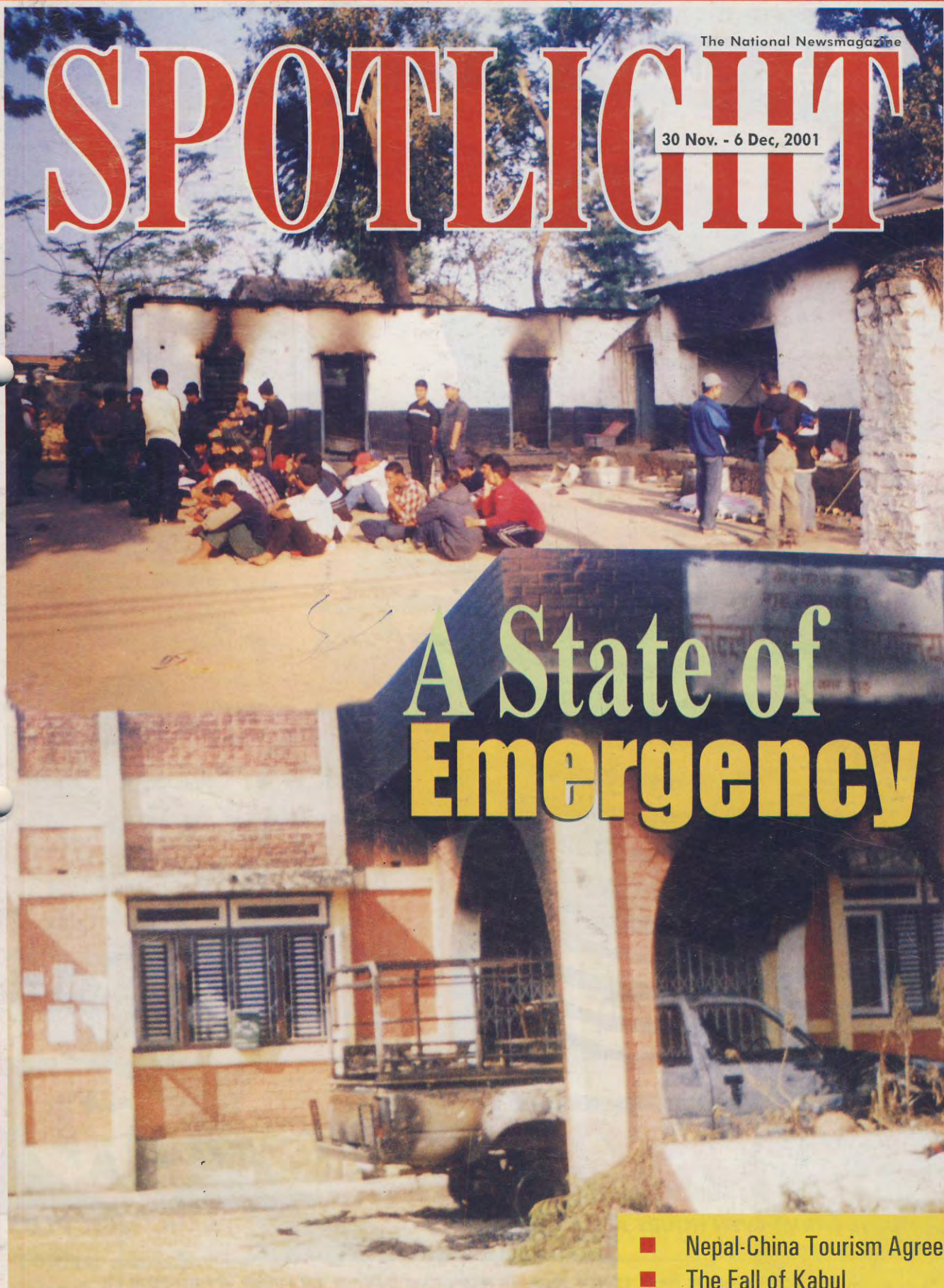


The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

30 Nov. - 6 Dec, 2001



A State of Emergency

- Nepal-China Tourism Agreement
- The Fall of Kabul
- Profile: Father Donnelly

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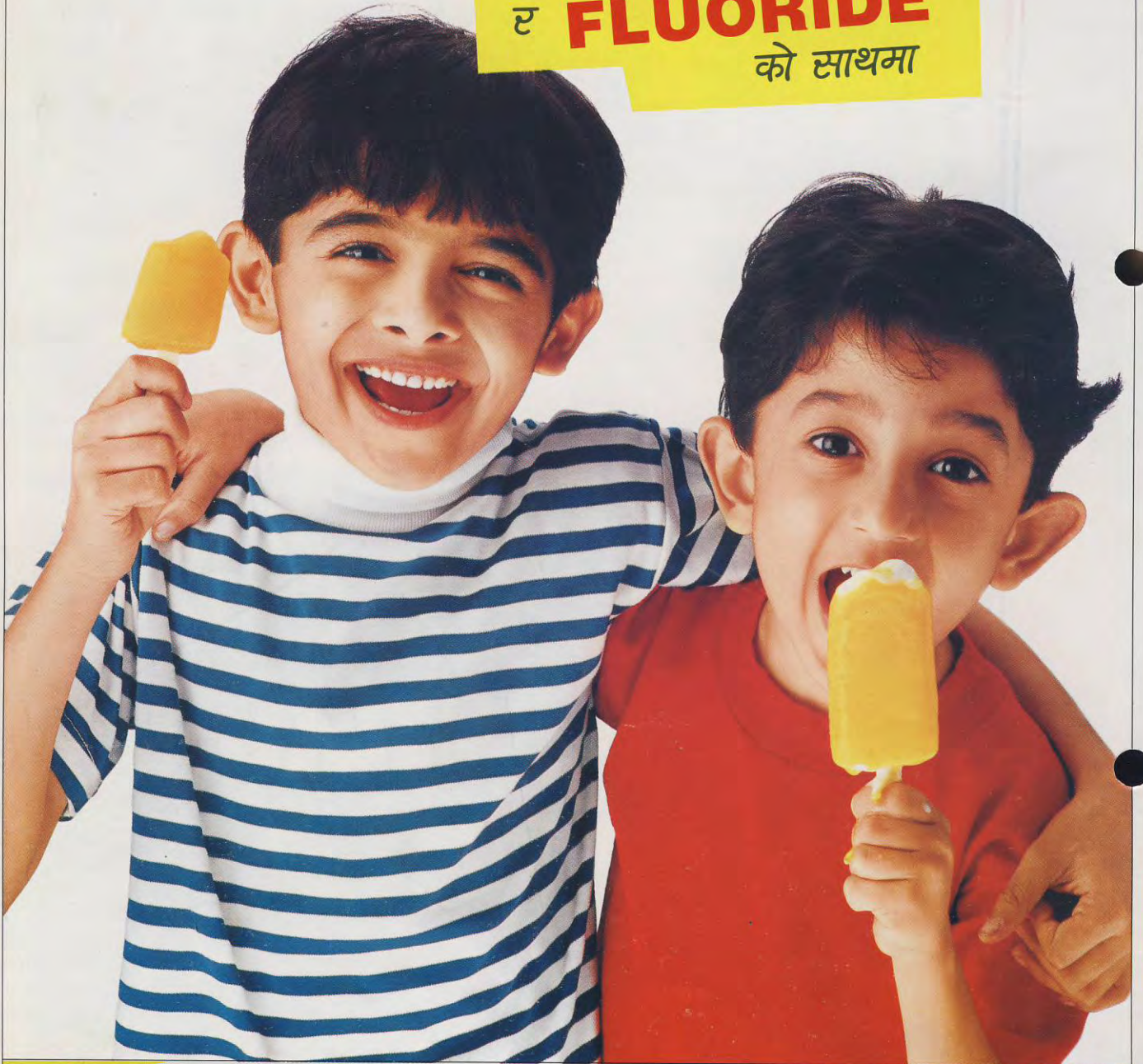
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CONTENTS

	Page
News Notes	4
Briefs	6
Quote Unquote	7
Off The Record	8
FAMILY PLANNING : Indonesian Experience	10
TOURISM : Nepal-China Agreement	11
LOCAL GOVERNANCE :Municipal March	12
HEALTH : Pharmaceutical Potency	13
CYCBER SECURITY : Are We Safe Enough?	14
AFGHAN CRISIS : The Home Front	21
PROFILE : Preacher Of Education	24
Little Literatures	26
THE BOTTOMLINE	27
VIEW POINT : Bikesh Shrestha	28
PASTIME	29
LEISURE	30
ENCOUNTER : Asko Luukkainen	32



COVER STORY :A State of Emergency

With a view to contain growing Maoist violence, the government declares a state of emergency all over the country. As the Maoists break the truce unilaterally and unleash terror, the government says it had no other options available than to use force to contain the violence.

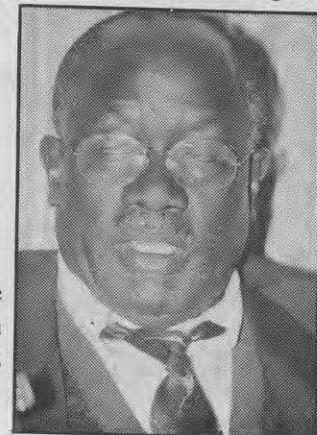
Page 16



Nepal-China Tourism Agreement

Nepal China sign a Memorandum of Understanding to allow more Chinese tourists to visit Nepal

Page 9



INTERVIEW: J. Bill Musoke

UNFPA's representative Musoke highlights the role of UNFPA in Nepal

Page 22

SPOTLIGHT

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EDITOR'S NOTE

That the country has become embroiled in a civil war is, indeed, very unfortunate. This terrible situation could have been avoided had our humble advice been heeded. The unforgivable complacency on the part of the establishment and security forces has, to a great extent, helped such a sorry episode to happen. This has only substantiated, once again, how miserably unqualified are they who bear the burden of ruling the country. What an irony of fate that it is again Sher Bahadur Deuba who has made another record 'the first ever promulgation of Emergency in the country.' Poor Deuba thinks he has been betrayed. He, perhaps, cannot realize that he has been treated like a child and taken for a drive by the Maoists. Naturally, we are always blind to our own blemishes. Be that as it may, if he has any semblance of integrity and love of the country, he must give in to some one who is better equipped to tackle the volatile situation and avoid unnecessary losses of precious human lives and properties of a poor nation like ours. It is an extraordinary situation and for the nation to get over such a cataclysm without greater damage we need leadership with imagination and strength of character. The present leadership has proved its imbecility and it is not a time to nourish personal and partisan interest. We are facing a national calamity and we must all unite, sinking all differences, to fight it tooth and nail. And this urgently calls for a national government. We know, it will be a cry in the wilderness, because it is not for the first time we have made such a call. We had definite prognostications of such a situation and had, time and again, exhorted the King to act. May be, King Gyanendra is destined to come to the rescue of the nation and the people. And he cannot afford to procrastinate.

It is, indeed, very gratifying to see that Nepal's friends are really getting concerned at the turn of events here and have called upon the Maoists to give up their violent activities and return to search for a negotiated outcome. Even though it might not be opportune, at this juncture, to humbly ask them to delve into the causes that have brought forth such a disastrous situation, the poor people of this wretched country would really feel ingratiated if they could believe that the anxiety shown by Nepal's friends is not hypocritical and what they are shedding are not crocodile tears. For about a decade the poor country was virtually subjected to loot and except a handful of crooks the poor people did not profit. But our foreign friends could only advise their poor friends to have patience as democracy was a lengthy process and it was the only panacea for all ills of the poor and developing nations. If Nepal's friends and donors are genuinely concerned for Nepal's poor people and want their cooperation to become more productive, they not only have to reshape and reorient their aid policies but also twist the arms of the recipient governments for better governance of their respective projects. It needs no emphasis that these powerful friends can have a big sway in the functioning of the governments of the poor third world countries. Since the pressing problem in our country, at the moment, is to restore peace and normalcy, Nepal's traditional and non-traditional friends have to quit rhetorics and come out with total sincerity to help her in her fight with terrorism. The Maoists too must give second thoughts and quit their suicidal activities, which will only contribute to destroy our poor economy. We Nepalese as a whole should never overlook the plain and obvious fact that such fratricide will only further the evil interests of those who do not want to see Nepal develop and prosper.



Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher

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'SAARC Summit To Take Place On Time'

Amid fears that the upcoming 11th summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) could be postponed because of terrorist threats, secretary-general of the seven-member body, Nihal Rodrigo, has said meeting will be held as scheduled. Talking to reporters at the Reporters'

Club here Thursday, Mr. Rodrigo said the reports of terrorist threats were blown out of proportion and expressed confidence that the



SAARC Secretary General Nihal Rodrigo

Nepalese government would take all necessary measures to ensure security during the summit due to take place in early January next year. The secretary-general said the SAARC heads of states or governments were expected to sign a convention to protect the rights of children and a convention against trafficking of women and children from and within SAARC countries. The leaders were also expected to follow up earlier decisions on the summit on poverty alleviation, food security and the fight against terrorism. He said a new deadline is likely to be set for the creation of a South Asian Free Trade Agreement during the summit. *Compiled from reports Nov. 23*

Nepal-India Treaty To Be Renewed

Outgoing Indian ambassador to Nepal, Deb Mukharji, said that the Nepal-India trade treaty, which is to expire on December 5, would be renewed as per schedule. Talking to reporters here Thursday, the Indian envoy expressed hope that the two neighbors would be able to overcome their differences on certain provisions in their bilateral trade treaty. Mr. Mukharji said India wanted value addition on "third country goods that enter India from Nepal"

and export "surge" of five items of acrylic yarn, zinc oxide, copper wire, steel pipes and vegetable ghee. Referring to Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh's statement in August, the ambassador said India did not intend to alter the basic structure of the treaty, but admitted that it had some genuine grievances about certain clauses. Ambassador Mukharji also confirmed that Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee would attend the 11th SAARC summit due to be held in the Nepalese capital early next year despite alleged terrorist threats. Space Time, a Nepali daily, had reported Thursday that four heads of states of those of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka faced terrorist threats during the summit. *Leading dailies report Nov. 23*

US May List Maoists As Terrorists

The United States is likely to declare Nepalese Maoists as a terrorist organization, a tabloid newspaper said Friday. According to a journal published by the US Information Agency, as the US government has already declared The Shining Path, a Maoist organization in Peru, as a terrorist organization, its affiliate in Nepal, the CPN (Maoist) is also likely to be enlisted in the list. Both organizations are considered leading members of

the Revolutionary International Movement. A pro-Maoist intellectual, Govinda Neupane, said the US policy could have direct bearing on the Nepalese Maoists. Both the United States and India could pressure Nepal to suppress the Maoists movement militarily, he said. *Naya Sadak Nov. 23*

UN Convention Against Child Soldiers

An international treaty on banning the use of child soldiers is going to come into effect from February 12, UN officials said. Ten countries have ratified the treaty, New Zealand being the latest one. Eighty-seven countries including Nepal have signed on the protocol to the treaty. In May 2000, the UN General Assembly had adopted a resolution to prohibit the participation of children under the age of 18 in armed conflicts and their forced recruitment or conscription. According to the UN, an estimated 300,000 child soldiers are currently fighting in armed conflicts in nearly 40 countries. International human rights groups, including Amnesty International, have accused Nepalese Maoists of using children as soldiers in their guerrilla force. *Compiled from reports Nov. 23*

Maoists Form 'PLA,' Declare Ad Hoc 'People's Govt.'

The chairman of the Maoist party, Comrade Prachanda, has declared that the underground party has formed a "People's Liberation Army (PLA)" with himself as supreme commander. In a provocative statement issued Saturday, he also called upon security personnel to rebel and join the PLA. "We will take care of all the needs of those personnel and guarantee their jobs," he said. Comrade Prachanda alias Pushpa Kamal Dahal also took responsibility for the attacks in different parts of the country on Friday night. Alleging that peace talks did not lead to any political way out, Prachanda claimed that his party was "still in favor of seeking a forward looking political outlet through peaceful dialogue." Meanwhile, the underground party has declared a central level 37-member "people's government" with senior Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai as its convenor. Named as "Joint Revolutionary People's Council Nepal (JRPCN), central ad-hoc committee," the government has Krishna Bahadur Mahara as co-convenor and Dev Gurung as secretary. The underground party has already formed district level "people's governments" in over two dozen districts in the country. The recent national council meeting of the JRPCN has also called "Nepal Bandh" a nationwide shutdown strike on Friday, December 7, a statement issued by Dr. Bhattarai Friday said. *Compiled from reports Nov. 25*

'Maoists Are Anti-National Force': Defense Ministry

Referring to well-coordinated Maoist attacks in different districts Friday, the Defense Ministry has said for the first time in six years that the group's activities have made it clear that they are out to erode national sovereignty and democracy attained through the sacrifices made by the people, and (want to) impose an autocratic regime at gunpoint. A day after the Maoists launched deadly coordinated attacks, the Defense Ministry said all security agencies have taken the assaults "very seriously" and are determined to counter in a more organized and effective manner any untoward Maoist activity in future. In a statement issued Saturday, the ministry said as the insurrectionary attacks by the Maoists have jeopardized the country's law-and-order and security situation, all security agencies, including the Royal Nepalese

Army, are determined to fulfill their duties. The ministry also blamed the rebels of suddenly breaking the cease-fire unilaterally and taking up weapons against the wishes of the people "despite utmost

flexibility demonstrated by the government to solve the problem through talks". *Leading dailies report Nov. 25*

Army To Launch 'Cordon, Search And Sweep Operation'

After police and army personnel failed to defend themselves in the latest assaults by the Maoist rebels, the Royal Nepalese Army is preparing well-planned counter-insurgency operations against the guerrillas, a news report in a leading weekly said Sunday, quoting sources. According to the report, after hours-long deliberations on Saturday, the army top brass has demanded that the government declare emergency in the Maoist affected areas and delegate it necessary authorities. After that, the army will immediately launch what is called, 'cordon and search' and 'sweep' operations. The army sources said if swung into action immediately, the army could still recover

the arms seized by the rebels from Dang and 'disintegrate' their force. "Any delay would pose great risks to the government," the source said. The rebels have looted arms and weapons, including 303 rifles, SLRs, LMGs, machine guns, mortar launchers and other sophisticated equipment. The rebels took away three truckloads of weapons to the nearby northern districts of Rolpa and Salyan, the report said. A total of 237 soldiers were supposed to be stationed at the Bhagvati Prasad Company of the army. *Deshanter Nov. 25*

Number Of Nepali Students Doubles In The US

The number of Nepali students studying in the United States has more than doubled in the last three years, authorities said. According to the American Universities Admission Program (AUAP), the number of Nepali students enrolled in various campuses and universities in the US for the year 2000/2001 has reached 2,618, up from 1,214 in 1997. The AUAP cited the improved economic and academic status of the country for the rising enrolment in the US from the Himalayan kingdom. Nearly 548,000 students from all over the world, 55 percent of them from Asia, are enrolled in the US for the year 2000/01, the AUAP said. Foreign students poured US\$ 11 billion into the US economy in tuition fees, living expenses, and

related costs during the academic year 2000/01. *Compiled from reports Nov. 20*

VAT Enters Fifth Year

The number of taxpayers registered under the Value Added Tax (VAT) has reached 22,000 over the last four years, officials said. According to the Department of Inland Revenue (DIR), the government collected Rs 11.85 billion in the year 2000-2001. Introduced four years ago amid strong protests from the business community, the VAT has emerged as one of the important sources of tax revenue in the country. Addressing a function organized by the DIR to mark the fifth anniversary of the new tax, experts said political instability and lack of awareness among the consumers were mainly responsible for poor implementation of the tax. Reports said up to 90 percent consumers don't ask for a receipt after purchasing goods and services. *Compiled from reports Nov. 20*

India On High Alert

As waves of Maoist attacks shatter a tentative truce in Nepal, prospects of another armed revolution in the next-door Himalayan kingdom has put India on a heightened state of alert, a leading Indian daily reported. Recent Maoist attacks in Nepal killing nearly 50 security personnel opens up another front of instability for India, the news report said. While the (Indian) government denies stoutly any presence of Maoist training camps in India, there is no doubt that the Maoists retain intimate contacts with the PWG (People's War Group) and the MCC (Maoist Coordination Center). What impact the current developments in Nepal might have on the forthcoming SAARC summit is difficult to say, but if the conflict continues in Nepal, the summit may well become a casualty, which would put paid to hopes for an Indo-Pak summit. India has already con-

demned the Maoists as being terrorists, and according to sources, even shared intelligence with Nepal's security forces, the report said. *The Economic Times Nov. 25* ■

Foreign Aid Commitment

Nepal has gone up by fourfold in the first four months of the current fiscal year 2001-02, officials said. According to Foreign Aid Coordination Division at the Ministry of Finance, foreign aid commitment by different donors to Nepal reached equivalent to Rs 15.37 billion, up from only Rs 4.3 billion over the same period last year, Kantipur daily reported. Of the total foreign aid, the grant component was equivalent to Rs 12.69 billion and that of loan worth Rs 1.7 billion. In terms of projects, Melamchi Water Supply Project attracted the biggest amount worth Rs 5.53 billion. Similarly, Reduced Fertility and Protected Health Project received grant assistance worth Rs 4.48 billion whereas the Banepa-Sindhuli road project received grant assistance from the Japanese government worth Rs 2.05 billion. The United States was the largest donor by extending Rs 5.9 billion for three projects. ■

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King Gyanendra offering Puja at the Ram Janaki Temple in Janakpur.

BHUTANESE REFUGEE LEADERS HAVE STARTED preparations to launch a joint agitation, reports said. Chairman of the Bhutanese Refugees Repatriation Committee (BRRC), S.B. Subba, said the Bhutanese leaders recently met their senior leader, Tek Nath Rizal, who is currently in Bhutan, secretly and have urged him to lead the movement. "There is no option left for us other than to internationalize the issue," Subba said. As agreed during the tenth joint ministerial level meeting, a joint verification team has started verifying the nationality of refugees in one of the seven refugee camps in eastern Nepal from early this year. Refugee leaders say it will take several years for the verification process to be completed at the present pace.

THE GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY WILL CONTINUE to extend technical and financial assistance to Nepal by keeping it in its list of priority countries for assistance, reports said. During a meeting between Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat and Norwegian Minister for International Development H F Johnson in Oslo Tuesday, it was informed that Nepal was still one of the seven countries in the priority list. During the meeting, Minister Mahat requested the Norwegian government to extend both private and government cooperation on areas including infrastructure, rural electrification and rural telecommunications. Minister Johnson said the Norwegian government was interested to support education sector in Nepal as part of their strategic program to reduce poverty in Nepal.

A DUTCH CONSULTANCY HAS COMPLETED THE third phase of the feasibility study of the Mahakali Irrigation Project, a leading daily reported Thursday. As per the project, mooted under the Integrated Mahakali Treaty concluded between Nepal and India in 1996, some 34,000 hectares of land in far-western districts of Kailali and Kanchanpur. As per the feasibility report, it would take 20 years for the completion of the project at an estimated investment of worth Rs. 11.16 billion rupees. Under the Mahakali treaty, Nepal will get 1,000 cusec of water for irrigation, a news report in Kantipur daily said.

THE EXPORT OF READYMADE APPARELS FROM Nepal has plunged drastically in the first 10 months of 2001,

entrepreneurs said. According to Garment Association of Nepal (GAN), export to the United States, the single largest buyer of the Nepali garment products, went down by almost 12 per cent compared to the same period last year. Nepal exported garments worth US\$ 120.96 million during this period compared to US\$ 136.8 million over the same period. The association claimed that nearly 75 per cent of the garment industries have been closed down and rest are running at less than 50 percent capacity. The recent labor agitation back home and slowdown in the American economy have been termed as major reasons for slump in the exports of Nepalese garment products.

ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL CHILD Rights Day, the Nepalese government decided to make arrangement for all juveniles now living in different prisons in the country. Inaugurating a cycle rally in the capital Tuesday, Minister of State for Home Devendra Raj Kandel said the government had decided to hand over those juveniles who were in prison by default as their parents were in jail to Nepal Children's Organization. There are around 64 such children presently across the country, officials said.

THE PROPOSAL TO REPAIR AND MAINTAIN NEARLY 30 km sections of road in the capital ahead of the SAARC summit has been delayed due to lack of funds. The Ministry of Works and Physical Planning has estimated the job to be completed at around Rs 70 million but the money is yet to be allocated by government agencies, Himalaya Times daily reported. Meanwhile, officials are trying to hand over the job to competent private companies through the state-owned National Construction Company of Nepal (NCCN). "We are still hopeful to complete the job in time," said Dr. Hare Krishna Bhagat, chief of the Division Road Office at Min Bhawan. The SAARC summit is to convene in the capital in the first week of January.

NONE OTHER THAN SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF Representatives Taranath Ranabhat has said the present parliament should be dissolved and mid-term poll should be announced. Addressing an interaction program in the capital (on Nov. 21), Mr. Ranabhat said the solution to the Maoist insurgency should be sought through talks. "The best way for this is dissolution of the present parliament and holding elections in a free and fair way." Mr. Ranabhat further said the Maoists should hand over their arms to the state and join political competition by enrolling at the Election Commission.

CHIEF OF THE ROYAL NEPALESE ARMY, GENERAL Prajwolla Shumsher JB Rana, cut short his visit to Germany and returned home Sunday (Nov. 25), reports said. General Rana had left for Germany on a 10-day visit Friday. After attending a high-level meeting at the Army headquarters upon his return, General Rana also attended the extended cabinet meeting at Singha Durbar late Sunday. Inspector General of Police Pradip Shumsher JB Rana has been admitted at Norvic Hospital after he fell indisposed Sunday. He was rushed to the hospital from the Airport in Kathmandu where he was supposed to accompany Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka during his tour to Dang and Syangja districts. ■

“I will be ahead in terms of collections. It must be realized that the film too must be good.”

Bhuwan K C, a famous Nepali actor, in the Business Age.

“I was frail before; now that I have got your mandate and I will be stronger”
Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba after receiving the consent by the Central Working Committee of Nepali Congress in Jan Bhanwana

Why didn't you (looking at PM Deuba) take this crisis to the King? How come the King had to ask about the current crisis?”

Girija Parsad Koirala speaking in Jan Bhanwana replying to the queries raised by the media.

“The problems Maoists are causing are to be dealt with the barrel of the gun. What have human rights, democracy, laws and the rights of common people if you are standing in front of a gun barrel ?”

Ex-Chief Justice, Mohan Parsad Sharma speaking to JanaAsta weekly.

“The parliament and voices of all the parties agreed in passing this act. So, when the parliamentarians and the parliament agreed on it there is no question of disapproval of the bill.”

Minster of Education Amod Prasad Upadhaya in Deshanter on how the act of providing free education since the 2058 taking money from 6 grade on-

wards.

“A HIV patient doesn't grow horns on his head and tails on his back. I am the first Nepali to come out in the open saying that I am HIV positive.”

29 Year- old, Rajiv Kafle - in the Space Time Dainik

“The incidents in Dang have the whole nation in a dilemma and all the security tentacles of the government will be used to contain the present crisis in the nation.”

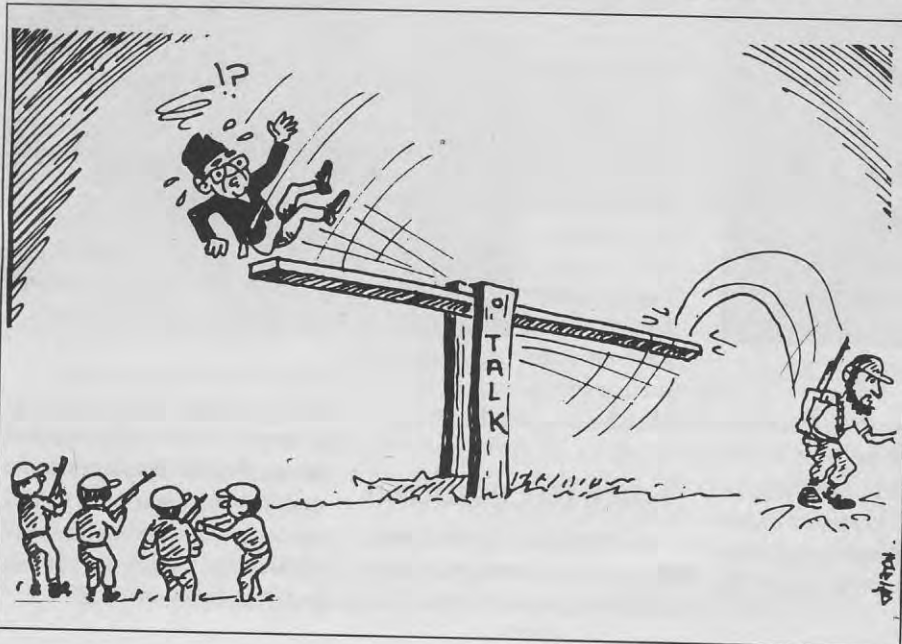
Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khadhka, speaking to media persons on the aftermath of the Maoists attacks in Dang, Kantipur daily.

“We will certainly find the solution to the on going feud in the national Soccer team.”

N. P. Saud, Minister of State for Education and Sports, speaking to media persons- in Kantipur.



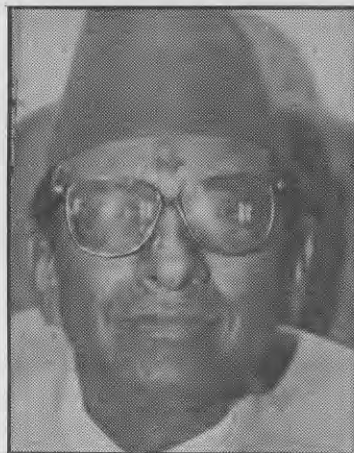
Jana Zaha



Deshamur

Mercurial Leader

House of Representatives Speaker Taranath Ranabhat



Ranabhat : What is next?

has maintained a consistent record of behavioral inconsistency. When the Nepali Congress formed the first government in 1991 after the restoration of multiparty democracy, Ranabhat sided with former prime minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and led the Group of

36 dissidents. During the second parliament, when he lost the election, Ranabhat sided with party president Girija Prasad Koirala. In the third House of Representatives, Ranabhat was elected speaker

but he came full circle. When Koirala was prime minister, Ranabhat did little

to ease the troubles of the premier. After Koirala's ouster, Ranabhat has sided with Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. However, Deuba must be wondering how long it would be safe to count on Ranabhat.

Time And Trouble

Some people have developed their own culture when it comes to working. Whatever the situation, they do not care about how their actions may affect others. Perhaps this is why even senior officials aren't bothered about time. Tribhuvan Interna-

tional Airport is one place where you can see senior officials and junior employees acting in strange ways. Whether this is coincidental or intentional, officials appear every time several flights land in close succession. From customs officials to immigration

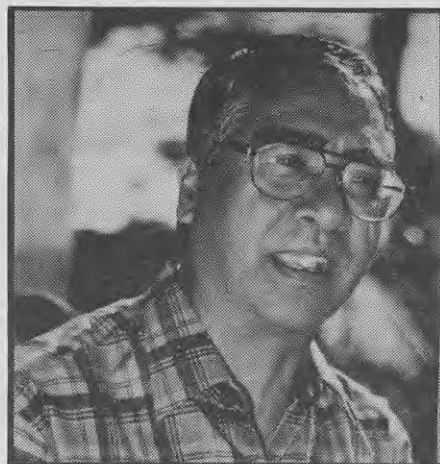


Gautam: Man of hunch

personnel and from loaders to sweepers, all the people start working. For the arriving passengers, this creates trouble. Can't these people spread out their work evenly over the day?

Emotional Discipline

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur



Deuba: 'I am a lion'

Deuba is admired for his patience and courage, but there are times when he loses both. When Deuba was coming out of the Nepali Congress Central Committee meeting this week, he was without both patience and courage. Replying queries from journo-

s, Deuba roared that he was as fierce as a lion in keeping with his name. Deuba knows all the rules of playing with ice and fire. If a lion loses his temper, what will happen to the jungle? Let's hope Deuba has the wisdom of remaining cool when he needs it the most.

Voice Recognition

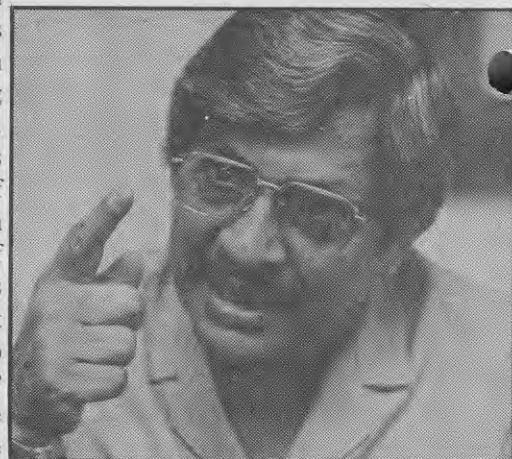
Communist leaders, too, are sources of strange actions. CPN-ML leader Bam Dev

Gautam seems to have mastered the art of recognizing voices on the telephone. When some Maoist leader phoned Gautam without introducing

himself recently, the former deputy prime minister declared that he could tell that the caller was not Comrade Prachanda. Helpful? Gautam's skill might be, it didn't help those who wanted to know who the caller was.

Mum's The Word

Former foreign minister Chakra Prasad Bastola is maintaining a Sphinx-like silence these days. After the Nepali Congress Central Committee meeting this week, Bastola,



Bastola: Mum

who used to be friendly to journo, deliberately avoided them. Bastola seems to have understood that silence has its value, but does he believe reporters can easily forget his previous cordiality? ■

FAMILY PLANNING

Indonesian Experience

Indonesia shows how a well-organized community-based family program can offer an enduring model for managing population growth

By KESHAB POUDEL in Indonesia

At a time when countries like Nepal have been struggling to control their burgeoning population growth rates, Indonesia has recorded successes by experimenting with a novel model. After the implementation of a community-based family planning program, Indonesia has been able to reduce its population growth rate from more than 2.87 percent to 1.6 percent.

Nepal and Indonesia began their family planning programs almost at the same time. But Nepal's population continues to expand at the rate of over 2 percent whereas Indonesia has been able to reduce the growth rate dramatically through a vigorous approach of community mobilization.

Although the country was under a semi-authoritarian political system for nearly three decades, Indonesia achieved some important targets in terms of economic and social development. One of the major achievements of the Suharto regime, which was overthrown

by popular uprising in 1997, was in controlling population growth through a robust program of community mobilization.

Under a program designed by the National Family Planning Coordination Board (BKKBN), the Indonesian government executed effective reproductive health and family planning programs through widespread community participation. The role of males in the process is very insignificant. It is the women who

have led the drive.

During an observation study tour of a community-based national family planning/reproductive health program under a decentralized approach, an 11-member Nepalese delegation took a close look at Indonesia's participatory approach.

Community mobilization and decentralization are not new concepts for Nepalis. The kingdom has already experimented a successful forest management program through community participation. The introduction of a decentralized approach to development is in the imple-



Women and children : For quality family

mentation stage.

Indonesian officials emphasize that success did not come overnight. "Our achievement in the field of community-based national family planning is not a work of a few years. It has been introduced through vigorous attempts," said Dr. Jasi Kamil, international training program coordinator. As Nepal's population continues to expand, it urgently needs a community-based approach in the area of

reproductive health. When a Muslim nation with strong values against family planning can achieve such successes, there is no reason why Nepalese society, which is more receptive to population management issues, cannot expect a similar approach to bear results.

Indonesia has many advantages, as the literacy rate is high and the participation of women in the area of family affairs is massive. Although Indonesian society remains male-dominated, like much of the Muslim world, the voices of women are fully respected. This is the reason why a large number of women have the choice of using contraceptives and adopting other family planning methods.

Over the last five decades, Nepal has developed a sturdy infrastructure from the ward to central level and trained a large number of health workers. But the problem is lack of political commitment to family planning and population issues. Indonesia's success in managing its population rests on strong political commitment.

Active community participation has allowed Indonesia to maintain well-recorded data for everything from marriages to the growth stages of children. Family planning has become an integral part of the social and religious system and has instilled in Indonesians deep appreciation for the value of a small family.

Sponsored by UNFPA Nepal's country office, the observation and training

tour provided a major opportunity for Nepalese participants to familiarize themselves with what is by all standards a highly effective approach to family planning. The program was based on seminars as well as observation tours of Yogyakarta Special Territory and Bali, which allowed the participants to understand the underpinnings of the model and to observe how community-based family planning and reproductive health programs can bring results. ■

PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY Constitutional Safeguard

At the recommendation of the council of ministers, King Gyanendra declares a state of emergency

By KESHAB POUDEL

For the first time in the 12 years since the restoration of democracy, Nepalis are experiencing restrictions on their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Following a fresh wave of violent attacks unleashed by the Maoists, which resulted in the indiscriminate killing of innocent people and the massive destruction of property, the government was compelled to take recourse to the emergency provisions contained in the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990.

"We have been compelled to recommend the [declaration of] emergency as Maoist terrorists attacked public offices and killed security personnel indiscriminately in different parts of the country," said Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba in an address to the nation on Tuesday evening.

"I tried my best to solve the problem through peaceful negotiations, but the Maoists broke the peace process and went on killing spree."

On the advice and consent of the council of ministers on being satisfied as to the existence of a grave emergency threatening the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security of the country arising out of the armed rebellion as posed by Maoist insurgents, in exercise of the power conferred by Article 115 (1) of the constitution, King Gyanendra declared a state of emergency effective from November 26.

To deal with the emergency, the king also suspended Articles 12(2a) b, c and d and 13.1, 15 and 16, 17, 22 and 23 of the constitution. These are the clauses

meeting, such proclamation or order shall continue in force for a period of six months from the date of issuance.

"The government has every right to exercise the constitutional provision to safeguard the interest of the people and sovereignty of the country at a time of armed rebellion," said Supreme Court Justice Laxman Prasad Aryal.



Prime minister Deuba : Tough decision

through which citizens can get remedy.

Although the situation following the state of emergency is going to be normal for the common people, the suspension of these articles would allow ordinary laws to temporarily regulate constitutionally guaranteed rights.

The proclamation can remain in effect for up to three months even without parliamentary approval.

It can be extended for another six months if the proclamation is approved by a two-thirds majority of the members present in the Lower House. According to Article 115(2) every proclamation or order issued under clause (1) shall be laid before a meeting of the House of Representatives for approval within three months from the date of issuance.

If a proclamation or order laid for approval pursuant to clause (2) is approved by a two-thirds majority of the House of Representatives present meeting at the

"The emergency clauses have been included in the constitution to protect the country and the constitution from armed rebellion," said Justice Aryal, who was a member of the panel that drafted the constitution.

A state of emergency is declared during extraordinary situations and has serious implications on the fundamental rights citizens enjoy during normal times. Citizens shall be deprived of these fundamental rights for the duration of the proclamation. No citizen can go to the Supreme Court to seek remedy for the protection of fundamental rights suspended by the order.

The suspension of Article 12(2) a, b, c, d would affect the civil liberties Nepalis have become accustomed to since the political changes of 1990.

This article guarantees the freedom of opinion and expression, freedom to assemble peacefully and without arms,

freedom to form unions and associations, freedom to move throughout the kingdom and reside in any part thereof.

His Majesty also promulgated an ordinance making all terrorist and disruptive activities illegal and punishable.

Through this ordinance, the government has filled the vacuum created by the non-existence of anti-terrorist laws in Nepal.

The ordinance has also sought to provide some relaxation in the exercise of rights of freedom of speech and expression and other rights suspended by the proclamation of emergency. Only those activities that support and incite violence and terrorism are to be restricted.

Under the order, the press and publication right is also suspended. According to Article 13(1), no news item, article or other reading material shall be censored but the article gives some rights to impose reasonable restrictions on any act which may undermine the sovereignty and integrity of the kingdom, or which may jeopardize national harmony.

The order also suspends Article 15, which relates to the right against preventive detention and the right to information.

"The government has rightly taken the constitutional decision to quell terrorism. The government has every right to order the emergency and impose restrictions on certain fundamental rights," said senior advocate Mukunda Regmi, who was also on the panel that drew up the constitution.

"Of course, people will have to lose their rights and freedom for a certain period."

As the king has ordered the emergency by activating the constitutional provisions, it will last for three months without any challenge. For their part, the people would have to sacrifice their freedoms.

The country can only hope this trade-off would bring peace and stability that is vital for democratic growth and economic progress. ■

NEPAL-CHINA TOURISM ACCORD

Economic Lifeline

The agreement between Nepal and China allowing Chinese tourists to visit the kingdom has encouraged tourism entrepreneurs

By A CORRESPONDENT

Following the resurgence of Maoist violence, the uncertainty gripping the Himalayan kingdom has turned more ominous. On the tourism front, the situation has gone from bad to worse, as a large number of western and Indian tourists have either cancelled or postponed their travel plans. At a time when the backbone of the economy is gasping for its very survival, a 20-member Chinese delegation led by Tourism Minister Hu Quanbai arrived in Kathmandu and signed a formal agreement, injecting new hope in the industry.

Although China placed Nepal as one of 19 foreign destinations for Chinese visitors last year, this week's agreement has formalized the mechanism for the inflow of tourists from the northern neighbor. Nepal is the only country in South Asia Chinese tourists are allowed to visit. While other countries, including Nepal's close southern neighbor, India, are discouraging their citizens from visiting the kingdom, Beijing has extended a welcome gesture of goodwill to Kathmandu.

After the signing of the formal agreement, Chinese tourists will be allowed to visit Nepal in groups of at least five. China, which has long supported Nepal's efforts to become economically independent, has again come to the kingdom's aid at a time of crisis. This agreement would go on to strengthen Nepal's overall economy by reviving the vital tourism sector.

"Nepal and China need to change many things before the agreement's objectives can materialize. This agreement will help boost economic ties between the two countries," said Chinese Tourism Minister Hu. "The agreement has paved the way for other arrangements, including the exchange of Chinese currency, aviation service and other entry points."

Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation Bal Bahadur K.C was equally upbeat. "We hope Nepal will receive continual support from China to in coming days to achieve the objectives of the agreement," he said.

According to official figures, Chinese visitors make up 1.27 percent of the total tourist arrivals in Nepal. Some 5,000 Chinese visited Nepal last year. With a formal agreement now in place, tourism entrepreneurs believe annual arrivals from China could go up to 50,000. "The agreement has boosted our confidence as Nepal's tourism sector has got another big market," said a leading tourism entrepreneur. ■

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Other SAARC Countries	US \$ 100.00	US \$ 150.00	Hong Kong/Taiwan	US \$ 150.00	US \$ 200.00
Japan	US \$ 150.00	US \$ 250.00	Australia/New Zealand	US \$ 150.00	US \$ 200.00
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LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Municipal March

The umbrella body of Nepalese municipalities fosters discussions on local development

By AKSHAY SHARMA

Democratic governance in Nepal is underpinned by the national commitment to empower people at the lowest rungs of society both politically and economically. Despite the existence of institutional mechanisms to promote local governance, Nepal's record in encouraging local communities to become the driving force of development has much room for improvement.

tion in Dhulikhel jointly with the New Delhi-based Urban Management Programme. Representatives from 21 municipalities of the country, the Ministry of Local Development, national and international non-governmental organizations, and the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries participated in the discussions.

MUAN held a consultative workshop on the Local Self-Governance Act 1999 on August 9-10 at Nagarkot to gather



People participation : Human resource is the key

The experiences and challenges faced by municipalities in Nepal in the process of promoting local governance and community participation came up for discussion at two recent workshops organized by the Municipal Association of Nepal (MUAN).

In May, MUAN organized a workshop on Municipal Resource Mobiliza-

input from stakeholders on the major issues and difficulties faced by the municipalities while implementing the SGA and regulations. The consultation process is expected to shed light on important issues needed to be addressed by the central government and the municipalities reinforcing their partnership. These consultations are also expected to enable MUAN

to evolve a comprehensive strategy to influence policies, laws, rules and regulations at the central level.

MUAN and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) have established a strategic partnership for municipal development in Nepal. The process includes facilitation of decentralization, good governance and inter-governmental relations, among other things.

"The FMC stresses governance systems by fostering local ownership and delivering development results that have an impact at both the local and the nation levels," said Subani Thapa, highlighting the activities of the organization. "The program has been taking a collaborative approach to international municipal development. Its program has been taking a collaborative approach to international municipal development. Therefore, its programming and policy involve a range of local, international and Canadian partners."

MUAN was formed about four years ago to unify the municipalities of the country and to make them constantly active for their own development. The organization works towards attaining its objectives by promoting coordination and understanding as well as attaining functional unity among municipalities, including the sharing of experiences for all-round development of urban residents. MUAN has been working to enhance the rights of municipalities in maximizing the involvement of the urban population in their development work and in self-governance through decentralization. It is also actively engaged in providing physical infrastructure and services and facilities at the local level.

Over the years, MUAN's projects have focused on such areas as the country framework for infrastructure development, institutional strengthening, study of water optimization in Kathmandu Valley through integrated water resources management, strengthening of municipal government in Nepal, municipal capacity building for improvement, and coordination and facilitation of a Canadian team's bid for the management lease contract for water supply and sewerage facilities for urban areas of Kathmandu Valley. ■

HEALTH

Pharmaceutical Potency

A popular medication for high blood pressure and heart disease also appears to reduce the risk of developing diabetes

By AKSHAY SHARMA

A popular drug used to treat high blood pressure and heart disease, and recently shown to help prevent strokes and heart attacks, also appears to reduce the risk of developing diabetes. In a large trial first reported last year, researchers found that people at high risk for developing diabetes who take the drug Altace were 34 percent less likely to develop diabetes than those who did not get the drug.

Those findings have now been confirmed in a detailed analysis, published in the Oct. 17 issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. "This is an exciting finding, which could potentially open up new ways of preventing both diabetes and heart disease," Dr. Dikshya Bhattachan of Tribhuvan University told SPOTLIGHT. "Standard diabetes drugs haven't been shown to reduce heart disease convincingly, but we know that this drug does," he added.

People with diabetes are up to four-times more likely to have heart disease or suffer a stroke than the general population. In fact, some form of heart complication such as a heart attack is present in 75 percent of diabetes-related deaths. But American Diabetes Association (ADA) spokesman Dr. Nathaniel G. Clark says doctors are only now beginning to understand the importance of preventing these cardiovascular complications in diabetic patients.

Dr. Poonam Risal of Jorpati Hospital says, "In the past, we focused on the need to control blood sugar, which is, of course, important. ... But the reality is that for patients with type 2 diabetes, the most significant complications in terms of the time spent in hospitals and death are ... problems like heart attack and stroke."

Dr. Clark says the findings from the

Heart Outcomes Prevention Evaluation (HOPE) study are intriguing but not conclusive because the diabetes data were incidental findings. The study's primary

Altace, Dr. Clark says other ACE inhibitors, like Vasotec or Lotensin, may have similar protective properties for people at high risk for cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Dr. Clark, the ADA's national vice president for clinical affairs, said research published last month in *The New England Journal of Medicine* suggests that a similar class of high blood pressure drugs known as angiotensin-receptor blocking agents, may be protective against diabetes-related kidney disease.

There is clearly a lot of discussion about what should be the drug of choice



Medicines: Quality concern

focus was to determine if taking Altace, a type of drug called an ACE inhibitor, prevented heart attacks in people at high risk for having one. People at risk for diabetes have similar risk profiles of people at risk of heart disease.

As hoped, significant reductions in deaths from heart attack, strokes, or other cardiovascular diseases were seen among participants taking the ACE inhibitor. But the reduction in diabetes incidence was unexpected. A total of 3.6 percent of the participants taking Ramipril developed type 2 diabetes, compared to 5.4 percent of participants given a dummy pill for comparison.

- US experts have begun a new study designed to directly evaluate whether Altace prevents diabetes in some 4,000 subjects at high risk for the disease. Although the HOPE trial evaluated only

for someone with diabetes and hypertension. There is a lot of information that suggests that one class of drugs may be better at preventing some diabetes complications and another may be better for others.

Medical experts say the evidence is mounting that making modest lifestyle changes may be the most important factor in lowering the risk of diabetes. A large clinical trial found that people at high risk who exercised moderately and lost just 5 percent to 7 percent of their body weight reduced their risk of type 2 diabetes by almost 60 percent. Those who did not change their lifestyles, but took a widely prescribed diabetes drug reduced their risk by only 31 percent. But experts caution it is too soon to recommend Altace or any other drug of its type solely for the reduction of diabetes risk. ■



Cyber Security: Under threat

CYBER SECURITY

Are We Safe Enough?

The security of government computer systems comes under greater scrutiny amid the global campaign against terrorism

By AKSHAY SHARMA

One major fall-out of the September 11 attacks in the United States has been a growing focus on the need to ensure the security of government computer systems. There were notable security weaknesses in such systems, including Internet networks, well before the horrific suicide attacks in New York City and Washington DC. The global campaign against terrorism has revitalized efforts to thwart attacks in cyberspace.

Nepal, too, has been stepping up efforts to ensure cyber security. "Government computer security systems are quite easy to get into," says a 24-year-old Kathmandu University graduate working for a leading computer firm in Kathmandu, on condition of anonymity. The arrest of a hacker a few weeks ago has highlighted the urgency of drawing up proper security measures and instituting effective legal measures to fight cyber crime.

Money is the main reason why many companies choose to overlook Internet security altogether. While it's true that computer security audits are usually costly, they're important because they identify security weaknesses and

benchmark where the company needs to make improvements.

"The Nepalese government has never thought of a program to regularly inspect the computer systems of government agencies and reports their findings to," says Sayyed Naved Shah, a computer science graduate.

"There has been growing media attention on security issues recently. Yet not much coverage is given to the really important stories, such as attempts to deface government agency Web sites in recent years," he adds.

"Another glaring omission in many of these reports is the notable security breaches of government

contractors in the past year. One interesting report concerns a breach of security that allowed hackers to access a large amount of the source code for a noted satellite and the defense secrets of an organization," says another computer expert.

In a recent speech at Microsoft's Trusted Computing Conference, Richard Clarke, the Bush administration's special adviser on computer and Internet security, reiterated his call for a separate Internet for government use.

If the private sector follows the lead of the government, many analysts say, it's doubtful

that the Internet will continue to be the business tool it is. "Segmenting the Internet into a public and private version does not address the core problems with Internet security. Unless the problems of government computer and network systems are addressed, it makes no difference whether the government physically or logically separates its networks from the rest of the Internet," says Shaket Shrestha, who recently completed computer studies abroad.

Good computer and Internet security can be expensive, but in the long run, the only way to solve these security issues is to fix them at the source rather than trying to hide from them. "It's time for the government in Nepal to focus on the security of the Internet services used by governmental agencies," a network security manager says.

In Denial of Service (DoS) attacks, hackers flood Web servers and networks with sudden and overwhelming bursts of network data, slowing down server performance and eventually crashing the Web site. Unlike a virus or worm, which can cause severe damage to databases, a DoS attack only interrupts network service for a limited period.

Even an hour of service outage can mean serious losses and angry customers. In February 2000, DoS attacks took down five of the 10 most popular Web sites in the world, including Amazon, Yahoo, and eBay. Yankee Group has estimated that these attacks have caused an at least \$1.2 billion in lost revenues and subsequent drops in market capitalization.

Hackers gain unauthorized access to computer resources to steal data or sabotage systems. According to current research, in early 2001, as many as 210 hacker groups made attacks on about 1,280 Web sites across the world.

While we commonly associate hackers with the image of a professional cyber terrorist, we now know that there are a variety of different kinds of hackers with different motives. A forensic psychology expert describes one type of hacker: the so-called "script kiddies," who have little hacking skill.

They use other hackers' programs and like to cause malicious damage such as defacing Web sites. Security experts attribute the rise of this threat in part to the proliferation of simple, point-and-click programs that make it easy to exploit known holes in server software. The temporary shutdowns of Amazon, eBay, and Yahoo in 2000 were blamed on script kiddies armed with software they downloaded from the Internet.

Insider's malicious hackers are not the only threats to companies. Disgruntled company insiders like current employees and former workers often represent the most dangerous security threats. They understand the business and how the computer systems work and, more importantly, they have authorized access to

network resources and critical company information.

In-house security breaches account for 70 to 90 percent of all security breaches, according to experts. The percentage is probably even higher than that because most insider attacks go undetected. Strategies said for every in-house attack reported, as many as 50 go unreported or undetected.

"The majority of high-value breaches--those costing \$250,000 or more--are perpetrated from the inside," says Shah, "because insiders often know how and where to access the most valuable data."

Virus and worm attacks cost businesses up \$17.1 billion in 2000, according to an independent research firm based in Kathmandu. The costs incurred include cleaning viruses from computer systems and networks, restoring lost or damaged files, and lost productivity of workers caused by system outages and downtime.

"It is estimated that the Code Red worm and its variants have infected 760,000 servers worldwide to the tune of \$2.05 billion in system repairs and lost productivity. The Love Bug attacks, including the 50-plus variants of the virus that rampaged through systems worldwide in May 2000, have cost businesses up to \$8.7 billion in lost productivity and system repairs," says Shah. All your firewalls, virus scanners, and encryption measures are useless if a malicious individual gains unauthorized, physical access to your premises and destroys or steals computing equipment, including all the valuable project data contained within.

"Sometimes, data thieves don't even have to break into the office. Portable computing and information devices like laptops and PDAs make it easy for your remote team members to touch base with your project and exchange files, plans, and information. But this portability also makes it an easy target for data thieves, especially in conferences and airport lounges where a moment's inattention can give thieves the chance to walk away with your equipment and gain easy access to all the confidential information stored on the portable machines," says Shah.

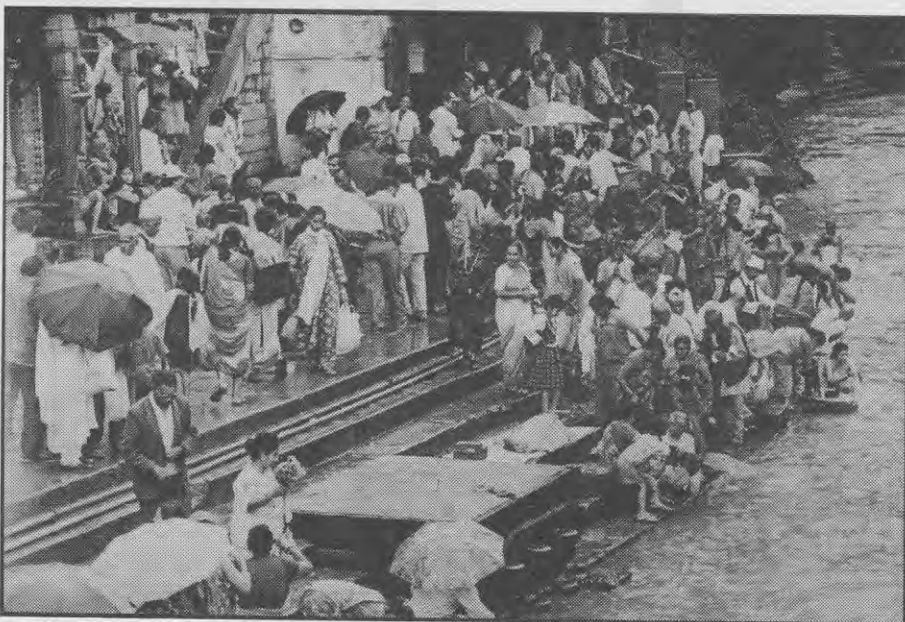
The situation gets a little more critical if your machines are set up to access corporate networks via a remote dial-up or virtual private network (VPN) connection: The data thief is potentially only one click away from all your project secrets, since any password mechanisms you have can be easily defeated by the plethora of password-cracking tools available on the Internet, say experts.

Information is power is the slogan of the century and contrary to what many people may think, Internet security isn't the sole responsibility of the IT staff. You can't simply throw inexpensive firewalls and antivirus software at the problem and hope that everything will turn out for the better. Effective security requires a comprehensive, holistic policy. ■

FESTIVALS

Changing Mood

With other pressing jobs at hands, youths find little time to rejoice



Festive season: Changing mood

By A CORRESPONDENT

"The days were so soft when I was young," Shekhar Gurung, a BBS student, gets a little carried away. "Can you imagine how different time has become. Those days were free of worries, you never had time to think about the future. In one way, it was like the most beautiful moment to be treasured. Two things have changed. The semantic elixir of good old days appears so far beyond the reach. We can't make it happen again."

A sense of nostalgia ran across the face of Shabi Pradhan, a BSc student. "It used to be lot of fun. But it's been long since I had fun. I have no idea about intricate things going around but I think it is mainly the sense of a rising burden of responsibility and concern about one's career. It doesn't mean that I don't enjoy the mosaic of cultures, but the intensity has decreased. It is not what it used to be. The conventional theme of the festival

has lost its originality."

These comments by two college students on Vijaya Dashami and Tihar are by no means representative of the national mood. However, their views are a sampling of how the youth feel about what is arguably the most important period in Nepal's cultural calendar.

Academics tell you that culture is a complex whole that includes art, knowledge, belief and any other capabilities acquired by people as members of society. It is hard to figure out whether there is a decreasing interest in major Nepalese culture events, especially among the youth. Flying kites high in the sky, swinging on "rote pings" have become rare scenes in urban areas. And everybody does love to get back to the times when these scenes were the ornaments of the festival. People are now less inclined towards celebrating great festivals mainly because their essence has become trivial in the sense that life has become more rigorous. ■

STATE OF EMERGENCY

Operation Clean Up The Mess

As the Maoist rebels unleash a fresh wave of terror across the country and target the army for the first time, the government declares a nation-wide state of emergency. The belated move, which some call an over-reaction, highlights the gravity of the situation and exposes the weaknesses of the security agencies. But the unanswered question is: despite growing international opinion against terrorism, why did the Maoists choose a suicidal course and at whose behest?

By BHAGIRATH YOGI

Forty-eight hours after the deadly attacks by the Maoists in western districts of Syangja and Dang, among others, killing nearly 40 people (See Box), including 23 policemen and 14 soldiers, the government in Kathmandu was still con-

sidering options and modalities available to it to counter the growing Maoist violence. At around the same time, hundreds of Maoist guerrillas were on their 'adventurous' mission to capture Salleri, the district headquarters of the beautiful eastern mountainous district of Solukhumbu, the gateway to the Everest region.

At the end of a nearly six-hour-long battle, 27 policemen, half a dozen soldiers and couple of senior government officers, including Chief District Officer Buddhi Sagar Tripathi, had been killed. As in Dang, most of the government offices, including the district court, had been destroyed and burnt down by the insurgents, two local bank branches



Soldiers carrying their wounded colleagues: Were they alert? Photo: TKP

looted and documents burnt. Despite their heroic feat, the casualties on the part of the rebels were no less staggering. The dead bodies of around 50 rebels were discovered the next morning and authorities said at least dozens of others might have been killed during their overnight encounter with the army and police.

Upon his return from religious trip to the Ram Janaki temple in Janakpur, King Gyanendra granted audience to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba late Monday (Nov. 26). The same evening, he endorsed the recommendation made by the Council of Ministers to declare a state of emergency throughout the kingdom. During its extended meetings over three days, the Council of Ministers okayed the proposal to declare the Maoist insurgents as terrorists. It also endorsed an anti-terrorist ordinance, promulgated by King Gyanendra on Monday, which gives sweeping powers to the security agencies to launch sustained and decisive action against the terrorists.

Less than a week back, chairman of the CPN (Maoist), Comrade Prachanda, had issued a statement saying that there was no longer any justification for the on-going government-Maoist talks and the nearly four-month-long cease-fire. In his statement, Prachanda alias Pushpa

Kamal Dahal asserted that his party's efforts to establish peace had been rendered unsuccessful due to the conspiracy of the imperialist and reactionary forces. Though he did not name those forces, it could be understood that the Maoist leader was pointing toward the United States as imperialist and the royal palace as reactionary.

Prachanda's statement was no less than a bombshell for Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who had rode to power only four months ago pledging a peaceful settlement of the insurgency through talks with the Maoists. Deuba's aides, however, continued to hope that the Maoist leader did not mean what he said and would not ask his rebels to break the informal truce.

But as soon as the Maoist guerrillas launched well-coordinated attacks Friday night on army, police and other government installations in Dang, Syangja and Surkhet districts, security agencies found themselves caught off-guard.

So was Prime Minister Deuba. His relentless emphasis on the resolution of the problem through talks had been shattered at once. "I have been betrayed (by the Maoists)," said Deuba, at a public function on Sunday. "Now, I will not relent and do whatever is necessary to defeat the insurgents."

As the Deuba-led government sat idle for four long months, hoping peace to prevail on its own, the Maoist rebels had a field day in re-grouping their cadres, recruiting and training new ones, raising forced donations and taking revenge against anyone who they thought did not toe their line.

Despite severe criticism from the opposition, the government would not take any measures to provide law and order in the country. Instead, it agreed to release 69 Maoist rebels and withdraw the Public Security Regulation only to persuade the Maoist negotiators to sit for the third round of talks early this month.

Government negotiators taking part in the talks say the rebels were never serious in the three rounds of talks that took place over the last three months. From Godavari Resort to Bardia and back to Godavari, the Maoist negotiators deliberately chose to highlight the points of difference with the government rather than trying to negotiate on other 'soft issues.'

In the latest round of talks, the Maoists said they had decided to drop their demand for making Nepal a republic but insisted that they would not agree at anything less than elections to a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution and form an interim government. "Now the ball is in the government's court," said chief Maoist negotiator Krishna Bahadur Mahara after coming out of the third round of talks on November 12.

Analysts say there was asymmetry at the level of negotiators too. "While the government side was headed by high level policymakers, the Maoist side was represented by a lower level. It seemed that the Maoists negotiators did not have clear guidelines and were confused," said Dr. Panna Kaji Amatya, professor of political science at Tribhuvan University. "The Deuba government had shown utmost sincerity (to find a peaceful solution) but there was a lack of consensus and honesty on the part of the Maoists."

Amid growing pressure from his own party and the opposition, Prime Minister Deuba had promised that he would try his best to convene a fourth round of talks. As predicted by SPOTLIGHT, that

MAOIST ATTACKS

Red Terror

After breaking the truce unilaterally, the Maoists mount daring raids in Dang and Syangja districts

Last Friday (Nov. 23), local residents at Tribhuvan Nagar, Ghorahi had little imagination of what was in store for them that night. As the evening approached, hundreds of people from far-away places started entering the town—district headquarters of Dang. Within a couple of hours, Maoist guerrillas had reached the towns in around one dozen buses from nearby districts of Rolpa and Pyuthan. But the local administration was simply unaware.

Little before mid-night, hundreds of Maoist guerrillas under the command of Comrade Pasang simultaneously opened fire at District Police Office, District Administration Office, official residence of Chief District Officer, District Forest Office, Bhagvati Prasad Company of the Royal Nepalese Army, among others. In half an hour, the police had surrendered. Another squad of the Maoists daringly entered the barrack on a hijacked police van and proceeded directly to the court-guard, where the sophisticated weapons were stored. They shot dead Major Naresh Upreti and other soldiers who resisted. Their comrades had already surrounded the barrack and opening fire relentlessly. The soldiers fought bravely for a couple of hours but had to give up later. They had lost 14 of their colleagues—first-ever army casualty in six years in the Maoist attacks. The rebels then took away three truck-loads of weapons to northern district of Rolpa.

The rebels killed five policemen during their attacks at Ilaka Police Office at Narayanpur, 10 kms west of Ghorahi. They also looted around 100 million rupees in cash, gold and jewelry from local branches of Nepal Bank Limited, Rastriya Banijya Bank and Agriculture



A rural village: Lost tranquility

Development Bank. They abducted Chief District Officer Lok Bahadur Khatri who was later released. Two civilians were killed during the Maoist attacks.

In western district of Syangja, hundreds of Maoist rebels stormed the district headquarters at around same time Friday night. Major government offices were destroyed in the Maoist attacks. Over a dozen policemen lost their lives fighting the insurgents. The rebels set free inmates after raiding prisons in Dang and Syangja districts. In mid-western district of Surkhet, rebels set fire on a private helicopter belonging to Asian Airlines. Sometime back, they had set on fire a private helicopter owned by Air Ananya.

Lack of intelligence gathering by the security agencies and lack of coordination among them has been blamed mainly for the overpowering of even an army barrack by the rebels. The army top brass is said to be worried mainly about the seizure of powerful automatic weapons in huge quantity by the Maoists. The army has already launched operations to recover the weapons and disarm the rebels, reports said.

never happened. Nine days after the third round of talks, the Maoists unilaterally withdrew from the truce and two days later launched massive assaults against the security forces.

Power Struggle Within the Maoists

At a time when there is an almost unanimous global opinion against terrorism, what might have led the Maoists -- who had emerged as a major political force in the country over the last six years through sheer violence-- to choose, what many believe, would be a suicidal course. Sources said growing dissension within the Maoist party was mainly responsible for their turning back to armed insurrection. While party chairman Prachanda and politburo member Dr. Baburam Bhattarai were said to be in favor of a negotiated settlement and joining mainstream politics, chief of the 'people's militia' Comrade Badal or Ram Bahadur Thapa and one of the seniormost Maoist leaders, Mohan Vaidya, were reportedly in favor of continuing the 'people's war.'

After the Thapa-Vaidya duo backed Dr. Bhattarai, the power equation within the underground party started to change. To cut military strategist Thapa and company to size, Prachanda announced the formation of 'People's Liberation Army' (PLA) and declared himself its supreme commander. Dr. Bhattarai was appointed convenor of the 37-member Joint Revolutionary People's Council Nepal (JRPCN), central ad-hoc committee--dubbed as the parallel, central level 'people's government.'

The rapid expansion of the party's base, collection of billions of rupee through daring raids and extortion and entry of criminals in its fold had, to a great extent, diluted the 'militant and revolutionary character' of the Maoist party, said critics. In their strongholds in mid-western hills and other parts of the country, the Maoist cadres were running a parallel administration and courts and forcing people to obey them at gunpoint. With the availability of easy money, their lifestyle had also changed. To change all this, and protect his own supremacy in the party that had adopted 'Prachanda Path,' as the guiding philosophy, Comrade Prachanda had, perhaps,

no other way but to send his troops on military actions.'

The Maoist cadres were very critical of their party leadership's decision to drop the demand for a republic state -- the cause for which hundreds of their comrades had lost their lives. Moreover, the central meeting of the party at Kureli, Rolpa in September this year had instructed the party leadership that the Maoist cadres would accept nothing less than a constituent assembly.

Even then, why did a sharp strategist like Prachanda and Dr. Bhattarai -- who quickly changed and tried to re-adjust their strategies in the aftermath of the Royal Palace massacre on June 1 -- choose to send their guerrillas to fight with the army? Analysts say the Maoist leadership may have thought of adopting the strategy of 'talks' and 'military action' simultaneously or pressuring the government to accede to their demand for a constituent assembly by exhibiting their guerrilla force. As usual, they would still try to play a game of 'divide and rule' between the political establishment and security agencies and remain elusive.

In the aftermath of the US war against terrorism in Afghanistan and top Indian government official declaring them as a terrorist group, the best option for the Maoists would have been to prolong the talks, conserve their power and wait for an opportune moment, say analysts. But they did not. This means that there is



A child soldier: Playing with a gun



Home Minister Khadka in Dang: Assessing the Damage

much more than meets the eye.

External Dimension

"Nobody plays an apparently losing game," says Prof. Amatya. "There must be an external force behind the Maoists which sent them on a suicidal mission." Those looking at the origin, growth and present state of the Maoist party argue that it is into a clandestine operation. "The Maoists have nothing to do with Maoism or Communism," said a noted political analyst, on condition of anonymity. "Code-named Maoist 'people's war,' it is nothing more than an operation launched by a foreign military intelligence in the Nepali

territory in view of the growing power struggle in this part of the world."

After his failed bid to mobilize the Royal Nepalese Army to rescue nearly 70 policemen abducted by the Maoists from Holeri, Rolpa earlier this year, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala resigned from his post. During his farewell statement, the septuagenarian leader and four-time prime minister said the Maoist insurgency was not only targeted against the country's democracy and constitution but also against Nepal's national security. After the massacre of policemen at Dunai last year, then Home Minister Govinda Raj Joshi resigned from his post accusing the Royal Nepalese

Army of not cooperating to fight the rebels. But the Royal Nepalese Army chose to look the other way until the Maoist rebels drove within one of their barracks in mid-western Nepal in the dark of the night, said critics.

Within hours, the Defense Ministry issued a statement saying that "the Maoists were an anti-national force and they were out to erode the national sovereignty of the country and democracy attained through the sacrifices made by the people, and impose an autocratic regime at gunpoint."

After September 11, 2001, things have changed a lot around the world. So have the definitions of terrorism and national security. As the major global powers start their games in South Asia, small, land-locked countries like Nepal find it hard to protect their legitimate interests.

It is but natural that the flare-up of violence in Nepal is of utmost concern for its immediate neighbors, India and China. Though the two Asian giants had not commented on the latest wave of violence in this Himalayan kingdom till Tuesday, western democratic governments were quick to condemn the Maoists. In a statement issued Monday, the US Embassy in Kathmandu said it strongly condemned the recent actions by the Maoists and called on them to achieve their goals through peaceful



District Police Office in Dang : Failing to protect itself

means by remaining within the framework of the present constitution. "The US government fully supports the Nepalese government's efforts to protect its civilians and officials by remaining within the bounds of the constitution," the statement said.

The head of Mission of the European Union in Kathmandu also condemned the recent acts of violence in the severest term and called upon Maoists to desist at once from all acts of violence and intimidation and return to search for a negotiated outcome. In New York, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed his deep concerns about the flare-up of violence in Nepal.

After the famous Siliguri tete a tete with other communist leaders, it became clear that top Maoist leaders, including Prachanda, enjoyed safe haven on Indian territory. But after Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh's statement declaring Nepali Maoists as terrorists, the Indian government decided to deploy its nearly 10,000 soldiers along the Nepal-India border to check cross-border terrorism, among others. West Bengal state police also started conducting raids on hideouts of the Nepalese Maoists, who are said to have very good connections with other Maoist groups operating in India.

The recent seizure of huge cache of explosives at Kapilvastu-- brought in a passenger bus from New Delhi-- proves that the Maoists still have their supply lines open. "The Kapilvastu incident showed that the Indian soil is being used in aid of terrorists in Nepal. So the government should immediately hold talks with the Indian government in this regard," said a front-page editorial in Kantipur daily Tuesday. "As part of the global campaign against terrorist, the international community will support Nepal's latest initiative because the Maoists are terrorists and they have stood against democracy, civil rights, human rights and development."

State of Emergency

Though the opposition parties have expressed reservations on the issue of supporting the government's decision to declare emergency, they have reiterated that it is the duty of the government to maintain law and order in the country at any cost. But analysts say declaring a nation-wide emergency may have been made in haste.

"Though there had been an escalation of violence (over the last few days) emergency is not declared in a democratic system unless there is a national calamity. Though nobody will protest

the government's right to use coercive instruments to control violence, questions could be raised on whether a nation-wide emergency was essential," said Prof. Dhruva Kumar, a security expert at the Tribhuvan University's Center for Nepal and Asian Studies. "The government could have used its security apparatus even without declaring an emergency. Instead of taking the people and security forces into confidence in order to isolate the Maoists, it seems that the government took this decision in a haste and with insecure mindset."

Nepali academics and human rights activists are equally worried about the possibilities of misuse of authorities by the security personnel during their campaign against Maoists. Citing the declaration of emergency by Indira Gandhi in India in 1975, Prof. Kapil Shrestha, a member of the National Human Rights Commission, recalls that once an emergency is declared, it may have very far-reaching consequences. "Emergency is like a radical surgery, the scars of which are bound to remain. An emergency addiction could also develop. So, the government must move cautiously and should not curtail the people's fundamental rights under any pretext," said Prof. Shrestha.

A highly disciplined and professional force, Royal Nepalese Army is facing a real challenge to quell the insurgency on the home front. But the history of insurgencies around the world show that use of military power alone can't contain insurgency in an effective manner. As long as terrorist outfits find

poor and unemployed youths as their recruits willing to risk their lives for an abstract cause, no military can contain the rebellion. The solution perhaps lies in creation of an equitable and just society envisaged by the

country's democratic constitution -- against which the Maoist rebellion is targeted.

Twelve years after the restoration of democracy, the political leadership and the country's democratic polity are facing their greatest challenge. Will peace be restored and at what cost? Only time will tell. ■

AFGHAN CRISIS

The Home Front

Nepal needs to properly assess the emerging scenarios in Afghanistan, experts say

By A KSHAY SHARMA

As Kabul fell into the hands of the Northern Alliance with the help of massive American firepower, most nations began setting their eyes on the new government to be installed in Afghanistan. This week, the Northern Alliance endorsed international calls for a broad-based government.

"The Taliban was a creation of Pakistan and the new government would have broader recognition from the international community if it could open Afghanistan to the rest of the world," said Professor Shree Dhar Khatri of the Institute of Foreign Affairs.

However, the old dilemma haunts the region: Will Afghanistan be stable? Will the international community be able to encourage the emergence of a broad-based government in Kabul that would be acceptable to all of its neighbors?

Some analysts fear a repetition of the bloody conflict Afghanistan has been engulfed in the past. Others worry the country might eventually split along ethnic lines. "Much will depend on how broad-based the new government in Kabul would be," Professor Khatri added.

With South Asia having become the main theater of the US-led war on terrorism, the region can expect both positive and negative fall-outs, an expert says. The neighborhood has been described as the "most dangerous" place on the globe. According to a 1998 Pentagon report, until 2030 there will be no country to challenge the United States in military and economic might. This has left regional powers like India and China in a quandary. After all, history has shown that wherever US troops have been stationed, they have never left, except in Vietnam.

The change of government in Kabul represents a positive signal for India, as Al Qaeda, the organization Washington blames for the September 11 attacks, is also on the wanted list of Indian security agencies. In recent days, images of Afghan civilians listening to Indian film songs have been broadcast around the world. Bollywood has a very big market in Afghanistan, which India could use to cement ties.

Although Pakistan is alarmed by the prospect of having a less friendly government on a sensitive flank, there are positive signs for

Islamabad, too, since it has proved itself indispensable to the West. The United States has always been known to aid Pakistan and many in Islamabad see a clear opportunity to settle the long-running Kashmir conflict through US involvement. "Pakistan always wanted third-party involvement in the dispute and maybe this is the right time," an expert says.

"On the other hand, the Indians might have problems sharing their influence in the region if there is a long-term presence of US troops," the expert adds. "But Pakistan will definitely play a pivotal role in the region with the United States close by its side."

Nepal will have to respond carefully to the unfolding scenarios. "We in Nepal need to keep our eyes and ears peeled with proper assessment to the scenarios in Afghanistan in the future," says Nischal Nath Pandey, deputy executive director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs.

Kathmandu could find itself in the middle of conciliation efforts between New Delhi and Islamabad early next year. The Indian and Pakistani leaders are to hold talks in Kathmandu on the sidelines of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit in January.

However, non-state parties could exert a greater influence on regional stability. "South Asia has been long one of the transit routes of international arms smuggling. The war in Afghanistan and the Burmese insurgency were the major causes of transforming South Asia into an important transit route," writes Neil Hussain in "Problems of Proliferation in Small Arms".

Adds Rohan Gunaratna in "Sources of Arms to the LTTE": "Dual-use technology with military applications are sold in the open market, but in the hands of a terrorist, a guerrilla, their application can enhance militant performance." He says terrorists have access to modern weapons and law-enforcement agencies working with the global coalition against terrorism need to control small-arms proliferation in South Asia. That challenge is bound to grow, with the US Central Intelligence Agency mounting a hidden war in Afghanistan with secret paramilitary units on the ground and Predator surveillance drones in the sky, which provided key intelligence for concentrated air strikes on Al Qaeda leaders.

The CIA units, whose existence has not been previously disclosed, are operating in what amounts to a central combat role in America's war in Afghanistan. One of these

units was the first US force to enter the country in the current terrorism war, paving the way for US Special Operations Forces. The units also have been providing the Northern Alliance with intelligence on opposing Taliban and Al Qaeda troop concentrations.

The units are part of a highly secret CIA capability, the Special Activities Division, which consists of teams of about half a dozen men who do not wear military uniforms. The division has about 150 fighters, pilots and specialists, and is made up mostly of hardened veterans who have retired from the US military. The division's arsenal includes helicopters, airplanes and the unmanned aerial Predator drones equipped with high-resolution cameras and Hellfire antitank missiles.

Assuming that the Taliban are routed, will the alliance be able to rule Afghanistan or will it splinter? Enter King Zahir Shah, whose long exile in Rome may soon end. Countless delegations, including one from the Northern Alliance, have called on him recently to discuss his return as an interim head of state.

At age 86, the king is still active and undoubtedly has a following. In a poll in the Afghan refugee camps in Peshawar in the 1980s, 70 per cent voted for his return. Today, his supporters want a *loya jirga* (the grand council of Afghan leaders), or general assembly, to vote on the country's future. The alternative is a Western-style election supervised by the United Nations, which would undoubtedly be fraught with difficulties.

In step with the military offensive, the allies will need to engage in a massive airdrop of food and medical supplies to the starving people of Afghanistan, who are already suffering famine on a Biblical scale. Immediate humanitarian aid would have to be followed by an Asian equivalent of the Marshall Plan for investment and reconstruction, and the wiping out of opium and heroin production.

"Having restored some sort of order in Afghanistan, the West would then need to address the most critical task of all: establishing a just peace in the Middle East. Without that, any success in Afghanistan will be meaningless," says Sandy Gall, a specialist on Afghan and Middle Eastern affairs.

The synchronization of diplomacy, criminal law, financial controls, military force, intelligence is the best arrangement for the broader war on terrorism America is fighting. As the attacks of September 11 proved, you do not need anything sophisticated for a massive terrorist attack. All this suggests that Nepal must brace itself for the unfolding challenges. "After the Maoists decided to end the four-month cease-fire with massive coordinated armed attacks, we must be better prepared for the repercussions from the events taking place so close to Nepal," says an expert. As the war on terrorism is a new kind of war, its repercussions could be felt in ways that can scarcely be comprehended today. ■

“Nepalis Must Take The Initiative For Their Development”

— J. BILL MUSOKE

J. BILL MUSOKE, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Representative to Nepal, has been working to implement various projects in the area of population management. He spoke to SKESHAB POUDEL on Nepal's population status and the role of UNFPA. Excerpts:

UNFPA recently released its annual report. How do you see the position of Nepal?

First of all, let me thank you and, through you, the people of Nepal, the media and government of Nepal for the continued focus and interest in population and development issues of this country. Unlike several other reports, we do not rank countries based on particular indicators. The statistical tables in our report are directly linked to the goal of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to which the UNFPA is committed. However, like the other reports before this one, the theme of the State of the World Population focuses on a specific issue. This year it was on Footprints and Milestones: Population and Environmental Change.

What are the main thrust of the report?

The report identifies several footprints and milestones around the globe. Increases in population, particularly in developing countries, and a deteriorating environment are the major focus of the report. The report says that unless population growth is maintained and sustainable development practices are adhered to, the world will witness worsening population and environment dynamics detrimental to people's health and development. One of the key areas of Nepal's development challenge has been deteriorating environment and rapid population growth. Given this, the report has direct bearings on Nepal's population and environment and its policies and programmes in the years to come.

What is the position of demographic transition in Nepal?

You are asking a relatively complex question. Demographic Transition (DT) entails many more things than just transition from high fertility and mortality to low fertility and mortality. Decades of efforts to lower both mortality and fertility have shown encouraging results in Nepal. Demographic and health surveys of the recent past in the country show steadily declining fertility and mortality. In the mid-1960s, a Nepali woman of reproductive age bore about 6.4 children. Today, she is bearing 4.1 children in her lifetime. Knowledge of modern methods of contraceptives has become universal while about one-third of women are current users of contraceptives. Likewise, infant mortality, which is now around 70/1000 live births from around 200/1000 live births in the 1960s, has reduced significantly, contributing to the increased life expectancy of around 60 years (from around 40 during the 1950s) for both sexes in 2001. These are significant achievements and indicative of what one would refer to as the onset of a demographic transition.

How do you evaluate the DT?

However, we have not achieved the implied “Demographic Transition” in your question. Perhaps, the DT you are referring to means a situation that you can compare with that of the West (developed countries), women having two or less than two children during the course of their reproductive life. Let me also hasten to add here that DT is shorter, and swift in countries where the pace of socio-economic development has been rapid (Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, and the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in India. Even Bangladesh, which has almost a similar history of population management programme to Nepal's, is far ahead of us. Almost 69 percent of Nepal's burden of disease is due to disorders related to infectious diseases, maternal and prenatal ailments and nutritional deficiencies). An epidemiological transition from this group of disorder to degenerative and non-communicable diseases) will also hasten the pace of demographic transition in the country. This is still to happen in Nepal. Despite this, even in Nepal, one can say that we are at various levels of demographic transition. In urban areas, and among educated women, total fertility rate is almost half of the national average, indicating educated and urban women are more likely to hasten demographic transition by bearing fewer children and caring more for the survival of their children than their uneducated and rural counterparts. Therefore, the key is the pace of socio-economic development: education, health and women's empowerment. Since the pace of the socio-economic development is rather slow in Nepal, so is the pace of the demographic transition and may take some more years to complete. However, it may not be too long if the pace of socio-economic development and epidemiological transition is rapid.

How would Nepal's resources be affected by over-population in the future?

I wouldn't use the word “over-population”. This is a relative term to be taken together with resources and other issues. The population of a country may become “over” only if its resources are constrained, there is continued hunger, disease, unemployment, violence, lack of basic facilities and amenities. People have to judge for themselves whether or not they are “over populated” and take whatever actions they deem necessary. Almost half of Nepal's population is under the poverty line. The poverty level has remained almost stable during last three decades. However, the absolute number of people living below the poverty line has increased significantly. Almost 30 percent of children of school-going age are still not attending school, six out of 10 women can not read and write, 80 percent of households do not have toilet facility and about 30 percent do not have access to drinking water. Frontier land has already been brought into cultivation, which has further added to environmental deterioration. According to the UN Population Projection, Nepal's population is likely to double and reach

Decades of efforts to lower both mortality and fertility have shown encouraging results in Nepal. Demographic and health surveys of the recent past in the country show steadily declining fertility and mortality.

44 million by the year 2035. The increased population will require basic services. Now, you tell me, whether you would call Nepal overpopulated or not. It is not too late to take corrective measures that would allow the country to manage the population and strike a balance between the population and the available resources. However, if corrective steps are ignored or delayed more problems lie ahead. Obviously, rapid increases in any given context without commensurate economic development is bound to create resource constraints and Nepal is not an exception.

How do you see the response of the government?

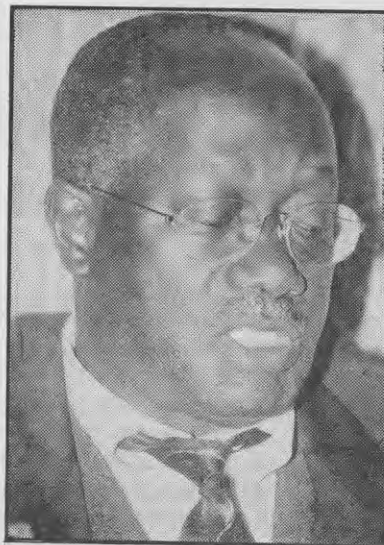
Nepal is one of the countries with "early recognition" of population problem, sometime in the early 1970s. However, until recently, policies and programme to manage the population were not well defined. The government has been sensitive to population issues and has been attempting to formulate a comprehensive population policy especially since the Cairo Conference. We see commitment at the highest level. For example, Nepal is one of the few developing countries that contribute to UNFPA's global activities on a regular basis, which UNFPA is very grateful for. On the other hand, at the local level this commitment is not often translated into practice. For example, the National Population Committee or Board has not met for the last two years. This is the policy-making body at the highest level. If it does not monitor what is happening, who will do it? Population being a cross-cutting issue requires common understanding among the stakeholders. I do not want to sound negative. But I would like to draw a comparison between Nepal and Bangladesh. Both countries had same levels of fertility in the 1970s. But today, the fertility level of Bangladeshi women is almost half that of Nepali women. Why and how could Bangladesh achieve this feat while Nepal lagged behind? There must be reasons. Among other things, it is the leadership in population issues; it is the lack of that commitment to put what we say in practice.

Does Nepal have comprehensive population policy?

Nepal still lacks a comprehensive population policy that addresses spatial and temporal distribution of population, elderly, adolescent and youth, migration (both internal and international), urbanization, ethnic and minority populations, women and gender issues and last but not least the emerging but serious issue of HIV/AIDS. Let me emphasize that formulation of a sound population policy alone is not enough, unless it is accompanied by a coherent and well-articulated operational modality, equally accompanied by sufficient budgetary allocation to translate the sweet words into practice.

What has UNFPA been doing to manage Nepal's population?

Let me make it very clear right from the outset that UNFPA is in Nepal at the request of His Majesty's Government to assist it in identifying and offering solutions to population problems. The onus of managing the population of Nepal lies squarely on the government and people of Nepal. Thus, UNFPA is supporting HMG to manage its population in two ways, namely, technical and financial support. UNFPA started its work in Nepal in the early 1970s. Up to 1996, UNFPA support was directed to family planning, maternal and child health care programmes, population education, expansion of the population database, and development of a national plan of action for women in development and the introduction of an integrated health management information



system (HMIS). In the Fourth Country Programme (1997-2001) UNFPA's support focused on improving the coverage, access, quality and continuity of gender-sensitive reproductive health services; and at strengthening the capacity of nodal agencies to integrate, plan; and coordinate gender sensitive population and development issues.

What will be the highlights of the fifth country program?

Under the fifth country programme that is to begin from Jan 2002, we are adopting a two-pronged approach. UNFPA will continue to support some of the nation-wide activities that we have been supporting and also focus on selected districts. This allows us to strengthen the national as well as the district capacity to formulate, implement, coordinate and monitor population, reproductive health (RH) and gender projects. UNFPA is committed to assist HMG towards its commitment for the fulfilment of ICPD goals. Therefore, UNFPA will focus on improving access to quality RH services including family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention, adolescent reproductive health, and safer motherhood.

How do you see the role of government ministries and other local bodies?

UNFPA will further work with HMG to ensure that there is an effective delivery and management system, and improved monitoring and evaluation of the programmes and projects. It will therefore, be necessary to continue to work with the nodal ministries/department such as the Ministry of Population and Environment, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Local Development and local bodies (DDCs, VDCs, Municipalities) to improve their capacity to design and implement gender-sensitive population and sustainable development policies and programmes both at the national and local level. I wish to reiterate that UNFPA believes that it is the people of Nepal and their government who have to take the initiative and lead in their own development. Donors are here only for a short time for a specific technical input to speed up the tempo of the development. The process has to be initiated and owned by Nepal and where necessary supported by donors with technical and financial resources. In short, UNFPA and I believe other development partners in Nepal are here to support your own effort and to contribute to the development goals of HMG. ■

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PROFILE

Preacher Of Education

A pioneer of education takes pride in the work his students have been doing for the nation

By AKSHAY SHARMA

Having taught 3,000 students during his 40 years with Saint Xavier's School, Father James J. Donnelly S.J. has retired from his full-time teaching job because of poor health. As he looks back, Fr. Donnelly takes immense satisfaction at the work his boys have been doing for their nation.

Fr. Donnelly says September 4 was one of the most memorable days of his life. He was granted an audience by King Gyanendra, who spent 11 years at St. Joseph's North Point Jesuit School in Darjeeling, India. During the audience with the new monarch, Fr. Donnelly took the opportunity to reminisce about mutual acquaintances at the school and to reflect on Nepal's future.

"I told His Majesty that teaching at the two St Xavier's schools was my chief mission," Fr. Donnelly told SPOTLIGHT last week. "The 3,000 students that I've taught are active participants in nation building. I believe our country is in capable hands and His Majesty needs grace from the Almighty to help care for his 23 million subjects."

Fr. Donnelly adds: "We talked about the fathers, mostly Canadians, Belgians too, who had taught the king at St Joseph's, literally dozens of those who passed through the 11 years of his education there." The late King Birendra, King Gyanendra and his younger brother, the late former prince Dharendra all studied at St Joseph's. King Birendra went to pursue further studies at Eton College, England.

"I told King Gyanendra that I had done the same job at Godavari which the Jesuits at St. Joseph's did. We talked about the Belgian father -- whose name we both had forgotten ó who ordered movies for students. I told him that from the day I came into Nepal, I have been pouring my energies on the students."

Born in Cincinnati, in the US state of Ohio, Donnelly was educated in the mid-western American city. He joined the Jesuits in 1947 and was ordained a priest in 1959. For 40 years, he has been a teacher and administrator at St. Xavier's school in Nepal.

"When I was 8 or 9, I read a magazine from Patna. As a little boy, I saw priests in

White Cassocks helping people. I wanted to be a Jesuit priest and go to India, a thought I pursued in school. My superiors told me to go into theology and get ordained to priesthood. In 1961, I came to Godavari School to join Father Nisen and Father Watrin (they were the rector principal and the vice-principal respectively). I was one of the 14 Jesuits that were in Godavari. We were only a handful of teachers for 130 students."

"It operated on the Senior Cambridge system and we believed the students were going to be very successful and would get into any field they would like. The system was inspiring for the teachers and the students. The exams were inspiring because the students were given a fair evaluation and good marks," Fr. Donnelly speaks of his early days in Nepal.

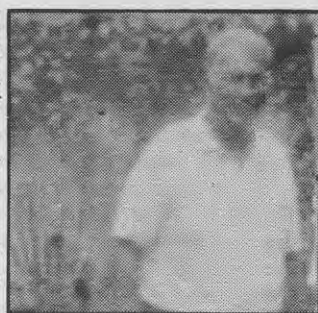
"We cut across everything from a distance then. Our students went into diverse professions. They became doctors and engineers. The army was an attractive career. The previous commander-in-chief, Dharmapal Singh Thapa, was among the 70 students we had in 1951." The incumbent, Gen. Prajwalla Sumshere JB Rana, is also a Xaverian.

"The class of 1962 consisted of Pyar Jung Thapa. I coached him in basketball and soccer. I hear he's slated to be the next commander in chief. The next in line is a boy I had taught in Grade 7 in 1961, Sadeep Shah. We are proud of what our boys have turned out to be."

"I taught Susheel Silpakar for four years before he went on to become a doctor. I have to visit him these days for my ear. I am under the care of two other very good doctors. Dr. Ranjeet Singh Baral, who was in the batch of 1965, takes care of my heart. Dr. Ashok Baskota, who was in the batch of 1964, operated on my hip. Raju Pradhan, of the 1971 batch, is among the best radiologists. There are countless medical professionals like them who attended St. Xavier's."

Fr. Donnelly says there is a reason why his students have been able to serve their country so well. "We have managed to motivate students because we were able to run a top-quality school. I admire Fr. Moran for the style of teaching he introduced in Nepal. I

loved what I was doing and I look upon myself as an educator rather than an administrator. I always wanted to do that -- teach -- and I had fun."



When he came to Nepal, Fr. Donnelly says, the education system was patterned on the one set up by the British Empire to create secretaries, clerks and other people. "You had to be good in English but you also had to be good in math, history, science and languages as well. So there was a good spectrum

of subjects. In St Xavier's, we had the Senior Cambridge and General Certificate exams from England. On the other hand, we had to adapt to a system that had existed in the Asian continent. You had to be very well motivated to pass the three-hour O Level exams."

He says schools around the world then were much the same, whether they were in Tanzania, Uganda or Burma. "In all parts of the former British Empire, students were studying the same things our boys were doing here. I found it rather inspiring and meaningful to be able to walk into a classroom and expect high-quality education. I taught English language, English literature and moral science. I was relatively sure that when I left the class, the students would not be cheating. The boys knew that at the end of the line,

they had to talk, think, and write honestly because the system was so well worked out that the questions were never ever repeated. The students knew that they could not just mug up answers and expect to get through. The system that existed until 1976 was meaningful and inspiring."

But the scenario changed when the government implemented the New Education System Plan (NESP). "We were told to get into the model and we gradually did. At the end 1976, we had two senior classes, the Senior Cambridge and the first SLC Class 10. The Senior Cambridge became a coaching alternate but

regular classes have been suspended since then. Then-Crown Prince Birendra and his planners wanted to introduce a better-motivated education system."

The government brought all educational institutions ó public and private -- under the NESP program. "Now that was idealistic. They had a lot of bright people and well-educated planners. There was nothing wrong

with the planning, but the education system, including the teachers and the whole administration, fell into pieces. The system didn't click because it was implemented too fast. It was implemented without everybody aboard."

He says the new system overleapt itself. "I wasn't privy to all that was going on at the Ministry of Education, but they did not leave room for any school to escape the program. In the late 70's and the 80's, however, some people saw that the Ministry of Education did not have the proper mechanism to implement the planning.

"As a result, many people started private schools, gradually bringing in their own textbooks and ideals. And they started charging big money because the government system was not working well. People expected better education but the NESP was a big disappointment. We thought the government was going to do it all but they did not have all of the wares needed to implement the NESP.

"Ten years later, the scenario has changed. The private schools had to set up their own standards and the people became satisfied with the English-medium schools. That is where we are today. Private education has dominated public education. And I see nothing wrong with that. I support that, if you are charging good money for good education," he says.

"There are hundreds of private schools around the country providing good education and charging a high amount of money. A private school would mean that the headmaster would be in charge and he would certainly provide good education. If he were a government servant only, his ideals would not have been so strong. And that is the stimulus of the headmaster doesn't want to fall flat on his face.

"Unlike the NESP episode, they know that they are going to be rewarded for their service. That was lacking in the NESP program because nobody felt that he was going to be rewarded for his efforts. I think the key lies on demonstrating on how to get a person on the line in education to give the motivating and to expect good results from his students," Fr. Donnelly says.

"Boarding schools at least have created a façade, if not a reality, for a better quality education. Quality education means that you have to pay for that and what is wrong with that? These people have to earn a living; they should be given a family wage for their work. If people are providing private education in a productive and demanding way, they are doing a big service to the nation as a whole. They are producing good citizens for our land and I would like to see more of that. May their tribe increase." ■

TOURISM

Recurring Reversals

Already hit hard by the slowdown in the international travel trade, Nepal's tourism industry suffers another major blow from the sudden upsurge of Maoist insurgency

By A CORRESPONDENT

Surendra Bahadur Khadka, a car driver at Tribhuvan International Airport, has remained idle in the midst of a continuing decline in tourist arrivals. For Khadka, this year has been particularly miserable, with tourism hit by a series of adverse national and international factors. In what should have normally been a peak tourist season between September and November, Khadka finds his prospects of recovering earlier losses close to nil.

"I don't understand what benefit do our political parties get by promoting the violent activities in the country. The Maoists' violent activities have already proved fatal for Nepalis directly and indirectly," he says. "The latest upsurge in rebel violence will only keep tourists away and push the country into a very difficult position," said Khadka.

There are tens of thousands of Nepalis like Khadka in the tourism industry whose livelihoods are on the line. The slump that began after the hijacking of an Indian Airlines flight to New Delhi in December 1999 has been worsened because of serious violent incidents. The sharp fall in tourists from India after the hijacking worsened by days of street violence triggered anti-Nepal remarks attributed to Indian movie star Hrithik Roshan, which he denied making.

Frequent bouts of politically inspired strikes and work stoppages, interspersed with labor unrest in the hotel industry, prevented Nepal's tourism industry from making a recovery. Just when some signs of an improvement were becoming visible, the June 1 massacre at the Royal Palace brought another blow.

In 2000, tourist arrivals declined by 25 percent, rattling the entire travel trade. Despite some disturbances in January, the first five months of 2001 were very encouraging in terms of arrivals. After the palace tragedy, arrivals plunged again. But things started to

look better when the government and Maoists announced a cease-fire in July after Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba assumed office.

The September 11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington DC again hit Nepal's tourism sector. The violence unleashed by the Maoists, shattering the four-month truce, has come as a further setback to an industry that once was hailed as the engine of Nepal's quest for modernization and prosperity.

"Our livelihood is once again under threat following the resurgence of Maoist violence," says Khadka, who failed to get even a single trip for two successive days this week. According to airline sources, renewed Maoist violence has badly affected reservations.

Although terrorism activities are confined to remote parts of the country, including far-eastern and far-western districts, hotels and airlines have been received a stream of cancellations from various parts of the world.

"If situation does not improve soon, Nepal's tourism sector will have to face dire consequences," says a private airline operator. "We have already reduced the number of mountain flights and scheduled services to Pokhara and other hilly areas. The upsurge in Maoist violence has frightened the entire world and many tourists, needless to say, will cancel their travel plans."

The Maoist violence has taken a heavy toll on the economy. Tourism is the hardest hit sector because of a confluence of a series of national and international factors. The country primarily needs peace and tranquility for tourism to recover. With law and order taken care of, entrepreneurs could then seek specific policy support for the government and the cooperation of political parties. With help from all vital quarters becoming elusive by the day, the tourism industry can only reminisce about its glory days and hope the present phase of uncertainty ends soon. ■

Little Literatures, Great Dreams

By YUYUTSU R. D. SHARMA

Last fortnight at a poetry reading that we have at a roadside restaurant at the heart of Kathmandu every first Saturday of the month, a young journalist from a Nepali weekly asked me a rather awkward question: What do you think is the future of Nepali literature?

A silence spread at the readings. I repeated the question in the quiet spaces of my mind. The idea of little literatures and great dreams that a Yugoslav poet had lately proposed came to my mind. I wondered, could the great dreams of these little literatures ever get realized?

For the making of these little literatures has been part of the making of these little nations. Right from the times of Bhanubhakta Acharya, who wrote the Ramayana in Nepali and gave birth to the literary horizon of Nepal, to the turbulent times of Gopal Prasad Rimal who gathered his fellow poets and activists in temples and public squares to read poems/hymns of protest against despotic rulers, the poets in Nepal have meaningfully written the script of a poet's role in autocratic societies.

The vibrant tradition that Rimal initiated influenced not only his contemporaries like Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Siddhicharan Shrestha and Balkrishna Sama but also generations that followed, including Bhupi Sherchan, Parijat, Basu Shashi, Poshan Pande, Krishna Bhakta Shrestha, Shailendra Sakar, Manjul, Krishna Bhushan Bal, Bimal Nibha and even several younger poets writing today. Regardless of political differences, these poets have launched several movements like Amlekh, Boot Polish, Sadak Kavita, Movement of Discarded Communities and Ralfa, among others, that made them take active part in the socio-political set-up and culminated in the 1990 democratic upsurge establishing the present political system. Thus, Nepal's literary life has been vehemently built on the idea that poetry can "make things happen". As evident in the past, the poets who tried to join the despotic regimes or tried to raise obscurantist or quasi-western movements have been either marginalized or have stopped writing or have been dropped out from the

body of Nepali literature by younger generations.

But today the scene is different. After decades of dialogue with undemocratic, despotic regimes, Nepali poetry has come to confront a bigger opponent—the multinational market as a touchstone of its authenticity. In the first decade of the new millennium, as the debate on the impact of globalization is raging, as multinational publishers continue to bombard the minds of these writers with much orchestrated networks, the question of survival and future of these little literatures has become more intriguing than ever before. So far, each poet writing in Nepali has listened to the authenticity of his/her own voice and hoped its sheer honesty, its distinct fresh cultural colors will win the hearts of the world. Nepali literature has a long history of writing for an audience that has been won over by these writers over the centuries. But now the same voice that they have mastered after their grandpoets, the voice whose traditions go back to Sanskrit poets or oral traditions of Buddhist literature and the influence of Bhakti and Sufi poets has to adopt itself to the voice and demand of the new world order of cyberspace and success-story network of the multinational markets.

In India and elsewhere, experience shows that the classics of these little literatures didn't make much difference, even after they joined the rat race of the market. Indian classic Premchand's "Godan" and other works in English translation didn't do so well as compared to works by a novice picked up randomly by a multinational publisher. The advance royalty and the senseless media furor made such a glaring difference that great classics of the Indian subcontinent were left licking the dust of the streets and pavements of Daryaganj.

Recently a poet from Hungary at a Sahitya Academy reading mentioned that all they had known back home of Indian literature remained the Ramayana, the Bhagavad Gita, Rabindranath Tagore and Arundhati Roy. The awkward space between the Bhagavad Gita and Arundhati Roy is the space where little literatures lie

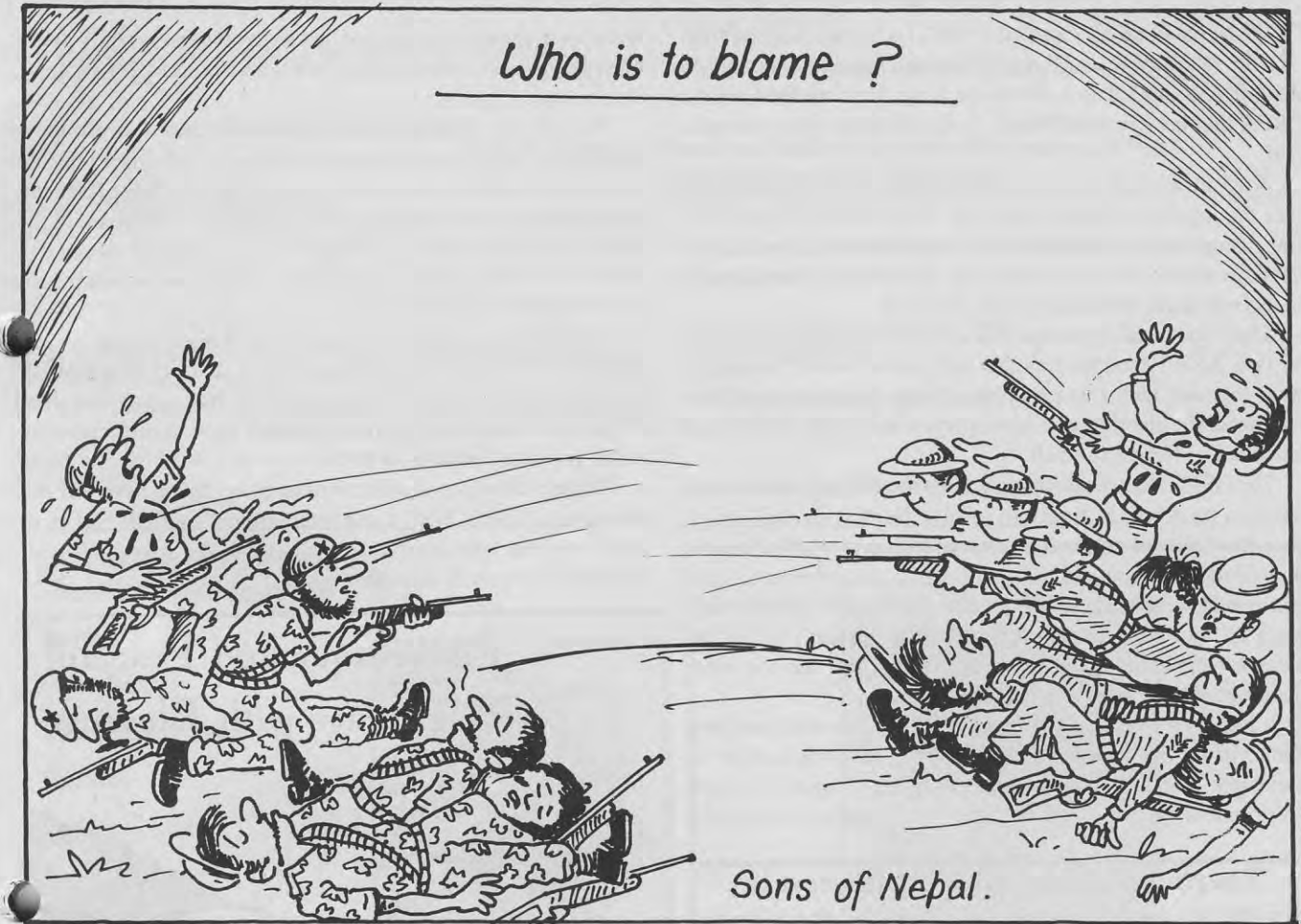
languishing for their dreams to be realized, for the world to listen to their voices. Instead, come novice snobs from rich families with Western backgrounds to blame them for their shoddy editing or populist motifs. The way the voice of these little literatures has come under the shadows of multinational English blockbusters is a phenomenon to watch.

What would become of the world after globalization has had its grinding march is yet to become clear. At the moment the skeptics' demi-god remains Chomsky's much flouted talk of corporate tyranny behind these big houses. Every year, the skeptics believe, an icon is built, encashed and forgotten only to discover a newer sensation, a fresher genius of the year. Milan Kundera and V. S. Naipaul's prediction that best writing will come out of the fresher societies narrated by Asian or Latin American authors is the guiding ideology. Each year, believe the skeptics, they startle us with their advance royalties, claiming the sale of millions of copies, exploiting their well-knit infrastructure—Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri—the list is endless.

Of course, the flood of this new writing that this icon building has triggered is welcome with the hope that out of all this turbulent commotion one day a great classic, a "War and Peace" or a "One Hundred Years of Solitude" would come. But the impact it has in belittling the little literatures is horrendous. And there is always a fear that these novice multinational first timers tuned to the demands of Western readers and ruthless copy-editing and glamour-greed might be representing/misrepresenting the little literatures they are advertised to belong to. And secondly, over the years it might get a blunt dismissal like Rushdie's who a few years ago announced that regional writing of the Indian subcontinent has not been able to produce works of enduring value and everlasting appeal.

(Yuyutsu R. D. Sharma has published three poetry collections and recently brought out a collection of Nepali poetry in English. He edits Pratik, a literary magazine). ■

Who is to blame ?



Sons of Nepal.

TRANSITION

AWARDED:

Krishna Bhakta Shrestha Devkota Kabya Samman 2058 by Laxmi Prasad Devkota Academy.

LEFT:

Environment and Population minister **P.L. Singh** Montreal Canada.

RETURNED:

Chief of the General Staff of Royal Nepalese Army **Prajwalla Sumsher Rana** suspending his 10 days visit to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Main opposition party leader and CPN-UML general secretary **Madhav Kumar Nepal** after a brief visit to the US.

The team of the expert divers

from Bangladesh citing the reasons that there is a very thin possibility of successfully carrying out rescue work in the Rara Lake.

NOMINATED

Nona Koirala as head of the Congress Women's Department and **Gopal Raj Pahadi** as a head of the department concerning parliamentary and local bodies by Congress president **Girija Prasad Koirala**.

ELECTED:

Sushil Kumar as president of Kathmandu Jaycees. **Amod Raj Rajbhanari** and **Nilkaji Shakya** as secretary and co-treasurer respectively.

FORMED:

Nepal Media Society under the convenorship of Pushkar Lal Shrestha, chief editor and publisher of Nepal Samacharpatra Daily. ■

ANFA DISPUTE

By Bikesh Shrestha

The Nepal Football Fan Club (NFFC) is deeply saddened that the much awaited All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) elections has failed to resolve the long standing feud within ANFA that has crippled Nepali football for the better part of a year.

The various parties involved continue to put personal benefit over the interest of Nepali football. This is utterly deplorable. The manipulative, calculated and deceitful way in which the elections were held clearly show the character and intentions of the personalities and associations involved.

There was great optimism that a single election would bring the two ANFA factions together and allow Nepali football to move forward. Unfortunately both ANFAs decided to hold their own separate election and have perpetuated their feud to the detriment of Nepali football.

The NFFC is very disappointed that the AFC and FIFA have not been proactive in trying to resolve Nepal's football crisis. They have shown minimal interest in trying to research all the facts of the situation and to bring the two sides together. They continue to send funds to one faction of ANFA despite the fact that it has not been able to do anything in the last year for the average Nepali footballer or football fans. Nor has the other faction of ANFA done any better.

It has been over two years that the Nepali public has been unable to see its national team in action on home-soil or on television. We still lack a proper national league or youth development system. Football clubs are in disarray because of a

tional awareness campaign to shed light on what is really going on in Nepal as the international football community seems to be ill-informed about it.

We will ask all international donors to temporarily stop all funding for ANFA and seriously review the way they allocate funds to ANFA in the future. It is our view that the lure of cashing in the foreign grants, and the perks associated with being in the ANFA executive have contributed to the current dispute in ANFA and will continue to hinder the stability and development of ANFA and Nepali football.

The NFFC is extremely disappointed that we are put in such a position. The Nepali football fans deserve to have their football back! The football fans of Nepal neither started nor picked sides in this feud. Therefore it is wrong that they have to suffer because of the greed and politics of a few.

Having said that, we still continue to invite the two ANFAs, the national sports bodies and international football bodies to come together and resolve this crisis for the sake of Nepali football and football fans. ■

They have shown minimal interest in trying to research all the facts of the situation and to bring the two sides together. They continue to send funds to one faction of ANFA despite the fact that it has not been able to do anything in the last year for the average Nepali footballer or football fans. Nor has the other faction of ANFA done any better.

lack of proper guidance from ANFA, and absence of any rules and regulations. There has been no football infrastructure development. The majority of football players receives negligible training and is not cared for.

Organizing a Mickey-mouse tournament every couple of months and sending select Nepali teams abroad to participate in insignificant tournaments is not what Nepali football or Nepali football fans want and need!

The NFFC will no longer stand and watch Nepali football being destroyed. Effective immediately we will start an interna-

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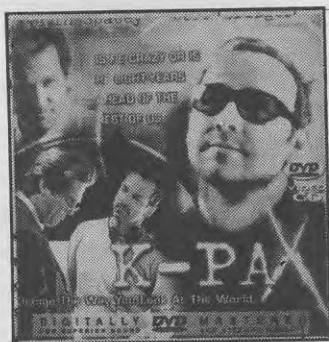
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(Source : Himalayan Book Center, Bagh Bazar, Kathmandu, Ph : 242085)

Video (English)

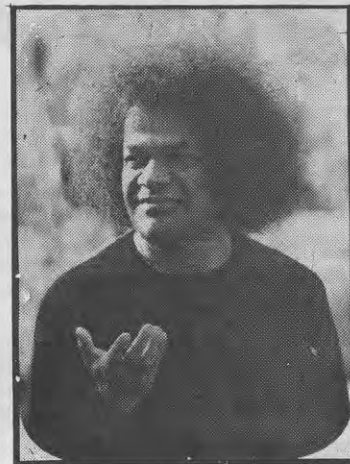
- Bandits
From Hell
Max Keeble's Big Move
The One
Backyard Dogs
Crocky Romans
Hard Ball
Training Day
Creepshow II
Jeeper's Creeper's



Hindi

- Belagam
Ashoka
Indian
Kasam
Rehna Hai Tere Dil Main
Pyar Zindagi Hai
Yeh Tere Ghar Yeh Mera Ghar
Mitti
Kiyon Ki Mein Jhooth Nahin
Ajnabee

(Source : Super Star Video, New Road)



“Do not get attached to worldly things and pursuits. Be, in the world but, do not let the world be in you.”

- SATHYA SAI BABA

ANDY CAPP



GARFIELD



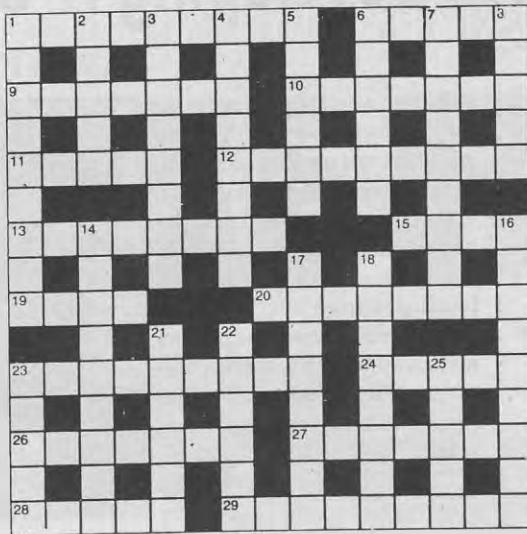
FRED BASSET



OVERBOARD



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Abigail's dismal day off (5,4)
6. Matches containing sulphur in bunches of five (5)
9. Open cart covered by elegant umbrella (7)
10. Lash out, left locked inside plant (7)
11. Joint given to one about to leave (5)
12. Familiar US stars, including outstanding diver (3,6)
13. Pre-arranged drill without approval, among rocky bens (8)
15. It's no more than a drop of water (4)
19. Noisily opening carriage (4)
- Resumed, given international honours again (8)
23. Invoice timber for hoarding (9)
24. Stalks maiden on trail (5)
26. Capture in sudden attack (7)
27. Leather case in rambling hostelry, not closed (7)
28. Outcome of a word in confidence on'es given away (9)

DOWN

1. One leaving papers around found a *Listener* under bed (9)
2. Under protest, bishop has to stand down (5)
3. Second team cap or lid (5-3)
4. Did Babel spread improvised words? (8)
5. Condescend to accept direction in project (6)
6. Write up tablet if needing stimulus (6)
7. Tip to get rid of old car (5,4)
8. A bit of Asparagus — mint may be added (5)
14. Picture, even so, is not wholly devoid of animation (5-4)
16. Fatty type of make MOH ponder (9)
17. Try graphite first for slugs (4,4)
18. Graduate composer getting up function (8)
21. A bishop, by roman law, has to recant (6)
22. Brownie's eccentric cycle (6)
23. Support for anecdotes taken from Xenophon's history (5)
25. Extremist, having given up painting, left university (5)

DOWN : 1. Litterbug 2. Demob 3. Screw-top 4. Adlibbed 5. Design 6. Fillip 7. Scrap heap 8. Spear 14. Still life 16. Endomorph 17. Leadsheet 18. Bachelor 21. Abjure 22. Camera 23. Basis 25. Ultra

ACROSS : 1. Ladys maid 6. Fists 9. Tumbrel 10. Splurge 11. Elbow 12. Big dipper 13. Bespoken 15. Mere 19. Gait 20. Recapped 23. Billboard 24. Haulm 26. Seizure 27. Holster 28. Steve 29. Aftermath

SOLUTION

BRIDGE

NORTH 5-5
 ♠ K 8 6
 ♥ 8 6 5
 ♦ K 6 4
 ♣ Q 9 3 2

WEST **EAST**
 ♠ 5 3 ♠ J 10 2
 ♥ Q J 10 3 ♥ A 9 4 2
 ♦ Q 10 9 2 ♦ 3
 ♣ A 10 6 ♣ K J 8 7 5

SOUTH
 ♠ A Q 9 7 4
 ♥ K 7
 ♦ A J 8 7 5
 ♣ 4

Vulnerable: North-South
 Dealer: West

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

Opening lead: Heart queen

"You pay a great deal too dear for what's given freely."

— SHAKESPEARE

When declarer gives you an opportunity to score a small trump, should you grab it while you can? Be careful. Not many declarers are certified members of the Philanthropic Trick-Donating Society.

West leads his heart queen to East's ace, and East returns a heart to South's king. After South cashes the ace and king of trumps, he leaves a trump at large to begin the diamonds. He cashes dummy's diamond king and leads another diamond. Should East ruff with his "useless" trump jack?

If he does, he is betting South has forgotten to draw East's last rump. If East accepts South's gift and ruffs with his trump jack, South enjoys an easy time. He cashes his diamond ace and ruffs a diamond with dummy's last trump, limiting his losses to only a heart, a club and the diamond ruff.

It's a different story if East is suspicious and refuses to ruff. After East discards, what can South do? If he cashes his ace and concedes a diamond, West will cash his club ace and lead a fourth diamond for East to ruff. And if South finishes in diamonds, the onetrick set arrives even sooner.

Ruffing one of declarer's winners is a good strategy; ruffing one of his losers is usually worth nothing. ■

'There Is Good Prospect In Developing IT Sector'

— ASKO LUUKKAINEN

Asko Luukkainen is the Charge d'Affaires at the Embassy of Finland in Kathmandu. He was working in the Foreign Office of Finland as a director in the unit for sector policies before he came to Nepal in August 2000. He has been posted also in Tanzania. Finland is celebrating its 84th independence day on 6th December, 2001. On the eve of the independence day, Luukkainen spoke to SANJAYA DHAKAL on the bilateral relations between the two countries and prospects for enhancing them in the coming days. Excerpts:

How do you see the state of Nepal-Finland relations at the moment?

The relations between the two countries are very good. The implementation of the development cooperation program in your country shows that relations are very good and cordial. There has been growth in political contacts as well. Last year, then Foreign Minister of Nepal Chakra Prasad Bastola visited Finland which was followed by the Finnish environment and development cooperation minister's visit here in September this year. At the moment (November 21-22), Nepalese Minister for Finance Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat is in Finland. This shows the growing contacts especially at the political level.

What have been the major areas of Finnish cooperation in Nepal?

They are geared at mainly four-five sectors. Environment is one of our major priorities. We are involved in the rural water supply and sanitation project in Lumbini since 1989 and now we have reached phase III of the project. We want to be active in human rights and democracy support programs. Mapping is another area of our cooperation. We are one of the donors financing the Basic and Primary Education Project II (BPEP II). In the past, we were quite active in forestry sector. Energy used to be also one of the sectors Finland supported. Rural electrification and Khimti Transmission Line are examples of this cooperation.

Do you think the HMG of Nepal could have used your funds more fruitfully?

Well, the money has not been wasted. For instance, the transmission line is functioning. The other important project is that of rural water supply and sanitation. If you go to villages, you will find the health situation is improving and women have more time for their households than before because they do not need to collect the water from far anymore. These two examples prove that money has not been wasted. It has been put to good use. But, we don't know yet about the results of the environment projects. Same applies to the education. The mid-term review is coming up soon so will know about it only after that.

How do you see the prospects of promoting economic relations between the two countries? What should be done to promote trade and investment between Nepal and Finland?

Geographically, Nepal and Finland are far from each other. The main export products of Nepal are agricultural products, garments, carpet, pashmina and so on. I think, the trade cannot grow much by depending on these products alone. I always stress on the Information Technology (IT). There is good prospect in developing this sector. Finland is very advanced in IT and we have many world-class companies that provide the service. Right now we are experiencing shortage of skilled labor although the demands for our IT products/services are on the rise. There is a possibility that Nepalese and Finnish IT companies could start cooperating. But the problem is, the IT education is still very low here. This has to be improved. We, at the Embassy, have been trying

to find out what the bottlenecks are for IT education in Nepal. If the education and training can be improved, there are good prospects, as you know IT doesn't know any border. Although Nepal is a land-locked country, we can cooperate by using internet.

Depending upon the performance, do you think there is bigger scope for enhancing Finnish cooperation to Nepal in coming years?

Yes, the basic possibilities exist. A year ago, the government of Finland had reviewed its aid programmes with many countries. Countries were classified into different groups like those which we call long-term partner countries. Nepal was chosen as one of the countries with long-term cooperation. So there is this possibility. Still, the scope of our assistance depends on the performance of the country, we expect that Nepal has such priorities like poverty reduction, democracy, good governance, sustainability in natural resources etc.

What about the possibilities of luring more Finnish tourists? How many of them come to Nepal at present?

It is always possible. Everybody in Finland has some kind of idea about Nepal. I remember when I was assigned here almost all of my friends started to plan a visit to Nepal. Of course, Nepal has Himalayas, landscapes are wonderful and people nice and friendly. You have all that is necessary to lure tourists. Also, you have quite a lot of experience. There are good hotels and trekking routes. So it is the question of advertising. At the moment the political situation in the whole world is quite unstable. But people tend to forget these things after a while if nothing else happens. If advertisement programs like exhibition contacts between travel agents of two countries are enhanced, there is a plenty of possibility of luring Finnish tourists. At present, about 1300 Finnish tourists come to Nepal every year.

How do you see the on-going government-Maoist talks? Will the donors, including Finland, come forward to support the Integrated Security and Development Program (ISDP) being implemented by HMG/Nepal?

Like everybody else, I welcome the talks. The situation looks to be better now than a few months ago. Both sides have made moves towards making the atmosphere conducive. Government has released prisoners and the Maoists have released those abducted by them. I hear Maoists talking about settlement. I am really hopeful about some negotiated settlement. As far as the ISDP is concerned, all donors have not decided yet. ISDP is trying to create some development especially in those remote areas which are strongholds of Maoists. It is very easy to say that this is the right thing as the government has not been able to take development to these regions. But questions remain on how and under which umbrella such programs will be implemented. We are not yet in a position to say that we support ISDP. Though we are willing to assist the grass-root projects, we have not decided what is the right channel for that. All of us (donors) realize that there has to be development in these areas, that the people there should experience it but we (at least, us Finnish) are undecided as to what the right channel should be. ■





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