



Courage & Conviction

newsfront

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Rigged

GPK in foul mood



newsfront

■ nf correspondent

Prime Minister GP Koirala has not yet accepted his defeat, nor is there any sign of his relinquishing the post. But if his latest remark about the poll outcome is any indicator, there are high chances that he will question it sooner than later. Koirala has said the poll was 80 per cent rigged.

In a meeting with top officials of the Nepal army on the occasion of a reception hosted by Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) in the army headquarters on April 19, Koirala said the poll was rigged, and in his estimate, it affected 80 per cent of the total results. Koirala's brief statement came after a General said the rigging must have affected at least 20 per cent of the seats.

Koirala said the Maoists must dissolve the Young Communist League (YCL) and come out with an acceptable and practical suggestion on how and where to integrate their Peoples Liberation Army (PLA). "They cannot be integrated in the army," Koirala, known for saying things pleasing to the ears, told the Generals.

What he said in the army headquarters in

brief about the poll outcome is being seen as his way of taking up cudgels with the Maoists after the Congress party reviews its poll performance and its future role in the new political context. The two-day review meeting is slated for April 24 and 25. Individual leaders and parliamentarians have been told not to hold press conference about the poll irregularities before the party's review meeting.

But the initial reports of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and some prominent observers group like DEAN have given much more detailed pictures of how the rigging and intimidation took place. The DEAN

report also brings to light the indifference or lack of seriousness on the part

Koirala said the poll was rigged, and in his estimate, it affected 80 per cent of the total results.

of the Election Commission to contain the situation when Maoists launched a campaign of terrorising individual voters and intimidating candidates and their active campaigners. But more than everything, the PM's assertion that poll was fair only 20 per cent not only brings the EC to ridicule but also sends out a signal as to how PM will officially respond to the poll outcome when it is finally announced.

Sujata Koirala, daughter of the PM, has reported to her father how 'pathetically helpless' the EC was when she complained about the large scale rigging and threats meted out to her by the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum. "The EC poll observers were either too scared or biased," she is believed to have told her father.

The review meeting is largely going to hear three kinds of complaints - internal sabotage, mass rigging by the Maoists and helplessness exhibited by the Home Ministry and the EC. Party leaders are armed with 'details' of how the EC chose not to take any cognisance of their reports before and on the day of polling. ■

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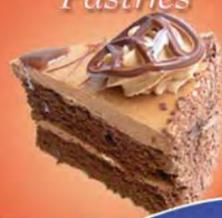
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Preconditions

The list keeps on increasing

As Prachanda, chief of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M) seems all set to take over as the chief executive of the government whatever be the model of governance from day 1, he has got a long list of pre-conditions from the parties. Depending on how the Maoists will respond to those conditions, the parties will decide on their lines of association with the new government. But all however, leads to one question, will GP Koirala leave the post so easily?

The Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist wants Young Communist League (YCL) dissolved as a pre-condition. "We want the YCL dissolved instantly," said Madhav Nepal. He raised the issue when Prachanda called on him at his Koteswar residence last week.

But far more serious pre-conditions were raised by Prime Minister GP Koirala. "You must come out with a clear package about integration of the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) outside the Nepal army. And do not instigate the Nepal army," was Koirala's stern warning when Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai met him in Baluwatar last week.

Prachanda's interview to the media in which he said, "Nepal army is our army and the bitterness in the past had taken place on a different context," appears to be a follow-up of what the PM had advised him. But he has not responded to the demand for YCL's dissolution.



The issue is not only being raised by the UML, but even noted academicians who were seen as supporting the Maoists till recently have come out with veiled fear and warnings that Maoists would be losing their political character if YCL did not change its behavior.

Prof Abhi Subedi, in his regular column in the Kathmandu Post expressed fear and anger after Maoist Minister Hishila Yami publicly justified the YCL attack on Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat in Nuwakot last week. Some diplomats, especially the Indian ambassador, have been advising Maoists that they must change their behavior and YCL must be restrained.

There is also a palpable discomfiture in the senior level leadership of the Congress and UML over Prachanda already 'projecting'

Avoiding Koirala and complications

The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) is not keen to offer the position of the Head of the State to GP Koirala when the Maoists take over the government's leadership. "This will lead to complications," Prachanda told Zhang Song, Kathmandu based journalist of Wen Hui Daily from China, recently.

However, the basis of power and post sharing is yet to be discussed and finalised among the major political parties including Maoist, CPN-UML and Nepali Congress. The position taken by Prachanda, however, contradicts recent speculations that Dr Baburam Bhattarai asked Koirala to take up the post of the Acting President. Zhang Song told newsfront that Prachanda's response came during an informal chat but he was assertive that he would want to avoid complications in future power sharing.

himself as the sole winner in the election. A senior office bearer of the Nepali Congress asked, "He is the leader of 245 while we all together will be 355. Why is he going around like the absolute majority leader of the government?" "We will appropriately counter him after our poll assessment is over," he added.

Blame game in the south

As Nepali parties and players are yet to start a serious postmortem report on the poll outcome, Delhi seems to have already begun the exercise. The ball game has begun there, Nepal watchers say.

The biggest chunk of the blame is most likely going to be shifted to the security advisor of the Prime Minister, MK Narayan, who had openly stated that government of India's favourite was GP Koirala, and that they would not be backing Maoists at this stage. The observation aired through his interview to a television channel was obviously based on miscalculation that Maoists were going to be a distant third behind the Nepali Congress and the UML.

However, Foreign Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee led the damage control exercise by instantly accepting the results and congratulating Prachanda for having emerged as the leader of the largest party. Ambassador Shiv Shankar Mukherjee who is likely to leave Kathmandu for his next assignment in London sometimes this week met Prachanda at least two times to assure that Delhi will



be as cooperative with its 'new favourite' as before.

Yet, given Prachanda's skill in making a total turn-around in his political line, and his one time eagerness to work with King Gyanendra against the political parties perceived as pro-India; India seems to be keeping a cautious watch on his reliability. For India, Baburam Bhattarai seems to be better preferred given his wide contacts and 'credible' associations, a Nepal expert from Delhi said.

Prachanda had once said he was in favour of Kashmir and North Eastern regions in India, which have been witnessing 'secessionist' movements, being given the right to self determination.

Nepali labourers in Saudi Arabia

The number of Nepali women working as house maids in Saudi Arabia, is estimated to be around 15,000, although officially they are prohibited by the Nepali government to work in that country.

■ Bhumika Ghimire

Every year thousands of Nepali labourers arrive in Saudi Arabia looking for employment opportunities. Trying to escape grinding poverty and stagnant economy back home, these hard working men and women arrive in the desert kingdom where economy is booming, thanks to surging oil prices and growing trade with Europe and North America. Unfortunately for many, the dream of escaping poverty and achieving financial security quickly turns sour.

Nisha Varia of Human Rights Watch says that although Saudi Arabia reformed its labor law in 2005, foreign labourers still face several problems. Many are abused by their employers; passports are held forcibly, wages not paid in time or paid less than the amount in contract, they are denied time off from work and have no access to health care and it is very difficult for them to go to the court for help.

And yet every year thousands of Nepali labourers flock to Saudi Arabia. Rabindra Baral, a Nepali working in Riyadh, explained that

although Nepali engineers and managers working in the country have a comfortable life, a majority working as labourers are not so lucky.

He said that Nepali laborers working in rural and urban areas on construction projects and those who work as farm help in the desert are the most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Often they are housed in cramped living quarters which lack proper ventilation and air conditioning. Access to health care and legal support is limited, and the problem is exacerbated by language barrier as

DIASPORA

majority of Nepali laborers lack Arabic language skills.

The number of Nepali women working as house maids in Saudi Arabia, is estimated to be around 15,000, although officially they are prohibited by the Nepali government to work in that country. Rabindra Baral says that these women are forced to work 18 hours everyday with very low pay and are often physically and sexually abused by their employers.

The new Saudi labor law does not include house maids, so it is almost

impossible for them to get help through the legal system in case of abuse, abandonment without pay or false accusations. Nisha Varia said that it is the embassy of the woman's native country in most cases that come forward to help.

Zaki Alzayer, an undergraduate student at Purdue University from Saudi Arabia, says that mistreatment of foreign laborers happens in the country mainly because the Saudi society is conditioned to look down upon those who do menial jobs and are poor. He insists that it has very little to do with the fact that they are foreigners. Not properly understanding Saudi customs, culture and language barrier further alienate migrant laborers, says Alzayer.

Rabindra Baral also echoes similar sentiments, saying the Nepali laborers should be trained in Arabic language, Saudi culture and customs before they come into the country to work. This empowers the labourers so that they can protect themselves. He also points out that those who wish to work in Saudi should be sufficiently trained in their jobs and be aware of prospective employer's history and reputation.

MJF holds the key

The Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) in all likelihood will be holding the key to government formation and power balance once the new political arrangement comes into place.

As the final results of both First Past the Post and the Proportional Representation indicate the Constituent Assembly is going to be a hung one with Maoists as the single largest party. But it will still fall short of at least 55 members to have a simple majority. For two third majority which is essential for any constitutional amendment the Maoist led government will need at least 155 members from other parties to back it.

The MJF which has emerged as the largest regional party will have 40 plus members whose support or opposition to the government would

be crucial in running the house business. "Our support or opposition will be determined by Maoists' response to the accord that MJF and government had signed," MJF leader Upendra Yadav told newsfront.

CPN-M which was part of the government when Prime Minister GP Koirala signed the accord with Yadav in presence of Prachanda in March has not responded to the MJF condition yet, but an influential Maoist leader has publicly stated that Maoist will not accept the, 'One Madhesh, one Pradesh' demand.

There is also a history of bitterness between the Maoists and MJF especially in the backdrop of Gaur incident in which the MJF activists have been blamed by the Maoists for the killing of 29 Maoist cadres on March 23, 2007.

Impact on banks an

Some countries have refused to honour the letter of credit issued by the Nepali banks without a counter guarantee from the international banks, thanks to the fears that Nepal's economy will be on a verge of collapse after the Maoists lead the government.

A top banker said banks are facing a hard time and the situation might derail Nepal's trade if the Maoists do not address the situation promptly. A bank source said Taiwanese business groups with substantial trading volume in Nepal have

already begun refusing to accept the LC from Nepal.

Prachanda's address to the business community that his party would protect the business growth helped in fast recovery of the NEPSE, but the sectors that are reeling under fear and threats are many. The education, health, judiciary and media sectors are the ones fearing 'meddling' by the Maoists.

The All Nepal National Independent Students Union-Revolutionary (ANNISU-R), student wing of the CPN-M has already come out with a stern warning that suggests that it might even go for a fee capping in all

Vacate palace

In yet another calculated move mixed with elements of propaganda and political threats, Prachanda, chief of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M), has asked King Gyanendra to pack off and abdicate.

In simultaneous interviews that Prachanda gave to some print media as well as the national television directly under control of the party, he said he would soon be meeting the king. "We have some formula for the king's exit," he said. Prachanda's message to the king conveyed through the media came a day after many Indian media speculated that he was likely to settle down in Shikar in Rajasthan.

"The motivated propaganda in the media in India, and Prachanda's interview appear quite interlinked. One creates a terror scene for the king, and Prachanda uses that to extract some concessions from him," said a political analyst and senior journalist in Kathmandu.

As the king has not made his stance known so far, those who have met him in the recent past believe that 'going in exile' is the last thing he would want to do. So far, neither the Prime Minister nor any official representative of the government is believed to have conveyed anything to the king.

Prachanda, in company of Baburam Bhattarai, had a longish meeting with Kamal Thapa, chairman of the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal on April 19. While the details of the meetings are not yet known, the meeting that took place at the residence of Hishila Yami's older sister in Shitapaila assumes much political significance. Thapa and Baburam Bhattarai know each other well as both were involved in the failed negotiation between the government and the Maoists in 2002-2003.

The RPP-N led by Thapa was the only party that stood for constitutional monarchy during the recently held elections. But RPP-N is said to be upset with the palace following reports that most people supporting the monarchy not only voted for the Maoists, but also actively campaigned for them during the election.

A newly elected Maoist parliamentarian said he had no knowledge about what exit formula Prachanda was talking about, and said, "But our party will stand by what he does."

and schools

the private schools.

Lekhnath Neupane, president of the student union issued a statement on April 20 asking all government schools not to charge any fee until the next government takes power. He also asked the private schools not to hike their fees. The only reassuring factor was that Neupane decided not to resort to physical attacks on schools and their representatives. A 15-member committee led by Union General Secretary, Himal Sharma will be taking up such instances of violation by the schools.

News Brief

Advani gives in to Yechury

Months after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), India's main opposition, fumed over what it said was the government of India's outsourcing its Nepal policy to the CPI-M, it appears to have finally fallen in line.

In a statement issued on April 19, the BJP stated that it welcomed people's verdict in favour of democratic republic in Nepal. It hoped that a secular Nepal will continue to respect the 'Hindutva.' On January 17, BJP leader LK Advani had strongly opposed Nepal being stripped off its 'Hindu identity' and had also held constitutional monarchy as the 'symbol of stability and unity' of Nepal.

BJP sources say that the latest stance of the BJP on Nepal is in conformity with India's well maintained practice of major parties having a common approach on foreign policy, especially the one on its neighborhood.

Vote rigging took place

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has said the poll on April 10 was peaceful but marred by several cases of rigging and booth capturing. It also said there were security lapses and inadequacies.

The NHRC report released on April 18 said the volume and instances of re-polling itself was an indicator that security provisions were not sufficient. "The NHRC has been receiving reports of booth capturing and terrorising for votes in the election," it said, a fact that other observers chose to ignore.

The report mentioned serious complaints of rigging and intimidation by the Maoists in Dhading, Nuwakot, Gorkha, Ramechhap, Karvre Palanchok and Sindhu Palchok, but gave no conclusion about the complaints. Similarly, it pointed out the terror that reigned at two places in Saptari district which resulted in zero participation of the voters.

Interestingly, the NHRC came out against the Election Commission's (EC) over-enthusiasm in allowing candidates to file their nominations

through fax. It was perturbed over the EC's failure to stop candidates accused of committing serious crimes from filing their nomination, and said that would promote impunity.

Bringing out several facts of irregularities, the NHRC cited reports of one person casting votes many times, or children posing as adults. It held lack of coordination between the EC and the security agencies responsible for such lapses.

Free Tibet movement begins



The Free Tibet group which had suspended its protest has resumed the campaign for Tibet's freedom again, soon after the polls to the constituent assembly got over. The group began holding demonstrations outside the Chinese embassy on a daily basis beginning April 16 in which more than 200 people staged Dharna, chanting 'free Tibet' slogans.

The demonstrators were rounded up by the police. On April 18 at least two protestors were injured as the police baton charged them. The government is facing double the pressure over the issue. On one hand the international groups including the human rights organisations have criticised the government for use of force on an unwarranted scale against the demonstrators; and on the other, the Chinese government has warned Nepal of

serious implications on bilateral relations if such protests and 'anti-Chinese' activities continued from Nepali soil.

Miscalculation

What with the politics and the poll outcome, the country has no doubt seen many miscalculations. But the worst victim of the miscalculation was

UML General Secretary Madhav Nepal.

According to senior UML leaders, Maoist Chief Prachanda had approached Nepal as late as on the poll eve that he would lose from Kathmandu's constituency number two if he failed to forge an alliance with the Maoists. Prachanda offered to have Jhakku Subedi retired if Madhav Nepal showed a similar gesture by retiring his party candidate from constituency no 10 from where Prachanda was contesting.

But Nepal refused to heed the advice. UML sources say the main reason was the advice he got from officialdom of Delhi that he should not spoil his chances of becoming the Prime Minister by embracing the Maoists. Delhi's advice was, 'keep them engaged, but do not embrace them.'

Day light robbery

Criminals looted Rs 8.5 lakhs from the Bank of Kathmandu in Sinamangal on April 21.

The robbers armed with Khukuris attacked the security guard seriously injuring him and ran away. The injured security guard has been admitted to Kathmandu Medical College Hospital. No arrests have been made so far.

New loader introduced

One of the world's largest construction equipment manufacturing companies, TEREX, has introduced next generation Backhoe Loader-TX760 4X4 model with 4WD option. The company says it is the finest and the most efficient utility machine in its product segment. This machine is equipped with best transmission and axles called CARRARO.



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Point to Ponder

I hope our wisdom will grow with our power, and teach us, that the less we use our power the greater it will be.. - Thomas Jefferson

Neutral dialogue

NEPSE crashed and then recovered a day later as Maoist leader Prachanda assured the business community that the Maoist government would be friendly enough to let business grow and flourish.

But the fear is not confined to the business community only. Banking sector has already been hit and some countries have refused to accept the letter of credit from Nepali banks without a counter guarantee from international banks.

While people have voted for peace, giving Maoists the mandate to lead a government that should run on consensus, fear gallops in the minds of many other sectors. Fear of attack on the independence of judiciary and media are deeply rooted in the minds of the people, since Maoists have time and said and done many things that justifies those fears.

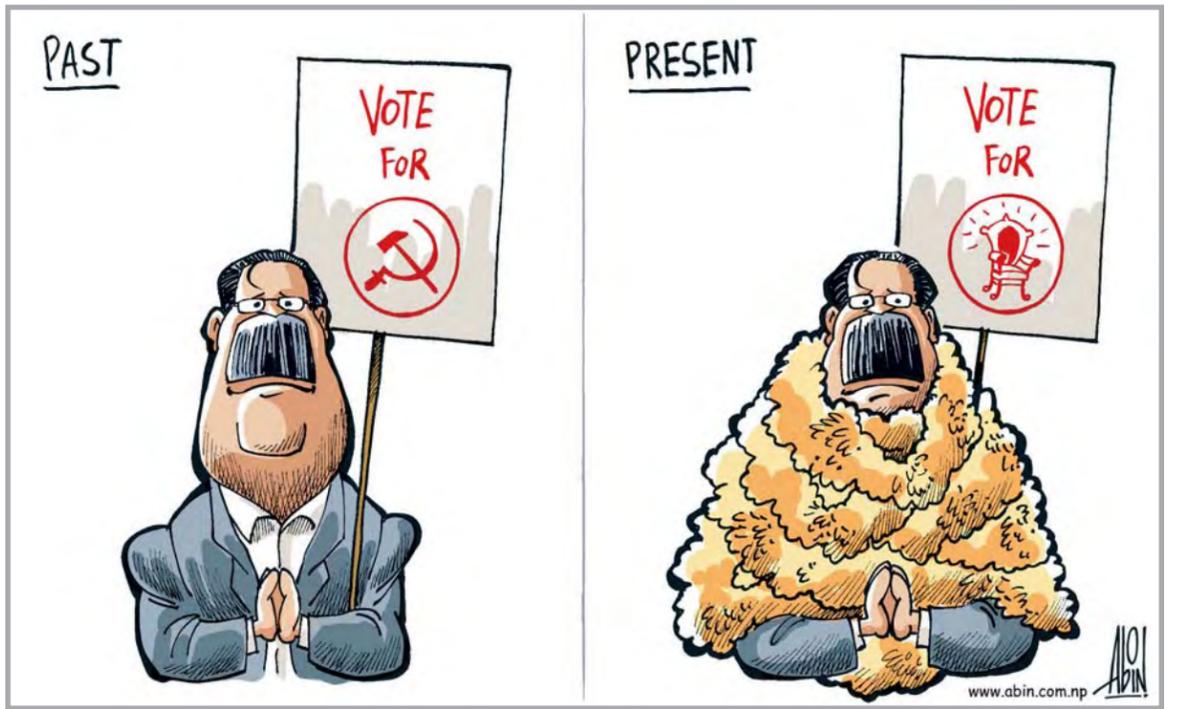
The list of sectors under the grips of fear is long. The education and health sector which have progressed a lot over a period of time, fear government takeover. International investors are cautiously watching if Maoists are going to reverse all these.

Prachanda's address to the business community alluding to their fears did magic as stock exchange recovered from the earlier shock. But the large scale withdrawals of money, suspected capital flights and demoralisation among likely investors on one hand, and the continuing shortage of fuel and other items and rising inflation may create an uncontrollable situation.

A simple statement by the Maoists that 'we will solve these problems' is not going to help as the time-lag between now and their formal takeover of the government is long; with higher chances that these problems and their effect on the ordinary people as well as on the national economy might increase.

Many people who were part of the governance and policy formulation in the regime during the yesteryears would instigate Maoists not to compromise on their radical slogans, not because they believe in those 'radical policies', but because they want to be seen on the side of 'new regime.'

What the Maoists need to do is to initiate neutral dialogues with different groups with just one message that says with all integrity, "please carry on with your business, we are not going to destroy it."



Letters

Be proactive or fade away

After being declared the winner of the most important constituency in Kathmandu, Prachanda made statements to the private sector that adopting capitalistic trade and labor law policy will allow for an economic revolution and elimination of the conflict in all its forms.

For this revolution to take place it is necessary to form an environment, friendly for international investment, as domestic actors lack the necessary financial resources. Only by sticking to democratic principals will the Maoists gain the trust of foreign investment, necessary to achieve their economic ambitions.

To gain the trust of the people and of the international community, the Maoist need to go through a major transformation - from being a guerrilla on a rebellion mission to become politicians responsible for the country's welfare.

To sustain the trust of the people, the Maoists need not only include other parties when forming the new government, but also not repeat the mistakes the previous government made.

First of all the Maoists should reopen the industries shut down by their cadres at the time of insurgency. This will allow the estimated 500,000 workers currently unemployed to return to work and allow for a revival of the country's nearly collapsed economy.

Immediate actions should include

government control of price fluctuations of consumer goods, making beaurocracy accountable and alleviating fuel crisis. If the Maoists ignore the plight of the public, they will collapse soon.

Sharmila Pandey Putalisadak, Kathmandu

Peace votes, not endorsement of Maoists' war

Maoists have urged their coalition partners not to quit the government; and Chairman Prachanda has revealed his discreet efforts at providing a 'graceful exit' to King Gyanendra. This shows that they are growing somewhat mature in terms of political attitude.

However, Maoists cadres have not given up yet their nefarious modus operandi which consists of threats and intimidations. The way they rough up other parties' leaders and cadres makes us wonder if Prachanda is only pretending to be politically mature. As the latest editorial in newsfront states, Maoists must acknowledge the fact that their unexpected victory is not derived from bullets but from ballots.

Ask randomly ten people out on the streets and they will candidly say that they cast their votes for Maoists; and all of them will tell you that they did so not to legitimise the so-called

'people war' but to prop up the commitment made by Maoists so as to move towards a peaceful Nepal. The moment Maoists start flaunting their victory as an endorsement of war, the end of their days begins.

Sushma Rai Kirtipur

Readers, your reactions, criticisms, comments, suggestions are most welcome. Please address it to: newsfront@bhrikuti.com

Spiritual Corner

True nature

One day, in ancient India, the Buddha was giving a teaching to his followers. On this day however, instead of a verbal teaching, he simply held up a flower. One of his disciples, Mahakasyapa, smiled. The Buddha said: "Today, I gave a silent teaching and Mahakasyapa alone understood it." This was the birth of Zen.

Zen stories:

"A student asked master Bankei "How can I cure my terrible temper?" "Show it to me," demanded Bankei, "I can't just show it to you like that because it comes on unexpectedly," explained the student. Bankei replied, "It is not your true



nature, then. If it were it would be with you at all times."

Master Bassui reduced the whole of Buddhist teachings to one phrase

"Seeing one's own nature is Buddhahood." When asked how to see into one's own

nature, Master Bassui would reply. "Now! Who is asking?"

A student who felt he had achieved emptiness of mind boasted to his master, "Now I have no idea." The master replied. "Why stagger about under the weight of this concept "No idea?"

(www.poetseers.org/spiritual_and_devotional_poets/zen/stories)

Yubaraj Ghimire



Once again, euphoria has come to rule the country. The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M)

that will be the single largest party in the 601-member constituent assembly has already begun projecting itself as the future government, and now the moot question is how it is going to implement its radical agenda. Prachanda's over-enthusiasm far outsmarts the demoralisation in the camps of other political parties – mainly the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal -United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML).

The other parties are so shell shocked that its leaders are not even speaking publicly about how will they cope with the 'radical policies' of the Maoists. But the CPN-M, along with its understandable euphoria, has also been trying to appear pragmatic wherever necessary, and at the same time placating its cadres by saying, 'we will not compromise on radicalism.'

The 'defeatist mentality' of the non-Maoist parties with some exception like the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) also gives an impression that they are either keen for a back room deal with the Maoists on power sharing, or that they are so disappointed that they

do not see any role for themselves. The natural consequence of the national players' abdication will mean an enhanced and continued role for the international players in charting out a future course of the country.

Maoists have embarked on a

At bigger stake

Maoists should not be using the weight of the mandate and their still existent military set-up to make the CA totally irrelevant.

populist journey. Prachanda gave an interview to the Maoist controlled Nepal Television saying that he would meet King Gyanendra and ask him to vacate the palace. Buoyed by the euphoria, pro-republic Nepalis no doubt must have clapped over Prachanda's monologue. International players, especially India and the Great Britain have reasons to applaud Prachanda's straight-forward approach, and 'statesmanship'.

The United States which still has the Maoists on its terrorist list may not be joining the rest in applauding the Maoists but will not take a different position. The reason is simple. Maoists' campaign for King Gyanendra's exit will conceal their role, especially after October 2002 when they approached and instigated the king to sack an elected Prime Minister on the plea that Nepal should be stopped from being a 'failed state' and that 'terrorists' should not be allowed to win.

They changed their tactics only

after February 2005. Not only did they withdraw their support to the king, but their earlier stance against 'terrorists' was gone. Delhi's faith shifted from the king to the Maoists. But probably what upset Delhi's calculation were the seats the Maoist won, and the percentage of votes the party won. That in an ideal situation would reduce its dependence on Delhi. In Nepal's politics, leaders more often look for external support and recognition than the support of its people. The Maoists now will be tested on that aspect as well.

The interference of the international players in Nepal's politics is reducing the role of national players with the leaders playing a servile role. On the other hand, the international donors, including the bilateral donors, have only created a group of synopsis writers and project-getters who are good at becoming rich by selling the country's poverty. Corruption has assumed new heights under certain projects that avowedly pledges to corruption in the first place.

It is where the responsibility of the future government and the constitution makers lies, to address these

issues and bring laws and create machineries to enforce accountability and transparency. But the Maoists are more reverent towards the 'outsiders' and bent upon establishing their 'radical image' at a heavy cost.

The Maoists are clearly being guided by the compulsion of the big 'outsiders' to remove the monarchy in whatever manner, constitutional or unconstitutional, by the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly (CA). The move is going to subvert the entire constitutional process and the constitutionality, something that the constituent assembly should be irreversibly establishing.

What is the compulsion behind such a move? An unelected interim constitution ordered that the future CA 'shall enforce republicanism' by its first meeting which as per the established practices under any democracy, will be restricted to a pro-tem speaker swearing in the new members.

The 601-member house has many parties and members who were not in the interim parliament that was a body filled by the handpicked members of the parties loyal to their leaders. All of them have a right to be part of any major decisions and issues in the CA independent of what the interim parliament's order was. The political muscle and dominant will of one or more parties cannot be used to subvert the political process and rights of any member of the House.

Let not the House begin with that subversion. That subversion will create dangerous aberrations and give sweeping excuses for the future government to move towards Korean

and Cuban model of democracy.

The hasty move on the monarchy has another clever dimension that renders the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission totally futile. The future regime will be at a liberty to say that the king was solely responsible for the Maoists having to take up guns against the state, and with him gone; there will be no need to pursue or investigate any human right violation cases.

Let the international community pretend not to understand such things, but Nepali actors along with the Maoists must come in defense of constitutional methods and practices. Maoists should not be using the weight of the mandate and their still existent military set-up to make the CA totally irrelevant.

If CA under the new regime is to thwart democratic process in such a brazen manner, then its natural targets will be the independent judiciary, Nepal army and the media, as they alone will be offering some resistance to the authoritarian design of any regime.

Political parties have spoken through their manifestoes, and people through their ballots. That is a mandate to prepare a constitution through consensus after having a prolonged and useful debate in the CA. The implementation part follows only after that process is over. ■



If CA under the new regime is to thwart democratic process in such a brazen manner, then its natural targets will be the independent judiciary, Nepal army and the media, as they alone will be offering some resistance to the authoritarian design of any regime.

False assumptions

LET PARTIES DOWN

■ Uday Pariyar

The Maoists surprised many by doing well in the April elections. Their electoral victory shocked not just the mainstream political parties but also Kathmandu-based intellectuals, analysts and opinion makers. Why did their calculations and predictions before the polls go wrong? And why did they think, in the first place, that a Maoist's majority was unlikely?

The analysts and thinkers might produce many reasons why the Maoists made it to power. Probably one of the less obvious but important factors was the popular false assumptions about the actual influence, strengths and support base of the Maoists, not least in the rural parts.

The wrong beliefs existed since the start of the armed movement in 1995. The NC rulers of the time took it extremely lightly and went around making public comments about how they would be able to crush the budding insurgency within days or weeks. They used the poorly armed and not-for-battle police force for their anti-Maoist missions, which only contributed to the spread of the insurgency.

Lack of seriousness of the Maoist cause persisted for a long time, which provided space for the bloody movement to hit almost every village. The political players and thinkers could not fathom the level of penetration and influence of the Maoists among the citizens mainly because they did not visit the rural areas. The parties were busy with their power sharing games and inter-party and intra-party squabbles in the capital town. The media did not cover remote places either.

The mainstream parties at one stage also held a false belief that the Maoists were threats to one party and not another. The king believed that the Maoists were aiming at the parties. The NC believed that the Maoists were mainly hurting the UML's support base and the UML thought that the NC was the one in real danger. Also there was a lot of disagreement on whether the Maoists were political forces or terrorist ones. So the state parties failed to come up with any

comprehensive political or military plans to confront the insurgents on time. The Maoist leaders happily played one party against another and went ahead with their mission.

No wonder the Maoists became extremely powerful, particularly in the rural areas where the State was largely absent. Although they did not win the war, they did not lose it either. The equilibrium of power forced the state parties to seek a negotiated settlement. And now, the former rebels have shown that they are competent fighters not just on the battlefronts but also on the ballot fronts. The parties must have now realised



Shyam Bhatta

their serious flaws leading to the humiliating defeat.

One of the key reasons why the parties misjudged the grassroots support and strength of the former rebels was because of their false assumption that the Maoists were very unpopular in the villages. They held the wrong view that the villagers supported them mainly due to the fear factor and they would not vote for the Maoists. The past abuses and excesses would deter the Maoists from winning. That must be the reason why they planned to contest elections without properly re-establishing themselves in many parts of the country outside the towns. How could they think that people would vote for the parties who had not visited them for many years?

Another false assumption of the parties was that the people would accept the status quo. The party leadership resisted any change and contested the elections in the same old style

with mostly the same old faces. Neither did they have any appealing new agenda nor did they have young and representatives of marginalised groups contesting elections.

For instance, the NC had just one Dalit candidate under the first past the post system. It refused to let charismatic young NC leader Gagan Thapa contest elections under this system. Similar was the case with the UML. It showed that the mainstream parties had refused to change with the people's aspirations for change. The Maoists did have attractive slogans and did try to find candidates from different caste, ethnic and regional backgrounds.

And now the Kathmandu intellectuals and parties are living with yet another false assumption on what the Maoists might be up to. They argue that the Maoists had now turned into another parliamentary party. They believe the Maoists will now be no different to the UML. But this is an assumption not based on realities. The Maoists still have not explicitly stated that they have given up violent politics. Their cadre has not stopped intimidating other party workers and common people.

The Maoist leaders might not be able to offend their militant forces such as YCL and other hardcore workers by following the traditional parliamentary system. So, how could one be sure that the Maoists have changed by winning the votes? How can we be certain that the peace process is close to success by bringing the Maoists on board? What is the guarantee that the Maoists will adhere to the old agreements with the seven parties at a time when the parties' coalition has to be reoriented?

This election taught many lessons. One of the key lessons was to the so-called prominent analysts and thinkers not to arrive at a judgement by reading some Kathmandu papers and observing some leaders in Kathmandu and key towns. This is time for not just party workers but also analysts to start visiting the rural people and getting their point of views as well. This exercise might help them arrive at better predictions next time.

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In this new found political equation, the loss of Nepali Congress and the UML can be equated as an India's loss in Nepal too.

After the election

■ Siddhartha Thapa



The unfolding political situation in Nepal, where the Maoists have secured a majority, will lead to a situation where Indian

influence is severely curtailed. Professor SD Muni, a Nepal expert, during his last visit to Kathmandu had commented during a TV interview with Bhusan Dahal that, "whenever the kings have been at the height of their power, Nepal has been insensitive to India's national security." Muni went further to suggest that the king was paying the price for "inducting China" into the SAARC amalgamation without India's consent. If there are any similarities amongst staunch royalists and the Maoists, it is a fact that both perceive themselves as uncompromising nationalists.

In line with this assessment, King Gyanendra's two latest statements, one before and the other after the elections cannot be ignored. In the first statement issued on the eve of the polls, he urged his countrymen to vote in order to protect Nepal's unity, integrity and sovereignty. In the second statement after the polls, he succinctly stated, "the enthusiastic participation of the Nepali people in the Constituent Assembly elections, through which they have emphatically reiterated their firm resolve not to compromise the nation's existence, independence and integrity under any circumstance is a source of satisfaction for us."

What is significant is that the king seems unperturbed by the victory of the Maoists. It is also no secret most royalists and Maoists consider the political parties as agents of Indian rule in Nepal. Although King Gyanendra may be devastated by the inevitable abolition of monarchy; on the contrary, he has found some solace in the Maoists victory because the Maoists have promised to challenge Indian hegemony in Nepal. Undoubtedly, the king is having the last laugh in this bitter battle that has ensued between the monarch and the beleaguered main stream political parties over the last two years.

In this new found political equation, the loss of Nepali Congress and the UML can be equated as an India's loss in Nepal too. In actuality, the Maoists will do what King Mahendra did best to contain Indian hegemony in Nepal – consolidate domestic support base through popular programs and use China as a countervailing force against India – in either case, India's influence in Nepal is all about to erode significantly. When the Maoists do take control of the state, it is highly unlikely the Maoists will want to repeat the mistakes of what other communist leaders around the world have done – adherence to radical communism.

Given the global reality and their acceptance of a free market economy, the Maoists will aim to consolidate their domestic support base by sympathising with labor unions and by bringing about

popular programs aimed at rural Nepal such as free health and education to name a few. However, the pursuit of radical policy programs will prove to be counter productive for the Maoists. Similarly, the Maoists will also aim to neutralise Nepal Army with the induction of PLA. But, since the Maoists have secured a majority, the necessity to neutralise Nepal Army does not become a strategic compulsion.

In other words, the Maoist foreign policy and the anti-Indian rhetoric they stand for will naturally convince some influential officers in Nepal Army to support Maoists on issues related with nationalism. Therefore, in such a situation the deterrence level of main stream political parties and India will loosen dramatically.

But on a different level of analysis the rise of Maoism in Nepal also opens a new arena for a political crisis in Nepal and in South Asia. Since these elections have reflected the insecurity of the Nepali people, the coming constitution will lack credibility leading to a short term political situation. Democracy in Nepal will be severely threatened by extreme forces.

Concurrently, the rise of Maoism in Nepal will also serve as an ideal benchmarking model for the Maoists and Naxalites in India to make significant inroads in their revolution through much of impoverished India. Due to ideological and emotional linkages that have existed between the Maoists in Nepal and India, it is but natural for the Nepali Maoists to support their counterparts in India on moral and ideological grounds. Poverty at 25% and unemployment at 7% may further augment the support of Maoism amongst the vast majority of neglected Indians.

Then there is every indication that China will slowly but eventually establish its influence in Nepal. China may now opt to play a subdued role, but when the Maoists are in control of Nepal firmly, it is inevitable that China will consolidate their base in Nepal on both ideological and strategic grounds. Other aspect of consideration for India could be the possible influx of Nepali refugees in India but this depends on how the Maoists conduct themselves. However, if such a situation arises, can India afford another refugee exodus into their borders after Bangladesh? The other problem for the Indians amongst many is the systematic victimisation of the Indian minority population in Nepal that will gain momentum in the days ahead.

In any event, the threat to India's national security has multiplied. But on the other hand, in Nepal, on issues related with nationalism two extreme forces: King and Prachanda – have come together foregoing ideological and political obstacles. It is now perhaps time the Nepali Congress and UML, both take valuable lessons from this colossal defeat – there are no shortcuts to an indigenous solution. ■

Lost in populist rhetoric



A clear majority in a body that is tasked to write Nepal's future constitution is not a position that should be treated lightly.



■ Dr. Hari Bansha Dulal

The major political parties of yesteryears: the Nepali Congress (NC) and the United Marxist Leninist (UML) may regret not having paid greater attention to the words of the late poet Gopal Prasad Rimal: "One day in an era..." - words which the NC and UML parroted relentlessly during the run up to CA elections. As is often the case when the ideas of others are regurgitated, the NC and UML appear to have lost sight of the holistic implications enshrined in the late poet's words.

For in the same poem that contains the phrase mentioned above, Rimal also alludes to the arrival of such a day that fundamentally alters the very assumptions upon which an existing paradigm is based. Self-absorbed in the victory of past elections and reassured with erroneous data from the South, Nepal's former democratic title-holders appear to have severely misinterpreted the meaning and spirit of poet Rimal's words.

The single day in our era has come and gone and instead of reinstating the NC and UML to their former pedestals, this day has all but eradicated the UML as a credible political contender and as many argue, may unwind a life's worth of work, started by the late B.P. Koirala.

The verdict of CA elections is in, and there is no turning back. As humbling the former titans' experience has been, they are the victims of their own inability to understand and counter Maoists' strategies. The NC and the UML thought that the YCL's irrational activities were enough to turn off the voters. So instead of trying to defeat the Maoists by scoring a goal, they foolishly wished YCL's high-handedness to prove as a suicide goal, which at the end of the day did not happen.

Although it is unclear at this time how the Maoists will move ahead in days to come, a few speculative ideas may be generated based on observations from the Maoists' landslide victory and lessons from history.

In turbulent times, voters tend to choose candidates who promise radical changes. During the early 1930s, the voters in Germany were so frustrated with the inability of their government to address the country's basic problems that they opted for a candidate from the extreme right to bring about a desired change in the status quo - that candidate happened to be none other than Adolf Hitler.

Although premature to predict whether Nepal's Maoist party will abide by its commitment to democ-

racy or interpret its victory as unconditional support for the full execution of the 'Prachanda path,' the tendency for a radical party to continue carrying out radical policies should not be negated. A clear majority in a body that is tasked to write Nepal's future constitution is not a position that should be treated lightly; Nepal simply cannot afford to rely on liberal interpretations of what Maoists leaders say from this day onwards.

To the Maoists' credit, at no point throughout the peace process or the entire period of insurgency has its leadership expressed anything but a full-fledged commitment to the Maoists' strategic end-goal: the establishment of a one-party communist republic. Any misrepresentation of the Maoists' strategic intent has come from outside the party - mainly from individuals and organisations that have chosen to retrofit Maoist utterances to their own world-views, regardless of the Frankenstein prescriptions that have often resulted.

For two agonising years, the mainstream parties engaged the Maoists through appeasement. The Maoists in turn, engaged the mainstream through an ultra-realist paradigm. At the end of Nepal's peace process, realism has triumphed and the Maoist strategy of

hard-ball negotiations has prevailed.

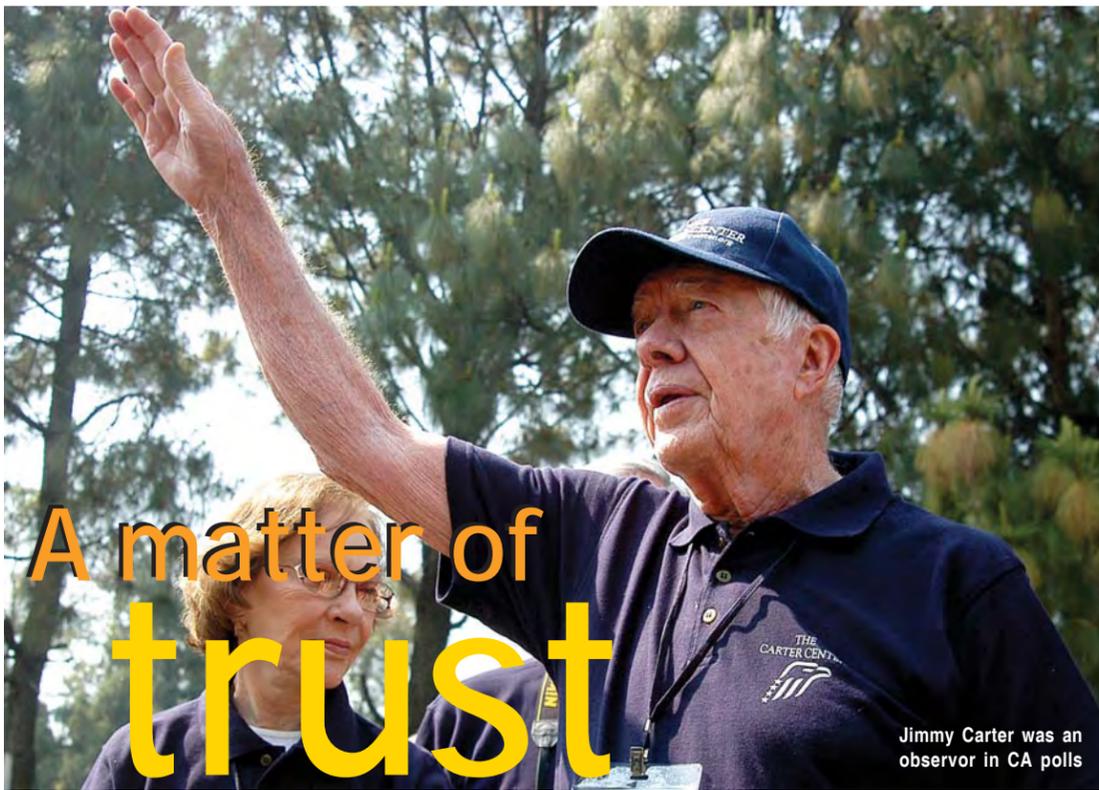
A stunned Indian government, bent on showing its own Naxalites that violence doesn't pay off, is now forced to shake hands with a group that it had once, unilaterally declared as 'terrorists.' Having outsourced its Nepal policy to India, the United States of America also faces an unsettling prospect of a China-friendly government in Nepal, thanks to Indian miscalculation.

Such considerations however, are now moot points. Much more relevant is how quickly the unseated parties can reinvent themselves and provide credible alternatives to the Maoist writ. With a gigantic representation in the CA, the Maoists find themselves in a commanding position from which they have virtually unlimited powers to remake the Nepali polity in their own image. This is all the more reason the presence of competing ideologies and thoughts are a must to resuscitating Nepal's democracy.

The lesson here is two-fold: the politicians of the NC and UML must practice what they preach; and these parties must engage in introspection to fully comprehend the disastrous consequences of compromising their parties' distinguishing principles, in favor of their political rivals' electoral platforms.

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In turbulent times, voters tend to choose candidates who promise radical changes.



A matter of trust

Jimmy Carter was an observer in CA polls

■ Binod P Bista

What was different in this election from the previous ones? Was it the presence of a huge number of international election observers (almost 900) as well as the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN)? Or because of a relatively large amount of funding received from donors for the election? These questions need to be answered truthfully and understood fully if a new Nepal were to be built within a democratic setup that would demand periodic general elections in a free and fair manner for receiving people's mandate to govern.

Finding the right chord would not only help Nepal and other poor developing countries in Asia but the whole developing world that is trying hard to find the right choice: suitable electoral process acceptable to all; without which democracy stands a slim chance of survival and people keep on suffering from lack of development.

All successful democratic systems being practiced in the developed western world and with some exceptions in the developing world, belonging to both presidential and prime ministerial system, have one

thing in common. The leaders of the parties, after a hard fought contest, sometimes turning nasty during the run up to elections, accept the outcome of election based on a pre agreed framework, rules and remedies of the electoral process.

Humility in humiliating circumstances, as observed during the last general elections in India, is the most sought out commodity in all leaders of the world. Most importantly, the party in power (BJP) not only accepted defeat gracefully but also handed back power to the winner in an urgent manner. This is a normal

transfer of power in all matured democracies.

In Nepal, too, a start has been made by the UML resigning from the government after electoral defeats. The other major party, which has also lost the election, is yet to make similar announcement since the winner is certain to secure the absolute majority in direct elections for 240 seats, in addition to leading in the proportional representation contest by a comfortable margin.

However, would we have witnessed a similar picture if there were not a coalition government of un-elected members of all major parties that governed the country for two full years? Disagreement among major political parties after elections leads to a stalemate. Foreign election observers are of little use so long as the major parties refuse to accept election outcome. Even if a government is formed, it remains unstable and always under pressure from opposition to function smoothly.

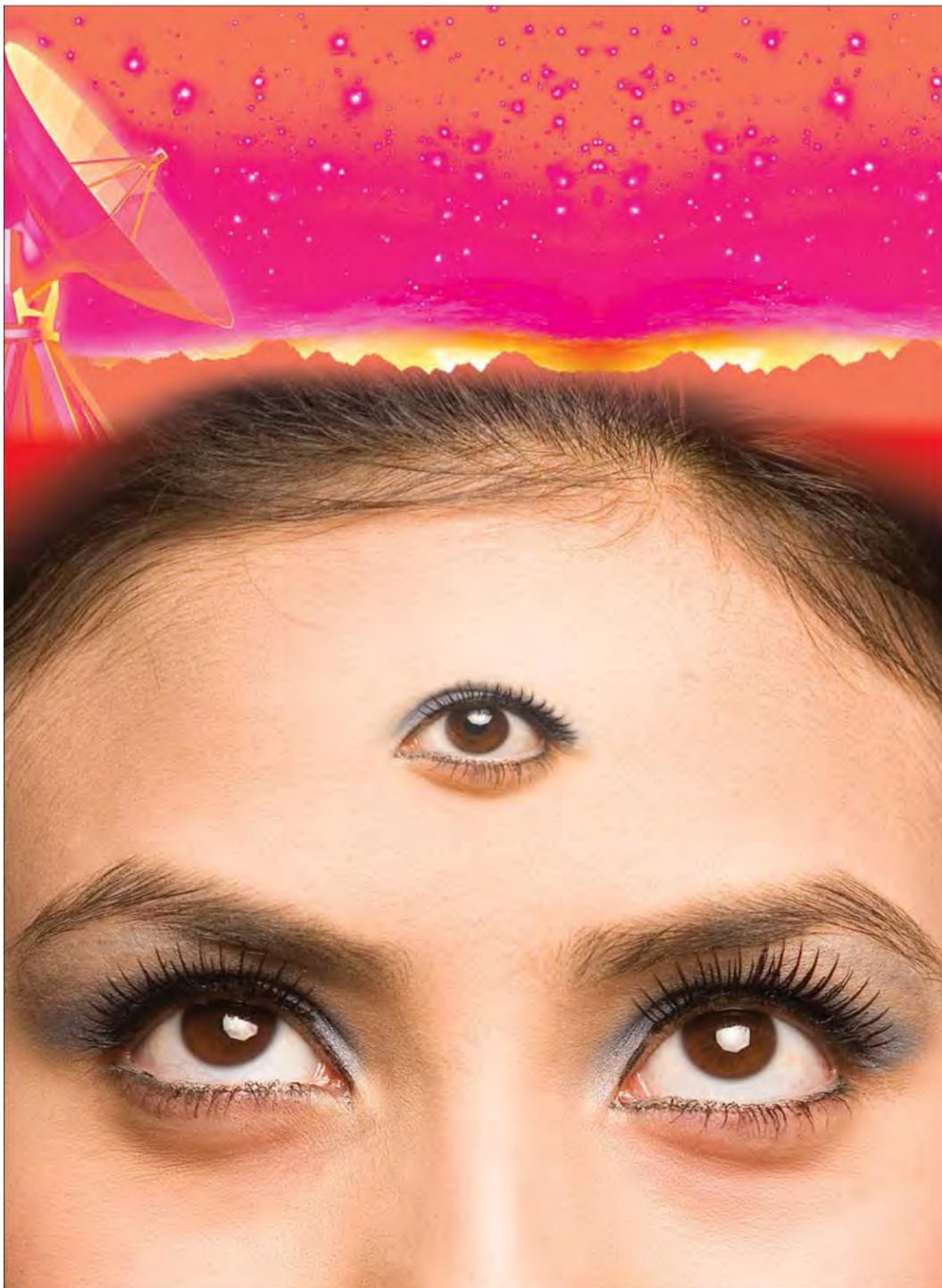
Adequate funding and necessary support by the incumbent government to the national election commission for preparing and conducting polls is the least that any democratic government could do. Owing to paucity of funds (and sometime lacking access to technology and techniques) election commission is most often compromised at source in most developing countries. Funding support by donor agencies and international institutions would go a long way in the conduct of

relatively free elections.

It is seen time and again that the loser (individual) almost always challenges the election outcome as it (including many other smaller parties) finds several anomalies and shortcomings in an election. However, the established parties and their leaders take care of the situation and prevent it from getting out of hand unless they, too, feel that the government funds and machinery were used to support ruling party candidates including taking up populist measures just before the elections. Not to mention of vote rigging and other such unfair measures.

The dream of a new Nepal can be realised only under a liberal democratic system that respects the fundamental rights of every individual, group and society. Free and fair elections are an integral part of it. Conduct of elections by a coalition government, comprising all major parties and some minor parties, did the trick this time. Since the constituent assembly members must be eager to draft a new constitution for our self-governance, a serious thought must be given to make all future elections as successful as the present one.

Supporting an atmosphere of transparency, accountability and level field for all players can build trust among the contestants and their parties, lacking which it could give rise to several problems, and if unattended, it will cause premature demise of democracy. Nobody in Nepal is willing and prepared to face this situation. ■



संचार जगतमा तपाईंको तेस्रो आँखा

स्पष्ट, दरिलो र विश्वसनीय श्रोत, केहि तीतो सत्य, केहि मिठो विचार र पुरो विवेचना अनि विविध विषयको सुमधुर समिश्रणका साथमा समाचार र निष्पक्ष विश्लेषणलाई फरक दृष्टिकोणले प्रस्तुत गर्दछौं । तेस्रो आँखाको कोणबाट हरेक पक्षको विश्लेषण र प्रस्तुति गर्दै तपाईंको तेस्रो आँखा बन्ने प्रण गर्दछौं ।



सगरमाथा

तपाईंको तेस्रो आँखा

Iraqi cleric threatens 'open war'

Iraqi Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr has threatened to wage "open war" on the Baghdad government if it does not halt operations against his supporters.

Moqtada Sadr said he was giving the government a "last warning", and urged it to take "the path of peace".

His statement came as Iraqi troops, with US and UK support, clashed with his forces in Baghdad and the south.

In August the cleric's militia declared a ceasefire, pledging not to attack government or foreign soldiers.

"I'm giving the last warning and the last word to the Iraqi government," Moqtada Sadr said.

"Either it comes to its senses and takes the path of peace... or it will be (seen as) the same as the previous government," he added, referring to former President Saddam Hussein's fallen regime.

"If it does not stop the militias that have infiltrated the government, then we will declare an open war until liberation," he added.

Moqtada Sadr issued the warning after soldiers launched fresh operations against positions being held by his Mehdi Army.

The BBC's Crispin Thorold in Baghdad says the government is slowly beginning to establish a presence in areas where the Mehdi Army had been all-powerful.

In Baghdad the US army and Iraqi troops clashed with militiamen in the area of Sadr City. Local hospitals say that seven people died.

Sadr City is the site of frequent confrontations between Shia fighters and Iraqi and coalition forces.



Tensions have been increased by the construction of a wall in the district by US and Iraqi forces.

They say the wall aims to hamper the militants who regularly fire mortars at the Green Zone, Baghdad's huge diplomatic and government compound.

Also on Saturday, clashes were reported between Iraqi forces and the Mehdi Army in the southern city of Nasiriya.

Meanwhile, in the southern city of Basra, Iraqi security forces, backed by British artillery and American warplanes, moved into the district of Hayania, where Moqtada Sadr also has strong support.

The operation, which apparently sought to seize illegally held weapons, opened with a massive display of firepower by supporting US and UK forces, who pounded a deserted area of the district with artillery.

(BBC)

I'm Taliban hostage, says Pak diplomat

The unknown captors calling them as Taliban Saturday released videotape of Mr Tariq Azizuddin, Pakistan's Ambassador to Afghanistan who went missing mysteriously on February 11, 2008.

The videotape was released through computer CD, which showed Mr Tariq Azizuddin along with driver Gul Nawaz and security guard Amir Sultan.

In his brief but comprehensive statement on video, Tariq Azizuddin said, "I am Tariq Azizuddin. I am in custody of Taliban. My health is deteriorating. Accept all demands of Taliban. Government should work for my release."

In his around four minutes statement through tape, Mr Tariq Azizuddin informed that he along with driver and security guard was abducted from Ali Masjid area of Khyber Agency on February 11, 2008. He said that they were abducted by Taliban and were still in their captivity. He said there wasn't any problem. They were living in peace. "We are being respected and properly looked after," he remarked.

However, he said, "Personally I am facing health problems." He said at the moment, he was well and healthy.

Mr Tariq Azizuddin who grew beard during captivity

mentioned in particular the names of his brother Tahir Azizuddin, Secretary Foreign Affairs Mr Riaz Mohammad Khan, Pakistan's Ambassadors to China Mr Shafqat Saeed and Iran Mr Salman Bashir to accept demands of Taliban and to release their prisoners. "I also tell my family and children that I am well and our health is satisfactory at the moment. Pray for our health," he added.

The alleged Taliban besides demanding release of their members were also asking for money, which they spent on abducting, shifting and hosting of Mr Tariq Azizuddin since February 11 last. At the end of his statement, he also said, "Today is Saturday, 8th of March."

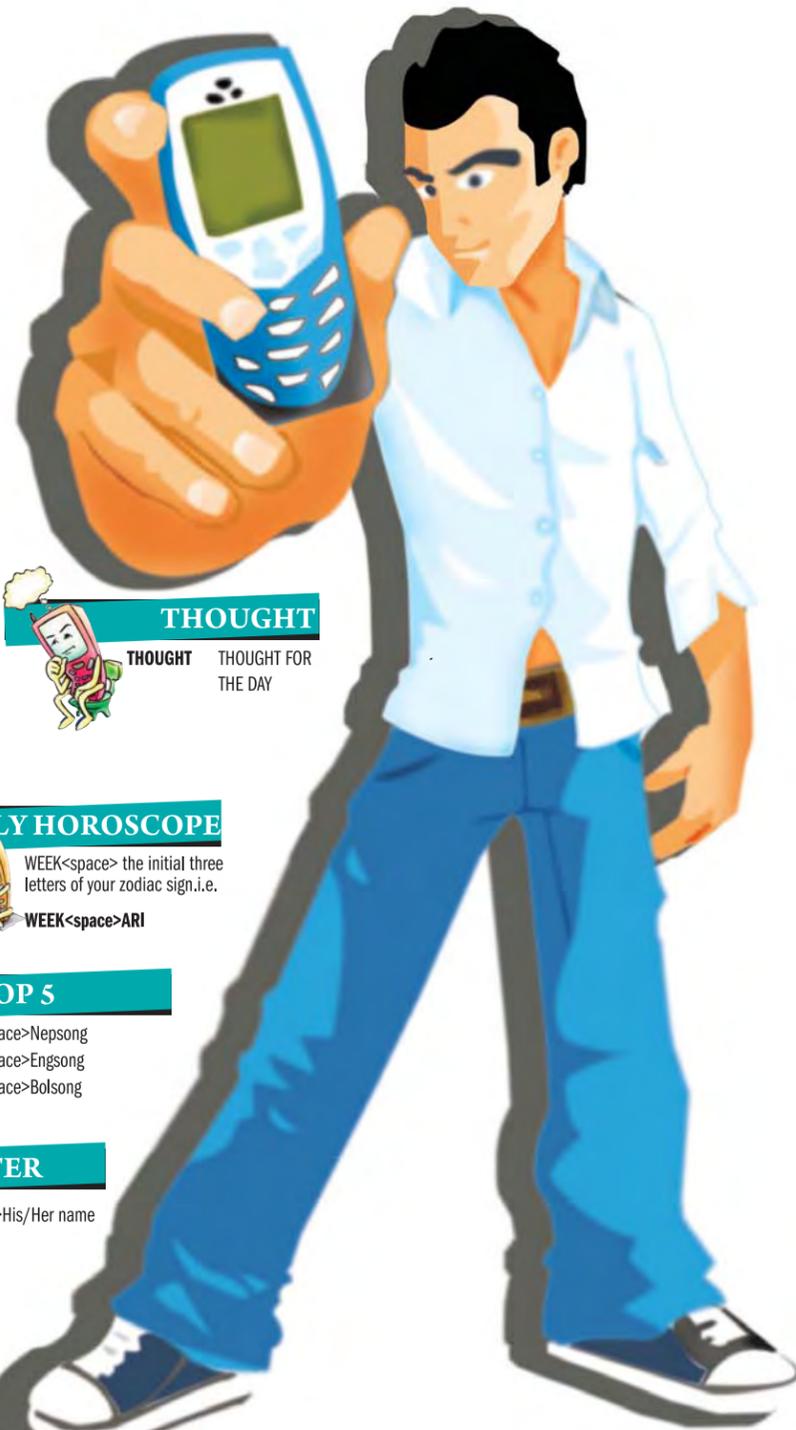
Though the names of members of Taliban who were demanded to be released, were not mentioned yet some highly placed internal sources reveal that Mansoor Dad Ullah brother of late Taliban leader Mullah Dad Ullah is on the top. Mansoor Dad Ullah was removed from his office by Taliban

supreme leader Mullah Omar in January last when he (Mansoor) without taking his seniors into confidence held meetings with high-ranking Al Qaeda leaders.

(Nation, Pakistan)



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AST<space>the initial three letters of your zodiac sign. i.e.
AST<space>ARI



NEWS

NEWS National news
SPO Sports news
ENT Entertainment news
INT International news
LIVE Breaking news



JOKES

JOKE
JOKE<space>DOC
JOKE<space>SILLY
JOKE<space>LAWYER
JOKE<space>SANTA
JOKE<space>BLONDE



THOUGHT

THOUGHT THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

STOCK

SHG Top 5 gainers of the day
SHL Top 5 losers of the day
SHH Stock related help

FOREX

FOREX<space>BUY
FOREX<space>BUY
FOREX<space>CURRENCY ID

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

WEEK<space>the initial three letters of your zodiac sign.i.e.
WEEK<space>ARI

DICTIONARY

DICT<space>the word you want to know the meaning of.i.e.
DICT<space>tut

CALENDER SERVICE

Calnep ddmmyyy Nepali to English
Caleng ddmmyyy English to Nepali

TOP 5

TOP5<space>Nepsong
TOP5<space>Engsong
TOP5<space>Bolsong

CRICKET UPDATE

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WEATHER

CLI<space>city name i.e.
CLI<space>dharan

LOVE METER

LM<space>Your name<space>His/Her name

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MARSHLAND FLOWERS

Samyag Dristi

Correct view is very important, as karma - that is, one's actions depend heavily on one's views.

■ Acharya Mahayogi Sridhar Rana Rinpoche

In the Buddhist experience, the experience of an Atma is sheer fabrication and thus it leads to bondage. This non – conceptual experience of Sunyata is called the first Bhumi when the Bodhisatwa has his/her first glimpse of emptiness (Sunyata) non – conceptually. Then there are ten such Bhumis (stages or steps) before the Bodhisatwa becomes a Buddha. Through such a knowledge the practitioners gain insight (Vipassana) into the reality of impermanence (Anitya), suffering (Dukha) and non – ego (Anatma) and non – substantial existence (Sunyata).

Then the fifth Abhigya is known as Chyuti-utpaada gyana. This is the knowledge of the passing away and the rebirth of sentient beings. This is also called Dibya Chakchhu gyana. This is a little different from the above Abhigya. The above was more about seeing the past, while this one is related more to seeing the future. In the Digha Nikaya of the Theravadins and the Dirgha Agama of the Sarvastivadins, the Buddha says,

“With his mind thus concentrated he applies and directs his mind/ thought to the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of the sentient beings. With his Dibya Chakchhu which is purified and surpassing human sight, he sees sentient beings passing away and being reborn again, low or high, good or bad appearance, in happy or miserable existence, according to their karma.

He fully realises that those sentient beings who are given to evil conduct in deeds, speech and thoughts, who are revilers of the noble ones (Aryas = Arhats, Bodhisatwas etc.) who are of false views (Mithya dristi, i.e. wrong views) acquire the karma of their false views. Correct view is very important as karma, that is, one's actions depend heavily on one's views. For example, if a person is of the view that killing goats to various deities is good for the goat and for him/herself, s/he will definitely sacrifice goats to various Devi – devatas. If s/he is of the view that killing other sentient beings is a heavy bad karma no matter for whom it is done, s/he will not sacrifice animals to any deity.

That is why Samyag dristi (correct view) is very important in Buddhism. Those beings with wrong views after the dissolution of their bodies after death have been reborn in Durgati (lower realms) in hell. But those sentient beings who are given to doing good karmas in words, deeds and thoughts, who do not revile the Aryas (noble ones), who have Samyag dristi and who acquire the karma of their right views, at the dissolution of the body after death have been reborn in a happy existence (Sugati) in the world of the Deva lokas (heavens).

Because this is similar to the sight of the Devas (gods) it is called Dibya Chakchhu and it is very useful to gain Samyag dristi as the person can see for him/herself how those who have lived a life of bad karmas based on wrong views fall into lower realms, and those who have lived good lives with good karma based on Samyag dristi, attain the higher realms. Again, the various texts prescribe various exercises to attain this psychic power.

(To be continued)

(Sridhar Rinpoche is a Vajrayana Master)



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The tide that washed Gyanendra away washed the Maoists in. Up against **the wall**

■ Lucille Bolduc

As the police rain Lathi blows on Tibetan exiles, and the Election Commission condemns the dangerous people who run Nepal's domestic monitoring organisations, you'd think this was a country without a lot of problems. A country whose institutions can stop to smell the spring rhododendrons, taking the time to beat up some monks here, harass some civil society organisations there. You would think this was Tibet, a confidently authoritarian country, where the elite have the luxury of engaging in petty repressions they know will bring no consequences.

Two years ago another government behaved with similar arrogance. The king walked the streets of mid western towns, surrounded by conscripted schoolchildren and frightened functionaries. Weeks later his police responded with casual violence to small crowds of political party activists. Within 30 days he was gone, swept away on the blood of two dozen demonstrators murdered by security forces. And the tide that washed Gyanendra away washed the Maoists in.

Both are of the same species, the royals and the rebels. Twinned creatures, carnivorous but blind to the world, thrashing on the shores of the 21st century, left behind by political evolution but still dangerous. Both possessed of certainty, one their own divinity, the other their infallibility. Both comfortable with violence; atrocities justified as sacrifice to the greater good. Both claiming to

be the only solution to the evils of ignorance, illiteracy, and serfdom; both knowing in their hearts their survival depends on those evils thriving: free people rarely choose governments of kings or tyrants.

With the king-fish apparently at

Nepal's democrats do not know how to behave without some sort of authoritarian inspiration. Just as they lined up through the 1990s to leap into bed with the king they tried to overthrow in the first People's Movement, now the

not heresy, as is federalism, even though no one knows what it means. It's what the Maoists want, that's what matters: they are the new big men, the new kings, and kings are gods who have to be appeased.

The Maoists learned this lesson well. For two years now they have been religiously, rigidly, consistent: they have always moved in the direction of power. And the supposed democrats have given it to them, usually without a whimper; you can sometimes feel what amounts to admiration. They laid down the red carpet, even when it covered the graves of NC and UML cadres, of journalists, killed as part of a peace process that looks more like unilateral disarmament.

The Maoist labor camps continue to operate, so do their courts, administration, tax system. The PLA soldiers disqualified by UNMIN are still in cantonments that have become internationally subsidised campaign headquarters, places where often uniformed and sometimes armed cadres have a meal and a nap in between forays to terrorise the locals with threats of death and vote-reading binoculars.

Sadly that's still an important distinction, and the weak men who run the UML and NC could, possibly, in time and under the right circumstances, come to admire justice more than strength. That's a faint hope, but at least it is hope. I will choose the weakness of cowards over the strength of bullies, any day. And I hope, one day, that Nepal rejects all the creatures the tide washes in. ■



the end of its natural life-despite the claims of some that the monarchy will, like the Prime Minister, live forever-you would think those trusted to guide Nepal would be aware of the damage that dying beast did, and be reluctant to let a similar creature loose on their long-suffering people. Far from it; it is as if

Shah's are left to flip-flop in the ponds of Narayanhiti, while the Maoists dazzle Koirala and Nepal with the flash of their political scales and the gleam of their teeth.

Two years ago only the Maoists wanted Constituent Assembly elections; today every party in the country claims them essential. Republicanism is now orthodoxy,

FIREFRONT

Right after the election results, the people in the west have started looking at me as if I am about to face a calamity.

Silence in the Shangri-la

■ Yuyutsu RD Sharma



On my way to Chicago, I met a young man. "I've long wanted to visit two places in the world," said he, "One is Nepal and the other, Shangri-la."

"Yes," I laughed, "you can still dream of visiting the Shangri-la of your dreams and may even discover one, but Nepal that you are looking for has vanished and become a hidden Shangri-la." He became instantly apologetic about his lack of information on the region, and expressed his earnest concern about the current state of Nepali politics.

Right after the election results, the people in the west have started looking at me as if I am about to face a calamity. "You have no clue what you people are about to face," a professor at Knox College told me. Right before the elections, a Kathmandu-based British friend had written to me. Was he referring to Cuba? Or Venezuela? Burma? He wrote names of some such nations in crisis.

"Maybe your reading at Knox College, the place where Abraham Lincoln debated the abolition of black slavery, will be your first reading after Nepal has turned Republic," said he. The joke has turned out to a truth. I try to look for news in the North America media about the recent Maoist lead. I have not yet seen any major coverage here of the political developments in the Himalayan nation. Only Jimmy Carter has moved to Palestine to meet Hamas after a brief comment on the credibility of the Nepali elections.

In the middle of my literary tour, I am being asked vague questions about rationale behind Nepalis' decision to go republican. Is Tibet issue related to this, some ask. Is it Chinese influence? Anyone vaguely familiar with Nepali polity will dismiss these claims and questions as baseless. But I am a poet only, I tell them. Nepal, I believe, is a land of extremes, a land of extreme hardship and hunger and at the same time a land of extreme natural splendor. It's land of extreme political hunger, anger and plunder.

No wonder people would opt for an extreme political system. The pendulum seems to have swung from extreme right to the extreme left. The moderates have suffered a serious setback. Will the Maoist insurgency spread to the Indian subcontinent? Is it a reflection of emerging influence of the Chinese expansion as a superpower? Is this, as some have claimed, a wake up call for the Indian subcontinent? Or is this the world's youngest republic's first few days of silence before unprecedented turbulence? The timepiece, for sure, is ticking most menacingly.

(writer@yuyutsu.de)



■ Sabita Gyawali



This election has been a unique landmark in the history of Nepal also from the perspective of women.

While looking at the participation of women in the election, it is clear that the women of Nepal are politically conscious and are actively seeking for their rights within the political process. This increased political consciousness and political participation of women will definitely make a huge difference within the overall transformative politics in the country.

There is a level of satisfaction when one looks at the victory of women candidates. The country finally gets to see a number of new faces of women as the Member of Parliament. Many of them come from diverse background, along with some women who

Women and election

Nepali women cannot be sidelined anymore.

already have an established political image in the mainstream politics.

While looking at the emerging figures, it is clear that a majority of women representatives are from the revolutionary background. The victory of Karima Begum, a Muslim candidate has also marked a significant importance which will have a political as well as symbolic impact in overall women's empowerment process and also in the Muslim community. The women's fair representation has also been one of the major causes for Maoists getting public support this time.

Some established women leaders such as Bidya Bhandari, Chitra Lekha Yadav, Sujata Koirala, Sabitri Bogati, Asta Laxmi Shakya etc. have lost the election. On the other, some of the established male leaders such as Bamadev Gautam and Raghu Panta of UML, Arjun Nar Singh KC, Chiranjibi Wagle, Krishna Kishowar Ghimire of Nepali Congress have been defeated by women candidates.

This clearly shows that women candidates in the parliament have come through a

rigorous process and they have created a new political dynamics which will have a long term impact on politics from women's perspective. Though, the number of women candidates was not as significant as it could have been, the increase in their number is an important issue and the victory of more than 26 women (so far) is praiseworthy. Media coverage also shows that a large number of women eagerly participated in the election. This shows an increase of political awareness in Nepali women who cannot be sidelined anymore.

Maoists now have a historic opportunity to lead and change the face of the country. However, it is important for them to work together with the seven parties. In this context, women have specific responsibilities to amplify the voice of women in overall political process and also to maintain their effective leadership in the parliamentary process. Nepali women are capable of leading the political process in the country and all women need to support and encourage each other in the journey towards self emancipation.



Pic. by KAT

Stop abusing donkeys



Animal right activists hope that human beings would recognise all animals as sentient beings and treat them with love and respect they deserve.

working and are helping the community that labour in these brick factories say that the working conditions for these beasts is appalling.

"The brick factories destroy the surrounding vegetation so there is very little for the donkeys to eat. It appears that they are just forced to work until they drop. We need to educate the factory owners and workers in the care of these long suffering animals in the future. We hope that 'Asi' will become a symbol for the future wellbeing of all suffering working animals in Nepal."

KAT was founded in 2004 and carries out a programme of animal birth control and rabies vaccination amongst street dogs to reduce suffering and benefit the community. Street and community dogs are caught each day, taken to KAT Centre, treated for conditions such as worms, fleas and mange, and then sterilised and vaccinated against rabies. Once they are fully recovered they are released back where they came from. Since it began, KAT has sterilised and vaccinated over 5,400 dogs – preventing around 55,000 unwanted puppies being born.

Animal right activists hope that human beings would recognise all animals as sentient beings and treat them with love and respect they deserve. ■

■ Indra Dhoj Kshetri

The discovery of two critically abused, injured donkeys, dumped by the main roadside in the Kathmandu city has signalled a new crisis in animal welfare in Nepal. The rapid urbanisation of Kathmandu has created a booming brick factory industry in the city. Around 1,000 donkeys have recently been introduced to work in the brick kilns. They are used to transport bricks and mud and are forced to bear loads beyond their capacity.

The two donkeys were dumped by the owner on April 1 near Kushunti in Lalitpur, nearby Ring Road. One died after a few days from its injuries, starvation, overwork and exposure. The other was found to be suffering not only from a broken leg but also from multiple large open sores and serious leg wounds. The local children and community tried to help the donkeys by feeding them and covering them with plastic to protect them from rain. They showered their generosity

to save the donkeys, but did not know whom to inform for rescue and treatment.

A local, who knew about Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre (KAT) contacted them if they could help the dying creatures. As soon as KAT was informed, its team rushed to the scene. KAT Manager Khageshwar Sharma said, "Although KAT does not have facilities to house large animals, this was an extreme case of animal cruelty which we could not ignore at all." The surviving donkey has been named, 'Asi' and is still under treatment and care at the centre.

Dr. Dar, a veterinarian from Israel, who is currently in Kathmandu said, "I have never seen such a case of abuse in my life. It seems to be that this mule underwent multiple severe prolonged abuses in the past, since there is an old untreated fracture on her fore left limb that caused a twisting of that leg. The poor body condition indicates severe starvation and malnutrition. Poor hoofs and atrophy of the hind

legs are also present. In spite of all the lesions, somehow this stoic jenny (female mule) could maintain and manage to stay alive up to the point of the recent rescue. A severe open on her fore right limb probably was the one that finally became too much for her."

KAT resident vet Dr Kiran Pandey added, "The fact that she was neglected while on the ground and could not move herself created further severe pressure sores all over her body side and dehydration. This supports the assumption that this animal was subjected to a severe abuse and heartless cruelty for a long period of time."

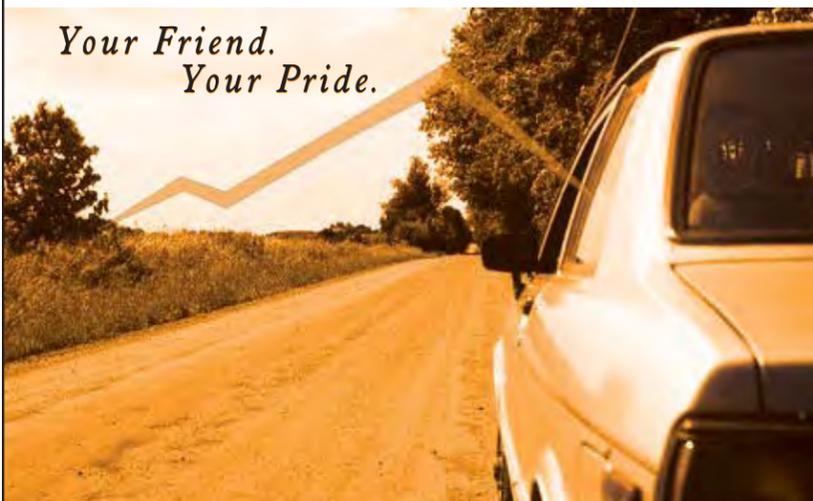
KAT Founder Jan Salter said, "I despair at this new development. We have done important work mainly with the stray dogs in the Kathmandu Ring Road area and are just starting to see the results with much healthier animals on the streets. Now we have another new crisis to face. Information gathered from the local NGO in the area who are

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