

SPOTLIGHT

May 23-29, 2008

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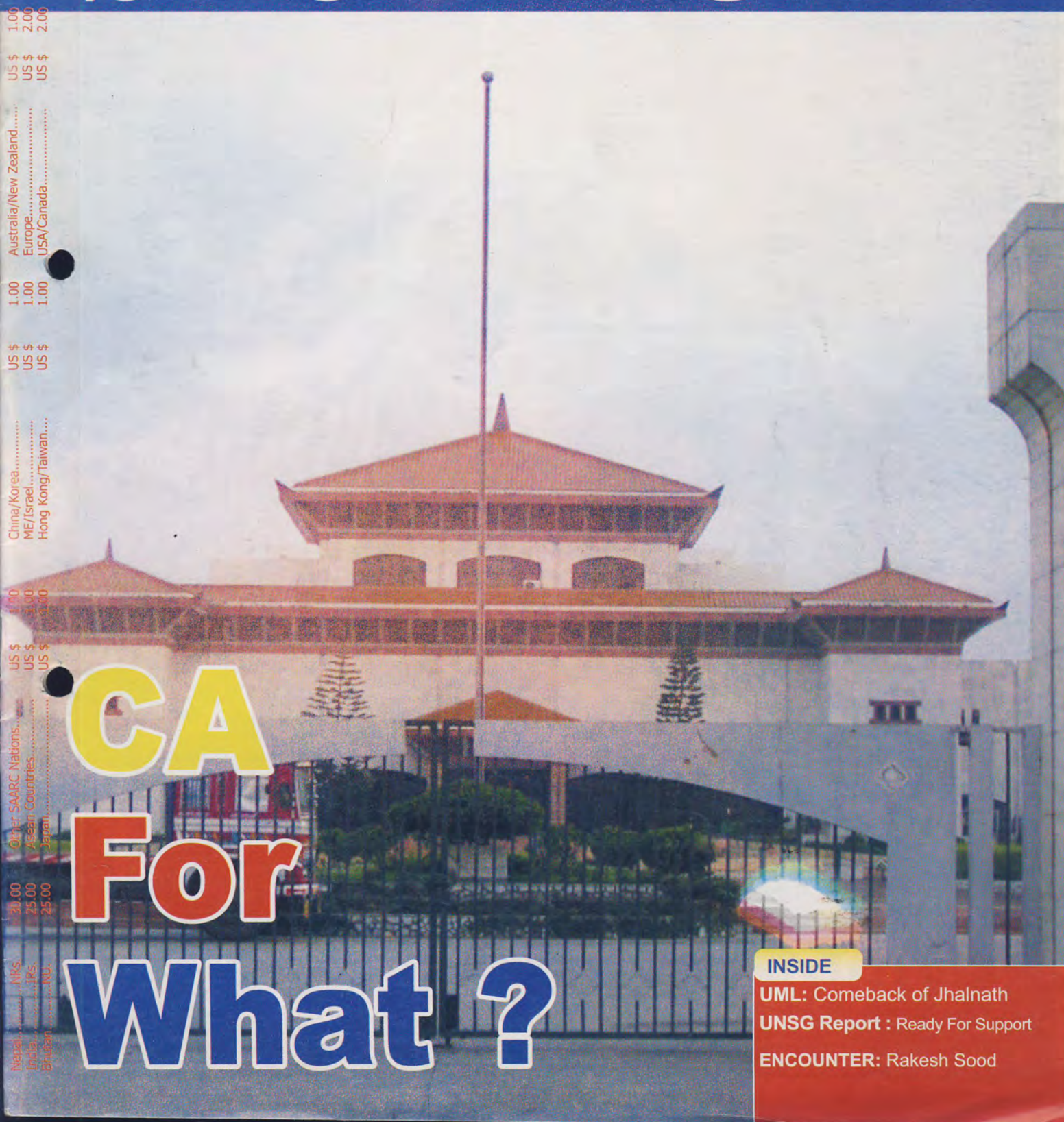
CA For What ?

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UNSG Report : Ready For Support

ENCOUNTER: Rakesh Sood



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All for one, Tuborg for all!



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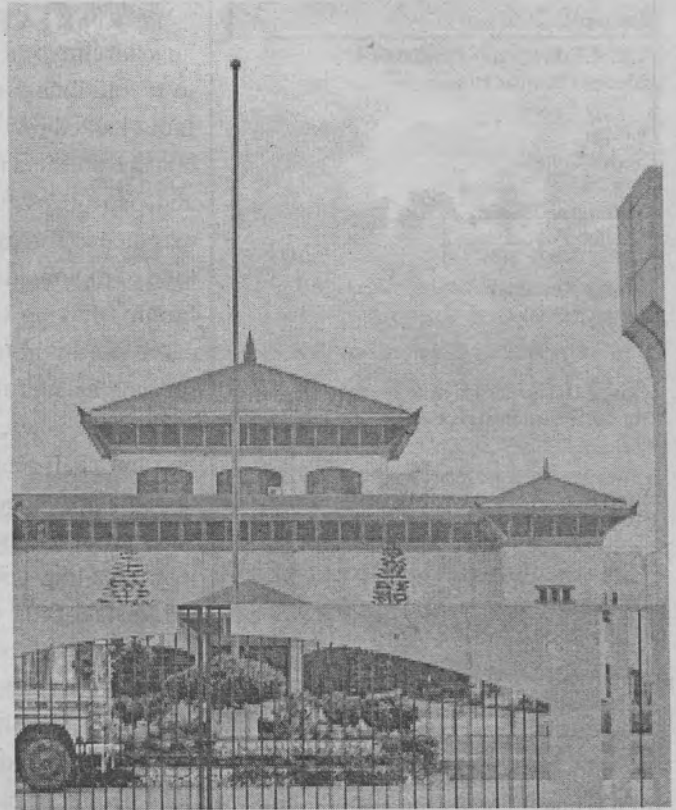
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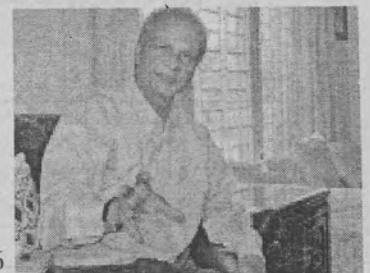


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UNSG REPORT: Ready for Support In his latest report to the Security Council, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon expresses readiness to support Nepal as per its request even as he anticipates that UNMIN's mandate will not be extended
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SPOTLIGHT

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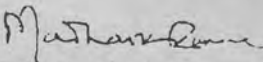
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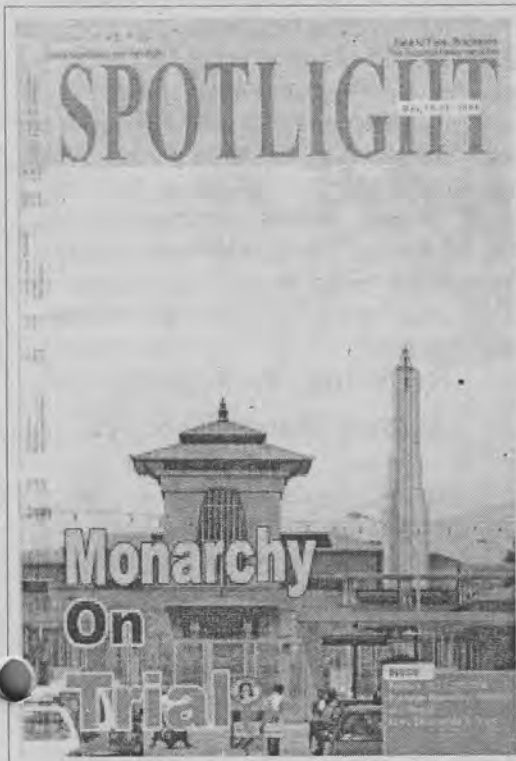
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All kinds of threatening rumors are pervading the sky of Kathmandu as the zero hour for the inaugural meeting of the historic constituent assembly draws closer. With less than a week to go, even the principal *dramatis personae* are not sure how the climax of the drama – transition from a traditional monarchy to revolutionary republic – will come to pass. Since the bane of India-locked tiny country has been the surfeit of pliant, servile and corrupt politicians and conspicuous absence of honest, dedicated and patriotic statesmen, Nepali politics has been dominated by extraneous forces that don't even bat their eyelids to violate any kind of diplomatic etiquette and international behavior. The dismal failure of king Gyanendra to exploit the unique opportunity to carve out an immortal niche in the history of the world, reserved for only a handful of fortunate persons, has brought himself to the sorry stage where he might have to preside over the liquidation of two and a half century old monarchy. The revolution that has pushed this small poor country into the cauldron of unending destabilization and turmoil might be forced to witness another counter revolution if the leading political party in the present situation – the CPN (Maoists)- fails to rise up to the occasion of shouldering the responsibility thrust upon it. The political doctrine the Maoists have vowed to follow has turned out to be out of tune with present political trends of global interdependence for mutual economic growth and advancement and cannot fulfill the needs and aspirations of the poor people of modern times. No one need harbor any doubts or misgivings that the Maoists are sure to lead the new government in Nepal. But whether the Maoists would be able to provide a new leadership to Nepal restoring her pride and status of a sovereign, independent state is a million dollar question. If the recent behavior of the Maoist is any indication, there seems to be little room for ballooned hopes they have been trying to feed the people with. The Maoists must have learnt a good lesson from the protests and demonstrations and the derogating slogans against their supremo generated by the murder of innocent Ramhari Shrestha by their own colleagues. They must have realized that the Nepali people have come of age and cannot be taken for a ride by any body, howsoever strong. Again, the recent interview Pushpa Kamal Dahal a.k.a. Prachanda, the Maoist supremo, gave to CNN-IBN man Karan Thapar also reveals the man in his entirety, which leaves a very sour taste in the mouth of patriotic Nepalis. Since they have still not been tried yet, we are prepared to give them the benefit of doubt. We hope against hopes that they won't disappoint us like their predecessors.


Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Analysis of Monarchy

Your cover story on Monarchy on Trial (May 16-22) was a good analysis. Democratic society is a just society. Thus everyone needs justice, even monarchy needs justice. One cannot do away with centuries-old institution on the basis of whim. I, too, agree with you that Nepal needs monarchy to give stability in multi-cultural, multi-linguistic and multi-religious society. Instead of taking hasty decision, political leaders should think twice before declaring republic. Individually, there were good kings and bad kings but the institution monarchy has nothing to do with that. You have done a wonderful job in bringing out the story.

Sandhya K.C
Via email

No Need For Debate

At a time when the country is already in a position to declare Nepal as a republic, there is no sense debating the utility of institution of monarchy. Of course, there are many good things about monarchy but this institution always worked against democracy. I don't understand why national newsmagazine like Spotlight is defending the rotten and regressive organization like monarchy. I don't see any reason to defend the monarchy. Monarchy will be abolished like Rana rule. We are waiting for the day of pronouncement of republic.

Sudip Khadka
Via email

Vested Interest

One cannot abolish the monarchy on the basis of whim of certain vested interest media and people. The recent incidents regarding the rampant corruption in Federation of Nepalese Journalist shows how money is pouring in the media sector to project the interest of various groups. If we see the last two years of anti-monarchy wave, we don't need to have any hesitation to say that there were involvement of foreign money in one or the other way to discredit the institution of monarchy. I agree with lawyer and commentator Bipin Adhikari

that reason behind the abolition of monarchy in Nepal is geo-political. I would like to thank Adhikari for bringing such an important matter in public notice.

Pradeep Rai
London, via email

Gruesome Aftermath

I would like to add that after abolition of monarchy in Afghanistan, a number of leaders were killed one after another. Daud was killed by Amin after a military coup. After that another leader Barbak Karmal was killed. Even the last president Najibullah faced similar fate. Even the present president Hamid Karzai escaped a number of assassination efforts. Once the monarchy was abolished, not only Afghani people but also a friendly country responsible to remove monarchy has already disintegrated. This is the writing on the wall for all to see and contemplate. Any country which has a genuine security concern does not have privilege to play a game which will ultimately bring calamity on her.

Dinesh Gurung
Via email

Lot Of Suffering

As the prices of essential commodities including the rice, wheat and maize have increased, the common

people with low income are suffering a lot. At a time when oil price continues to increase, more difficult days are in store for us. Your cover story Rising Cost; Falling Exports; Twin Tremor deserves a thank. In future you need to have more stories like this one. Do not give space to politics alone.

Pranita Subba
Shanker Dev Campus
Via email

Defending UNMIN?

I don't understand why Spotlight is defending UNMIN now as it has failed to work impartially in Nepal. Thanks to UNMIN's presence, Maoists were able to rig the election freely. The time has come to send back UNMIN. I don't see any reason to have this white. Because of failure of UNMIN, Maoist army openly threatened people in the elections. If UNMIN failed to monitor and check election process to make it free and fair, what more can we expect from it.

Rammohan Shaha
Ramswrop Ram Sagar Campus
Janakpurdham
Via-Email

Issue Of Treaty

Your cover story Right Issue, Wrong Time was very interesting and well-written analysis. It is very strange to see why Maoists raised this issue even before forming the government on their own. As Maoists secured just over 33 percent votes, they don't have much needed parliamentary strength to amend the treaty. If that is their position what prompted them to speak on such sensitive issue? Equally interesting is the quick response from Indian political leaders and diplomats who even backed Maoist stand to amend or scrap the treaty. Because of 1950 treaty, Nepalese have been receiving reciprocal treatment in India. They have to look after all those people who have been living in India and investing their money there. If Maoists are to be in the government, they must do so responsibly. Maoists seem to have hangover of anti-India. If Maoists raise such kinds of irritant views, it will serve neither Nepal's interest nor India's interest.

Kailash Jha
Via-email



Prachanda Fears Counter Revolution

Maoist chairman Prachanda has said that there is a possibility of counter-revolution in the country because of growing differences among the parties. "I'm saying this sincerely...there is a possibility of counter-revolution in the country," Prachanda said during a picnic program organized by Human Rights Concern Centre at Matatirtha, Kathmandu on Saturday (May 17). Alluding to the recent reactions of Nepali Congress and CPN-UML leaders to the Maoist victory in the polls, Prachanda said the reluctance of "some parties" in accepting the people's mandate has given rise to the possibility of counter-revolution in the country. "Those who had not anticipated this kind of election result are finding it difficult to accept the mandate of the people," the Maoist chairman said, adding that huge masses should take to the streets across the country from May 27 to 29 as the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly on May 28 is set to abolish monarchy and declare the country a republic. He said reactionaries could try to stage a counter-revolution during this period. *Compiled from reports*

US Playing A Game Against Maoists: Former Indian Envoy

Former Indian envoy to Nepal Dev Mukherjee 'cautioned' his government against what he called a game being played by the US against the Maoists in Nepal. He said this might lead to strong Chinese reaction, Kantipur daily

reported. According to the daily, Mukherjee, while speaking at a seminar in New Delhi on "Emerging Situation in Nepal : Policy Options for India" organized by Observer Research Foundation, a foreign policy think tank, on Friday, said India must be cautious about the US game in Nepal. Stating that US government (May 16) has been trying to deny legitimacy to Maoist led government in Nepal, he said this could lead to instability due to possible reactions by China, given the situation in Tibet. Mukherjee claimed that US officials in Kathmandu and some people within the Nepali Congress party have been suggesting Prime Minister Girija Koirala to lead the next government and not hand over the leadership to the CPN (Maoist) which has emerged as the largest party through recent elections. Terming the refusal of Koirala to step down from prime minister's office is against the people's mandate and that it would lead to a constitutional crisis in Nepal. Speaking at the same program, CPI leader D. Raja stressed on the need to review the treaty with Nepal as it has done with Bhutan last year. "I don't think the Indian government will have any objections," he said. *Compiled from reports*

Maoist Cadres Admit Killing Kathmandu Businessman

Maoists confirmed that the party's cadres had killed businessman Ram Hari Shrestha, a resident of Koteswar in the capital a few days back. The Maoists admitted that Shrestha, who was also the chairman of a local Tole development committee, was killed after being abducted. Traffic at Koteswar remained tense this afternoon following the publication of the news. The Maoists said that Shrestha was abducted from Santimarga in the capital on April 27 and taken to the Maoist third division cantonment at Shaktikhor in Chitwan district and was killed on May 10 and thrown into the Narayani River. A group of Maoists led by Maoist third division commander Kali Bahadur Magar 'Bibidh' had abducted Shrestha from Santimarga on charges of stealing Rs 1.7

million from their room. Three brigade commanders of the Maoist third division— Ganga Ram Thapa, Keshab Adhikari and Govinda Batala—were involved in Shrestha's death, Superintendent of Police at Chitwan District Police Office Puskal Raj Regmi informed. The Maoists have handed over Batala to the district police, while the other two are still at large. *eKantipur reports*

NC Youths To Retaliate Against Maoist Excesses

Nepali Congress youth leaders Thursday said that they will openly retaliate against the Maoist excesses, saying that the Maoists continued with their war-time attitude though the party has emerged as the single largest party after the Constituent Assembly elections. Organizing a press conference at Reporters Club in the capital on Friday (May 16), the NC leaders said that they will bring together youths throughout the nation as part of the preliminary preparations for retaliation. The nationwide youth conference labeled as active congress for prosperous Nepal, reformed organization for active congress and youth campaign for reformed organization is due to kick off in the capital from Sunday. The campaign to be started from the capital will also be run in Pokhara, Biratnagar, Dhangadi and Nepalgunj as well, the NC informed. Former President of Nepal Student's Union (NSU) Guru Raj Ghimire said that it was late to retaliate against the Maoist atrocities. Ghimire added that the people have expressed dissatisfaction with the Congress in the CA elections for tolerating the atrocities of the Maoists. Another former NSU President Govinda Bhattari said that the NC which fought for the democracy time again should be ready to fight authoritarianism. NSU joint-president Kalyan Gurung stated that the Maoist excesses have crossed the limit. The NSU leaders called on the youth to be ready to fight against authoritarianism. *Compiled from reports*

Jwala Singh Loses JTMM Commandership

Nagendra Paswan alias Jwala Singh has been suspended from the post of

chairman of Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM), an armed outfit active in Terai. Reports said a meeting of the JTMM politburo held last week in an unknown location removed him from the post, accusing him of working against the party's policies and involving in financial irregularities. The politburo meeting appointed Ranabir Singh as the outfit's commander, reports added. Jwala Singh had been leading the group after a split with Jaya Krishna Goit-led JTMM some time back. The insurgent group, which claims to have been fighting for an independent Terai state, has mainly been targeting hill-origin people living in Terai, government employees and local leaders of political parties. *Compiled from reports*

US Says Maoists Never On Terrorist Watch-List

With the former rebels CPN-Maoist poised to head the new government, the US has declared that the party was never included in its "foreign terrorist organization" and its relations with Nepal will depend on the actions of the individuals included in the new government. The US has hinted a rethink of its Nepal policy following the victory of the former guerrillas, CPN-Maoist, in the historical Constituent Assembly (CA) elections held here last month. The former rebels Maoist have, however, been included on the 'terrorist exclusion list' that applies to consular issues, visas and other kinds of matter, State Department Spokesperson Tom Casey told reporters in Washington, making an elusive distinction between the two categories for the first time. Although the US accepted the CA polls verdict, Casey indicated that the US government still needs to have a clear stance on whether to change the Maoist's status on the 'terrorist exclusion list'. Regarding the meeting held between the US Ambassador to Nepal Nancy J Powell and Maoist Chairman Prachanda on May 1, the US senior government official said that the meeting was principally to get assurances that the US humanitarian programs will not be interfered with. The CPN-Maoist had formally laid down weapons in 2006 and joined the interim coalition government last year. *Compiled from reports*

Seven Injured In YCL Attack

Seven people have been injured in separate attacks by Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) cadres in Kaski and Chitwan districts on Wednesday (May 14). Five persons belonging to Nepali Congress (NC) and Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) parties were beaten black and blue with bamboo sticks by YCL cadres in Pamebazaar in Kaski district. The injured include Bam Bahadur Adhikary, Krishna Bahadur Adhikary, Min Bahadur Adhikary, Bharat Bahadur Adhikary and Narayan Bahadur Adhikary. Likewise, in Madi of Chitwan district, two teachers of Someshwore High School were attacked by a group of people including YCL cadres. Teachers Ramnath Tiwari and Krishna Pathak were beaten in the school playground. They are being treated in Bharatpur hospital. According to Pathak, a group of youths who were taking side of some rowdy students resorted to attacking them. *Compiled from reports*

Nepali Students Safe In China

All Nepali students studying at Sichuan University in the earthquake hit region of Chengdu, China are safe. In a letter written to the Himalayan Times, a reader Bijay Lal Shrestha said he had spoken by phone to his daughter a student of medicine at West China Center for Medical Sciences at Sichuan University last night and she had informed him that all the 300 Nepali students at the university were safe. She also said that the students were staying outside in the open in the University Football Ground for the fear of aftershocks, said Shrestha in the letter. The powerful earthquake which hit China yesterday toppled buildings, schools and chemical plants killing about 10,000 people and trapping untold numbers in mounds of concrete, steel and earth in the country's worst quake in three decades. The 7.9-magnitude quake devastated a region of small cities and towns set amid steep hills north of Sichuan's provincial capital of Chengdu. Striking in mid-afternoon, it emptied office buildings across the country in Beijing and could be felt as

far away as Vietnam. Meanwhile, Nepalese ambassador to China Tanka Karki told Kantipur Television that he has received information that no foreigner has been killed in the quake.

Compiled from reports

Mahara Accuses NC Of Violating Understanding

A senior Maoist leader has accused the Nepali Congress (NC) of violating the understanding by putting forth conditions for cooperation. Referring to seven conditions put forth by the NC Central Working Committee for lending support to Maoists, Minister for Information and Communication Krishna Bahadur Mahara has told Kantipur Television that the NC had violated pact with it. "The NC has flouted the agreement by raising such conditions for



cooperation," he said, pointing at the demand of dissolution of Young Communist League (YCL) and other similar parallel outfits of the Maoists. The NC had also demanded that weapons belonging to Maoist combatants be surrendered. The party has asked the Maoists to guarantee to keep judiciary, army, police and other institutions at bay – away from any kind of interference. It has said that only on such conditions will it extend its cooperation to Maoists in the formation of the government. "Issues like dissolution of our army are a part of the entire peace process. The election itself is a part of that process. It was not appropriate to raise such conditions," Mahara said. He also urged the NC to become 'democratic,' by shedding off 'autocratic' elements. *Compiled from reports* ■



People observe 2552nd Buddha Jayanti

TWO BHUTANESE REFUGEE GROUPS have sent memos to Indian Prime Minister Dr Man Mohan Singh seeking Indian support to solve the two-decade long refugee crisis. The appeals – by National Front for Democracy and Human Rights Organization of Bhutan – were sent to Dr Singh, ahead of his visit to Thimphu. Dr Singh reached Thimphu on Friday (May 16) for a two-day visit to the Himalayan kingdom that held its first democratic elections in March. Bhutanese government media said Dr Singh will address the joint sitting of the Bhutanese parliament Saturday. “Over 108,000 Bhutanese, after being victimized by Bhutan’s ultra-nationalist policy, have been forced to live as refugees,” the NFD memorandum said. “The drama of democracy being staged recently has not only failed to address the sentiments of those exiled, but also of those living inside the country.” “We request consideration of the genesis of armed struggle by refugee youths, after being pessimistic due to the refugee life for over one-and-half decade,” read the HUROB letter sent to Dr Singh. The organizations also expected the visit to be crucial for refugee repatriation and India’s role in the process. Chairman of Druk National Congress Rong Thong Kinley Dorji, who lives in New Delhi, had already submitted such memorandum to Singh expressing hope that the visit would be important for establishing real democracy and begin repatriation of Bhutanese refugees who are languishing in various camps in eastern Nepal and India.

THE ELECTION COMMISSION (EC) has asked candidates who have won two seats in the direct election at the recently held Constituent Assembly (CA) election to vacate one by June 8. The EC has issued a statement saying that the candidates need to resign from one seat within 30 days of formal declaration of election results. In the April 10 election, Maoist chairman Prachanda, Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba, Madhesi Janadhikar Forum coordinator Upendra Yadav, its leader Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar and Maoist leader Dev Gurung had won from two seats each. The candidates can vacate one of the two seats based on their choice.

NEPALI BANKS WILL INVEST RS 6 BILLION in the development of 309 MW strong Upper Tamakosi hydropower project. This is the first time Nepali banks are investing such a huge amount under co-financing in a hydropower project. Himalayan Bank Limited will act as the lead bank and invest Rs 6 billion as requested by Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), according to Ashok Rana, chief of the bank. He said so following a meeting of consortium of 21 banks. He said banks were encouraged to invest in the project after Employees Provident Fund decided to invest Rs 10 billion. The total cost of the project is said to be around Rs 27 billion. The NEA is preparing to raise remaining investment from Beema Sansthan, Citizens Investment Fund and other financial companies. It is also preparing to raise money by distributing shares to local people of Dolakha where the project will be located.

THE CHINA STUDY CENTER-NEPAL has made a humble contribution of Rs 20,000 (Twenty Thousand rupees) to the relief operation being carried out for the earthquake victims in China. The Center hopes that Nepali people and institutions of all walks of life would also make their contributions as per their capacity to the earthquake relief operation as a token of friendship towards our neighbor China and its people.

KOREA INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY(KOICA) is supporting to establish Government Integrated Data Center and Training Center. The groundbreaking ceremony was held recently in Singha Durbar. With the total cost US\$ 3.5 millions (NRS 235 millions), KOICA will support to build infrastructure of e-Government by establishing the Government Integrated Data Center (GIDC) in Singha Durbar. It will also provide equipment and materials necessary for the operation of IDC and IT training for government officials, and support the capacity building in the ICT field of Nepal through various training programs. Korean Ambassador to Nepal Nam Nam Sang-jung said that this project would contribute to laying the foundation for e-Government in Nepal. Apart from this, KOICA has supported to establish 11 School Tele-centers in districts and also developed Cyber Nepali dictionary for the public use. KOICA dispatches about 10 Volunteers annually in fields of computer and electronics as well as invites the government officials to Korea for the training programs in fields of IT Policy and IT Technology. ■

MELAMCHI PROJECT MUST BE REVIEWED

•Dr. AB Thapa

Melamchi Project to be implemented with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank must be reviewed if we want to provide free of cost the Melamchi water to inhabitants of the Kathmandu valley and at the same time to overcome to a great extent the present power shortage problem within a short period at a relatively low investment.

Positive Attitude of the ADB

In the past the Asian Development Bank had been very flexible. They fully cooperated with the Government to make substantial amendment to the agreement whenever they were convinced that there is a room to make any of the projects financed by the ADB economically and financially more viable.

Kankai Irrigation Project could be a typical example.

Feasibility study as well as the detailed design of the Kankai Project was done under a grant directly by the Asian Development Bank outside Nepal. We from

the Nepalese side expressed our reservation about the detailed design. After completing various formalities the Bank decided to finance the Kankai Irrigation Project. The construction of this project commenced from around the middle of 1970s.

We proposed the Asian Development Bank to amend the loan agreement by substantially modifying the total design of the project even though the contractors had already started the construction works at site. The modification allowed the capacity of various structures (involving about 2/3 cost of the project) to be increased by about 60% absolutely without rise in project cost. The Asian Development Bank agreed to amend the Agreement. A Supplementary Loan Agreement was signed to incorporate funding for the construction of the infrastructures needed to further extend the canals and to provide services to cover additional areas.

Melamchi Tunnel Hydropower

There exists a *big potential to generate cheap electricity* by using the diverted flow of the

Melamchi River The elevation of the Melamchi intake weir is 1715 m and the inlet to the treatment works near Sundarijal is 1409 m. Thus there is an enormously big gross head of 306 m. *The UNDP feasibility study report has clearly pointed out that the*

net increment in investment (the cost of the powerhouse located near Sundarijal with electromechanical equipment) needed to implement the hydropower element is relatively small as the



intake, headrace tunnel and penstock are already in place for conveying water to the treatment works.

According to the feasibility report of the Arun-3 Project operating at a head of

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

about 300 meters (same as the Melamchi Hydropower) the cost of electromechanical equipments and power station civil works is only about 30% of the total project cost. *The UNDP study has concluded that it would be worth constructing the hydropower and it could make a contribution to reducing the cost of drinking water to Kathmandu.* The UNDP report explains that even before the diversion of the Yangri and Larke rivers the total annual generation of the Melamchi hydropower would be 60 GWh and out of it the firm power generation would be 40.5 GWh.

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

It is quite unfortunate that sometime back the hydropower component of the Melamchi Project was dropped ignoring the strong recommendation of the UNDP

report. It is still not too late to reintroduce the hydropower component.

Additional Use of Melamchi Tunnel

The 28 km long Melamchi tunnel to divert the Melamchi water into the Kathmandu valley is the most expensive component of this project. This tunnel, apart from diverting Melamchi water into Kathmandu valley, could be developed as a trunk tunnel to provide transit to regulated flow of the Langtang river, and also the waters drawn from the Yangri and Larke rivers. Such conversion would not involve additional investment. A small portion of the combined flow of these rivers sufficient to meet the long term demand for water in the Kathmandu valley could be provided for free

after the generation of electricity at hydropower station located near Sundarijal. The bulk of the water could be dropped into the Kulekhani reservoir to generate abundant cheap electricity. Water thus pumped into the Kulekhani

The Langtang projects operating at a head of about one thousand meters and more could produce electric energy at a very low cost. Apart from it, water in abundant quantity could be supplied to the Kathmandu valley for free.

reservoir after being used for power generation in a cascade of hydropower stations (Kulekhani Nos 1,2 and even 3) could also be used to provide gravity irrigation in Chitwan valley

The Langtang Power Projects

The Langtang projects operating at a head of about one thousand meters and more could produce electric energy at a very low cost. Apart from it, water in abundant quantity could be supplied to the Kathmandu valley for free. The concept of the Langtang project solely for power generation was developed under the UNDP supported Gandak basin masterplan study. This concept requires some revision to include a new component to supply drinking water to Kathmandu valley. It necessitates dropping the regulated Langtang water at the end into the Melamchi river instead of the Bhotekosi (Trisuli).

According to the Gandak Basin Master Plan a 120 m high dam has been proposed on the Langtang Khola near Jaithang. The volume of the reservoir would be about 180 million cubic meters. Based on revised concept the water in the reservoir at a full supply level of 3995 meters would be first tapped

by the Langtang-1 power station operating at a gross head of 950 meters. The installed capacity of the Langtang-1 power station located near Ghore Tabela about 15 km downstream from the storage reservoir would be about 70 MW.

Water from the Langtang-1 power station would be directly drawn into the Langtang-2 power station. For augmenting this flow the water from the catchment downstream of the storage dam would also be drawn into the headrace tunnel of the Langtang-2 power station. The installed capacity of the Langtang-2 power station operating at a head of about 1300 meters would be about 150 MW.

Why is Langtang Power Cheap?

Of all the site characteristics, head is the most important. Design guidelines, 1989 approved by the American Society of Civil Engineers has given some simple reasoning that would help to explain why

the super high head Langtang power stations operating at many times greater head by comparison with other hydropowers could be built at very low cost. "Very simply if one doubles the head the quantity of water needed to produce a certain amount of energy is halved. Thus, for like site energy development the penstock area and reservoir volume are halved and further large cost reductions occur for powerhouse and machinery costs. This fundamental consideration is at the root of the large cost reductions that occur at higher heads."

A joint team of German, Japanese and the US consultants has made an interesting reference to a Canadian high head project vis-à-vis the Upper Arun project to be operated at moderately high heads. "It is worth mentioning that the search of the worldwide inventory of the existing hydropower installations identified only one plant with a combined head and flow magnitudes greater than that of the Upper Arun-Kemano in British Columbia, Canada". At present the electricity generated by the 896 MW Kemano Project with a 16.3 km long headrace tunnel operating at 800 m head provides power for Alcan's aluminum smelters at Kitimat at a cost below US cents 3 per KWh. ■



UNMIN officials: Clearing progress

UNMIN Mine Action

The UNMIN continues works to help in the de-mining and destruction of unsafe explosives, which remain a big threat

By A CORRESPONDENT

The news reports about children getting killed or maimed while playing with 'strange objects' found in the vicinity of their villages have continued to pour in despite the end of conflict two years ago.

As de-mining and destroying unsafe ordnance is a very taxing and expensive exercise, the operation to clear them has not been completed.

The Mine Action Unit of the UNMIN has continued the destruction of category one (unsafe to store) improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war at Maoist army cantonment sites, bringing the total number of items destroyed to 12,000, which is approximately 90 per

cent of the reported Maoist army improvised explosive devices, according to the report by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

"A detailed plan for the destruction of the remaining devices was developed and agreed by the Maoist army representative in the Joint Monitoring Coordinating Committee. The last stage of destruction of the improvised explosive devices, which began on 21 April, is expected to be completed by 24 May."

"The Mine Action Unit also undertook mine-clearance activities with the Nepal Army in fulfillment of their obligations under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which requires clearance of all

minefields. As at 4 April, clearance of three minefields and surveys of 16 more minefields has been completed. The Nepal Army has so far approved the clearance of 20 of the 53 minefields, 12 of which are to be completed in 2008. The Unit held strategic planning workshops with the Nepal Army to review current operational and training plans to enhance its mine-clearance capacity. A second mine-clearance training course was given to 37 Nepal Army personnel in April, following which the Nepal Army's de-mining capacity increased to four teams."

The presence of improvised explosive devices in the community continued to cause harm. From 1 January to 31 March, 22 casualties were reported, including children and young people. Although the number remains high, there has been a considerable decrease compared with each of the previous three years.

Early in March, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining conducted two workshops focused on various mine action and legal framework issues that were attended by Government officials from several Ministries, Nepal Army personnel and civil society representatives.

"The report on the comprehensive assessment conducted late in November 2007 in response to the Government's request for United Nations assistance in mine action was submitted to the Government for its review. If the Government endorses the report's recommendations, the Mine Action Unit could coordinate with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to support their implementation." ■

UNSG REPORT

Ready For Support

The UN Secretary General has said he is ready to continue support to Nepal's peace process

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Even as the tenure of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) draws to a close in July end, the political parties have not initiated debate over whether they want the mandate of UNMIN extended beyond that date or not.

Since the sensitive and potentially divisive issue of management and integration of Maoist army remains unresolved, the departure of UNMIN could be missed in the coming days, according to observers.

However, in his recent report to the Security Council, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has said that he does not anticipate extension of the mandate of UNMIN beyond July 23, 2008.

"I do not anticipate a further extension of the mandate of UNMIN, but the United Nations stands ready to provide continuing support for the completion and consolidation of the peace process and for the long-term development of Nepal. My Special Representative and the Resident Coordinator will be in discussion with the new government once it is formed regarding whatever assistance it may request," he said.

Stating that these are critical times for long-term stability in Nepal, the SG has said the UN will remain by the side of the people and leaders of Nepal 'in the historic tasks of political and social transformation on which they have embarked.'

Further in his report, the UNSG has reminded that though a key part of

the peace process – the Constituent Assembly election – was held in generally orderly and peaceful manner, more important tasks remain ahead.

"The election is only a milestone in the peace process, however. The real work of addressing the nation's deeper socio-economic difficulties and drafting a constitution that reflects the will of the entire nation only begins now. The immediate tasks of government formation and preparatory work for drafting the constitution are of the utmost importance," he said.

He has termed the CA polls as historic achievement. "Nepal's success in holding the Constituent Assembly election under considerably better conditions than most observers had expected is nothing short of a historic achievement."

On the electoral outcome and the subsequent need for political consensus, he had this to say, "The extent of the Maoists' electoral success came as a surprise to many. I am encouraged by the commitment to consensual politics and cooperation that the Maoist leadership and party have continued to project since the election. It is vital for other political parties to maintain the focus on the long-term interest of the peace process and the nation, rather than on any immediate political set-back or partisan interests."

Elaborating the impending withdrawal of UNMIN following the election, the UNSG said, "Now that their tasks have been successfully



Moon: Expressing readiness

completed, the UNMIN electoral staff have been progressively withdrawn from the districts and regions, and are departing from the Mission. The number of arms monitors is progressively being reduced as those who are rotating out towards the end of the mandate are not being replaced, and the Arms Monitoring Office will be restructured accordingly. Vacancies are not being filled, and all substantive staff contracts will terminate by 23 July, leaving only administrative personnel that would be gradually phased out from August to December 2008."

According to the UN, at present, there are a total of 968 of the authorized 1,048 personnel recruited by the Mission.

The political parties, on the other hand, have not yet taken up the issue of UNMIN in their discussions. Maoist chairman Prachanda had earlier said that a final decision (on whether to request UNMIN to continue after July 23) would be taken following discussion among the parties. But he had hinted that the issue of integration of Maoist army could be dealt internally alongside the CA process through a special committee.

However, experts believe that given the bitterness among the leading parties in the aftermath of election and the explosive nature of the issue of army integration, the issue could be better resolved in the presence of a widely accepted body with related expertise. ■



Khanal : Difficult task

JHALNATH KHANAL

Comrade's Comeback

After nearly two decades, Jhalnath Khanal comes back as the general secretary of CPN-UML

By KESHAB POUDEL

CPN-UML leader Jhalnath Khanal had to wait for more than two decades to come back again as the secretary general of the party. Following his defeat in 1988 to charismatic Madan Bhandari, Khanal had no option other than to bide his time.

Last time, after the rise of comrade Madan Bhandari, the UML had emerged as the largest communist party reducing the size of all other leftist. This time the CPN-Maoist has become the largest communist party pushing UML to the second place. Khanal, it seems, has his job clearly cut out.

After major debacle in the last CA elections, incumbent general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal tendered his resignation paving the way for comrade Jhalnath Khanal, who is among few UML central committee members who had won the elections under first-the-past-post system, thus placing himself as a lone competitor for the position.

This time when Madhav Kumar Nepal proposed the name of Jhalnath, there was no competition and rivalry as only aspirant for the position K.P. Sharma Oli was also in no strength to claim the position. Due to his health and his recent electoral loss, Oli was not in a strong position to challenge Khanal.

Two decades ago, when the erstwhile CPN-ML – the predecessor of UML – was underground, Khanal became general secretary using force. It was reported that Khanal and his comrades asked then secretary general C.P. Mainali to resign at the gun point.

Although late Madan Bhandari was unknown to many till then, he appeared publicly in Mathura, India through an interview in the Indian newspaper in 1990. Subsequently, Bhandari became new general secretary while Jhalnath Khanal popularly known as comrade J.N. was suddenly appointed the Minister for Forest and Agriculture in the interim government led by Krishna Prasad Bhattarai in 1990.

During Janandolan I, Radhakrishna Mainali took part in all the negotiations but Khanal was suddenly given the major role in the cabinet.

Unlike other communist leaders, one of the important aspects of Khanal is that he always maintains his decency and decorum. He is known for attending public functions wearing suit and tie and driving fine vehicles.

Having started his political career in 1964 as a student leader, J.N. Khanal was one of the key architects of the 12 point agreement that was signed in New Delhi in November of 2005. Along with Congress leaders, J.N. Khanal made several trips to New Delhi in preparation of the deal.

Born in Ilam, comrade J.N. Khanal, 58, has major challenges now to revive his party organization and prevent his party workers from joining CPN-Maoist.

Comrade J.N.'s challenge is also to manage the party when it is playing politics in open society. In his first tenure, CPN-ML was an underground party with a very limited number of die-hard supporters.

Another challenge for J.N. is to accommodate the various interests and inject the life in the party through effective leadership. As J.N. has taken over the charge of general secretary when the CPN-UML is facing biggest challenge from CPN-Maoist, his road ahead is very difficult and bumpy.

Although former general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal resigned from the party general secretary, he still has huge influence in the party and J.N.'s success will hinge on how well he would be able to accommodate the diverse interests of the people to revive the party.

Although his nomination as a general secretary of the party was finalized on the basis of unanimous voting, there are many ambitious rivals who can pull him down at any time if the comrade fails to tread carefully. Unlike Madhav Kumar Nepal who took the control of the party when it was at a rising phase, Khanal has come to head Balkhu Durbar when his party is in falling phase.

Madhav Nepal developed high blood pressure during the course of running the party as its general secretary. Nobody knows how J.N. will manage the pressure of his party. ■

Constituent Assembly For What?

As the countdown begins for May 28 – the day set for the crucial first meeting of 601-member jamboree of Constituent Assembly - the uncertainties about the procedures of the first meeting remain. From the formation of new government to the settlement of the major constitutional issues like the structure of the state – unitary vs federal – or forms of government – republican vs monarchical, it will have to deal with many tricky matters. In a hung assembly where no political party has the majority, running the CA- which has to perform the role of the parliament as well – is, in itself, a challenge. As an elected body with the fresh mandate of the people, nothing is binding for CA- which was elected to draft a new constitution in accordance with the wishes of the people. However, the indication is that members of CA will have to function as a rubber stamp from the very first meeting. The challenge before the elected CA will be to perform their role as per the people's mandate

By KESHAB POUDEL

The final preparation of the venue of constituent assembly is already being completed. Constructed with the support from People's Republic of China and named after late King, the building of Birendra International Convention Center is being turned into the venue where the meeting of CA will be held from May 28 – a crucial meeting

expected to oversee the implementation of republic, and formation of second communist government, among other important stuffs.

Preparations are on final stage regarding the seat arrangements, installing microphone and recording systems, preparation of offices and so on. The Secretariat of Legislature-

Parliament has taken the charge of renovation and decoration of the venue as per the standard of legislature.

"The venue is now ready to hold the meeting for 601 members. Everything is in place to follow the proceedings of the house," said Manohar Bhattarai, secretary general of Legislature Parliament. "From seat arrangements to



BCC: The chosen venue

Chair for speaker, media center, security everything has been modified in accordance with the need for CA.”

Despite the completion of technical aspects, political consensus is still elusive regarding the agenda for CA. Leaders of seven parties and other newly elected parties have differences over the agenda of first meeting.

Maoist leaders are issuing threats even to the extent of capturing the BCCI by inviting a million people on May 28 if they are denied power. Such rhetoric has created panic among foreigners and common people. However, the two people - King Gyanendra and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala - who will

lose their prestige and power appear cool and relaxed. On the other hand, CPN-Maoist leaders including Prachanda who will probably lead the next government are showing signs of nervousness.

Prime minister Koirala is appealing for patience while Prachanda perceives the threat of counter revolution.

As of writing this story (till May 21), the political deadlock continues. Given the experiences of the past, political observers believe that political leaders will agree on a package dealing at last minute or probably on the midnight of 27 May.

“They will come to an agreement on the last day before the meeting. This is

the practice in Nepal. I think they will reach similar conclusion,” said a foreign diplomat based in Nepal.

For Speaker of Legislature Parliament Subas Nembang and Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, their first priority is the declaration of abolition of monarchy.

“The first meeting of CA will execute the agenda of previous parliament and declare Nepal as a republic,” said Subas Nembang a lawyer-turned-speaker of Legislature Parliament. “This is the mandatory agenda. If it is necessary, we will also amend the constitution to ensure that a simple majority can form the government.”

“The first meeting of CA will execute the provision of interim constitution and abolish the monarchy and declare Nepal as a federal, democratic republic,” said Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. “Second issues will be the resignation of prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala and formation of new government under our leadership. We will have consensus on all agenda.”

At a time when the common agenda is yet to be announced, newly elected general secretary Jhal Nath Khanal of CPN-UML has called his party workers to celebrate 28 May as the Day for Republic Nepal.

Consensus and Differences

There is a virtual consensus that Maoists should be given the chance to lead the next coalition government. However, there are differences among political parties about the issue of amendment of constitution. Major political parties want to amend the constitution before allowing Maoists to lead the next government.

This means that the government will be formed only after the amendment of the article 38 (1), 2 and 3. Major parties want to amend the article 38 (2) ensuring that the government formation can take place by simple majority. “There must be a package for constitution amendment and formation of new government,” said leader of Terai-Madhes Loktantrik Party Hridayesh Tripathy.

Nepali Congress, CPN-UML Madheshi Janadhikar Forum, Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party and Nepal Sadbhvanva Party want to amend the constitution in package including the formation of government. However, Maoist leaders have said that they will oppose the amendment of constitution.

However, there is a near consensus on the issue of abolition of monarchy.

Constitutional Lacunae

The constitution is unclear regarding the procedure of declaration of republic. The article 159 (2) says the implementation of (transition to) the republic shall be made at the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly. About the procedure, it is silent whether it will be endorsed by two third or simple majority.

Before the third amendment, the article 159 (30) said notwithstanding anything contained elsewhere in this constitution, the constituent assembly shall decide by a simple majority at its first meeting about whether or not to continue the monarchy in existence.

Regarding the first meeting, article 69(1) says the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly shall be held, as summoned by the prime minister within twenty-one days after the final results of the elections of members of the Constituent Assembly have been made public by the Elections Commission

On procedures for passing a bill relating to the Constitution, article 70 (1) says the Constitution Assembly shall, in order to pass bill relating to the Constitution, vote on the preamble and each Article of such a bill introduced before it. (2) To vote according to clause (1), at least two-thirds of the total members of the Constituent Assembly must be present and must pass the motion unanimously.

As a body elected to draft the new constitution, only the members of Constituent Assembly can take the decision on structure of state, nature of state and fundamental rights, forms of judiciary, and forms of government.

CA will also decide on issues like monarchy or republic, federal or unitary,



PM Koirala: Calculating next move

presidential or prime ministerial. All these things need to be settled by CA but the way political leaders are arguing show that they want to make CA just as a rubber stamp to endorse and implement their pre-determined agenda.

"We want republic Nepal but this must be incorporated through the amendment of two third majority. We are not bound to follow the decision taken by the previous non-elected parliament," said Upendra Yadav, chairman of Madheshi Janadhikar Forum.

CA Skeptics

At a time when there serious skepticism about the role of newly elected members of CA in constitution drafting, Nepali Congress central leader and Constituent Assembly member- Dr Shashanka Koirala alleged that Maoists have prepared a tentative draft of the new constitution in New Delhi.

"Indian leaders had informed me that Maoist leaders including Dr Baburam Bhattarai were involved in preparing a tentative draft of the new constitution in New Delhi. My Indian political friends have informed me about the Maoist move," said Koirala, nephew

of prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala. One can expect that he must have some authenticity to disclose such thing.

Leader of Nepal Peasant and Workers Party Narayan Man Bijjukchhe Rohit had revealed that New Delhi had prepared the draft of the agreement between seven parties and the Maoists two years ago before the uprising.

Along with Rohit, CPN-ML leader C.P. Mainali has also repeatedly revealed the same but none of the other constituents have shown guts to take action against them even though both NWPP and CPN-ML belong to seven party alliance.

C.K. Lal, a severe critic of Royal regime and a columnist, had revealed the role of Indian establishment even in making and unmaking of the constitution since 1958. "The constitution of 1958- which India disliked- was scrapped just in 18 months. After the controversy over Tanakpur Treaty, there started attack against the constitution (of 1990)." *Himalkhabar Patrika* (May 14-28).

These kinds of things are not new to Nepal as its geo-strategic position is such that its political problems is rooted not

with the nature of constitution but the conflicting interests of Nepal's two neighbors. Nepal has seen several political upheavals in the last five decades, which are linked with geopolitical reality.

For instance, Ranas were removed after the Chinese forces entered into Tibet. The first democratically elected government was dismissed following the fleeing of Dalai Lama and consolidation of Chinese hold in Tibet.

Experiences in Constitution Making

Unlike other parts of the world, Nepalese have fair knowledge in constitution making as they have experienced a number of constitutional practice. Since the promulgation of first constitution by Rana prime minister Padma Shumsher Rana in 1948, Nepal has already experimented with Interim Constitution 1951, Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1959, Constitution of Nepal 1962, Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 and Interim constitution 2006.

This time the 601-member crowd of CA is sitting down to prepare another constitution. This unmanageable crowd will either disturb the constitution making or endorse the draft prepared in the dark room and presented through their political leaders as indicated by Dr. Shashanka Koirala, remains to be seen.

The importance of constitution making has been completely ignored by political parties. For instance, out of 103 sets, Nepali Congress does not have a single member who is a constitutional expert. Some of the lawyers and old guards lost in the elections and some were not nominated from proportional representation despite being in the closed list. There are no constitutional experts in the house with necessary professional and academic caliber.

Jamboree of Elected-Selected Persons

The present 601 member house of Constitutional Assembly composes of directly elected members under the first-past-the-post system and also members selected through the list of proportional representation by party panel and some



Maoist chairman Prachanda: Setting forth revolutionary agenda

who will be nominated by the government.

Proportional representation is a process of selection. "A tricky law of representation has reduced the number of elected people into minority and persons nominated through various seen and unseen screenings have a deciding position in the Constituent Assembly," said the political analyst.

The House which carried high expectations from the common people that they will represent them has been outnumbered by persons who have been selected through the proportional representation by the respective political parties.

That way the constituent assembly is not going to be energized and inspired by electorate. Majority of them didn't have chance to get elected directly from the people and, therefore, they will remain loyal to the cliques and coteries of political parties.

"The party nominated only those persons who are loyal to party leadership. Nobody was concerned about the quality, caliber and contribution and popularity of the party workers," said Nepali Congress leader Man Mohan Bhattarai who also wrote a note of dissent.

Arjun Narshing K.C., a senior leader of Nepali Congress and outstanding parliamentarian, shares this anguish. "Gone are the days when the NC was reputed for becoming a policy-led party, during Panchayat regime, it had become leader-led and now it is an irony to say that the NC has become a relative-led party," K.C. said.

After amending the constitution for the third time, they enlarged the number from 425 members to 601 without any justification for creating such a big house for a small country.

"Making such a jamboree was not the original idea of people, it was just an after-thought mechanism to procure a desired result. In fact, this has reduced the role of elected members into a minority," said the political analyst.

Although the CA is not bound to follow any decision of previous government about the shape of the constitution and forms of the government, it is not expected to take everything with an open mind and free from pre-conditions imposed upon it.

Despite differences and uncertainties, the first meeting of CA will have to answer what CA is for: as a rubber stamp or elected body with fresh mandate? ■

“Aviation Industry Is A Driver Of Economic Growth”

-Lalit Bikram Shah

LALIT BIKRAM SHAH, an internationally renowned aviation expert, retired a few months back as a regional director of International Civil Aviation Organizations (ICAO) Asia Pacific Regional Office. Shah - who joined Nepalese aviation sector in 1962- taking over the handling of aircraft from Indian aviation officials, also served as a director general of Department of Civil Aviation for quite a long time. A first batch Nepalese Air Traffic Controller, Shah has seen all the developments in Nepal's aviation sector as well as in the Asia Pacific Region. Shah spoke to SPOTLIGHT on his experiences. Excerpts:

Statistics shows that if one invests 100 dollars in aviation, it will generate 600 dollars. The present contribution of aviation industry is over 3 to 4 trillion dollar and it provides jobs to about 25 million people.

At a time when everybody is talking about the need to improve air safety in Nepal, how do you evaluate overall air safety situation here?

This problem is not unique to Nepal. This is the reason why ICAO has introduced ICAO Auditing Guidelines throughout the world to evaluate the situation. The first cycle of ICAO auditing has already completed in 190 countries around the world and between 140 to 150 countries have already completed the second round of auditing. The audit consists of safety related eight areas.

What are those safety related areas?

There are eight critical elements related to safety. These include lack of resources, properly trained manpower, lack of proper law and organizational back up and so on. The initial audit is done on three areas - airworthiness, flight operation and exaction. Under this system airworthiness, licensing, flight operation, air traffic and communication, all important aspects are covered. This was an extremely successful program as it evaluates the scenario of a particular country in totality. This audit system enhances the air safety.

How serious are the countries regarding the ICAO guidelines?

If we see the globally findings, it shows that there are many incidents of non-compliance of ICAO standard though this is mandatory.

As airlines industry is growing in Nepal, what problems do you envisage?

The common problem is safety. I can say there has been putting of cart before the horse. The

country has been issuing license to airlines without looking at the capability of existing infrastructures. Our level of infrastructure has not improved. If you want to issue license to more airlines, one must have proper and adequate infrastructures in place. There is a need to develop a package growth. Of course, the growth of airlines is not unique to Nepal - it is happening around the world. Asia Pacific region has seen about 11-12 percent growth annually. There are requirements and guidelines. There are always pressures of industry on the regulator but regulatory bodies are far behind the industry. This is universal truth.

As a country based on tourism industry, how can Nepal manage the growth and safety?

Indonesia had a very good experience, which we can share. Due to frequent air crashes, Indonesia's economy badly suffered as tourism declined because of concern of air safety. Indonesian president's commitment changed the overall scenario as he took the issue of aviation safety as his number one priority. I mean a strong political commitment is needed to manage the growth as well as safety issue.

How important is the aviation sector in economic growth?

Aviation industry is a driver of economic growth. This is one of the strongest drivers of economic growth. Aviation is not just landing and take off of aircrafts in the run way. Statistics shows that if one invests 100 dollars in aviation, it will generate 600 dollars. The present contribution of aviation industry is over 3 to 4 trillion dollar and it provides jobs to about 25 million people.

How sensitive is this industry?

This is a very sensitive industry. If there is one accident, it will carry the wrong message all over the world. It is very vulnerable and it impacts the tourism industry.

What does Nepal need to do to develop its aviation sector?

Being a country with tourism dependent economy, Nepal needs to prove that it does not compromise on safety issues. One needs to consolidate the resources in particular areas. We have to stop the spread of resources.

What is your impression about the growing private sector investment in the aviation sector?

After opening up Nepalese sky to private sector in 1994, we have seen many private airlines coming up. But can you give me the name of a single airlines, which can compete regionally or internationally with competitive international airlines? There was a time when Royal Nepal Airlines had twenty-two aircrafts, but now often it does not have any aircraft.

Don't you think opening up the sky changed the situation?

Many airlines obtained license to fly but most of them have already folded up. Naturally, this is the process, which one can encounter in the growth. Many airlines come and go but there is a need to build an airline –with the strength of technical capability to compete in the regional level. One needs to go for alliance pulling their resources and strength in one place. You need to have resources, pilots, technical skills and others. There might be only a couple of airlines but they will have competitive capability.

Have you seen any major changes in the aviation infrastructure in Nepal in the last one decade?

Of course, Tribhuvan International Airport is overcrowded but infrastructures have improved outside Kathmandu. Many new airports were constructed. Some airports have better facilities some have not.

What should Nepal do to manage the overcrowded international airport?

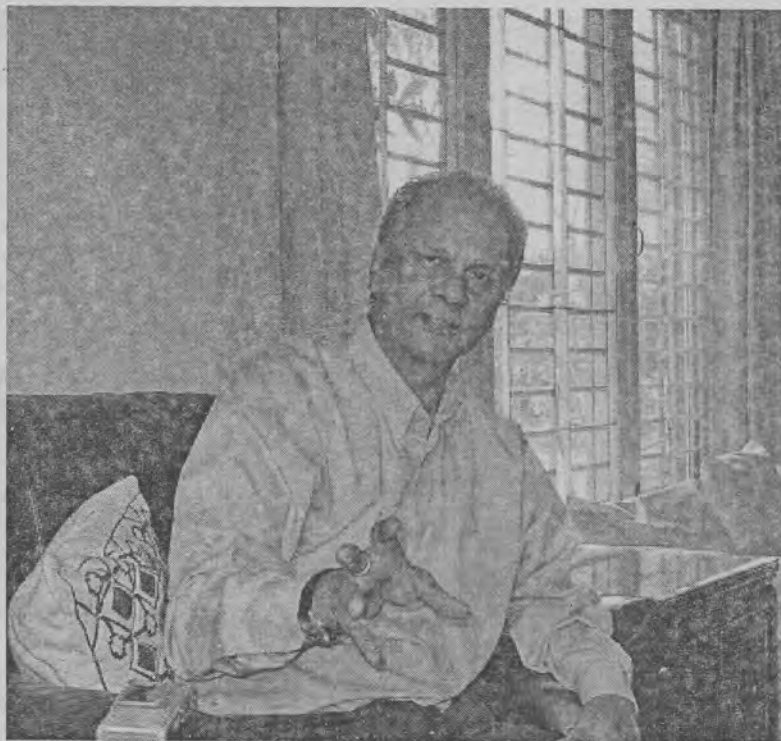
There is a need to have better management, whether we can scatter departure and arrival. Like many other airports, we also need to do slotting. It can be very serious problem if we cannot manage it properly. Now the whole thrust of airlines is minimum delay, fuel efficiency and selections of altitude. On the part of regulator, we are more concerned about safety and efficiency. In this context, if an airplane is stranded at taxi way and is being parked for a long time, it will reduce the efficiency. It is high time to build a new airport.

Why should we worry when our aircrafts are flying?

A politician cannot assure that everything is alright just looking at flying of some aircrafts and airlines. If we want to fly to Europe, they will check our audit. They have to be satisfied before they give permission to our airline. Similarly, our regulatory authority needs to look at audit of particular country. We have to exercise this right.

How do you see the growth of technical capability of Nepalese?

Nepalese have proved that they are also capable and competitive. Before we started to control our airspace as per the ICAO Convention



in 1964-65, Calcutta and New Delhi provided all facilities to our airspace. It was under Indian control. After returning from training, our groups consisted of about 20 Nepalese who then took over our airspace. We started to control the political sovereign territory belonging to Nepal and established information center to give flight instructions. That was one of the major achievements of my life time. We have now hundreds of Nepalese manpower working in this field.

Before you commenced your job, who looked after the technical aspects in Airport?

It was managed by Indian technicians and it was under Delhi and Calcutta which provided service to Nepalese airspace up to Kathmandu. As we got latest training, we had better knowledge. This is what I am proud of. I have started my job since 1965 and I quit the job in 1994. During my tenure as a regional director, I was involved in North Korea and South Korea air agreement. The air space issue between Vietnam and China also was settled during my tenure.

What is the most worrying factor about aviation in Nepal?

One of the tragedies is to see the collapse of Nepal Airlines. It was a crime as it took years and years to build an institution like Nepal Airlines. It is very unfortunate to say that Nepal Airlines is now without aircraft. Nepalese are very talented and capable who can compete with anybody in the world. ■

One of the tragedies is to see the collapse of Nepal Airlines. It was a crime as it took years and years to build an institution like Nepal Airlines.



Rural women: Lacking opportunities

WOMEN WORKERS

Searching For Greener Pastures

A study has shown that women workers migrate to urban center primarily due to financial problems

By A CORRESPONDENT

A large number of women from rural areas have been flocking to urban centers of the country including Kathmandu to work in different sectors.

A recent study has shown that the primary motivation for the women to migrate toward urban centers is their urge to search for greener pastures.

Most of the women workers who migrated to Kathmandu did so due to financial problems, not due to conflict as is widely believed, according to a study conducted by International Labor Organization (ILO).

The latest study conducted at the work places like carpet industries, shops and cabin and dance bars

revealed this fact. The study released on Thursday (May 15) stated that 32.7 percent women workers responded that they migrated to Kathmandu due to financial problems but only 3.6 percent women said they came to the capital due to conflict.

Research consultant Dr. Ava Darshan Shrestha said that most of the women workers had discontinued their study to help their families. They were found contributing to their family at significant level with average income of Rs. 3595 per month. The study divulged that the women were deprived of many labor rights provisioned by the labor law of Nepal and prescribed by ILO.

They were found working almost seven days in all three types of workplaces. The working hours for a worker should be 42 hours a week as per the ILO standard. Shrestha said they worked for longer period to earn more and were forced to do so without extra payment.

The study also reveals that the women workers engaged in dance and cabin restaurants earned more than those working in woolen carpet and commercial shops. The women working in cabin and dance restaurants were working fewer hours than those engaged in other workplaces. But, Shengjie Li, director for ILO office, Nepal said that question was whether the women workers were engaged in decent jobs.

He however opined that the increasing participation of women labor forces in different areas had contributed to empowering women. The study revealed that most of the women were unaware about their rights and most of them were beyond the reach of trade unions. ■



Collapsed buildings: Devastiated by quake

EARTHQUAKE IN CHINA

Tremors In Nepal

Once again, rings an alarm how vulnerable Nepal is to similar tremors and how catastrophic they could be

A CORRESPONDENT

Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala showed solidarity by visiting Chinese Embassy to express condolence as China observed three days of mourning for the victims of the devastating earthquake in Sichuan province.

At the Embassy building, flags were flying at half-mast and a nationwide silence was observed to mark the time it struck a week ago. From prime minister Koirala to leaders of major political parties and diplomats based in Kathmandu and common Nepali people, many visited the embassy to show solidarity with Nepal's northern neighbor.

More than 71,000 people are dead, buried or missing following Monday's 7.9 magnitude quake in Richter scale, Chinese media says. More than 220,000 people were injured.

And as aid efforts continued, the media say mudslides had buried 200 relief workers in the last three days. A local official said there had been some fatalities, but the numbers of dead and injured were not known.

The workers were said to have been repairing damaged roads. Two construction machines and six vehicles were also buried, Xinhua news agency said, quoting a transport ministry official.

Strong aftershocks are continuing to shake the region, hampering the rescue efforts.

On Sunday, a tremor with a magnitude of 6.0 killed three people and injured 1,000 more in Jiangyou city, in Sichuan province's Mianyang County. Continuing heavy rain in Sichuan is also raising fears of new flooding and landslides.

The relief effort is now shifting towards providing food, medical care and shelter for the millions of survivors.

Meanwhile, the Chinese government said the country was expected to make direct economic losses of 67bn yuan (\$9.5bn), approximately 0.27% of Gross Domestic Product, as a result of the disaster.

Sichuan is not a major industrial base, but there was extensive damage to factories and mines in neighboring Gansu province and Chongqing municipality.

The mourning comes as hopes fade of finding many more earthquake survivors. The total number of confirmed dead rose to 34,073, the Chinese government said.

Crews worked through a steady rain as they searched wrecked towns across hilly stretches of Sichuan province that were stricken by Monday's magnitude-7.9 quake, China's deadliest in three decades.

"I'm cold. I don't dare to sleep, and I'm worried a building is going to fall down on me," said Tang Ling, a 20-year-old waitress wrapped in a borrowed pink down jacket and camped outside the Juyuan restaurant with three co-workers. "What's happened is so cruel. In one minute to have so many people die is too tragic."

Although the earthquake with the magnitude of 7.9 richter scale rocked the Chinese city of Chengdu virtually turning the city into rubble, Chinese government and people have shown their capability of handling such devastation in an effective manner.

Most of the dead were trapped in high building and houses. For Nepal, which lies in an active tectonic plate, this kind of devastation can occur any time but Nepal's preparedness level is still very low.

With the number of buildings rising, the casualty will definitely be high as most of the houses are built without following the basic building codes. According to a study, an earthquake with the magnitude of about 8 richter scale, which is said to be overdue, may completely ruin the city. ■

Water scarcity: A Crisis Looming Large

-By Rajan Bajracharya

In an unprecedented move that eerily pointed to the reality of water scarcity, Spain recently executed an emergency plan by importing water by ship. A giant tanker with water from France arrived in Spain, and more water will be imported over the next month. The reason behind this move was the shrinking of the reservoir in the mountain above Barcelona.

It reminds us what if similar situation emerges in Nepal. Though it may appear a far-fetched and preposterous, we are already importing hydropower despite being one of the top five countries in the world in terms of hydropower potential, aren't we? Though we are managing to import petroleum products - even if one-half of the actual demand - we may not be able to afford importing water if such situation emerges.

"There is no enough water to cook food now. So I have started to eat corn instead," said Tensing Sherpa, a local resident from Khumjung.

Khumjung is a village located an hour away from the tourist hub of Namche bazaar, to its south, and is at the base of the holy mountain, Khumbila. It is said that the valley was once a lake but the water broke a long time ago. He added,

"If similar scarcity haunts Namche, it will impact the entire tourism industry in the whole of Everest region."

Khumjung is one of the villages in the Everest region where Sir Edmund had in the past helped the villagers build a safe water drinking system. However, now the Khumjung is facing problem in drinking water due to lack of snow fall during this winter that drained out the water resource from the area.

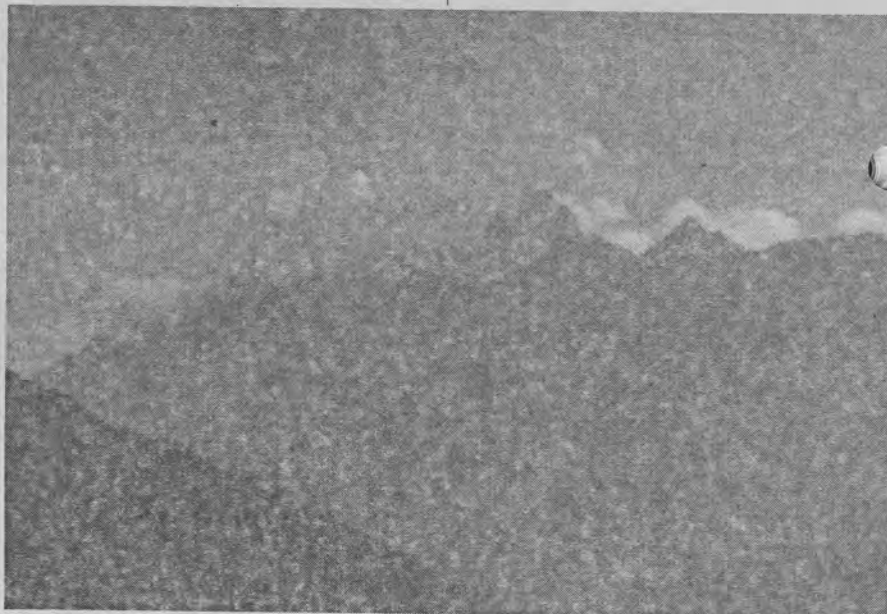
It is a stark reminder of warnings sent out by climate experts about the impact of global warming in the approaching decades. It appears their warning is already coming true.

On the other hand, there are over

6,000 rivers in the country; all large rivers are fed by snow melt from the glaciers, which covers area of around 5225 sq. km that feed natural reservoirs i.e. glacier lakes in the Himalayas. Some of these glaciers are melting rapidly and, thus, glacier lakes are swelling swiftly, in some cases up-to 74 meters per year; presumed to be a result of climate

other species downstream.

Retreat of glacier, rise in temperature, and scarcity of water might be the early warning signals of the climate change. However, further research is required before a conclusive statement can be drawn regarding how the climate is changing.



change.

Temperature observations in Nepal from 1977-1994 showed a general warming trend with significantly greater warming at higher elevations in the northern part of the country than at lower elevation - experts again blame this on climate change.

If the present trend of glacial retreat continues, the total glacier area will likely shrink, which is a renewable storehouse of fresh water. The shortage of fresh water is likely to be the most serious resource problem in the country together with power shortage. Besides, it will have a long term implications of water shortage and effect livelihoods of half a billion people living in the Himalayas, and also for 1.3 billion people living in the region and every

Currently, as a part of the Eco Everest Expedition 2008, scientific teams are carrying out tests in the Khumbu region to try and assess the impact of global warming special focusing on the Imja and Dig Tsho glacial lakes. Along with the expedition, special events have been organized together with local communities, national and international media to raise the awareness of climate change impact in the Himalayas.

Such campaigns will help raise awareness of the public at large about the hazards of climate change and stir them to contribute to the cause of reducing carbon emission by using eco friendly solutions and emission free products.

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BOOK

Sino-Indian Rivalry

John W. Garver draws the conclusion that the conflict will intensify between Asia's two powers India and China in twenty-first century

By A CORRESPONDENT

The book written by John W. Garver is objective and impartial analysis based on intensive research to observe the relations between Republic of India and People's Republic of China, its implications to South Asia including in Nepal.

Opening of railway close to Lhasa is a major strategic advantage for China and its extension up to Nepal's border point within a few years will alter the scenario. Although the recent anti-China activities in Tibet have increased its security worries, China continues to invest money to improve infrastructures along its southern border. In this context, the importance of Garver's book has gone up.

After doing intensive study and interactions with Indian, Chinese and other scholars of the region, the author has concluded that smaller countries in South Asia have to face many difficult days ahead in the process of adjustments and readjustments of India and China.

In the past, India and China have been locked in a complex rivalry ranging across the South Asian region - a rivalry punctuated by numerous military confrontations and one outright war, frequent disagreements over national and international policies and pervasive mutual suspicions.

Despite some instances of cooperation and growing trade, Sino-Indian relations have been characterized by conflict more than by friendship. First published in 2001, noted scholar Garver intensely examines two countries' actions and policy discussions over the past fifty-years in the book.

"For few decades the two powerful states struggled to reach mutually acceptable accommodations. This was a difficult process, producing one limited but intense war, half a dozen of instances of sharp political-diplomatic militarized confrontations, dozens of instances of sharp political-diplomatic struggle, chronic conflict over national policy, and layer upon layer of mutual suspicion. This book is about that conflict. It analyzes the protracted conflict between the foreign policies of India and China in the vast arc of land and water

lying between and alongside those two great nations," writes Garver.

India's intention to counter China is open to all. After making intensive research, India has recently successfully launched long range ballistic missile with a nuclear capability of hitting China's big cities including Beijing and Shanghai.

Writing about India and China's views about smaller countries of the region, the author writes "From 1949 through 1999 India and China have viewed the status of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim very differently. India has insisted on establishing a special relation with those regions, one that guarantees India's security interests regarding China. Beijing, on the other hand, has insisted on its right to conduct the full range of regular state-to-state relations with those entities and has viewed Indian assertions to the contrary as acts of hegemonic."

This is very interesting book in every aspect - research, analysis and presentation. There is rich information in all pages.

Highlights of the book

- Yet, in reflecting on Republic of India- People's Republic of China relations over the last five decades, it seems fair to say that conflict has been dominant characteristic of that relationship.

- The growth of Chinese capabilities may lead to the further expansion of ties between China and India's neighbors. India may feel increasingly vulnerable and seek ways of countering China's advances. China no doubt would take a negative view of these Indian counter measures. Unless India is willing to become a junior partner of China in the

emerging world order, Asia and the world may well see further Sino-Indian rivalry in the first part of the twenty first century.

- The second taproot of ROI-PRC conflict is a security dilemma. To guarantee its national security, the ROI wants to keep China (and other extra regional powers) out of the South-Asian-Indian Ocean region at least limit its presence there. Doing this, however, necessarily poses challenges to the security of the PRC. A South Asia organized and led by India would pose a far greater potential threat to China than a fragmented South Asia, China would be less able to defend its southern territories should that need arise.

- New Delhi objected to both the US and Soviet presence in India's south Asian region, but China was, and remained India's top extra regional concern. India has not, of course, opposed any and all Chinese links to South Asian countries. A wide range of commercial, diplomatic, and cultural intercourse between China and South Asia has taken place without causing Indian concern. But, when that region's intercourse shades into closer political alignments or when security issue enters the picture, Indian concerns mount.

- Concern with China's looming presence weighed most heavily with Indian leaders even if it was not always at the top of their explicit foreign policy agendas. China's occupation of Tibet completely changed Nepal's status for India.

- Nepal is the only one of the three Himalayan Kingdom with enough power to play with autonomous role between India and China.

- Almost as troubling to New Delhi as the Kathmandu-Lhasa Road was beginning of secret military cooperation between China and Nepal.

- How might this, constant pulling and tugging between Beijing and New Delhi end. Thereby ushering in a new era of predominantly cooperative, nonconflictual Sino-Indian relations? Conceptually, there are two ways in which this might happen. One China could agree that South Asia is India's security zone and sphere of influence and desist from actions there which are objectionable to New Delhi. Two India could accommodate itself to a seemingly inexorable growth of China's political military role in South Asia. The second course might involve an Indian-Chinese partnership dealing with security problems in the South Asian region and could possible evolve toward Indian acceptance of Chinese preeminence in that region. ■

**Protracted Contest
Sino-Indian Rivalry in the
Twenty-first Century
Written by: John W. Garvar
Published by: University of
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ROYALTY

Howzzzat?

As the monarchy in Nepal is about to be declared out, the royalty begins a new innings in its neighborhood

By SUSHIL SHARMA

Monarchy is on its way out—in Nepal. Thanks to a 12-point pact the Maoists and the mainline parties reached three years ago—in India.

Once the out and out republican constituent assembly ends the kingship in Nepal in its first meeting next week, the Nepalese monarchy will formally become a history.

Amidst the republican euphoria over the past two years, anything royal or kingly had already been erased from public places and monument. The Royal Stag whisky is a rare exception.

Move to the republican neighbor in the south. You will find a different picture. The royalty has staged a great comeback there—in the

national craze, i.e. cricket!

The maiden Twenty20 cricket hosted by the union minister Shared Pawar-led Board of Cricket Control of India (BCCI) has been a huge draw since it was launched last month.



Four of the eight teams in the fray are either kingly or royal. As of writing this, three of them, the Rajasthan Royals, the Punjab Kings and the Chennai Super Kings, are on the top of the table.

The fourth, the Royal Challengers Bangalore, has not been able to net big wins. But it has liquor-baron Vijay Mallya's Kingfisher in its net.

The legendary Aussie leg spinner Shane Warne is the only foreigner to lead a team in the fray. He is the captain of the top team, Rajasthan Royals. His country, Australia, is not a republic yet. Queen Elizabeth remains at the helm Down Under.

Royalty continues to charm many others—in different ways.

The captain of the Kolkata Knightriders is the 'Prince' of the capital of West Bengal—Saurav Ganguly. And the man who owns the team is the 'Badshah' of Bollywood—Shahrukh Khan.

As the republican India sports a royal look in its premier sports tourney, the monarchical Nepal is poised to don a republican hat in crucial political games.

Is that cricket? ■

"I still have one duty left to be fulfilled. That is to write the constitution."

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, speaking at a function held to inaugurate cathlab in Norvic Hospital.

"I'm saying this sincerely. There is a possibility of counter-revolution in the country."

Prachanda, Maoist chairman, speaking at a program organized by Human Rights Concern Center.

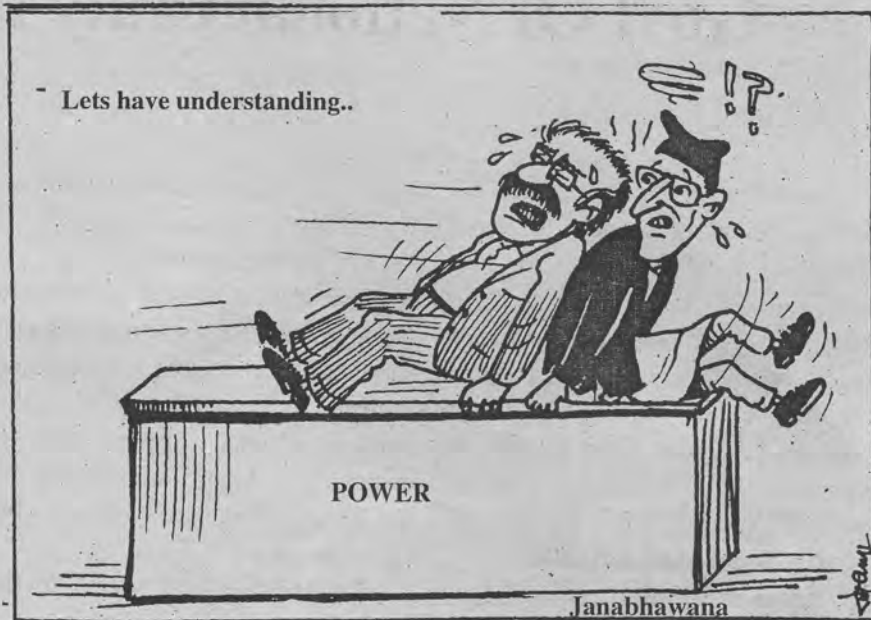
"Issues like dissolution of our army are a part of the entire peace process. The election itself is a part of that process. It was not appropriate to raise such conditions."

Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Information Minister and Maoist spokesperson, criticizing the conditions put forth by Nepali Congress.

"They want to form government based on our support. And they don't want to change the provision about two-third majority, which means they want to stick to power forever."

Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, NC leader, expressing the apprehension about letting Maoist form the government without changing the constitution to allow a simple majority to form or dissolve a government.

"During this critical period, it becomes necessary for all political leaders, especially the larger parties and the largest party, which has emerged, namely the Maoists, to take position of



responsibility, to develop consensus and to form a government of national unity."

Rakesh Sood, Indian ambassador to Nepal, at an interaction.

"We will also demand that NC and UML be dissolved."

Ram Bahadur Thapa Badal, reacting to demands for dissolution of Young Communist League (YCL).

"Maoists will form a government along with Madhesi parties."

Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader, speaking at a program in Birgunj.

"The Madhesi Janadhikar Forum does not have a mandate to join the government."

Upendra Yadav, coordinator of

MJF, ruling out the possibility of joining the government.

"I do not anticipate the extension of the mandate of the UNMIN, but the United Nations stands ready to provide continuing support for the completion and consolidation of the peace process and for the long-term development of Nepal."

Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary General, in his recent report.

"The party, which has emerged as the single largest party in the election has the right to lead the government."

Surya Bahadur Thapa, president of Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP) and former prime minister, talking to journalists in Biratnagar.

TRANSITION

LEFT: Girirajmani Pokharel, Minister for Health and Population, for Geneva, Switzerland, to take part in the World Health Organization (WHO) program.

SACKED: Jwala Singh, as the chief commander of Janatantrik

Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM), by its politburo meeting. Ranabir Singh will replace him.

KILLED: Ram Hari Shrestha, a Koteshwore resident, by Maoist cadres.

AWARDED: Jagadish Ghimire, with this year's Uttam-Shanti

Puraskar, for his book "Antarmanko Yatra."

DIRECTED: The Election Commission, has asked the candidates who have won in two seats in Constituent Assembly election, to vacate one of the seat as per their choice within June 8.

“Govt Of National Unity Is Necessary”

-Rakesh Sood

More than two weeks after his arrival, Indian ambassador to Nepal RAKESH SOOD addressed his first press meet at the Reporters Club Nepal. Sood explained various issues regarding India's policy on Nepal's ongoing crisis. From UNMIN's presence to present state of political situation, Sood replied to various queries. Excerpts of his address:

On Nepal India Relations

Nepal and India have excellent relations all the time. Our relation is age old. We have many common things to share including culture, religion and geography. Whoever may form the government, the basic relation remains same. India would continue to help Nepal as India shares age old relations in all aspects of life. Our relation at the people-to-people level has always been excellent.

On Nepal's Prosperity

India wants to see Nepal as a stable and prosperous country. India will always provide all kinds of support to its neighbor. Stable and prosperous Nepal is also in the interest of India. India is providing all kinds of economic support to Nepal for this purpose.

On the Formation of New Unity government

India's preference is for the formation of a national unity government. Formation of a government based on national consensus is necessary in Nepal in the present critical period. All the major political forces must come together to make a national government and they should work on the basis of consensus.

As the largest party, Maoist has to take the initiative for such a consensus.

On His Suggestions

I have not suggested anything to Nepal's political parties regarding who should be the president and the prime minister. It is completely up to the parties of Nepal and the people to decide these issues. I am not here to say who should be president and who should be prime minister.

Regarding Nepal's Territorial Integrity

The constitution drafted by the constituent assembly should be a constitution which maintains the territorial integrity of Nepal which reflects political, social and economic aspirations of the people of Nepal. The new constitution should provide justice and equity to different sections of the society in Nepal.

On Federal Structure

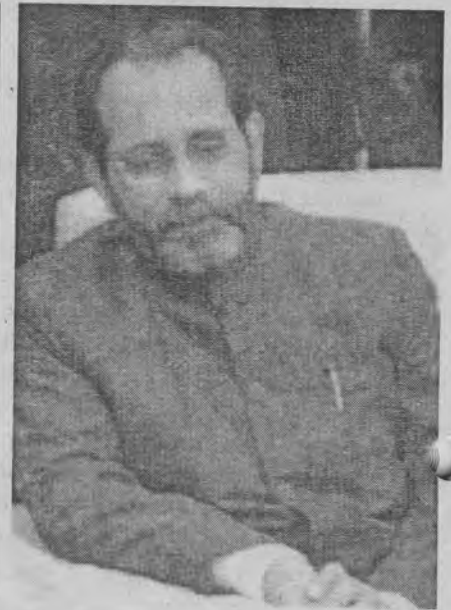
It is for Nepal's political parties and the constituent assembly to should decide what sort of federal structure Nepal wants. There are always ethnic aspirations, and linguistic aspirations. These aspirations can be dealt with through the peaceful means and through democratic means.

On Maoist-led Government

India is committed to work with Maoist led government. Our relations with Nepal are much deeper and it will continue no matter who comes to power. Change of government has nothing to do with these relations.

On 1950 Treaty

India is ready for revising the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal. It is not a new issue as this issue was raised in the past also. India would be happy to



take the matter up for discussion and it is ready to work out a mutual understanding.

On UNMIN's presence

It is up to the government of Nepal to decide whether it likes UNMIN to continue in Nepal or not. If Nepalese government believes that there are no more roles for UNMIN, it is for them to decide its fate.

On Issue of Monarchy

India will accept the verdict of people of Nepal. It is for the people of Nepal to choose whether they want republic or monarchy. Nepalese people had expressed their desire through CA. India had accepted and respected that verdict. We are the first country to accept and welcome the verdict of Nepali people. There was no secret agreement done between Nepal's monarchy, the political parties and India to save the monarchy. If Nepalese people want republic, India will welcome it. ■

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