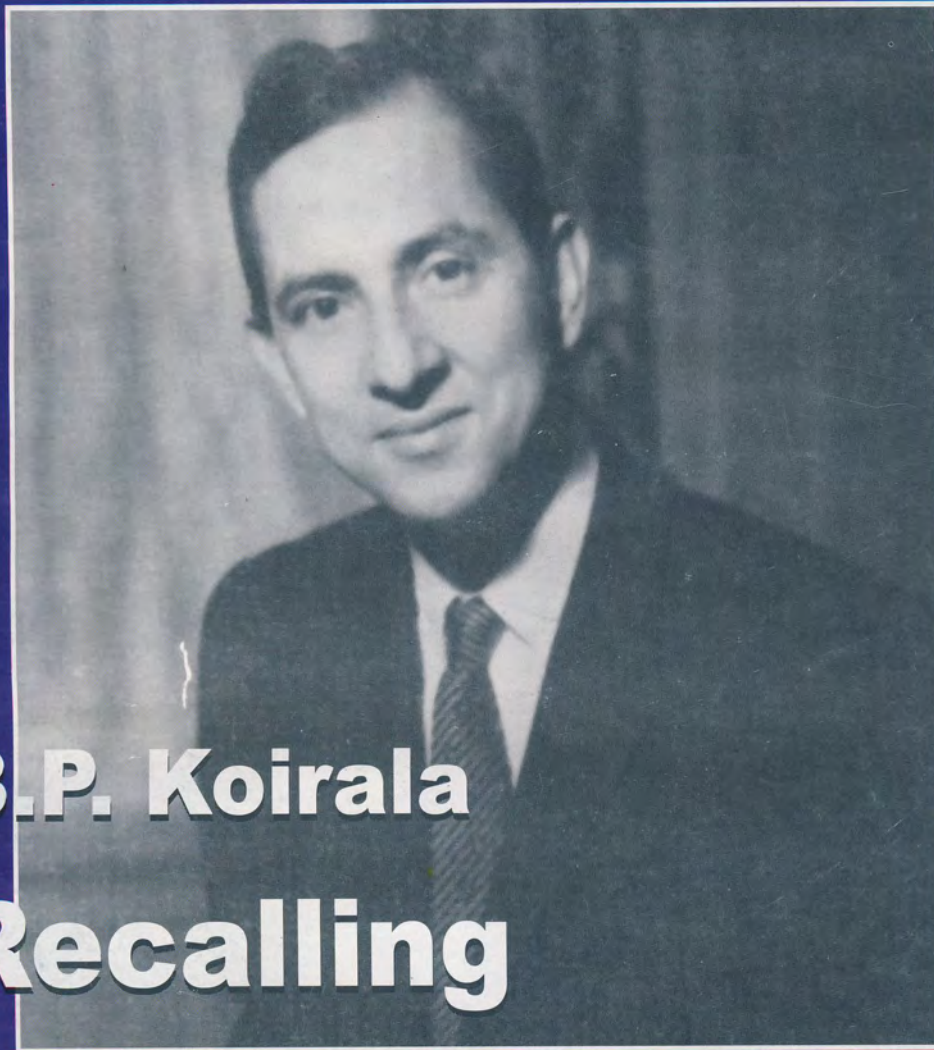


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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Dec 29, 2006-Jan 04, 2007



B.P. Koirala

Recalling

His Reconciliation

Article : Gui Xiaofeng
Tourism : New Destinations
Economy : Maoist Perspective

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प्रस्तुत छ...

...परिवार वचत खाता

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- निःशुल्क अन्तर शाखा कारोबार सेवा
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विस्तृत जानकारीको लागि नजिकैको नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकको शाखामा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोस्।



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(Cover Photo Courtesy: Ganesh Raj Sharma)

COVER STORY: Is Reconciliation Irrelevant?

The idea of reconciliation has been dumped by all leaders even though people still have faith in it Page 12

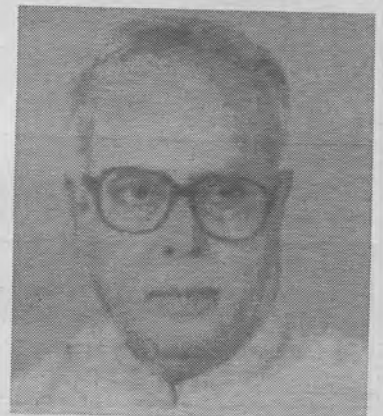


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Recent events show that the peace process remains vulnerable Page 10

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SPOTLIGHT

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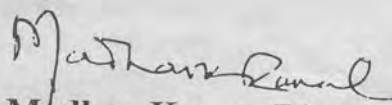
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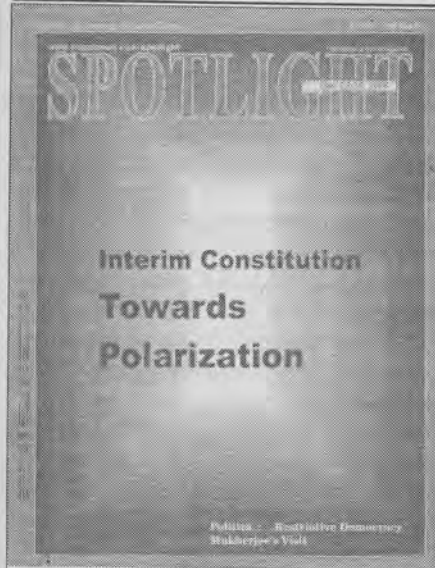
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Quo vadis Nepal? Perhaps, no leaving Nepali, at the moment can satisfactorily answer that question. Nepal has become a rudderless ship in a vicious hurricane, full of ferocious pirates with no captain. At a time when the beleaguered country imperatively needed an honest, dynamic and patriotic leadership, a senile leadership with no sense of morality and integrity has been thrust upon her. More than eight months in office, the Seven Party Alliance government is still groping in darkness – directionless, involved only severe machinations how to keep the CPN (Maoists) out of power, who, despite not enjoying the seat of authority, are calling the shots. The SPA government can do nothing except looking helplessly and entreating the Maoist leadership to cooperate. The Maoist leadership, after missing the bus in April, are getting impatient to wield the scepter. They are not that naïve not to see through the designs of the powers that be who are scheming to keep them at an arms length from the seat of authority. And that's why they are giving a blind eye to all the undemocratic activities of the SPA government. Isn't it very strange that these so called votaries of democracy who cried their heart out at the undemocratic behavior of King Gyanendra and supported the public agitations against him, which have totally denuded him of all authority, are keeping quite mum at the glaring violation of all democratic norms by the SPA government? Why are they so much enamored of the stooge SPA government that is bent on compromising Nepal's integrity? Why haven't they said even one word against the most undemocratic draft of the interim constitution which is only meant to safeguard the authoritarian SPA regime by barring more than eighty percent of the population from contesting the elections? We have already suggested that it must be scrapped if the country is to be saved from going into civil war again. Because, no patriotic Nepali is going to sit quiet and watch the discredited politicians mortgage the nation's sovereignty. Are these democratic countries trying to befriend the poor people of Nepal or helping the corrupt politicians to perpetuate their corrupt regime so that they and their lackeys keep on eating the plum all the time? We think, even the CPN (Maoist) leadership must have become wiser and started to see through the designs of the SPA government. By agreeing to align with the SPA which consists of mostly the branded politicians, Prachanda has not augmented his stature neither added to his charisma. Rather, both have been badly damaged. Can he believe that the interim constitution will be effective in ten days? How long will it take for the habitable barracks, with minimum facilities to be constructed for the Maoist cadres? When will the arms management be accomplished so that the Maoists too would become partners in the government? And pray, why the veterans of the Nepal army and the British Gurkhas are being sidelined in preference to the Indian Gurkhas? Only fools will not be able to see through the hidden intentions behind all these. Comrade Prachanda might have inexhaustible patience but the poor, destitute people of Nepal don't. They need peace, food and shelter. They need medicines for their sick and education for their children. These basic necessities should no more be denied to these needy poor. We do trust that he is fully cognizant with the Nepali character - even poor they will not tolerate the quisling behavior of the corrupt politicians and will rise up to defend their country. And Nepal's security forces, despite the change in the supreme command, will not stay silent spectator of their nation's disintegration.


Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Polarizing Effect

Apropos your cover story "Emerging New Polarization" (SPOTLIGHT December 22), it must be said that a fresh recombination among the political alliance is long overdue. The current alliance among a variety of political forces is unnatural but borne out of necessity. However as the country is heading for a constituent assembly elections, there has to be fresh polarizations for natural politics to set in. Therefore, one must not be surprised to find dissensions brewing among the alliance partners in the coming days.

Bikas KC
Maitighar

Keep Unity Intact

The unity between the seven parties the Maoists had worked to restore democracy in the country. It was after they reached 12-point understanding in New Delhi last year that the politics of the country turned for better days ("Emerging New Polarization" SPOTLIGHT December 22). So, it would be unwise to break that alliance at this moment. Even though the alliance among leftists and rightists do not seem correct, it is the need of the hour. If the political leaders truly want to uplift the condition of their people, they will have to keep the unity intact for at least one more decade. This stability and unity of purpose could translate into rapid economic development and prosperity for this country of 24 million people. At present, Nepal ranks very low in terms economic progress. Our GDP is very low, growth is stagnant, there is overwhelming socio-economic problems and so on. Even though the United Nations has set socio economic goals in the name of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be fulfilled by 2015, Nepal is hard pressed to attain them. The years of political instability, the decade-long violent conflict all ganged up to ensure that Nepal did not rise. While its neighbors India and China are becoming the latest darling of global economic community, Nepal lags behind even among the third world economies. Such a worse situation must not be allowed to continue for too long. The first thing that

Nepal needs now is a stable politics. That can be ensured through the unity of political parties and the writing of a new constitution through the elected Constituent Assembly. Then after the political forces should set their eyes upon the economic building of the country. Although they often talks about building a new Nepal, the political forces have yet to convince the people what agenda they have for doing so. It is very obvious that if the politics after the CA elections is similarly unstable, then Nepal's dream of economic prosperity will go kaput. As such, there is no alternative for the political forces but to join hands and work together on common minimum program aimed at developing the nation. For this to happen, the alliance among the rightists, liberal democrats and leftists is necessary. They must jettison their partisan ideologies for the time being and stand together to fulfill the dream of their people. After the country reaches stability and its economy is improved, then they can think about their ideologies. Till that time they must not think of any polarization that is sure to invite more frictions and dissensions. It is difficult for them to accommodate liberal and communist economic policies. But that is what they will have to do. This is the mandate of the People's Movement. The tens of thousands of people of Nepal did not come to the streets in April only demanding the restoration of democratic polity. They also wanted to develop their country and uplift the millions of poor masses from the grueling poverty. If the

leaders want to fulfill the mandate of the People's Movement, they cannot escape their responsibilities. They should do well by focusing on successfully holding the Constituent Assembly followed by the implementation of common economic policy aimed at developing Nepal.

Kiran Bista
Sardobato

Interesting Prediction

The cover story "Emerging New Polarization" (SPOTLIGHT December 22) has made an interesting prediction of fresh polarization. Although the author has given his justifications for the coming polarization, it must also be noted that this alliance was not forged due to wishes of the parties. Rather it was forged based on the needs of the time. Therefore, until the need of the time changes, there is no possibility of break in this alliance.

Laxman Acharya
Balkhu

Interim Arrangement

The article "No Checks, No Balance" (SPOTLIGHT December 22) rightly points at some of the flaws of the interim constitution. The leaders seem to believe that they can get away with these flaws since this interim constitution will be in force only for a short time. Lets hope their belief will come out true. If in case there is some delay, then the country is sure to face disastrous consequences because this constitution do not have provisions for checks and balances and has heavily fortified the executive.

Nishchal Khadka
Thamel

Need Of The Hour

Apropos your cover story "Emerging New Polarization" (SPOTLIGHT December 22), it must be said that a fresh recombination among the political alliance is long overdue. The current alliance among a variety of political forces is unnatural but borne out of necessity. However as the country is heading for a constituent assembly elections, there has to be fresh polarizations for natural politics to set in. Therefore, one must not be surprised to find dissensions brewing among the alliance partners in the coming days.

Sushil Basnet
Thapathali,

Indian Officials Urge To Use EVM

The Indian election officials who met with their Nepalese counterpart recently in Kathmandu have urged the latter to use Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) during the forthcoming Constituent Assembly elections. They assured all kind of technical and logistic support for the purpose. The Election Commission officials including its chief Bhoj Raj Pokharel met with Indian delegation led by its deputy election commissioner R. Balkrishnan. The Nepalese EC officials informed that they were interested to make use of modern technologies like EVMs. *Leading dailies report*

NSU To Hold Its Tenth General Convention In Janakpur

The student wing of Nepali Congress (NC) – the Nepal Students Union (NSU) – is going to hold its tenth general convention in Janakpur from March 9 to 11. Last year, the union's tenth convention had to be cancelled due to clashes among the students. At a press meet organized on Saturday (December 23), the NSU president Mahendra Sharma said the general convention will be held smoothly. The NSU has also urged the government to appoint vice chancellors in universities to end the uncertainties in education sector. The NSU has condemned the behavior of Maoist-affiliated student union, which it said was using armed guerrillas to threaten other students. *Compiled from reports*

PM To Appoint VCs Soon

At a time when the student wing of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) has announced agitation against the government for not appointing vice chancellors in universities, the Prime Minister and chancellor of the universities including Tribhuvan University has assured that he will make the appointments soon. According to Education Minister Dr. Mangal Siddhi Manandhar, who is also the co chancellor of the universities, the PM has assured of appointments soon. "I have once again drawn the PM's attention to the need of appointing officials and he has assured to appoint them soon after taking

Maoists, too, in confidence," Dr. Manandhar said. *Leading dailies report*

Udayapur Shut Down To Protest Maoists

Protesting the atrocities by the Maoists and attacks by their guerrillas against student activists close to UML, the Udayapur district was shut down on Thursday (December 21). Bazaars of district headquarters Gaighat and Katari, the place where the incident took place, were closed down. Enraged by their atrocities, local people, students and businessmen even vandalized the contact office of the Maoists in Katari. They have declared Katari as 'prohibited' zone for Maoists. *Leading dailies report*

IOC Cuts Down Supplies To NOC

With the objective of pressing it to pay back outstanding dues, the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has cut down the supplies to Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC). NOC chairman Biswonath Goyal has said that the IOC has cut down the regular quantity of supplies to NOC. Reports say that the IOC has cut down as much as 60 percent of supplies triggering acute shortage and depletion of petrol stock at Thankot depot. Goyal said that from Friday, they will not be able to supply petrol from Thankot depot. The NOC needs to pay Rs 9.04 billion to IOC; and the latter has been pressing the NOC to pay the dues soon. "The IOC has demanded that we pay Rs 320 million a month. In order to press their demand, they have cut down the supplies," said Goyal. Earlier, the IOC had cut down 33 percent supplies to press the NOC. At present, the supply of kerosene and diesel has not been affected much though. Meanwhile, the monthly losses of NOC have come down to a record low level in years. It now accrues monthly loss of Rs 15 million only due to sharp reduction of oil price in the international market. *Kantipur daily reports*

Moriarty Protests Maoist Actions

On the day he left for Washington on Christmas holidays, American Ambassador James Moriarty met with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala

and expressed concerns over the actions by the Maoists in recent days. He was particularly perturbed by the violent bandh imposed on Tuesday. "The Prime Minister told me that he had consulted the Maoists before the cabinet took the step," Moriarty said, referring to the government's decision to nominate ambassadors. PM also assured him that the recent Maoist activities will not affect the peace process. "Obviously what happened (on Tuesday) was a direct violation of a commitment; combatants' recruitment also violates a commitment," Moriarty told reporters. Saying that he had not received any indication that the Maoists would give up violence, Moriarty hoped that everybody settles issues through dialogue. *Leading dailies report*

RPP Protests Its Non-Inclusion

Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) president Pashupati SJB Rana met with Prime Minister Koirala and protested the deliberate sidelining of his party from vital processes like constitution-making. Rana said that although his party has 13 percent seats in the current parliament, RPP was kept in total dark over the making of interim constitution. He also protested decision of seven parties and the Maoists to nominate local body officials on mutual consent. *Leading dailies report*

Maoist PLA Attack NC, UML Students

In two separate incidents, Maoist guerrillas physically attacked students of Nepal Students Union (NSU) and All Nepal National Free Students Union (ANNFSU) in Chitwan and Udayapur. Chitwan, over 1000 Maoist guerrillas barged into the Rampur Agriculture Campus and thrashed NSU activists injuring 49 of them. The guerrillas descended on the campus on Monday (December 18) following some differences between NSU and activists of pro-Maoist student union. After the incident, the campus has been shut down. The NSU has issued a statement saying that over 1000 guerrillas came to the campus from Shaktiher cantonment nearby. "They used iron rods to beat us," said Rajendra Dotel, president of the campus unit of NSU. In a separate incident, over 20 students were injured when Maoist guerrillas attacked activists

of ANNFSU in Gaighat of Udayapur district. The guerrillas came after there were disputes between ANNFSU and pro-Maoist students in Katari campus. According to reports, even ordinary people and policemen were injured when the guerrillas from Belsrot camp came on buses and attacked them. The student organizations have condemned the incident and termed it as violation of peace agreement. *Compiled from reports*

PFN And Unity Center

Against Citizenship By Birth

Chitra Bahadur KC, president of a faction of People's Front Nepal (PFN), said that the approval of the Citizenship Act that upholds distribution of citizenship based on birth and inclusion of the same provision within the finalized interim constitution is highly objectionable. "If this provision is actually implemented, door will be opened for foreigners to receive Nepali citizenship," KC said. KC's party as well as Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Center-Masal) issued statements deploring the provision. The Unity Center has lent a 'critical support' to the interim constitution but has remarked that "provisions related with citizenship could seriously hurt nationalism." "Provision of providing citizenship based on birth can pave the way for foreigners to become Nepali citizens and this would have serious and far-reaching consequences to the nationalism," states a statement issued by Mohan Bikram Singh of Unity Center-Nepal. *Compiled from reports*

Write Offs Behind Fall In Banks' NPL Level

Going by statistics, the crucial issue of non performing loans (NPL) ailing the financial sector may appear to have been sorted out. The level of NPL, which stood at whopping 60 percent prior to the financial sector reforms in 2002 and hovered around 30 percent in 2003, has come down to 14.22 percent in 2006. But thereby hangs a story of massive write offs of loans and interest on loans. Nepal Bank Limited has written off loans amounting to almost Rs 4 billion and an interest of around Rs 8 billion, points out Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB). According to the bank regulator, even Rastriya Banijya Bank (RB) is planning to write off a total of Rs 12 billion loans. "But the problem

is far from solved," avers Surendra Man Pradhan, NRB executive director (Regulation), "As the NPL level remains far above the acceptable level of less than five percent. Although the management teams have struggled to recover Rs 17 billion from medium and small sized loans this year, the big fish have gone scot free. "The big borrowers have been avoiding loan repayments by getting stay orders from courts," says Pradhan, who recently even made a presentation in this regard to the Supreme Court judges and the banking committee. The Himalayan Times daily reports

ANNFSU To Launch Agitation

The All Nepal National Free Students Union (ANNFSU) – the pro-Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) student wing – has announced agitation to force the government to immediately appoint vice chancellors in universities including in Tribhuvan University (TU). The ANNFSU has announced that it was forced to announce agitation after the government failed to appoint vice chancellors in universities such as TU, Pokhara University, Purbanchal University and so on since the last nine months. "We have repeatedly drawn the attention of the Education Minister in this regard but in vain," he said. Education Ministry's portfolio is currently held by a UML leader Dr. Mangal Siddhi Manandhar. *Compiled from reports*

Citizenship To Be Distributed Before CA Polls

The government has said that it will distribute citizenship to the people of Terai region before the elections of Constituent Assembly (CA). The Home Minister Krishna Sitaula informed the parliament on Tuesday (December 19) said that special teams will be dispatched to distribute citizenship to the people beginning January 15. The Home Ministry will dispatch such teams across the country with the objective of distributing citizenship ahead of planned Constituent Assembly (CA) elections to be held by mid-June 2007. The government plans to complete the distribution of citizenship between mid-January and mid-March. *Leading dailies report*

MMR Is A Neglected Crisis: Disaster Report

In Nepal, maternal and neonatal mortality topped the list of the neglected crisis. A record of Department of Health Services in 1996 put the mortality rate at 539 per 100,000, later in 2004 after adjustments by UNICEF, the rate was put at 740, implying that 5000 to 6000 women die each year during childbirth, according to World Disasters Report 2006. "It means one pregnant woman dies every two hours," said Jonathan Walter, editor of the report presenting Nepal's fact file. Unsafe childbirth and neonatal practices, lack of healthcare facilities and discrimination against women are main factors responsible for high mortality. "Most of the mothers died during childbirth due to lack of emergency obstetric care or assistance from a skilled birth attendant following birth complications," the report stated. Over 90 percent deliveries take place at home without skilled attendants. The rate of neonatal mortality is 39 per 1000 live births. An estimated 30,000 neonatal deaths occur every year, a report of Department of Health Services said. The Himalayan Times daily reports

Governor Urges For Mergers & Acquisitions

The governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) Bijaya Nath Bhattarai has urged the banks and financial institutions to opt for mergers and acquisitions (M&A) in order to face the challenges of internationalization of financial services. Indicating to the higher level of bad debts of the banks and financial institutions in the country, Bhattarai has forwarded M&A as a strategic option. "We will have to take necessary steps aimed at strengthening if the market fails to understand the signals on time," he said, addressing a program in the capital on Saturday. The program was organized to discuss likely impacts on Nepal's economic and financial sector after foreign banks will be allowed to open their branches here from 2010. "The internationalization of financial services can help create more vibrant financial system in the country, which will benefit both financial institutions and the consumers," he said. Bhattarai also drew attention of all concerned that the opening up of financial sectors will not only have impact on finance sector but the overall economy. Kantipur daily reports. ■



Nepali christians celebrating Christmas festival

Photo: Gorkhapatra

THE MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR MELAMCHI Drinking Water Project is facing a series of disruptions and anarchy because it lacks political support at both the local and central level, according to the House of Representatives Environment Conservation Committee. Following the field inspection of the project, the MPs of the committee have concluded that due to weak political leadership at the local level, local people were raising obstacles everyday by coming up with newer demands. Narendra Bahadur Bam, president of the committee, said, "At the local level there is no political leadership, there is only anarchy." In fact the local people had even tried to manhandle the MPs on Tuesday by making demands such as job for each household, construction of temple, crematorium, hospital etc. Bam said the committee will try to coordinate political understanding at the central and local level in order to make the project successful.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO IMPOUND the passports and stop transactions of properties of black-listed defaulters. The cabinet meeting on Monday (December 18) decided that they would be denied other state facilities as well. The cabinet has decided that such defaulters would not be appointed in public positions and their credit and debit cards would be confiscated. They will not be able to become members of any board of any company. Likewise, they will not be able to open new company as well. They will not be allowed to sell their properties except to pay the loans. Likewise, they can sell bonds also only if the money will be used to pay back the loans.

THE JOINT TECHNICAL LEVEL Nepal-India Boundary Committee has decided to recommend the extension of its mandate by six months till June 2007 to complete the remaining tasks. Claiming that the JTC has successfully completed more than 98 percent of mapping work, the meeting appreciated "the progress made in respect of mandated boundary tasks including fair mapping of boundary of strip sheets." The JTC has also

directed the concerned officials 'to complete the office work and field work with vigour and with the same spirit of mutual cooperation.' The 28th meeting of the JTC was held in Kathmandu on 21-22 December 2006. Prior to the JTC, a preparatory Survey Officials Meeting of both countries was held in Kathmandu on 18-20 December 2006. At the JTC meeting, the Indian side was led by Major General M. Gopal Rao, Surveyor General of India and the Nepalese side was led by Mr. Toya Nath Baral, Director General of Survey Department. The next JTC Meeting will be held at New Delhi in March 2007.

INDIAN COMMERCE SECRETARY Gopal K Pillai, on Tuesday (December 19), said India is ready to hold talks on renewing the Indo-Nepal Trade Treaty on Nepal's terms. There is a provision in the treaty – signed first in 1996 for a five-year term – that allows for a renewal after its expiry on March 5, 2007. Nepal has been doing homework to fix its priorities for the renewal of the treaty, sources said. Pillai said India does not want any major change in the treaty. "Any change in the treaty would be guided by what Nepal wants," he said.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ASSURED THAT THE Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) will resume regular supplies of petrol to the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC). On Friday, officials of Nepal government held talks with Indian officials where the latter agreed to "resume regular supply for the time being," according to Kantipur daily. Hridayesh Tripathy, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies informed that the Indian officials have agreed to resume regular supplies. Likewise, Indian Embassy spokesperson Gopal Bagley also issued a statement saying Indian would ensure regular supplies of petroleum products to Nepal. Earlier, following reports that IOC had cut down 60 percent of petrol supplies to NOC to press the latter to pay back outstanding dues worth Rs 9.04 billion, there have been acute scarcity of the fuel in the country.

THE NUMBER OF WORKERS LEAVING for Malaysia – which is the number one destination of overseas workers – declined by 25 percent in the last five months compared to the same period previous year. Likewise, those going to Qatar – the second favorite destination – also declined by 20 percent in the same period. According to the Department for Labor and Employment Promotion, 30,513 Nepalis left for Malaysia during the period compared to 41,468 the previous year. The number of workers going to Qatar decreased from 22,094 to 17,505. "Apart from these two countries, the numbers of workers going to other countries have not declined," said an official at the department. In totality, the number of overseas workers leaving the country declined by 5.53 percent during this period. Overseas employment agents claim that imposition of service tax and other taxes by the government has caused this decline. The officials, on the other hand, claim that due to restoration of peace and prospects for growth in the country, the number of people going overseas has come down. ■

“We are proud we created a new political situation in the country. Now we want to more rationalize our priorities.”

Maoist leadership tried to clarify their economic policies to the donor representatives.

“Some forces want to drag us in multiparty parliamentary politics to tarnish our revolutionary image. We are stick to our ideology of Maoism.”

Krishna Bahadur Mahara, spokesman of CPN-Maoist in Nepal Television.

“The UML wants the government to withdraw nominations and the Maoists to maintain peace in order not to disrupt the environment of talks.”

Amrit Kumar Bohara, acting general secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UM).

“If this provision is actually implemented, door will be opened for foreigners to receive Nepali citizenship.”

Chitra Bahadur KC, president of a faction of People's Front Nepal, saying that the provision of providing citizenship based on birth could have disastrous impact for the country.

“The organization which was formed with the motive of launching people’s



war needs some changes as the party has now entered political mainstream.”

CP Gajurel, a senior leader of the Maoists, about the decision of the central committee to restructure the party organization, in BBC Nepali Service.

“We have proposed his name for Nobel Peace Prize because of the mature and miraculous role he played in bringing a party engaged in violence and terror to the mainstream politics.”

Mahendra Sharma, president of Nepal Students Union (NSU) – student wing of Nepali Congress – proposing the name of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala for

Nobel Peace Prize, in Nepal Samacharpatra daily.

“At the local level there is no political leadership, there is only anarchy.”

Narendra Bahadur Bam, president of the Environment Committee at the House of Representative, reaching the conclusion after making a field trip to the project site of Melamchi Drinking Water Project.

“We won’t let any pro-royalist to hold any political program in the valley in future.”

Padma Ratna Tuladhar, human rights activist and chairman of Newa Republican Front for Autonomy, in The Himalayan Times.

TRANSITION

APPOINTED: Former Chief Justice Biswonath Upadhyaya as the chairman of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Gauri Pradhan and Leela Pathak as members of the Commission, by the cabinet.

NOMINATED: Fourteen persons as ambassadors in various missions abroad, by the special cabinet meeting. They include Shailaja Acharya for India; Tanka Karki for China; Dr. Suresh Chalise for the United States; Bhagirath Basnet for the United Kingdom; Nabin Prakash Jung Shah for Thailand;

Pramesh Hamal for Belgium; Dr. Surya Kanta Mishra for Qatar; Hamid Ansari for Saudi Arabia; Bal Bahadur Kunwar for Pakistan; Pradeep Khatiwada for Bangladesh; Dr. Ganesh Yonzon for Japan; Guna Laxmi Sharma Bisokarma for Myanmar, Dr. Surya Kiran Gurung for Russia and Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai for UN Permanent Mission in Geneva.

UPHELD: Nepali Citizenship Act 2006, which was recently enacted by the parliament, by the Supreme Court (SC), in response to a writ petition filed challenging the act.

HELD: The central committee meeting of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) at Mahendranagar.

LEFT: Chief Justice Dilip Kumar Poudel, for Moscow, Russian Federation, at the invitation of Chief Justice of Russia.

ELECTED: Subodh Pyakurel, as the president, Kedar Khadka, as the vice president and Dr. Gopal Krishna Shiwakoti, as the general secretary of the Human Rights Home. Other members of the HRH include Purna Basnet, Chakra Man Biswakarma, Mandira Sharma, Tikaram Bhattarai, Bishnu Khatri and Raju Thapa.

BEREAVED: Govinda Chimaouria, a journalist working AT Radio Nepal, of his father, who died at the age of 68. ■

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE NOT A DROP TO DRINK

By Dr. AB Thapa

English lyrical poet, critic, and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his most famous poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," composed during the autumn and winter of 1790s describes the suffering of a sailor who had committed a crime against the life principle by slaying an albatross "Water, water everywhere not a drop to drink". But why Kathmandu valley residents amidst the plenty of water should be punished by denying them to quench their thirst with enough water.

It need not be explained that Kathmandu valley at present is suffering from water shortage. There is a great urgency to resolve this problem. Our government has indeed launched a big program. Our program to a great extent is based on method to force the Kathmandu residents to cut down their daily consumption of water by charging them more for water supply. It has been very recently reported that our government has even nominated a foreign firm at an exorbitant cost to accelerate this process. Such demand management is the only recourse in those desert regions where there is not any possibility to augment water supply. How about Kathmandu valley? We have abundant water. We need not cut down the supply to Kathmandu residents to resolve this problem. As explained hereinafter, an enormously large additional quantity of water could be provided to Kathmandu residents almost for free if we linked water supply program with electricity generation. Diversion of regulated Langtang river flow via proposed Melamchi tunnel would provide such opportunity. The super high-head Langtang hydropower stations would be able to produce electricity at an extremely low cost. Unfortunately, we are at present following a very irrational method to resolve Kathmandu water supply problem. There is a need to hold widespread consultations to find best solution to resolve Kathmandu valley's long term water supply problem.

German Concept of Langtang River Diversion

The diversion of the Langtang river for water supply to Kathmandu valley is not a new concept. Initially it was thought to effect diversion from the catchments area instead of the river. A study of such diversion was made by GTZ in 1977. The study provides the following information.

The idea to augment the limited water resources of the Kathmandu valley by diversion of water from the

Langtang / Gosaikund massif in the North was first mentioned by Peter Aufschneider in 1960. In 1976/77 the project was studied on a very preliminary level by Dr. Ing. Cristian Kleinert. This project, originally not listed by HMG of Nepal under the projects to be investigated for possible cooperation with the Germany had been included into the study program on the initiative of the German Government Mission itself because of the fascinating concept and promising objects. The Mission report points out that at that time the high cost of the project mainly caused by difficult access and transportation would not make it viable to undertake this project for further detailed study. Fortunately, now the road situation has greatly improved. The decision to build a 28 km long Melamchi tunnel with a capacity to carry a flow of about 15 cubic meters/ sec just to divert about 2 cubic meters/sec Melamchi flow into Kathmandu valley has radically improved the situation and made the Langtang diversion project perhaps the most attractive for implementation in very near future. Intake of the Melamchi tunnel is not far away from the Langtang river. Thus the diversion of the Langtang river into the Melamchi river for power generation would not involve big investment.

Multipurpose Langtang Development

The concept of the Langtang project solely for power generation was developed under the United Nations Development Program supported Gandak Basin Master Plan study. This project can be easily linked with the Melamchi project tunnel. The interconnection of these two projects could open up whole new vistas for the most cost effective development of hydropower in near future. The diversion of the Melamchi-Langtang flow into the Kulekhani could be regarded as one of such possibilities. It can be roughly said that after the full development of the Langtang-Melamchi-Kulekhani interconnected projects it could be possible to generate about 2500 million KWh peaking power at a cost of about 2 US Cents per KWh. Three hydropower projects each operating at a head of about 1000 m or more with a total installed capacity of about half a million KW could be built at a cost of about US \$ 1000 per KW. After the completion of the above projects the Melamchi tunnel could be expected to

run in full capacity of about 15 cumecs throughout the year though the Melamchi river alone would be able supply only about 1.5 cumec or even less in dry months when the demand for water supply in the Kathmandu valley is the highest.

A New Bagmati River

At present the Bagmati River has virtually turned into city drain. Residents of the Kathmandu valley as well the large multitude of peoples coming to Pashupatinath Temple each day for worshipping from all over the world are appalled at the miserable sight of the holy Bagmati River. It can hardly be denied that the water scarcity is the prime cause of complete deterioration in condition of the Bagmati River. Unfortunately until now we do not have any satisfactory plan to resolve this serious problem. We are pinning our hopes on much publicized Melamchi Project, but it is all eyewash: the Melamchi water will not even reach Pashupatinath Temple area in dry season. According to the Melamchi Project report from 2011 onward the entire Melamchi dry season flow would have to be tapped to meet the growing demand for water supply in the Kathmandu valley.

Fortunately there is a good solution to resolve the Bagmati River conservancy problem. It would be possible to transform the Bagmati into a medium sized river that would be carrying a discharge of about 10 to 15 cumecs even in the driest month. Many of us might be astonished to learn that the proposed Bagmati flow augmentation program would not at all be a financial burden on residents of the Kathmandu valley. Full cost of the project could be recovered from the sale of the cheap hydro electricity. The generation cost of the electricity would be very low, as a result, it might even be possible to lower the present electricity tariff which might be among the highest in our region.

Diversion from Kathmandu to Kulekhani

The diversion of the surplus Melamchi and Langtang waters from Kathmandu valley to the Kulekhani

reservoir could be a very simple and at the same time the most cost effective proposition despite the fact that at first glance it might appear to be a highly complicated engineering task. Let us take a hypothetical case that we are going to draw only 4 cumecs water somewhere near Chobar out of the combined flow of the Bagmati, Melamchi and Langtang rivers. It is explained hereinafter that the benefit accruing to the NEA could be as high as US \$ 22.5 million per annum by investing only about US \$ 20 million in the construction of the proposed diversion structures.

We might have to build a 15 MW pump station at Chobar to lift 4 cumecs water to a height of about 300 meters which might be equivalent in height to the full supply level (FSL) of the Kulekhani storage reservoir. It is equally possible that instead of one big pump station we might need several small pump stations with a total capacity of about 15 MW that would be completely dependant on topography. A 15 km long waterway might be needed to carry the water

into the Kulekhani storage reservoir out of it the length of the tunnel could be about 9 kilometers. The total cost of such diversion could be about US \$ 20 million

After the completion of the above described Langtang diversion into the Kulekhani reservoir, there would be a net increase of about 250 GWh firm power in annual generation of

the Kulekhani Nos 1,2&3 hydropower stations even after taking into consideration the energy spent on pumping. Thus the additional generation of the Kulekhani hydropower stations after the Langtang diversion would be two times greater than the present annual generation of Kulekhani No 1 Station. It would be possible to increase to such a great extent the electricity generation absolutely without any additional investment in civil structures and electrical equipments of the Kulekhani dam and hydropower stations.

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

PEACE PROCESS

Still Too Fragile

The show of brute force by the Maoists over appointment row exposes the fragility of the peace process

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

In terms of agreements and understandings, Nepal has come a long way in the path towards restoration of durable peace. From November 2005 12-point New Delhi understanding to successful people's movement and from 8-point understanding to identical letter sent to the United Nations to the much touted November 8 agreement, November 21 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Agreement on the Monitoring of Management of Arms and Armies; there has been a systemic movement towards establishment of peace and cessation of violence.

Just last week, the seven parties government and the Maoists signed the interim constitution even – which awaits formal promulgation.

The agreements and understanding would have us believe that the peace has indeed arrived.

However, the process still appears to be much fragile. Given the swiftness and rudeness with which the Maoists imposed one-day bandh in the valley last week and the abandonment of Maoist People's Liberation Army from cantonments exposed the prevalent vulnerabilities.

Ostensibly to warn the government to withdraw its decisions to nominate ambassadors and officials of human right commission, the Maoists even announced – which was later withdrawn – the two-day Nepal Bandh on New Year's eve.

In an incident which has disturbed the optimism of many people, hundreds of Maoists' guerrillas came out of their cantonments carrying weapons last week to protest the government



Prachanda: What next?

decision to appoint ambassadors. The 800 PLA men from Chulachuli camp in Ilam district came out with their weapons. They came three kilometers south of the camp and held demonstration saying that they would not return till the government cancelled its decisions regarding appointments, relocation of police posts and directives sending VDC secretaries to villages.

Likewise, altogether 3500 PLA men including 800 from the main camp in Chulachuli and the rest from sub-camps left the camps (according to The Himalayan Times). In Biratnagar, 1900 PLA men in two sub camps of Morang left their camps in the afternoon. In Dang district, around 2500 PLA personnel came out of main cantonment site of Dahaban of Rolpa and held demonstration. In Dhangadhi, 3000 PLA men of the seventh main camp at Taalband and other sub camps came out of camps with weapons. In

Surkhet, around 6000 armed PLA men from the main camp at Dasrathpur and other sub camps left the camps.

According to Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, the Maoist army have gone into the cantonments on their own will and can come out on their own will at this juncture when the official monitoring has not begun. Another Maoist leader Krishna Mahara warned the government not to underestimate and/or bypass them. "If the government flouts agreements, then we alone cannot be expected to abide by them," he said, claiming that the government had agreed to consult with them before making any major decisions.

Fortunately, the rapidly spiralling down relations between the two sides were quickly arrested after the Maoists withdrew their two-day Nepal Bandh slated for December 31 and January 1 after what they claim as 'understanding with the government.' In a statement he issued late on Friday, Maoist chairman Prachanda has called off the bandh. He stated that the government informed him that its serious attention has been drawn to the Maoists' demands.

Although the government has not actually promised to withdraw the nominations, Maoist leaders claim that since the government has told them that they will not proceed further without consulting them, "it (nomination) is as good as dead."

The pressure on the government was also mounted by its key alliance partner Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) whose acting general secretary Amrit Bohara urged the PM to withdraw the decisions to nominate ambassadors in view of Maoist protests.

The government due to the fierce opposition has not forwarded the nominees to the parliamentary hearing committee for confirmation. Neither has it officially withdrawn the nominations. How it moves ahead in the coming days could shape the peace process and Maoist response. ■

MAOIST PERSPECTIVE

Ideology Vs Reality

The Maoist leadership make tentative attempt to convince the western donors about their economic policies

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Both Prachanda and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai have publicly admitted that they faced tougher negotiations on economic agenda with the liberal democrats during the process of drafting of interim constitution.

This showed that the comrades will have a tough job to alter the present economic system as they are sure to face fierce opposition from liberal democrats, international community and reformists in the days ahead. Perhaps sensing this difficult task, the Maoists have already said that they are in favour of realist economic agenda and have talked about reaching a common economic program with other parties during the interim government.

In such a background, the two leaders tried to present their perspectives on economy and development policies to a select group of Kathmandu-based western donors on December 22.

At a program hosted by the World Bank Nepal office, the two Maoist ideologues preached about the significance of socialist communist policies for a country like Nepal.

They, however, did not miss the opportunity to tell the donors that they are in favour of foreign assistance as well as foreign investment so far as "they are targeted at benefiting the poor people."

In what is seen as their first official interaction with the representatives of donor community, the Maoist leaders tried to allay the fears of western donors regarding their intentions.



Dr. Bhattarai: Hard time convincing

"We are proud we created a new political situation in the country. Now we want to more rationalize our priorities," said Maoist chairman Prachanda said at the program. By "more rationalizing priorities" he probably meant that the doctrinaire and dogmatic communist economic policies seeped in classical Marxism could be facing the axe as far as they are concerned. Already under fire from their ideological fraternal parties from India and elsewhere for "abandoning the revolution midway," their decision to make a departure from classical Marxist economy could draw further criticism.

However, as Dr. Bhattarai so fondly states, "We neither sought others' support when forming the Maoist party or launching the people's war and nor we will seek their acceptance while making our decision

based on our needs," the Maoists are making brave efforts to undergo both political as well as economic transformation into a mainstream political party.

But his efforts still appear half-hearted. When he elaborated Maoists' economic agenda before the donors, he did not forget to lay emphasis on the need to transform the country's current 'dependency stage' to capitalist stage. In classical Marxism, a state has to pass through stages of feudalism to capitalism to socialism to communism – the final dictatorship of the proletariat. As he has been stating that Nepal currently is at feudal stage, Dr. Bhattarai did not have any ideological qualms to say that his party wants the country to become 'capitalist for the time being' – something which surely would have pleased the ears of donors.

Dr. Bhattarai also said his party stressed on redistribution of land in order to usher in commercialization of agriculture and industrialization.

And in an apparent effort to win the confidence of donors, particularly the World Bank, Dr. Bhattarai also added that his party had the necessary political will to take action against big wilful defaulters of bank loans.

The program was attended by representatives of embassies of Denmark, Finland, World Bank, Canadian Cooperation and Asian Development Bank.

How well the comrade duos presentation went with the donors remain to be seen. But in an initial reaction to BBC Nepali Service, Ken Ohashi the country director of World Bank in Nepal said there were still many things to be clarified.

He particularly referred to the land redistribution scheme. He hinted that the state might not have enough resources to buy off the excess lands that will be determined through fixation of land ceiling. And any move to just seize the land would be against the individual's right to property. ■

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION DAY

Is National Reconciliation Irrelevant ?

More than two decades have already passed since his death. But B.P. Koirala provides spiritual leadership to the Nepalese people even now when they lack the leader of same intensity of thought and commitments towards national reconciliation. For his followers, national reconciliation day has become a ritual to celebrate. However, it is always of primary importance to the people of Nepal for their basic aspiration for democracy as well as independence of nation. At a time when everybody in Nepal has an inner turbulence in his/her heart regarding the fate of the country and its independence, the call of national reconciliation is much more relevant this time than in the past when B.P had propounded it

By KESHAB POUDEL

Today, our country is in a national crisis. All have realized that this crisis is getting heightened since the last few years. As a result, the very national identity has been endangered. Others have also admitted this," said B.P. Koirala in the statement he gave on return from exile on December 30, 1976.

After three decades of his return from exile with this statement to the nation, this is more relevant now than ever before as the country is in transition and the situation is so uncertain that nobody can predict what will happen next.

As B.P. Koirala's own brother Girija Prasad Koirala is leading the country, it

is certain that his followers will celebrate Saturday (December 30) as a national reconciliation day delivering statements and speeches but nobody will pay any attention to the essence of his national reconciliation and no one pays attention to his call for unity among all political forces to prevent national crisis.

"The term of reconciliation propounded by B.P. Koirala seems to have become liabilities to his followers in the party, which has led for three decades, at this changed contest of the nation but common people have realized its relevance more and more," said a political analyst. "During the painful periods of this country what the people

adhere to is that their highly useful political need of the country has no talk in the national politics. In fact, as an adherent of democracy with all its contents of pluralism and the accountable government to the people on the basis of popular franchise, the spirit of the call of B.P.'s reconciliation was in essence an urge for democracy and right of self determination of nation."

Champion of reconciliation

Throughout his political career B.P. Koirala had always championed national independence as well as democratic ideals. "One can find him throughout his career championing these two basic ideals even in an unstable and changing

situation of the country. Among the prime minister after the political change of 1951, B.P. was for the shortest period in power but he has remained as the tallest politician in Nepal till now.

"It was not due to his leadership of the government and state power but he is remembered as leader of the real aspiration of the people because of principle and ethical stand in politics," said the analyst. "In the last message to the people in a recorded voice he was choked with emotion while assessing his whole endeavor as a politician."

"If Nepali people want to give me credit, they should give me credit on only one thing that I understand the country's strength from within and I have made efforts to speak it. They should not give me credit believing that I have created a confusion," said B.P. Koirala in his recently published book *Raja, Rastriyata Ra Rajniti*. (King, Nationalism and Politics)

"One cannot avoid mentioning this contribution of B.P. Koirala while discussing the theme of national reconciliation at any moment of Nepalese politics. For his followers, it has become a ritual to celebrate it with a human show if they are in the power. Otherwise that celebration goes unnoticed to the people at large," said the analyst.

But national reconciliation is always of a primary importance to the people of Nepal for their basic aspiration for democracy as well as independence of the nation. The urge for democracy is universal which the people share everywhere according to their awareness.

Compulsion of Nepal

"But on the question of national independence the awareness is much more higher in Nepal as this country is sandwiched between two highly populated and militarily most powerful countries of the region," said the analyst. "With both the countries, Nepal has porous border and both the countries have dissimilar political system as well as economic models. In such an unseen geo-political situation, Nepal has no facility to tilt towards one

against other as both the countries are alert and vigilant to see that the other doesn't transgress the limit in Nepal."



BP Koirala: Leader of cause

Even prominent American scholar late Leo E. Rose describes this limitation in his book *Nepal Strategy for Survival* when he writes that Nepal's two neighbors have also pursued their policy on Nepal in strictly limited space.

"Because of Nepal's preoccupation with mere survival, its foreign policy inevitably has a psychological orientation different from that of larger states, including India and China whose physical attributes are in themselves a fairly reliable guarantee of security. Present day Nepal perceives its critical geopolitical situation in terms of a long tradition as a buffer state and with some deeply ingrained attitudes toward the policies and tactics required to maintain its political and cultural integrity," said late Rose.

According to the political analyst, in such a highly sensitive area, it is everybody's concern to see that Nepal maintains its equidistance with both and thus maintains its national independence. Equidistance of alignment is the geopolitical compulsions of Nepal which even its neighbors can ignore with a risk or peril.

In his book *Nepal's National Defensive Strategy and Nepal-China Relation*, published by China Study Center, Chinese Professor Wang Zong writes, "Nepal's independence is prerequisite for Chinese security as Nepal's falling under Indian security umbrella

shall be constant threat to Chinese Security. Powerful presences of Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal-India open border are two issues, which cannot permit Nepal to accept security umbrella of that country."

Geo-strategic Importance

It has always been the writing on the wall to every patriotic person of Nepal whether it was King Prithivi Narayan Shah of the 17th century or a popular leader B.P. Koirala of 20th century about Nepal's geo-strategic location.

"Now the time tested policy of equidistance has come into a severe test incidentally at the time when B.P. Koirala's own brother and successor-Girija Prasad Koirala is in the leadership of his own party - has a decisive role in the government as well as the state apparatus. As the way the government is tilting more and more towards the neighbor in the south, a grave concern is arousing the minds of the people about the wisdom and the

integrity of leader," said the analyst. "Now burden is heavily upon the prime minister who has been exercising all the powers which were vested previously in the King as well as in the prime minister accountable to the elected parliament. Now the game plan is almost ready to do away with all these reminiscent."

As Nepal is facing very difficult situation, the country does not have leader like B.P. Koirala.

"That concern has made the call of national reconciliation of B.P. Koirala much more relevant this time. B.P. Koirala has provided a spiritual leadership to the people even now when they lack the leaders with same intensity of thought and commitment. In his recent publication of his tape recorded publication, he has again stirred emotional feeling for his call of national reconciliation but the cool hearted players in politics of Nepal don't have that courage and character to maintain the continuity of his thought. This is one of the saddest parts of politics in Nepal," said the analyst.

Although there are many leaders in Nepali Congress who still worship B.P. Koirala's portrait, there is hardly any person who can champion his views.

"B.P. Koirala Claims that he had not propounded any new concept or ideology. He had expressed what the people have in their minds and heart. While doing that he has always inspired and motivated by two basic ideals to champion - the pride of a citizen as well as the pride of nation too, said the analyst who was very close with B.P.

"At a time when the national reconciliation day is observing, under the supreme leadership of a prime minister Koirala, who has a long history of democratic struggle, the interim constitution has come in the totalitarian model of communist pattern making it a dictatorship of eight parties. Rest of the parties and people at large are all subject whereas those eight parties have become the ruling citizens in the resembling to monarchical ethos as the King and his subjects," said the analyst.

Whether there is any person in national politics to push forward the concept of national reconciliation with the same fervor and commitment is a big question mark before the people and that opinion remains leaderless and without spokesperson.

Rights of Citizen

The other side of national reconciliation was much publicized and popularized in the country - it was related with the question of rights of a citizen in the form of democracy. It was one of the confirmed views of B.P. Koirala that democracy needs no adjectives

In several of his writing and speeches, B.P. Koirala has enumerated certain basic contents in it such as a representative government based upon universal franchise, independence of judiciary, guarantees for liberties and fundamental rights of the people, periodical elections and etc.

In his opinion, he said nation is not only a geographical unit it is a collective body of the citizen. In the question of democracy, he firmly believes that liberty of an individual is its prerequisite. As he said, democracy means contesting the periodical elections for self governance but in Nepalese context, it is a commitment to endure suffering and sacrifices

"There are three basic elements of



Common people: Faith in reconciliation

democracy. One is that the people have democratic rights- freedom of expression, freedom of organization, freedom of press, and freedom of conscience; the second feature is the sovereignty of the state belongs to the people of the nation as a whole; the administration of the state should be in the hands of the representatives of the people. This means that government must be formed on the basis of the adult franchise, and the government should be responsible to the parliament that is elected by the people. And the third feature of democracy is that the independent of democracy," said B.P. Koirala in his one of interview with American Journalist.

"He began his political carrier with these two supreme ideals of independence of the nation and democratic rights of the people," said the analyst, "And up to his last breath he

adhered to it."

In his last message to the people he had said, "Our country is in a very difficult situation. Our country, our people and our identity is in a very difficult situation. We have to protect them."

As a liberal democrat he believed the politics of compromise and reconciliation but not at the cost of principles. Now at this critical moment of transition in Nepal, the model of leadership B.P. has provided in the past is being recalled by people as a need for this country's salvation from all these fatal challenges.

One must feel pity for this country now that Nepal does not have leadership like there was in the past when country faced similar situation.

"Nepal had a leadership in the 17th century to champion the cause of national reconciliation and in critical period of 20th century also. King Prithivi



PM Koirala: Where does he stand?

Narayan Shah, founder of modern Nepal, at that time a visionary, said the country is a garden of all kinds of flowers. In his own language, the country of various castes, creed and ethnic groups. A visionary as he was, King Prithivi Narayan Shah was able to say that Nepal is a yam between two boulders in which Nepal has to preserve its own independence and identity," said the analyst. "Prithivi Narayan Shah was a conqueror, a warrior and a

victorious King. B.P. Koirala in the end of 20th century at his almost death bed said to a recorder that our country, our people and our identity is in crisis. Is there anybody in the politics of Nepal who accepts this challenge and claims that there is more popularly accepted alternative than the concept of national reconciliation propounded by B.P. Koirala?"

Although prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, who has a long association with B.P. Koirala and who is the only living politician to know the essence of national reconciliation, is leading the country, nobody can predict the future political course. There are past experiences whenever prime minister Koirala tried to pursue the B.P. Koirala's national reconciliation, he was in political trouble

having to face attacks from all fronts.

Now all the political parties including Maoists are hailing Koirala as a messiah

of the country and even his opponents are writing for his nomination for Nobel peace prize for his recent role to bring the Maoists to national mainstream. Prime minister Koirala has gut to face the criticism at his last leg of political carrier?

"The people of Nepal need to know how much as B.P. Koirala 's his own brother and successor in his party Girija Prasad Koirala is prepared to comment and convince the people that he has maintained the glorious tradition of his noble brother," said the analyst. "B.P. Koirala's views were minimum necessities of this country but unfortunately there are innumerable people to pay high tribute to his personality but none is left there to champion the cause he pursued up to his last breath. Even his kith and kin are not visible to the people with the same intensity and commitments."

As years pass, many familiar names in Nepalese politics are going out of memory of the people. Many of them had gone through great suffering and made sacrifices for the cause of democracy and the national independence but the name of B.P. Koirala is still instilling noble ideals and commitments. ■



NC workers: Confused

Nationalism and Democracy

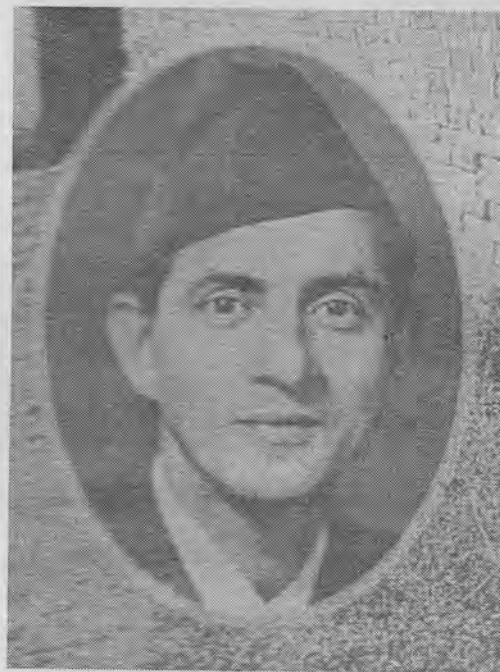
The statement B.P. Koirala gave on return from foreign exile on December 30, 1976:

After a pretty long period of exile, we are returning to our country. On this occasion, I would like to say a few words to the countrymen.

Today, our country is in a national crisis. All have realized that this crisis is getting heightened since the last few years. As a result, the very national identity has been endangered. Others have also admitted this. All including the King have from time to time referred to the danger posed to national identity. We are returning to home after realizing this grave reality. We think that the lack of national unity is a major factor for such a national crisis as a result of which foreign elements have started to become successful in playing their dirty games and making Nepal a center of international conspiracy. National unity can be achieved only through a collective campaign and efforts of all Nepali people. Such a collective campaign does also lay the grounds for the institutional base for the emotional unity of the Nepali people. If the sloganeering alone could do this, the national unity would not have suffered so much nor our country would have landed in such a miserable condition in the last sixteen years. Today, there is selfishness, communalism, individualistic practices and the tendency to have external-tilt is rampant in the country. In such circumstances nationalism becomes the first casualty.

Till yesterday, our struggle was confined to the attainment of the people's democratic rights. That's why, we emphasized more on the democratic side. Today, there is a new dimension added to it. A dual responsibility has befallen the Nepali Congress. This second responsibility is, safeguarding the national identity. We have visualized two fold faces of today's Nepal: Nationalism and Democracy.

It means the Nepali people should take the responsibility of restoring democracy as well as safeguarding the nation. If we talk of only one responsibility we will be following the wrong track by being one-sided. And, if



we emphasized only on the restoration of democracy, we will not be contributing to addressing this national crisis. Moreover, we may even fall into the trap of the foreigners by such one-sided action. Similarly, if we talk of the nationalism only, we will be repeating the same 16-years-old hollow slogans of nationalism, and will be siding with the authoritarianism. Such a hollow slogan of nationalism cannot generate an internal willpower in the countrymen to safeguard the nation. Therefore, we need now to understand that the national unity can be built on the foundation of democracy only. And the foundation of the democracy can be cemented by the economic development and the just economic system. Therefore we feel that nationalism, democracy and economic development are interdependent on each other.

It is well known that the Nepali Congress has taken historical and serious decisions from time to time in the national interest. The decision to wage the 1951 revolution and its executions are some examples. After finding that there was conspiracy to put off the elections forever, it took the leadership of national campaign for the holding of the elections. We received the cooperation from various parties in that campaign. Nepali Congress launched the resistance movement for democracy after the cruel and the fatal blow dealt to democracy in

1960. And today, we have taken this historical decision seeing the crisis the nation is facing. This is in accordance with the tradition of the Nepali Congress.

In the history of every nation there comes such moment when its people have to risk their lives to safeguard the national identity. We think, such a moment has come in Nepal today. Our well-wishers had advised us not to return Nepal seeing the dangers involved in it. We would like to tell them that we have taken this historical decision because the likely danger to our lives is nothing as compared to the danger to the nation. The work of Nepali Congress have also shown the example of unprecedented courage and love towards nation by returning to the motherland following the party directives.

In this hour of national crisis, all of us should get united by forgetting and ending the past unhealthy debates, experiences and differences. Our program should be directed by the feeling that we will no more exist in the absence of our nation. I do not know what fate awaits me after I return to the country. Through this statement, as the Chairman of Nepali Congress, I would like to appeal to the entire countrymen that let us unanimously unite in the pious task of defending the nation, its progress, happiness and prosperity of the people. If I get an opportunity, I will put forth my feelings before His Majesty also. The responsibility to save the nation is the common responsibility of all.

Jai Nepal!

Bishweswor Prasad Koirala

Dec.30, 1976

(This excerpt has been reproduced in order to re-emphasize the importance of national reconciliation)

TRPAP

New Products

Under Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Program (TRPAP) five new tourism destinations are developed as a new product

By A CORRESPONDENT

Tired of selling more than five-decades-old tourism destinations like Everest Base Camp, Pokhara, Annapurna Trail, national parks and Valley's culture, Nepal tourism entrepreneurs can now expect to sell five more new tourism destinations around the country.

Developed and identified by the Tourism For Rural Poverty Alleviation Program (TRPAP), a project launched with technical and financial support from the United Nations Development Program, DFID, SNV-Nepal and Nepal Tourism

Board and Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation, the new five

destinations are unique in terms of their cultural and natural placement.

With a goal to contribute to the poverty alleviation objective of the government through review and formulation of policy and strategic planning for sustainable tourism development that are pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-rural communities and pro-women, the new destinations have been identified.

TRPAP has contributed to develop areas like Tamang Heritage Trail in Rasuwa, Chitwan Chephang Hill Trail of central Nepal, Limbu Cultural Trail and Pathibhara Trail in Taplejung of eastern part of Nepal, Dudhkunda Pikey Cultural Trail in Solu of Everest Region, Lumbini Buddhist Circuit and Lumbini Village Walk and Dolpa Experience Circuit in Dolpa.

As the program aimed to contribute to the poverty alleviation, it covers 700 villages and settlements within 48 Village Development Committees at 6 districts with total beneficiaries of 28,347 households and 160,732 people.

The TRPAP and Tourism Products and Resources Development Unit of

Nepal Tourism Board recently held



Rural Tourism: A New Product

an interaction program with the Trekking Agents Association of Nepal (TAAN) to market Nepal's new tourism destinations.

"One of our programs is to demonstrate sustainable tourism development models for policy feedback and to develop institutional mechanisms for the sustenance of tourism development in Nepal," said Rabi Jung Pandey, National program manager of TRPAP. "We have supported to develop many infrastructures in the new tourism areas and now

we need support of trekking agents and travel operators to sell the products to foreigners."

Participated by more than 200 trekking agents, the interaction program also discussed important aspects of

tourism in alleviation of rural poverty. Trekking agents from various agencies have shown tremendous interest to promote these areas for trekking.

Although Langtang rage has been one of the popular trekking destinations for the tourists, nobody has noticed that the inhabitant of the areas is culturally rich living in absolute poverty. The development of Tamang Trekking trail just in between Langtang Gosaikunda Himalayan range is very much new.

"The new destinations identified by TRPAP are very much in tourism area but ignored by mainstream tourism market. Nepal Tourism Board can do whatever is necessary to sell these new products in the international market," said Tek Bahadur Dangi, executive director of Nepal Tourism Board. "We need public and private partnership to maximize the benefits from tourism."

The government has also shown interest to promote necessary support to the project. "As poverty alleviation is the main target, the ministry will fully cooperate with the private sector to utilize the infrastructure to provide benefit to a large section of population," said Sharada

Prasad Trital, joint secretary and National Coordinator of TRPAP.

Along with the support for infrastructure development, TRPAP has also conducted a number of training for human resources development.

"We have conducted a number of skills training and orientation programs dealing with aspects like awareness raising, hotel lodge management, food and beverage preparation including menu selection, sanitation, health and hygiene, guiding, porter, HIV/AIDS orientation, tourism health and safety, hospital management, agriculture, horticulture, poultry, bee-keeping, handicraft and gender empowering," said Chet Nath Kanel, training specialist. "We have trained 9201 people under such vocational training." ■

MAOISTS

On Peace Mode

The Maoists reshuffle their party organization to suit the needs of peace time

By A CORRESPONDENT

Eight months after the success of the People's Movement, the central committee meeting of the Maoists has decided to reorganize their party organization to fine tune themselves in the peaceful environment.

Heavily dominated by military-like structures and underground operations, the Maoists needed to undergo a massive reshuffling and redistribution of roles and responsibilities in order to meet the challenges of peace time.

The central committee meeting of the Maoists held last week in Bhaktapur has decided to restructure party's war-time organization into a civilian one.

The meeting has decided to restructure the central command, regional bureaus, fronts and departments and a central secretariat as per the recommendations made by a taskforce headed by Ram Bahadur Thapa aka Badal.

Addressing a press conference on Thursday (December 21), Maoist spokesperson Krishna Bahadur Mahara said the meeting assigned him to lead the party in the interim parliament and the interim government.

He said the party will make public the list of its interim parliament members once the interim constitution is promulgated. The party is also said to have included 40 percent women members.

According to the decision, an 11-member central secretariat headed by Prachanda has been formed with Mohan Baidya, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, KB Mahara, Dev Gurung and heads of its foreign cell and five development regions as members. Mahara said Prachanda

himself would head the party's publicity department, Dr. Bhattarai will head the party's parliamentary front, Mohan Baidya will head the training, publications and monitoring department.

Badal will be in charge of eastern development region, Barsha Man Pun of the central development region, Top Bahadur Rayamajhi of the western development region, Post Bahadur Bogati of the mid western development region, Netra Bikram Chand of the far western development region and CP Gajurel will head the foreign cell. Leading dailies report

The change in the party structure was materialized keeping in view the forthcoming constituent assembly elections. "The organization which was formed with the motive of launching people's war needs some changes as the party has now entered political mainstream," said CP Gajurel, a senior leader of the Maoists.

The central committee meeting started by welcoming Baidya aka Kiran and Gajurel aka Gaurav - who were recently released from incarceration by Indian authorities. Baidya, one of the senior most leaders, has been assigned an important job of monitoring and maintaining internal discipline while Gajurel has been reinstated to the post he previously held before he was arrested in India.

The meeting ended after passing a slightly amended political resolution proposed by chairman Prachanda.

The party has also approved a two-pronged strategy of mass movement and entering the government. ■

NEPALI ECONOMY SLOWS DOWN: WB

The growth of economic activity in 2006 is estimated to have slowed down in Nepal because of the intensified conflict, a weather-related decline in agricultural production and a decline in clothing, says World Bank.

As per the WB's announcement this month for 2006, GDP growth as a whole in South Asia is estimated to have expanded at a very rapid pace of 8.2 percent in 2006, despite Nepal's slow growth. India has topped in GDP growth, which is estimated at 8.7 percent, backed by non-agricultural growth in excess of 10 percent, according to WB.

Similarly, output in Pakistan is estimated to have slowed from 7.8 percent to 6.6 percent, following a return to a more normal agricultural production in the wake of a bumper harvest in 2005.

Bangladesh fetched 6.7 percent growth while Sri Lanka attained 7 percent thanks to good harvest, and post tsunami recovery and reconstruction activity. Strong growth in South Asia region is fuelled by economic reforms that have promoted private sector-led growth, sound macro management and greater integration with the global economy, Shantayanan Devarajan, WB's chief economist for South Asia was quoted as saying. "But the region faces several risks. Unless policymakers act early and decisively to control rising macro-economic imbalances, inflation out turns will be higher, current account deficits larger and subsequent slowdown more pronounced." ■

“China will respect the choices of Nepalese people”

By GUI XIAOFENG

This is the first time that we set our feet on the soil of Nepal. We have been harboring aspirations for this ancient and beautiful country, which is also our neighbor. And we are also strongly interested in how our Nepalese colleagues develop and bring their national culture into full play in the context of new era. The invitation from the Nepal Editorial Association has now made our aspiration come true.

Over the last couple of days, we have met with prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, speaker Subash Chandra Nembang and state minister of information and communication Dilendra Prasad Badu. We have also visited the Gorkhapatra Publication Group, Kamana Publishing House and conducted number of communications at various levels and from various angles discussing in detail with our Nepalese colleagues about expanding exchange and cooperation. We have also visited historical sites and cities. Nepalese magnificent sceneries, brilliant ancient civilization leaves us a strong impression and what impressed us most is that wherever we go, we keenly feel Nepalese people's profound friendliness towards Chinese people. Wherever we go, we see that Nepal is radiating the vigor of youth. We feel deeply moved and greatly inspired.

We have learned a lot in our visits. With the help of our Nepalese friends, we have successfully completed our schedule. We are leaving Kathmandu for China. Being reluctant to depart, I, on behalf of all my colleagues, will share with you our impressions and reflections we have gained during our four day visit. Due to time limit, I'll only stress two points.

First, the friendship between China and Nepal can be traced back to ancient times and will proceed in the future and should take on new look at the new era. Nepal is an important neighbor of China and the Chinese people have ever had friendly feelings towards Nepal. The magnificent Himalayas, the roof of the world, link up our two countries.

There is a household story of China popularizing in Nepal for many generations. The legend was that Kathmandu was a big lake of mists and ripples Before Christ. One day, Manju Shree came here from the Wutai Mountain of China land lived at Swayangbu temple. She plants a brilliant Lotus rising from the center of the lake. In order to have a good view of and worship the lotus, Manju

Shree cleft the cliff with one sword slash and surging waters poured into the Ganga along the rift. The bottom of the lake turned into the Kathmandu valley. The rift that Manju Shree cleft turned into the Chobhar Gorge also named as “one sword cleft.” This beautiful legend reflects from another aspect the long lasting friendship between the two countries.

The recorded written history of communications between the two countries has also stridden across thousand years. As you know, China, in the course of its 5000 year civilization development, has absorbed cream from other civilization, of which Buddhism is of the greatest and far-reaching influence. Besides the ethnic Han people who make up the vast majority of the Chinese population, ethnic Tibetans and Mongolians were also greatly influenced by Buddhism. Buddhists ideas and doctrines found their way into the fields of Chinese philosophy, ethical codes, politics, literature, music, fine arts, architecture and language and became integrated with native Chinese culture to form an integral part of the traditional Chinese culture.

In history, many Chinese thinkers, politicians, literary masters and artists absorbed nourishments or wisdom from Buddhism one way or another. In turn, they did their bits in developing Buddhist thoughts and, therefore, made Buddhism all the more profound. Nepal is the birthplace of Buddhism founder Sakyamuni. Many Chinese, therefore, have a “Lumbini Complex.”

Over the last millennia, Chinese Buddhist monks, driven by their piety and passion, made pilgrimage to the birthplace of Buddhism to learn Buddhists doctrines and bring back to China Buddhist scriptures, in defiance of unbearable hardships along the way. Fa Xian, a revered monk in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420) toured to Lumbini as early as in the fifth century. He faithfully recorded Nepal's geography, Buddhist holy places and religious activities in his book Kingdom of Buddhism.

In the seventh century, Xuan Zang, a revered Buddhist monk in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and also a household name in China today, also came to Nepal. His book “Western Regions” became authoritative materials for studies on the history, geography, religion, resources and customs in South Asia at the time.

In China's Tibet legends about Nepal's

Princes Bhrikuti marrying Tibetan King Sontsen Gampo are still circulating. I myself, as a member of the Chinese People's Political Circulation Conference (CPPCC) delegation, came to Lhasa on our tour of inspecting the newly build Qinghai-Tibet Railway and saw Sakyamuni's 8 years old life-size stature still very well preserved at Lhasa's Ramoque Lamasery. The statue was brought to Tibet by the Nepalese Princes as a national gift. We have lots of such stories.

In 643 AD, during the reign of the Tang Emperor Taizong, the emperor sent Li Yibiao to India as his emissary en route Nepal. He was warmly received by the Nepalese King. In 648 AD, Nepal sent emissaries to China. They brought with them spinach, which enriched the variety of vegetables in China.

Nepalese teenage architect Arnkio's stories were also very popular over many generations. In 620, the Yuan Emperor Kubla Khan ordered his adviser Baschpa to build a pagoda in Tibet. The imperial adviser selected 80 Nepalese workmen for the project because Nepal was noted for technical excellence of its workmen. But the posts of the foreman remained open. The 17 year old Arniko offered to lead the team to construct the pagoda. Baschpa thought very highly of this extraordinary young man and entrusted him with the duty of superintendent of the architectural project. Upon the completion of the pagoda next year, Baschpa urged Arniko to go to Beijing China's capital. When Kubla Khan, the emperor, asked him what he had accomplished, Arniko answered: painting, sculpture, and gold casting and so on. The emperor let him see a damaged bronze human model for practicing acupuncture. It was said to be the product of the past Song Dynasty and nobody was able to have it repaired but Amger repaired it.

In the following years, Arniko created the majority of Buddhist statues in the temples of Beijing and Kaiping. He also oversaw the construction of Baitasi Temple (White Pagoda) landmark architecture in Beijing. Amiger was, therefore, made superintendent of foreign artisans and also became a high court official overseeing imperial construction agencies. After his death, he was posthumously made a duke. His sons and disciples, many of whom were ethnic Han people, Tibetans and Mongolians, were also good at sculpture. Arniko, his sons

and his disciples made great contributions to China's Buddhist art.

In the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) China and Nepal frequently sent envoys to each other, exchanged gifts and cemented relations. Nepalese music and dance found their way to China in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). In imperial court then was set up an agency overseeing the playing of Gorkha music. In the other way around, Chinese culture spread to Nepal. Architecture in Kathmandu, for example, demonstrated Chinese influence. Leech spread from China to Nepal and keeps its Chinese pronunciation.

China and Nepal established diplomatic relations in 1955, which marked that the traditional friendship and cooperative ties had entered a new phase. The two sides stuck to the five principles of peaceful co-existence. They respected each other and treated one another on the basis of equality. Top leaders of both the countries frequently exchanged visits. While Nepalese leaders paid visits to China as Chinese leaders reciprocated. The leaders of both the countries decided to establish an everlasting friendly and good-neighbor relationship for the 21st century.

Last year was the 50th anniversary of Sino-Nepalese diplomatic relations.

Top leaders from both the countries met with each other time and again. A string of celebration events were staged and we have lots of mutual visits of higher ranking officials. In March this year, Tang Jiaxuan, Chinese State Councilor, toured Nepal. In late July, Chinese vice foreign minister Wu Dawei paid a visit to Nepal and got in touch with leaders of the new Nepalese government. In late August, Nepalese deputy prime minister and foreign minister K.P. Sharma Oli paid an official visit to China.

In recent years, bilateral economic and trade cooperation has developed in depth. Exchanges are also conducted in the fields of sports, literature, arts, broadcast, science, religion, photography, publication and education.

In regional and international affairs, China and Nepal understand and support each other.

China has consistently supported the efforts made by Nepal for maintaining the independence of sovereignty and territorial integrity and never interfered with the internal affairs of Nepal. Nepal has ever been giving clear and firm support to China on the question of Tibet, Taiwan and Human rights. In 2005, Nepalese government ordered the closedown of Dalai's office in Kathmandu and issued a statement to support China's formulation of Anti secession law. The Chinese government and people thought highly of this and reiterated gratitude many times.

The relationship between China and Nepal has set a model for the friendly co-existence between countries of different social systems.

The Chinese people believe that China and Nepal have similar past and are now engaged in the similar tasks of developing the economy, safeguarding national unification of the country and promoting the national unity and social harmony. Both the countries share wide and lasting interest in bilateral relations and in regional and international affairs. Consolidating and expanding the friendly and cooperative ties are in the accordance with both people's aspirations.

The Chinese government has reiterated many times that China will respect the choices of Nepalese people concerning with the social system issue and developing model based on your own national conditions. The Chinese government and people will work together with the Nepalese government and people to push the long standing friendly and good-neighbor ties ahead.

Non-governmental exchanges claim an important position in China-Nepal relationship. The two sides have set up a China-Nepal non-governmental forum overseen by the two countries association of commerce and industry.

The China Association of Editorial Affairs has established a solid relationship of exchange with its Nepalese counterpart.

Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, during his meeting with us, pointed out that non-governmental exchanges are more important than those conducted between the governments. One government replaces the other but people are eternally there. Therefore, communications at people's level is the basis of the two countries relationship. Our delegation completely agrees with prime minister's point of view.

Culture is something that exerts influence on people's minds. Among all the mechanism created by the humanity, culture is one that works at the deepest roots of things and plays a long lasting and all encompassing role.

Therefore culture is the most powerful force with most profound influence. A dress can be worn by one person but a movie and books is for millions to see and read. They influence the shaping of people's world outlook and values. This function can never be replaced by any material products.

Second, culture constitutes the very foundation for a country's unification and national unity.

Culture in general is the crystallization of the national spirit which marks the nation out from all other nations. In this sense, culture is the very source of vitality

for the nation and the nucleus of the national coherence.

It is also the stabilizer of the society. For a country of multiple ethnic groups, culture serves as a psychological tie that knits all the ethnic groups together. In absence of the ethnic groups' approval of the common culture, it is hard for a country keep stability and unification. This is borne out by the histories of China and Nepal also is histories of the world.

In this phase, wide application of digital technology and spread of the internet accelerate the spread of culture and widen the scope of culture's functioning. The high speed and wide scope have never been in history. As a result, the intensity with which different cultures and thoughts integrated with each other and compete with one another, has never been seen in history, either. Cultural competitive edge has been the important content of the comprehensive national power. Correspondingly, cultural safety has also been the important factors of national safety.

Some developed countries, making use of their economic, scientific and military advantages and those they enjoy mass communication means are pushing for cultural hegemony and cultural colonialism and engage in cultural penetration against the developing countries in an attempt to weaken their national and spirit in order to bring about a monolithic world which are dominated by western values, serving for political hegemony.

In this scenario, cultural building is directly connected to national security, not merely having economic significance. Our point of view is: economies can be globalized but cultures should never be integrated into monolithic body. Every country and every nation has rights to protect and develop their own traditions and unique cultures. Safeguarding cultural security in the context of economic globalization is an important task for every country, especially developing countries.

Since its founding, China Study Center of Nepal has done a lot of work for promoting mutual understanding, friendship, exchange and cooperation between Nepal and China, which has had favorable influence on both the countries.

Now, I, on behalf of the editorial circle in China, would like to express our respect for our friends at the center and congratulate them on their accomplishments. ■

(Excerpts of the statement delivered by Gui, the leader of five member Chinese journalists team. The statement was delivered at a talk program organized by China Study Center).

EX GURKHAS

Mission At Home

The famed Gurkha soldiers could take up the job of initial monitoring of arms and armies

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Although they have earned name and fame working overseas, the Gurkha soldiers could finally get the opportunity to show their skills within their country – but in a peace mission.

The government has invited the ex-Gurkha soldiers who have served in British or Indian army to work as independent monitors of the management

cantonments.

Meanwhile, a delegation of 35 ex-Gurkha soldiers who have served in Britain, India and Singapore met with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala on Sunday (December 24) at Baluwatar.

The delegation led by Deepak Gurung sought detailed information about the government and the Maoists' decision to recruit ex-Gurkha soldiers. They also urged the PM to amend the



Maoist cantonment: Time to monitor

Photo : Kantipur

of arms and armies of the Maoists and the Nepali Army.

As the United Nations monitors could take more time to arrive and start their monitoring job, the government and the Maoists have agreed to recruit ex-Gurkhas to monitor arms.

The two sides have reached understanding agreed to recruit ex-Gurkha soldiers who have served and retired from British or Indian army. The meeting between the talks team members of the government and the Maoists held

on Thursday (December 21) evening in presence of Ian Martin, the Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General, agreed to appoint around 111 ex-Gurkha soldiers within a week and send them for monitoring purposes before the actual UN monitors arrive and take up the job.

The call for applications from interested ex-Gurkhas were made the following day. The selected ex-Gurkha soldiers will first be provided with two-day training and then sent to monitor the

understanding to allow all ex-Gurkhas to apply for the monitoring job. At present, only those ex-Gurkha soldiers who have served and retired in the last three years will be eligible to write the application.

The two sides have agreed to screen the applicants and recruit eligible ones within the end of this week. After giving them two-day training, the selected persons will be dispatched to seven major and 21 sub cantonment areas to take up the duty of 24 hour monitoring.

The government has already started sending containers imported from India to the seven cantonment sites. The Maoists have said that two containers per cantonment would be adequate enough to store their weapons. Similar quantity of weapons will be similarly deposited by Nepali Army.

And the weapons and the movement of Maoist army will have to be monitored round-the-clock by the ex-Gurkhas till the official UN monitors arrive to take over the jobs.

"The selection of ex-Gurkhas will be completed within a week. Then, two to four days afterwards, we expect the interim constitution to be promulgated and interim government and the parliament formed paving the way for timely holding of the Constituent Assembly elections by mid-June," said senior Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai.

At a time when the government and the Maoists are working to recruit ex-Gurkhas for the monitoring job, a senior ex-army official of British Gurkhas has already claimed that they capable and willing to monitor the management of arms and armies. Central Secretary of Gurkha Ex Servicemen Organization (GAESO) Mahendra Lal Rai recently told media that he feels "proud" that the leaders have finally thought that they are capable to do it.

"We are quite capable of handling all kinds of modern weapons. Here, we have seen that most weapons that will have to be managed belong to the 1960s era," said Rai, claiming that ex-servicemen are technically capable of doing the job. "Besides, we have lots of experience of being involved in internal strife and wars," he added. ■

BOOK

Liver Disease

Dr. Santoshman Shrestha discusses the implications of liver diseases

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when the number of patients suffering from liver related diseases continues to rise, Dr. Shrestha's book on liver disease gives important information regarding the liver disease and its prevalence in Nepal.

Although the government is yet to conduct any major study to know about the state of fatality and its national status, Liver Foundation Nepal has made efforts to understand implications of liver diseases in Nepal's health sector.

Written in Nepali language, the book discusses the Jaundice, Hepatitis E, Alcoholic liver disease, Hepatic IVS disease and Ascites in Nepal. Due to contaminated water, every year a large number of Nepalese suffer from jaundice and Hepatitis E. Now even the cases of Hepatitis C and B are gradually increasing in Nepal.

Unlike in developed world, Hepatitis E and jaundice is common in Nepal and its prevalence is higher during the rainy session when drinking water is over contaminated due to its connectivity with sewerage.

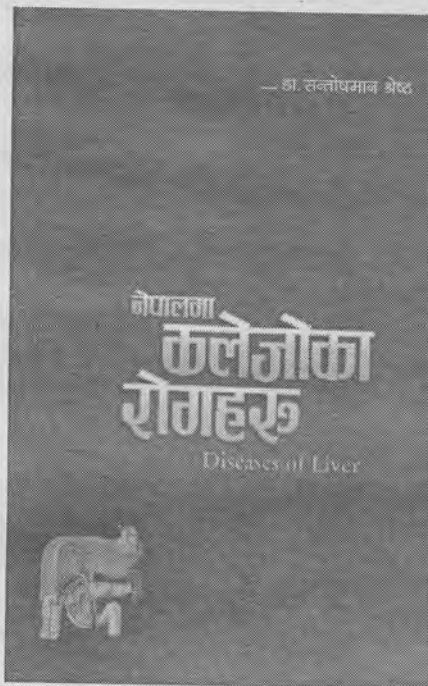
As a well-known specialist on liver, Dr. Shrestha has been working in this area for more than last three decades and has a lot of experience about it. One can read many things about liver diseases in this book.

Divided in three major parts and eight chapters, the book discusses everything from the physiological

structure of liver to its functions and the major diseases, which afflict this vital organ.

As it is said that prevention is better than cure, this is the reason the author Dr. Shrestha seems to have made a lot of efforts to generate awareness among the common people of Nepal through the book.

Simple and interesting, Dr. Shrestha uses simple language to



Diseases of Liver
By: Dr. Santoshman Shrestha
Published by: Liver Foundation Nepal
Price: Rs.150.00
Pages: 210

generalize many technical terms so that a common man does not have to face any difficulty to comprehend the problem.

According to Dr. Shrestha, the problem related to liver diseases is very much associated with culture and race of people. In Nepal most of the problems related to liver is confined to Newar, Tamang and economically high class family. The chronic Hepatitis B is much common in Tibetan and Sherpa community. Because of unhygienic environment, many children are infected by Hepatitis A at very early age and younger and older people suffer from Hepatitis E.

“Along with other cases of hepatitis, the hepatitis C is also common now in Nepal among the drug users who share needles among themselves,” Dr. Shrestha writes in his book.

This is the first book ever published in Nepali language that gives basic information about liver disease.

In a country like Nepal where only a small number of people have access to modern medicine, it is impossible for many to go to doctors. Nepal can save the lives of common

people only through the prevention of the disease.

Although it is not easy to translate almost all medical and technical words into Nepali, Dr. Shrestha has accomplished the difficult job of writing the book in Nepali to generate awareness among people of different level as well as medical. ■

MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

Growing Attraction

Media institutions in the country are competing with each other to offer most resourceful and professional media education

BY DIL BAHADUR BASNET

Nepal Manawiki Campus (NMC), previously known as Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, is located at a stone's throw away from busy bus park in the heart of Kathmandu. It is the oldest institution among three run by Tribhuvan University (TU) that has been offering journalism course in intermediate, bachelor's and master's level since 1976, 1982 and 2001 respectively.

The strength of the media institution could be evaluated from the quantity, and more importantly, quality of resources it owns. Since no institution is able to boast of enough resources, the requirement of 'learning the art of resourceful use of resources' is urgently

According to Badri Poudyal, acting head, department of journalism at the NMC, "The department is in dire need of latest infrastructures so that our students would not be deprived of practical classes."

The students say, almost in chorus, "There are no resources we can be proud of, other than resource persons. Our achievement entirely rests on our self endeavors."

There are private media institutions emerging to meet the needs of media manpower. One such institution is the Kantipur City College (KCC), which has been conducting the master's level in mass communication since 2001. It offers upgraded instructional facilities, and unrivalled learning resources ranging from laboratories (computer, photography, and audio & visual) to library with 500 books on media, and online service.

To quote Ram Krishna Regmi, chief, "It is not being run with all the necessary chattels but all the basic resources are available.

However, we are on the way to enable students become independent by learning from library and citations by teachers."

There is yet another College of Journalism and Mass Communication (CJMC) that specializes on media studies in Bachelor's and Master's levels. Launched in January 2002, the Shepherd College of Media Technology (SCMT), has FM studio, digital photo studio, computers, library consisting of around 1000 books, and collaboration with international media institutions.

"I am nothing without resource persons," opined Dr. Manju Mishra, Founder Director.

Technological familiarity is indispensable to keep up with the pace for living in this world of globalization. To serve this objective, SCMT was set up in 2002. Currently, the SCMT runs Bachelor of Media Technology (BMT).

The media and technology centre is set

with state-of-the-art computer and projection technology, and labs (video filming, editing, radio, photography, learning assistance etc.).

If there is any university running journalism besides TU, it is Kathmandu University (KU), which is TU's only rival. It has commenced 4-year Bachelor in Media Studies under the DLMC from 2006. The DLMC Head Dr. Junga Bahadur Chauhan is of the view that it is going to meet all the resources of international standards before the first batch comprising of 16 students reaches the very stage.

Nobel Academy Higher Secondary School (NAHSS) is among many higher secondary schools carrying out MC in the 11th and 12th grades since 2002 with approximately 100 books on media, computer lab, a resource person, and 2-3 guest speakers.

"Students became indifferent to Business Journalism when offered in Management Faculty," said Narendra Sharma, Vice-Principal, "The institution is going to launch BA with majors in Journalism and English, and enhance resources accordingly."

Needless to say, media training institutions are contributing pragmatic lessons to trainees. Nepal Press Institute (NPI) is a pioneer in media education and services that has been running short/long term trainings since its inception in 1984.

The NPI houses a wide range of materials/equipments, publicizes a monthly electronic bulletin, and brings out media books (22 publications so far).

"At a time when media colleges are mushrooming mainly with theoretical approaches, the NPI is purely oriented towards imparting ample practical knowledge to generate professional manpower. We are marching ahead to learn all about the trend of Nepalese media by mobilizing our three regional resource centers," observed Bishnu Prasad Sharma, Executive Director.

Nevertheless, the authorities concerned admit that there are merely limited resources (e.g. printing press, TV studio, IPOD system unavailable) in their institutions. And most of the resources available are not commensurate with the prevalent media. All the institutions except the DJMC of NMC have internet connectivity in their computers. The latter, therefore, has to gear up a lot to compete with private media institutions.

(Basnet is an internee)

Book List

Ecotourism in Nepal with Theoretical concepts and Principles D.P. Bhatt Rs. 675.00

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Issue of the Work in Nepal

Rimal/Upadhyaya and Khatiwada Rs. 350.00

Source : Himalayan Books Baghbazar, Kathmandu

“India Remains Committed To Supporting All Efforts Aimed At Peace, Democracy And Development In Nepal”

Pranab Mukherjee



Pranab Mukherjee, the External Affairs Minister of India made a short visit to Nepal on December 17. On the same day before he returned to New Delhi, Mukherjee made a statement and answered to media queries. Excerpts of the statement and his replies:

On His Visit

I am privileged to be the first Union Minister from India visiting Nepal after the far-reaching political changes that were ushered in by the people of Nepal earlier this year. Since then, the people of Nepal, through their political leaders, have successfully taken a number of steps to consolidate peace and democracy, in the form of various understandings and agreements. This has amply proved that the people of Nepal, who have taken their destiny in their own hands, can successfully address the challenging tasks ahead.

My visit to Nepal is in the context of the forthcoming 14th SAARC Summit, which will be held in New Delhi on 3-4 April 2007. I called on the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. G. P. Koirala, and handed over to him the invitation from our Prime Minister to attend the Summit.

During this meeting, we also recalled the landmark visit of Prime Minister Koirala to Delhi in June this year. We discussed the progress in implementing the decisions taken during that visit. The economic package that was announced during that visit has been largely implemented. There have been some other requests for assistance in terms of logistical equipment and I was happy to inform Prime Minister Koirala our agreement to provide these also.

Today, when Nepal stands at the threshold of a new and brighter future, India, as always, remains committed to supporting all efforts that are aimed at achieving peace, democracy and development in Nepal.

On Not Meeting With Maoists:

There is no question of untouchability. We have welcomed the decision of the Maoists to join the mainstream of national politics and it is a very wise decision. But when the representatives of the Government come, we speak with the persons who are in the political system in the Government. And, therefore, these are the Government meetings and we are not meeting those political party leaders who have not joined the Government. The moment the Maoists join the Government, there will be no question of not meeting them. It is not a question of untouchability. We have already welcomed their decision and we do consider it is a very wise decision.

On Interim Constitution:

We are not to make any comment. It is for the people and political parties of Nepal to decide what type of constitution they will have. So far I understand, these are the transitory provisions. And once the Constituent Assembly is constituted through free and fair elections and after the Constitution making process is complete in the Constituent Assembly, these transitory provisions will not be there.

On Maoists Joining The Government

I do not think that their joining the Government here and joining the mainstream of the national politics would also encourage the extremists and Maoists in other areas to join the national mainstream of politics. And, in fact, in India we had it. Mizoram is one of the examples. AGAP is another example in Assam. Mizo National Front (MNF) in Mizoram. They were extremists. We entered into dialogue with them; they joined the

mainstream of the national politics and till today they are running the Government there. This is always encouraged.

On Mahakali Treaty:

When I came here in 1996, I initialed the Mahakali Treaty and after that it was formally signed by the two Prime Ministers. At that point of time, India's Prime Minister was Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao and Nepalese Prime Minister was His Excellency Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba. There were some problems and the process was little, I would not say disturbed, it did not get necessary momentum. So far Pancheshwor Project is concerned, we have, both the sides have, discussed it during the recent visit of Nepali leaders. A detailed project report will have to be prepared and we are awaiting note from the Nepali side and once it is decided, then the technical team will come and they will have discussions with their counterparts here and the process will continue.

On Logistical Support:

Firstly, there are requirements of some vehicles and some communication equipment. We have already agreed to provide 200 vehicles for the mobility of police force and also the communication equipment. In addition to that, for the use of the Nepali Armed Police, we have requested the Inspector General (IG) to come to India and discuss with his counterparts and identify the type of equipment and facilities they would like to have and we will be glad to provide them.

On Use Of Ex-Gurkha As Arms Monitors:

It is for the Government of Nepal to decide and if they want to recruit them as helpers to the Monitors, I think it would be a good suggestion. But after all, the decision is to be taken by the Government of Nepal.

On Bhutanese Refugees:

I am aware of this problem. It is going on for quite sometime. We have always encouraged both Bhutan and Nepal Governments to engage in bilateral talks and to resolve this issue and we still hold that view.

On Not Meeting With The King:

So far the situation prevails after 1st February 2005 and subsequently in April 2006 you are fully aware of it. We go by the desire of the people as reflected in the form of the Government of the country concerned. Therefore, we have decided to meet the leadership of the political establishment which exists today.

On Changing Political Scenario:

We have discussed the developments which are taking place. But, as we have mentioned repeatedly that here we go by the decision of the people of Nepal as reflected through their political parties and Government. Therefore, whatever they feel proper and just we stand by that.

On Charges Of ISI Activities:

So far ISI activities and fake currency circulation are concerned, these are the issues which we take seriously and we take it up with the appropriate authority. And whatever preventive measures are required from our side, we will take those preventive measures to checkmate these undesirable developments.

On 1950 Treaty:

In these meetings, we did not discuss about the revision of the Treaty. However, at some point of time there were some discussion and we are always prepared to talk about it.

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