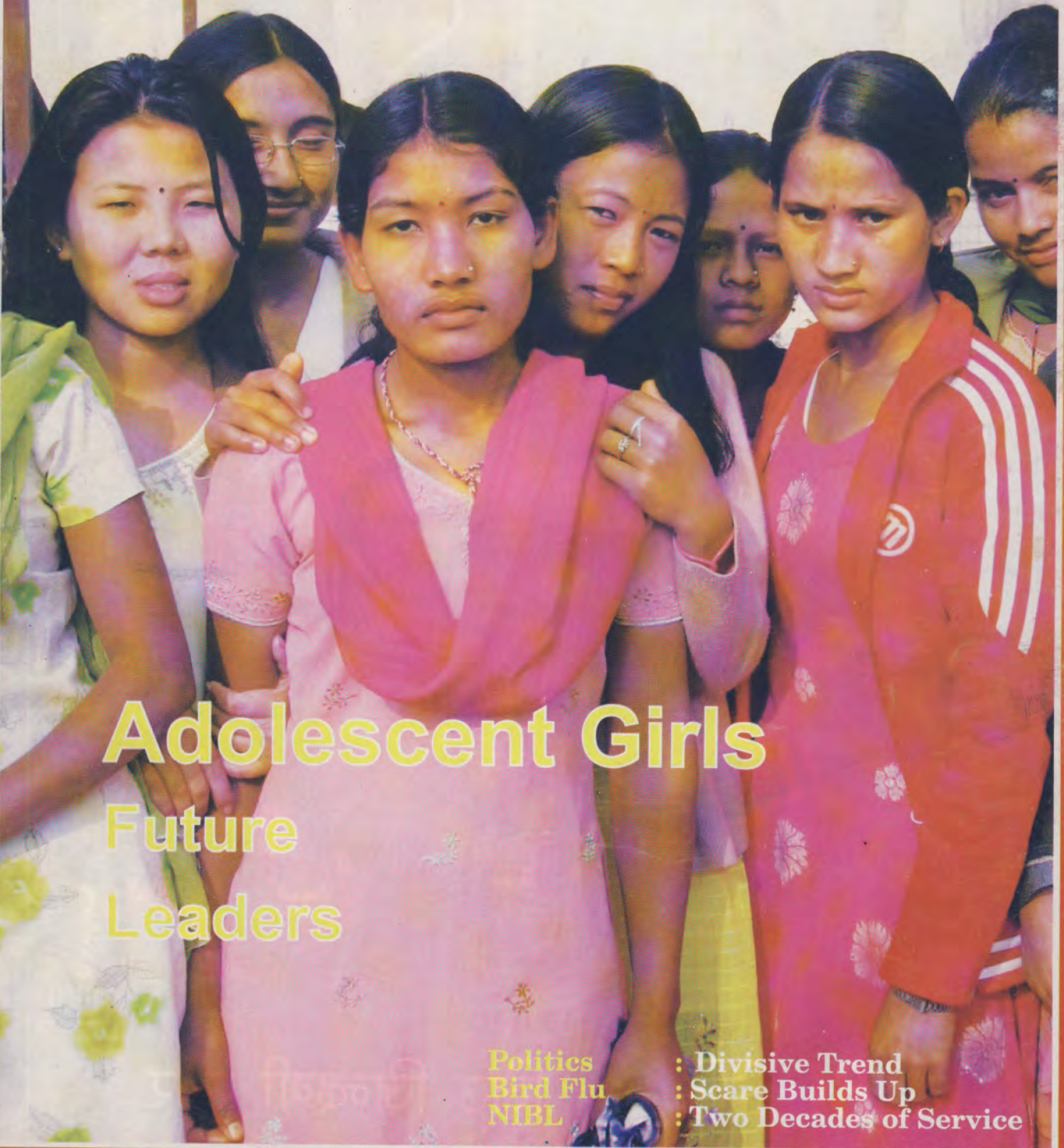


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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Mar 03- 09, 2006



Adolescent Girls Future Leaders

Politics	: Divisive Trend
Bird Flu	: Scare Builds Up
NIBL	: Two Decades of Service

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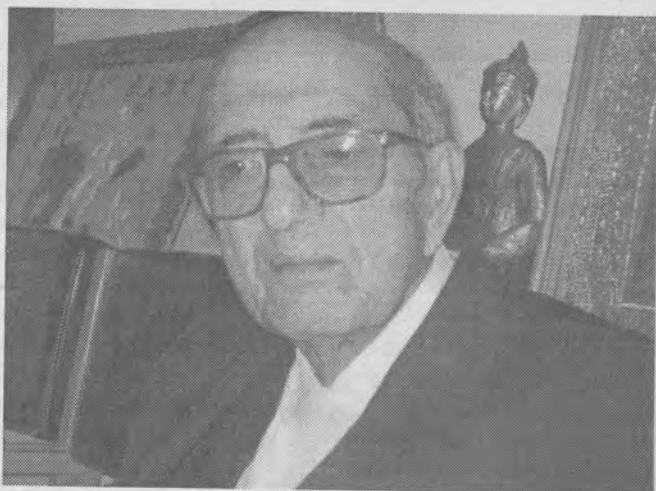


COVER STORY :

Future Leaders

The package to educate adolescent girls on reproductive health empower them enabling them to develop leadership capabilities

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Politics: The Great Divide

Political parties are divided into pro and anti constitution factions

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INTERVIEW:

Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat

Senior Congress leader Dr. Mahat talks about parties' stance on the 12-point MoU with the Maoists

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SPOTLIGHT

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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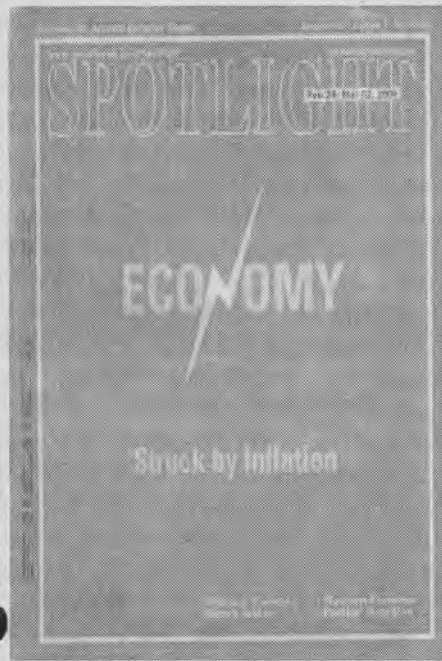
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The recent issue of SPOTLIGHT carried the interview given to BBC by James F. Moriarty, U.S. Ambassador to Nepal. It must have generated heated debates in most political quarters in Kathmandu. The ambassador has expressed grave apprehensions that Nepal might turn into a "crazy totalitarian state" if King Gyanendra did not reach out to the political parties for reconciliation to hand them over the reins of his government. If he has condemned the Maoists for "spreading terror," he has also denounced the "undemocratic royal regime" for "leading an unsuccessful authoritarian rule." He has even criticized the "shaky seven party alliance" for entering into an "untenable agreement" with the Maoists. He has also tried to assure the Nepalis that he would prevent Nepal from becoming a totalitarian state. Knowing well the American stance against communism and terrorism, all peace loving Nepalis must have welcomed the ambassador's statement. They do also trust that the Americans would never forsake a small friendly country like Nepal. But why should he have assailed King Gyanendra's one year old regime only for taking Nepal to such a calamitous situation when the so called democratic parties had ruled Nepal for twelve years before him is, indeed, surprising. Moreover, had the greatest democracy, friendly neighbor, India, scotched the Maoists right in the beginning, this situation would have been easily avoided. Instead, India, despite branding the Maoists terrorists, not only granted them sanctuary but openly permitted them to train their cadres in their country to mount violent insurgency against Nepal. Even to think that the Americans were totally ignorant of this reality, would be quite foolish. As a good friend of Nepal, why didn't they impress upon India to stop such unfriendly behavior indeed, beyond all human comprehensions. And why should India be playing such a blatant double game with her traditional friend and good neighbor, is for anybody to guess. The ambassador needs no illumination to see, if our good friend India wanted, the Maoist problem can be easily resolved, and quite soon too.

Like love and war, everything is fair in politics also. Kathmandu must be rife with rumors that the U.S. too might be playing a double game in Nepal. Since the responsibilities of the United States are global, varied and unenviable, it can play any kind of game as demanded by its grave imperatives. This is very clearly reflected in the regime of George W. Bush. Since King Gyanendra's responsibilities are different, he should not be influenced by the behavior of leaders of bigger countries. He has his own imperatives, which he has to confront with his own judgment. He must not permit, at any cost, any amount of pressure, from whatever quarter it might come, to impress upon him because all are motivated by their own interests or constraints. King Gyanendra must never lose sight of the axiomatic truth that whoever volunteers help or cooperation, even to the needy, will always try to exact his pound of flesh. As such, King Gyanendra has no option but to tackle the situation himself. Of course, he would need wise and sound advice so that he will be able to fulfill his commitment in the stipulated time. King Gyanendra is fully aware, it is the teeming millions of poor Nepalis who need his attention, concern and service, and not a handful of corrupt and quisling politicians. They are expendable, not the people. Since only a free and fair election can produce a new generation of patriotic politicians, the only course left open to him is the general elections, and Nepal's good friends must join him in this noble task. Why should the extremely anti-Communist Nepali Congress align itself with the Maoist insurgents is plainly clear for everyone who can keep his eyes open. If it is not the greed for power then what is it? Thrown in the wilderness for such a long time, they have lost all their senses of judgment. How can a patriotic Nepali even think of a Republican Nepal? The anti-king agitation is nothing but a marriage of convenience between opposing forces, detrimental to Nepal's interests. Consequently, all those who want peace and democracy restored in Nepal soon, must cooperate with King Gyanendra and not pressurize him to give in to anti-national forces. Since this is not a time to rush but to think and act sagaciously, every well wisher of Nepal has to give second thoughts to what he speaks and how he acts. ■

Madhav Kumar Rimal
Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Relevant issue

You have raised the issue of public concern through the cover story this issue "ECONOMY: Struck By Inflation" (SPOTLIGHT February 24). In fact, the current rate of inflation has come as a nightmare for the public. At a time when normal economic activities are frequently disrupted by programs of political parties, Maoists and the government alike to achieve their short and mid-term political goals, the high rate of inflation has added pain to injury. By covering the issue you have raised 'the voice of the voiceless' and we can but only hope that the situation improves.

Preeti Nyaupane
Banasthali

concern he showed for the problems of Nepal is praiseworthy, it was not clear on certain assertions and I have a *different* point of view on such issues. He has stated that the system is very close to collapse, but does not elaborate how that was so. The country is certainly in a crisis. I being an optimistic person, do not see it close to collapse. However, looking at the panic-situation, it seems a real change is overdue. Such a change will establish normalcy in the country in the due course of time.

Jeet Bahadur Thapa
Baluwatar

Words of Caution

The interview of American ambassador Moriarty "We Want To Prevent Nepal From Becoming A Crazy Totalitarian State" (SPOTLIGHT February 24)" should help to open our eyes to the prevailing danger to Nepal. He has provided wise words of caution that all Nepalese should carefully and seriously think about. In a zeal to overthrow the direct rule by the King, the parties are beginning to get trapped in the 'deadly embrace' of the Maoists. At this moment words of cautions like those of Moriarty are hard to come by.

Kamal Pokharel
Hattisar

Analytical Article

The cover story this issue was very analytical and informative "ECONOMY: Struck By Inflation" (SPOTLIGHT February 24). As you have written, the high rate of inflation at the most odd times, is hitting the consumers hard. The growth of inflation ensued by frequent rise in fuel prices coupled by a low economic growth due to the conflict related reasons has started to increase anxiety in the people. They have started to feel insecure about their economic future. Had it not been for the remittances, the economy probably would have already collapsed. At these hours of crisis, it is the responsibility of the government, the political parties as well as the Maoists to make it a point not to conduct any activity that would hinder the normal economic activities. After all, they should understand that they are not going to remain unaffected if the entire economy collapses.

Dhirendra Pradhan
Ekantakuna

Peace Endangered

I agree with Prakash Man Singh's opinion that the US ambassador's recent comment has endangered peace in Nepal "Moriarty's Statement Endangered the Peace" (SPOTLIGHT February 24). By

bypassing the Maoists, which has created a complete reign in the rural areas and a reign through terror in the urban areas, there is no way we can attain peace. The parties, the Maoists as well as the monarch should think about this and not follow his remarks blindly.

Pratibha Shrestha
Maharajgunj

Promote Foreign Employment

As you have written in the cover story this issue the high rate of inflation has threatened the macro-economic stability "ECONOMY: Struck By Inflation" (SPOTLIGHT February 24). The economy has survived so far due to the remittances. While, foreign employment cannot be a permanent solution to the ailing economy, it can certainly be a relief. So, at such time of crisis, I think, it would be wise for the government and private sector to promote foreign employment opportunities.

Radha Khadka
Nepaltar

Different Point of View

I read the interview with the American Ambassador to Nepal James Francis Moriarty "We Want To Prevent Nepal From Becoming A Crazy Totalitarian State" (SPOTLIGHT February 24). While, it was quite insightful on most grounds and the

Leave Business Alone

The economic activities in the country have been badly affected by the ongoing insurgency "ECONOMY: Struck By Inflation" (SPOTLIGHT February 24). Due to frequent strikes, extortion and intimidation to entrepreneurs and lack of security has disrupted normal functioning of business activities. Not only investors are shying away from investing in new ventures existing businesses are also on the threat of survival. While, many businesses have closed down as a result, others are on the verge of closing down. If these situation persists, it will not be long before the entire economy collapses. So, it is high time now that the government, the Maoists and the political parties be serious on this matter and leave the business sector free from violence and disruptions.

Anju Shrestha
Kalimati

“This State Is In Danger Of Collapse”: Moriarty

Reiterating his stance that only reconciliation between the King and the parties can save Nepal from turning into a failed state, American ambassador to Nepal James Francis Moriarty has feared the takeover by the Maoists if (reconciliation) doesn't happen. “I believe this state is in danger of collapse - I cannot state it more clearly - if the King and the parties do not cooperate, if the King doesn't reach out to the parties and plan a way back to democracy,” Moriarty said in an interview with Kantipur Television. He said that the actions and words by Maoist leaders since the withdrawal of their unilateral ceasefire suggest that they have not abandoned violence. He added that the Maoists need to clarify what they mean by “bourgeoisie parliamentary democracy” which they intend to dislodge in favor of their ‘new type of democracy’. *Compiled from reports.*

Clash In Palpa, 16 Maoists Killed

Security forces have claimed that they killed 16 Maoists during a fierce fighting that erupted around Satyabati area near the border between Palpa and Rupandehi district on Sunday (February 26). Eleven security personnel were also injured in the incident. Forces also claimed of seizing few weapons from the Maoists. *Compiled from reports.*

India Commits Rs 4 Billion Assistance For Road Project

Indicating an important shift in its ‘Nepal police’ since February 1, 2005, Indian government has agreed to assist in a big development project that had remained suspended for the last three years. Indian government's approval to assist in the huge road project worth Rs 4.64 billion is seen as an attempt by New Delhi to improve its relations with the Nepal establishment – the relations had soured since February 1, 2005 royal steps after which India suspended military aid and applied pressure on the King to

restore democracy. The project includes building 22 link roads that will connect a number of Terai cities with East West Highway. The total length of the roads would be 552 km including 14 big bridges. Likewise, India has also agreed to assist in the construction of 553 km of postal road in Terai area. The project would be carried out in two phases to be completed by next five years. Diplomatic sources say this Indian move is a second significant policy shift by foreigners in recent weeks. Earlier, American ambassador James Moriarty had termed the 12-point understanding between the parties and the Maoists as ‘wrongheaded.’ *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

Parties Press Maoists To Abide By Pact

Even as they declared that they would not back off from the 12-point understanding, leaders of seven parties have pressed the Maoists to abide by the pact. Speaking at an interaction program on Saturday (February 25), leaders said the pact provided a proper roadmap for peace and democracy in the country. Arjun Narsingh KC, leader of Nepali Congress, said the pact was aimed at mainstreaming the Maoists. He, however, added that the Maoists were breaching the pact in many instances. “Even now abductions continue, our party workers continue to be harassed and violence continues,” KC said, urging the Maoists to abide by the pact. Pradip Gyawali, leader of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), urged the Maoists to abandon the violence as it was hindering the progress of peaceful agitation. Lilamani Pokharel, vice president of People's Front (PF), said that the US ambassador's suspicion over the 12-point pact is ‘meaningless.’ Likewise, former army chief Satchit SJB Rana urged the parties to join hands with the King and sever their ties with the Maoists. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

Congress Urges Maoists To Abide By Understanding

Amid concerns shown by the United States over the Maoist

commitment to enter into peaceful multiparty politics, Nepali Congress (NC) – a key alliance leader of the seven party front that had entered into 12-point understanding with the Maoists – has urged the insurgents to abide by their commitment in the pact. The informal meeting of the central working committee of NC held on Thursday (February 24) has regretted the continuation of extortion and abductions by the Maoists. The meeting also discussed the state of the agitation by the seven parties. The meeting concluded that there is no alternative to intensifying the agitation. According to central member Arjun Narsingh KC, the meeting discussed the ‘modalities’ of including professionals like lawyers, professors, journalists, rights workers and larger civil society in the agitation. Meanwhile, Amik Sherchan, president of People's Front (PF), has accused the Maoists of breaching the 12-point understanding by continuing to attack political workers. He said Dip Raj Barma, a leader of PF in Banke district, had been recently attacked by the Maoists when he was participating in a peaceful program in Betani village. Barma is receiving treatment, he said. Issuing a statement, Sherchan has condemned the attack and termed it as ‘blatant breach’ of the understanding. *Leading dailies report.*

Review 12-Point Pact, Moriarty Tells Parties

The United States, on Thursday (February 24), suggested the political parties rethink their 12-point understanding with the Maoists, reports The Himalayan Times daily. In a ‘breakfast meeting’ at his residence with leaders of political parties, US ambassador James F. Moriarty, is learnt to have expressed his country's strong reservations on the 12-point pact, stating that the Maoists continue to ‘resort to violence, harbor an anti-American stance’ and lack commitment for democratic transformation. “It was a courtesy call and we discussed the current political situation,” Arjun Narsingh KC of the NC told the

daily. Prakash Man Singh of the NC-Democratic, too, said it was a 'courtesy call.' Citing Maoists continued violence, Moriarty is learnt to have told leaders that the understanding was not going to resolve the current crisis. The leaders were also told that the US cannot trust the Maoists' commitment to the pact. Party sources said the ambassador pressed for the unification of the NC and the NC-D, and the political parties' reconciliation with the King as two key steps towards restoration of 'full democracy.' The envoy is also learnt to have told leaders that the democratic movement will have the international community's support if the parties snap ties with the Maoists. Conveying their parties' respective stances, the party sources said, "The leaders told the US envoy that the parties want the constitution re-activated, and parliament restored before reconciling with the monarch." *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

Maoist Leaders Arrested

Security forces arrested two Maoist leaders from a hospital in Lalitpur. They were identified as chief of Morang People's Government Shrawan Rishidev and another district-level leader Dinesh Bhandari. They were undergoing treatment at the hospital since last week. Police arrested them based on a tip-off. Rishidev was undergoing treatment after meeting with a motorcycle accident. Bhandari has problems in his legs. In a separate incident, police have arrested a Maoist worker suspected of opening fire at a mayoral candidate for Lalitpur municipality. Roshan Thapa was arrested from Kathmandu and has been charged of attempting to kill Dal Bahadur Rai. *Leading dailies report.*

Koirala Holds Talks With Deuba, Unity On The Cards

Nepali Congress (NC) president Girija Prasad Koirala held an extensive talk with Nepali Congress (NC-Democratic) president Sher Bahadur Deuba at his residence in Maharajgunj

on Wednesday (February 23) discussing a wide range of topics including political situation, seven parties' agitation and unity of NC. "You may understand that the process of unification has began," Koirala told reporters after the meeting. Likewise, Deuba added that while the meeting focused on how to restore democracy, talks on unity were also held. "But the unity is a complicated process. Both the parties have their separate institutions up to the district and ward level. NC-Democratic has always supported the idea of respectful unity," Deuba told reporters. This is the first meeting Koirala held with Deuba after the latter was released from prison sentences by the Supreme Court's order to dissolve the Royal Commission for Corruption Control (RCCC). A few days ago, senior Congress leader and its former president Krishna Prasad Bhattarai had urged both Koirala and Deuba to reunite the party stating that Congress unity was necessary to ensure the restoration of democracy in the country. *Compiled from reports.*

UML Proposes Democratic Front

The Central Committee meeting of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) has floated a new idea of forming a broader United Democratic Front including all forces working for the 'end of autocratic monarchy and restoration of democracy.' The meeting, which will continue on Thursday also, proposed the idea in order to strengthen the agitation. "Till now there are different democratic forces working separately. We want to bring all such forces under a united front to strengthen the hands of democrats," said Pradeep Nepal, spokesperson of the UML. The party central committee has decided to present its proposal to the seven parties for further discussion. The meeting was chaired by acting general secretary Amrit Kumar Bohara. The proposal for united front also includes intensifying such programs that will stifle the source of revenue and foreign aid

weakening the regime; launching general strikes, demonstrations; disrupting aerial and custom points; appealing police and army personnel to join the agitation or remain neutral and so on. In the meeting, additional programs for agitation were also proposed. As per the proposal, big demonstrations will be held in major urban centers between March 13 and April 1. A huge demonstration will then be held in Kathmandu on April 8 following with 'non-cooperation' program will be launched across the country. Likewise, the elected representatives of the municipalities will be provided deadline to resign from their positions. *Leading dailies report.*

NRB To Stem Price Rise With New Monetary Tools

Being harried by the rising inflationary pressure and a price rise in petroleum products, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has introduced new monetary instruments to control inflation and bring about price stability. Bijay Nath Bhattarai, governor of NRB, while releasing a mid-term review of monetary policy has said that the central bank, as a policy response to the risk of inflation, has revised bank rates by 25 basis points to 6.25 percent from an earlier level of 6 percent, which is expected to bring about stability in the money market and prices. Bhattarai also observed that there would be a low GDP growth rate in coming days due to low performance by major economic sectors. He, however, did not divulge the figures for GDP. Krishna Bahadur Manandhar, deputy governor of NRB, said that the bank rate is an indication for the banking sector, which guides 'interest rates' of banks. NRB already has over Rs 12 billion in treasury bills, which is enough to maintain market stability, informed Manandhar. According to central bank officials, NRB with Wednesday's (February 22) announcement, can intervene anytime in the money market through open market operations to ensure the financial sector's stability. *The Himalayan Times daily reports.* ■



King Gyanendra and Queen Komal visit Pashupatinath Temple on the occasion of Mahashivaratri

Gorkhapatra

KING GYANENDRA AND QUEEN KOMAL GRACED THE ARMY Day function at Tundikhel on Sunday. The Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) displayed its various weapons and its current action against terrorism in the show. Meanwhile, the royal couple also visited the Temple of Pashupatinath in the evening and prayed to Lord Shiva on the occasion of Mahashivaratri festival – one of the biggest festivals of Hindu. According to Pashupati Area Development Trust (PADT), around 250,000 pilgrims visited the shrine on Sunday.

CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF (COAS), ROYAL NEPALESE Army (RNA), General Pyara Jung Thapa has called on to move on constitutional and legal path. In a message he delivered to the army on the occasion of Mahashivaratri and Army Day, General Rana instructed to become sensitive towards international humanitarian laws and human rights. He said the RNA moving ahead with the target of realizing the sovereign Nepalis' aspiration for security and peace, is heading towards victory. Stating that the joint attempts by the King, people and the army had been successful to resolve crises faced by the nation since its unification, he added he was confident of similar success in facing the present crises. General Thapa lauded the patience, courage, dedication and incomparable contribution of the RNA personnel in the interest of the nation. He also praised the encouragement given by family members of the RNA personnel.

DISPUTE RAGING BETWEEN TAX OFFICERS AND traders has been resolved after a meeting was held between them at the initiative of Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC) and Nepal Trans-Himalayan Traders' Association. According to Durga Bahadur Shrestha, president of the association, dispute has now been resolved. "From Friday, shops will open," he said. In the meeting, the tax officers agreed not to harass the traders by demanding different documents. They, however, will be authorized to demand invoices. Meanwhile, Dr. Roop Jyoti, Minister of State for Finance, said that problems cannot be resolved by coming out on streets. "Traders should rather abide by their tax duty," he said. Dr. Jyoti claimed that the government and the tax office has no intention of harassing the traders. Earlier, protesting the mobilization of tax officers to raid shops, the traders and

shopkeepers had closed down their shops in New Road area on Wednesday and Thursday (February 24).

AN INDIAN MINISTER HAS SAID THAT NEPAL GOVERNMENT has requested India for releasing the military assistance that remains stalled since February 1, 2005, reports Kantipur daily. Speaking at the meeting in Lok Sabha (Indian parliament), Indian Minister for State for External Affairs E. Ahmed said that India had received information that Nepal had brought military supplies from China, Pakistan and other third countries.

TWO FOREIGN DONORS HAVE JOINED HANDS WITH THE objective of investing in programs aimed at strengthening sustainable democratic governance and internal governance reforms of political parties. Britain's Department for International Development (DFID) and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) have announced joint program amounting to Rs 350 million. According to the donors, "Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund" will be implemented initially for three years. The donors expressed their steadfast support for multiparty democracy in the country.

SPEAKERS AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SESSION in Brussels have demanded 'smart sanctions' against the King and his aides, reports Kantipur daily. Remarking that the rulers in Nepal have turned 'deaf' after last year's royal steps, they also urged for stopping RNA from being deployed in the UN peacekeeping missions abroad. They also called for appointing special representative to initiate dialogue with all actors. The parliament had invited UN human rights office chief in Nepal Ian Martin and other Nepali human rights officials including Sushil Pyakurel and Gauri Pradhan to present their case. The government representative Diwakar Panta, head of the human rights committee at the Prime Ministers Office, was, however, not allowed to speak due to lack of time.

THE ROYAL NEPALESE ARMY (RNA) IS ALL SET TO recruit about 3000 soldiers, a move that will pave way for the formation of Regional Corps in the near future. The cabinet recently approved the RNA's proposal of recruiting 3000 soldiers and officers. "The recruitment of an additional 3000 soldiers will increase the RNA's strength to 100,000, and that will suffice to form two Corps," an official at the Ministry of Defense told The Himalayan Times daily. The Corps are being planned for the eastern and western regions. A source at the ministry said homework has been done for establishing the Corps, but due to senior RNA general's 'promotion-related matters' it may take some time. "The RNA is also planning to separately recruit 6000 more soldiers this year for the division that provides security to National Parks and Wildlife Reserves," said the ministry official. The cost of training one person in the first year of his/her recruitment, according to an army official, is about Rs 300,000, while the same amounts to about Rs 100,000 from the second year onwards. The RNA, which is currently busy drafting a National Security Policy through the National Security Council, operates from the Central Headquarters as well as Division Headquarters in the five development regions. "Only the Corps Headquarters are planned initially for the two regions (east and west). It will be expanded gradually," the Ministry official said. ■

“E very body wishes for unity. But it is easier said than done as both the parties have established organizations up to district level.”

Sher Bahadur Deuba, former prime minister and president of Nepali Congress (Democratic), talking to reporters.

* * *

“I believe this state is in danger of collapse - I cannot state it more clearly - if the King and the parties do not cooperate, if the King doesn't reach out to the parties and plan a way back to democracy.”

James Francis Moriarty, American ambassador to Nepal, in an interview with Kantipur Television.

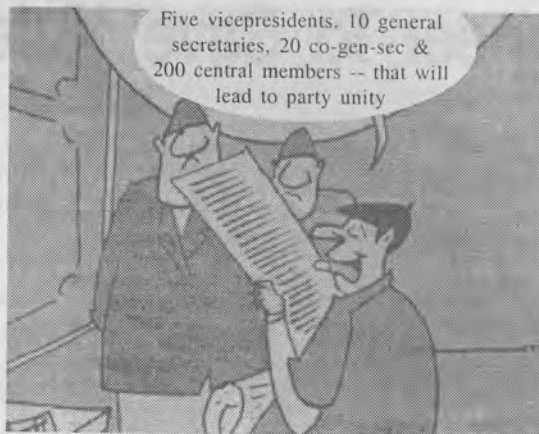
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“Economy is a complement of politics, so economy cannot revive until political situation improves. I cannot say that the economy will collapse by June as Dr. Raghav Dhoj Panta has said but it is certain that the coming days will be very scary.”

Dr. Tilak Rawal, former governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, in Aajako Abhayan.

* * *

“T here is no possibility of Item-9 being implemented in Nepal.”



Diwakar Pant, Coordinator of Human Rights of the government, in Jana Bhawana.

* * *

“Nepali Congress's unification is no more a concern of just the two party factions but all best-wishers of democracy in Nepal.”

Bijaya Kumar Gachchedar, leader and former general secretary of Nepali Congress - Democratic, talking to journalists after an informal party meeting, in The Kathmandu Post.

* * *

“UML's vision on the issue of Nationality is not much different from the (Royal) palace's vision.”

Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta, former leader of Nepali Congress, in Jana Astha.

* * *

“I f we cannot stand together, neither the country nor the democracy will survive. So, we must stand together.”

Dr. Bhola Kishor Dongol, Educationist and political analyst, speaking at an interaction program, at the Reporters' Club, in Gorkhapatra.

* * *

“W ish alone is not enough. A conducive atmosphere has to be created.”

Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat, leader of Nepali Congress, speaking at a program in Kathmandu.

* * *

TRANSITION

LEFT: Ramesh Nath Pandey, Foreign Minister, for India, to participate in an academic interaction to be held at Benaras Hindu University.

APPOINTED: Ishwar Lal Shrestha, as the chairman and Rajeshwar Prasad Pant, as the executive director of Cottage and Small Scale Industries Development Board, Bishnu Das Dongol, as the general manager of Nepal Transit and Godown Management Company Ltd, Janak Bahadur Karki, as the general

manager of Industrial Estate Management Ltd., Rishav Dev Sharma, as the general manager of National Trading Ltd., Krishna Bhakta Shrestha, as the general manager of Nepal Food Corporation and Rajani Shrestha, as the general manager of Royal Drugs Ltd., by the government.

RETURNED: Park San Hoon, Korean Ambassador to Nepal, to Korea, after completing his term in Nepal.

RE-ARRESTED: Krishna Sitaula, spokesperson of Nepali Congress (NC), by the police, from his residence in Maitidevi.

ARRESTED: Shrawan Rishidev, identified as chief of Morang People's Government, and Dinesh Bhandari, a district level leader, from a hospital in Lalitpur, by the police.

AWARDED: Punya Rashmi, with the 'Sita Ram Award -2061', for commendable contribution in drama, stories and novels since last three decades, and Pratistha Amatya Bista, with the 'Sita Ram Youth Award 2061', by Sita Ram Academy.

BEREAVED: Nim Kanta Pandey, publisher and editor of Jana Dharana weekly, of his mother.

Appeal To Save Kulekhani-3 Potential

By DR. AB THAPA

It is reported in local newspapers that our government has approved the plan to implement the 15 MW Kulekhani-3 Project. It is quite regrettable that we often take decision even on very important subjects without thoroughly examining their wider implications. The decision to implement the 15 MW Kulekhani-3 Project is indeed going to be a big mistake. Such decision would deprive us of the opportunity to develop the big sized 75 MW Kulekhani-3 Project which is perhaps the most cost effective hydropower project to help us to a certain extent to resolve the problem to fulfill our present need for the peaking energy. The 15 MW Kulekhani-3 Project and any of its other alternatives with a capacity in excess of 15 MW including the 75 MW Kulekhani-3 Project would be mutually exclusive. As a result, the prospect of developing 75 MW Kulekhani-3 Project would be doomed forever. It is earnestly hoped that the concerned government agencies would thoroughly examine the entire gamut of the Kulekhani-3 Project before taking the final decision to implement this project.

Capacity of Kulekhani-3 Hydropower

Government of Japan had provided financial assistance to conduct feasibility study of the Kulekhani-3 Hydropower. Study team had considered various alternative capacities ranging from 15MW to 75 MW. They had rightly proposed that the capacity of the Kulekhani-3 Project should be raised to about 75 MW (originally it was 54 MW) to supply electricity to meet the demand for peaking energy. Topography and other related conditions allow increasing the capacity of this project without undue rise in the project cost.

Kulekhani-3, indeed, is the most suitable project to meet our peaking energy demand. It is unfortunate that our experts in the NEA, Planning Commission and Electricity Department never seem to have understanding about the capacity value of hydropower generation. They are all the time insisting upon only the direct energy value solely in terms of the generation cost of per KWh electricity. In their opinion the 15 MW Kulekhani-3 Project is far better by comparison with the 54 MW or 75 MW Kulekhani-3.

Nepal is now experiencing an acute shortage of electricity to meet the demand for peaking. The proposed 75 MW Kulekhani Project could help to soften the impact of present power shortage crisis. The proposed 75 MW

Kulekhani-3 Project is not a complicated project and, thus, it could be implemented within a short period.

The Kulekhani Reservoir and Existing Power Stations

The proposed Kulekhani development plan consists of a reservoir on the Kulekhani River with an effective storage volume of 73.3 million cu. m. and three hydropower stations in a cascade. The upper two hydropower stations (Kulekhani 1 & 2) have already been built. The last hydropower station in the cascade is the Kulekhani-3, which is now proposed to be taken up for implementation.

The Kulekhani reservoir operation rule for the Kulekhani-1 with an installed capacity of 60MW is framed by a basic discharge pattern of 6.2 cum./sec. in the dry season from

December to March and 2.1 cum./sec. in the wet season from April to November. The former is designed to generate four-hour peak power using the maximum discharge of 13.1 cum./sec. and 20-hour base load using 4.8 cum./sec. The latter is to utilize 6.55 cum./sec. for the peak power and 1.21 cum./sec. for the base load respectively.

Available water for the Kulekhani-2 power station with an installed capacity of 32 MW is comprised of the outflow from the Kulekhani-1 and the runoff of the Mandu river. The firm discharge of the latter with 90% dependability at the intake is estimated to be 0.2

cum./sec. both in winter and summer. Thus the maximum Kulekhani-2 discharge is designed to be 13.3 cum./sec.

High Price of Peaking Energy in Thailand

Thailand's electricity authorities have proved themselves to be extremely capable in handling the electricity planning. They have undertaken their generation expansion plan with great care taking full advantage of the experience gained by the developed countries in this field. They buy electricity from the private developers and the Laos Government in conformity to their actual demand and the purchase price has been fixed based on their true value to the Thailand's electricity authority. Private developers are paid for peak hour supply at a rate almost twice as much as such payment rate for the rest of the time. Unfortunately the decision makers in our NEA never learned to follow sound engineering practice in launching generation expansion plan. We could have easily applied the time of the day tariff for the purchase of electricity from the private developers. Instead, the NEA is appearing to ridicule itself by considering to introduce the time of the

Kulekhani-3, indeed, is the most suitable project to meet our peaking energy demand. It is unfortunate that our experts in the NEA, Planning Commission and Electricity Department never seem to have understanding about the capacity value of hydropower generation. They are all the time insisting upon only the direct energy value solely in terms of the generation cost of per KWh electricity.

day tariff for its sale to its innumerable big and small customers

In 1999 Thailand produced 89.4 billion kilowatt-hours (KWh) of electricity, up from about 3 billion KWh in 1968. Of this, 91 percent was produced by generating plants powered by oil, gas, and coal. The country imported 1 billion KWh of electricity from hydroelectric plants in neighboring Laos. At present the total installed capacity of power stations in Thailand might be well over 20 million KW.

Thailand purchases electricity from the private developers as well as from the Government of Laos. The electricity purchase tariff in force at the end of 1991 was tied up with the supply time. The rates were as presented hereinafter: (a) from 18.30 to 21.30 - 5.80 US Cents/KWh; (b) from 8.00 to 18.30 - 3.32 US Cents/KWh; (c) from 21.30 to 8.00 - 2.65 US Cents/KWh.

Thailand has already embarked on the construction of the pumped storage schemes to meet the growing demand for peaking energy. Many such pumped storage schemes are either in operation or under construction or planned for the construction in future. Lam Ta Khong Pumped-Storage Project is one of such schemes which has recently been completed.

Growing Demand for Peaking Energy in India

At present India is experiencing an acute shortage of peaking energy. At the beginning of the Eight Plan, the total peaking shortage was 20% whereas the energy shortage was only 9% of the total power generation. The thermal and nuclear power stations are suitable to supply electricity to meet the base load demand of the system. It is not economic to use them to supply peaking energy. Unlike Nepal, India is trying to resolve its power shortage problem based on sound engineering principles. It is making every effort to improve the hydrothermal mix for ensuring better system operating condition. However, the share of hydropower in the overall power generating capacity has steadily declined since the last few decades. The share of the hydropower in the overall power generating capacity was 50.6% in 1963. But few years before it has come down to only 25.66%.

Most of the good sites for the hydropower development have already been developed in the Northern India. There are even now several good sites for hydropower development in the North-Eastern India which have not as yet been used. However, such sites are at locations far away from the load centers. As a result, the Government of India in recent years had to embark on a plan to develop the pump storage schemes

Firm Energy Versus Firm Capacity

It is relatively easy to determine the energy value for secondary energy. It is, however, quite a complex task to disaggregate the value of firm energy and firm capacity because the firm energy and the firm capacity are inextricably linked. Despite such difficulties the Karnali Multipurpose Project study provides a good analysis of such disaggregation. The result of disaggregation of benefits into

capacity and energy values derived from the Karnali study report helps to understand how we were terribly wrong to purchase on a big scale at a high price electricity from the private developers that fetches insignificant value.

It should be explained that the Karnali Multipurpose Project would be having a power station with an installed capacity of 10.8 million KW. Firm capacity is expected to be 9 million KW. Average energy of the project would be 20842 GWh/year whereas the firm energy would be 15007 GWh/year. The values presented hereinafter have been discounted at 10% to the year 2001 though the whole analysis of the feasibility study has been discounted to the year 2003.

According to the Karnali Project feasibility study the firm power (capacity and energy) value of the Karnali Project is expected to be US\$ 81.9/MWh. Just the energy value including both firm and secondary energy is expected to be only about US \$ 16.6/MWh. Thus the capacity value of the Karnali Project would be US\$ 65.3/MWh. In other words, the firm capacity value of the Karnali Project is going to be about 4 times greater than the energy value.

In Conclusion

It is strongly urged to review the installed capacity of the Kulekhani-3 hydropower before taking the final decision to implement this very important project. ■

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

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THE GREAT DIVIDE

Pro-Constitution and Anti-Constitution

Nepal's political debate divides in pro-constitution and anti-constitution

By KESHAB POUDEL

When Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala and Nepali Congress Democratic leader Sher Bahadur Deuba met a week ago at the residence of Koirala, overwhelming members of the parties welcomed it. Despite complications of the unification process, all of them have welcomed it.

"The process of unification begins but there are many hurdles before us to complete the unification," said Congress leader Koirala. "Congress unity will bring positive implications in the country."

"It is a lengthy and complicated process as the party has split from top to bottom. I can wish the unity but it is not easy as said," said former prime minister Deuba. "We need mental unity first from grass root to top level. Parties cannot unite on the basis of personal wish of Girijababu or me."

The country has been passing through a great phase of destabilization and it is manifested by divisive trends in the politics. Not only Nepali Congress, even the diehard monarchists like former Panchas are divided in half a dozen different factions.

Whether RPP leader Pashupati Sumsher Rana, former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa or Rajeshwor Devkota or newly established RPP (Thapa)'s leader and home minister Kamal Thapa or Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives Keshar Bahadur Bista, all of them are staunch monarchists - but they are divided among themselves.

When parliament was functional and there were periodical elections, the parties were united sooner. The power through the elections had kept

political organizations united. Several factions of Nepali Congress came closer and merged into a larger one with the motivation of emerging as the largest party in the parliament. Even Congress supremo, late Ganeshman Singh could not split the party, when he was sidelined.

After the dissolution of the parliament when there was no prospect of election, Nepali Congress split into two. Within Nepal Congress, Koirala has own coteries and Ram Chandra Poudel and Narahari Acharya have different coteries. One can see powerful divisive forces in the Congress.

"There are many procedures to unify Nepali Congress. The conditions of our division is still there," said Prakash Man Singh, general secretary of Nepali Congress Democratic.

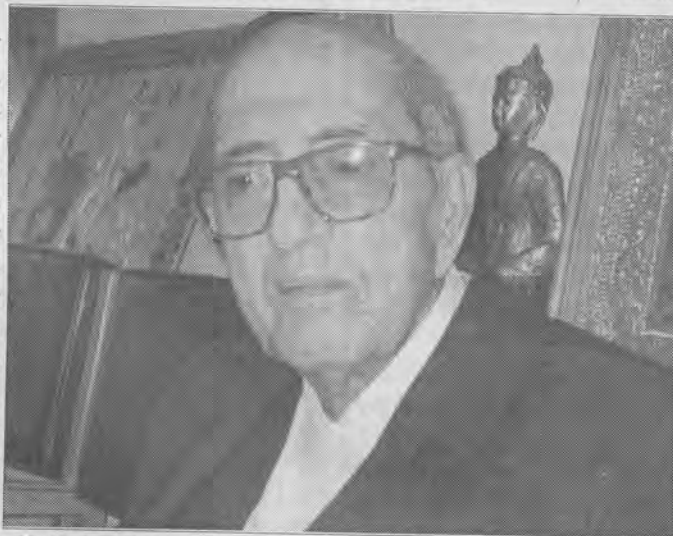
The communist party CPN-UML emerged as the largest party in the second general elections in 1995 and formed a minority government. Though there was split in it before the third general elections, later the split was undone and it emerged as one when it had to contest the third elections.

Similarly, RPP, third largest party, suffered several splits but it reemerged all the time because that was related with the prospect of elections and power sharing. But currently, as there is no parliament and no immediate prospect of elections, the parties have fragile unity with each party having heterogeneous lobbies and groups upholding contradictory demands and slogans.

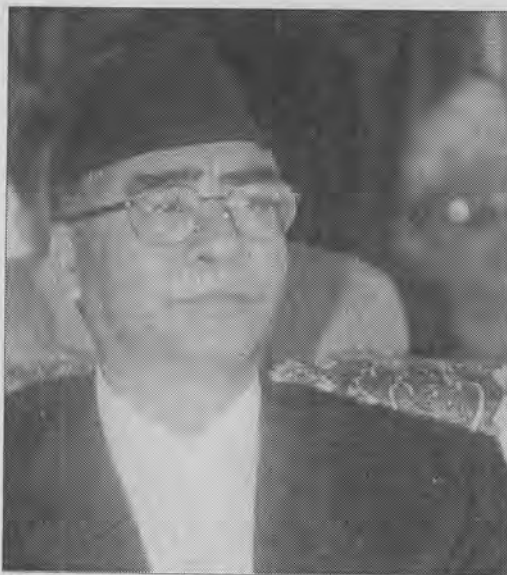
Each party has pro-constitution and anti-constitution divide among itself. In fact, the present politics of Nepal has many dimensions of polarization. Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala's declared policy is to reactivate the constitution through reinstatement of the House of Representatives. But his viewpoints contradicted by his own party leaders. "Only through the Loktantra, we can achieve peace and absolute democracy," said Krishna Sitaula, spokesman of Nepali Congress. "Constituent Assembly has no alternatives to the present political crisis," said Sitaula, who is also a member of National Council. These opinions expressed by two powerful members of the Nepali Congress indicate how they are divided on the basis of pro-constitution and anti-constitution.

Within Nepali Congress (Democratic) and Nepali Congress, there are two different groups struggling to establish themselves on the basis of pro-constitution and anti-constitution. There are sizeable numbers of persons in Nepali Congress who uphold the constitution and sincerely believe that it has all elements of a democratic system.

One aspect of Congress leader Koirala's stress in politics is to begin with the present constitution and face whatever problems that may come thereafter. "The first step should be to reactivate the present constitution through the reinstatement of House of Representatives," said Koirala. Being in a critical position of top leader of unprincipled alliance with Communists, Koirala is still more critical and equivocal regarding the constituent assembly. Knowing the mind of Koirala, there are influential persons behind the scene who



Koirala: Stressing on Constitutional Process



Deuba: "Unity is not easy"

are yet pleading for the activation of the constitution with certain reservation.

Within the party, there is a small section - which speaks about the Constituent Assembly- but none of them have popular base in their constituency like Narahari Acharya, Laxman Ghimire, Bhim Bahadur Tamang, among others.

Although popular issues are being debated in the street, what lacks is an expression through organized leadership. Almost all leaders have an eye upon the government positions but they ignore the popular opinion of the people. The way former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has picked up some popular issues in his recent interviews has touched the heart of reasonable persons.

Never in the last twelve years, the country has seen such a division on the basis of pro-constitution and anti-constitution. With the elected parliament, the King and constitution were beyond controversy. Now, in absence of parliament, both are under attack.

Similarly, in UML also, opinions seem to have been divided into moderate and extremists. A section of UML leaders have become prisoners of their own populist slogans of Constituent Assembly, republic and all kinds of destabilizing slogans.

"The monarchy has already lost its utility and the country is heading towards the republic," said senior CPN-UML leader Bamdev Gautam, who has

been representing extremists in the CPN-UML for a quite a long time.

The position of RPP is unique compared to these as it has a large number of people in the party who have had a long association with the institution of monarchy. For them, this is the most testing time. It has recently split into three organizations.

Pashupati Sumsher Rana leads the main organization of RPP. Though a democrat, he and his colleagues are staunch monarchists. Former Prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa who also has the same faith in the monarchy, leads another group. Home minister Kamal Thapa, who is known equally as staunch monarchist as others and has

capability of persuasion for reconciliation, leads the third and latest faction.

None of the political parties have unified single-minded push for any particular direction. All parties have contradictions as fractions but the greatest divide has now come into a debate as pro-constitution and anti-constitution group.

The silent majority, which has always been decisive, expressed faith upon the present constitution reflecting the general will of the country in favor of the constitution.

"As long as the mysterious machinations continues against the country, none of the parties has chance to emerge with freely unified approach towards the constitution. Groups and factions are the

symptom of destabilizing machinations. There is news that Nepalese people may have general hope that all parties will come closer and factions and groups will vanish away in the same context. People expect that fractions of RPP unite and emerge as non-communist democratic alternatives and same kind of wishful thinking is there about Girija Prasad and

Sher Bahadur Deuba factions of Nepali Congress. As the trend has been set a long time back, none of these have a chance to come to be united (soon)," said a political analyst.

"Fractions and divisions promote the objectives of destabilization and the architect of destabilization will not relent in its divisive actions. The great divide is much prominent as pro-constitution and anti-constitution - though the overwhelming majority of the people may be on the side of pro-constitution spirit - that is the spirit of national unity for prosperity and democracy."

The way out is the reconciliation between the King and the political parties that will reactivate the constitution and hold credible elections. After that the King will remain on his own constitutional limit and the elected parliament and the government responsible to it would come to its decisive position.



Thapa: Multiple splits

Whether it is the American ambassador or other western countries, they are stressing for the reconciliation between the monarch and political parties to reactivate the constitution. The credibility of elections implies a popular government through reconciliation between the King and political parties to avoid that crisis. ■

ADOLESCENT GIRLS' CONGRESS

Making Future Leaders

Though the group is heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity and geographical regions they represent, the decision-making process of adolescent rural girls taking part in three district Consultative Meeting is participatory and democratic as they debate and discuss every matter among them before finalizing it. After implementation of Building Demand for RH Awareness among adolescent Girls (BuD) by the Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA/Nepal) with the support of USAID, this is what the young girls in three districts have learned. With the implementation of BuD, the adolescent girls, who go through drastic changes in their bodies, emotions, capabilities and ways of thinking, secure wide range of knowledge and information regarding reproductive health, health service, education and other issues. Foremost important aspect is they secure the capability of leadership to disseminate the message to community

By KESHAB POUDEL

First they identified the issues and discussed it among them. After reaching consensus on the issues, they finally approved it for implementation in the community. The adolescent girls, who have been taking part in the BuD project, analyze all aspects of the problems faced by other group members before prioritizing it for implementation.

For the different groups taking part in the Adolescent Congress held in capital on February 26-27, they follow the participatory modality with equal voices to all the members. This is the capability all the girls have acquired at the local level during the course of project implementation.

Led by Hasman Khatun, 14, a resident of Aurahi Village of Mahottari District, a group of adolescents girls found health risks associated with Reproductive Health

(RH), early marriage and unwanted pregnancy, education and HIV/AIDS, major threats to women's lives in their own community. Although this is a common problem of all the adolescent girls of Nepal, overwhelming majority of girls cannot share it among their peers.

Khatun, who hails from a conservative Muslim family, does not hesitate to talk on RH. "Since we have been facing many problems like early marriage, trafficking and gender discrimination, we have to raise it.



Girls' Congress: Debating the issues

It is not my problem alone. By listening to the voices of all, we can achieve better results in the project implementation," said Hasman.

Another group led by parent Dhan Maya Nepali, 50, Armoal Chaur village of Baglung district seriously discussed the concerns raised by adolescents girls and agreed to support them to overcome the challenges. The two-day Congress was full of lively debates and discussions about the problems of adolescent girls.

More than 70 adolescent girls, senior officials of District Health Office, District Education Office and the parents of children spent their time discussing the problems and issues of adolescents.

Vulnerable Adolescence

Adolescents are vulnerable in all dimensions of health but are more vulnerable to reproductive health. Girls are always in high risk due to exclusionary cultural tradition based on gender, caste and ethnicity. Due to illiteracy, poverty and on going conflict, there are added risks resulting in a situation where adolescent girls are exposed to violence, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS and trafficking.

The largest-ever generation of young people aged 10-19 are now making the transition from childhood to adulthood. According to human rights and reproductive health advocates who put child marriage on the international agenda,

marriage during the teenage years is particularly harmful for women: autonomy is limited and sexual activities are uniformed perhaps even coercive and dangerous to women's health.

Nepal's one third of girls are still married prior to age 18. In order to understand the dynamic of marriage, there is a need to collect information on social, cultural and economic factors that affect life decisions among young people.

In Mahottari (terai) and Baglung, there are two culturally distinct social systems. In both provinces, marriage age has been increasing moderately but at different paces. In terai, early adolescent marriage (under age 15) has declined perceptibly, yet two thirds of recently married women had married by the time they were age 18. Among women in Baglung, in contrast, marriage is increasingly being delayed. Education, even at the primary level, is associated with sharply increased marital age.

Although they are adolescent rural girls with very poor education background and low economic status than their urban counterparts, they are smart, transparent, interactive and informative as seen in the manner they raised issues from Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS to other health problems. The participants of the two days three District Consultative Meeting (Girls Congress) under Building Demand for Reproductive Health Among Conflict Affected Districts of Nepal (BuD

for RH) Project also showed unique quality of leadership.

At the floor of Shanker Hotel, a luxurious hotel of capital Kathmandu, the rural adolescent girls demonstrated their skills, information and knowledge. Though the ages, academic background, economic status is incomparable with participants of other seminars usually held in this kind of star hotels in capital, the adolescents girls smartly raised fundamental and genuine issues prevailing in Nepal.

Implemented in 15 VDCs in three program districts covering a little more than 26 percent 2998 of the total adolescent girls (11410) in the area comprising of 1,155 out of school and 1,843 in schoolgirls, BuD is a model project aimed to generate awareness on RH and to build the future leaders for the communities.

Nepal's Problems

Studies have shown that RH is one of the major problems faced by adolescent girls. Only through generating awareness on RH, the country can minimize high maternal mortality, infant mortality, and high prevalence of STIs, illiteracy and poverty. If adolescents are involved in the program, they will carry it for a long period of time, as they will have to play many roles in future including mother, community mobilizers and leaders.

"Implementing the BuD for RH project, CEDPA/Nepal tries to minimize the magnitude of the gap by enhancing the knowledge and skills of reproductive health and its practices among adolescent girls," said Ms. Yolonda Richardson, president and CEO of CEDPA, who was in Kathmandu to see the Congress. "These girls, who didn't have access to political, social and health, can say now where the access are available. Once you give hope to adolescents, it will never extinct and no one can snatch it from them."

With the support from USAID, CEDPA/ Nepal is implementing the project through three local partners - Aama Milan Kendra, Nepal Red Cross Society and Nepal Technical Assistance Group.

"They are here to discuss the RH but all these girls acquire the skills and capability for the leadership. They are leaders of future who can contribute to change in the communities," said Ms. Linda Kentro, Development Assistance Specialist, USAID/ Nepal.

In all three districts, school drop out, social and cultural based gender



Young girls: Significant opportunity

discriminations are rampant and socio-cultural environment compel large number of adolescents girls to marry in early age.

"Our efforts are still small and we need to take more drastic steps to prevent early marriage," said Samikchya Bohara, 16, a resident of Paunipata village of Baglung Village Development Committee. "We need not hesitate to discuss about the growth of our body and complications of early marriage in our life."

The adolescents girl aged between 10 to 19 in-school and out-school of three conflict prone districts have many common problems. Most of them are unknown to RH, complications of early marriage, girl trafficking. Worse, the higher rate of school drop out, limited access to health, lack of employment opportunity and gender discrimination are creating more problems.

Although their discussions mostly focused RH, the adolescents girls spared a lot of time to discuss education, HIV/AIDS, trafficking, gender discrimination, health problems, community awareness, early marriage, linking the programs in society and technical training.

By participating in the discussions and debates, these girls have learned the skills to improve their capability to work as catalytic workers to mobilize the community to defend the rights of adolescent girls in their neighborhood.

Like this District Consultative Meeting, these girls conducted similar programs at different level following participatory and interactive process. As the girls know that participatory process is effective where each member has time to present his/her points of view, the decision

is finalized only after intense debate in the group.

Following participatory approach, these girls have been taking message of RH, education and other social problems and democratic attitudes at the bottom of society. As Nepal is in transition of change moving from traditional system to modern democracy, this kind of practices will help to develop a much-

needed new culture. "In a society with low literacy, high school drops out and early marriage, the implementation of BuD has brought many changes in rural areas helping young rural girls to overcome their problems" said Krishna Prasad Kafle, District Education Office of Mahotari District. "The rate of drop out in program implemented areas has drastically reduced."

"Whether in the central level like this or the village level, we take the decision following intense debates and discussions. All the members are given equal opportunities to express their views, as these are the problems of all. We all are leaders and workers," said Maheshwori B.K. 15, a Dalit girl from Hatileta VDC of Mahottari district.

"A health posts, school building can be destroyed in the conflict. But once you



Richardson: "Girls Are Assets"

train a person injecting new ideas on her, it will last forever. These young girls are now asset for the community with a leadership quality," said Yolonda C. Richardson.

Goma Khadka, 15, whose two sisters are already married and have one offspring each, has seen difficulties and complications in early marriage in her own house. After taking part in the CEDPA/Nepal's BuD program in the last two years, Khadka is in a position to generate awareness among the local populations on implications of early marriage and importance of education and to build the confidence and self-sufficiency to the girls.

Had she was not dropped out, Ganga Bhujel, 19, a resident of Beltar village of Udayapur, 450 miles east of Nepal, would have been a student of 10th grade by now. Thanks to the implementation of BuD project, she has now enrolled again at Seventh grade at local high school following completion of a year of informal education. "Education opens my eyes," said Bhujel, a girl of under privileged community.

"The adolescents girls have changed the attitudes of local communities towards education, health, RH and other related issues," said Dr. Ram Kumar Shrestha chairman of Nepal Technical Assistance Group, which has been implementing the BuD program in Mahaottari district. "The knowledge and skills the these girls acquired through the project make them future leaders in community."

Although she was grown up in a remote parts of Chitepani Village Development Committee of Baglung district, 250 miles west of capital, Usha Chhetri, 16, a student of class 9, has high awareness level in the issues like RH, HIV/AIDS, trafficking and unsafe sex and health problems of adolescent girls than any urban girls. "Every woman should be given right to decide about her body," said Chhetri. After attending the program under the BuD, Chhetri is now is generating awareness in her neighborhood about RH.

As Dr. Chhatra Amatya, country director CEDPA/ Nepal says: "If an individual is empowered to take decision in life regarding oneself, one's health and education, one's role in the society, it empowers a person not only to take care of oneself but also to seek help from others to advocate for support from parents, teachers and other people in the society."

“Empowered Person Not Only Take Care Of Oneself But Also Advocate The Cause”

DR. CHHATRA AMATYA

DR. CHHATRA AMATYA, Country Director of CEDPA/Nepal, has experience of working for more than three decades in the Ministry of Health. Dr. Amatya has extensive field knowledge on reproductive health (RH) in Nepal. She spoke to SPOTLIGHT on various issues regarding activities launched by CEDPA. Excerpts:

How do you see the implementation of Building Demand for Reproductive Health among the adolescent girls in the conflict-affected districts?

Well, we have introduced BuD program two years ago in three conflict prone districts three geographical regions of Nepal. We have been implementing it in Baglung, Mahottari and Udayapur districts through the local partners Aama Milan Kendra, Nepal Technical Assistance Group and Nepal Red Cross Society respectively. In recent Congress the girls have shown their interacting capability and their base of knowledge. So far the result is quite satisfactory and the girls have acquired what they were supposed to achieve.

What are the major aspects of the BuD project?

One of the major aspects of the project is to offer adolescents girl opportunities for all round personal development focusing on RH and to build leadership quality. Conducting the Three District Consultative meeting in Kathmandu, the adolescent girls have demonstrated their leadership capability. It is a long-term process particularly when you are focusing on the behavioral change as one cannot see the result of behavior change in overnight. It is quite interesting to see these adolescents who are openly discussing issues about their health, RH, unsafe sex, unsafe abortion, masturbation and growth of body and their requirement.

What process do you follow to implement it?

If I have to answer the process, CEDPA - which is the pioneer organization to increase educational opportunities for girls, ensure access to lifesaving reproductive health and HIV/AIDS information and services, and strengthening women's leadership - has its own global manual known as Choose A Future Manual (CAF). The manual has 12 modules which covers topics like Me, Myself, Goals and plans, our families, community, work, friends and marriage, partnership, parenthood, puberty, reproduction health, legal rights, environment, us and together.

How do you adopt the model in Nepal?

We have adopted it in Nepal as Choose a Future for Girl. As our mission is to empower women, families, communities and societies with the realization that they're full worth and values as a full partner of development. Taking all these into account this model has been prepared in such a way that it first provides individual to introduce self to himself/herself - To know who I am? What is my identity, what is my body like and what takes place inside my body and what is the physiology of body. How to protect from unsafe sex preventing the infection of sexually transmitted disease and also how not to get trafficked. Starting from personality development to knowing about one's body physiology as well as what is happening in the society, the manual gives everything.

How do you see the results?

If adolescent girls are empowered to take decision in life regarding oneself, one's health and education, one's role in the society, it will bring tremendous change in community. Our experiences have shown that empowered person not only take care of oneself but also advocate their cause through their parents, teachers and other people in the society.

In which areas are your program implemented?

Based on CAF principle, we implemented this program in three districts Udayapur in eastern region, Mahottari in central region and Baglung in western region. If you look at selections of these districts in terms of geographical areas, they represent three different topography of Nepal - hill, terai and mountain respectively. In terms of development region, they represent eastern, central and western region.

What is the mission of CEDPA/Nepal?

CEDPA/ Nepal's mission is to empower women, families, communities and societies with realization of their full worth and value as full partners in development. We have been working towards achieving our mission by helping rural women and girls to acquire knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions. BuD is one of the important programs helping rural women and girls to acquire knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and to take appropriate actions to address their education social and reproductive health needs. Our organization provides technical assistance to the government at national, district and local levels and to implementing NGOs, private institutions and practitioners.

How do you choose the girls?

We have chosen the adolescents girls in two ways. First we selected adolescent girls from schools. For that purpose, one school each from five VDCs of the district is chosen. These girls have privilege to go to schools. We have also other groups of adolescent girls who don't have privilege to go to school. Some of these girls either have never gone to school or have dropped out.

How do you begin your program to drop outs and illiterate girls?

For adolescent girls who have never gone to school or the dropouts, we begin program through a literacy package of nine months duration. After completion of this package, we start the program to tell them all about adolescence and reproductive health. Those discussions are also incorporated in the literacy program. The result has been very satisfactory.

How do you enroll these girls in the formal school program?

After the program, these girls have to appear for exam. We arrange the linkage with the department of education to enroll these girls in formal courses in schools. Seventy percent of the school dropout girls were enrolled in schools in various classes from primary to secondary level. These girls are very motivated after getting enrolled in the schools.

What are other highlights of the program?

As we know, information is a power. There are many programs in the districts targeted at the adolescent girls including the scholarships but many people don't know about it. What we do is collect the information and provide to the parents of the girls and to the girls. It will generate awareness.

How much has the insurgency hindered your program?

It is very difficult to implement programs as all these districts are, on one way or the other, insurgency-affected. Repeated general strikes often hamper our programs. This makes delays in the implementation side. I am proud to say that we are managing to overcome these problems because this program is very popular in the villages. So far, we have not faced any sort of threat or obstacle during the process of implementation.



“The US Envoy’s Remarks Intended To Alert Us”

DR. RAM SHARAN MAHAT

DR. RAM SHARAN MAHAT is co-general secretary of Nepali Congress (NC). An elected member of NC central working committee and a former finance minister, Dr. Mahat is known as an influential second-generation Congress leader. He recently authored a book titled “In Defense of Democracy” that earned him wide acclaim. At a time when the nation is debating the pros and cons of 12-point understanding between the political parties and the Maoists following remarks by the American ambassador that such an alliance could be fraught with danger for Nepal, Dr. Mahat spoke to KESHAB POUDEL and SANJAYA DHAKAL clarifying the parties’ stance and position. Excerpts:

“We have said that the decision to go to the constituent assembly will have to be taken by the parliament. Unless and until, the parliament is restored, how can the King call for constituent assembly elections? The election to constituent assembly should follow the restoration of parliament and negotiation with the Maoists.”

Maoists have continued their violent ways. What is the status of the 12-point understanding?

I agree that the Maoists are not implementing the 12-point MoU strictly. One of the principle points of that MoU is that they are committed to multiparty ideals and human rights values. But whatever is done through threat or violence is not in conformity with the multiparty principles. We have got reports that extortions are taking place; abductions are taking place; they are forcibly trying to close the schools, which are run by the community; forcing the community-run schools back to the government; forcing the resignations of resource persons under the education program; forcing people to join labor camps; and so on. They have now started giving new interpretation to multiparty democracy with a suffix “anti-feudal” and “anti-imperial.” These are not in line with the understanding. Nevertheless, the violence has considerably come down since we signed the MoU. Similarly, there has been considerable relaxation on the movement of people throughout the country. What we are insisting is that the Maoists strictly implement the understanding, which will reduce the crises of confidence between the two sides.

Why are not the parties pressing the Maoists to follow the 12-point, then?

We are now raising these issues. One of the things that we agreed in the beginning was that there must be proper monitoring of the implementation of the understanding. The reports that we are getting from the districts show that there have been cases where the 12-point understanding have been violated.

If the Maoists continue to violate it, what will be the status of the understanding?

I do not want to speculate. The agreement was signed in good faith. I hope they will implement it in good faith. We still believe the MoU could be a starting point for broader political solution.

Recently, two representatives of powerful western democracies – the US envoy and UK’s chief of South Asia Division at Foreign and Commonwealth Office – have cautioned about the understanding with the insurgents. What do you say?

I take Moriarty’s remarks as being intended to alert us. He doesn’t want to give benefit of doubt to the Maoists. We are still giving them that benefit. We believe that ultimately the Maoists will reconcile to the multiparty system given an honorable political exit. Mr. Moriarty has reservations on that. He made some strong points based on Maoist activities and statements by their leaders that show the Maoists still believe in revolution. He tried to draw the attention of the parties on that – which is alright. But then, what has establishment done to draw the Maoists to peaceful politics. Yes, we had an understanding with the Maoists. But everybody knows that the solution of the impasse lies on the reconciliation of the three forces. One force is constantly denying any opportunity to sit down and come to negotiation. The present regime did not even respond to the Maoist ceasefire and their eagerness to negotiate. They seem to rely on only militaristic method, which will not solve the problem. Maybe, if the regime had responded to the ceasefire offer, the situation would have been different. At the same time, he (Moriarty) talks about the parties and the King coming together – but what is the framework for that. The King has violated the constitution – he must restore the constitution through the restoration of parliament. That, will give, at least, the constitutional path for the constitutional parties to play their respective roles. Any agreement outside the framework of constitution will not work.

But, even your party’s general secretary Sushil Koirala said recently that there will be negotiation with the King as long as he does not announce constituent assembly.....

No, no. We have not said that. We have said that the decision to go to the constituent assembly will have to be taken by the parliament. Unless and until, the parliament is restored, how can the King call for constituent assembly elections? The election to constituent assembly should follow the restoration of parliament and negotiation with the Maoists.

The CPN (UML) also continues to demand the constituent assembly as the only solution. What is the position of seven parties on that?

That is the ultimate point. We have clearly mentioned in seven-party roadmap that the constituent assembly comes at the last part. The beginning is the restoration of parliament. This is also the point of difference between us and the Maoists. The Maoists say that we must go

directly to the constituent assembly after having roundtable conference and interim government. If you agree with this route, you will accept the full legitimacy of their so-called "people's war." We disagree with that. The legitimacy of 1990 People's Movement still exists, which gave us democratic constitution. So restore the constitution. Then, based on that you can go further to the constituent assembly after negotiating with the Maoists. We are still silent on the issue of what will be the future of Maoist arms. This issue must be settled before going for constituent assembly.

As you are now tied with the Maoists on 12-point understanding, do you take responsibility for the violent actions by them?

We do not approve or favor the activities that directly affect the people. We have clearly said in the MoU that our ways are different. They must ultimately come to the non-violent means, which will give strength to the agitation.

One of the points of the 12-point MoU states

that the parties and the Maoists will continue to work against autocratic regime from their respective positions. Don't you think it gives Maoists a broad license to continue doing what they have been doing?

We didn't give license. They have been pursuing their methods for a long time. We could not stop that. It was our desire to see the Maoists change their track. But since that was not possible, we said we have our own ways and we do not believe in (Maoist) ways. That is what we did. They will change track only when a political exit is agreed upon by all sides.

NC president G.P. Koirala last week met with NC-Democratic president Sher Bahadur Deuba. Are you close to the party unity?

Every NC worker of either side sees future in the unification of Nepali Congress. That is the desire and wish of every party worker. It is up to the leaders to translate that into action. Over 95 percent of workers desire for the unity. If the leaders fail to re-unite, that will be their failure. Instead of sticking to their prejudices, egos and bitterness, the leaders must rise above their party interest and fulfill the desire of the rank and file. The meeting between Koirala and Deuba is a good beginning. But, we should not be overly excited about it. There is still a long way to go.

When bitter rivals like Koirala and Deuba can meet and when the parties and the Maoists can reach understanding, what is hindering the reconciliation between the parties and the King?

The King must first reconcile himself to the constitution. It is not us who violated the constitution. He encroached upon the constitution. He took over powers that did not belong to him citing historical role and inherent authority, which the constitution does not provide. Recent Supreme Court judgment firmly said that the state power and sovereignty belongs to the people and that there is nothing like inherent powers that belongs to the King other than those prescribed by the constitution. Therefore, first the King must give up



the power. That will lead to reconciliation. We are not the stumbling block. The royal folly is giving credence to the Maoist theory that monarchy is the root of Nepal's problems. That is the reason the feeling of republicanism is growing.

On what grounds can you start reconciliation with the King?

First of all, there must be clear acknowledgement of the fact that whatever he did in October 2002 and February 2005 were wrong. And the executive powers he took over must be handed back forthwith – not three years after or after election.

Since it appears that negotiations with the King have to take place at some point, why doesn't your party come out with clear terms for it to start?

Since the King violated the constitution, he must first correct it. He must say that forthwith he is ready to give power back to the people.

On an economic front, how do you view the claims being made by some economists that nation's economy is going to collapse in next three months?

How do you see the economy going, say 2/3 months down the line?

It depends on how you define 'collapse.' The economy is very weak, there is no doubt. The situation is deteriorating – the growth rate is down even below the population growth rate; unemployment is rising; inflation rate has gone up sharply; trade deficit is very high; revenue growth is down; investment is down; tourism is down and so on. These will have serious implication on the country's economy and its poverty. But it is not going to 'collapse.' Terms like 'collapse' and 'bankruptcy' applies when you become insolvent; you are not able to pay the wage bills or service your debts; there is a cash crunch or foreign exchange crisis. That is not going to happen in the near future thanks to the economic base that was created as a result of reform process of the last decade. There is still resilience in the economy, which will prevent it from collapsing. ■

"The King must first reconcile himself to the constitution. It is not us who violated the constitution. He encroached upon the constitution. He took over powers that did not belong to him citing historical role and inherent authority, which the constitution does not provide."

MAOIST VIOLENCE

Red Alert

The escalation of violence and targeting of civilians could make it further difficult for the parties to justify their understanding with the Maoists

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

In the last one week, the Maoists injured over two-dozen civilians in various bombings and they killed half a dozen civilians.

As the Maoists continue to step up violent activities, the political parties – already “alerted” by the international community, particularly the US, about the dangers of alliance with the Maoists – are under further pressure to justify their 12-point understanding.

On Saturday (February 25), six persons, including two kids, were injured when the Maoists exploded bomb in a busy street of Chhorepatan in Pokhara. The explosion injured the passers-by. Two days later on Monday, sixteen civilians were injured when the Maoists exploded a remote-controlled bomb in a crowded marketplace in Chipledhunga bazaar in Pokhara.

In separate incidents, the Maoists in Dang district killed a youth in a bomb explosion. Chhullu Chaudhary, 30, was killed after a roadside bomb planted by the Maoists went off. Likewise, suspected Maoists gunned down Balram Shrestha, 26 - a cab driver - in Dulegaunda of Tanahun district. Furthermore, in Dailekh, a group of Maoists mercilessly killed a person and his daughter in Bestada VDC on Friday evening. In Jhapa, suspected Maoists have shot to death a refugee leader named Narayan Kharel.

These incidents of violence come in the wake of statement by Nepali Congress (NC) – the principal ally of the seven party bloc – urging the Maoists to abide by their commitment as expressed in the 12-point understanding. The meeting of the central working committee of NC held on Thursday

(February 23) regretted the continuation of extortion and abductions by the Maoists. The statement itself had come in the wake of words of caution by the American ambassador.

The political parties, to be fair to them, seem to believe that they can pull the Maoists out from their violent path and bring them to the mainstream. That is what 12-point understanding is all about, they say. But the activities by the Maoists seem to suggest quite a different story.

As American ambassador James Moriarty has made it clear in a series of



Bomb explosion in Pokhara: Senseless violence

TKP

interviews and speech he gave in recent weeks, the Maoists seem to be winning. By drawing the sulking parties into their deadly embrace, the Maoists are ‘having the cake and eating it, too.’ While they have been able to create rift among constitutional forces – the King and the parties – and, thereby, gained political legitimacy through the pact with the parties, they have also kept their option of violence open. To borrow their own terms, the Maoists seem to be climbing the spine (the parties) to hit at the head (the establishment). So, where is the need for them to give up their path of violence, asks Moriarty, adding that unless the

Maoists see their influence eroding swiftly, there could be no reason for them to give up their arms.

Despite remarks *ad nauseum* by the leaders of the political parties that they are not in favor of the violent actions by the Maoists, the continuing violence is bound to reflect poorly on them given their understanding with the insurgents. In fact, the major point of the 12-point pact states that both the parties and the Maoists will continue to act from their positions, separately, against the autocratic regime. While the parties interpret it as their firm commitment to abide by peaceful path, the provision does indicate a broad and loose approval (by the parties) to continue to let the Maoists do what they have been doing. This is on contrary to what the parties have been saying that ‘through the 12-point understanding the Maoists have shown willingness to join the peaceful multiparty competitive politics.’

Even though a big section of Nepali intelligentsia continues to give benefit of doubt to the Maoists, the latter’s action do not seem encouraging. A year after the King took over the executive powers upsetting the democratic processes, Nepal’s constitutional forces are now at the opposite ends allowing free hand to the insurgents. That is why when Moriarty says, “There certainly is no way for the parties or the King to successfully ride the Maoist

tiger for their own advantage. One could easily fall off and ... tigers get hungry,” he is not referring to stories but becoming deadly serious.

As the violence escalates, the need of the hour is the reconciliation among the constitutional forces whereupon the King abandons the executive power and the parties handle the affairs of the state. Such an arrangement would, at least, be able to derive wide international support and, thus, be able to withstand the Maoist onslaught. Otherwise, as Moriarty recently added, “the state is in danger of collapse.” And the time is running out for such an arrangement...tick...tick...tick. ■

NEPAL INVESTMENT BANK

Two Decades Of Service

The bank marks 20 years of successful operation establishing a benchmark of quality service

By A CORRESPONDENT

The figures speak for themselves. They point to a proud fact how a completely Nepali team after taking over the management of a joint venture bank operated by French experts has been able not only to maintain the handsome record but even build on that.

It was 20 years ago, on February 28, 1986, that, Nepal Indosuez Bank came into operation as a partnership between Nepali partners and Credit Agricole Indosuez of France. In 2002, its name changed to Nepal Investment Bank Limited (NIBL) after the Nepali team took over the management.

In the brief period of three years, the new management has been able to increase the volume of deposits by 287 percent reaching over Rs 12 billion. Likewise, total lending has increased by 334 percent to reach just over Rs 9 billion. Its net profit has grown by three times reaching Rs 175 million in 2006. The number of employees, too, have tripled to reach 374.

"In the last four years NIBL has pioneered a number of firsts in Nepal. It was the first to introduce 365 days banking; it was the first to introduce Visa Electron debit card;

it was the first to introduce Premier banking with consultancy; it was the first to introduce utility payments through ATM's & POS machines; and it was also the first private sector Bank to introduce loans against gold & silver," states a press release issued by the bank.

"These pioneering products & services has not only put NIBL on top of the banking community in Nepal, but also been granted recognition by the Financial Times of London as the top bank in Nepal on two occasions in the last three years."

The bank has established 13 branches across Nepal. "It has introduced innovative new products and schemes with an aim to cater to the specific needs of it's clientele. To name a few - there is the E-ZEE series – E-ZEE Savings, E-ZEE Student account, the E-ZEE Visa Travel Card. NIBL has made banking e-zee for many segments of society. The Premier Banking with consultancy services has been a much sought after and emulated service NIBL provides. The recently launched "Pariwar Bachat Khata", a recurring saving deposit



scheme is another popular account with parents who want savings on account of their children."

"NIBL has made banking convenient – today, NIBL's branches within Kathmandu Valley provides extended banking services from its counters till 7 pm on weekdays and are opened 365 days."

All 13 of NIBL's branches are connected online, thus facilitating transaction from any of its branches for all its customers. For the first time in Nepal NIBL introduced a new electronic delivery

system with the issuance of the Visa Electron debit card in the country.

NIBL has eight ATMs at strategic locations in Kathmandu and Pokhara. It also has 600 Point of Sale (POS) machines. In keeping with it's innovative nature & style NIBL devised a "consortium of cards" amongst some banks of the banking fraternity. NIBL invited like minded banks to join hands in the cards consortium. This consortium with NIBL in the lead provides an electronic delivery platform to all customers of all banks who have signed up for the consortium. The Banks who have joined consortium are Rastriya Banijya Bank, Nepal Bank, Kumari Bank, Nepal SBI Bank, Nepal Development Bank and Sanima Bikas Bithhya Sansthan now have the benefit of a world class electronic delivery system which was unavailable to them prior to NIBL's initiative.

"On the occasion of the 20th anniversary, we are pleased to announce the new product – Social Deposit Account. Based on this scheme, we invite NGOs and INGOs engaged in uplifting disadvantaged community to bank with us and we will share 50 percent of the earnings from their deposits on their project," said Chairman and Chief Executive Director of NIBL Prithivi Bahadur Pande.

Clarifying the new scheme, the bank's general manager Jeetendra Basnet said, "In the 20th anniversary of operations, the Bank would like to share some of the good fortune it has had for the last 20 years with those who are less fortunate. The Bank will introduce a new depository scheme called the Social Deposit Account. It is a Social Contract that the Bank will be entering into with society."

Basnet said that the bank will share 50 percent of the earnings from the INGO/ NGO account with the concerned INGO/ NGO working for the upliftment of the disadvantaged. "This is over and above the interest earned on the account," he said, adding that the INGO/NGO can then utilize the earnings in the social cause it represents.

"This is our way of saying Thank You to society for 20 years of their trust in the Bank," said Basnet. ■

AVIAN INFLUENZA

Scare Grows

The detection of bird flu in the neighboring countries put Nepal under high risk of contracting the dreaded disease

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Sanu Maharjan is a befuddled man. A poultry farmer from Bhaktapur, he is nervously watching the daily news reports about the bird flu disease. Even though Nepal has not yet reported detection of the disease, poultry farmers like Maharjan are already feeling the pinch. The rumors of the disease and scary news reports have led to sharp decline in the demand of chicken meat and eggs.

With the authorities hitting the panic button, farmers and traders find themselves in the cold. A news report from Nuwakot said how the local people there had boycotted the poultry products early this week after 1000 chicken belonging to one farmer died. Tests were later conducted only to reveal that they died of Ranikhet – a common poultry disease.

Nepal's poultry industry – with the total investment of Rs 18 billion – has been growing handsomely making the country almost self-sufficient on poultry products. The scare of bird flu could undo the progress made in this sector, according to Guna Chandra Bista, president of Hatchery Industry Association. Bista said that rumors and scare could damage the sector that employs 400,000 people.

The panic was triggered by the news of detection of H5N1 strain of virus in the poultry samples from Navapur in Maharashtra state of western India. Since Nepal has an open border with India and since Nepalese poultry farmers depend on the import of poultry products like chicken feed, egg-tray, mother-chicken and so on from India, the panic was not altogether false.

Days after the detection of bird flu in India, the Department of Livestock Services banned all kinds of poultry imports into Nepal including live fowl, frozen meat, unprocessed meat, egg and other related items. The department also put all the 24 quarantine posts across the country on high alert. "We are on high risk due to open border with India," said Dr. Dhanaraj Ratala, program director at the Department.

The authorities have appealed to the people to immediately notify them if they see sudden death/sickness of large number of birds. People have also been asked to avoid contact with such birds. The deadly disease, which is sweeping across Asian, African and European countries, has been reported both in China and India – two countries with which Nepal shares its borders. "Although efforts to prevent the disease from entering



Minister Bista: "Do not panic" Kantipur

continues, special alertness is essential since the disease can erupt from anywhere, anytime," said Dr. Dhan Raj Ratala.

Facing the first crisis in his ministry since he was appointed the Agriculture Minister, Keshar Bahadur Bista has been stressing that the government will do everything it can to prevent bird flu from entering Nepal. "First thing, we have not detected bird flu yet. So there is no need for people to panic. Second thing, we are exercising special alertness to prevent it," he said.

Last week, senior World Health Organization (WHO) official in Nepal, too, said that the country is at high risk of bird flu given its location between China and India – both of which have detected incidents of

dreaded H5N1 avian influenza. "There is particular risk from India because of open border," said Dr. Margarita Ronderos, an official at WHO. She said that the Nepal government must make quarantine posts alert and strict as well as 'enhance surveillance among birds as well as humans' for the symptoms of the flu.

Despite the call for caution and calm, people have already started to keep out chicken from their menu – an unnecessary step at this moment, according to experts. Properly cooked meat are safe to eat, doctors say.

What is Bird Flu?

The disease that has stolen the sleep of thousands of experts and public health officials across the globe actually was first detected in Hong Kong in 1997. Since then 88 people have succumbed to the H5N1 virus. Around 150 million chicken have been culled due to detection of the disease. In western India last week, over 10,000 chicken were culled and 90,000 people tested for the disease – they exhibited no sign of the disease.

The bird flu virus are thought to have been first spread by migratory birds. As its name suggests, bird flu doesn't usually infect human. When the strain of H5N1 enters human body – through contact with the infected birds – it could fuse with strain of human flu virus resulting in the creation of new subtype of virus. This new virus has the potential to mutate inside a human body and becoming a deadly strain that can be transmitted between humans through air. Till now, human to human transmission has not yet been confirmed. Once the virus mutates and becomes transmissible among humans, health officials fear, the disease would become just uncontrollable possibly leading to millions of deaths. This is the reason why authorities around the world are taking the disease very, very seriously.

The last one month has been particularly worrisome. According to World Health Organization (WHO), in the last one month, 13 nations have reported bird flu cases including India. European countries, too, have reported bird flu and so have African countries like Nigeria and Niger.

Health officials fear that the outbreak of bird flu in Asian and African countries can have dangerous consequences since in these countries people normally live close by their poultry farm and mingle extensively whereas in European countries, people usually have commercial poultry centers that are well managed and secluded from human settlements.

CRISIS IN NEPAL

Regional Implications

As the violence intensifies and the crisis in Nepal grows, western democracies express concern over its implication in the entire region

By KESHAB POUDEL

The US ambassador James F. Moriarty gave two interviews and addressed a gathering of member of civil society, politicians, bureaucrats, media persons and others revealing the policy of American government and observing possible alarming situation in the region.

Whatever Moriarty said it is not his own views but largely reflects the observation and attitude of the US government.

It shows the seriousness of US government on Nepal's crisis as it seems to have feared that Nepal's internal crisis may convert into regional conflict if it is not settled. The US ambassador clearly pointed out the way

out - that is the reconciliation between the King and the political parties. That would lead to the reactivation of the constitution and hold the credible elections.

As the conflict in Nepal intensifies, there have been a lot of changes in the attitude of western governments in recent days. Nepal has been in prime debate in the western capitals and they must have a clear view regarding the center and sources of insurrections in Nepal.

"Obviously right now, the main concern is that the state would fail, the Maoist will take over and Nepal would end destabilizing the entire region. Our interest is to prevent that," said US ambassador James Francis Moriarty. (See Spotlight February 24- March 2 issue)

A great change has come in the composition of government of India also. A forward looking prime minister Dr. Manmohan Singh is slowly and gradually

gathering his strength in the leadership, which may have to deal with the notorious and hawkish secret services, which have been major factor to alienate India from its neighbor. The west particularly, the United States and Britain, seems to have properly



Moriarty: Triggering debates

understood the complexities of relations between a big and several smaller nations of South Asia.

Nepal's internal arrangement is not sufficient to settle the crisis as it also seriously needs the regional arrangement - that has yet to come in intensive and extensive debates within the region and outside.

Some journalists from abroad and India, however, seem to be starting generating such debates.

In a recent new report, a US journalist Richard Halloran - formerly with The New York Times as a foreign correspondent in Asia and military correspondent in Washington, writes from Honolulu "the US officials say that unless a turnaround is engineered in six to eight months, Nepal will collapse into Maoist hands. Besides bringing more instability to South Asia, that would

enhance ties between the Maoists in Nepal and anti-government insurgents in northern India and possibly provide a new haven for terrorists."

"If any one has been hurt by the recent statements of US ambassador to Nepal calling for reconciliation between the monarchy and the seven political parties, it is India, which is backing overtly and covertly Maoist and seven parties alliance. The UNITED States and India, never fully on the same page as far as King Gyanendra's illegal seizure of power in Nepal was concerned, have now decisively parted company with Washington publicly opposing a key aspect of Indian policy:

the need for the Nepalese parliamentary parties and Maoists to make common cause for the restoration of democracy in the Himalayan kingdom. James F. Moriarty, the American Ambassador in Kathmandu, delivered a blistering attack on the agreement reached last November between the Nepalese Maoists and the parliamentary parties, an agreement that has the implicit support of the Indian Government," writes Indian journalist Siddhartha Vardarajan, who was selected to interview Maoist leader Prachanda in The Hindu.

Vardarajan, goes on to add, "At the same time, the Manmohan Singh Government still finds itself at a crossroads as far as the endgame of its Nepal policy is concerned."

At a time when concerns are expressed by the US and British officials, China, which recently postponed a high-level visit to Nepal, has fixed the new date for the visit by its State Councilor Tang Juaxian at March 16 (Nepal Samacharpatra daily).

"The biggest problem of this region is to convert the mind of hegemonies into a democratic relations between the nations. The example is of the recent days Europe where bigger and smaller have a close and confident relationship," said a political analyst. "Let India emerge as a leader and a powerful compelling aspiration of the region but not as a hegemony. ■"

Land-locked-ness: Geographic Handicap

Landlocked States, the author notes, face serious disadvantages, due to their geography. This geography not only restricts their access to sea resources, but also limits their participation in international trade. Indeed, they have to totally rely on the transit countries to gain access to sea ports and international markets.

Because of this harsh reality, the international community, throughout the past few decades, paid special attention to the situation of landlocked States. It not only gradually recognized but also partly addressed some of the constraints faced by them through a number of international legal and normative instruments. In the course of the past few decades, through the concerted efforts of landlocked as well as transit countries, the situation witnessed major improvement.

In this vein, the Transit Regime for Landlocked States International Law and Development Perspectives, by Kishor Uprety, is an attempt to review the evolutionary features of the legal regime applicable to landlocked States, with a view to demonstrating the nexus of international law and development. The book attempts to assess the strengths and limits of existing international law related to the free access of landlocked states to and from the sea by analyzing, in parallel, whether its provisions satisfy the economic demands of landlocked states, the majority of which are among the world's poorest nations. In so doing, the book reviews the several principles of international law that dominated the discussions pertaining to the evolution of the rights of access, leading to several general and specific conventions, as well as treaty regimes emanating therefrom, and further examines the several restrictions imposed by some of those conventions, not all left unchallenged by landlocked states.

The methodology is straightforward. Followed by a detailed historical account of the legal as well as political relations amongst landlocked and transit countries, Part 1 of the book examines the problems that the landlocked countries have faced, along

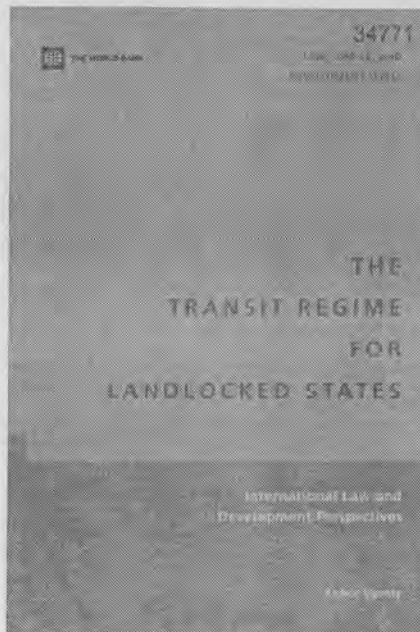
with their different economic, institutional and development-related challenges. Its Part 2 continues with the discussions on the doctrines and theories that have influenced the evolution of the legal regime applicable to landlocked States. The progress achieved by the international community over the decades in devising legal mechanisms to address the problems faced by these States is then discussed by the book in Part 3. In this context, the enforcement aspect of the right of access, in particular, the several administrative, institutional and technical mechanisms are also part of the discussions. The book further analyzes the bilateral treaties and agreements dealing with the question of transit in different continents that aim at facilitating transit between the

landlocked States and their transit neighbors, and providing for specific regimes applicable to suit the specific geopolitical and socio-economic needs. From a purely international law angle, it analyzes the three major facets of public international law (customary law, treaty law, and state practice) and goes into some detail in the areas of law and fact, particularly by reviewing a sample of the bilateral arrangements amongst landlocked and transit States. Although the coverage of the agreements reviewed is worldwide, this Reviewer believes that the book could have been more beneficial for Nepalese readers had it provided some specific examples from the Nepalese practice, particularly the aspects of Indo-Nepalese transit relations, a perennial thorny issue.

Another interesting aspect covered by the book concerns "soft law". On this front, it discusses the different international resolutions that have focused on cooperation among landlocked States, with the assistance of multilateral institutions. It briefly provides a commentary on the ongoing international initiatives and developments aimed at addressing the theoretical as well as practical problems faced by landlocked states. Actually, these developments, which have led to the creation of instruments with normative value, underscore the evolutionary nature of international law as well as the continual efforts associated with its development.

Finally the fourth Part of the book, the Conclusion, highlighting the positive achievements by the international community of a regime satisfactory to all, reviews the different multifaceted initiatives and approaches taken by the international community to solve the problems of the access of landlocked States.

This book, published by the World Bank, under its "Law, Justice and Development Series" promises to be useful for those -lawyers and non-lawyers alike-concerned with the transit regime of landlocked States, particularly with the perspectives of law and development. ■



Title: *THE TRANSIT REGIME FOR LANDLOCKED STATES INTERNATIONAL LAW AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES*

By: *Kishor Uprety (204 pp; index; World Bank, November 2005)*

Reviewed by: *Pravakar Adhikari, Associate Professor of International Law, Nepal Law Faculty, Tribhuvan University*

CARBON TRADING

Gaining Momentum

One year after the ratification of the Kyoto protocol, Nepal is beginning to establish some CDM projects

By THAKUR AMGAI

Even as the regularisation of material trading is still beyond the comprehension of many Nepalese, the country's developmental organisations are venturing on something as complex as trading of reduction in carbon dioxide emission.

The process has begun after two projects (Activity 1 and Activity 2) of Bio-gas Support Program- Nepal (BSP-N) was registered in the CDM Executive Board December last year.

According to Saroj Rai, executive director of BSP-Nepal, 18,000 bio-gas plants have been registered in each projects, out of about 140,000 bio-gas plants installed under the assistance of BSP-Nepal.

BSP-Nepal has signed agreement with the Community Carbon Development Fund of the World Bank to sell 93,883 tons of carbon to be traded in a year. According to Rai, BSP-Nepal, is negotiating to fix the rate at \$ 6 – 7 with the fund, which had shown interest to buy the emission reduction at \$ 5 per ton earlier. It had sent a letter of intent to BSP-Nepal to buy the emission reduction long before the Kyoto protocol had been endorsed.

The formal process got stalled because of Nepal's delay in the submitting instrument of accession to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and formation of Designated National Authority (DNA).

Now, after Nepal submitted her instrument of accession to the UNFCCC on September 16 last year and a DNA was formed through a cabinet decision on December 22, not only the official processes of this project resumed, but it has also opened avenues for interested parties to develop further projects.

Experts say Nepal has a lot of prospects to develop more Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects.

After the official registration of the two projects, Nepalese implementers are working on developing other several prospective projects. Any project that can reduce the carbon emissions by replacing use of fossil fuels by clean energy can be developed into a CDM projects. BSP-Nepal, itself is capable of developing many other projects. From among

140,000 biogas plants installed under the program less than 40,000 have been registered.

Other projects that have gone into the process of developing CDM projects are Micro Hydro Power Project, Improved water mill, Solar Tuki, Improved Cooking Stove, Safa Tempo Transportation, Landfill Site Solid Waste Management and Vertical Brick Kiln Shaft.

According to the provisions of Kyoto protocol, Nepal, as a non-annex I country can sell its emissions reductions measured as certified emission reduction (CER), to the industrialised countries. The industrialised countries that have ratified the protocol, known as Annex I countries should reduce their emissions by 5.2 per cent below the level of 1990, by 2012. If they cannot reduce the emissions by themselves they can purchase the reductions from developing countries.

"Kyoto protocol is the first binding agreement to do something to check the effects of climate change," says Jeewan Acharya, climate

change officer at the Winrock International Nepal. "The speculations that it might not be implemented have ended after the ratification of Kyoto Protocol on February 16, last year."

The protocol signed in 1997, in the third meeting of UNFCCC, held in Kyoto, Japan, came into effect after Russia-that is responsible for 17 per cent of the total green house gas emissions- ratified it on February 16, 2005.

One year on after the ratification of the protocol, as some countries with higher expertise have gone much ahead in the process, Nepalese development workers, too, are working hastily to find out new prospects and cash the existing ones.

As the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MoEST) – nominated focal ministry for the Kyoto protocol – is working out detailed structure and procedure of the DNA, development workers are advocating including feasible projects such as the Hydro Power projects and community forestry in the CDM. A meeting of concerned parties in Montreal, November last year withheld decision to include non-renewable biomass (community forestry) in the CDM projects.

"Such projects not only help to reduce the emission reductions, but also work as a potent tool for sustained community development," an expert points out. "We have to develop our expertise to get better rates for the emission reduction and include feasible projects in the CDM."

FOOTBALL

MMC Does It Again

Following the stiff competition, Manang Marshyangdi Club (MMC) has won the league title in the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) San Miguel 'A' division Martyr's Memorial League. MMC secured its title after it defeated Nabil Three Stars Club (TSC), the defending champion of the title, by 1-0 in a tightly contested match on Tuesday (February 21) in Dasarath Stadium.

As the title winner of the national league, MMC will be eligible to play in AFC President's Cup tournament to be held in Cambodia in May. It was also awarded with cash prize of Rs 1 million. This is the sixth time MMC has bagged the national league title. With this victory, MMC has also become the club with most league titles along side Rani Pokhari Corner Team (RCT).

After playing all 28 matches MMC had collected a total of 68 points, while its closest contestant the defending champion TSC was limited to 63 points.

Played amongst a huge crowd at the stadium, MMC had an upper hand in the final match with 64 points while TSC had 63 points. TSC had been under pressure from the beginning of the match, as only a draw would have been enough for MMC to win the title.

The first runner up TSC and the second runner up Tribhuwan Army Club (TAC) were awarded with cash prize of Rs. 7,00,000 and Rs. 5,00,000 respectively. Likewise, as the top teams on the scoresheet Sankata, Rani Pokhari Corner Team (RCT), New Road Team (NRT), Armed Police team and Mahendra Police club got Rs. 50,000 each. Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev awarded the winners after the final game at Dasharath Stadium.

Two clubs – Bouddha and Mahavir – have been relegated to B division with least points. Meanwhile, goalkeeper of TSC Upendra Man Singh – who is also a national goal keeper – has been awarded a brand new Toyota Yaris car after he was adjudged the Best Player. Likewise, Chhiring Lopsang, coach of MMC, was adjudged as Best Coach whereas Ritesh Thapa, Ramesh Budhathoki, Sagar Thapa and Bishan Gauchan were termed Best Goalkeeper, Best Striker, Best Defender and Best Midfielder. Each of them were awarded with a motorcycle.

KALYAN RIMAL AND BIJU RIMAL Fore-Runners of Duet Singing

Rimal duo have enriched the Nepali modern music with dozens of melodious folk based duets

By THAKUR AMGAI

'Lekaki Thiti, Besima Aai Kina Layau Maya Thyammai, Lau Bhana Nadhati'

The above mentioned song that translates as "Tell me without lying, being a girl of the mountains why did you come to the plains and fall in love."

If Kalyan Rimal had asked this question to his wife Biju Rimal, 'She would probably answer, 'so that we could sing duets.'

Truly the union of this couple has enriched the Nepali music with dozens of evergreen duets. At a time, when the Nepali society was so conservative that parents and in laws would not allow daughters to sing and dance in public, to sing a duet with a man was not easy. So, there were very few duet singers in those days.

Rimal couple was free from this problem. Both of them had a passion for music and flair in singing. And after they got married braving the social barriers of caste discrimination, they could overtly engage themselves in duet singing.

Born in 1994 B.S. in Kathmandu, Kalyan was privileged to get a musical ambience at home. He started singing at social functions like 'dabali' and family functions since the tender age of six. He passed a voice test and started singing at Radio Nepal shortly after its establishment. 'Tanki Phool Relimai Chaitaima Phoolyo' composed by Ustad Bhairab Bahadur Thapa was the first song aired live in his voice. The song was not recorded.

In 2013, Kalyan formed 'Navin Kala Mandir' with some of his like minded friends and conducted various activities under its banner. The organization is celebrating its golden jubilee next year with various functions. It has been felicitating various artistes every year since last couple of years.

As a freelancer, Kalyan had also started teaching music at schools and colleges. It was in one of these schools that he had met Biju - Bijeshwari Shrestha then.

Biju, who was born in 2002, did not have similar environment at home. "My



Rimal Duo: Singing Together

father used to tell me to focus on studies and engage in music only after completing studies," said Biju.

However, she used to learn and practice music at school. Kalyan had noticed her melodious voice and flair in singing at 'Padhma Kanya School', Dillibazar, where she studied.

Biju began her musical career after completing high school in 2017, by singing a duet 'Aakash Jhalmaliyo,

Chand Muskurai' both written and composed by Kalyan. They got married the same year.

After two years, Kalyan got a job at Nepal Rastra Bank and was deployed in Birgunj. Biju followed him. There, they composed and sang songs at various cultural functions. Occasionally they would come to Kathmandu and record songs.

In the next one decade, Rimal couple sung more than 150 songs. Kalyan was equally apt in composing the songs and he himself composed most of the songs they sang. Songs like 'Jomsom Khola, Kahile Bhet Hola', 'Lekki Thiti', 'Sunkoshiko Sanglo Pani', among others are equally popular today.

In 2027 Kalyan stood first in the Nationwide Modern Songs contest singing the song 'Sathi Nata Kobi Thiya'. After this, however, the momentum in singing duet gradually retarded. Rimal duo have sung much fewer songs after those days compared to the first decade of their career.

Kalyan is an M. Mus. and Biju, a B. Mus. from Allahabad University, India. Earlier, Kalyan learned classical music from Sangeet Pravin Nara Raj Dhakal and Biju from Mohan Kumar Shrestha, Surya Raj Sharma along with Sangeet Praveen Dhakal.

After the retirement from the job, Kalyan has been involved in composing music. The duo brought out their first album 'Triveni' in 2043. After that, they have brought out some collection albums and some albums with new songs, like 'Anjuli' and 'Shivaya

Nama'.

At present, Kalyan is now working to bring out an album 'Navin Swarharu' with young singers. "The album will be released on the golden jubilee function of 'Navin Kala Mandir'," said Kalyan.

Kalyan won the best music director award from the Department of Archives in 2014 and Nati Kaji Award last year. Likewise, Biju was awarded with the 'Tara Award' a few years back. ■

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