision makers in government in due course of time. Following the same line of thinking and also in keeping with what is provided in the interim constitution, can anyone blame us commoners if we beg not to be deprived of the opportunity to give verdict on the type of political system for this country? It may also be noted that Maoist chief has been on record umpteen times in the past vowing strict adherence to people's verdict on this issue. Maoists are right that ideas change over time and sometimes decisions need to be altered, too, but what is the harm in letting people exercise their franchise in the constituent assembly polls that do not happen every five or ten years? People will be thankful if they are given this chance.

People are hopeful that the long adjournment of the winter session will be productively used by political leaders in clearing the prevailing confusion by

initiating both intra and inter party dialogue in a pragmatic manner. People would like to hear loud and clear from their leaders on these issues. It may be humbly submitted that the confused people often find themselves frustrated and utterly perplexed listening to the message thrown for mass consumption after well publicized political meetings, be they of supreme leaders or that of dialogue committees. Politicians should work together in clearing the confusion if they want to save themselves and their parties from being further discredited. Let a practical date for the polls be fixed by forgetting about indulging in time consuming exercise of changing the leadership and the government. Despite numerous accusations leveled against G. P. Koirala and the gradual erosion in his popularity, his stepping down from power or incapacitation is bound to create a vacuum for quite sometime due basically to a lack of an acceptable and effective substitute. Moreover, notwithstanding mouthwatering perks and privileges associated with the supreme position, not many politicians would dare get into his pair of shoes at this difficult point of time. Let us, therefore, wish the octogenarian leader the much needed good health and success in holding the polls without having to cancel them again. Let us also not forget that failure in delivering the goods will be blamed mainly on Koirala but the cooperating seven parties will not be spared, too. People want the seven party alliance to work united in holding the polls giving everyone, be they royalist or someone else, the right to vote and contest elections in a free and fearless environment. Let us also stop fantasizing with the idea of conducting polls without participation of any measure political party, let alone Maoists, which has got political strength as well as the oft demonstrated ability to scare anyone off from any event.

(Dr. Rawal is a former governor of Nepal Rastra Bank)

"Our Attention Is On The Peace Process"

- Ad Melkert

UN Under Secretary General and UNDP Associate Administrator AD MELKERT recently visited Nepal and inaugurated a micro-hydro project in Baglung district. During his stay, Melkert, who served as a member of the Board of Directors at the World Bank for over three years, discussed the current and future development programs of UNDP with the political party leaders, senior government officials, civil society leaders and media. He is also a former minister of the Netherlands. Excerpts of his interaction with the press:

What was your recent visit to Nepal about?

This is an important occasion to visit Nepal. Of course, my three day visit cannot make me expert on Nepal but what I have seen is nice and dedicated Nepalese people.

How did you find the work of UNDP?

There are very motivated people in UNDP and UN has been doing very useful works. I am very happy to see that UNDP rural energy development program has been able to reach people living in such remote areas. Even interesting is the community participation and efforts to bring electricity to the village.

What did you see in the village?

It gives great satisfaction to see the visible changes brought in the lives of the people. This was occasion to discuss with my colleagues for pro-poor, sustainable development, gender equality, HIV/AIDS and clean energy. UNDP will spend US\$ 100 million in three years period. In political sector, UNDP and UNICEF played a role in verification process.

How do you see economic activities here?

Economic activities are going on. We have very good cooperation with the World Bank. There is a need to step up cooperation among UNDP, the World Bank and other bilateral donor agencies. They should coordinate.

Can Nepal achieve MDGs?

We feel that it is hard to achieve Millennium Development Goal by the year 2015 in many sectors. We are now half way and we can still achieve some of the goals in case we do hard work.



There is no doubt that there is a good progress in some areas of MDGs but there is uncertainty on political process which is creating all kinds of problems. There is a huge inequality in Nepal particularly affecting life of women and children. This is the key area which needs to be addressed. I am very pleased to meet and discuss development process with key actors in politics and development.

What role will the UNDP play in future?

I want to emphasize strong commitment by UNDP and our board to support Nepal's development programs. After visiting Baglung, I find that there is direct impact of many development activities in the life of rural poor. UNDP has financially and technically supported the micro-hydro scheme of 42 Kw in Bhumgite Village Development Committee in Baglung district and the electricity produced by the plant is reaching to 420 households and has considerably changed the life of people living in the village.

How do you see the peace process?

Now, our attention is on the peace process but we will continue to support development activities. Economic growth has suffered because of conflict. Political issues need to end soon so that we can focus on development. UNDP's resources will be available to carry out development activities. Social inclusion, gender sensitivities are important.

What about the local initiatives?

I am very much impressed by local initiatives to build infrastructures like micro hydro. There are enormous challenges to carry out development activities. We feel very strong solidarity to reach poor people of Nepal. It is fair to say that economic growth is needed in Nepal. The growth needs to be inclusive and women and girls must be included in that process. ■

KOREAN FILM FESTIVAL

Depicting Korea

Korean films depict complex human relations and social transformation going on in Korean society

By A CORRESPONDENT

Films are the best way to visualize social transformation, human relations, trauma and tragedy of particular society and country. Most of the films are made on the basis of social and cultural changes of a particular society.

Despite the language barrier, one can understand the message of the films through the sentiments expressed by particular actors in particular circumstances of film. This is what Nepalese film lovers have experienced after watching four Korean films depicted in the first Korean Film Festival.

Like all the film makers of the world, Korean films are made by viewing and



looking at the transformation of Korean society, human relations, love and tragedy.

Tired of watching commercial Hollywood and Bollywood movies, Nepalese film lovers found a different kind of cinemas to watch this time.



Unlike other commercial movies, Korean films were more realistic.

The film Joint Security Areas lured many audiences as it showed how divided Korean society has to face trauma and tragedy even after decades of end of cold war. Unlike Germany which was unified in 1988, Koreans are yet to attain Korean Unification.

The film Joint Security Area is a film which showed the tragedy of a divided nation with similar culture, language and history. The film depicts killing of soldiers in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) - an area which demarcates two Koreas. In the whole process of investigation, the film ended with a message of tragic situation. The film showed the soldiers of both the countries eyeing each other and looking as an enemy of each other without knowing why they are facing each other.

Another film Il Mare depicted the relations of young couple who are in deep love. Though the young couple like each other and they are in love, they are unable to share their inner feelings with



each other for quite a long time. Because of social barriers and conservative approach, they found it difficult to share their closeness.

From the tragedy of battlefield to human relations of a young couple and social surroundings, Korean films left good impacts on Nepalese mind about their quality.

Although Korea is not far away from Nepal and it is very popular destination for Nepalese workers, Nepalese people had to wait for a long time to see Korean films in their own country.

Thanks to the efforts of Embassy of Republic of Korea, Nepalese film lovers had the opportunity this time to watch Korean films which are able to depict the social transformation and changing life.

Started on November 12, the five-days Korean Film Festival drew a large number of Nepalese fans. Inaugurated by Korean ambassador to Nepal, Nam Sang-Jung, four Korean films were screened at the exhibition.

"Film is the most effective way to depict the life, culture and values, life styles and sentiments and thoughts of our nation," said ambassador Nam Sang. "I am happy to introduce Korean films in Nepal."

All the four films which were screened in the capital are super hit films of Korea.

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