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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Jan 18-24, 2008

CA Polls Fuzzy Picture



Politics	:	Rise Of Daughter
Earthquake Day	:	Learning Lesson
Loadshedding	:	Crippling Effect

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CONTENTS

	Page
LETTERS	3
NEWS NOTES	4
BRIEFS	6
OPINION : Dr. Ananda Bahadur Thapa	7
NATIONAL: Termors of terror	10
Load Shedding: Crippling Cuts	11
Unemployment : Rush for jobs	18
Prachanda: Red Herring	19
Environment : First concrete achievement	20
ART: Roof of the world	21
Book	22
QUOTE UNQUOTE/TRANSITION	23
Obituary : Sir Edmund Hillary	24

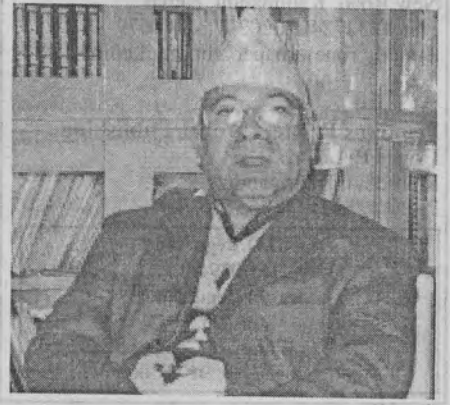


COVER STORY: Pluralism Or One Idea State As proponents of one idea state are dominant, the election, if held, can become a setback to pluralism Page 12



SUJATA KOIRALA: Lady Luck
The elevation of the prime minister's flamboyant daughter in the power hierarchy has more to it than meets the eye

INTERVIEW:
Madhav Kumar Nepal
CPN-UML general secretary Nepal spoke about various issues on contemporary political issues



SPOTLIGHT

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

Vol. 27, No 19, January 18, 2008
Magh 4, 2064

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

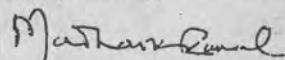
Printers : Printers World Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.
Maitidevi, Kathmandu
Ph : 4423904, 4426520

C.D.O.Regd. No
151/039-40

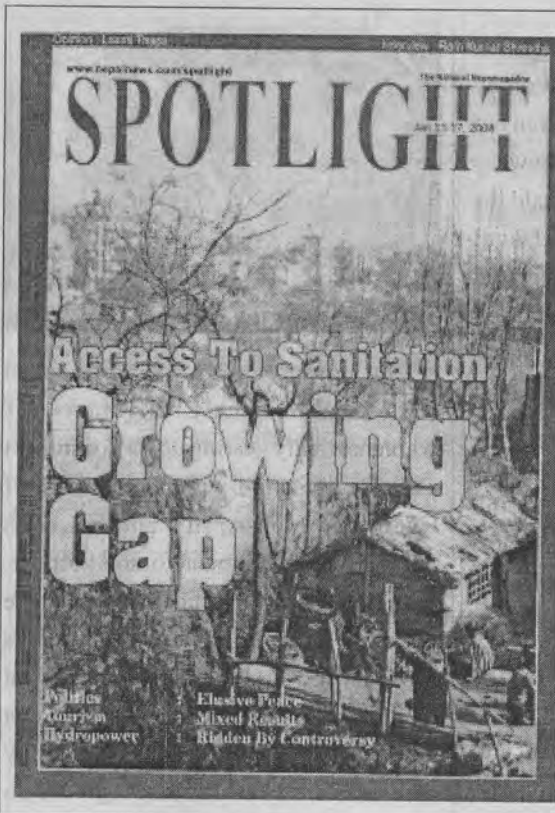
Postal Regd. No
42/61/62

U.S. Library of Congress
Catalogue No. 91-905060

The SPAM government has finally agreed to fix a date for elections to the Constituent Assembly. This is just another ploy to take the Nepali people for a ride for the third time. As we have been emphasizing, all the time, since the nominated members of the unconstitutional parliament will be the ultimate losers if the elections are really held, no one sincerely wants that the government should conduct it. Neither the seven parties in government with their Maoists collaborator want the elections as they are all apprehensive that the overwhelming poor masses will totally reject them. They know that very soon there is going to be a big hue and cry for a non- partisan neutral government to conduct the elections in an impartial manner. And they will have no option but to quit. How free and fair will the proposed elections be under their illegal dispensation has been clearly manifested by the naked loot of the poor country by the parliamentarians themselves whose foremost duty is to preserve the poor country's limited resources from being wasted. The finance minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat was supposed to be carrying in a comparatively cleaner image and upright behavior than his other colleagues in the government. But by giving in to such a totally immoral and corrupt proposal tamely he has proved he is also tarred with the same brush like others. We are not only disappointed in him but extremely frustrated to see that neither the government nor the parliament contains one upright and patriotic individual. How can such a government be trusted to carry out the act of conducting elections to the noble and historic assembly that will frame the first constitution that must reflect nothing but the overwhelming peoples' wills and aspirations. The constitution directs the destiny of the nation and its people and must not be permitted to be influenced by any political doctrine. For this the first and foremost imperative requirement is total peace and security in the country and a regime of total law and order. This government of SPAM has failed to provide both and consequently is not at all qualified to stay in authority at this particular juncture. The Nepali people can no more stay unconcerned and must wake up to oust this SPAM government. The Nepali Army is the one organization that can be depended upon to defend the country from the imminent disintegration. They cannot even think of integrating the Maoists rebels in their fold. No force indoctrinated with extreme political ideology can be assimilated in the national army. The Maoist leaders would do well to practise restraints in their outbursts against the Nepali Army and its personnel. They will only alienate the overwhelming neutral people if they continue to unjustly vilify the Nepali Army. And lastly, we again exhort Nepal's friends not to use their influence and high offices to support corrupt politicians and this illegitimate government. They cannot afford to stay quiet and let this nominated unpopular government behave in the most authoritarian way that is only leading the country towards total destabilization. That will only damage their image as votaries of democracy.



Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Sorry Saga

It is very unfortunate to read that more than 13,000 children die annually due to lack of sanitation in Nepal (Spotlight January 11-17). Whatever the situation is, sanitation is not a priority for our political leaders and there is no one to raise the voices of poor people of Nepal. As our political leaders, civil society members and others are also busy chanting political slogans, I don't think anybody will show concern to save these helpless children..

Neema Lama
Boudha via-email

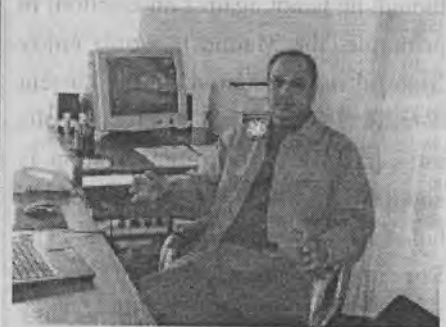
Facing The Music

One of the major challenges for Nepal in coming days will be to face the consequences of global warming. However, only a few Nepalese have shown any concern towards it. From policy makers to political parties, they have not shown any commitment towards it. If the present trend of rise of temperature continues, many glaciers will outburst creating major problems for us. Nepal has already faced unpredictable weather pattern in the last few decades resulting in major losses. I hope policy makers in Nepal do something to mitigate the effects of global warming.

Subodha Rai
Canberra Australia via email

Interesting Theme

Interview of Sanjaya Adhikary, country representative of Water-Aid Nepal gave an interesting theme.



Actually, persons like Adhikary, who have been working to uplift the life of people, deserves to be congratulated for their contribution. I agree with his concern on the loss of human life due to lack of sanitation. As he pointed out, Nepal has to maximize the opportunity of 2008 as the international year of sanitation by developing a national sanitation master plan recognizing the right of the people to sanitation. I hope Nepalese government will take necessary steps to look into the issues raised by Adhikary.

Kumar Ghimire
Bangalore India via-email

Sanitation Story

After reading political stories almost all the time regarding the petty issues of internal infighting and feuds, your cover story on sanitation (Access to Sanitation: Widening Gap January 11-17) was interesting to read. If a construction of latrine can bring transformation in social status, this is a good area for government investment. It is unfortunate to read that the government investment is nominal. I would like to request the government that it must sanction adequate budget to sanitation.

Jitendra Lal Kayastha
Via-email

Basic Denial

If a country cannot provide a basic sanitation facility to its citizens, one cannot expect other rosy programs from it. Nepal's tragedy at present is that its government and political leadership have been talking about the rosy picture for future through the holding of constituent assembly election but vast majority of its citizens do not have basic facilities like latrine. I am disappointed

to know that there are still more than half of the population who do not have access to basic facilities like sanitation. Instead of talking big things, our political leaders must work to provide the basic sanitary facilities to the overwhelming population.

Sunita Subba
Via-email

Biased Reporting

Your cover story on Suspended Republic (January 4-10) was biased as it tried to minimize the historic pronouncement by the interim parliament to declare Nepal as a federal republic. Whether one likes it or not, Nepal is now republic and the day for monarchy is no more. In such a situation, I don't see any reason to defend the monarchy or denounce the republic. Spotlight also needs to express its commitment towards republic.

Bhogendra Dhakal
Via-email



Madhesi Parties Not Encouraged By Election

Raising a big uncertainty over the election, Madhesi party leaders have demanded that rights of Madhesis be addressed before any election. On Saturday (Jan 12), Mahantha Thakur, the chief of the Terai-Madhes Democratic Party (TMDP), said his party will not take part in the Constituent Assembly (CA) election before the rights of Madhesis are ensured. Addressing a mass meeting in Birgunj, Thakur said that though he is not against an election, in principle, the Madhesis won't enjoy 'rightful representation' in the current context. He said he will take part in polls only if fully proportional system is adopted. He asked the government to hold talks with armed Terai outfits. "The Special Task Force is engaged in suppressing and creating terror. They must be withdrawn. Otherwise, we will seize their weapons and fight back," he said. Thakur also urged the government to withdraw government officials of hilly origin from Madhes. Earlier, Upendra Yadav, chief of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum, had also spoke in similar language. The Madhesi parties have threatened to launch agitation from January 19. *Compiled from reports*

PM Says His Views On Army Integration Were Taken Out Of Context

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala is learnt to have assuaged the Maoist

ministers in the cabinet on Thursday over the controversy on army integration by saying that his viewpoint were taken out of context by media. "When we drew his attention to this controversy, he said his views were twisted," Local Development Minister Dev Gurung told reporters after the cabinet meeting on Thursday (Jan 10). Prime Minister's rejection of integrating Maoist combatants into national army in the wake of similar comments made by army chief had irked the Maoists. In the parliament, on Thursday, lawmakers also criticized the PM for triggering the controversy. *Compiled from reports*

Rs 15 Billion Worth Public Shares In The Offing

Within a year, various government and private companies are planning to issue shares in the public worth Rs 15 billion. "These will be the new opportunities for investment," said Dr. Chiranjibi Nepal, chairman of Securities Board of Nepal (SEBON). Due to lack of investment opportunities, the value of real estate and shares of banks and financial institutions had surged in recent times. The new opportunities include state-owned Nepal Telecom, which will issue shares worth Rs 9 billion. Agriculture Development Bank will issue Rs 750 million worth of shares. Likewise, Chilime will issue Rs 240 million worth of shares. Banks like Global, Citizen, Sunrise and Bank of Asia will issue Rs 1.2 billion worth of shares, in total. Likewise, a number of financial institutions will also issue their shares. *Kantipur daily reports*

Prachanda Pounces On PM Over Army Integration Row

Maoist chairman Prachanda has said Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's statement that the Maoist army cannot be merged into the Nepal Army is not only provocative, but it also runs counter



to the comprehensive peace accord (CPA). "While the CPN (Maoist) is wholeheartedly gearing up for constituent assembly election within the month of Chaitra [March-April], and has even rejoined the government for this purpose, the Prime Minister's statement has made us very serious. His statement is provocative," Prachanda said speaking at an interaction organized by the Marwari community in the capital Wednesday afternoon. The Maoist chairman conjectured that the PM's statement could have been intended to provoke his party against the election process and then put all the blame on it if CA polls fail. Prachanda further said though he didn't see any possibility of military coup the Prime Minister's remarks had made him to suspect a "democratic coup". "There is a mystery in what the Prime Minister said, and it will not particularly help the peace process," he added, adding that the PM should have refrained from making 'inflammatory' remarks in the current situation. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Koirala, who also holds the defence portfolio, threw his weight behind NA chief Rookmangud Katawal who, a few days ago, said that the NA be kept free from political influence, dropping a hint that the NA is not ready to take in politically indoctrinated PLA combatants. *Compiled from reports*

PM Against Politicizing NA

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has said that the Nepali Army (NA) should not be politicized. He said that Maoists'

People's Liberation Army (PLA) combatants cannot be integrated into the Nepali Army (NA). He added alternatives should be explored regarding the army integration issue. "Even in India, after the independence, Pundit Nehru refused to integrate the rebel army of Subas Chandra Bose," he said. Better than integrating the Maoist PLA combatants into the army, it could be inducted into the security sector by forming Industrial Security Force or by integrating into any other security force, PM Koirala told a delegation of journalists led by Reporters' Club in Baluwater, Tuesday (Jan 8) morning. He also hinted that those combatants who want to opt for overseas employment should be allowed to do so with "high priority". PM Koirala warned against any move to politicize the national army, saying that it is an institution that should follow certain rules and regulation for the security of the country. The prime minister who also holds the defense portfolio also defended the army chief's recent remarks by saying that there's no



reason why anybody should raise any kind of objection on his remarks. Before leaving for China, army chief General Rookmangud Katawal had said that politically indoctrinated combatants would not be integrated into the army, much to the annoyance of the Maoists. Talking about the border encroachment issue, Koirala said the problem should be resolved through "quiet diplomacy".

SPOTLIGHT/January 18, 2008

This is not a matter to be resolved by making a big fuss about it and since Nepal and India are good neighbors, the border problem would easily be resolved through diplomatic means, he is reported as saying. The delegation of journalists had submitted a 6-point memo demanding, among others, setting up of a media center at the PM's residence. PM Koirala reportedly assured that the government would fulfill those demands. Compiled from reports

Liquidity On The Decline

Banks, which were enjoying excess liquidity till a year ago, are now slowly facing the declining liquidity. Currently, it is said the banks are running negative liquidity of Rs 2 billion – against the excess liquidity of Rs 10 billion a year ago. "Liquidity has declined but there is no crisis yet," said Anil Shah, chief executive of Nabil Bank. KB Manandhar, acting governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), said, "There is shortage of liquidity. But we are studying whether it is long term or short term. It will increase interest rate of deposits, which is good." Because of anticipation of bulk issue of shares, minimum interest on deposits, increased lending on hire purchases, capital flight and political instability, the liquidity crunch has emerged. Bankers say that soon the interest rates of both deposit and lending could be increased as a result. Kantipur daily reports

Supplementary Budget To Announce Oil Bond

The government is preparing to issue Rs 3 billion worth of oil bonds to pay the dues of Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC). The bonds will be announced in the forthcoming supplementary budget to pay NOC's dues to Indian Oil



Corporation (IOC), according to a statement issued by Finance Ministry. The government has also said it will also announce other price reform measures to rescue the financially troubled NOC, which is said to be losing to the tune of Rs 550 million (as per international oil price in January). Leading dailies report

Microfinance Summit In The Offing

Nepal is hosting a world summit on Microfinance on February 14-16 as the country continues its long battle to expand and consolidate the service delivery institutions. The main output of the summit will be the joint declaration and an action plan for building a strong and inclusive microfinance sector. The three-day long conference — the first of its kind in Nepal — has a slogan 'Reaching the Poorest of the Poor for Sustainable Income'. "Microfinance is an effective tool for poverty alleviation," said Dr Harihar Dev Pant, chairman of the National Steering Committee, adding that the summit is intended to facilitate a broader dialogue between the stakeholders and create a common understanding among them, including policymakers and politicians to make micro finance a priority issue in the national development strategy. The participants will discuss their experiences and jointly decide on the future course of microfinance in Nepal that has over 3,600 microfinance institutions providing services to roughly one million families.



People Paid Respect to Prithivinarayan Shah

PRIME MINISTER GIRIJA PRASAD KOIRALA expanded the cabinet, inducting three ministers and five state ministers on Thursday (Jan 10). Koirala nominated his daughter Sujata Koirala as a minister without portfolio while NC leader Farmulla Mansoor was nominated as minister for science and technology to replace Mahantha Thakur who had recently walked away to float a separate party in Terai. Minister of state for general administration Ram Chandra Yadav was promoted to full minister with the same portfolio. Sujata will also be overseeing matters with the PMO, it is learnt. Likewise, NC leaders Ram Kumar Chaudhary and Mahalaxmi Upadhyaya have been nominated as state ministers for home and water resource ministries respectively. Koirala appointed UML leader Nagendra Choudhary as minister of state for culture, tourism and civil aviation and two Maoist nominees, Padam Rai and Nabin Kumar B.K, as minister of state for physical planning and works and minister of state for local development respectively.

THE ELECTION COMMISSION has announced that the Constituent Assembly Elections will be held from 7am to 5 pm on April 10. The Commission's meeting has also decided to formulate the election Code of Conduct effective for the governmental, state enterprises, non-governmental and local bodies from January 16. The code of conduct will be effective in the case of political parties under proportional electoral system after the submission of candidates' closed-list and for candidates for the first-past-the-post after filing their nominations. Likewise, in the case of private media organizations, the code of conduct will be effective following the registration of the election symbol. The commission has further decided to insure Rs 1 million for accident cases for the employees mobilized for the election.

THE UNITED STATES WILL ASSIMILATE 10,000 Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal under the first phase of refugee rehabilitation program, US ambassador to Nepal Nancy

J Powell said on Wednesday (Jan 9). Powell was speaking at the inauguration of Overseas Processing Entity (OPE). Though Powell did not specify when the process will begin, Jhapa chief district officer Shankar Prasad Koirala said that the US and Nepal governments had agreed that the first batch of refugees will leave for the US in March. Powell told the gathering to take the rehabilitation offers from countries other than the US just as seriously. "We mooted the third-country settlement option after realizing that it was difficult to get the refugees repatriated," she said. Powell said the US will not abandon its efforts to get the refugees repatriated, adding that under the circumstances third-country settlement was the most feasible option. "They left their homes 17 years ago and are leading displaced lives. If their repatriation is forced upon Bhutan, they might be uprooted again," said Powell. CDO Koirala said that while the government was committed to the refugees' repatriation, it had also kept the option of third-country settlement open for those wanting to opt for it. Newly appointed UNHCR Nepal chief Daisy Dale said the refugees were free to opt for either repatriation or third-country settlement. She added that she will visit Jhapa district again to discuss the issues of the refugees. Spokesperson for the international non-government organization IOM's Damak office chief David Derthicke said his organization will see to the verification of refugees, their rehabilitation and do all the paperwork with regard to forwarding their documents to the host countries. Denmark's and Norway's ambassadors, who visited Jhapa along with Powell, also dropped by at the IOM office.

NEPAL TELECOM IS SLASHING CALL RATES for its landline (PSTN), CDMA prepaid (sky phone) and pre- and post-paid mobile services from February 13, 2008. The company announced Monday that it is slashing call rates for post-paid mobile services to Rs 2.40 from the existing Rs 3 per call during peak hours (8 am to 8 pm). "Calls made from 8 pm to 8 am will be charged Rs 1 per call, down from the existing rate of Rs 1.50 a call," says an NT statement. The rates are exclusive of taxes. Likewise, pre-paid mobile phone users would need to pay Rs 3.20 per call made during peak hours. At present, they are charged Rs 3.50 a call during this period. For calls made during off-peak hours (8 pm to 8 am), NT would be slashing the rates to Rs 2 per call from the existing Rs 2.50. NT has said it would also cut tariffs on CDMA prepaid (sky phones) to Rs 2.70 a call. Currently, customers are charged Rs 3 a call. Subscribers would also enjoy a tariff cut of 50 paise for calls made on Saturdays. At present, they need to pay Rs 2.50 a call on Saturdays. On land lines (PSTN) and CDMA fixed lines also, NT would be slashing distance call rates to Rs 3.50 a minute from the existing Rs 4 during business hours (8 am to 6 pm). Rates for distance calls made during normal hours (6 am to 8 am and 6 pm to 8 pm) would also go down to Rs 2.50 a minute from the existing Rs 3. Likewise, calls made during 10 pm to 6 am would be charged Rs 1.50 a call. At present, calls made during this period are charged Rs 2 a minute.

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT'S NEW DEAL AND THE TVA

Franklin D. Roosevelt became the President of the USA after 1932 election. In 1936 Roosevelt won his greatest victory in his second term by receiving more than 60 percent of the popular vote and winning every state except Maine and Vermont. People had overwhelmingly voted for the Democratic Party to support his New Deal reforms.

One of the most sweeping and imaginative New Deal reforms was the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), an independent federal corporation set up to improve conditions in a depressed area of 103,600 sq km in seven states. Chiefly responsible for this scheme was Senator George W. Norris of Nebraska, a progressive Republican who had almost single-handedly blocked the sale of government-owned power sites on the Tennessee River during the 1920s and who was a firm believer in government ownership and operation of public utilities such as power and water companies. Roosevelt was an advocate of publicly owned power. He saw it as a yardstick with which to measure the real costs of privately owned power companies. Roosevelt was greatly attracted to the TVA because of its possibilities for the conservation of natural and human resources.

Historical Background

The TVA was created to improve the steadily worsening conditions in the Tennessee River Basin. In particular, the basin was suffering from frequent destructive floods, intermittent unnavigability of the river, deforestation, and severely eroded land. Beginning early in the 19th century, sporadic attempts were made to cope with one or more of these conditions, but the first major effort of the U.S. government to improve conditions in the valley was initiated during the World War I (1914-1918). Late in the war President Woodrow Wilson approved construction of a hydroelectric power dam and two nitrogen-fixing plants at Muscle Shoals. However, neither the dam nor the nitrogen plants were completed in time to aid the war effort. During the postwar years the Muscle Shoals facilities remained mostly inactive.

Establishment of the TVA

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is a federal corporation. It was established in 1933 primarily to control floods, improve navigation, improve the living standards of farmers, and produce electrical power including distribution along the Tennessee River and its tributaries. Related TVA activities, based on the original TVA Act and subsequent enactments, include reforestation, industrial and community development, test-demonstration farming, the development of fertilizer, and the establishment of recreational facilities.

• *Dr. AB Thapa*



The Tennessee River was subjected to severe periodic flooding, and navigation along the river's middle course was interrupted by a series of shoals at Muscle Shoals. In 1933 the U.S. Congress passed a bill establishing the TVA, thus consolidating all the activities of various government agencies in the area and placing them under the control of a single one. A massive program of building dams, hydroelectric generating stations, and flood-control projects ensued. The fusion of a broad range of specific powers with a sense of social responsibility to the region made the TVA significant as a prototype of natural-resource planning. Its jurisdiction is generally limited to the drainage basin of the Tennessee River, which covers parts of seven states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The TVA is a public corporation governed by a board of three directors appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Senate. The constitutionality of the TVA was immediately challenged upon the agency's establishment, but it was upheld by the Supreme Court

The TVA Dams

The 50 dams operated by the TVA serve many purposes. In flood season the TVA dams store potential floodwaters to lower substantially the flood crests. The dams, besides controlling the floods, supply water to generate electricity, increase the region's water availability, and provide lakes for recreational purposes. In addition, the nine major dams on the main stream of the Tennessee River create a series of narrow lakes that together form a continuous navigation channel from Knoxville, Tennessee, to Paducah, Kentucky. The channel is 1045 km long and 2.7 m deep. Near Paducah, the channel is connected with the Ohio River and the 21-state inland-waterway system. Other TVA dams are on tributaries of the Tennessee River. In flood season they store potential floodwaters, lowering flood crests substantially on the Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi rivers.

TVA Electric Power

Twenty-nine of the dams operated by the TVA supply water to generate electricity. The TVA system also includes 11 large coal-burning steam plants, which generate most of the electricity produced by the TVA. The TVA currently operates nuclear-powered electric-generating plants at two sites in Alabama and Tennessee, and an additional plant is under construction in Tennessee. The TVA power system annually produces more than 125 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity, which is almost 90 times as much electricity as was generated in the same region in 1933. Average annual domestic electricity use in the area has grown from 600 kilowatt-hours

in 1933 to nearly 15,000 kilowatt-hours.

Major Benefits

All dams in the system are managed as a unit, with primary emphasis on flood control, which proved to be extremely effective. The TVA has built navigation locks into each of its nine main dams. Improvement of the channel conditions encouraged the development of port facilities along the river. As a result, traffic on the river increased from 53,000,000 ton-kms in 1933 to several billion ton-kms by the late 20th century. The cheap electricity provided by the new dams spurred the industrial development of what had been a chronically depressed regional economy. The waters impounded by the dams created the "Great Lakes of the South," which the TVA helped to develop into a prime boating, fishing, and recreational area.

More than 60 million people per year visit the recreational TVA lakes. In the western parts of Kentucky and Tennessee, the TVA operates a demonstration project that offers outdoor recreation and wildlife education. The site, located between two artificial lakes, is a strip of woodland 64 km long.

The TVA carried out a vigorous mosquito eradication program on its reservoirs, thus eliminating the endemic malaria that had previously been traceable to the river. The agency also improved forestry and land conservation practices in the region.

During the World War II (1939-1945), TVA power and manufacturing facilities made significant contributions to the national defense effort. At Oak Ridge, Tennessee, a key atomic-energy installation was operated largely with TVA-produced electricity. The TVA plants also produced significant quantities of munitions materials and fertilizers.

The TVA & Privately Owned Power Companies

The TVA had built a series of hydropower stations and thermal power plants for generation of electricity. It distributed electricity generated by its power plants to many who never before had enjoyed the benefits of electricity. The TVA also produced cheap fertilizers. As a result, the standard of living of the people in its area steadily improved. The TVA was seen as a direct threat to the country's private-power companies. A TVA type plan was not imitated elsewhere, although the Roosevelt administration did build dams and power plants in the West.

Privately owned power companies opposed the decision of the TVA to take part in the production and sale of electric power. The TVA contracted with municipalities and cooperatives to supply wholesale power for distribution and it has joined with them in purchasing the facilities of privately owned electric-utility companies in the region. These purchases have established an integrated power service area in which the TVA is the sole supplier of power. The TVA

power system, which includes more than 50 dams, as well as coal-fired thermal plants and operable nuclear plants, possesses a huge generating capacity. Power is sold in bulk, about half to federal agencies and half to large industries and locally owned municipal and cooperative distribution systems. Electricity tariffs in the Tennessee River valley are among the lowest in the nation. Because of critics' claims that the low rates are made possible by lack of obligation to show a profit on its operations, a schedule of payments was worked out by which the TVA would refund to the national treasury over a period of years all federal electric-power investment in the valley. The TVA nuclear power plant program was seriously curtailed in the 1980s because of the introduction of the new stringent safety regulations that seriously affected several plants already completed or under construction.

New Research & Development Works

In cooperation with state and other agencies, the TVA conducts research and development programs in forestry, fish and wildlife preservation, watershed protection, and air and water quality control. In addition, the TVA encourages the economic development of Tennessee Valley tributary areas through citizen associations. More than 100 valley communities with local flood

problems have been helped by the TVA, which offered technical guidance and built improved channels and detention dams where feasible.

In the late 1970s the TVA, Commonwealth Edison

The TVA contracted with municipalities and cooperatives to supply wholesale power for distribution and it has joined with them in purchasing the facilities of privately owned electric-utility companies in the region.

of Chicago, and the Department of Energy, together with the nation's electric industry, entered into a venture to build the first large demonstration liquid-metal fast breeder reactor in the United States, to be operated as a part of the TVA power system. An estimated \$1.7 billion was spent preparing a site for the reactor on the Clinch River near Oak Ridge, Tennessee. In 1983, however, the U.S. Senate refused to provide additional funds for the demonstration project, which had the potential of producing more fissionable fuel than it consumed.

Business Community Feared the TVA

In 1933 the Democratic administration headed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced a bill creating the TVA. The bill was adopted by the U.S. Congress and signed by the president in May 1933. The TVA achieved striking successes almost from its inception. However, the program was the target of bitter attacks by business spokespersons, who considered its program a socialistic, unconstitutional threat to competing private industries. Private industries objected particularly strongly to one part of the program, a government plan to use the cost of TVA-produced power as a yardstick for measuring electricity rates charged by private utility companies. After a series of legal battles from 1936 to 1939, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the TVA act was constitutional, but many newspapers and spokespersons for private industry continued to attack the TVA as socialistic.

SUJATA KOIRALA

Lady Luck

The elevation of the prime minister's flamboyant daughter in the power hierarchy has more to it than meets the eye

By SUSHIL SHARMA

In a programme at his Biratnagar residence last November, prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala was asked whom did he see as his successor.

He was given four names in the following order: daughter Sujata Koirala, nephew Shekhar Koirala, cousin Sushil Koirala and colleague Sher Bahadur Deuba.

The prime minister evaded the question. Pressed further, he patted the back of this correspondent and said, "You are trying to make me speak my mind. But I am not going to oblige you."

Seated at the other corner was Sujata Koirala giving an innocuous looking smile at her evasive father.

It has turned out that the smile was not as innocuous as it did appear then. She knew what the prime minister father had in his mind.

Three months after a non-committal answer, the octogenarian leader thought it was high time he let his mind speak up.

He inducted daughter Sujata into the cabinet. She has been given no portfolio, but remains a powerful figure in charge of the ailing prime minister's office.

Prime minister Koirala has let it known whom he sees as his successor.

He could not get rid of Sujata's nemesis, home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula,

But he ignored many senior leaders including staunch loyalists to get monarchist daughter on board with the republican Sitaula still firmly entrenched in the home ministry.



Minister Koirala: Lady Luck

Even as Sitaula remains a Maoist favourite and an unwelcome figure at the Bhadrakali headquarters, Sujata remains a bete noire of the former and a favourite of the latter.

Discerning observers have noted that the head of the Nepali Congress international department got a cabinet berth less than a month after what she told confidants as a "very, very positive" sudden tour of Delhi.

An upbeat Sujata had earlier played host to the new ambassador from Beijing to set up a meeting with the prime minister father at her Mandikhatar residence.

The Chinese envoy apparently felt it more convenient, comfortable and secure to drive a few extra kilometres from the Bhatbhateni chancery, instead of dropping in at the nearby official residence of the prime minister for a heart-to-heart talk with the senior Koirala who has not been to China yet

in his latest innings at Baluwatar.

It could be a sheer coincidence, but the move to elevate Sujata as heir apparent to the boss of Nepal's largest party and the head-of-state cum prime minister came just ahead of a summit talk between Nepal's influential neighbours.

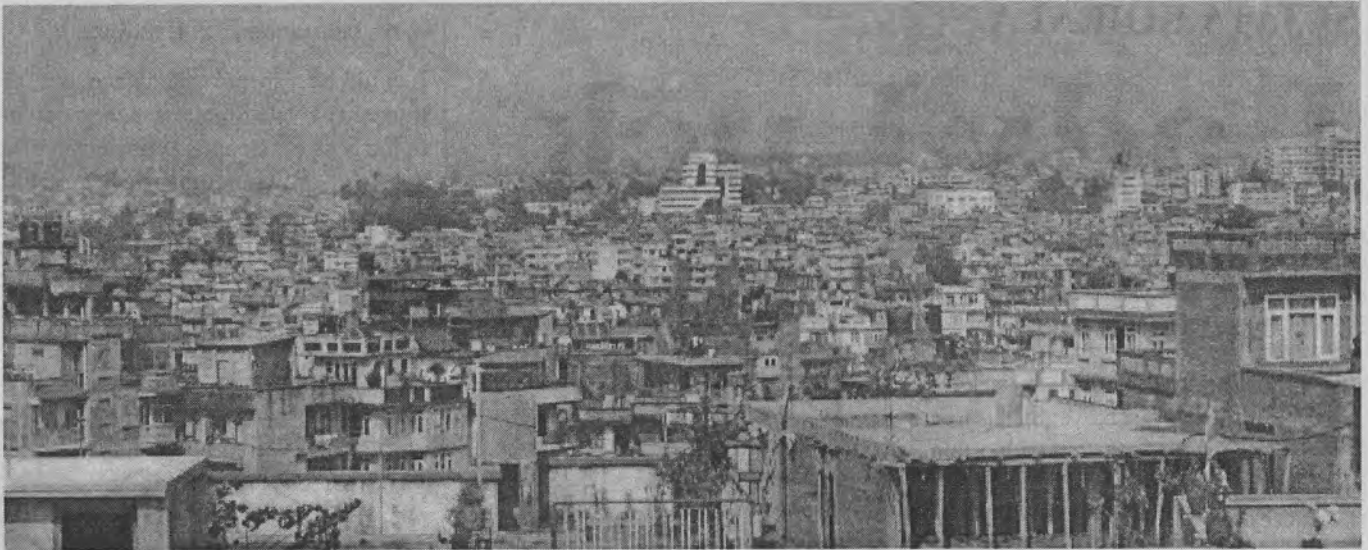
Whether Nepal did figure in the Indian prime minister Man Mohan Singh's

meeting with his Chinese counterpart in Beijing is not known yet.

It is unlikely, though, that the volatile political transition in their neighbourhood with a potential of exploding into a major source of instability in the entire region would escape their agenda.

While elevating the reportedly favourite lady of the country's only stable institution, the Nepal Army, and still a monarchist in the world's only monarchical republic, Girija Prasad Koirala is also unlikely to have turned a blind eye to the high stakes of the two powerful neighbours in Nepal.

It is a different matter altogether that some have dubbed the senior Koirala the modern-day *Dhritrashtra* — a blind father in the mythological *Mahabharat* who would go any length for the love of his children.



Kathmandu city: Under Terror

EARTHQUAKE

TREMORS OF TERROR

By A CORRESPONDENT

A recent report has stated that Kathmandu is in high risk for devastation from a big earthquake

As Nepal prepares to observe the National Earthquake Awareness Day on January 16 – which is marked in memory of Great Earthquake of 1934 – a report by a government agency has painted a dangerous picture.

According to the report by the Department for Urban Development and Building Construction, the people of Kathmandu are, in fact, in much more dangerous situation than the people of Kobe of Japan – which is regarded as one of the most earthquake-prone zones in the world.

The report has pointed at the weak infrastructure, dense population and cramped settlement as big reasons for such a sorry situation.

“The infrastructures are weak, and narrow alleys and dense population make it a very dangerous place,” said Surya Bhakta Sangachu, director general of the department, releasing the report in the capital on Sunday (January 13).

According to him, around 6000 houses are constructed every year in the capital valley. And most of them are weakly built.

Although the department has enforced a Building Code since last five years, it is not followed properly.

The population of Kathmandu valley has crossed three million. The dense and haphazard settlement has made the city highly vulnerable to devastations from earthquake.

Nepal, as a whole, lies in an active earthquake belt. As the Indian plate is

said to be pushing into the Tibetan plate – thereby causing the formation of high Himalayas – earthquakes even major ones are said to occur regularly in this region.

Seismologists have frequently warned that a big quake is due in this region in near future. They have warned that in case of big earthquake in the range of over 8 richter scale, thousands of people could lose their lives.

According to Kathmandu Metropolitan, the growth of urbanization in the capital valley is very rapid. Population is bursting at its seams.

Worse, the increasing insecurity in countryside has forced people to build their houses in the valley. Most of the time they build their houses by ignoring the building code and without ensuring quake-resistant methods, which are actually not very costly as is believed.

After the last major earth quake of 1934, the valley has not seen any big quake. As it lies in the active quake belt, tremors could hit anytime, scientists claim. ■

LOAD SHEDDING

CRIPPLING CUTS

Faced with acute power shortage, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) imposes 36-hours-a-week of load shedding

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The NEA officials have repeated ad nauseum that they are facing power shortage as water volume in snow-fed rivers has declined with the onset of winter. This has been their refrain since past few years. Yet, they do not seem to have made any concrete moves to rid the load-shedding in the short term.

While big hydropower projects like Upper Karnali (300 MW), Arun III (402 MW), Upper Tamakosi (309 MW) and Budhi Gandaki (600 MW) are being touted regularly, small and medium sized projects that can be built in a short time have not received as much attention as they deserved, especially during this time when the country is facing crippling hours of power cut.

Less than a week after the NEA had increased the load shedding hours from six hours to fifteen hours a week, it announced on Wednesday (Jan 9) that from Thursday (Jan 10) onwards, every household will face 36 hours of power cut each week.

Stating that the dwindling supply has become grossly inadequate to meet the rising demands, the NEA has said that every household will now face six hours of load shedding every day for six days a week. Each household will enjoy one day free of load shedding. The load shedding hours have been divided into four categories – morning, daytime, evening and night time.

As per NEA's schedule, the morning schedule will involve power cuts between 5 am – 8 am; 6 am – 9 am; and 8 am – 11 am. Likewise, the daytime schedule will involve power cuts between 9 am – 12 noon; 12 noon – 3

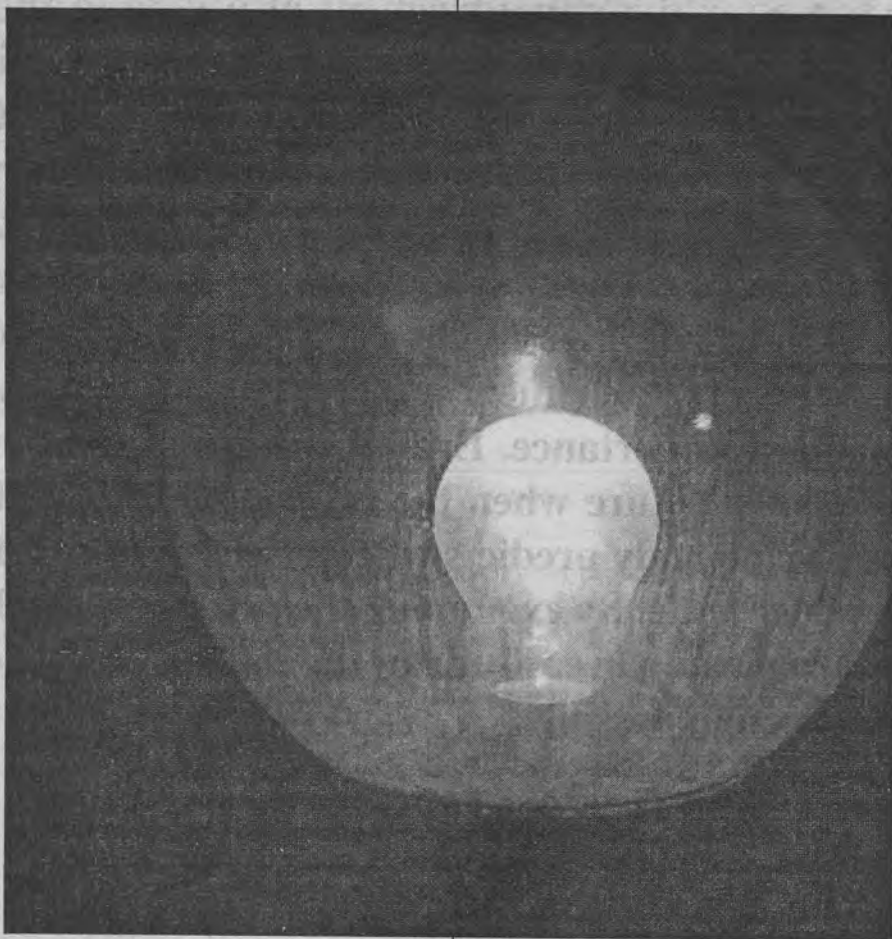
pm; and 3 pm – 6 pm. The evening schedule includes 5 pm – 8 pm; 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm; and 6 pm – 9 pm. The night time schedule will include 9 pm to 12 am, 12 am to 3 am and 3 am to 6 am.

The NEA has said that currently it faces demands over 700 MW of power while

load shedding woes by importing around 40 MW of power from India within mid-January. But this has not materialized yet. NEA has come up with a separate power cut schedule for Hetauda and Birgunj, however, as both are industrial towns.

The prolonged load shedding is already taking its toll on students preparing for annual School Leaving Certificate (SLC) and the business community.

The private sector has already complained that the long hours of power cut will considerably reduce their manufacturing output.



Loadshedding: No light

the supply has come down below 500 MW. As the winter has set in, the water volume in snow-fed rivers have receded causing the most of the hydropower projects to run way below their capacity.

The government had promised to lessen

In fact, reports have already come that industrialists in Morang and Sunsari districts have warned of a stir against NEA. The local chamber of commerce and industry has stated that load shedding has severely affected over 500 industrial units located in the region. ■

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIO

Fozzy Picture

Even after the announcement of a date to the Constituent Assembly election for the third time - scheduled for April 10, 2008 - majority of common people have a question in mind: will the election be held this time? As Nepal's two neighbors' prime concern is security and seven party alliance government's aim is to control state power, election does not figure as priority of anybody. Even for the common people - who, in any case, will have to choose the candidates from among the present members of parliament if there is an election - peace and stability are of primary importance. Even if the government holds the election at the present juncture when the proponent of one idea state is dominant in power, no body predicts whether elections will be held for pluralism or one idea state. By examining the priority of all the players, external and internal, one can easily draw the conclusion that only a miracle can make the election possible

By KESHAB POUDEL

- "Be assured the elections will not be deferred this time," said Home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula addressing a press meet just after the decision of cabinet to fix the election date "All the political leaders are sincere this time."

- "The election would definitely be held as Nepali Congress leader and prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala and CPN-Maoist leader Prachanda, too, have assured me that they will not disrupt it," said Madhav Kumar Nepal CPN-UML

general secretary.

- "Don't talk anything negative about the election. Election will be held as government has assured us that they will restore law and order and make all necessary arrangements to hold it," said chief election commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel.

All of them seem enthusiastic about holding the election on schedule. However, terai's new emerging political

forces, whether they are proponent of peaceful agitation or armed revolt, have threatened that they will not allow the holding of elections.

- "My party would do everything to upset the forthcoming constituent assembly polls in terai districts and our struggle in terai is for sovereign homeland," thundered Jaya Krishna Goit, chief, Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM-Goit).



Election Commission: Uncertain course

In a face-to-face interview with Hindustan Times daily, India's leading daily, in Sitamarhi of the Indian state of Bihar, Goit had said, "How can we allow election of Nepal to be held in our Terai? We are not Nepalis." He said so on January 12, just a day after government's announcement of new date.

Likewise, chairman of newly formed Terai-Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP) Mahantha Thakur echoed similar words in Birgunj, southern industrial city, 150 miles south of capital. "As long as the Madhesis are not given complete autonomy, there is no question of holding the election for CA."

At a time when leaders of seven party alliance kicked off a first elections campaign for the CA polls in capital Kathmandu organized a joint rallies on January 14, a bomb was exploded at the bus carrying the supporter of SPA. Eight

persons, mostly supporter of SPA, were hurt.

This incident indicated that the elections and disturbance seem to go side by side raising suspicion on the future of elections.

If Nepal's history is any indication, it also backs the logic that election for Constituent Assembly will have to pass through severe test. After the revolution of 1951, parties had agreed to hold the elections for CA within two years but it was deferred for seven years. Finally, instead of holding the election for CA, the election was held for parliament in 1959 following prolonged political instability.

"Let there be periodic election (for parliament) if not constituent assembly election," said former speaker of House of Representatives, Damannath

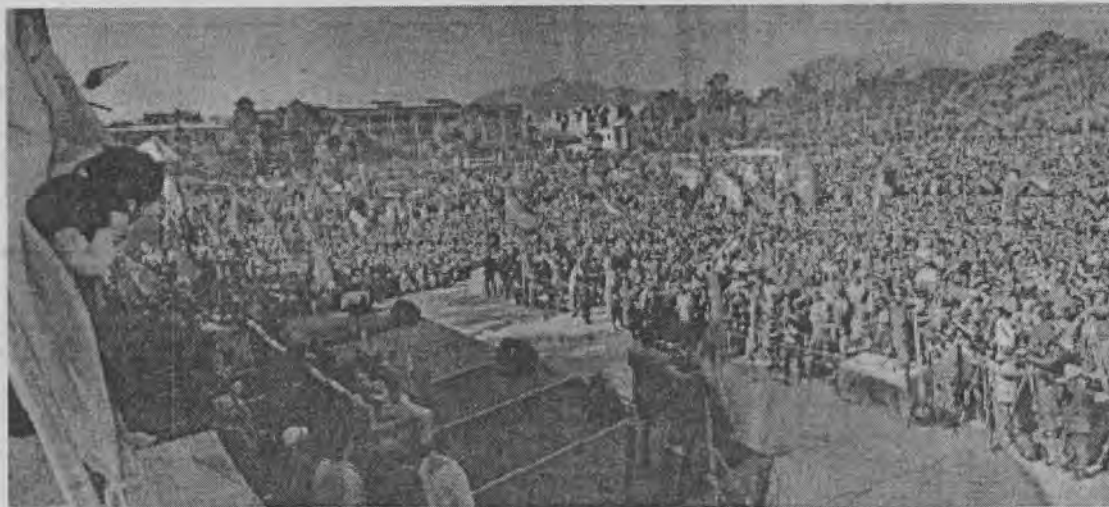
Dhungana. (See Spotlight November 23-29).

Even newly appointed minister Sujata Koirala has been personally lobbying for reviving Constitution of 1990 in case of failure to hold election of CA. "If you ask me, I would prefer to go to election under the 1990 constitution. If election for the constituent assembly cannot be held, I am for strong steps towards the general election," said Koirala. (See interview Spotlight December 21-27)

At a time when there is confusion over holding the CA election, voices are being heard advocating a parliamentary election. However, there is no easy way to hold any election at present.

Preparedness For Election

Election Commission (EC) has already made public the time table for CA election. According to the Commission,



Mass Meeting : Show of unity

the schedule for proportional representation system will be completed by March 25. Symbols will be distributed for the first-past-the-post system on March 3.

For the PR system, the parties will submit the closed lists to the EC office by February 20 and the EC will let the parties make corrections on February 21-27. The parties will present the corrected lists by March 5. The final list of candidates will be published on March 1. Election symbols will be given to candidates on March 2.

The commission has already decided to set up more than 15,000 booths and sub-booths for 601 members for the Constituent Assembly. Among them 240 will be elected on the basis of first-past-post system and remaining 335 will be elected on the basis of proportional representative system. Prime minister will nominate the remaining 26.

According to Election Commission, the voting will start from 7 in the morning till 6 pm on April 10. EC will mobilize 140,000 employees for the election.

To show their faith in the election, seven party alliance has already organized a joint mass meeting in capital Kathmandu and they will hold similar kind of mass rallies in various parts of Nepal in coming days.

But as was shown by the sudden bomb blast in Kathmandu on Monday after the mass meeting, the seven parties need to

do a lot more to assure the public about security situation. Holding rallies and issuing public statements would not guarantee that the election will be held.

External Interests

In public statements, all the major external powers including Nepal's southern neighbor India- which has the highest security stake in Nepal – express hope that the parties will hold the election.

India's external affairs ministry spokesman publicly issued a statement when SPA signed 23-point agreement dubbing it as an encouraging development in the right direction. However, Nepal's terai based rebels have threatened to disrupt the election from their hideout in Indian state of Bihar. Nepal may not be able to hold the election if terai based rebels continue to wage armed struggle from bordering cities of India.

Nepal's northern neighbor China – which too has a security stake in Nepal- is much concerned about continuation of peace process and political stability in Nepal. Chinese ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xianglin in his recent interview to Nepal Weekly Magazine said that as a good neighbor, China sincerely hopes the peace process will realize the political stability and economic development in Nepal.

Western democratic countries including

the USA, which have no security interest in Nepal, are genuinely concerned about holding the election. Promptly responding to the announcement of election date, United States welcomed the decision on Friday January 11 just a few minutes after the government made its decision public. "We congratulate the government, the parties and the people

of Nepal on establishing a date for the CA polls," said a statement issued by the US Embassy. "The US is prepared to offer assistance to allow all Nepalis to participate in the democratic process."

Other European democratic countries, too, have issued similar statements like the United States of America welcoming the decision of holding the election.

"So far as the internal forces are concerned; they are subject to the geopolitical situation of this country. One cannot ignore the reflections of the on going regional conflict in the internal politics of comparatively smaller countries of this region. Nepal has a unique position in this context. It has been repeatedly mentioning a fact that in other countries internal situation determines the foreign relations, whereas in Nepal external relations determine internal power equation. So has been the situation all the time and particularly since resurgence of India and China as active forces in Nepali politics. Nation, however big and small and powerful they are, keep their national interest as the supreme goal in their political strategy while dealing with others," said a political analyst.

According to the political analyst, instead of coming to direct confrontation, big powers in the modern age, go through covert operations to achieve their goals. "Keeping that into mind, one could not be amazed that the Maoist revolution in Nepal had India as its base. This fact was made public for the first time when all

top leaders of the prominent seven parties reached Indian capital New Delhi and signed 12 points agreement against the secluded palace without presence of media. In recent weeks, when parties signed the 23-points agreement to hold the CA election, it was widely reported in media that India's premier intelligence agency RAW's chief had played a determining role. It showed that a democratic power need not push forward a democratic force to achieve its target - even a communist force carrying the name of a communist leader Mao could be used against China's interest in Nepal," said the analyst.

The analyst argued, "One can see in Nepal, democratic India using Maoist communists to promote its interest and communist China may find suitable the name of a nationalist King Mahendra or a democratic leader like B.P. Koirala."

Pluralism or One Idea state

Even if all parties finally agreed to go for election, it is uncertain whether the elections will be for pluralism or one idea state. Given the present political scenario and law and order situation, Maoists will not allow other democratic parties, regional parties and monarchist parties to campaign freely.

"At a time when one idea state champions are in the power, they would want to use the power as much as possible and as long as possible. Almost all communist parties fall in this bracket," said the analyst.

Maoist leaders have already indicated this. "We will not allow regressive and monarchists to campaign in the election," said Maoist leader Prachanda.

According to Karl Mark, state power is of primary importance, which determines everything related to the state order. As Marx has enunciated the end justifies the means, the same thing has developed and translated into different context in different countries - Nepal being no exception.

In Nepal, communists have experienced varied roles from political adventurism to the leadership in the government. If the election is held, it will be a testing ground for their role in a pluralistic democracy.

Liberal Democrats

As the oldest party with its broadest appeal, Nepali Congress is in lead for a pluralistic society. Despite the weakness of its leaders as self seekers and opportunistic with their narrow outlook and selfish interest, it has a large number



Pokharel : Difficult task

of dedicated persons with mass-based character.

There are other liberal parties also in the race for power but they are all fragmented fractions of the previous Panchayat politics. "As the Panchayat was party less system, so is the character of the politicians of that experiment. In spite of coming as one in a broad based liberal party, they have shattered into pieces. Combined together, they have a significant role in the politics," said the analyst.

Although every body including leaders of seven parties, rebel leaders of terai and regional parties, have been stressing publicly that they want election, their response in private conversation is opposite to their public pronouncement. If the election is held, there is no guarantee that SPA leaders will get similar position and privilege. For external players particularly to Nepal's southern neighbor, the present arrangement of non-elected government has not done much harm. Whatever political players say about election in public statements, nobody wants to go for the elections, which are always unpredictable. The blast occurred at the first show of strength of SPA indicated that the days ahead are not easy. ■



Vehicles at EC: Final preparation

“Nobody Can Disrupt The Election Now”

-MADHAV KUMAR NEPAL

*After election,
we will enter
into a new
period in the
history of Nepal.
The
conspiracies
have been
hatched against
the Constituent
Assembly
election but we
can solve all
these problems
collectively.*

Having long experience in the parliamentary politics in the last fifteen years, fifty-five-years old CPN-UML general secretary MADHAV KUMAR NEPAL has seen many ups and downs in Nepalese politics. After the death of Madan Bhandari in a mysterious road accident in 1994, Nepal continues to lead the party by deftly managing the heterogeneous interests. His party switched from one extreme to another in twelve years long parliamentary politics. He also worked as a powerful deputy prime minister in nine-month-old minority government under the leadership of late Manmohan Adhikary. Like the country's most unstable political situation, Nepal too has shown unstable characters aligning from one extreme to another. As the country is heading to hold the election for CA, Nepal spoke to KESHAB POUDEL at his residence in Koteshwor early Wednesday morning. Excerpts:

As seven party alliance has already postponed the election for CA twice in the past one year, how can you guarantee that the election will be held in April 10?

Forget about the past, I will assure you that the election will be held this time on April 10, 2008. As all members of seven parties have already expressed commitments from open theater, I don't think anybody can disturb it now. Overwhelming majority of people want election and they will decide who is fit to rule and who is unfit to rule. Nepali Congress and Maoists were responsible for deferring the polls twice in the past. As both parties have shown their strong commitments to the elections, it will held on time.

Why are you giving such a priority to Constituent Assembly Election?

Constituent Assembly election is a great opportunity to the people of Nepal to decide their own fate as they will decide federal structures, forms of government and other issue through this elections. After election, we will enter into a new period in the history of Nepal. The conspiracies have been hatched against the Constituent Assembly election but we can solve all these problems collectively.

But, some unknown persons detonated a bomb just after completion of joint mass meeting in Kathmandu. How can you assure the people that such things will not happen again?

I am not saying that there are no forces who are making efforts to sabotage the election. The recent incident is an indication and it is serious issue. Since seven party alliance still hold countrywide representation, the efforts of reactionary, regressive and ultra-rightist forces will not

succeed. Election will not be free of obstacles as the reactionary elements are still conspiring against it.

Some Madhesi groups had reportedly disturbed your mass meeting in your home town in southern terai recently, how do you look at it?

During my recent visit to terai district, I found that people are eager to take part in the polls. It is a democratic rights to wave black flags against their opponents. Some of the groups have raised political demand and they must be addressed and the criminals and secessionist forces should be isolated to create environment for the polls. It was a very insignificant event.

Ho do you respond to them?

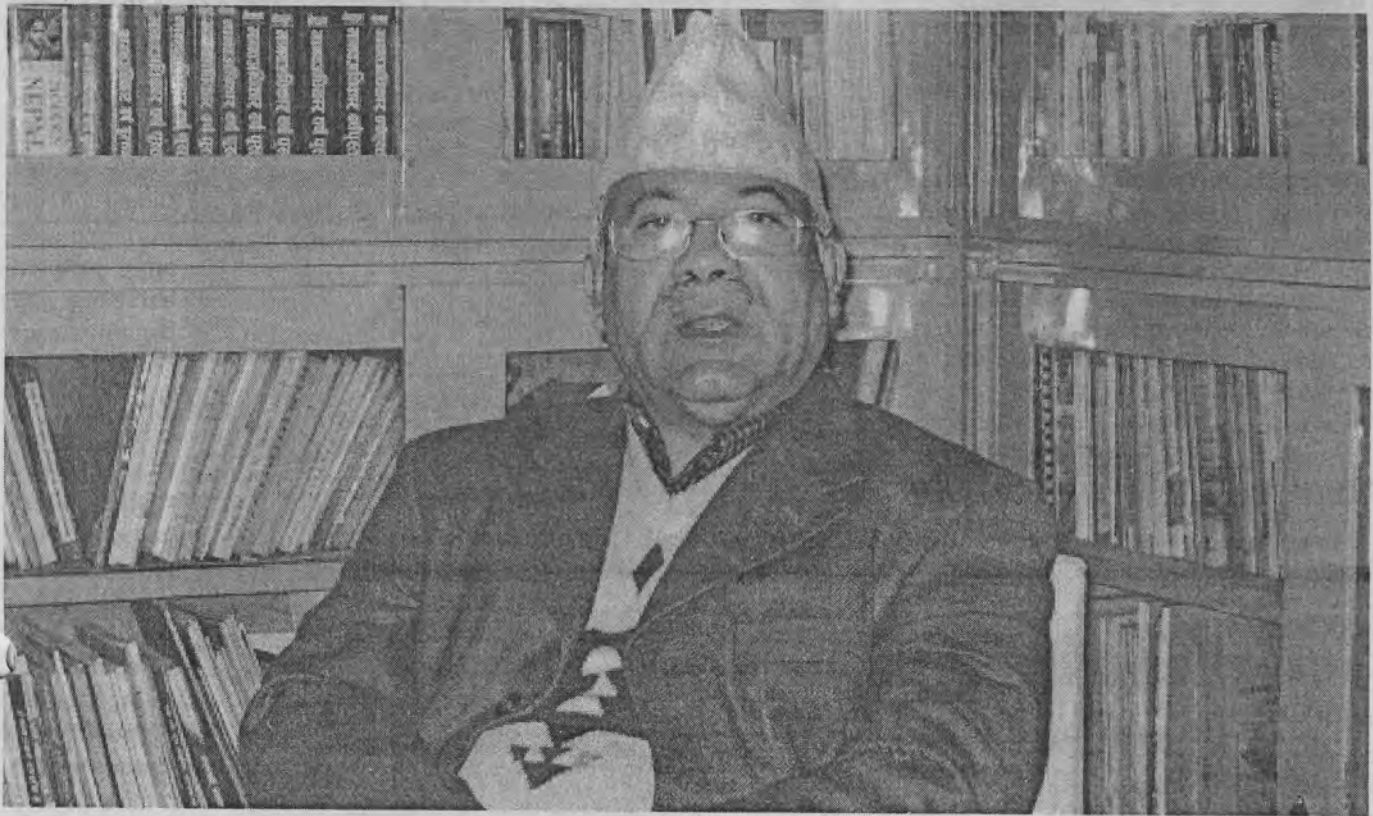
I requested them to join the election process so that they themselves can chart the course of their future. There were some dozen people who tried to disrupt my program. The groups dispersed following the protest from local community. If we empower Madhesis, such groups will be marginalized.

But, many Madhesi groups, armed and unarmed, have issued threats that they will not allow holding of the election till their demands are not fulfilled?

I have already said that the government needs to fulfill those demands, which are genuine and start dialogue and negotiations with them. We are holding the election for CA to make Nepalese sovereign.

But, Madhesi groups are demanding right to self determination or independent state?

We have already addressed the demands raised by the Madhsis, Janjatis and Dalits. We amended the constitution and included federalism, reservation for people of terai, janjatis and Dalits in government service, police and army. We need to fulfill all the demands except the declaration of independence.



Seven party alliance has already decided that the simple majority of CA Assembly will endorse the republic, how will you respect the opinion of monarchists. In case monarchists win the majority, shall they be allowed to retain monarchy?

We have already said that the first meeting of CA assembly will decide the fate of monarchy. We will accept the verdict of people. We are not afraid of the people.

If that is so, why couldn't you wait for the people to decide the fate of monarchy?

It is the people who will formulate the constitution now. The amendment was the agenda of seven parties and not the people as a whole. Again, it is the people of Nepal to decide.

Leaders of newly formed Madhesi party have accused leaders from Pahadi community of exploiting the Madhesis. How do you look at it?

There is no question that Madhesis have suffered a lot and they were exploited in the past. This is the reason why we are holding the CA election to make new Nepal where all the communities will have equal rights and can live with dignity.

Daughter of prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala and newly inducted minister in the cabinet Sujata Koirala in her recent statement said that the country needs monarchy. How do you react?

The party concerned has to take action against those airing views against the party line. It is Nepali Congress to take such action.

What about the recent row regarding the army integration issue?

I don't think it is in anybody's interest to politicize the army. I don't understand why prime minister and Maoist leader Prachanda have been raising this issue at this critical juncture. There is no question of politicizing the national army as it should be given independence. Nepal Army is a patriotic and professional army. Even prime minister Koirala and Prachanda accept this.

Don't you think that the integration of Maoist rebel in Nepal Army will politicize it?

I have told you that army institution needs to be made professional and it is not the army of particular political party. The national army is a patriotic force which can defend the country. As all of us know, Maoist army have ideological orientation and it the army of particular political party. There is no question to integrate such force in national army.

When Maoist leaders and even your party leaders have been saying that foreign elements are actively trying to disrupt the polls, how do you see the role of external element in forthcoming politics?

Foreign elements will always be there but it is for the people of Nepal to take decision on that. If we unite, we can avert such interference. Nepal is a sovereign and independent country which is capable to solve all political problems. Maoist leader Prachand revealed that foreign elements are trying to sabotage the elections. ■

As all of us know, Maoist army have ideological orientation and it the army of particular political party.



Unemployed youth: Rush for job

Management Ramesh Lekhak only to be cancelled abruptly as youths who had turned up at the fair began angry protests, accusing the organizers of fraud. The frustrated lot chanted slogans against the organizers and vandalized some of the stalls. Some agitators complained of being denied entry inside the venue despite

showing the tickets while others claimed that the organizers asked for as much as Rs 80,000 for trainings to become qualified for the jobs and even refused to accept the academic credentials of undergraduates.

In the advertisements, the organizers had set 10+2 education and English language proficiency as the minimum qualifications for the jobs on offer. The agitators burned tyres on the road and blocked traffic. The agitators even pelted stones at the Kantipur Publications at Teenkune, charging Kantipur daily as being one of the media partners of the event.

The fair was being jointly organized by High Level Committee on Information and Technology, New Horizons Nepal and Timesjobs.com in association with Convergys.

The row, however, has exposed a dangerous situation. It indicates the level of frustration, which can snap at the drop of a hat, among the youths. Such frustrations are especially deadly at a time when the country is passing through a bitter and prolonged spell of instability. ■

UNEMPLOYMENT

Rush For Jobs

The scale of unemployment was evident when youths in thousands rushed for job offer at an international job fair, which ended in a bitter row evident

By A CORRESPONDENT

It is said that around 500 Nepali youths leave their country everyday for Gulf countries and Malaysia in search of job opportunities. Additional hundreds also leave the country daily looking for education opportunities abroad.

As job and economic opportunities have almost vanished from the conflict-torn homeland, youths have no alternative than to seek greener pastures elsewhere.

It is also said that around 300,000 youths enter into job market every year. And, of them, only ten to twenty percent get jobs here. Remaining youths are compelled to turn their eyes elsewhere.

The extent of the unemployment problem

was made evident once more last week when thousands of youths rushed to Birendra International Convention Center (BICC) in New Baneshwore where a government agency along with some private companies had organized an international job fair offering over 2000 jobs in multinational companies on the spot.

But the fair turned ugly after the youths were disappointed to know that unlike what had been advertised, they needed to cough up money or show extra qualifications to be considered for the jobs on offer.

The fair had been inaugurated by Minister for Labor and Transport

TRC

Western Concern

Representatives of nations of western world express deep concern over proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission

By A CORRESPONDENT

Regarded as a key aspect of the peace process and promised as an institution that would heal the scars of decade-long conflict, the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has now attracted serious concerns from western diplomats who believe that the government might be trying to rush through the job of institutionalizing the TRC by sidestepping fundamental human rights issues.

A delegation of diplomatic representatives of western countries met with a senior minister and expressed concerns over the draft of a bill regarding establishing TRC, on Friday (Jan 11).

The delegation comprising British Ambassador, the US Ambassador, the Danish Ambassador, the French Chargé representing the EU Presidency and a representative of the European Commission called on the Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel and raised their concerns over the draft bill.

In a statement issued after the meeting, the delegation of the diplomats said, "The international community welcomes the proposal to establish a TRC. Addressing the past on the basis of truth, justice and reparation allows the country to look forward and build a society where violence is unacceptable and the rule of law is respected."



A victim of insurgency : How to reconcile

They further said, "But as before, we are concerned that some of the provisions in the TRC Bill do not meet international standards and will not advance democratic principles. This is of particular concern in regard to the potential granting of amnesty for serious violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law. This is not the basis on which lasting peace can be built."

The delegation also supported the recommendations of the OHCHR and civil society, both of whom are calling for the TRC to be established only after extensive broad-based public consultations which would include the participation of victim groups.

The delegation's statement reads, "We are concerned that the one month deadline set out in the 23-point agreement does not allow sufficient time for consultations. Consultations that inform the drafting of the Bill are vital if the TRC is to be legitimate and provide justice to victims of the conflict. This may require establishing a broad-based steering committee to design a national strategy on consultations. In the spirit of supporting Nepal's peace process we urge the government to delay submitting the TRC Bill until there has been adequate consultations which also take into account international law and experience. This is a unique opportunity to set up a sound process of truth and reconciliation that will heal the wounds of the past. Nepal should not miss it." ■



PRACHANDA

Red Herring

Is the top Nepalese Maoist leader a Lenin in the making?

By SUSHIL SHARMA

In a newspaper interview last Saturday, the top Nepalese Maoist Prachanda repeatedly singled out Lenin as his all-time favourite world leader.

Neither the ideologue Marx nor the revolutionary Mao did figure in his list.

Two days later at a mass meeting in Kathmandu, Prachanda advocated for a dictator "to control the anarchy in the country."

Roared the Stalinesque-moustached Maoist supremo, "in the twenty-first century Nepal can and must have a Buddha (the prince who gave up throne and the royalty to seek salvation) along with a Jung Bahadur (who became a ruthless dictator after eliminating all his opponents in a bloody massacre)."

His open admiration of Lenin and the pleading for a Jung Bahadur came three months before the proposed elections for the constituent assembly.

Was Prachanda trying to give a message?

According to history books, it was Lenin who became the Russian Jung Bahadur by smashing the constituent assembly elections and grabbing the power after he dispensed with his opponents including the royal Czars. ■

First Concrete Achievement

Nepal's biogas sector receives the first installment of carbon credit under the CDM for helping reduce GHG emission

By A CORRESPONDENT

A month after the much-touted Bali conference on global climate change, Nepal's biogas sector has become the first such sector in the country to actually receive money in return for helping reduce emission Green House Gases (GHGs).

The Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) has received a payment of US\$514,786 for its first delivery of verified emissions reductions to the Community Development Carbon Fund (CDCF) under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) created by the Kyoto Protocol.

"This payment is made for the Biogas Support Program-Nepal Activity 1 Project deducting all costs as per Emission Reduction Purchase Agreement (ERPA). Verification of the Biogas Activity 2 has also been completed and AEPC is waiting for the payment for the second activity too," states a press release by the World Bank office in Kathmandu. The World Bank had agreed to buy the emission reductions from the biogas sector.

The Kyoto Protocol is the 1997 international treaty which came into force in 2005, which binds most developed nations to a cap and trade system for the major Greenhouse Gases (GHG).

Taking into account that human-induced climate change is a global environmental problem, the CDM allows countries to fulfill some of their GHG-reduction commitments through purchase of emissions reductions from climate friendly projects in the developing world.

"The Nepal Biogas Project is one such project under the CDM. It is part of the Biogas Support Programme (BSP) that started in 1992, with Dutch government support through the Netherlands

Development Organisation (SNV). BSP also started getting funding from the German government through KfW (German Development Bank) and the Nepal government through AEPC. Biogas Sector Partnership Nepal (BSP-



Green Forest : Attracting money

Nepal) assists AEPC in execution of BSP through its implementation. BSP promotes the use of biogas by expanding its use for cooking and lighting in rural households. The biogas units displace fuel sources traditionally used for cooking—fuel wood, kerosene and agricultural waste—with renewable biogas produced from the treatment of animal and human waste. Each household biogas unit can reduce almost five tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, annually. Additionally, there are significant benefits in terms of improved agriculture yield and replacement of chemical fertilizer, due to use of slurry, another product of the biogas plant."

"Many visionary Nepalese put in years of painstaking work to make this

happen," says Susan Goldmark, World Bank Country Director for Nepal. "They saw that clean environmental practices would eventually bring economic and social payoffs. In addition to renewable energy sources, hundreds of thousands of rural Nepalese also stand to gain from a wide range of associated benefits in the areas of health, sanitation and agriculture."

An emission reductions purchase agreement was signed by the Community Development Carbon Fund managed by the World Bank and the AEPC in May of 2006 for sale of one million tons of Carbon Emissions Reductions. This payment represents the first of several annual payments which will be based upon actual verified delivery of Emissions Reductions under the agreement.

"As we see by this payment, carbon finance can produce direct financial rewards while supporting sustainable development at the same time," says Jeremy Levin, Task Team Leader for the World Bank. "This project produces significant local benefits to the rural peoples of Nepal through provision of modern, clean biogas energy while at the same time helps address the global issue of climate change."

As per the existing agreement, the funds shall be used to ensure proper implementation of the current phase of the Biogas program and will also support implementation of future phases to reach additional households in the rural areas of Nepal.

"We are happy in contributing reduction of greenhouse gas in the global atmosphere and contributing in the sustainable development of the country as well. As a result we have received the contracted payment from the World Bank for sale of our emissions reductions, and look forward to continued cooperation in the future," says Dr. Govinda Raj Pokharel, Executive Director of the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC). He emphasized that the ER payment received from the biogas CDM projects will be utilized in the promotion and sustainability of the biogas sector in Nepal. ■

CONTEMPORARY PAINTINGS

Roof Of The World

Artists from Tibetan Autonomous Region of China exhibit their paintings

By A CORRESPONDENT

Known as a roof of the world, the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China has many things to boast. From its religion to culture and arts to literature, TAR possesses many unique characters to distinguish it from the rest of the world.

This is what one can see in the contemporary paintings displayed at Siddhartha Art Gallery. Inaugurated by noted Singer and founder of Nuns Welfare Foundation of Nepal Ani Choying Dolma, the paintings explained many important aspects of Tibet.

Painted by 13 Artists Han Shuli, Hwang Zachi, Zhangde, Pema, Sonam Tsering, Wang Shiming, Jang Yung, Yak Taseten, Jian Jun, Yu Your Xin, Gyyoan, Tshrin Zhuoma, Lamu Bianpa, Zhang Ping, the paintings are full of meaning.

Related to the life and culture of Tibet, the artists use modern style to depict what they have visualized in their mind. From the beauty of nature to spiritual importance and faces of people living in the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China, artists of varied interest have drawn their own imagination.

As free thinkers, different artists have their own way for imagination. Some artists have romanced more with traditional issues but others have more attachment with the modern way of life.

As a place of rich history and religious philosophy, the themes, too, roam around the Buddhist philosophy. The paintings exhibited at the exhibition also showed the philosophical part of Tibet and its importance in the life of people.

Some of the artists are renowned in Tibet also. They showed the simplicity of Tibetan life and people. They seem to enjoy depicting the tradition and culture of Tibet and simplicity of the people. In

paintings depicting the hard reality of life and surroundings. The conflict between modernity and tradition are some of the important themes chosen by the artists.

The three paintings by artist Jang Yung showed various faces of innocent girl who wants to play and who wants to fly in the sky. She uses things like bicycles, helicopters and other flying objects.



all their paintings, the artists have shown that they have deeper philosophical insights.

There is perfection in the combination of colors and the artists have shown maturity to display. From depicting dream and reality to real life, the artists choose various media. There are also

As a people deeply influenced by their unique traditional culture, one can find different kinds of imagination very much related to their own surroundings.

The artists show that the clean air, depth scene of cultural and religious theme makes their theme more attractive and different than the rest of the others. ■

BOOK

Newars Communities Of Tibet

The author highlights the role of Newar communities in Tibetan capital Lhasa and Kalimpong

By A CORRESPONDENT

For centuries, Newar communities of Kathmandu had completely dominated the trade and business in Tibetan capital Lhasa. From religion to trade, Kathmandu remained major area influencing Tibet.

After a marriage of Nepali princess Bhrikuti with King of Tibet Srong Tsang Gampo, a troop of skilled craftsmen traveled with her to Tibet. Due to these nuptial relations, trade also developed between Nepal, Tibet and China. Nepal had then monopolized the trade with Tibet.

Although many Newar traders conducted the trade and business in Tibet, Symukapu was the most well organized and popular brand name in Tibet. Symukapu (meaning white cap in Tibetan) still maintains its centuries old brand name in capital of Tibetan Autonomous Region of China.

Until the British control of India and opening up of new road from Sikkim and Kalimpong, Kathmandu valley remained a major point for trade with Tibet and Newars of Kathmandu had monopolized the Trans Himalaya Trade. Even after opening of new routes from Kalimpong, some traders from Kathmandu moved to Kalimpong India to continue their traditional trade.

Although there are so many interesting things about the trade ventures by Kathmandu's Newar in Lhasa, this book is all about the Symakapu, a personal account about Bhajuratna and his son

Syamukapu
The Lhasa, Newars of
Kalimpong and Kathmandu

By D.S. Kansakar Hilker

Published by: Vajra
Publication, Kathmandu,
Nepal email:
bidur_la@mos.com.np

Price: Rs.700.00

Pages: 252

Gyan Jyoti. According to the writer Hilker, the book stretches over the period of 122 years, from 1882 to 2004 and unfolds in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kathmandu. As a daughter of Gyan Joyti and grand daughter of Bhajuratna Kansakar, Dil Shobha Kansakar has first hand information regarding trade with Tibet.

"This book includes Gyan Jyoti's life story, as it is not possible to write about Syamukapu without mentioning the contribution made by my father Gyan Jyoti," writes Hilker in her introduction. "In recent years, much has been written about the period in which Bhajuratna, my grand father lived in. I now attempt to add my contribution to those published material on the Newar Merchants of Lhasa and Kalimpong, with details narrated by my father."

Bhajuratna started as a small trader in Kalimpong, producing copper and brass

household goods for the Tibetan market. Over the years, he expanded to importing and exporting musk, yak tail, wool, Rolex watches, cotton and woolen textiles and rich Indian brocade. Later, business was carried on by his sons under the name of Jyoti Brothers, but the family remained popularly known to all as Symukapu both in Kalimpong and in Tibet.

The book is divided into two parts with several sub headings. Beginning from the history of Newars and Nepal and Tibet's historical background to Kalimpong and Darjeeling, author Hilker has made efforts to gather all the information regarding Nepal-Tibet trade.

Despite the book being a personal account of Syamukapu, author Hilker has collected much historically important information in the book. One can see how the flourishing trade with Tibet transformed the life of Kathmandu, Darjeeling and Kalimpong.

She also discusses how Rana rulers prosecuted and expelled Buddhist monks from Nepal and how Bhajuranta and Gyan Jyoti supported them during the exile. Gyan Jyoti made important contribution to preserve Therbad.

In her book, Hilker also discusses the short history of Nepal-Tibet trade and its implications in Nepal. She focuses her attention on Bhajuratna's years and his contribution in Nepal-Tibet trade. The book deals with Bhajuratna's early years, settling downs in Kalimpong, Syamukapu- the beginning, A deal with the Thebas, the Earthquake of 1934, Maniharsa Jyoti and such interesting topics.

Hilker's book is very interesting to read and to know about the pain and joy of difficult trade journey to Tibet in those times. For those who are interested to know about Nepal's past and flourishing contact with Tibet it is going to be interesting. ■

“I see a possibility of democratic coup.”

Pushpa Kamal Dahal aka Prachanda, Maoist chairman, in response to statements by prime minister and army chief regarding army integration.

“The Special Task Force is engaged in suppressing and creating terror. They must be withdrawn. Otherwise, we will seize their weapons and fight back.”

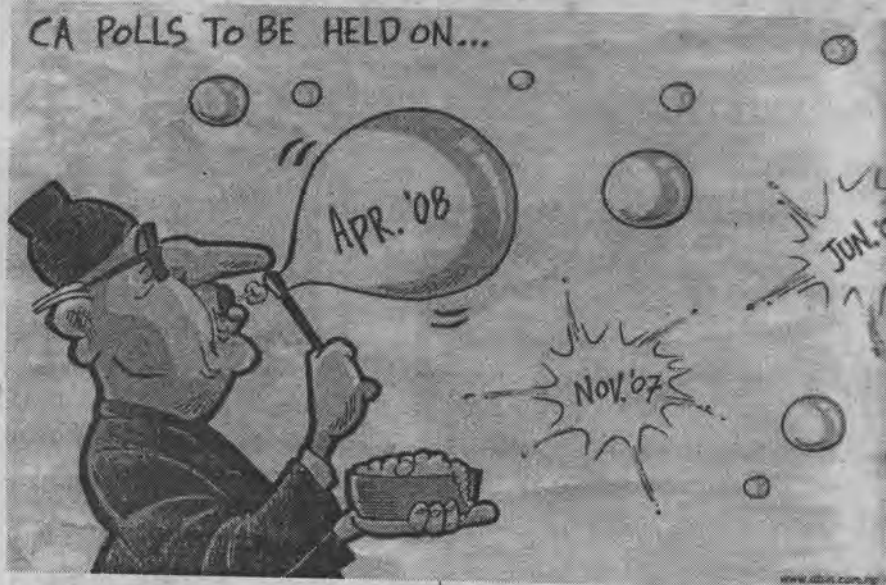
Mahantha Thakur, chief of Terai-Madhes Democratic Party (TMDP), calling for withdrawal of STF deployed by the government to create law and order situation favorable for election.

“When we drew his attention to this controversy, he said his views were twisted (by media).”

Dev Gurung, Local Development Minister and a Maoist leader, saying that Prime Minister GP Koirala said that media twisted his views on army integration.

“It is nothing like that. I will focus on law and order situation so that full democracy can be established by holding the Constituent Assembly election.”

Sujata Koirala, newly appointed



Minister without portfolio and daughter of PM Koirala, when asked if her appointment reflected the desire of her father to clarify the succession line within the party.

“The problem of load-shedding is not our making. It has been caused by (lack of projects) earlier governments.”

Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, Minister for Water Resources, talking to reporters.

“Sir Ed described himself as an average New Zealander with modest

abilities. In reality, he was a colossus. He was a heroic figure who not only ‘knocked off’ Everest but lived a life of determination, humility, and generosity.”

Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, in a statement announcing death of Sir Edmund Hillary.

“It’s a great loss for the Sherpa community. There’s no word to express this loss. He was like a parent for the Sherpas.”

Ang Tshiring Sherpa, managing director of Yeti Airlines, on the passing away of Sir Edmund Hillary, in *The Himalayan Times*.

TRANSITION

FIXED: April 10, as the date for Constituent Assembly, by the government of Nepal.

EXPANDED: Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala expanded his cabinet by inducting daughter Sujata Koirala as Minister without portfolio. Other ministers included on board include Farmulla Mansoor, as Minister for Environment, Science and Technology, and Ram Chandra Yadav, Minister for General Administration. Newly appointed Ministers of State include Ram Kumar Chaudhary (Home Ministry), Mahalaxmi Upadhyaya (Water Resources), Nagendra

Choudhary (Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation), Padam Rai (Works and Physical Planning) and Nabin Kumar B.K (Local Development).

APPOINTED: Chief Justice Kedar Prasad Giri has appointed Tahir Ali Ansari and Rajendra Prasad Koirala as permanent judges of the Supreme Court (SC). Both Ansari and Koirala were approved by the Special Parliamentary Hearing Committee (SPHC) earlier.

APPROVED: The nomination of Durgesh Man Singh, as ambassador-designate for India, by the Special Parliamentary Hearing Committee (SPHC).

NOMINATED: Prime Minister and

president of Nepali Congress (NC) Girija Prasad Koirala has nominated three MPs from his party to fill the vacancies in the parliament. PM Koirala has nominated Nagendra Jha, Laxman Raya Yadav and Rishikesh Tiwari as MPs to represent Sarlahi, Saptari and Parbat districts, respectively.

The Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) has also nominated three MPs as replacements in vacant positions in its parliamentary quota. The party has nominated Ras Narayan Yadav (Sarlahi), Abhishek Pratap Shaha (Kapilvastu) and Narendra Chaudhary (Salyan) as its MPs and has registered their names at the parliament secretariat.



SIR EDMUND HILLARY

Loss of A Great Legend

Death of Sir Edmund Hillary, who first scaled Mount Everest, is a great loss to Nepal

By KESHAB POUDEL

As soon as news was broadcast by Nepalese media on January 10 regarding the death of legendary mountaineer and Nepal-lover Sir Edmund Hillary, it sent shockwaves in the entire Nepal, particularly among the Sherpa communities of Solukhumbu district.

Since his first expedition to Mt. Everest in 29 May, 1953 as a first conquer, Sir Edmund Hillary spent his almost entire life to take care of the people living around the Everest region and promoting the cause of mountaineering. At 11:30 am of 1953, Hillary and Tenzing Norgay had reached the summit of Everest, 29,028 feet above sea level.

Thanks to his contribution and dedication, Hillary turned Solukhumbu and its Sherpa inhabitants into prosperous and educated lot. For backward and closed county like Nepal, late Hillary gave much needed popularity defending that Mt. Everest lies in Nepal's territory.

When he climbed Mt. Everest, Solukhumbu district had no education

institution and people were economically in bad shape and hundreds of people died because of lack of health facilities. The situation has changed now. Sherpas of Solukhumbu district have established themselves as best climbers of world making them economically better as well.

The death of Sir Edmund Hillary at the age of 88 at his home town in Auckland had saddened the whole world, particularly Nepal. The country has lost a great friend and well wisher who spent almost all his life for the cause of Nepal and to uplift the life of Sherpas.

Many people come and go but late Sir Edmund Hillary had made enormous contribution to Nepal. Whether it was during crisis period or peace time, late Sir Edmund Hillary supported Nepal and Nepalese.

Hillary, too, faced a great tragedy when his wife and daughter were killed in a plane crash in 1975 in Nepal but he continued his work to support the poor people of Solukhumbu district.

After his ascent to Mt. Everest, Hillary spent his most valuable time uplifting the Sherpa communities of remote parts of Nepal.

"He was not only a great mountaineer. He was a great friend of Nepal and the people here. Nepal has lost a great friend of her," said New Zealand's consul for Nepal Elizabeth Hawley to The Himalayan Times. "Instead of living around the glamour of being the first conqueror of Mount Everest, he preferred to live for the poor, undedicated and impoverished community and did what others hardly can do in one life."

Founded by late Hillary, the Himalayan Trust Nepal has established 27 schools and two hospitals and many health posts in 11 village development committees of Solukhumbu district. Now the Solu people have good education, job opportunities and better life style compared to mountain people of other areas.

"He was not speaking a lot but listening to all of us. The trust and legacy of Sir Edmund has to continue. We will work harder to keep the name alive," said Hawley who is also the executive officer of Himalayan Trust Nepal.

Among many of Nepal's friend, late Sir Edmund Hillary was one of them. Whenever Nepal faced difficult time, Hillary had stood for Nepal's cause. When Nepal was passing through a turbulent year in 2002, Hillary visited Nepal on the occasion of golden jubilee celebration of Mt. Everest.

At a time when Nepal has been facing very critical phase of its history, the death of Hillary is a great loss to the country. "He was a compassionate companion of the Sherpas. He never expected anything in return but dedicated his whole life for the betterment of these people," said Dr. Mingma Galen Sherpa.

"I climbed many peaks and became more and more competent – competent enough to finally stand on the summit of Mount Everest. I have visited many countries and admired places of great beauty. But I feel fortunate to have been born as a New Zealander," writes Hillary in his autobiography View from the Summit. "With June's help and the support of my Himalayan Trust Members, I am hopeful that our work in the Himalayas will continue for some time yet."

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