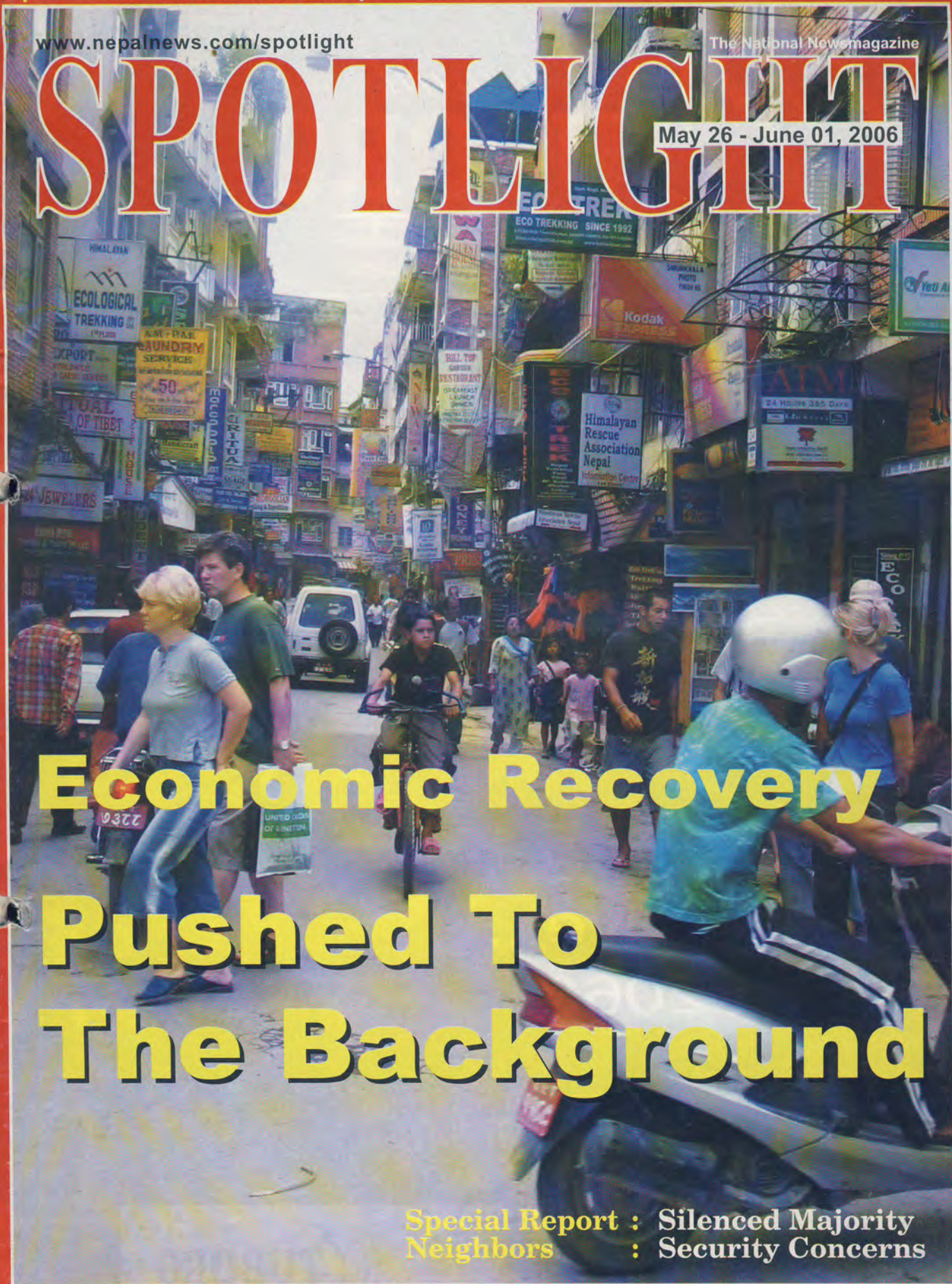


www.nepalnews.com/spotlight

The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

May 26 - June 01, 2006



Economic Recovery Pushed To The Background

Special Report : Silenced Majority
Neighbors : Security Concerns

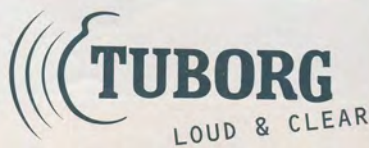
C.D.O. Regd. No. 17719/94
Regd. No. 20009/01
Australia/New Zealand..... US \$ 1.00
Europe..... US \$ 1.00
USA/Canada..... US \$ 2.00
Other SAARC Nations..... US \$ 1.00
China..... US \$ 1.00
MS/Japan..... US \$ 1.00
Hong Kong..... US \$ 1.00
Japan..... US \$ 1.00

8TH Annual TUBORG IMAGE AWARD

Coming Live...
Jestha 2063



Co Sponsor



CONTENTS

Page

LETTERS

3

NEWS NOTES

4

BRIEFS

6

QUOTE UNQUOTE/TRANSITION

7

OPINION: Dr. AB Thapa

8

TRAFFICKING AND HIV/AIDS: Building Unity of Purpose 19

NEPALESE IN US: Home Away From Home

20

REVIEW: People's Movement

22

ART: Diversity In Unity

23

PROFILE: Guna Raj Poudel

24



COVER STORY : Pushed To The Background

Even as extreme communists grab the center-stage of political as well as economic debates, the burning issues of economic recovery are relegated to the background

Page 12



SECURITY : Neighbors' Prime Concern

Security is the prime concern of Nepal's neighbors

Page 10



SPECIAL REPORT : Silent Majority In Turmoil

With extreme voices dominating the streets, silent majority finds itself in mental turmoil

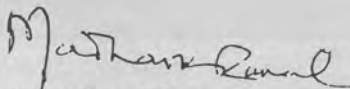
Page 16

SPOTLIGHT

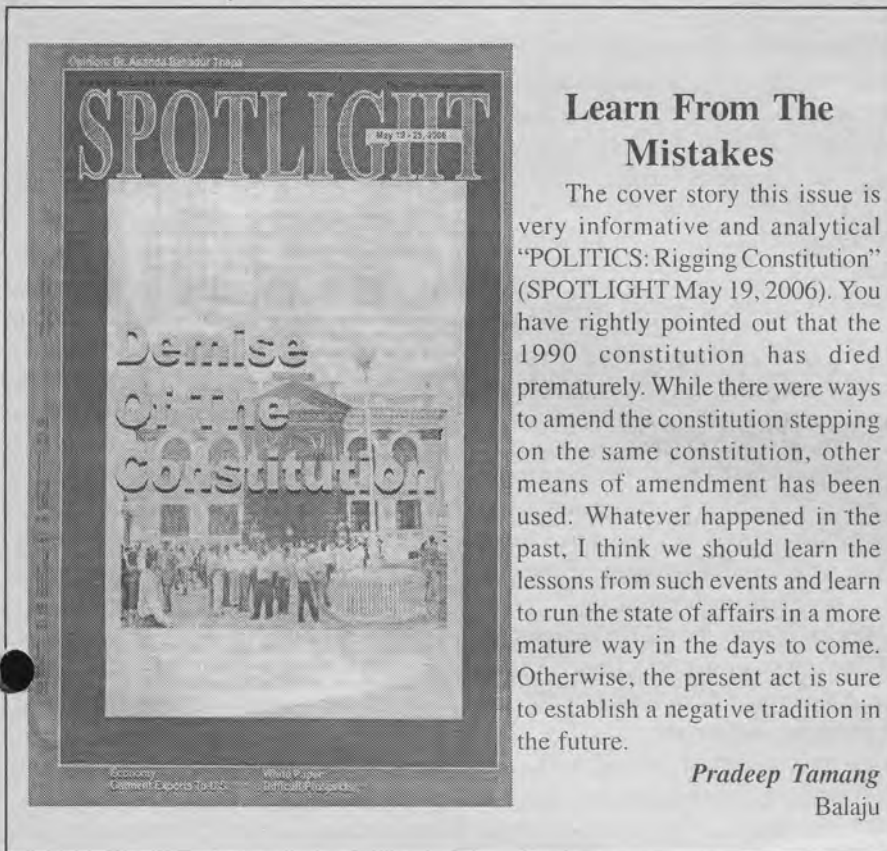
THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

Vol. 25, No 38, May 26, 2006
Jestha 12, 2063**Chief Editor And Publisher**
Madhav Kumar Rimal**Editor**
Sarita Rimal**Managing Editor**
Keshab Poudel**Senior Reporter**
Sanjaya Dhakal**Reporter**
Thakur Amgai**Design and Layout**
Jyoti Singh**Photographer**
Sandesh Manandhar**Legal Advisor**
Advocate Lok Bhakta Rana**Marketing**
Navin Kumar Maharjan
Madan Raj Poudel
Bishnu Prasad Chaulagain**Editorial Office**
GPO Box 7256, Maitidevi, Kathmandu
Tel (977-1) 4423127 Fax: (977-1) 4417845
Chief Editor's : 4435594,
E-mail : spot@mail.com.np
Internet : www.nepalnews.com/spotlight**Cover Design : Digi-Tech Scanning &
Pre-Press Pvt. Ltd.**
P.O. Box : 1655, Jwagal, Kupondole,
Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel : 5551251, 5529530
E-mail : degiscan@wlink.com.np**Distribution : R.B. News Paper Traders**
New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Ph : 4232784, 2020247, 4244679
E-mail : rbnewspaper@hotmail.com**Printers : Printers World**
Maitidevi, Kathmandu
Ph : 4423904, 4426520
E-mail : printerworld@wlink.com.npC.D.O.Regd. No
151/039-40
Postal Regd. No
42/61/62
U.S. Library of Congress
Catalogue No. 91-905060

The epoch-making proclamation made by the government of Seven Party Alliance most recently in the House of Representatives reinstated by King Gyanendra at the revolutionary mandate of the people has set the country on a totally uncharted course. As all uncharted courses are full of uncertainties and perils, Nepal, too, has to face grave dangers if she fails to learn the lessons of history and if the politicians in power again fail to rise to the occasion. Situation in Nepal demands men of indisputable integrity and unassailable loyalty to the nation to lead the country in such a difficult time. Unfortunately, the people of Nepal are finding it very hard to pin their full faith in the political leadership who have been catapulted to the high pedestal by the successful denouement of the people's revolution. Whether the once discredited leaders can become the repository of the people's confidence is yet to be seen. Many though are looking upon the leaders of CPN (Maoists), with great hopes and aspirations, that they will give an honest and patriotic leadership to the country. Since their role in the restoration of peace and normalcy is assuming greater importance and they will be equal partners in the interim government that will conduct the elections to the constituent assembly, the Maoist leadership will have to set an example of clean and people-oriented administration. They did take up arms against the state and mounted insurgency against their own country and own people from a safe sanctuary in a foreign country, which has totally devastated their own country. Maybe, this was the only way to fight the centuries old exploitations of the poor mass in their poor country. But, after achieving the most difficult part of their mission, it is high time for them to start working to bring quick relief to the miserable lives of suffering millions for which they started their insurgency. The poor people of Nepal, too, have risen and given them their full support, even making supreme sacrifices. They have also very clearly demonstrated that no power is stronger than the peoples' power and no one can trifle with it. They have also made it crystal clear that their patience and tolerance have totally exhausted and they will not take any injustice lying down any more. The poor people of Nepal are desperately looking for new leadership – a leadership that will be able to restore the nation's pride and honor, take the country on the road to speedy all round development and, above all, defend the sovereignty and independence of the nation. The leadership of the bigger parties in the SPA has started fighting for plum positions. This proves they have not been able to change themselves to suit with the changes brought about by the historic revolution. Their most disgusting behavior was to deny the position of the Speaker of the House to the most deserving lady in the country, Chitra Lekha Yadav, the Deputy Speaker. This is, indeed, a blatant insult to Nepali womanhood, only to nurse their own nefarious partisan interest, pushing back the interest of the nation. How is one to expect that such men will defend the interests of the country? The people of Nepal have been very magnanimous to forgive them all their misdeeds in the past sixteen years. The people are closely watching them. They will not forgive them again. As such, those in power should no more resort to rhetorics and speech makings only but dedicate themselves to accomplish the pressing objectives of the poor and win the confidence of the people. Else, they will be swamped by another convulsion that is waiting round the corner.



Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Learn From The Mistakes

The cover story this issue is very informative and analytical "POLITICS: Rigging Constitution" (SPOTLIGHT May 19, 2006). You have rightly pointed out that the 1990 constitution has died prematurely. While there were ways to amend the constitution stepping on the same constitution, other means of amendment has been used. Whatever happened in the past, I think we should learn the lessons from such events and learn to run the state of affairs in a more mature way in the days to come. Otherwise, the present act is sure to establish a negative tradition in the future.

Pradeep Tamang
Balaju

Convincing Argument

I read the article about the recent suspensions and reshuffle of civil servants by the government "SUSPENSION OF CIVIL SERVANTS: Politics of Vendetta?" (SPOTLIGHT May 19, 2006). While such a move by the government was not unanticipated, it is nothing different from the earlier trends to politicize bureaucracy. Nepalese politics has been suffering from such trends since a long time. It is a very bad practice and needs to be discontinued at some point of time. Politics of revenge has never done well to anyone and will not do in the future. You have done a courageous job by raising the issue at a time when most of the mainstream media have been hailing such acts blindly.

Prativa Sunuwar
Anamnagar

Reading Culture

The story about the world book day was very informative "WORLD BOOK WEEK: Reading For Learning"

(SPOTLIGHT May 19, 2006). I agree with your argument that we lack a reading culture. Not to talk about those who do not read because of inaccessibility, even those who have easy access to books do not read books. It is not possible to develop a well civilized and cultured generation without developing a reading culture. So, it is important for the media as well as other related organizations to develop a reading culture, particularly among the growing generation. However, at a time when modern means of entertainment and learning are taking over the traditional means it is a challenging job for education planners to devise strategies to generate interest among the youths and the children to read.

Shovana Pradhan
Kupondole

Actions, Not Words

I read the interview with Madhav Kumar Nepal and got to know his opinions on the current political scenario "Following Charter Declaration, The Parliament Is Going To Be Supreme

Sovereign Body Of The Country" (SPOTLIGHT May 19, 2006). Leaders including Nepal have been saying that they will not repeat their mistakes of the past and take the country to a new course, but their actions do not seem to be going in proper direction. The long delay in the formation of the council of ministers because of tug of war regarding plum posts is an example. In theory and in rhetorics they have always been good. But what people want to see now is the implementation of those things. So, instead of just saying that the parliament is going to be the supreme body, they should show in practice that it becomes so.

Kumar Khadka
Nepaltar

Economy is Important

Whatever may be the political situation, it is important to focus on economic sector because the failure or success of the economic sector will in turn affect the political situation "WHITE PAPER: House On Notice" (SPOTLIGHT May 19, 2006). In the recent days, the people in the government as well as the MPs are talking very less about how to improve the ailing economic sector, probably because they are always occupied by political issues. However, if we are to give the nation a stability and tranquility, it is important to give due attention towards the improvement of national economy and the living status of the people. In fact, this is a very opportune time for us to do so. With huge amounts of donations pouring in the country and the nationwide ceasefire from both sides, it would be very easy these days to develop infrastructure and increase production to break the vicious cycle of poverty. At a time when both the warring parties have laid down their arms, the security forces of the government as well as the militia of the Maoists should be used in development works. This would also leave a positive impression of the army among the public, who otherwise have a very bad impression among the public.

Pratap Limbu
Dharan

Maoist Talk Team Leader In Capital

Leader of Maoist talks team Krishna Bahadur Mahara has arrived in Kathmandu. He arrived in Kathmandu on Sunday (May 21) from Nepalgunj via Buddha air flight. Mahara, however, did not contact with media and is reported to come out in public a few days later. Other members of his team Dinanath Sharma and Dev Gurung would also soon arrive in the capital, say reports. Meanwhile, when Mahara tried to board a flight from Nepalgunj along with his two armed bodyguards, the administration did not allow him and the Home Minister urged him to come along without armed bodyguards. Later on, the bodyguards were allowed to board but without arms. *Kantipur daily reports.*

PM Meets With The King

In what is seen as the first meeting between them after the May 18 parliamentary charter declaration, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala visited the royal palace on Sunday evening (May 21) and met with the King. Sources said that Koirala formally briefed the King about the declaration during the meeting. Meanwhile, The Himalayan Times daily adds that PM Koirala "sought desirable cooperation from the King in the fast changing constitutional and political scenario." The meeting, sources close to the PM said, dwelt on the contents of the declaration and its likely fallout on the royal family. Koirala is said to have given the King a detailed briefing while the King listened avidly. Koirala is said to have told him that whatever has come in the form of the declaration was long in the coming and constituted the voice of the people at large. "The main purpose of the meeting was to impress upon the King the need to cooperate with the parliament and government which has the supreme task of enforcing what has come out of parliament," a source said. Koirala is also said to have told King Gyanendra that "there was room

for constitutional monarchy if it cooperated with the parliament in enforcing the parliamentary declaration." "People must feel that the institution of monarchy is cooperating with their representatives. They also must feel that the monarch is well-meaning. Only this will benefit the monarchy," Koirala is said to have told the King. *Leading dailies report.*

"Judiciary To Move Ahead Along With Change"

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (SC) Dilip Kumar Poudel has stated that the judiciary will move ahead along with the political change. Speaking at a program organized on Sunday (May 21) to mark the golden anniversary of the apex court, CJ Poudel said that the coming days would be further challenging before the judiciary. "We must move ahead along with the change," he said. Later on, talking with reporters, Poudel refused to elaborate the court's stance on the recent parliamentary charter declaration saying that the judges of the apex court were yet to discuss the topic fully. However, justice Anup Raj Sharma said that that declaration was a political document and, in absence of further decision, there is a confusion. He added that a quick decision should be made by politicians to determine which particular model of 'parliamentary supremacy' to follow. *Kantipur daily reports.*

Deuba Elected PP Leader

Party president Sher Bahadur Deuba has been elected as the parliamentary party (PP) leader by bagging 24 votes out of 37 cast. His rival Bijaya Gachhadar collected 13 votes. Despite efforts to reach agreement for a consensus candidate the president's faction and dissident faction went ahead to the election. After the election, Deuba said he would accommodate all factions of the party. Gachhadar, on the other hand, said he would abide by the

decision of the democratic election. *Leading dailies report.*

Congress Asks Maoists To Come Within The Parliamentary Charter

Concluding that it heralded a new era in Nepal, the central working committee (CWC) meeting of NC has asked the Maoists also to come within the perimeter of the Charter Declaration 2063 of the parliament. The meeting chaired by PM Koirala stated that it is not the duty of the government of Nepal to ensure the democratic environment in the country. The meeting urged the Maoists to immediately stop extortion, seizure of properties and display of weapons and armed uniforms. It reminded the Maoists to abide by the party-Maoists pact. During the meeting, central member Narahari Acharya urged the NC to finalize its viewpoints on the status of monarchy in the face of forthcoming constituent assembly elections. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

Unconditional CA Is The Agenda For Peace Talks: Maoists

Addressing a public program in Biratnagar, Maoist leaders have said that unconditional elections of constituent assembly is the only agenda for the forthcoming peace talks with the government. Dina Nath Sharma, a central committee member and a member of Maoist talks team, said that the agenda of the talks would be to dissolve the parliament, frame interim statute, form interim government and go for elections of CA unconditionally. He added that "the parliament, although it is said to be vested with many rights, is the same old one." Sharma said, "We will not back down from the talks. Rather we should be vigilant that the seven parties would back down from it." He added that the Maoists would not compromise on even 'ceremonial monarchy.' Likewise, another central member Matrika Yadav said that the Maoists were already in the "mainstream of the people's desire." He added; "Rather it is the seven parties

and other forces who need to come to this people's mainstream." Speaking at the program, various Maoist leaders including central members Hitman Shakya, Chandra Khanal, Ram Karki, president of Maoist women's wing Jayapuri Gharti and president of Maoist trade union Shaligram Jamarkattel said that the Maoists could once again take to arms for the purpose of making Republican Nepal. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

Leaders Fully Endorse The Declaration

Presenting the charter declaration at the parliament, on May 18, PM Koirala said that each word and paragraph of the declaration was written with the blood of martyrs. He warned that anybody that attempts to go against the declaration would have to face people's wrath. The general secretary of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Madhav Kumar Nepal stated that the declaration has ended the dispute that had started since 1950. Sher Bahadur Deuba, president of Nepali Congress (Democratic), expressed happiness over the victory of the people. Sushil Koirala of Nepali Congress, said that the victory of peaceful people's movement in Nepal provided a lesson to all despots around the world. Chitra Bahadur KC and Pari Thapa of People's Front, Narayan Man Bijukchhe of Nepal Workers and Peasants Party, Hridayesh Tripathy of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (SP-Anandidevi) and Yagyajit Shah of NSP also spoke fully endorsing the declaration. Pashupati SJB Rana, president of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), said that his party also supported the supremacy of the people. He, however, regretted that the seven parties did not take other smaller parties into confidence while drafting the charter. Surya Bahadur Thapa, president of Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP), expressed pride to become a member of a sovereign parliament. "This declaration was the result of the circumstances and the background," he said. *Compiled from reports.*

Maoists Welcome The Declaration But Have Some Reservations

Maoist chairman Prachanda issued a statement welcoming the charter declaration terming it as victory of 12-point pact and historic people's movement. He said the party feels 'glorified' that some of the demands raised by his party have been addressed. "But the declaration has attempted to address the people's desire of ending monarchy by politically limiting it as a ceremonial one," Prachanda said. He said it was silent over the issues of growing foreign interference, restructuring the state, self-determination, regional and ethnic autonomy and federal system, revolutionary land reforms and fundamental rights to education, health and employment. He also said that the declaration has given birth to 'serious suspicion' as it has maintained a 'surprised silence' over finding solution to the issues of the insurgency and impending talks with the Maoists. He also expressed doubt whether the declaration would put the issues of talks, election to constituent assembly under a shadow. He added that the declaration had tried to give credit to only to the alliance by not mentioning the significance of the 12-point pact. *Leading dailies report.*

"Tenure Of Parliament Should Not Be Fixed": Nepal

The Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal has said that in order to strengthen the reinstated parliament, its tenure must not be fixed. He said that in absence of alternative representative body, the blunder of dissolving the existing House must not be committed. "If we dissolve it in a hurry, the world will call us a fool. It would be suicidal to dissolve it in absence of reliable alternative," he said, addressing a function organized to mark the 13th death anniversary of UML leaders Madan Bhandari and Jeeraj Ashrit. Nepal added that Thursday's declaration would institutionalize the gains of the parliament. He said that

following the declaration, the government will be stronger and will hold talks with the Maoists. He also ruled out the need for international mediation in the talks. "We have held talks a number of times in Siliguri, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Patna and Delhi without any mediation," he added. *Kantipur daily reports.*

AG Says House Is Not Be-All, End-All

At a time when the seven party alliance is about to declare the reinstated House of Representatives the supreme body of the nation and curtail the King's powers, newly appointed Attorney General Yagya Murti Banjade has differed on the issue. "This is not the supreme body and it cannot do anything as it likes," said Banjade. He also said it should work and decide everything within norms and values. He also questioned the legitimacy of the much-expected declaration of the House. "How can the declaration get legitimacy?" he asked. Banjade called on the government and the House to choose whether to bring a new interim constitution or to incorporate all the things which would come in the declaration from the House into the existing Constitution through amendment to the 1990 Constitution. Banjade was speaking at a program organized by a number of NGOs on Wednesday (May 17), including the Nepal Law Society. "People will not accept autocracy from any quarter," Banjade said. "Unless the declaration is incorporated into the Constitution through amendment, how can we believe that it is part of the constitution," he asked. Banjade added that it takes time either to bring a new interim constitution or to amend the existing one to legitimize the declaration. Advocate Bhimarjun Acharya said that such a declaration of supremacy of the parliament is sheer violation of the rule of law. "This is nothing but undermining the rule of law and lacking in legitimacy," he said, adding that it amounted to nothing different from the "King's autocracy." *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*



PM G.P. Koirala administers oath of office to newly appointed ministers

The Kathmandu Post

BREAKING HIS OWN RECORD, FAMOUS MOUNTAINEER

Appa Sherpa has successfully climbed Mount Everest for 16th time. On Friday morning (May 19), the 46-year-old mountaineer from Thame, Solukhumbu, reached the peak as team leader of the Team No Limit Expedition. A father of two sons and a daughter, Sherpa had started his climbing career by first scaling Annapurna First in 1987. He first climbed Everest in 1990. Except for 1996 and 2001, he has scaled the roof of the world every year since then. In 1992 and 1997, he successfully climbed Everest twice in one year. Meanwhile, another person from the same village of Appa Sherpa holds the record of climbing Everest 14 times. Chhewang Ngima Sherpa, 39, climbed Everest for the 14th time on Saturday (May 20).

THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING TO CELEBRATE JESTHA

4 (May 18) – the day of parliamentary charter declaration - as the National Day from the coming year, according to deputy prime minister K.P. Oli. He said that he would present the proposal to this effect in the cabinet. Till now, the diplomatic missions and the government celebrated Asar 23 – the birthday of the King - as the National Day.

THE SUPREME COURT (SC) HAS ANNULLED A PROVISION

of the National Broadcasting Act that allows the de-registration of electronic media. The special bench comprising justices Anup Raj Sharma, Balram KC and Tahir Ali Ansari annulled Article 8 of the Act. The Article provisioned that the registration of any electronic media organization could be cancelled if it broadcast any program violating rules. The decision was made in response to a writ petition filed by Narayan Dutta Kandel.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH AND

Central Asian Affairs Richard A. Boucher said that the return to democracy in Nepal has created a broad spirit of optimism. According to press statement released by American Embassy, testifying on U.S. policy in South Asia before the U.S. House of Representatives International Relations Committee Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific on May 17, Ambassador Boucher said, "The people of Nepal have shown they are not prepared to live under an autocratic monarch. Their success in forcing a return to democracy has created a broad spirit of optimism for the future. We are looking at ways in which we can further strengthen democracy and, through greater public participation in the political process, strengthen the momentum for peace." On the Maoists, Boucher said, "Should they lay down their weapons, end their use of violence and intimidation and accept the rule of law, and accept the will of the Nepali people through the democratic process, there will be a place for them in Nepal's political arena. Until the Maoists take steps to change their character, we will not be convinced that they have abandoned their stated goal of establishing a one-party, authoritarian state." He added that US "can make a positive difference include technical assistance and

equipment to the Parliament and to a constitutional reform process, assisting reintegration of internally displaced persons, and funding election monitors. In addition, we want to assist the Nepali people with projects that can promote economic recovery, especially in rural areas." He said that the U.S. supports the new government's efforts to bring peace to Nepal. "The cease-fire is holding and the new government has made clear its readiness for peace. I told Prime Minister Koirala on May 2 that we stand ready to provide assistance to security forces if his government were to make a request. This offer includes our ongoing commitment to improve the human rights record of Nepal's security forces." Likewise, the U.S. Representative James Leach, the subcommittee chairman and a Republican congressman from the state of Iowa, noted in his opening comments that "both the Congress and American people recognize their determination and success in creating the conditions that led the King to hand over the reigns of power and reinstate Parliament."

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF NEPAL (CAAN) HAS

grounded two Fokker 100 aircraft of Cosmic Air following the request by Netherlands-based Air Cap Ireland Limited – the owner of the aircrafts. The Dutch company had written a letter complaining that the Cosmic was flying its aircraft illegally by not paying its dues. With this step, the Cosmic now has only one Fokker aircraft. Of the four aircraft, one has already been grounded on technical reasons. Meanwhile, Upendra Karki, marketing director of Cosmic, complained against the CAAN decision saying that they were flying the aircraft as per the decision of the court. He also claimed that the company had paid US\$ 400,000 to the Dutch company last month. Cosmic had introduced cheaper rates of flying in the country since one and a half years by bringing in jet aircrafts.

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS DENIED

reports in media that it has written a letter to the United Nations asking to send back a senior Royal Nepalese Army official, who is working in the peacekeeping force. The Ministry, on Tuesday (May 16), said that it had never made any communication to the UN authority to recall Lt. General Balananda Sharma, who is currently working as Force Commander in the UN Peacekeeping Force in the Middle East. It said news stories published in some dailies were totally false. It also urged the concerned publication to adhere to the ethics of journalism. Leading dailies report

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HUNGER AND POVERTY IN NEPAL

and meeting the goal of halving the number of chronically under-nourished by 2015 seems an elusive task, said Jean Pierre de Margerie, representative of the World Food Program Nepal (WFP/N). Addressing a press meet on Monday (May 15), Margerie said 12 million Nepalis – about 47 percent of the total population – are chronically hungry, reports The Himalayan Times daily. The meet was organized to brief the media on 'Fight Hunger: Walk the World' – a walkathon to raise awareness on hunger and collect fund for the program. In a report, the WFPN said Nepal's stagnant economy, lack of employment opportunities, weak governance, insufficient infrastructure and the Maoist insurgency have ensured that a significant number of Nepalis remain trapped in a cycle of hunger and poverty from which there appears to be little relief. One child dies every five seconds, Margerie said. At present, the WFP's global school feeding program is being run in 16 food-deficit districts of mid-western and far western regions of Nepal. The expected number of beneficiaries of the program is 292,000 in 2700 schools. Walk the World even is being organized on May 21 in Kathmandu. Comedian duo Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bansha Acharya have been appointed goodwill ambassadors for the program.

“I would be the happiest person if the King goes. Why would I be making such comments when I have been betrayed so many times by the King?”

Sher Bahadur Deuba, president of Nepali Congress-Democratic and former prime minister, talking to journalists about the allegations that he had proposed to make the King the chief of Army at the seven party meeting.

* * *

“The government is not seen serious about the 12-point agreement and talks because of the conspiracies of the foreigners and the King. If the government does not hold talks, the Maoists will initiate a new rebellion but will not go to the jungle.”

Dinanath Sharma, a central committee member and a member of Maoist talks team, addressing the mass meeting organized by the Maoists in Biratnagar.

* * *

“Until the Maoists take steps to change their character, we will not be convinced that they have abandoned their stated goal of establishing a one-party, authoritarian state.”

Richard A. Boucher, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, through a press statement.

* * *

“Unless the declaration is incorporated into the Constitution through amendment, how can we believe that it is part of the constitution?”



Bimarsha

Yagya Murti Banjade, newly appointed Attorney General, in The Himalayan Times.

* * *

“We cannot say with certainty that there will be sustainable peace in the country until the Maoists come to the mainstream. So, it is not yet the time to be happy.”

Pashupati SJB Rana, president of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), speaking at a function in Nepalgunj.

* * *

“Is the parliamentary declaration constitution, amendment to the present constitution or an interim statute? Its status should be made clear.”

Anup Raj Sharma, justice of Supreme Court, talking to journalists after a function

of the Supreme Court, in The Annapurna Post.

* * *

“They (Maoists) should stop extortion to create conducive environment for talks. We know that their cadres and armed guerrillas can survive at least for six months even if they do not resort to extortion.”

Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of the Unified-Marxist-Leninist, speaking at a program organized to mark the death anniversary of Madan Bhandari and Jib Raj Ashrit.

* * *

“It is necessary to convene the Mahasamiti meet now to discuss the issues of a republican order and the restructuring of the State. Only the CWC's decision may not suffice.”

Nara Hari Acharya, leader of Nepali Congress, talking to journalists after the central working committee meeting.

* * *

“Those who try to hatch conspiracy now will be swept away.”

Ram Chandra Poudel, general secretary of Nepali Congress, in Bimarsha.

* * *

“What kind of justice is this where the army officials are exempted from punishment.”

Dr. Devendra Raj Pande, civil society leader, in Jana Astha.

* * *

TRANSITION

ELECTED: Sher Bahadur Deuba, as the parliamentary party leader of Nepali Congress – Democratic, by an election of the parliamentary party.

DECLARED: Devendra Bhattarai, as the winner of the Uttam Shanti Puraskar of this year, by a meeting of Uttam Kunwar Smarak Puraskar Guthi.

EXPANDED: Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, expanded the cabinet inducting 11 new ministers including five cabinet-rank ministers and six state ministers. They include: Rajendra Pandey (Ministry of Local Development), Pradeep Gyawali (Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation), Dr. Mangal Siddhi Manandhar (Education and Sports),

Urmila Aryal (State Minister, Women, Children and Social Welfare), and Dharma Nath Shah (State Minister, General Administration) from UML. The new ministers from NC include Gopal Rai (State Minister, Forest and Soil Conservation), Dilendra Badu (State Minister, Information and Communication) and Man Bahadur Biswakarma (State Minister, Environment, Science and Technology). Narendra Bikram Nemwang and Ramesh Lekhak of NC (D) have been appointed as Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and State Minister for Labor and Transport Management respectively. Deputy Speaker Chitra Lekha Yadav, who was appointed as the Minister for Water Resources, refused to take charge.

DIED: Bhikkechu Subodhanand Mahasthvir, the eldest Sanghnyak of Nepal, at the age of 91

LEFT: Surya Bahadur Thapa, president of Rastriya Jana Shakti Party, for the USA, to participate in various programs.

Nepathya, a popular Nepali band, for Finland, for staging musical performances

APPOINTED: Dr. Suresh Chandra Chalise, as the advisor to prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, by the prime minister

NOMINATED: Baman Prasad Nyaupane, as the spokesperson of the Home Ministry, by the government.

ELECTED: Professor Doctor Jai Raj Awasthi as the president, professor Dr Govind Raj Bhattari as the vice-president, Bijaya Kumar Rauniyar as secretary cum treasurer, and Ram Lal Lohani and Bhim Lal Gautam as joint-secretaries of Linguistic Society of Nepal, by the election of the Society.

Inland Waterways Of Bangladesh

By DR. AB THAPA

Rivers in eastern part of the Indian Sub-continent have been an integral part of the human existence. They were used for navigation by country crafts from the time immemorial. Towns grew on the bank of rivers. Even in the Mōgul period major towns and settlements were on the bank of rivers mainly for easy mode of communications with the rest of the country. Dhaka, the capital of Mogul Bengal and similarly, Delhi the capital of Mogul Empire and other important cities were all situated besides navigable waterways. British also set up their capital in Calcutta besides the river Hooghly. During the era of the British rule, greater part of the river traffic as in the old days continued to be carried on indigenous boats made by the local river men. It was estimated in the eighteenth century that some thirty thousand boatmen found employment on Bengal's fleet of country crafts.

Steam engine driven paddle steamer was first introduced in the river Ganges in the year 1834. Since then paddle steamers with passengers and tugboats with dumb barges started plying from Allahabad in central India to Calcutta and from Calcutta to Eastern Province of Assam through East Bengal now Bangladesh. In those days river conservation works were carried out at district level by a Pilot Superintendent, who used indigenous method of sounding channels with lead line and bamboo sticks. Maintenance works were done in dry season by bandalling, which is a method still adopted in some rivers in Bangladesh. Dredging on a limited scale was also introduced for the maintenance of river. Some development works were also carried out in way of loop cutting, excavation of link canal in order to shorten the route.

Rivers in Bangladesh

The total area of Bangladesh is about 1,42,450 sq. km. Most of the land excepting the hilly regions in the eastern side bordering with Burma and India, has been formed by the sediments carried down over a long period by the big river systems of the sub-continent. These rivers, the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Jamuna, Meghna (along with their tributaries), bring with them 1,400 billion cubic meter of water annually. In addition, about 2.5 billion tons of silt is washed down every year from a vast region, which measures more than 1.6 million sq. km in area.

The rivers of Bangladesh are quite different from one another in nature. They are plagued by various types of problems such as the change in courses, river instability, massive siltation etc. While dominated by three major rivers e.g. Padma, Meghna and Jamuna, the country's river system is characterized by innumerable large and small channels that branch off from the major channels. This river system is

dominated by the big rivers and any changes in them affect the whole system. These big rivers are classified as 'unstable' (Meghna) and 'very unstable' (Padma & Jamuna.). Both Padma and Jamuna show a high degree of lateral migrations. For example, the Padma discharged most of its flow before the sixteenth century through the Hooghly River on the bank of which Calcutta is located. Since then, the main channel has progressively moved north eastwards, occupying and abandoning several courses before assuming its present position. Jamuna appears even more unstable which has changed its course significantly within the past 200 years abandoning large towns and inland ports to what are today unnavigable distributaries.

Regime of the Rivers

The regime of the rivers in Bangladesh with the exception of those close to the sea is characterized by a high and low water period. The low water period lasts from December to May. The lowest water levels are recorded in the months of March and April. During the low water period, shipping is hampered on many waterways, while some routes are closed.

Most of the rivers have meandering riverbeds of fine sandy material. They show an irregular pattern of deep bends and shallow crossings. These rivers can be subdivided in four typical types.

The large braided rivers (main rivers) - In the high water period (in rainy season), they flow in wide river beds (with velocities of 4 m/s) also overflowing the banks, and flooding large areas. In dry season, the flow branches, bifurcating and meandering irregularly.

The tributaries (e.g. Surma, Barak, Atrai).- These collectors carry the discharge from local catchment areas to the main rivers. Their regime depends on local rainfall and evaporation while their morphology is governed by the discharge and the erosion in the catchment area.

The tidal rivers and branches (e.g. Pusur, Karnaphuli etc) - These rivers carry the discharge from their catchment area but their regime and morphology are mainly determined by the daily tidal flow.

The distributaries or connecting branch rivers- Dhalesawani, Lakhya, Old Brahmaputra are fed by other rivers, and their regime and morphology depend on those larger rivers. Changes at the bifurcation and confluences with those rivers in particular have major impact on their morphology

Inland Water Transport Operation

In the early years since 1947 eight principal operators were engaged in IWT operation. Out of them the two former British companies with their registered office in London were

the major carrier (77%) of cargo and passengers. They owned about 450 vessels. River conservancy works and maintenance works were carried out by those British companies as in pre-partition years. From the early 50s more and more private sector operators started to take part in inland water transport both in passenger and cargo carriage. As a result, the Government felt the necessity of a central semiautonomous regulatory and development body for the operation and maintenance of inland waterways. Thus, in 1958, East Pakistan Inland Water Transport Authority (EPIWTA) was established under the Ministry of Road and Water Transport of the Government of East Pakistan. EPIWTA changed the old traditional method of river conservancy by improved organization and modernized the system of markings by introducing lighted buoys and shore beacons, survey by mechanized vessels equipped with echo sounders and later by DECCA system of position finding. Maps and charts replaced the memories of the former pilots and tidal gauges were installed to measure the flow of the river.

Dredging was extensively used for maintenance of navigable channels in dry season and also for opening up new routes for mechanized vessel. On an average 400,000 cubic meters were dredged annually.

In early 60s the first coaster with 800 ton load and about 12 feet draft was successfully piloted from maritime port of Chittagong to Dhaka a major inland port and enroute crossing 11 miles of Bay of Bengal. This opened a new chapter in IWT operation enabling self propelled coasters to ply between maritime ports and inland ports through bay crossing round the year rather than dumb barges towed by tug in winter season when bay was flat calm. This route soon became one of the major trunk routes with hundreds of coasters and tankers plying and carrying about 30% of the import from the maritime port of Chittagong to hinterland major inland ports of Dhaka and Narayanganj.

After independence of Bangladesh EPIWTA was renamed as Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA). Now great challenges both in operation and maintenance of river routes are facing the BIWTA - with more traffic from operational aspect and vigorous maintenance work for diminished flow of water in the rivers during the dry season.

Classification of Waterways

The responsibility for maintaining the network of navigable waterways is vested in Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA). The total length of waterways in the dry season is 5,222 km which extends to 8,433 km in wet season. BIWTA maintains about 4,200 km and has provided 3,900 kilometers with various navigational aids for day time navigation or both day and night navigation throughout the year depending upon the importance of the route. The present method of classification of waterways is principally based on the economic values of the waterways. Thus the class of waterway depends on the traffic generating potential of the places it connects. For conservation and maintenance purpose inland waterways are divided into 3 classes.

(1) Class I routes are the main arteries of traffic flow and are the major concern of BIWTA as regards conservancy and maintenance. The users shall have a guarantee of the specified navigability of minimum depth of 3.6 meters throughout the year. For day and night navigation channels are marked by lighted/unlighted buoys, and lighted shore beacons. Pilotage service is also provided by BIWTA for safe navigation. Maintenance of routes are carried out on regular basis during dry season by dredging and bandalling. With a total length of some 600 km the network of arterial routes link up the maritime ports of Chittagong and Mongla and the major inland river ports. These routes carry 83% of all mechanized inland water transport tonnage.

(2) Class II routes are important traffic links and also called Secondary Routes maintained at a minimum depth of 1.8 meters and usually 2.4 to 2.7 meters in flood season. The total length is about 1,440 km.

(3) Class III routes are traffic links of regional importance. With a total length of about 1,900 km BIWTA attempts to maintain them at 0.9 to 1.8 meters depending upon the regional importance.

IWT Traffic

The mechanized fleet carry broadly two types of cargo, one is the export/import cargo arising out of the foreign trade of the country and the other is the domestic cargo moving long distances between districts and regions of the country along the rivers. The estimated annual cargo and passenger traffic in 1978-79 was 3.77 million tons and 44.44 passengers respectively. In 1985-86 it increased to 5.9 million tons and 68.13 passengers respectively.

Type of Vessels

The IWT vessels in Bangladesh exhibit a considerable degree of commodity and route specification. Certain vessels operate mainly, if not only, in particular routes engaged in carrying specific commodity traffic. The extent of commodity and route specification of the major type of vessels could be described as hereinafter. (1) Coasters- *Chittagong Dhaka route for transportation of foodgrains, cement, POL, fertilizer, jute goods, iron, steel & general cargo etc.* (2) Tankers - *Chittagong Khulna and Chittagong Baghabari routes for export and import.* (3) Bay Crossing Barges- *Mongla/Khulna & Dhaka Narayanganj* (4) Inland Barges- *for transportation of sand, stone, rice, paddy, fertilizer, raw jute, salt, general domestic goods.*

Kosi Canal Waterway and Bangladesh

Nepal is aiming to develop Kosi Canal Waterway linking Nepal with seaports. The proposed canal waterway can be expected to be on a par with the Class I waterway of the Bangladesh and Faracca Canal Waterway of India. Nepal and India have already signed an agreement to conduct detailed feasibility study of the Kosi Canal Waterway. It need not be explained that the Kosi Canal Waterway would be linking Nepal with waterways of Bangladesh also. ■

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

SECURITY

Prime Concern Of Nepal's Neighbors

Recent comments of Nepal's two neighbors show that security is their main concern rather than a form of government and kind of constitution in Nepal

By KESHAB POUDEL

While Nepali Loktantrics - a new version of Nepali democrats - and western countries including the United States of America are jubilant by the success in the recent stage of agitation and the charter declaration issued from the parliament, the same is not the case with Nepal's two neighbors - India and China.

Some distant friends of Nepal like Switzerland, Norway, and Denmark have already seriously taken up the task of helping Nepalese people to prepare a new constitution through Constitution Assembly; but Nepal's two immediate neighbors have shown that their first priority is security in Nepal.

In the process of helping Nepalese to formulate the new constitution, Switzerland, Norway and other European countries have also come up with their offers to help achieving the goal to bring the new constitution through CA.

The prime concern of nearest democratic neighbor seems to be not to immediately extend help for making a new democratic constitution though the CA for which they had an experience in the past. Following the shift of power from Royal Palace to Parliament, the first response of India's state minister of state for External Affairs E. Ahmad was to discuss with new Nepalese leaders regarding growing activities of ISI (Pakistan's intelligence agency) in Nepal and its threat to India's security. "It has always been our wish to seek peace and prosperity in Nepal because stability

in Nepal is in the best interest of India," said Ahamad. (The Himalayan Times)

Even as prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala has been unable to expand cabinet including all his allied parties, the security concern expressed by an Indian official has alarmed reasonable persons in Nepal.

Real problems between Nepal and India do not always come to the surface in full length. But whatever is coming out as news recently is alarming. At a time when the whole country was anxiously the parliament declare its charter making itself sovereign and final authority, the security concern expressed by an official of big powerful neighbor has generated serious questions.

Not only the minister, a senior diplomat from south, who wanted to remain unnamed, also confided that security in Nepal is a question of survival for India. As Nepal shares more than 1600 kilometer long open border with India and both the countries share commonalities in cultural, religious, linguistic, geographical and ethnicity, naturally India has the highest stake in Nepal.



Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and envoy Mukherjee: Heightened attention

When asked about the role of western powers including USA, the diplomat of south said these western powers may come and go but India has to live with the situation and deal with whatever threats that emanate in Nepal.

"I do believe that despite the vast geo-political and geo-strategic changes that have recently occurred in the world, particularly the Subcontinent, by and large, we continue to maintain a close security relationship between our two countries. Its graph has had minor fluctuations. But, when one looks at it through a historical prism, these fluctuations are insignificant. In India, there is a genuine concern for Nepal's security, stability and progress. Nepal's security affects India's national security," said Ved Prakash Malik former chief of the Indian Army in his article India-Nepal Security Relations.

Almost similar opinions have been coming all the time from the northern neighbor. From senior politicians to diplomats, Chinese, too, closely monitor events in Nepal. In his recent visit to Nepal, Chinese vice premier Tang Jiaxuan clearly highlighted their interest in Nepal.

"A Nepal of peace, reconciliation and amity, enjoying stability, development and prosperity serves the fundamental interests of its people and will promote regional peace, stability and development," said Tang Jiaxuan. "We consistently support Nepal in its effort to safeguard sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Nepal is a sovereign country, and its internal affairs shall not be interfered with any way by any outside forces."

Responding to queries, a senior diplomat of Nepal's northern neighbor confided that Nepal's independence and stability is pre-requisite for Chinese security interest. The senior diplomat said State Councilor Tang's recent statement reflected the policy document (of China) towards Nepal.

"Nepal remaining independent nation is essential prerequisite for



Tang Jiaxuan: Concerned north

Chinese security. Thus, Nepal living under Indian security umbrella is constant threat to Chinese security," Chinese scholar Wang Zong in his book *Nepal's National Defensive Strategy and Nepal-China Relation*.

That implies, India or China cannot afford to be unconcerned about the recent volatile and unstable situation in Nepal. The Jamboree of our politicians is very unstable and this unreliable platform may abruptly come to an end by even a small jerk or terms from either side of the country.

"One of the power bastions of stability in Nepal has been neutralized by the declaration of the parliament and popular forces have come in direct relationship with the Nepalese Army. In case of any miscalculation from one side, it is not the monarchy but the regional powers may be tended to intrude," said a political analyst. "Using one against the other or the game of divide and rule of the past imperialist style has its own influence in the new atmosphere. Let them declare anything for their political survival but the ground realities of the country is not going to change by such declaration."

Alarmed by growing political instability in Nepal, India and China, Nepal's two neighbors, are closely

monitoring the situation. The country is in a very difficult phase of transition.

"Nepal's central location on the southern slope of the imposing mountain system that separates the Tibetan plateau from the plains of India has always strongly conditioned the country's history and foreign policy. Modern Nepal controls approximately one-third of the Himalayan bastion upon which South Asia relies for protection—never more so than today," writes late Leo E. Rose in his book *Nepal's Strategy for Survival*. "To Kathmandu, the current potentialities of external domination and subversion are not very different in kind—though they may be in degree—from those with which Nepali

governments have had to contend for at least two centuries. There is basic similarity between King Prithivi Narayan Shaha's analysis of Nepal's role in the Himalayan area and his selections of tactic and that of the Ninth ruler in his dynasty, King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev. In part, of course, this can be attributed to the paucity of alternative

policies for a country in Nepal's position."

"Nevertheless, there are choices to be made within this strictly limited framework, and the consistency displayed by widely different groups of decision makers over a long period is one of the more notable aspects of Nepal's history."

Despite the anger some motivated miscreants expressed by dismantling a statue of King Prithivi Narayan Shaha, one cannot change the geo-strategic reality—explained by him as "a yam between two boulders". For more than two hundred years, this has not changed.

Without any bloodshed, the power has shifted from Royal Palace to the parliament. This does not end the process of destabilization. The first phase of destabilization came to an end following the handover of power to the parliament but second phase may be yet to start, which is inevitably going to be more difficult and painful as Nepal's geo-strategic location remains unchanged. No change can be sustained if it fails to accommodate this ground reality where Nepal's two important neighbors have more concern on their security rather than anything else. ■

Indian Assistance For Goitre Control

A tripartite agreement between the Government of Nepal, the Government of India, and the Salt Trading Corporation Ltd. of Nepal for grant assistance of NRs.11.60 crores (116 million) for the control of goitre and iodine deficiency disorders in Nepal has been signed on May 23, according to a press release from the Indian Embassy.

"Bilateral cooperation for 26 years in this important area of health has resulted in eradication of visible goitre from Nepal and has made a significant dent in the cure of goitre, especially in the remote and hilly areas. The program has also encouraged increased consumption of iodized granular salt amongst Nepal's population. Twenty-two districts have been identified for distribution of iodized salt for treatment and prophylactic activities," adds the press release.

At present the Government of India is implementing 137 projects at a cost of NRs.1800 crores in the areas of health, education and infrastructure in over sixty districts of Nepal, the Embassy states. ■

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Pushed To The Background

Even as the country is basking in the glory of newfound political freedom, there are reasons to worry about the economy. At a time when the political leaders should be speaking and doing something about the ailing economy, they are concentrating only on political issues. Nobody doubts that political issues are most important at this juncture. But we can overlook the equally burning economic issues, only at our own peril. The lukewarm reaction of politicians, MPs and even civil society towards the White Paper presented by the Finance Minister and dearth of debates regarding the economic road Nepal should pursue in the coming days are ominous signals. Particularly, at a time when the extreme leftist parties are clamoring for radical changes in socio-economic fundamentals, the deafening silence from the vast majority of liberal-minded people and civil society is a worrying indication

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Quite clearly, the extreme communists led by the Maoists have been dominating the political debates in the country. And they have even dominated the economic sphere. Last few weeks have seen how various sister organizations of the Maoists have swooped on in industries, factories and even schools.

The frenzied campaign of extortions, demands for nationalization of schools and turning of the country into socialist-

communist republic have occupied the center-stage of debates of late. Gone are the debates over the economic reconstruction, public-private partnership, liberalization and globalization. This has made the threat of rise of 'illiberal democracy' or even outright 'communism' that is much more ominous.

After they declared ceasefire, the Maoists have stepped up their campaign of extortions reportedly to finance their militia.

Around ten industries in Birgunj-Pathlaiya corridor were forced to shut down following demands of big

'donation' by the Maoists. Newspapers reported that the Maoists asked for Rs 100 million donation from Dabur Nepal company alone. Although this particular problem has been resolved through talks between the business community and the trade union wing of the Maoists (All Nepal Trade Union Federation), the whole episode has cast a gloomy spell over the entire business and investment environment. "The extortion drive by the Maoists has negatively affected the business and investment environment," conceded Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat.



Poorer sections of society: Wanted better livelihood opportunities

The Maoists are also reported to be engaged in extortion in cities across the country. The Himalayan Times daily reported on May 23 that the Maoists have asked over a dozen private banks to "cough up Rs 2.5 million each as donation." And in the rush to strengthen their organization, the Maoists are taking up the causes of workers in industries and driving a wedge between them and employers hurting the industrial peace. In Birgunj, over 10 industries closed down accusing the ANTUF of spreading terror as the latter started barging into factories with arms; spraying black paints over the faces of managers and organizing the workers' meetings on factory premises.

"The business community never had to face pressure like this anytime before," said Bijaya Sarawagi, president of Birgunj Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).

The wave of extortion threats has even compelled the government to urge the Maoists to bring the issue of financing their militia in the forthcoming

talks. Senior ministers are saying that the government could look into how it can help finance the militias. "We can talk on this issue. So, they must stop the extortion drive," said deputy prime minister and Foreign Minister K.P. Oli. Politicians like UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal have already called on the Maoists to stop their extortion activities and, instead, put forth their problem of financing to the government, if they are genuine about maintaining peace.

The rampant excesses by the Maoist organizations have led many people to harbor suspicions regarding their real intent. "We were quite optimistic after the restoration of the parliament and announcing of ceasefire. But the recent events have caused us to doubt the seriousness of the Maoist commitment of joining the competitive multiparty politics," said an industrialist who did not want to be named.

Red Storm Rising

It is not only the ANTUF that is causing the business community to

worry. The student wing of the Maoists – All Nepal National Free Students Union (ANNFSU-Revolutionary) – has recently submitted nine-point demands to the Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala demanding the nationalization of all private schools. It has demanded that if the schools cannot be nationalized in the short-term, their fees must be sharply reduced immediately. They have threatened to unleash their protest campaigns if the demands are not met.

Last week, speaking at a program, Suresh Ale Magar, the central member of the Maoists who was released by the government as a gesture of goodwill, said that the parties and civil society should stop urging Maoists to come to the political mainstream. He added that the parties should, instead, come to the mainstream of people and the Maoists.

In his reaction to the parliamentary charter declaration, Maoist chairman Prachanda criticized it for failing to introduce 'revolutionary land reforms' among others. At a time when the Maoists are calling for collectivization of agriculture and building of communes, it is anybody's guess what 'revolutionary land reforms' would mean.

In fact, it is not only the Maoists that are shaping the debates over economy. The Seven Party Alliance (SPA), which is dominated by communist outfits, is also gripped by the communist line. Among the SPA constituents, Nepali Congress and NC (Democratic) are the only liberal parties. While the UML, Nepal Peasants and Workers Party (NWPP), People's Front (PF) and United Leftist Front (ULF) are communist parties, the Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandidevi) is a regional one. Consequently, the political as well as economic issues are being hijacked by the communists.

At a time, when the country is heading towards the election of the constituent assembly to write a new constitution for the country, the domination of debates by communists could spell trouble for democratic centrists, liberalists and capitalists. "It is a worrying sign for the private sector," added the industrialist.

"The Maoists are seeking a secular, socialistic republic with radical land distribution and removal of the monarchy. However, few realize the dire consequences of electing a constituent assembly. Basically, the Maoist-dictated and drafted constitution will trample on individual liberty and freedom, lead to mass migration of Nepalis, extinguish the nationalistic spirit of Nepal, and negatively impact the fledgling capitalistic economy," writes Laba Karki, a practicing attorney based in Virginia, USA (Nepalnews.com).

Economics In The Back-seat

As the country is engrossed in political debates, the economic issues are not getting the attention they deserve. So much so that Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat had to urge the people and the MPs in the parliament to 'zealously' pursue the economic agenda. "It is my firm determination and belief that the dream of people to build prosperous Nepal can be realized. I expect similar level of zeal as shown by the people during the popular movement in course of economic reconstruction as well," he stated.

The issue of economic recovery seems to have been pushed to the background for the time being as every section of society is focused on peace process and constituent assembly. "While the wheels of the political solutions are now in motion, the economic problem needs immediate attention. It will be disastrous to wait until the finale of political drama to address the economic problem. The burden of economic movement lies on the economists, socialists, informed citizens, and policy makers, from the leaders of both, the political parties and the Maoists," wrote Shiva Gautam, Assistant Professor at the Harvard University in an article published recently.

Economists agree that the government must take up the economic agenda with equal zeal. "I think the political agendas are now, more or less, settled. It is now time to take up the economic agenda. I believe that the economic development should go hand-in-hand with the political development," said Dr. Binod Karmacharya, an economist.

Adds Dr. Shankar Sharma, the former vice chairman of the National Planning Commission (NPC), "The time is now ripe for, not only repairing the damaged infrastructures but also, building new ones, particularly in rural areas." He added, "This is the time for nation-building."

Economic Recovery

The national economy currently lies battered. The growth has come down to less than 2 percent. Compared to the population growth rate of 2.3 percent, this pace of GDP growth could actually mean that the country is marching on a reverse direction.

"The growth rate can be increased if the peace is maintained. We can then cut down defense expenditure and divert the savings and resources to development sector. We can even take development to places where we could not go earlier thanks to the conflict. These activities are certain to fuel growth," said Dr. Karmacharya.

In the White Paper he presented last week, Dr. Mahat has painted the bleak picture of prevailing economy. It



India's booming townships: Waiting for spillover of prosperity



A tourist: Need to lure more of them

mentions that while the country had averaged the GDP growth rate of 5.1 percent in the decade prior to 2001, it has come down to 2.7 percent in the last three years.

Major industries of the country including tourism, garment, pashmina and carpet have all suffered terribly. Tourism has come down by nearly 50 percent. The exports of garment products have decreased by over 40 percent in the last two years. Tens of thousands of jobs in garment sector have been lost as factories are downing their shutters at an alarming rate.

Trade deficit has been growing at the rate of 17.7 percent in the last four years. The only saving grace has been the consistently increasing inflow of remittance.

The revenue collection has dipped. The previous government had set the target of collecting Rs 81.81 billion. This target is not going to be met at all. Till mid-April, the government had collected only Rs 46.37 billion. The government's adjusted estimates now puts the target of revenue at Rs 73.57 billion.

On Sunday (May 21), the Nepal Rastra Bank also released a report assessing the economy of the first eight months of the current fiscal year. The report states that the trade deficit, during the period, increased by over 37 percent

compared to 7.4 percent during the same period previous year.

But again due to favorable growth of remittances, the Balance of Payments (BoP) surplus registered Rs 13.8 billion in the period compared to only Rs 5.7 billion in the corresponding period last year. Likewise, the current account

posted a surplus of Rs 4.8 billion. The total foreign exchange reserve has also increased by 11.2 percent to reach Rs 144.4 billion till mid-March 2006, states the NRB report. This level of reserve is sufficient to finance merchandise imports of 9.8 months and merchandise and service imports of 8.3 months. The inflation, however, has increased by 7.7 percent in the review period as against 5.7 percent previous year. The unbridled growth of inflation coupled with low GDP growth can eat up the savings and earnings of common people triggering catastrophic consequences.

Given the bleak economic scenario, it is the duty of all concerned to pay attention towards developing the country's economy. While the people of neighboring countries India and China are reaping the benefits of unprecedented growths, the Nepalese, too, deserve no less. The people had not come out in the streets simply to change the constitution, they also had come there with the expectations that their lifestyle would be improved. And this desire of the people must not be relegated to the back-seat. ■

DONORS' ASSURANCES

Promises Of Support

During the major meeting with the government, donors pledge generous support

By A CORRESPONDENT

Just like they supported the democratic struggle, the donors have pledged to support their economic struggle as well.

After the February 1 royal step, the donors had stalled their aid to Nepal. Last week, during their meeting with the Finance Minister, the donors assured that they would resume the stalled aid. They also promised to provide further assistance to help in the process of reconstruction.

The meeting was held in the Ministry of Finance on May 17. During the meeting, Danish ambassador Finn Thilsted proposed the assistance of Rs 500 million for democratic process, constituent assembly and management of arms and cadres of Maoists. He added that Danish government would resume assistance in the rural energy program amounting to Rs 1.5 billion.

Other donors expressed concerns that the Maoist activities and lack of security could pose obstacles in the development works. They said that if the government can widen the development space and ensure delivery, people's confidence in peace process will increase. ■

POLITICS

Silent Majority In Turmoil

With the extreme voices dominating the streets, silent majority finds itself in mental turmoil

By KESHAB POUDEL

Some claim declaration made by the parliament is equivalent to Magna Carta and others claim it as a revolutionary jurisprudence announced by the parliament in accordance with the wishes of the people, but the country's silent majority is yet to express their views.

After the announcement by the parliament, the declaration has already started to be executed as it has been published in the official Gazette. In accordance with the declaration, the name of government and army has changed and many others are in the process of changing. Raj Parishad has been dissolved and so have other services in the Royal Palace. The serious question now is how to make it a part of law and constitution.

Citing the people power, proponents of the charter declaration are accusing the persons, who question the legitimacy of the declaration, as regressive and reactionary. Whatever they claim, finally Nepalese have been landed at the destination of uncertainty and a new phase of political instability.

"This is a historic document. Since the declaration was made under the demand of agitating people, the document is itself as a constitution," said Laxman Prasad Aryal, former justice and member of drafting commission of Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990. "What people in the street say is the constitution of Nepal."

Some others, too, back Aryal's argument. "The declaration is now a constitution of Nepal and no one can

challenge the declaration anywhere," said former law minister Nilamber Acharya, who headed a cabinet committee, which finalized the present constitution. "The people who are questioning the legality and legitimacy of declaration are supporters of regressive forces," said Acharya, former member of pro-Russian Communist party.

Other lawyers argue that it can still be incorporated in the constitution through the regular process. "Declaration of parliament is a fait accompli. However, to cloth the declaration with legal validity, the parliament should start amending the constitution under the article 116 of the amending procedure of Constitution of

Kingdom of Nepal 1990. None of the declaration has infringed fundamental tenets of the constitution. The supremacy of the parliament is in dilatory form, which cannot be given constitutional norm in a country where there is democratic and written constitution. The constitution is supreme whereas the organs of the state are creatures of the constitution," said an eminent constitutional lawyer.

As a matter of fact, the declaration concerning supremacy of the parliament has been made to proclaim the supremacy of the people, which the constitution enshrine and which has recently been affirmed by Supreme Court decision on Royal Commission for Corruption Control. This sovereign power and supremacy of the people, unfortunately, were impinged by the unnecessary acts of King Gyanendra following the dismissal of elected government back in October 4, 2002 and subsequent actions following that.

"By saying parliament supreme, members of parliament want to reaffirm the supremacy of the people. As they duly represent the people, they are supreme to other organs of the state, not the constitution," said the lawyer. "It looks as if parliament has acted in anger rather than with reason. Instead of reaffirming the supremacy of the people, they mistakenly declared themselves supreme, which may be Freudian slip of tongue."

So far as aspects of the declaration are concerned, they could very well be embodied in the constitution through the process of amendment as none of the declaration contravenes the basic strictures of the constitution. This embodiment, through the process of amendment, is very necessary since declaration may be challenged as unconstitutional in the Supreme Court - the court is obliged to determine the constitutionality of the declaration in view of the Article 88.1 of the constitution.

It is the reserve power bestowed to any citizen to move a writ petition in the Supreme Court challenging any unconstitutional



Parliament: Assumes sovereignty

act or declaration. Constitution is the embodiment of people's sovereign power against which no act or declaration can exist.

Whether to change the name of army, change the name of government, dissolve Raj Parishad, remove royal palace military secretariat, remove Security Council, remove privileges of the King, or take up the right to make laws regarding royal succession, all these can be done through amendment of the constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990.

According to article 116, everything can be amended except the spirit of the preamble of the constitution. All these declarations are not the salient features of the constitution. The declaration, too, admits that people are sovereign and supreme and no act against the people's will can stand.

Outburst of Anger

This is an outburst of anger against actions of various monarchs who twisted the constitution for their gains since 1953. Various kings have stepped into the active politics when the people became weaker and divided. This tendency widens the distrust and mistrust. "King Tribhuwan declared himself sovereign in 1953 limiting the role of judiciary. King Mahendra declared himself supreme through coup d'etat against the constitution of 1960. King Birendra disregarded referendum for evolutionary change towards multiparty democracy in 1979 and King Gayendra's maneuvers for seeking space for conservation or active role widened the mistrust," said the constitutional lawyer.

"How come the juxtaposition that the parliament could be supreme? It is nothing but an example of Freudian slip to counter claims of supremacy of monarchy." Maoist pressure seemed to be other reason to announce the declaration by the parliament. It seems that political leaders are eager to preempt the Maoists declaring almost all demands raised by them.

"Had all Kings followed the constitutional process since 1951, the country would not have seen the present state where there are growing demands to declare Nepal as a republic state," said Dr. Surya Dhungel, in his article in Nepal. "Political leaders too have shown their capability to lead the agitation but not a



Demonstrators: Demanding people's supremacy

capability to smoothly work in transition. Because of all these, we have been repeating similar kinds of mistakes in the process of democratization in the last 57 years."

Validity of Declaration

In a country where there is written constitution, all the organs of the state including the House of Representative are the creations of the constitution.

People are now saying that the declaration is a part of the constitution. Unless the contents of the declaration are incorporated in the constitution, the court cannot recognize it and it will lack legal binding case.

Declaration has never been a law. Rather, it is a way to make law, to embody its letter and spirit in constitution and law. For example, Magna Carta is a historical document, which heralded the era against the absolute monarchy. However, Magna Carta is not binding and enforceable law. The subsequent law and judgments in England commonly known as Common Law embodied the spirit and principles of Magna Carta.

There are still rooms to incorporate the declaration into the law and constitution. The Supreme Court can interpret it. "The declaration of parliament has historical value as it reflects the aspiration of people. No force can overrule this document," said CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal. "If someone tries to hatch conspiracy against

this declaration, people will not tolerate them."

Although it has already evaded the constitutional and legal process, one of the positive parts of the declaration is that it was not announced by a revolutionary council or a group of military council, but by 205 elected representatives of previous parliament.

There are legal and constitutional ways to incorporate the declaration recently made by the parliament. However powerful it may be, the mandate of people is really a force to reckon with but it must be translated into the law following its due procedure.

Mandate of People

In the last Royal proclamation of the King, the road map of the seven parties was mentioned to be followed. One of the six points of road map of seven parties stated their unequivocal commitment to activate the whole constitution.

Unfortunately, when they reached to the power, political parties ignored their previous commitment and made the declaration saying that any provision of the constitution, which goes contrary to the declaration, shall be null and void.

The legal status of declaration is very confusing and one dares not find similar instance anywhere in the world. No legislature procedure was followed to make it a legal document but in several of its provisions, the declaration demolishes the

constitutional title and privileges of the state authorities as well as citizens.

The King has been deprived of certain powers and privileges but ordinary citizens of this country have also been deprived of their fundamental rights and liberties to resist the guidelines of the declaration.

In the pattern of some military or communist takeover, the consequences remain the same – that declarations are as rigorously enforced as fundamental laws of the land.

“One cannot expect due course and process at the time of revolution. One must respect the declaration as a genuine opinion of common people,” said former justice Aryal. “The document consists of mandate of the people. All of us had seen how people violently came out in the street when parliament delayed the announcement for a couple of days. It reflected the people’s aspiration.”

Pressure of the Street

The announcement is a result of the pressure coming from the street. In fact, in the present context, the elites and civil society themselves turned into a mob and mob psychology is emotional and irrational. The persons who are sober and responsible remain silent and nobody is taking notice of silent majority. The voices of reasonable persons cannot be recorded because they did not take part in the street. The silent majority of people in the country is moderate, reconciliatory and sober.

If these trends continue to override the constitution by parliamentary declaration, despotism of parliament in definite term may come out with another declaration unflinching all basic freedom of a citizen.

Can Declaration Be Challenged?

Can a citizen challenge this resolution in the court? Till now any citizen could challenge an act or law or ordinance under the article 88.1 of the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990. As the mob is against any move to test the legitimacy of declaration, nobody is in a position to dare to challenge it, although some judges have indicated that they will judge the legality of declaration - if someone files a writ petition in the court.

“The court can test the constitutional and legal validity of the declaration of the parliament if writ petition is filed in the court

under the article 88.1 of the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990,” said Justice Anup Raj Sharma.

Constitution is source of all powers of state functionaries as well as citizens. The declaration has eclipsed the constitution declaring that the declaration of parliament supersedes the constitution as well as other laws of the country. It is not a part of legal document but a political document and political document has made the constitution irrelevant.

“When there is a revolution, nobody goes through the constitution. The document consists of mandate of revolution,” said Nilamber Acharya. “The declaration is the constitution now.”

Uncertain Mob

Organized demonstrations are not the real reflections of the whole nation. The mob in the valley has always been

unpredictable. When two Nepali Congress workers Bhim Narayan Shrestha and Captain Yagya Bahadur Thapa were executed, no one saw any mob. After winning the elections for dissolved Panchayat, record number of crowd came out to the street to welcome Nani Maiya Dahal. Similarly, the crowd remained silent when King Gyanendra dismissed the elected prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba’s government in October 4, 2002.

The crowd in the valley gave impression to King Gyanendra, who spent about eight hours in the street waving to the crowd in September, that they supported his move. What late Ganesh Man Singh, supreme leader of popular uprising of 1990, termed the people of Kathmandu is derogatory but it seems to be still valid. Late Singh who was named as father of democracy after successful agitation, compared the people of the valley as sheep when his son and wife were badly defeated in the general elections.



Supreme Court: Sole interpreter of constitution

Following the announcement of declaration, the charter declaration of the parliament has started a debate all over the country about its legal and constitutional validity. According to the proponents of the charter declaration, all the people are under the declaration including the King and people.

“All are under the constitution; constitution is under declaration and parliament is above the declaration. This is a revolutionary jurisprudence,” said a former attorney general.

Whatever the leaders of agitation said, silent majority were not shouting slogans during the street agitation and it is not their character to do so. But they consist the majority of the nation. In the present situation, they are silent but they have to be given utmost serious attention.

Let them declare anything for their political survival, but the hard realities of the country are not going to be changed by such declaration. ■

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND HIV/AIDS

Building Unity Of Purpose

The UNIFEM organizes a high level regional conference in Kathmandu to bring all the stakeholders who are fighting against trafficking and HIV/AIDS on a single platform

By A CORRESPONDENT

The issue of human trafficking and HIV/AIDS is clearly a multidimensional one involving a number of countries. Both the issues are serious and have caused a number of socio-economic problems for South Asian countries.

Each countries of the region on their own are dealing with these problems. In order to bring together the stakeholders of the region and chalk out integrated approach of overcoming the problem, the UNIFEM South Asia Regional Office and UNDP Regional Center jointly organized a high level meeting in Kathmandu from May 22-24.

"Already these countries have had experience of dealing with the issues. We wanted to bring them together for learning and sharing of experiences as well as strengthening the joint resolve to fight these problems," Chandni Joshi, chief of UNIFEM SARO.

Reports say that human trafficking in South Asia has taken many forms and occurs for a variety of purposes like organ transplant, bonded labor, domestic servitude, sex trade, hazardous labor, marriage, illegal adoption and pornography. "The most visible and widespread form, however, is trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation," states a press release by the UNIFEM. It is estimated that over 100,000 people are trafficked annually in this region.

"Increasingly, young women and children who have been trafficked are at increased risk for HIV infection since they have little or no control over their circumstances. Their vulnerability is rooted in and aggravated by prevailing poverty, deprivation and severe gender inequality that exist in political, social, education and economic areas of life. The female face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the female face of the trafficked and vulnerable constituency is a terrifying reality," adds the release.

Human trafficking in South Asia has taken many forms and occurs for a variety of purposes like organ transplant, bonded labor, domestic servitude, sex trade, hazardous labor, marriage, illegal adoption and pornography. "The most visible and widespread form, however, is trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation," states a press release by the UNIFEM. It is estimated that over 100,000 people are trafficked annually in this region.

Reports say that there are 5.1 million people infected with HIV in India, 40 percent of which are women. Nepal also has over 60,000 HIV infected persons. As Nepal has long and open border with India and as thousands of Nepalese girls are trafficked to brothels in Indian cities, the threat of HIV epidemic looms large. The link between trafficking and HIV/AIDS is obvious. The situation further endangers vulnerable sections of society including women, children and the poor.

The UNIFEM has been working in the area of trafficking since 1990.

Although the number or volume of trafficking may not have decreased significantly, the level of awareness and the society's response to this problem has progressively evolved.

"Earlier, these issues were debated in a different language. There were talks about sending countries, receiving countries, victims and so on. Now we talk about rights, dignity, coordination and so on. We have come a long way," said Joshi.

Sunita Danuwar, coordinator of Shakti Samuha, a network of survivors of trafficking, makes some interesting observations. "We now find that the society is beginning to look at survivors positively. In the past they were denigrated but now survivors can hope to pick up the pieces of their lives and move on. Even the police administration and media perspectives have changed. The police now have separate cell for

interrogating survivors. And the media, too, has moved away from the initial phase of sensationalizing the issue. The media now has become more sensitive," she said.

Despite the gradual change in the mindset, there are lots of challenges that still need to be overcome. The inhumane trade still continues. The governments of the region are yet to forge a strong network of cooperation to

nab the traffickers who operate with disturbing ease.

"One major problem that still remains is the poor legal mechanisms. The survivors do not have legal protections and the traffickers, often, go unpunished," said Danuwar.

Meanwhile, the government of Nepal is preparing to update its anti-trafficking act. "Now that the parliament is restored, we hope to update the law," said Shyam Sundar Sharma, spokesperson at the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare. ■

NEPALESE IN US

Home Away From Home

There are thousands of Nepalese working in the United States

By SANJAYA DHAKAL in New York

Sarada Laxmi Shrestha is a typical middle-aged Nepali lady. A mother of three sons, she is currently living in the Big Apple. She works for an American family in Manhattan and also is quite an active member of Nepalese society in the city.

Every morning she takes a one-hour subway ride to go to Manhattan after having a quick breakfast. Her work as a baby-sitter ends at around five in the evening after which she returns back. And sometimes when she gets part-time works as well, she can return only at midnight. Living in an apartment that she shares with three other Nepalese persons, Shrestha is



Shrestha: Hard work pays

an example of hard work and perseverance. "It is a hard life but it is also financially rewarding," she said. One of her sons is studying in the US and the other two and her husband live in Kathmandu. She is the primary bread-winner of her family.

Shrestha came to New York two years ago after wrapping up her job in Nepal. "As a woman, many thought that I would not be able to do anything in a foreign country. But I was determined to work hard and prove them wrong," she said.

Like Shrestha, there are tens of thousands of Nepalese who have gone to the United States searching for opportunities. Because of the political instability and economic slowdown, many Nepalese want to leave for overseas countries to work. And the US is their favorite destination.

These people have shown that they are capable of hard work and dedication provided a conducive atmosphere. Although the official number is not available, tens of thousands of Nepalese are living in the various cities of the United States working and studying and supporting their families back home.

"This is the land of opportunities. Though many immigrants first engage in entry-level jobs like working in restaurants, convenience stores and so on, there are ample opportunities to progress," said Mohan Gyawali, a Nepalese entrepreneur based in Ridgewood, Queens, who is also the president of Nepalese Ridgewood Society.

Gyawali, who had come to the US in 1996, has opened his own manicure and pedicure service outlet known as "Mount Everest Nail," where he has given employment to around ten Nepalese. "I learned about nails only after I came here. And now I even train Nepalese who arrive



Times Square in New York city: Magnet for immigrants

Photos by: Sanjaya Dhakal



Gyawali with his employees: Successful entrepreneur

ore and they are finding jobs easily elsewhere," he said. Gyawali has already excelled in his business as is evident by many awards that he has bagged for the outstanding service.

"When I came here in 1996, there was not any other Nepalese family in this area. But now, there are 400 plus Nepalese families here. There are many buildings where the entire occupants are Nepalese," said Gyawali.

According to him, in the New York city area alone, there may be over 30,000 Nepalese. And they are engaged in all sorts of jobs from entry-level low paying jobs to higher ones. "There are persons like doctors, lawyers, professors and engineers from Nepal," he said.

Dr. Tara Niraula is one such example. Faculty member of prestigious Columbia University, Dr. Niraula has been living in New York for the last fifteen years. "It is good that more and more Nepalese are now coming here and doing their jobs well," said Dr. Niraula, who is also the president of America-Nepal Friendship Society (ANFS).

Politically Conscious

The Nepalese community in the US are highly conscious about the politics back home. During the people's movement in April, they organized protest rallies in Washington DC and New York, among other cities. "We have a close network and we have participated in demonstrations supporting democracy," said Shrestha.

"Nepalese organized campaigns in Washington DC and in front of UN in New York. Ours is a non-partisan and non-religious society. We always pursue causes in the interest of our country and countrymen," added Gyawali.

At a time when Nepal is passing through a difficult transition, Nepalese people living abroad are also equally concerned. "Although we live here, we are very concerned about the developments back home. We are glad that the political situation has improved. However, we are still concerned about the final outcome and whether the peace will be established for good," said Dr. Niraula.

Because of email and internet, Nepalese are finding it quite easy to read about the events taking place in their home country in real-time basis. Pratap Adhikari, who is based in Virginia, keeps tab on the events in Nepal constantly. "Now there are even some newspapers that are published by Nepalese in Washington DC and New York," he said.

Apart from engaging in political demonstrations, the Nepalese in US are equally active in providing generous support to people back home. This trend of supporting seems to be catching up fast. "We raise funds for providing relief to disaster victims. In fact, we also raised fund to help a Nepali family here which had lost their home in fire recently," said Gyawali.

The Ridgewood Society also raised some amount to help injured persons of the current people's movement.

"We are also providing fund for financing scholarship to five students annually from backward classes in Bhedetar," said Gyawali.

Social Networking

Obviously, the people living overseas miss the festivals, food and social bond that they enjoy back home. In order to recreate those networking and bonds, the Nepalese living in the US have come together.

Now in various cities of the US, they have built temples and they come together to celebrate festivals like Dashain, Tihar and Teej. Although their number is not as huge as those of Indians or Pakistanis, Nepalese have formed close bonding with each other.

The organizations like ANFS and Ridgewood Society act as a bridge between Nepalese and American society. It is also a place where Nepalese can look up to if they are in some difficulties.

"Because of Diversity Visa schemes, the number of Nepalese coming to the US



Dr. Niraula: Building bridges

has increased substantially. We try to help them if they come into our contact. We can help them in finding jobs, getting settled and so on," said Gyawali.

Nepalese have literally built home away from home in the far away country. Their pursuit of professional excellence is bearing fruit. Their talent and resourcefulness could come in handy for the nation as it marches towards a democratic era. "We stand ready to help Nepal. There are many Nepalese who have excelled in their professions like teaching and technical jobs. Their talent can be helpful," added Dr. Niraula. ■

BOOK

People's Movement

Historian Dr. Pushpa Raj Chalise explains various events of People's Movement I analyzing the views of the government

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepal's five decade long history has seen many ups and downs. There have been a number of incidents that have taken place in the past, which have often caused serious set backs to the democracy as well as stability of the country.

People's Movement 1990: Views of the Government and Techniques Devised to Counter (Current Political History)

By: Dr. Pushpa Raj Chalise

Published by: Udaya Books Pvt. Ltd

Price: Rs. 210.00

Pages: 278

Had Nepal opted a particular political system with the understanding of all the political actors, Nepal would have evolved the political institutions it required to run the liberal democratic system in Nepal. Following the overthrow of Rana regime in 1951, King Mahendra overthrew democratic system in 1961 dismissing the elected prime minister. For the three decades, the country was virtually run by one party autocratic Panchayat system.

It was the People's Movement of 1990 which finally overthrew the one party Panchayat system and opened the road for multi-party democracy with liberal constitution. This book is based on the event of People Movement of 1990. Dr. Chalise has done very commendable job by bringing out the book.

The role and duty of historian is to describe all different kinds of major events of the past to its reader. Thanks to the efforts of various writers, Nepal is able to

retain its written history of about two centuries.

Whether in the ancient history or modern, they portray the picture and impacts of that time. For youths and new generations, such documented events help to understand the past of the country.

Following the successful People's Movement II recently, people in general have forgotten the importance of People's Movement of 1990, which actually opened the way for liberal and democratic society.

Although it was published four years ago, the book is still relevant and one of few books available that is filled with all detailed events of People's Movement of 1990. "The book entitled 'Jana Andolan 2046 People's Movement

1990: Views of the Government and Techniques Devised to Counter' by my distinguished colleague Shri Pushpa Raj Chalise, teacher of history at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, is a work marked by mature judgment and craftsmanship. We are so close to the events of 1990 that it still rouses our passions and emotions; but the author has been able to ride these heated waves and come out with objective analysis and conclusions," writes Prem R. Uprety, professor of History, Tribhuvan University. The book is divided into six chapters. But the most important chapters are reflected by the title itself.

Writing history is a very difficult and tedious job but it is the historian who can explain the events of the past to the readers,

students and scholars. In the last fifteen years, many books came out highlighting various aspects of the People's Movement of 1990 but this book is the first of its kind, which has done in depth studies based on all available documents.

Dr. Chalise has made a notable effort to collect and analyze the events in interesting manner that helps to understand the role of government, civil society and concerned parties during the period of movement. The events of 59 days and various events that occurred during the period are interesting to read. The fall of 30-years-old Panchayat system and restoration of multi-party democracy were the successes of the movement.

"This brings us directly into the vortex of the revolution of 1990, which has further broadened our insight into the phenomenon of what a revolution is," writes Dr. Uprety in his foreword.

BOOK LIST

Cost of Armed Conflict in Nepal Ananda P. Shrestha/Hari Uprety-2005	Rs. 250.00
Excesses Unlimited A Study on Impunity In Nepal Binod Bhattarai/Jogendra Ghimire/ Mohan Mainali-2005	Rs. 75.00
Foreign Direct Investment In Nepal Raghu Bir Bista-2005	Rs. 25.00
Historical Context of Newar Buddhism Shanker Thapa-2005	Rs. 300.00
Indo-Nepal Economic Cooperation P.A. Raj/M.Karanjit/C.K. Gyawali-2005	Rs. 100.00
Issue of the World of Work In Nepal B.Rimal/U. Upadhyaya/P. Khatiwada-2005	Rs. 350.00
Nepal-China Relations Nishchal N. Pandey-2005	Rs. 450.00
Nepal Celebrate Rotary Bishwa Keshar Maskay-2005	Rs. 800.00
New Life Within SAARC Dev Raj Dahal/Nishchal N. Panday-2005	Rs. 400.00
Nepalese Forts and the Royal Nepalese Army in Fort Battles Prem Singh Basnyat-2005	Rs. 281.00
Newar Buddhism History, Scholarship and Literature Shanker Thapa-2005	Rs. 300.00
Reproductive Health & Rights Bina Pradhan/Bishwa Keshar Maskay-2005	Rs. 200.00
Sounds of Road Broadcasting P. Kharel-2005	Rs. 130.00
Understanding Reforms in Nepal D.R. Khanal/P.R. Rajkarnikar/ K.P. Acharya/D.R. Uprety	Rs. 325.00
Under the Shadow of Violence Kishore Nepal-2005	Rs. 300.00

EXPOSITION

Diversity in Unity

The paintings by different painters of Nepal Water Color Society distinguishes the unique style of each individual

By THAKUR AMGAI

The walls of Siddhartha Art Gallery, which are otherwise filled with artworks of a single artist on a single theme, are filled with water colors of different tastes. At an exhibition organized by Nepal Water Color Society (NWCS) more than 50 different water color paintings are exhibited.

The paintings exhibited at the third annual exhibition of the society depict a

peace, the paintings show women's love for peace.

Popular cartoonist and painter from Pokhara Durga Baral has once again used his strong style of projecting the current grief through his paintings. He has used complete and incomplete women figures in various postures with dark color contrasts to depict the gravity of the chaotic situation through which the country just passed.

Ratan Kumar Rai, who is also the president of NWCS,

has painted landscapes in his canvases. The beauty of his paintings that depict the lands of Tibet, Humla and Mustang proves that water color does the justice to the beauty of landscapes.

Artist Surendra Pradhan has applied cubism in his paintings that show grief and sad sides of human society. He too has

used women in his paintings. Artists Naresh Sundar Sainju, Hari Bahadur Khadka and Tarzan Sangpang have also used women, mostly depicting grief. Sangpang has painted a nun, while Saiju has painted women attending to various household chores.

Other artists who have exhibited their works include Lok Prasad Gurung, who has painted the Kumari Chowk of Basantapur, Jeevan Rajopadhyaya, who has painted the scene of a stream and Hareram Jojiju 'Joju', whose creations have expressed that water color can be very beautiful even when it is abstract. Jojiju has painted various elements of nature in bright colors with somewhat abstract forms. The exhibition is on till June 18.



The range of contents and styles. While artist Buddhi Gurung from Pokhara has painted the beauty of Davies Fall and beauty around Pokhara, Ratna Kaji Shakya has painted the semi-abstract Kathmandu city that shows the pollution and rampant urbanization of the city.

Likewise, Mandira Malla Rajbhandari has painted various deities including living goddess Kumari.

Many artists have used women as a symbol in the works. Although, the styles of projection differ from each other, most of the creations depict the current situation of grief and a longing for peace. Shant Kumar Rai has used bird with women in his paintings. As a symbol of

OHCHR-Nepal Concerned About The Use Of PSA

The OHCHR-Nepal office has conveyed its concerns to the Home Ministry regarding the use of the Public Security Act (PSA) to hold five former ministers in preventive detention.

Former ministers Kamal Thapa (Home), Ramesh Nath Pandey (Foreign Affairs), Shrish SJB Rana (Information & Communications), Tanka Dhakal (Local Development) and Nikshya SJB Rana (Health) were arrested on 12 May 2006 and are currently being held in the Nepal Police Academy and the Armed Nepali Police barracks in Tripleshwor. OHCHR-Nepal visited all five detainees on 14 May 2006, and was satisfied that the conditions of detention were generally acceptable.

"OHCHR-Nepal believes that the use of the PSA raises serious questions about the legality of the arrests and detention," states a press release by the OHCHR office in Kathmandu. According to the detention letters issued by the Chief District Officer of Kathmandu, all detainees were "involved in conspiratorial activities including organizing secret meetings likely to jeopardize the sovereignty of the people and the people's rights achieved by the people's movement".

The OHCHR states that the detention letters do not indicate the basis on which these accusations are being made, nor do they give specific details of the "conspiratorial activities" and how such activities "immediately jeopardize the sovereignty, integrity, or public tranquility and order of the Kingdom of Nepal".

"OHCHR-Nepal has repeatedly condemned the use of the PSA in the past to hold individuals in preventive detention in violation of international human rights standards. It is disappointed that the new Government has continued this practice at a time when it should be setting new standards for fully respecting human rights and upholding the rule of law. Those responsible for human rights violations should be brought to justice, but I call on the authorities to ensure that the rights of anyone accused in connection with their activities under the previous Government are fully respected," said Ian Martin, Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal.

GUNA RAJ POUDEL

Creative Mind

Poudel, 29, has successfully made musical instruments and statues out of paper mash

By THAKUR AMGAI

When Columbus said he would venture to find a new land, everyone discarded his claim as an utterance of a lunatic mind. So, did the people when Wright brothers said they would make a flying machine. Einstein's Theory of Relativity is not an exception. The list goes long.

Here in Nepal, at a dark, damp room of Lekhnath Sahitya Sadan, Kathmandu, is a man who, too, makes similar claims that sound impossible to a mediocre mind. When he says "It could be possible to develop a technology to transfer electricity without wire", we prefer to disbelieve and dismiss it.

Whether this particular claim comes true or not is another thing, but young Guna Raj Poudel's accomplishments alone are enough to prove that he is capable and will come out with some stunning innovations in future. If provided a conducive environment, the

results would certainly be for the better of the entire nation.

This scribe entered the Lekhnath Sahitya Sadan, quite skeptically, on hearing that there was a man who has crafted musical instruments out of paper. However, on seeing the creative works he had developed, this scribe was easily spell-bound.

There were statues of different personalities, logos of various organizations, handicrafts of landscapes and other natural elements and musical instruments littered all over the staircases thanks to the lack of space. Here was a promising talent that could be an asset to the entire nation and his valuable creations are lying uncared for.

The statues Poudel has crafted gave a taste of natural-ness. He had made these creations using waste and scrap papers.

The musical instruments he has made are not just beautiful pieces for exhibition. He showed that they can actually be used and so feasible for mass production. "I am confident that I can make most of the musical instruments using paper," Poudel said blowing the Shankha (Shell) he had constructed of paper. So, far he has made Khajjadi, Chhain-Chhain, Shankha, flute, among other folk musical instruments. And now he is in the process of making a guitar out of paper mash.

He has made many statues



Paper products: Creative work

ranging from statues of litterateurs like Madhav Prasad Ghimire to international personalities like Alfred Nobel. "I am now making statues of world famous personalities Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi, Mao, Volta and Albert Einstein," Poudel informed.

Although, endowed with creative mind, Poudel lacks support in his innovative endeavors. "I am doing all this at my personal expenses," Poudel laments. "And it is quite difficult for a low range earner like me to spare money out of daily expenses for buying chemicals and other materials for researches."

Poudel wants to develop a kind of museum of various products made of paper. But thanks to the lack of space, his creations are lying here and there collecting dust and dampened by rainwater on the stairs of the building of Lekhnath Sahitya Sadan.

Poudel said he got inspiration to venture into something new when his attempt to make needle became successful about five years ago. "I was very much touched when people used to say that 'not even a needle can be made in Nepal'," Poudel said showing needles of various sizes and kinds stuck on the wall of the Sadan. "So, I made needle to show that it can be made in Nepal." ■



Poudel: Full of confidence

SPOTLIGHT

The News
Magazine
Packaged
with
Up-To-Date

News
Views
&
Analyses
Our Readers
Deserve The Best



SPOTLIGHT

The National News Magazine

BALUWATAR, GPO BOX: 7256

TELEPHONE: (977-1) 4423127, FAX: (977-1) 4417845

Email : spot@mail.com.np



The Star is in Your Favor.

Choose Your Lucky Casino!



CASINO NEPAL
Soaltee Compound
Tahachal, Kathmandu
Tel: 4280588
Fax: 9771 4271244
rdt@mos.com.np



CASINO ANNA
Hotel de L' Annapurna
Durbarmarg, Kathmandu
Tel: 4228650
Fax: 9771 4225228
casanna@mos.com.np



CASINO EVEREST
Hotel Everest
New Baneshwor, Kathmandu
Tel: 4780925
Fax: 9771 4782284
everest@mos.com.np



CASINO ROYALE
Hotel Yak & Yeti
Durbarmarg, Kathmandu
Tel: 4438619
Fax: 9771 4223933
royal_royale@hotmail.com



CASINO RAD
Radisson Hotel
Lazimpat, Kathmandu
Tel: 4420311
Fax: 9771 4445525
casinorad@mail.com.np



CASINO TARA
Hyatt Regency
Boudha, Kathmandu
Tel: 4482517
Fax: 9771 4470722
casinotara@mos.com.np