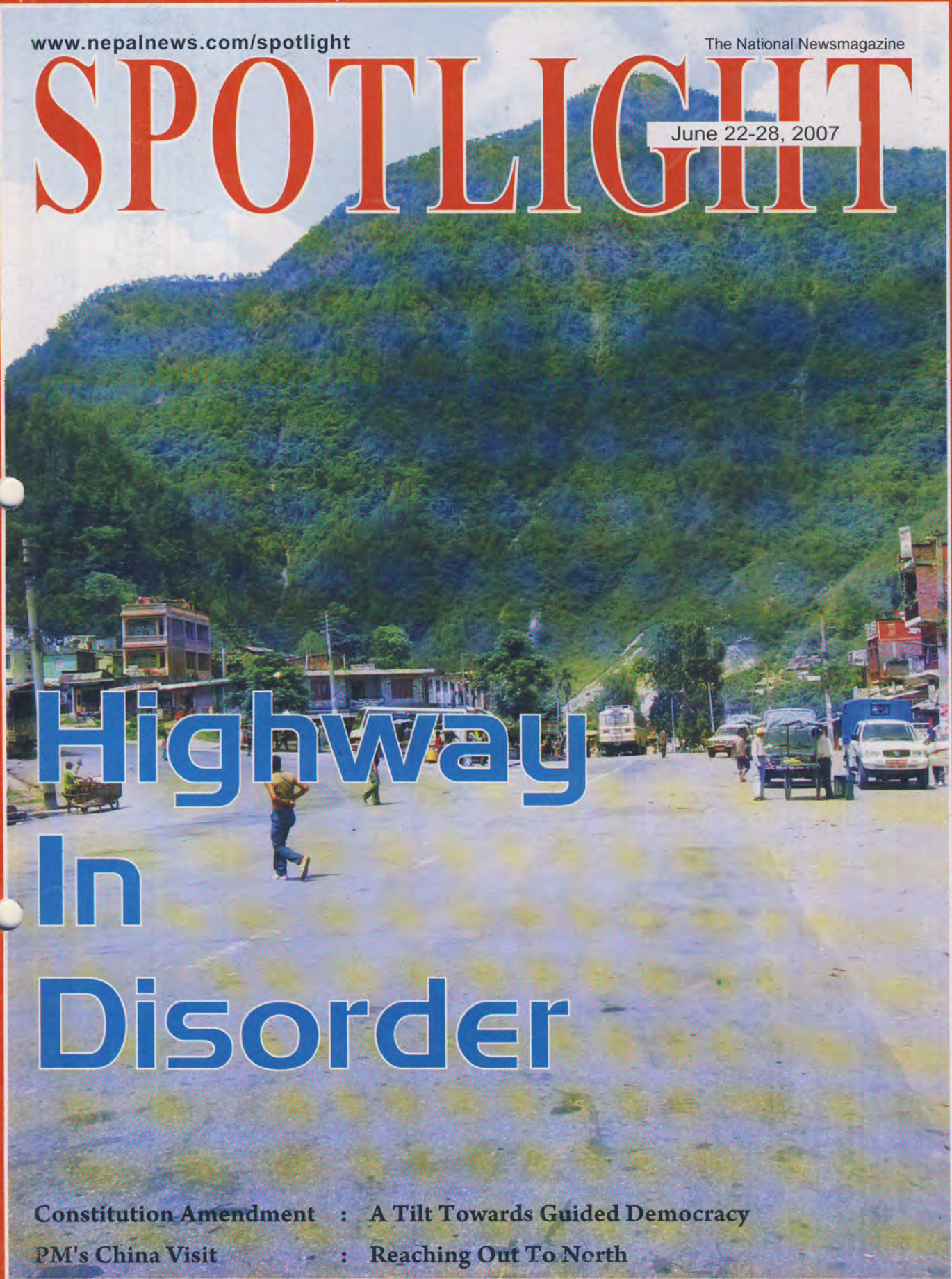


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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

June 22-28, 2007



Highway In Disorder

Constitution Amendment : A Tilt Towards Guided Democracy
PM's China Visit : Reaching Out To North

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....अब मात्र



Lotus

बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकले तपाईंहरूको विश्वास र चाहनालाई द्यानमा राखि फेरि ल्यायो जीवनभरको लागि मात्र रु. १,०००/- मा लोटस बचत खाता । यो योजना नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकका सबै शाखाहरूमा लागू हुनेछ ।

विस्तृत जानकारीको लागि नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकको शाखाहरूमा, सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला ।



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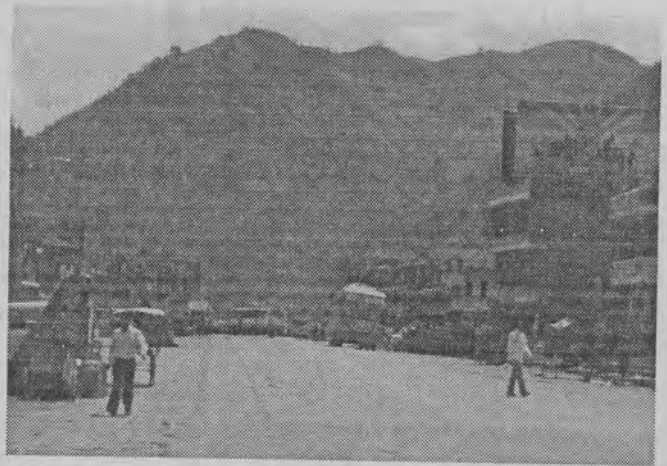
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CONTENTS

Page



COVER STORY: Highways In Disorder

Bandhas and localized strifes have thrown life in highways out of gear

Page 12



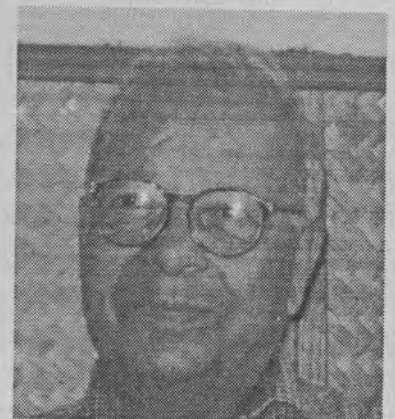
STATUTE AMENDMENT: A Tilt Towards Guided Democracy

The second amendment of constitution and latest CA Elections Act have compromised fundamental rights of individuals

Page 14

ENCOUNTER:
Ganesh Raj Sharma
 Senior lawyer Sharma talks about implications of second amendment of interim constitution

Page 24



LETTERS 3

NEWS NOTES 4

BRIEFS 6

QUOTE UNQUOTE/TRANSITION 7

OPINION : Dr. Ananda Bahadur Thapa 8

PM'S CHINA VISIT: Reaching Out To North 10

CARTER'S VISIT: Twin Concerns 11

PARLIAMENT: Mixed Bag 17

GP KOIRALA: Where Does He Stand? 18

ARTICLE: Madhav K. Rimal 19

REVIEW: Poetic Joy 20

NATIONAL: Martin Speaks 21

BUDGET PREP: Lacking Deliberations 22

SPOTLIGHT/June 22, 2007
 NATIONAL 23

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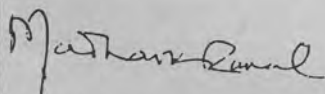
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The recently concluded four day visit of Jimmy Carter, former president of United States of America, to Nepal did not go unnoticed. It has created certain ripples. The top politicians and statesmen of Nepal did attach a lot of importance. The Maoist Supremo Prachanda did not mind stooping to Carter imploring him to use his good offices with the U.S. government to rid his party of the "Terrorist Tag". We don't know what kind of clout Carter can exercise on the U.S. Chief Executive. It is reported that President Bush does not listen to any one except his close advisers and intimate buddies. It is rumored even his father, a former president himself, would not tender unsolicited advice to his son. Under these circumstances, we can't say whether Carter can pull any strings with his President. Instead of seeking foreign help, Prachanda should have tried to win the respect and love of his countrymen. He sure, must be aware that he is feared more than respected. As it is, the charisma, he enjoyed when he was under ground has been considerably besmirched and even his stature has shrunk. And he has not added to his stature by begging favor from a foreigner whose sympathetic consideration is doubtful. It has, indeed, come as a big surprise to us why Prachanda is so anxious to get rid of the tag. Why has it become a 'Red Rag' suddenly? Did Carter advice him to abandon the path of violence? As a matter of fact, since his party has become a partner in the government and the parliament, Prachanda must relinquish violence and cooperate to restore peace and harmony in the country. Otherwise his cherished dream of a 'Republic' would vanish in thin air. The poor Nepalis have been suffering for decades because no honest and patriotic leader has emerged to lead them. They were hoping that they are going to see a new honest leadership. But, it seems, there hopes are being belied and they are being disillusioned. It would be a great pity if Prachanda and other Maoist leaders are really that naïve not to understand the designs of Indo-American axis towards Nepal. Even to think, under the circumstances, the Americans would accept Maoists, as they are, would be a real blunder. If one were to read Jimmy Carter's statements between the lines given on different occasion, even in his recent trip to Nepal, one would not fail to find some inkling to his thinking. We know, Jimmy cater does not like violence. He is a pacifist as has been irrefutably proved by the 'Iran Fiasco' during his own Presidency. We don't know how, if he does, can Jimmy Carter help Nepal revert to the peaceful days? As such, we cannot say what was the strong provocation that impelled Prachanda to stoop to Carter. We know for sure, this has not added to his stature.


Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Tourism Talk

The cover story "Reviving Tourism" (SPOTLIGHT June 15) shows a mixed picture about the situation of tourism in the country. It is sad to note that even a year after the Jana Andolan II, the country is yet to see complete peace. The situation in Terai plains has deteriorated rapidly. As such, it is not strange that tourists will still be wary about visiting Nepal. The house should first be in order before we can expect guests.

*Sujan Amatya
Patan*

people are seeing hopes of restoration of peace, it is natural for entrepreneurs to expect a turnaround. But that can only happen after the security situation stabilizes following the CA elections. Therefore, these are testing times for tourism sector as well as other sectors.

*Nanda Gurung
Maharajgunj*

Demagogic Leaders

After reading the article "Political Leadership: Where Do They Stand?" (SPOTLIGHT June 15), it became clear that Nepalese politicians don't have any vision for the country. These leaders are not responsible and mature enough. It seems that these demagogic leaders are worse than drunkards as they speak whatever they want without even thinking. For example, Prachanda accuses prime minister of being kingpin of criminals and within two days swiftly changes his words to say that he has settled all the matters. When they can't take a stand on their own words, how can we expect them to drive this country towards peace and prosperity? I think they want to continue this situation by creating confusion in the minds of people. The two leaders who speak against each

other one day praise each other the next day. I think people have become frustrated by their rhetoric. The speeches made by our leaders contain so many jargons that ordinary people don't understand. Their promises are just limited to their demagoguery. I am very disappointed that the country's future is not bright as we have the leaders who just don't listen to the people and who don't work for the welfare of people.

*Gagan Rai
Kuleshwore*

Trouble Ahead

At a time when tourism industry is getting less attention from the government as well as the media, the cover story "Reviving Tourism" (SPOTLIGHT June 15) has highlighted the problems that the tourism industry has been facing. Although the number of tourists arriving in Nepal has increased in recent months, the future seems gloomy. It seems that the violence in Terai isn't going to stop in near future as the issue in Terai is getting more complicated each day. The security is getting poorer day by day. Each day a new group with its own political demands calls bandh, which is effective enough to shut down shops and transportation. The government is weak and cannot assure security to its own people. How can we expect high end and organized groups of tourists in such a situation? It is evident that the road to constituent assembly is going to be bloody. The violence will

certainly escalate and the security will certainly deteriorate unless the government takes stronger measures to improve it. The next six months is depressing for tourism industry. Like the USA, other countries will also impose travel advisories since it seems that the security of the country will be inferior in the future.

*Kabindra Thapa
Lagankhel*

Testing Times For Tourism

Since last eight years – after the IC 814 hijack from Kathmandu in 1999 – Nepal has remained in the limelight for many wrong reasons ("Reviving Tourism" SPOTLIGHT June 15). The plan hijack, anti-India riots (Hrithik Roshan episode), strikes, bandhs, royal massacre, Maoist violence, state of emergency, King's intervention and so on have made it sure that Nepal remained in the limelight. All these things had quite a bad impact on the image of the nation. Consequently, the tourism suffered badly. Now that

PM Koirala Roots For Minor King

In a meaningful remark, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, on Sunday (June 17), said that the republic will come in the country if King Gyanendra and Crown Prince Paras do not voluntarily abdicate before the elections of the Constituent Assembly (CA). In his meeting with the visiting delegation of representatives of Weekly-Fortnightly Newspapers Network who were accompanied with visiting Pakistani journalists at Baluwatar, PM Koirala implied to the reporters that a ceremonial monarchy can be saved in favor of Nava Yubraj Hridayendra – who is second-in-line for the succession of 239-year-old Shah dynasty. “He indicated his preference for minor King and said he has already told the same to the King,” said Kishore Shrestha, a journalist, who attended the meeting. The eight parties have already agreed to decide the fate of monarchy by the first meeting of the elected CA. As per the second amendment of the interim constitution, the CA elections will take place sometime in Mangsir – probably on Mangsir 10 (November 26) as per recent media reports. The amendment also has a clause whereby the parliament can actually abolish the monarchy by two-third votes if the latter is found conspiring to derail the CA elections.

Compiled from reports

Curfew In Birtamod

The local administration clamped daylong curfew in Birtamod city of Jhapa district on Sunday (June 17) after the area became tense following a dispute over lottery results. One youth named Subas Khatri was killed in police firing and several others were injured. Irate public clashed with police since Saturday. They were angry over the results of lottery by Nava Jivan Shanti Samaj. The locals have accused that the Samaj has awarded prizes in a biased manner in collusion with the police. The locals then attacked district traffic police post where the

policemen had gathered. The administration imposed curfew from 1:30 pm on Sunday to control the situation. *Leading dailies report*

PM Favors Polls In Nov 26

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala favors November 26 to hold the elections of Constituent Assembly (CA). PM Koirala in his meeting with Speaker Subas Nemwang on Saturday (June 16) urged the latter to work from his side for the successful polls. “PM said he will soon make public the elections date after creating a basis for peace and security. We might not have to wait long for the date announcement,” Nemwang told reporters. Sources said that the government has found November 26 as preferable. Following meeting of eight party leaders, the date is expected to be announced within this week. *Leading dailies report*

Eight Parties Heading Towards Failure: Prachanda

Maoist chairman Prachanda has said that the eight parties are heading towards a failure. He said the morale of the leaders have been weakened. He also claimed that the growing violence in Terai was creating a ground for counter-revolution and was moving ahead in a planned manner to push them back to war. “I understand that they want to push us back to war before Dashain,” he said at a program organized by Dalit organizations. “We are in a peace process in an honest manner.” Prachanda said that people’s movement in Madhes has ended and now there were only criminal elements left behind. “Madhesi people have already organized movement for their rights. Now only criminal activities remain there,” he said. Prachanda also said that he felt like the character of “Abhimanyu” who is trapped in Chakrabyuha (- of Hindu epic Mahabharata in which Abhimanyu gets trapped in rings of plot (Chakrabyuha) from where he is unable to come out alive.) *Kantipur daily reports*

‘Dangerous To Push Elections Beyond Mangsir’

The general secretary of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Madhav Kumar Nepal has said that India has urged the political leadership to ensure that the elections are held within Mangsir (mid-November till mid-December). Speaking at a party program in the capital, he said that India feels it will be “dangerous” to push the elections beyond Mangsir. Nepal, leading a senior delegation of UML, had recently visited New Delhi where he met with senior Indian leaders including Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The UML leader also said that the legitimacy of the current government would end if the CA elections are not held on time. *nepalnews.com reports*

Second Stage Verification Of PLA Put Off

After the Maoists expressed concerns over the spate of killing of their leaders and cadres, the second phase verification of Maoist combatants scheduled to start from Thursday (June 15) has been stalled. “As two of our (YCL) activists were killed in Rupandehi only yesterday and a day before our central leader was killed in Saptari, works on second phase verification have been postponed for few days,” Maoist deputy commander Prabhakar told the media. He, however, said that the meeting of the Maoist party to be held Saturday may also decide on the next date for the second phase verification. Similarly, UNMIN has also said that it has been asked by the Maoist leadership not to proceed with the start of the second stage registration from Thursday. “In view of the killings of Maoist cadres, including the murder of Dashrath Thakur in Saptari district on Tuesday and the murders of Binod Panta and Sheshmani Lamichhane in Rupandehi district yesterday, the leadership of the CPN (Maoist) has asked UNMIN not to proceed with the start of the second stage of registration today,” states a press release by the UNMIN. The UNMIN has condemned the murders, and has urged the authorities to make urgent

efforts to bring those responsible to justice. "UNMIN expects to be informed that the second stage of registration can proceed in the next few days," the press release adds. Meanwhile, Kantipur daily has quoted Peace and Reconstruction Minister Ram Chandra Poudel as saying that there has been a secret pact between Prime Minister Koirala and Prachanda to reduce the number of PLA in cantonments to 15,000 through the second stage verification. Another source said that decision to build 1000 houses that can house 15,000 combatants was also guided by this secret pact. Meanwhile, PLA deputy commander Ananta conceded that the government has sent such a proposal of reducing the number of combatants to 15,000 but expressed ignorance over any secret pact to agree to such offer. He, however, added that once the second stage verification begins and Maoist combatants are included into army and armed police, their number could be reduced. *Leading dailies report*

YCL Cadres Killed, Maoists Enraged

A central member of the Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) Binod Pant 'Jitendra' and YCL's Rupandehi district secretariat member Sheshmani Lamichhane 'Mani' were abducted and killed, on Wednesday (June 14), by activists of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF). Both were abducted by MJF cadres as they were going to inspect the Khurdalotan dam on the Nepal-India border and killed later, Maoist Rupandehi district in charge Nirmal Kumar said. A home-made weapon was used to kill Jitendra at Shivpur of Gowaha VDC, while Mani was hanged from a tree before he was shot at 4:00 pm, YCL Bhairahawa in charge Udaya said. Jitendra's murder was horrendous – both his eyes were gouged out, his hands were severed and head hacked off. On the other hand, MJF leaders have said they have no hand in the killings. Meanwhile, Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation Matrika Yadav has accused

the home administration of aiding the violence in Terai region instead of 'controlling them.' Protesting the killing of central-level leader of Maoists, Dasarath Thakur, by activists of Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM-Goit) in Saptari district, Minister Yadav, who is the party's Mithila-Bhojpur in charge, said the Home Ministry was not working effectively to control growing violence in Terai region. He also said that various elements were attacking Maoists since they had laid down arms and stored them in container. Furthermore, Chandra Khanal aka Baldev, a deputy commander of Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA), threatened that his party will retrieve the arms stored in containers if attacks continue against its leaders and cadres. *Compiled from reports*

Govt No To Ethnicity Based PR

The government has said that it cannot agree with the demand for ethnicity-based proportional representation electoral system and ensure one representative for every ethnic group. The meeting between the government talks team led by Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel and Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFIN), on Wednesday (June 14), got stuck on this point. The two sides later agreed to hold next meeting after 15 days allowing for 'additional homework and preparations.' Poudel later said the understanding could not be reached on the demand of one group one representative and ethnic population based PR system. "There are problems with that," he said. Poudel said, "There are over 100 ethnic groups in the country and if all of them are to be represented, the Constituent Assembly will be more of an ethnic assembly and less of a political assembly." On the other hand, NFIN talks team has accused the government of moving backwards on their earlier promises. *Compiled from reports*

House Committee Takes Up West Seti

The parliamentary Natural Resources and Means Committee (NRMC) has asked the the government and political parties in parliament to come up with their final positions on a wide range of issues related to the 750 megawatt proposed West Seti Hydropower Project (WSHP). The decision was taken Tuesday (June 13) following days of debate on the agreement between the government and the Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation (SMEC) for implementation of the export-oriented project. The SMEC, an Australian company, has plans to generate 750 megawatt of power and export it to India paying 10 percent additional royalty over and above what is mentioned in the governing law. Under the governing law, Nepal is entitled to 2 percent energy royalty on total energy sales for the first 15 years, Rs 100 capacity royalty per kilowatt for the first 15 years and 10 percent energy royalty after 15 years. Capacity royalty per kilowatt goes up to Rs 1000 after 15 years. "Firstly, the government must say why the project should not be looked into in the light of Article 156 of constitution? Next, are we entitled to 10 percent power as additional royalty or we will have to settle for cash reimbursement?" CPN-UML MP Prakash Jwala said. Article 156 suggests a parliamentary debate in the case of mega projects. The other posers are: What will be the fate of 760 families who will be displaced when the project is implemented? "We feel the promoter has backed down from its initial word. We cannot settle for cash in lieu of power," said Jwala, who is a leading member of the NRMC. He pointed out how gradual change in the documents has ruined the chances of Nepal getting power as additional royalty. "At first they promised 'power.' Then they said either 'cash or power.' Lastly they said 'cash'," Jwala further said. "We cannot agree to the cost price calculation. The question is: will SMEC agree to sales price calculation? Minister (Mahat) has said that all this will be finalized later." The *Himalayan Times daily reports*



The visiting former US president Jimmy Carter with Prime Minister GP Koirala Kantipur

THE NEPAL STOCK EXCHANGE (Nepse) index continued to surge this past week also. The index soared by 15.89 points to reach 575.04 points. The bull rush is triggered by increase in prices of shares of commercial banks. The bull trend has began since last three weeks. It continued this week despite the caution by Nepse against speculative trading. According to the weekly share trading analysis, the commercial banks group, which is the largest scrip by volume, continued to climb higher and posted an impressive growth of 22.57 points reaching to 637.22 points.

MINISTER FOR WORKS AND PHYSICAL PLANNING Hisila Yami has offered a new proposal to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) stating that the government is willing to fulfill all other conditions of the ADB within October except awarding the management contract to Severn Trent. In her letter addressed to director general of ADB Kunio Senga, Yami has said the distribution of valley's water can be handed over to consultant. She said that in the interim period, the government will appoint new manager, call new tender for the purpose, and adjust terms of reference etc. Yami said that the government wants to appoint Nepali manager as far as possible. Last week, the ADB had asked the government about its alternative to Severn Trent and by when it would complete the institutional reforms on water management. In her reply, Yami has said that the reforms would be completed by coming September.

US AMBASSADOR JAMES MORIARTY has told a delegation of Bhutanese refugee leaders that fear must not affect refugees' choices on third country resettlement. According to a press release by the US Embassy, Moriarty emphasized that it is essential for refugees have the freedom to make well-informed, independent decisions regarding their future without fear of threats or intimidation. He said that the offer was based on humanitarian concern for the well-being of the Bhutanese refugees not for political reasons. "Third-country resettlement does not preclude the right of refugees to return to Bhutan should conditions there permit return at a later date," Moriarty told refugee leaders.

THE WORLD BANK HAS WRITTEN a letter to the central bank saying that its inability to carry out effective regulatory work could jeopardize the financial sector reforms program. In the letter written by WB Country Director Ken Ohashi to Nepal Rastra Bank governor Bijaya Nath Bhattarai and Finance Secretary Bidyadhar Mallik, suspicions have been raised that the central bank might not be able to enhance its regulatory

capacity on its own without the help from foreign expert. The KPMG Sri Lanka, which had been selected for providing technical help to the central bank last year, withdrew citing insecurity. Subsequently, this aspect has remained in a limbo. In its letter, the WB has asked to restart the tender process to select another expert. However, after the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) started interrogating NRB's concerned officials, the whole process is in a standstill. Source say that Ohashi had also contacted CIAA commissioner Lalit Bahadur Limbu in this regard.

THE WORLD BANK HAS APPOINTED Susan Goldmark its new Country Director for Nepal. She will succeed Kenichi Ohashi, who served in the position since 2000. Goldmark, an American national, joined the Bank in 1988 as a Private Sector Development specialist in the Africa Region. Since then, she has held various positions including Sector Manager for the Finance, Private Sector Development and Energy clusters in the Latin America and Caribbean Region. She has been a key member of the management team promoting carbon finance activities throughout the World Bank. Prior to joining the World Bank, she worked in a non-governmental agency and a private consulting firm specializing in enterprise development issues in developing countries. Earlier, she studied and worked in Nepal. "When I was a 20 year old student I lived in Nepal and was captivated by the country's peoples, cultures and beauty," says Goldmark. "I feel privileged and excited to be returning at this time of both promise and challenges. I look forward to supporting the goals of peace and development in Nepal." Goldmark was selected through a Bank-wide competitive managerial selection process. She will take up the position effective July 1, 2007. Ohashi, meanwhile, will move to Africa where he will take up the position of World Bank Country Director for Ethiopia and Sudan.

BHUTANESE REFUGEE LEADERS have announced the postponement of the Bhutanese refugees' repatriation campaign for a month. Issuing a statement, the National Front for Democracy (NDF) said it had been postponed for a month with effect from on Wednesday. The statement signed by party president Thinley Pinjore said: "Earlier, the repatriation campaign had been postponed till Friday (June 15) after a meeting that was held among Jhapa Chief District Officer, representatives of the eight political parties and Bhutanese Refugees' Organizations and the Darjeeling district magistrate, in Panitanki of India on May 28. Now, it has been deferred for a month." The statement added: "The repatriation campaign has been postponed for a month as India's remark on the issue was positive." The statement also urged refugees to wait for a month.

JOURNALISTS OF NEPAL 1 Television based in New Delhi have quit claiming they were mentally tortured by the management. According to statement issued by television's employees union on June 12, Chranjivi Devkota, Rajendra Khanal, Divyajyoti Mishra, Lily Baidhya, Sushil Kharel, Pradip Giri, Madhu Bhattarai and Aarati KC, Delhi-based journalists of Nepal 1 Television, quit their jobs after receiving mental torture and threat from the television's management. According to the statement, they were compelled to quit after being scolded in threatening language time and again. In the statement, union claimed that management showed indifferent behavior to implement the 14 point agreement signed between the employees and the television management on 7 May. ■

“It will be disastrous (for all) if election is delayed again.”

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, in his interaction with delegation of teachers' union.

“Madhesi people have already organized movement for their rights. Now only criminal activities remain there.”

Prachanda, saying that the Terai unrest was a counter-revolution, at a program in the capital where he also said that he felt like the character of “Abhimanyu” who is trapped in Chakrabyuha, in Kantipur.

“I have no authority. I am here as a private American citizen. But my preference is that the US does have communication with all parties here who are performing legal roles.”

Jimmy Carter, former US president, at a press meet, in reply to questions on whether he would recommend the White House to withdraw terrorist tag on Maoists.

“India feels it will be dangerous to push the elections beyond Mangsir.”
Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of UML, who recently visited India, speaking at a program in the capital.

“Our party will retrieve the arms stored in containers if the attacks



Jana Bhawana

against our leaders and workers continue.”

Chandra Khanal aka Baldev, a deputy commander of Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA), in response to killing of YCL cadres in Rupandehi.

“There are over 100 ethnic groups in the country and if all of them are to be represented, the Constituent Assembly will be more of an ethnic assembly and less of a political assembly.”

Ram Chandra Poudel, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, ruling out meeting demands of ethnicity-based proportional representation electoral system.

“He indicated his preference for

minor King and said he has already told the same to the King.”

Kishore Shrestha, editor of Jana Astha, saying that the Prime Minister told a visiting delegation of journalists that the republic will certainly come in the country unless the King and the Crown Prince abdicated ahead of CA polls, in Nepal FM.

“We had all hoped that the entry of the Maoists into the government on April 1 would prompt them to behave like a mainstream political party. Instead, the Maoists have forcefully reminded the people of Nepal that April 1 is also called April Fool's Day.”

James F. Moriarty, US ambassador to Nepal, at a program in Pokhara.

TRANSITION

PROROGUED: The winter session of the legislature parliament by the Prime Minister, with the consent of Speaker, and in accordance with the Interim Constitution.

PASSED: Second Amendment of the Constitution and Constituent Assembly Members Election Bills, by the legislature parliament

NAMED: Susan Goldmark, an American national, as its new

Country Director for Nepal, by the World Bank.

RETURNED: Jimmy Carter, former US president and co-founder of The Carter Center, after wrapping up his four day visit to Nepal.

ARRIVED: John Dennis, Additional Director for South Asia at the Foreign Commonwealth Office of British Foreign Ministry, in a formal visit.

APPOINTED: Krishna Dev Yadav, central member of Nepal Engineers Association, as the executive director

of UN Park Development Committee under the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, by the cabinet.

Kashi Raj Dahal, former secretary at the Judicial Council, as the chairman of Administrative Court, by the government.

AWARDED: Prisma Advertising Agency, with the Best Advertising Agency Award, at 4th Crity Awards function organized by Association of Advertisement Agencies of Nepal (AAAN).

KATHMANDU RESIDENTS' INTEREST BETRAYED

(Melamchi Water Supply Controversy)

- By Dr. AB Thapa

We frequently hear controversies over the projects financed by donor banks. Very often it is alleged that the donor banks impose their own terms and conditions which are not in the interest of our country. The most recent controversy is about the financing of the Melamchi Water Supply Project. Asian Development Bank had agreed to provide loan assistance to implement the Melamchi Water Supply Project. The Asian Development Bank is reported to have required that the management of the Kathmandu Water Supply Project be handed over to a foreign company as a precondition for providing the loan assistance. Such transfer of management is to take place based on the agreement already signed between our government and the Asian Development Bank.

Demand Management

It need not be explained that Kathmandu valley at present is suffering from water shortage. There is a great urgency to resolve this problem. It is quite clear that the present water shortage problem would hardly be resolved without augmenting the supply. It has been estimated that onward 2010 the supply to Kathmandu valley would have to be further increased even after the diversion of the Melamchi flow into the Kathmandu valley.

At present some of us have a very false notion that the Kathmandu valley water supply problem would be temporarily solved by improving the management system. Thus we are justifying the policy to hand over the management of the Kathmandu valley water supply to a foreign private company despite the fact that we would have to pay an exorbitant amount of money to that company. The water supply charge to be paid by Kathmandu residents would be greatly increased. It will force a vast number of financially weak Kathmandu residents to cut down their daily consumption of water. In this way it will certainly help privileged people to be provided any additional quantity according to their requirement at the expense of the poor.

Other Options

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. 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. Several articles have already been published in the journal SPOTLIGHT on Langtang diversion into the Kathmandu and the Kulekhani storage reservoir via Melamchi tunnel. 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.

Renegotiation With the Bank

It is reported in local newspapers that the Government is going to renegotiate the Melamchi agreement signed with the Asian Development Bank. Nepal should use this opportunity to reintroduce the hydropower component of the Melamchi project. Similarly Nepal should be on the alert against further acts of those who do not hesitate to kill the interest of the Kathmandu residents to make quick profit. Past decision to allow private developers to implement the Indrawati projects is a typical case how the interest of the Kathmandu residents is sacrificed to favour private developers.

Why Yangri and Larke Were Leased Out?

The UNDP supported feasibility study report of the Melamchi Project explains that around the time 2011 the total system demand for water supply (in Kathmandu valley) is expected to reach the total supply from in-valley surface sources and Melamchi. Thereafter the next stage of the development of the Melamchi will be required. This entails diversion from the YANGRI and LARKE rivers that flow to the east of the Melamchi. Water would be diverted by tunnels to a point upstream of the Melamchi intake. The total length of the delivery tunnels is expected to be over 12 kilometers. The Larke and the Yangri are the main tributaries of the Indrawati River. After the diversion of the Yangri and Larke

rivers into the Melamchi there would hardly be any flow in the upper reach of the Indrawati River during the dry season.

It confuses every common man to understand why it was allowed to lease out the Indrawati River to private developers to build a cascade of hydropower projects. One hydropower project is already completed and the others are at the planning stage. Could not we find some other suitable rivers any where in Nepal to be leased out to private hydropower developers?

Hydropower Component of the Melamchi Project

There exists a big potential to generate cheap electricity by using the diverted flow of the Melamchi river. The elevation of the Melamchi intake weir is 1715 m and the inlet to the treatment works near Sundarijal is 1409 m. Thus there is an enormously big gross head of 306 m. The UNDP report has clearly stated that the net increment in investment (the cost of the powerhouse located near Sundarijal with electromechanical equipment) needed to implement the hydropower element is relatively

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.

small as the intake headrace tunnel and penstock are already in place for conveying water to the treatment works. The UNDP study has concluded that it would be worth constructing the hydropower and it could make a contribution to reducing the cost of drinking water to Kathmandu. According to the UNDP report even before the diversion of the Yangri and Larke rivers the total annual generation of the Melamchi hydropower would be 60 GWh and out of it the firm power generation would be 40.5 GWh. The Melamchi hydropower electricity generation would have been close to 50% of the annual generation of the Kulekhani No.1 hydropower. After the diversion of the Yangri and Larke the electricity generation of the Melamchi hydropower would be further increased. It surprises anyone to learn that the

Melamchi hydropower component has been dropped. People want to know why our Planning Commission allowed the power component of the Melamchi project to be dropped despite the fact that the UNDP report has concluded that the power station would be worth constructing and could make a contribution to reducing the cost of drinking water to Kathmandu residents.

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)

NEPAL-CHINA RELATIONS

Friendship Matters

More than a year after major political change, prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala is scheduled to visit China

By KESHAB POUDEL

Despite joining of the government by the Maoists and reduction of political role and status of King, there is no sign of political stability in Nepal. In his recent interview, Chinese ambassador Zheng Xianglin shows how much they are concerned about new development in Nepal.

At a time when China's concerns are growing in the context of prolonging political instability, the proposed visit of Nepalese prime minister Koirala - who has already twice visited southern neighbor India in last one year - to China, has a great significance.

According to a high level source of Prime Minister's Office, prime minister Koirala is scheduled to leave for China in the second week of August. The source has also revealed that Chinese vice minister is coming to Nepal to prepare the agenda for the visit of prime minister Koirala. This will be the first high level visit by Nepalese delegation to its northern neighbor following the visit of then deputy prime minister and foreign minister K.P. Sharma Oli in August 2006.

Sharing more than 1400 kilometers long border with Tibetan Autonomous Region, China always wants to see Nepal as a stable, prosperous and independent nation since the treaty of Betrabati signed between China and Nepal in 1792 in which China states that it will come to Nepal's assistance in event of any attack by foreign power.

This is the consistent policy of China in Nepal. Whether remarks made by former Chinese premier Zhu Rongji or vice premier Marshal C'hen-Yi or state councilor Tang Jiaxuan, or recent interview given by Chinese ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xianglin, China has shown consistent policy towards Nepal.

"We consistently support Nepal in its effort to safeguard sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Nepal is a sovereign country and its internal affairs shall not be interfered with any way by any outside force. We believe that Nepalese government and people have the political wisdom and capabilities to solve their own problems," said Tang Jiaxuan in his statement in given in March 2006.

In his recent interview to Nepal weekly (see Nepal National weekly, June 17), Chinese ambassador to Nepal Xianglin states that China will not tolerate any foreign interference in Nepal's internal affairs. "Our policy has not changed on Nepal," said Chinese ambassador replying to a query whether China still stands by what former Chinese foreign minister and vice premier Marshal C'hen-Yi had said in 1960s. He had then said, "in case any foreign army makes a foolhardy attempt to attack Nepal ... China will side with the Nepalese people." This statement was given in October 5, 1962 at a banquet to celebrate the first anniversary of Nepal-China boundary treaty.

Chinese premier Zhu Rongji, who visited Nepal on May 14, 2001 or 17 days before the assassination of King Birendra, had said, "China has all along stood for equality among all countries regardless of the size, wealth or strength, and firmly opposed the bullying of the small or the poor or weak by the big rich and strong."

China's concern in Nepal is its security. "In the context of aggressive and expansionist policy of India in South Asia and beyond, that too in the nations which borders China, it becomes imperative and neighborly responsibility for Beijing to help, sustain and maintain the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of its neighbors specially of a country like Nepal with whom its security is inseparably linked.. In

Nepal's case, India has already advanced itself too far inside Nepal and India is about to control up to the Himalayas. Nehru has declared Himalayas as India's security crest. By declaring this military doctrine, Nehru wanted to influence beyond the Himalayas. For China, importance of Nepal is no less than any of the south Asian nations. Trade is not the deciding factor for Nepal. China is committed to come to Nepal's assistance," said Madan Regmi, chairman of China Study Center Nepal.

China has adjusted all political reality in Nepal as Chinese Mandarins have shown that they can adjust with any system in Nepal provided the authorities respect their security sensitivity.

"From China's point of view, securing

the cooperation or at least the neutrality of all of the Tibetan Autonomous Region's neighbors on the sensitive question of Tibetan Exile activity is not only a matter of rhetoric but also a political necessity in order to create a favorable environment for



Koirala: Goodwill visit

implementation of Beijing's global strategy in the Himalayas," writes Thierry Mathou in his article Tibet and Its Neighbors in Asian Survey in 2005.

Chinese scholars too see Nepal's stability as important factor. "For Beijing, Nepal's strategic disposition is of tremendous value to its South Asia policy and to the stability in its frontier region: Tibet. In specific, Nepal figures in China's strategic configuration," writes Hue Han, School of International Studies Peking University in her article on the Strategic Dimension in Sino-Nepalese Relations.

"The security threat felt by Tibetan Autonomous Region of China when these three Himalayan States Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim were under British security umbrella is even now a very sensitive issue for China. Thus, independent and sovereign Nepal is one of the necessary elements for China security," writes professor Wang Xung in his book Nepal's National Defensive Strategy and Nepal-China Relations.

Nepal's geopolitical reality has not changed much. "On Nepal's broader international situation, Prithvi Narayan was characteristically concise: the country is like a gourd between two boulders. This remark was made when China was governed by Manchu and India by the British East India Company. Yet no revision is needed to update it for the twenty first century, when India is a self governing republic and China communist," writes professor of Harvard University Francis G. Hutchins in his recently book democratizing Monarch, A Memoir of Nepal's King Birendra.

This time the invitation from China to the prime minister seems to concentrate on real issues between these two countries. "For that China seems to have started its homework by sending high ranking official to sort out agenda to be discussed and settled in Beijing. China this time does not depend on the memory of the person in delegation but they seem to concentrate on real business," said a political analyst.

CARTER'S VISIT

Twin Concerns

At the end of his four-day visit, Carter raised two worries – insecurity and ethnic division – apparently endorsing the position of Bush administration

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Although his meeting with Maoist chairman Prachanda was the highlight of his four-day visit to Nepal, former US President Jimmy Carter did not say anything contradicting the policy adopted by the Bush administration vis-à-vis Nepal.

After wide ranging discussions with leaders of political parties of every shade, Carter concluded that insecurity and need for peaceful inclusivity were his major concerns.

Carter, in his press meeting on June 16, said he had 'a couple of concerns.' First, he said he was concerned with the absence of complete law and order. "First, the police effectiveness needs to be improved. I think the police do not feel they have adequate political support. My hope is that the Prime Minister and other leaders will (give such support)," he said, adding, "The CDOs should be given unequivocal and clear authorization (to maintain law and order).

Another concern he raised was the need for inclusivity. "For the first time in Nepal's history, marginalized peoples are exercising their democratic right to be heard and to participate fully and equally in Nepali society. Their concerns are legitimate and I support them. When these rights are exercised in a peaceful way, it is an important and healthy part of the democratic process," he said.

His emphasis on the twin worries echoed what US ambassador Moriarty had said in Pokhara on June 12. Moriarty had then said that he sees two obstacles in the path of peace, prosperity and democracy in the country. He stated that Maoist conduct – which threatened the security situation and rule of law – and ethnic division were the two obstacles.

"No mainstream political party anywhere in a multi-party democratic system is allowed to maintain its own armed groups. Yet this is exactly what

the Maoists have done. Nor should a political party be permitted to carry out, with impunity, crimes of extortion, abduction, and intimidation. Again, however, this is exactly what the Maoists continue to do, particularly through their YCL," Moriarty said.

On the issue of ethnic division, Moriarty had said that there is an urgent need to address the issue of inclusiveness



Carter meets with Prachanda: Agenda of peace Photo: The Carter Center

— all groups in Nepal must be given a voice in the political, economic, and civic affairs of the nation.

On Terror Tag

The meeting between Carter – who visited Nepal in his capacity as co-founder of The Carter Center which has been invited to oversee elections here – and Prachanda was seen as significant as it came on the backdrop of US government continuing to term Maoists as terrorists.

After the meeting, Prachanda said he had urged Carter to use his influence to withdraw US terrorist tag from his organization.

At the press meeting, Carter did not categorically say that he favors withdrawal of such tag. He, however,

said that he would recommend White House to establish some communication with the Maoists.

"I have no authority. I am here as a private American citizen. But my preference is that the US does have communication with all parties here who are performing legal roles," Carter said in reply to questions on whether he would recommend the White House to withdraw terrorist tag on Maoists.

"It is better to have communication at some level with everyone who participates legally within the political framework of Nepal. Obviously, Maoists have complied with the UN requirements, disarmed to some degree, they have adopted the principles of multiparty democracy and publicly declared they will support the free enterprises," said Carter.

Carter said he was assured by Prachanda about controlling the activities of Young Communist League (YCL) such as demanding money from

merchants and beatings.

The Carter Center, he said, will be monitoring the YCL closely to ensure that their future behavior is in line with these promises. "I have also been assured by Madhesi Janadhikar Forum leadership that their group is committed to non violence and peace, and I also intend to continue monitoring this commitment."

Carter held two meetings with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and held separate meetings with top leaders of major parties apart from meeting Election Commission officials and army chief. Wrapping up his visit, Carter said he hopes that Constituent Assembly elections will be held in "open, transparent, honest, free and peaceful" manner in Mangsir. ■

Highways In Disorder

Frustrated by frequent general strikes of various natures, the instinct for survival has taught people the way to make their life normal as far as possible. With police forces without any political protections, there is no law and order in highways. Disturbed by high intensity ideological violence and armed conflict in the past, the roads and highways are now disturbed by low intensity insurgencies by regional, linguistic and ethnic groups. On the background of prolonging political instability, there is no sign of immediate peace and normalcy in the country. However, the people have developed their own contingency plan to cope with new challenge

By **KESHAB POUDEL** reporting from Narayanghat

For Kancha Tamang, a truck driver, it took three days to reach Narayanghat from Biratnagar when he was on his way to Dhangadhi of far western region carrying vegetable ghee from eastern Nepal.

Normally, it is just one and half day of driving from Biratnagar, eastern Nepal, to Dhangadhi, a town of far western zone. The nine hundred kilometer portion of east-west highway from Biratnagar to Dhangadhi is now one of most disorderly road in the country in terms of disturbance.

"I have already faced one day Chakkajam in Lahan, two hours disturbance in Nijgadh and a few hours in Hetauda," said Tamang. "These kinds of situation are nothing new for us as we have our own contingency plan for such period. We have seen more dangerous period during Maoist insurgency."

According to Police Post in Naryanghat, they recorded about 30 different kinds of Bandhas in the month between May 10 to June 15 in the

highways from Hetauda, Butwal, Bharatpur, Dhading and Kathmandu.

The reasons behind such general strikes are varied. Local level strikes are often related to the accidents and compensation for the victim. According to police, people often disturb the road to press the local demands like to have a new school building or drinking water schemes.

Other strikes were either called by political ideological groups or by the new groups of insurgents and ethnic groups. Whatever the situation of the highways may be, people continue to travel by bus and transport entrepreneurs are ferrying the products from one parts of the country to another. Though disturbance is causing huge economic loss, day to day life of the people is going on.

"During the peak of Maoist insurgency, sometimes the roads were blocked for weeks but we still drove our vehicles," said Tamang. "I have to drive to make money for bread and education

for my children. Anyway, at present I don't have to worry about the landmines and ambush and getting trapped in encounters between the insurgents and security forces."

Farmers' Woes

Vegetable farmers have to pay high price for chakkajam and other such road blockades. Having faced these kinds of situation for a long time, farmers have developed their own contingency program for the national level general strikes as well as local level frequent disturbances and bandhas.

To avoid the economic loss from national level bandha, farmers collect their products a couple of days before such bandhas and send their loaded trucks at night a day before the general strike so that they can reach the market before bandhas.

"We do our business even at midnight when there is a general strike next day as farmers send their products to us and we send products to our local vendors," said Ramji Shrestha, a wholesaler of

vegetables in Kalimati Vegetable Market.

Despite all these contingent programs, the farmers often end up losing a great deal of money. Some perishable products like tomatoes, cauliflowers and cabbage either have to be dumped or fed to cattle in case of longer duration of bandhas.

East-west high way has seen the highest number of bandhas between May 15 and June 15 - there were more than 50 incidents of bandhas which disturbed various sections of the highway. Along with a general strike called by Janjati Mahasangh and regional general strike called by Maoists in western region, other bandhas were called by local based various armed groups in eastern terai. Although the western and far western terai are relatively free of armed groups, Maoists organizations are leading the band there.

Although Maoist organization YCL also called general strike in Kapilvastu and Terai's various armed groups called many other bandhas affecting the life in terai, it had no impact in hill and valley.

"We supply our vegetables to many parts of Nepal including some parts of bordering town of India," said Bhimnath Upreti, a vegetable farmer of Dharke village of Dhading district. "We have system to place fresh vegetables for a couple of days bandhas. We will suffer only when the general strike are announced for more than a week."

Truck drivers, travelers and others, too, have their own contingency programs. Truck drivers and bus drivers carry minimum requirements of rice, kerosene, lentil and other snacks along with them whereas the bus passengers carry dry food like noodles, water and other such things.

"I have packed food for a couple of days. If the bus is stranded for a few days, I can survive by eating noodles, cheese balls, biscuits etc," said Krishna Gurung of Lamjung who was traveling from Lamjung to Kathmandu. "The traveling by road is very uncertain. For the past few years, bandhas and general strikes were exclusive to Maoists but now every one uses this weapon to press the government."

For the travelers and commercial farmers, general strikes and local bandhas may be a curse. However, it is a boon to the local traders in the highways.



Prithvi Highway: Subjected to regular disruptions

When buses get stranded for hours, grocery stores, local restaurants along the highway do a brisk business.

Local Level Disturbance

One can manage and develop contingency plan for national level bandhas but the local level bandhas which normally settles following intense discussions and debates with the local administration are causing more worries.

These kinds of local strikes are called to demand high compensation for the victims of road accidents or to press the local administration on some local demands. People stop the vehicle movement on any issue, which they consider as being ignored by the administration.

"This is creating major problems for us. We have been making efforts to make the road and highways free of hassles. The government needs the support of all," said Baman Prasad Neupane, spokesman of Ministry of Home Affairs.

Transport entrepreneurs have already demanded declaring the highways and roads as peace zones so that they can ply their vehicles peacefully. Following frequent attacks on vehicles by bandha organizers, the Transport Entrepreneurs have now given ultimatum to the government.

Between June 10-16, the road between Gajuri of Dhading and Mugling was stalled for more than 15 hours. The

road was blocked by local people demanding high compensation for the death of a local child in traffic accident. "It seems to be business now to demand high compensation from transport entrepreneurs in case of accidents," said a traffic police sub inspector of Gajuri.

"Most of the shop owners have good amount of food stuffs deposited to maintain uninterrupted supply in case of prolonged bandhas. Our business will double during the time of local bandhas. National level general strikes have nothing to do with us as all the transport entrepreneurs and travelers defer their travel during such time," said Nilima Hirachan of Nilima Restaurant in Kurintar, 100 kilometer west of Kathmandu."

A phase of ideologically oriented communists insurgency is over and a new low intensity trouble has been introduced in a stage-managed manner beginning from terai with a distinct possibility of spreading up all over the country.

If that ideological insurgency could continue for a decade, this low intensity upsurge may go on for more than that. People in Nepal may have to endure this "durable disorder" for a decade to come.

Despite the ending of high intensity armed conflict by Maoists, Nepal's highways continue to face the effect of new phase of low intensity insurgency by various groups. However, every one is learning to survive this situation. ■

AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

A Tilt Toward Guided Democracy

With the second amendment in the interim constitution and passage of Constituent Assembly Members Elections Act, the country's political system is tilting towards a guided democracy in which basic elements of democracy like right to dissension, right to contest the election, right to choose and independence of judiciary are denied

By KESHAB POUDEL

With the introduction of new Constituent Assembly Members Elections Act and second amendment of Interim Constitution, Nepal's political system is tilting towards the form of a guided democracy where there is no place for the voice of dissensions, independent judiciary, right to contest the elections and right to choose. Just like in Panchayat days, people have only the right to vote.

After the passage of the Act, there are now only two classes of people - one who have privileges to vote and also contest the elections and others who are given only the right to vote.

The article 45(2) has already made persons ineligible to be a member of legislative parliament who had stood against the popular uprising of 2006. Now the clause 19 (h) of Constituent Assembly Members Elections Act 2007 bars those (from contesting the polls) who were indicted in the report of fact finding commission constituted to inquire abuse of authority, loss and damage in popular uprising of April 2006.

"The members of parliament passed the bill with a reference of inquiry commission report which is still secret even to them. Without knowing what is there in the report, they inscribed a restrictive provision in the act to debar the people. As parties issued the whip, members of parliament had to follow whip rather than their own conscience,"

said a political analyst. "As the commission report has taken a statutory shape, the common people have the right to know the content of that inquiry commission's report, which is now referred in the statute."

This is not for the first time when Nepal has experimented the practice of guided democracy though. During the whole period of Panchayat, the constitution and laws, in one way or the other, had followed the practice of guided democracy placing certain clause in constitution barring the entry of other candidates who held dissenting views.

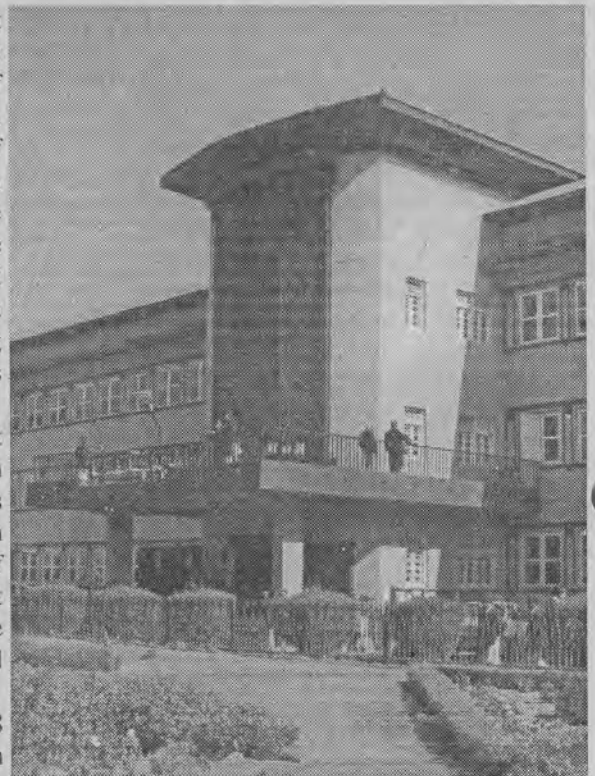
The second amendment of Constitution of Nepal in 1975 added many provisions to restrict persons from opposition. In the name of consensus, power to elect and contest the election were monopolized by a small group of people.

According to Article 38 (1) of the interim constitution, prime minister and cabinet shall be formed under the political agreement of eight political parties. The article makes it clear that political understanding means consensus among eight parties - Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, Nepali Congress Democratic, People's Front, Nepal

Sadbhavana Party (Anandidevi), Nepal Peasant and Workers Party, United Left Front and CPN-Maoist, which developed political understanding on November 9, 2006.

The article 45 (3) says the business of Legislative Parliament is conducted under political consensus.

Back in Panchayat days, under a political organ of 'Back to Village Campaign,' a large section of opponents were barred from entering into the political system and the second amendment of Constitution of Nepal 1962, too, stressed for political understanding and consensus to hold all the business from village to central level. In a phase wise political nucleus called 'Back To Village Campaign,' selected persons solicited support for their views, mobilized the public opinion and emerged as the political force in the elected bodies from top to bottom. That



Supreme Court: Independence undermined

was a form of guided democracy with all flowery adjectives.

Even after the third amendment of that Panchayati constitution—which took place following the great democratic

exercise of national referendum - there was a restriction for opponents to contest the elections.

During the period, present vice president of Rastriya Janashakti Party Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani's nomination was rejected on the ground of selecting the candidate with consensus. Scholar like Dr. Lohani was barred from politics to allow semi-literate and illiterate in the politics.

In that old constitution, according to article 35(C), in order to become a member of the National Panchayat, a person had to be a member of a Class Organization or professional organization pursuant to the provisions of article 67 b which said membership of any of the class organizations or professional organizations as determined by an Act shall be compulsory in order to be elected as a member of local Panchayat or National Panchayat,

Similar provision is now added in the act. According to the clause 19 of the CA Elections Act, one shall be ineligible to contest the election of CA if indicted in the Rayamajhi Commission's Report. Similarly, political parties which opposed the Popular uprising of April 2006 are also barred.

People can be barred from contesting elections on the basis of their ideology and views. Political parties have to express complete faith in Popular Uprising to get party registration for the elections.

"People of Nepal have been granted a new form of democracy which is appropriately termed as Loktantra. The essence of this democracy is that the people have been declared as sovereign but they have been deprived to choose a representative of their own choice following the second amendment, of the interim constitution," said the political analyst, who closely monitors political and constitutional development.

According to preamble and article 2 of the interim constitution, the sovereignty of Nepal vests upon the people of Nepal. It means the people have given right to choose his/her destiny. However, the new act restricted the right of individual to contest the elections.

Nobody knows the logic behind this restrictive provision to deprive persons



Political Leadership: Flowing with the wind

- who are not prosecuted in the court and convicted by it.

"After all why they needed this stringent clause to debar a person to go to the people and compete with others," said the analyst. "The essence of democracy as it is universally understood lies in a right to dissent as well as choose a form of government- which means right to vote as well as right to contest the elections."

The interim constitution which was promulgated on January 15, 2007 already had some provisions to deny the right to differ as well as right to get elected. With the experiences of past few months, a fear psychology has haunted the leaders of present and inclusion of new article to abolish monarchy through amendment is the result of that.

As the army has been quarantined from the command of the King and no role has been left for that traditional institution, there was no reasonable cause to apprehend any serious obstructions from the king to accomplish the task of contesting the constituent assembly except some invisible machinations but political leaders are still afraid of the King.

"Committed Judiciary"

One of the most objectionable articles in second amendment is regarding the legislative examination for the appointment of the judges of the

Supreme Court. In article 155, a new word is added making parliamentary hearing necessary for the appointment of judges of Supreme Court. Whether it is just coincidence or some link, these clauses were added just under the strong insistence of CPN-UML leaders who proposed these things following their highly publicized visit to India.

Enough damage has been done during the last one year to the independence of judiciary as well as the court by a series of humiliating orders and ordeals. This latest clause will further weaken the judiciary.

Although senior advocate and MP Radheshyam Adhikary and advocate and MP Harihar Dahal had made vehement efforts to change this clause, CPN-UML and other communist factions turned deaf ear to their logics.

"They have hardly any confidence and reason of having a permanent tenure with dignity. Now after this second amendment, Nepal is forced to have "committed judges" even in the supreme court level," said the analyst. "Members of parliament with varied ideologies or prime minister with a dominating role may have a natural tendency to get such judges to be appointed who may not be hurdle in their political push and drives."

The concept of committed judge was vigorously pleaded in India during Mrs. Gandhi's alliance with former Soviet

Union as well as communist lobbies within the country. In a political background of Nepal when every appointment by the political executive is made by a political bias, the impact of this clause is anybody's guess.

"These amendments in the constitution and some clauses of Constituent Assembly Elections Act have violated the basic essence of liberal democracy. The clauses added in the constitution turned the judiciary like that of committed judiciary of communist regime. Similarly, barring the persons from contesting the elections on the basis of the report of a fact finding commission violates the essence of rule of law," said member of legislative parliament Homnath Dahal. "As a member of liberal democratic party, I will always oppose the move to weaken independence of judiciary and violation of rule of law."

The concept of Judicial Council was introduced by the last constitution to guard and protect the independence and integrity of judge. Even article 113 of Present Interim Constitution also has this mandatory provision.

"One fails to understand what role and obligation the council will fulfill if the parliament would examine and approve the appointment of judges of Supreme Court. This basic feature of the second amendment has created a widespread resentment which has no credible outlet to get ventilated," said the analyst.

Most of the widely circulated media have their own corporate diktat to be followed which has its own inexplicable compulsions. Persons having in-depth knowledge of the working of the constitution has no ways and means to make their pressures effective.

Persons like Jimmy Carter may come with one declared mission and amusingly return back with different impressions.

"But, all these things will have far fetched serious consequences in the hard earned experiments of democratic exercise as well as in the life of citizen. Unfortunately, not only the people but their leaders too don't know what next is waiting for them," said the analyst.

Under the amendment in the constitution, new clauses are incorporated in the article 159 of the interim constitution. Under a new clause 3(a), two-third majority of members of



Parliament: Extra power

legislative parliament can abolish the monarchy in case members of parliament find King is working against the elections of Constituent Assembly and involved to sabotage it. Under the article 159 (3) (b), the right to present such proposal in parliament is given to the cabinet.

According to the article 155 (3), the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly will decide about the fate of monarchy on the basis of simple majority.

The second amendment in the constitution was made in such a rush as nobody knows why so many new provisions were amended. When the first amendment was passed, this idea had not crept in as the first amendment was to address the issues raised by regional uprisings in the south launched by several factions of Madhesi fronts.

Since then no significant event has occurred. However, after sometime the trends indicated what is being staged in the name of Madhesis may occur in the hills on the north under the over of Janjatis.

A phase of ideologically oriented communist insurgency was over and a new low intensity trouble has been introduced in a stage-managed manner

beginning from terai with a distinct possibility of spreading up all over the country.

"If that ideological insurgency could continue for a decade, this low intensity upsurge may go on for more than that. People in Nepal have to endure this "durable disorder" for a decade to come. But the most pertinent question is: Will this volatile region could endure this kind of instability for long in Nepal?" asked the analyst.

"The amendment has not only deprived the right of King but much more seriously it has deprived the people from their right to decide about the form of next constitution as well as the fate of institution of monarchy," said the analyst. "Once the people have been declared to decide the fate of monarchy through the Constituent Assembly, these kinds of round about way to deal with this institution is a betrayal to the people. Fraudulent act of this kind is a violation of oath and elegance of the people."

Whether one likes it or not, the present day reality is that the country is functioning on the model of guided democracy. ■

CA LEGISLATION

Mixed Bag

The parliament passes the crucial Constituent Assembly Members election bill setting rules for mixed proportional elections

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The crucial bill on Constituent Assembly Members Election was passed on June 14 by the parliament after marathon debates and discussions.

As it contained complicated provisions and aimed to usher in a totally new electoral system, the protracted deliberations were expected.

With the passage of the bill, it is now certain that the elections for CA will be held on the basis on mixed proportional representation. There will be 497-member CA with 240 seats each set aside for direct elections and proportional elections respectively. The remaining 17 members will be nominated by the cabinet.

As per the newly enacted Bill, proportional seats have been allocated to women, Dalit, Madhesis, Janajatis and others for the 240 seats set aside for proportional representation-based elections during the CA.

In the 240 seats allocated for PR-based elections, the new Act states that 50 percent will be given for women in terms of total candidates. Correspondingly, for Madhesi men and women, 15.6 percent each have been set aside. For Dalits men and women, 6.5 percent each have been allocated and for ethnic Janajatis men and women 18.9 percent each have been set aside. Two percent each have been allocated for men and women, respectively, of backward region and 15.1 percent each have been earmarked for men and women from 'other' category.

The PR-based elections will follow the closed (list) system model. This means that the political parties will need to submit their list of 240 candidates in terms of its preference level from top to bottom to the Election Commission prior to the elections. This list will be closed ie not made public.



Election Commission: Legislations in place

The enacted Bill also includes provision whereby those who occupied political positions during last year's Jana Andolan II and who have been named in the Rayamajhi Commission report as suppressors of Jana Andolan II will be barred from taking part in the CA elections.

This provision has been termed as controversial by many legal experts who believe that mere mention of name in Rayamajhi Commission – which lacks judicial authority – should not bar any individual from contesting polls unless he/she is found as guilty by the court of law.

The enacted Bill also includes provision whereby a political party cannot field its candidates in less than 10 percent of seats.

And only those parties will need to abide by the seat-allocation rules who field candidates in more than 20 percent of constituencies.

Nine districts have been named as backward region including Achham,

Kalikot, Jajarkot, Jumla, Dolpa, Bajhang, Bajura, Mugu, and Humla.

The bill had been subjected to extensive debates and discussions at the State Affairs Committee (SAC) of the Legislative Parliament.

Meanwhile, the winter session of the parliament has been prorogued by the Prime Minister in accordance with the Interim Constitution and with the consent of the Speaker. This is the first time that PM has prorogued a parliamentary session. The interim constitution bars the King from either

calling or proroguing the parliamentary sessions.

The winter session ran for five months. The session had began on January 15 by endorsing the Interim Constitution.

The very first session of the legislature parliament has passed a number of crucial legislations including two amendments of interim constitution as well as electoral legislations. The legislature parliament, which has 330 members nominated by the parties, had replaced the elected House of Representatives, which was restored by the King in the face of Jana Andolan II last year.

After a brief recess, the budgetary session of the parliament is expected to be called within next few weeks. "The parliament has fulfilled its major responsibilities. And now the lawmakers can visit their respective districts and villages and spread the message of Constituent Assembly elections," said Speaker Subas Nemwang.

G.P. KOIRALA

Where Does He Stand?

Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala's statements raise the questions on where does he stand

By KESHAB POUDEL

Following a series of controversial statements on the institution of monarchy and the King, prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala issued a statement on Monday that the first meeting of Constituent Assembly will decide the fate of monarchy.

"I suggested King Gyanendra and Crown Prince Paras to abdicate Kingship to pave the way for his grandson eight months ago. Now, the interim constitution has already made a provision that the fate of monarchy will be decided by the first meeting of Constituent Assembly, so people will decide it," said Koirala reacting to his widely-reported comment on June 17 that if King Gyanendra and his son, crown prince Paras abdicated, the ruling establishment could think of a minor King.

"I don't have any love with monarchy. My remarks were misreported by the media due to low English comprehension level," told prime minister Koirala to the reporters at prime minister's residence on June 18.

In the last eight months, prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala has made many headlines through his statements on the issue of monarchy. In his first few months, he agreed to give space for monarchy. Then, he proposed abdication for King and crown prince. After this, Koirala suggested media persons just say Gyanendra not King Gyanendra. Last time he invented the logic that monarchy has lost 80 percent of its utility.

Although article 159 of the Interim Constitution drafted by them says the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly will decide the fate of monarchy, nobody understands rationale behind Koirala's controversial statements on monarchy.

"Prime minister Koirala's statements reflect the acute political instability going on within the country. This instability has



Koirala: Wavering stance

made Koirala's outlook very much inconsistent and incoherent. After becoming the prime minister, Koirala was talking in favor of monarchy with an elusive adjective as ceremonial monarchy. One fine morning from his home town, he found 80 percent of people are against the monarchy and this reflected his anti-monarchical outlook," said the analyst.

During his visit to New Delhi last time, he suggested to the press to say Gyanendra not King Gyanendra. That also was his indication of his anti-monarchical bias.

"Now again he has come out with a headline in the press with a suggestion that the King and crown prince should abdicate and make grand son of the King as the King. Whether this is his republican conviction or vengeance against King Gyanendra only," said an analyst.

The interim constitution does not permit the PM to make a personal deal on his wavering convictions to have or not to have monarchy. According to the mandatory provision of the constitution, the right of the people is to decide the fate of the monarchy through their elected representatives of Constituent Assembly.

"It may be Girijababu's personal view. The fate of the monarchy will be

decided by the people through the elections of Constituent Assembly," said former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba responding to the recent controversy.

The statements of prime minister observed neither the discipline of the interim constitution nor his own previous commitments. The constitution binds all including the prime minister even though he has a very powerful support even to trample it down under his foot.

Prime minister Koirala has a very saleable image which has been built up by his hardened tests and trials under the guardianship of a person like B.P. Koirala. He has suffered much in detention as well as in exile but Koirala is always known as a relentless activist who is daring and defiant.

Koirala carried a great hope of the liberal democratic opinion holders of this country as he had a noble legacy behind him. Koirala remained in the forefront of the leadership and now has reached to a pinnacle of power but the way he is expressing his inconsistent and incoherent opinions having no political justification is damaging not only his reputation but the liberal political trend in the country. By his negative roles, as there is no right wing democratic alternative, the only gainer will be the leftists and extreme leftists, if not separatists.

"Within the last three months more than half of his influential members of central committee have expressed their views in favor of the constitutional monarchy with very much limited powers of ceremonial nature. These leaders had participated in popular uprising which concluded with an agreement to have the Constituent Assembly to make an agreeable constitution to all. They agreed, too, that CA will decide the fate of King. Though they don't challenge the leadership of Koirala but they have come out with their differences with his inconsistent and incoherent views on institution of monarchy," said the analyst.

Nepali Congress as a party has not yet declared its views against this institution. They had opposed, as always, the arbitrary and absolute power of the King. People need to know where prime minister Koirala stands - with his colleagues in the central committee or with the leftist extremists.

Some Reflections On My Recent US Visit

Madhav K. Rimal

The recent three and a half month sojourn in the United States of America has further enriched my experiences of American behavior. A nation of immigrants is now finding great difficulty in permitting entry to new immigrants. The chinks (Chinese) and the blacks (negroes) were initially imported for working as cheap labor and slaves. For the last nearly hundred and fifty years, slavery has been abolished but exploitation of non-white legal and illegal immigrants and their children continue. Although the constitution of the country vouches equality to all its citizens but blatant discrimination is still not uncommon. Women do enjoy equal rights but do suffer from some sort of invisible inferiority. In such an atmosphere, a woman and a black man, amongst others, are vying to become the next president of the country. Their success or failure will be the irrefutable verdict on American liberalism. The incumbent President's failures and unpopularity are sure to oust the Republican administration but whether the lady or the black gentleman, despite their enviable capabilities and accomplishments, will be accepted by the powerful conservative rightists and elected to become the *numero uno* in the world could be a genuine test of the powerful nation's claim of total absence of social discrimination in its behavior.

That President George W. Bush of the United States of America has become a lame duck, in real sense of the term, needs no emphasis. Losing the House and the Senate to the

Democrats, his remaining period of presidency will not be an easy one. Even his public rating has sunk to its lowest. His unjustified invasion of Iraq has cost him not only his reputation and global friends, but sent the surplus country to a deeply deficit one, with unending demands of billions of dollars on the public exchequer. His lackluster foreign policy has almost isolated the great country. He has not only antagonized the Muslims of the world, but made life for Americans and their friends very insecure not knowing where the Muslim suicide bombers will strike. Even the neo-Muslims in his own country are turning violent. Even the die-hard Republicans who seem to support him in public do not hesitate to criticize in private. They are quite apprehensive and won't be surprised if Utah, the most conservative of all the fifty states and traditionally republican, refused to stay loyal to the GoP in the next elections. Any candidate winning the democratic nomination is expected to have a cakewalk in the ensuing presidential polls. And this could be a very good reason why a lady or a colored man are in the fray. In about less than eighteen months, we will see if American politics turns a new leaf in its history.

My own preoccupations did not permit me to visit many places and meet many friends this time. But the few trips that I could take did provide me ample opportunities to meet quite a few NRNs (Non Resident Nepalis in the US) and know their mind. The majority of the NRNs I met seemed quite frustrated with the persisting anarchy in their former homeland and

the inability of the establishment to enforce law and order. When asked what did they think about the constitutionality of the parliament and the government they were emphatic that both were not representative and lawful and any subsequent government could nullify all their enactments and policies. About the foreign interference in the administration, these NRNs had no doubt whatsoever and said that no patriotic leader would tolerate such a situation. Some of them who had made good in their adopted country, would be willing to help their motherland if peace and normalcy were restored. But, they were not very optimistic that the present set of politicians would be able to take the country back to track. When asked how they saw India's protestations of friendship with Nepal, they thought even the enemies use these kinds of diplomatic language. It is for the Nepali people to see through India's designs and motives and plan accordingly to guard their own interests and not blame India. She would naturally try to exploit Nepal, the pliant politicians and take all the advantages that Nepal can provide. About the recent American policy towards Nepal, these NRNs minced no words to state that poor Nepal had become the victim of the US global strategy. The US needs India more than it needs Nepal and no wonder is playing second fiddle to them. When asked if they would like to come back they said, "First assure us that Nepal will be run by honest and patriotic leaders. Then only will we think whether we can go back."

Poetic Joy

Translated by Sharma, Irish poet Cathal O Searcaigh's poems are full of joy and pleasure

By A CORRESPONDENT

The poets have no specific boundary. Although Irish poet Cathal O Searcaigh, who has been described by the Irish Times as one of Ireland's finest working poets, was born in Ireland and has written a number of poems, he spends five months a year in Kathmandu with his adopted son Prem Timalisina and his family in Nepal.

Every one loves his/her mother tongues. Irish poet Cathal, too, loves his culture. "Cultures are colliding and co-mingling with each other all over the place. Anyhow, the challenge for all of us who belong to minority cultures is to find ways of creating collaborations between our past and our present," writes poet Cathal. "We have to ensure the continuation of lesser used languages. It would be a great loss to lose that native repository, that storehouse of tribal experience, be it Gaelic or Nepali."

His poems written in Irish languages have been translated into several other languages. Having translated various Nepali poems into English and various English and other poems into Nepali, Poet Yuyutsu RD Sharma has now completed the translation of Searcaigh's poems.

Being a poet himself, Yuyutsu's poems have also been translated into various languages including German, French, Italian, Hebrew, Spanish and Dutch. He also edits Pratik, a magazine of contemporary writings and contributes literary columns.

"My Journey to the world hidden behind the eyes of Irish poet O

Searcaigh's poetry has two stories interwoven within it. One is about how he came to Nepal the first time; and second how he came to know each other," writes Sharma in his introduction. "Cathal was first brought



By: Cathal O Searcaigh
Poems Selected and New
Translated
into Nepali with an
introduction
by Yuyutsu RD Sharma
Published by: Nirala
Publications
Distributed in Nepal by:
White Lotus Book Shop,
Kopundole
Price: Indian Rs. 250.00
Pages: 71

to Nepal by the Irish Squad, a team of mountaineers then headed by famous trekker, Dermot Somers. The basic idea was to take a poet to the Himal and see what would emerge. But interestingly, instead of buying the empty idea of overcoming the 20,000 feet summit of Langtang Himal, Cathal found solace along the trekking trail, in meeting colorful people and alluring cultural patterns on the banks of the raging rivers."

In all his poems, the poet depicts the combination of nature and his world. "The translation of these poems took me three years. More I delved into Cathal's World, the greater grew in my heart and urge to share these pristine images with my South Asian readers," writes poet Sharma.

In his poems on Kathmandu, poet O Searcaigh describes vivid picture hills, people and their surroundings. The translation was so original that one cannot feel that they are translated from Irish poet.

"Most of the poems collected in this anthology, except a few like "Lament" and "Well" that celebrate the fight of Irish Culture and language against the senseless modernization and globalization have in one way or other a slice of Nepalese life feel about them. For last decade Cathal has adopted Nepal as his second home. Every winter he comes to Nepal to relish the mellow yellow light of Kathmandu's winter. Unhappy with Irish skies that become sullen with somber winter grays, Cathal flies every winter to Kathmandu to celebrate the golden glamour of Nepalese evenings," writes Sharma.

This is a very interesting book to read as the translation is flawless and original. For this, poet Yuyutsu RD Sharma deserves commendation. From choosing words to preserving the originality of poem, Sharma has made very hard efforts.

MARTIN SAYS POLL CHALLENGES ARE CONSIDERABLE

Ian Martin, UNMIN chief, has said that the challenges involved in creating satisfactory conditions for a late November election are very considerable.

"They require not just the fixing of a date, but a realistic plan and timetable to which all parties commit themselves, and which ensure rapid progress on simultaneous fronts," he said at a press meet on Tuesday (June 13).

Martin said that the first task is that of final decision-making on the electoral system. "This includes the passage of the Constituent Assembly Election Bill defining that system and final decisions regarding constituencies," he said adding that these require not only agreement among political parties but also need to assure marginalized groups that their legitimate demands for representation are being met by the electoral system.

The second task, he added, is that of assuring public security. "This requires not just a plan for security at the time of

the election itself, but the creation of conditions in all districts and villages which allow all parties to conduct their activities from now on without facing intimidation and violence."

Martin said that he had hoped that the formation of the Interim Government would lead to much-needed discussions and cooperation between the Home Ministry, the police, the Maoists and others as to how such public security is to be achieved, including in places to which police have only recently returned. "I urge such discussions as a matter of priority," he said.

Martin said he has discussed the role and activities of the Young Communist League (YCL) with Chairman Prachanda on a number of occasions. "(I) have urged that he make public the instructions under which the YCL operates, making clear that these are fully in accordance with the law and with human rights standards - in particular, that they must not use violence of any

kind and must assist law enforcement only by acting as citizens cooperating with the police within the law," he said.



Meanwhile, Martin said that the second stage of registration and verification of Maoist army personnel will begin at the main cantonment site in Ilam, in the east of Nepal. "This is a crucial stage of the implementation of the Agreement on Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies, in particular as regards the commitment to discharge those aged under 18 on 25 May 2006, and to ensure that all who remain in cantonments were recruited to the Maoist army before that date. The verification and registration will be carried out by teams led by UNMIN arms monitors, which include UNDP registration

MORIARTY SAYS MAOISTS HAVE FAILED TO STOP VIOLENCE

In a hard-hitting statement against the Maoist atrocities, American ambassador James Moriarty has expressed his concerns for the future of Nepal. Moriarty addressing friends and supporters of the Community Information Center - Pokhara, on Tuesday (June 13), said that there are two main obstacles to peace, prosperity and democracy in Nepal at the moment.

The first is the Maoists' failure to bring their conduct in line with the standards of mainstream political parties in multiparty democracies; and the second is ethnic division.

The Ambassador stated, "Pushpa Dahal and the rest of the Maoist leadership have an historic opportunity before the Constituent Assembly election to prove to the Nepali people and the world that their party really is committed to democracy and peace Maoist assurances that they are peace loving democrats have been proven hollow daily by the violent actions of their

cadre. If the Maoists want the people's trust and support, they must win it through democratic competition and free elections - and not through violence."

Moriarty said that Maoist cantonments contained young recruits. He said that many seasoned PLA combatants remained outside the camps and were placed by the Maoist leadership in a new organization: the Young Communist League. "Most of the leadership of the YCL consists of senior PLA officers, including one who bragged in a recent interview that he had assassinated a senior police official in Kathmandu. Why are these PLA leaders still active in the countryside when they were supposed to be in the cantonments?" he asked.

"We had all hoped that the entry of the Maoists into the government on April 1 would prompt them to behave like a mainstream political party. Instead, the Maoists have forcefully reminded the people of Nepal that April 1 is also called



April Fool's Day. Since that date, the YCL has run amok, the Maoist ministers of Forests and of Local Development have called for bandhas against the government they work for, and the Maoist Minister of Information and Communications has publicly stated that the Prime Minister, his boss, has a criminal mind. Once again, the Maoist leader, Mr. Pushpa Dahal, has stated in a public interview that the Maoists have no intention of joining the political mainstream. His party's actions over the past year suggest that all Nepalis should take these words of Mr. Dahal very seriously," Moriarty said. He also said that people who stoned his car recently in Jhapa were, indeed, YCL cadres.

BUDGET PREPARATIONS

Lacking Deliberations

Nation lacks the extensive debate and deliberations that should precede the budget as economy is consigned to back-seat

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

When Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat spoke in an interaction program last week on the top of this year's budget, he looked quite forlorn as he complained about the lack of focus on economy from political leadership as well as civil society.

As the nation is fixated on the Constituent Assembly elections, issues of everyday concern, issues related with bread and butter, issues related with jobs have all been consigned to the back-seat.

"All the political forces must realize that economy is the primary issue. It is all about improving investment climate, generating jobs and taking the nation on the path towards prosperity," Dr. Mahat said, addressing a pre-budget discussion program organized by Management Association of Nepal on Wednesday.

"It is true that economic statistics are not favorable. But they are all due to non-economic factors. The conflict, social indiscipline, anarchy and demands galore about consumptions have derailed the economy," he said.

Just recently, a new report has been released by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), which states that due to decline in production of food stuffs and delay in political resolution, the economic growth rate has come down to 2.5 percent this fiscal year.

Such a disastrous news, however, were not taken very seriously. No political leader worth his salt responded to this disturbing trend.

This rate of 2.5 percent growth is the least growth rate witnessed in the last five years. A year ago, the economy had grown by 2.8 percent.

The sharp decline in growth rate comes on the backdrop of budget prediction of this fiscal year which had said there would be 4.5 percent growth in economy. However, the CBS report says that production of food stuffs decreased by 2.78 percent this year while wholesale and retail trade also came

down by 2.6 percent.

The report painted a further bleak picture stating that the industrial sector attained a minimal growth of 2.16 percent in the face of bandhs, lack of infrastructure, power cuts, labor disputes and so on. The agriculture sector grew marginally by 0.7 percent – compared with 1.1 percent growth previous fiscal year. Likewise, non-agriculture sector also grew by 3.7 percent – compared with 4.6 percent growth previous year.

The report also had some positive indications. According to it, because of new base year and procedural adjustments, the per capita GDP of Nepalis is estimated to have increased to \$383 from \$350 last year and the per capita income is estimated to have increased to \$456 from \$420 last year.

During the interaction program, Dr. Mahat conceded that productions have not increased, there are no new investments and even existing capacities in industrial and tourism sectors were not being utilized.

In an uncharacteristic frankness, the Finance Minister – who will have to prepare the budget for the forthcoming fiscal year 2007/08 based on the Common Minimum Program agreed upon by eight parties – urged for consensus on political issues. "Competitive democracy, free market economy, human rights and rule of law are some of the fundamental issues in which there is a global consensus. We can also proceed by adhering to these widely accepted norms," he said.

Dr. Mahat said that if there is a consensus on inviting big investments in hydropower sector, that alone could set off the whole new trend. "If we can get one big investment then that will open

the floodgate. Otherwise, nobody will believe our credibility," he said.

The Finance Minister believed that the exuberance and positive feeling among people of villages in the aftermath of Jana Andolan must be tapped to bring about building of new Nepal. Spelling out the few achievements of economy, Dr. Mahat said that in the eleven months of the current fiscal year, the capital expenditure has increased by 50 percent – compared with the same period previous year. "Revenue has grown



Youths going abroad: Desperate for jobs

consistently at around 20 percent because of which we could manage despite having to dole out Rs 4-5 billion in extra-budgetary topics," he said.

At the same program, Professor Dr. Madan Dahal of Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University talked at length about "Issues and Challenges" for the coming budget. "Our economy is in crisis. It suffers from conflict, recession and corruption," he said.

Likewise, industrialist Rajendra Khetan also presented a paper giving suggestions for the coming budget. "Industries are closing down, investment has stopped whereas 200,000 new labor force enters the market every year looking for jobs. Isn't it contradictory?" he asked.

EU SUPPORTS RENEWABLE ENERGY

The European Union is supporting Nepal in the implementation of the Renewable Energy Project (REP).

According to a press release issued by the EU office in Kathmandu, this project will be executed by the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPCC). The overall objective of the REP is to create a renewable energy infrastructure in rural areas, which facilitates income generation, sustainable growth and delivery of social services, thus alleviating poverty, the release stated.

The total project cost is estimated at EUR 15.675 million thereof EUR 15 million from the European Union and 0.675 as GoN's contribution. "REP is providing solar energy systems to communities of around 300 VDCs in 21 remote districts of Nepal. In order to maximize the impact of the project and ensure the best use of available resources, REP made multifaceted efforts while identifying the target communities, generating awareness regarding energy demand collection, and conducting feasibility studies in the first year of field implementation."

As a part of consultation process aimed at transparency and equal access to information, REP conducted 22 district level workshops amidst 1,600 participants. The principle objective of the workshops was to mobilize the communities for energy demand.

Following the same principle, REP is conducting second round of district workshops where up to 400 participants were informed on the process and results of this first year of field implementation. 172 community organizations are confirmed as REP partners and will be transformed into CESP's through capacity building and supply of energy equipment.

At the present stage, REP will provide PV systems to around 250 schools, 200 health institutions, 200 community centers, 54 PV systems for milling 30 water pumping PV systems will be disseminated. These PV systems are robust, substantial in power, tailored to each institution and subscribe to international quality standards. The number of beneficiaries has risen from the initially planned 500,000 to 1,500,000 people.

In addition, REP is supporting solar thermal applications for income generation. To this effect, REP received and processed 123 applications for solar thermal systems: A total of 38 projects: 24 solar dryer and 14 water heater have been found feasible and will receive the REP support.

Book List

- Fateful Interview, Madhav Kumar Rimal,Rs. 400.00
- Beyond The frontiers Women's stories from Nepal Padmavati Singh/2006.....Rs 200.00
- Bonded Labour Kamaiya in Nepal. Padma Raj Lamichhane/2005.....Rs. 350.00
- Dhoopee "The Juniper" A Long Poem.Toya Gurung/ 2006.....Rs. 185.00
- Distribution of goods and Services in Nepal's Conflict Ananda P. Shrestha \Hari Uprety\2006.....Rs. 200.00
- Ecotourism in Nepal with theoretical concepts and principles Damodar Prasad Bhatt\2006.....Rs.675.00
- Development planning in the Era of Globalization. Govind Nepal\2006..... Rs. 110.00
- Human Rights yearbook 2007 Kundan Aryal\2007.....Rs.500.00
- Insurgency Affected People of Nepal Rehabilitation. Ujjwal Upadhyay\2006.....Rs.100.00
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- My Life Story Ramhari Sharma Nepal \ 2006 Rs.....250.00
- Nepal -Japan Relation, Ram Kumar Panday\2006 Rs. 2000.00
- Nepal Struggle for Existence -Jagadish Sharma\2006 Rs.999.00
- Nepal Postage Stamps Catalogue 2005, Chandra Kumar Stapit \Deepak Manandhar \2005 Rs. 150.00
- Nepal 's conflict and its impact on Public Ananda P. Shrestha \Hari Uprety \2006.....Rs 150.00
- 15. Peaks and Pinnacles Mountainering in Nepal Harka Gudung\2004.....Rs. 500.00
- The Sakyas, Ajaya Kranti Shakyas \2006Rs. 350.00
- Simple Convictions My Struggle for Peace and Democracy Girija Prasad Koirala\2006.....Rs. 250.00
- 18 Uncertainty on a Himalayan Scale, Thompson \Warburaton \ Hatley \2007..... Rs. 250.00

'The Amendment Is Not Compatible With The National Situation'

-Senior Lawyer Ganesh Raj Sharma

Two major features of the recent amendment to the interim constitution are the re-scheduling of the constituent assembly elections for mid-December and the abolition of the monarchy by a two-thirds majority of the parliament "if the king is found obstructing the assembly elections". There has been a mixed reaction to the amendment. Pro-ruling parties analysts hailed it as a significant move toward the consolidation of the democracy and further caging the already estranged monarchy. Some others saw the amendment incompatible with the unstable situation in the country. Prominent constituent lawyer, GANESH RAJ SHARMA, was one of them. Breaking months of silence on political events, Sharma, who is also known for bold in-depth political analysis, spoke to Rabindra Mishra of the BBC Nepali Service last Thursday. Excerpts:

Can the second amendment of the constitution take care of the country's challenges until the constituent assembly elections planned for mid-December?

We have reached yet another stage of a long-running instability. The agitators who wanted to re-activate the previous constitution failed to do so. Instead, they brought a new constitution. There had been some significant political developments since the promulgation of the interim constitution less than five months ago. They point to the discrepancies between the situation prevailing in the country and the solution provided (by the ruling parties). They are not mutually compatible. So, I have seen the second amendment as a reflection of political instability.

What do you mean when you said that the situation in the country is not compatible with the amendment of the constitution?

This is not a new phenomenon. On return home from Nepal way back in

1976, the late B.P.Koirala said that Nepal had become a zone of turmoil. The turmoil has been casting a shadow over Nepal ever since, in one way or the other. It is against this background that some of the amendments appear to be the necessity of the outsiders not ours.

Like...?

Take, for instance, the new provision on voting out the monarchy through the parliament. In Bhutan they had a provision to remove the monarchy through a simple majority of the assembly despite the institution being free from controversies. But that provision has never been applied. It was only used as a Damocles' sword to keep the monarchy threatened at the behest of the external, rather than internal, forces. The present government spokesman (information minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara) had also recently said that the key of the Nepali politics is either in Delhi or Washington. He must not have made the remarks without a reason. Probably only after it became unbearable, he decided to speak out although they don't repeat such remarks. So, all political actors, whether they are in power or harassed by the power, have looked stupefied and helpless. They have not only confiscated the rights of the king, but also the rights of the people to make own decision. This can not be considered the expression of any popular will or the pressure over the past five months. The amendment does not address the agitation in Terai or the agitation by the Janjati groups. The point



is: every political actor has been made to make a visit to Delhi. But, even if the key is in Delhi going by what the government spokesman said, it is not possible to make Nepal another Bhutan.

So, the second amendment can not bring stability?

Yes, you can not achieve political stability if you go on like this, no matter whether you keep the monarchy or abolish it. We also saw the absolute rule of the king for a few months. In an interview to you then, I said that this (the direct royal rule) can not work, because the problem was of a different nature. Now, even if you abolish the monarchy the interest of your party and democracy can not remain safe. The cause of our (political) suffering is not internal but external pressure. Unless the whole country and all the people get united, unless a fundamental basis for such a unity, be it traditional or other, is forged, and unless an atmosphere is created to take all national forces along and if the politics of mistrust and vendetta is carried forward, the political instability hastened by the external pressure will go beyond control. As things stand now, I foresee a dangerous situation ahead.

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