

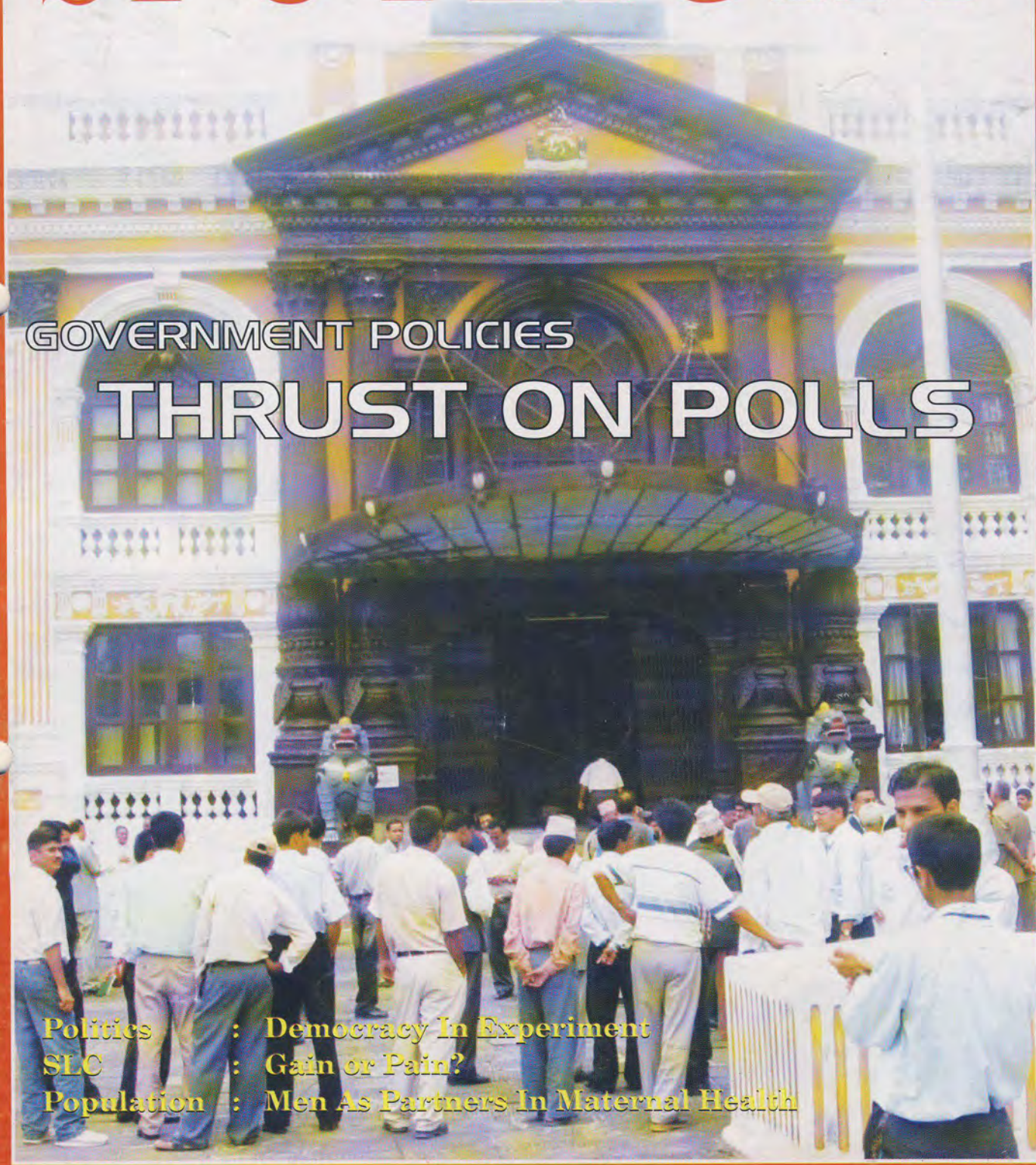
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The National Newsmagazine

# SPOTLIGHT

July 13-19, 2007

## GOVERNMENT POLICIES THRUST ON POLLS



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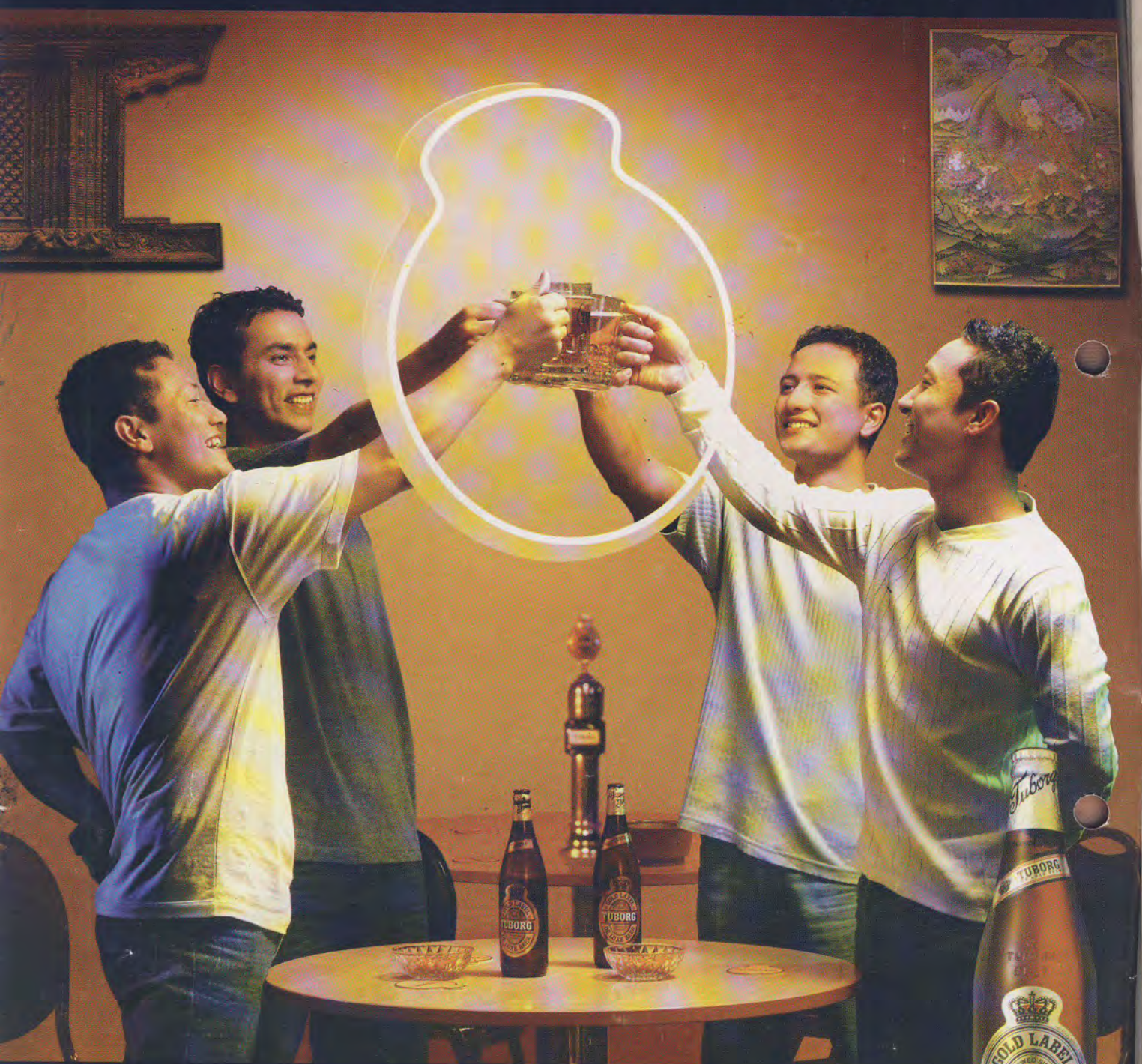
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- Politics** : Democracy In Experiment
- SLC** : Gain or Pain?
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**SPOTLIGHT**

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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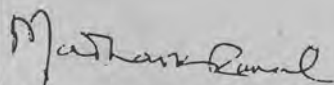
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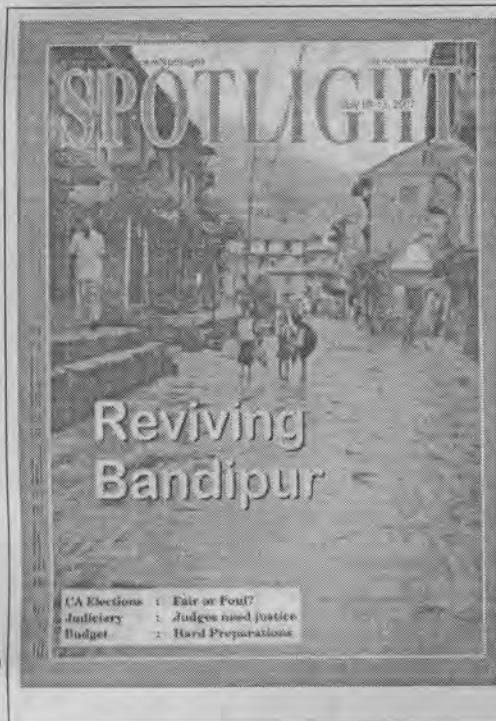
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**M**onarchy in Nepal is facing a very uncertain future. Whether King Gyanendra decides to move with the time and grant continuity to the institution could be a million dollar question. He could have totally avoided such a predicament after he was made to ascend the throne. But unbridled ambition to turn the clock back and disregarding saner counsels, he has hastened this misfortune and, as such, cannot put the blame on others but has to shoulder the responsibility of his ignominy himself. Since crying over split milk never produces fruitful solution, we have to look for a way out acceptable universally or to the overwhelming majority. A handful of disgruntled politicians have no authority to make this epoch changing decision of abolishing the monarchy. Whether monarchy has become redundant in Nepal is not for any political party or a few politicians or even interested and influential foreigners to decide. Since this is directly linked with the destiny of the Nepali people, it is for the Nepali people to give final verdict whether they would like to retain the monarchy. As such, there should have been a national referendum to gauge the public opinion. Since this could not be done and events have been galloping forward and cannot be retraced, the only way left for the people of Nepal to decide about the fate of monarchy is through the constituent assembly, elected in the most free and fair manner, whenever possible. As such, all political parties, civil societies and patriotic Nepalis must attach utmost importance to this single issue on which hinges not only the fate of the monarchy but peace and stability, even integrity of the country. But the lawlessness prevailing all over the country and the disinterestedness shown by the political parties to arrest such undesirable activities do not bode well for the election to the constituent assembly. In a situation where a discredited, weak, sick and unfit to rule politician, who cannot even exercise any control over his cabinet colleagues, has usurped the power and status of the King and not only the Nepali people perform, but the external community, too, has accepted the bizarre situation. How does King Gyanendra stand legally and constitutionally? Isn't it very strange that the learned political pundits around, who think they are the arbiter of the fate of weak and defenseless nation like Nepal and behave likewise, should stay unconcerned and let a handful of unscrupulous politicians whose loyalty to the nation can be challenged, play havoc with the destiny of the country? Where is gone their sense of justice and morality? King Gyanendra can still play a positive role, if he likes, to serve his country. Or will he decide to preside over the abolition of monarchy in Nepal? Since abolition of monarchy may push the poor nation into a dangerous and unpredictable situation, are not there enough patriotic Nepalis who should take the issue to the United Nations? After all, what is the United Nations for, if not to safeguard the interest and sovereignty of the smaller and weaker nations?



**Madhav K. Rimal**  
Chief Editor & Publisher



## Bandipur Story

The cover story "Reviving Bandipur" was a breath of fresh air (SPOTLIGHT July 6). At a time when political issues have been dominating the whole national and social landscape, the story on the development and revival of Bandipur has provided a new perspective to readers. There are so many similar untold stories in this country. But due to our political preoccupation, media have not been able to highlight them all.

**Keshav Gautam**  
*Bishalnagar*

## Pertinent Topic

The article "CA Elections: Fair or Foul?" (SPOTLIGHT July 6) has raised the pertinent topic. It is quite clear that eight parties will hold the CA elections come hail or sunshine in November. Otherwise, they will lose the very basis of this government and the unity. But it is still unclear how they will be able to bring the situation of unrest to normalcy in Terai before November. Besides, Maoists excesses are still continuing. In such a situation, it will be safer to bet that the elections will not be fair or be held in fearless environment. But this topic is not being seriously discussed by our political leaders and civil society. Most of them state that election has to take place under any circumstance. They have not said that improving circumstance is as important as holding the elections because for an election to be widely credible and legitimate, the voters must not be allowed to feel that their vote is not being counted fairly.

**Diwas Gurung**  
*Chhetrapati*

## Justice For Judges

The article "Judges Need Justice" (SPOTLIGHT July 6) showed how the judiciary is being undermined. Without the independent judiciary, no country can be termed as a democratic one. A nation

must have independent and effective judiciary to ensure justice and protect the people from the excesses of executive and legislative. Even constitution needs to be safeguarded by judiciary. In the absence of independent judiciary, nation's democracy becomes vulnerable and susceptible to attacks by autocratic elements.

**Birju Shrestha**  
*Kalanki*

## Good Choice

The cover story on Bandipur was interesting (Reviving Bandipur, SPOTLIGHT July 6). Spotlight needs to cover such issues frequently. At a time when all other papers are concentrating their efforts in covering the political events, it has done story on Nepal's one of the historically and culturally important sector. Keep up the spirit.

**Sudha Shrestha**  
*Via-email*

## Stress On Fairness

After reading the article "Constituent Assembly Elections, Fair or Foul?" (SPOTLIGHT July 6) it is discernable that conducting the election at any cost should not only be the main priority but the impartiality of the poll should also be considered. Home minister Krishna Sitaula's remark that the election should be conducted under any circumstance

without taking into account its impartiality indicates that the government isn't concerned about the fairness of the election. Minister Sitaula did not say whether an unfair election would be recognized by the international community or even accepted by rebel groups within the country. If the insecurity and rebellion by different factions persist, it is obvious that the election will not be able to come up with desired outcome. The elections were also held during the direct rule of King but many people shunned it and it lost its credibility despite the government's claim that the election was free and fair.

**Sabu Chettri**  
*Via-email*

## Fairness In Doubt

I agree with the argument presented by the writer that the fate of the CA poll may also be the same if the government doesn't take immediate actions to create peaceful environment within November 10 (SPOTLIGHT July 6). Even though Maoist leaders seem zealous about the CA poll, however, the armed YCL might be one of the major obstacles to hold the poll. The organization has intimidated general people by taking the law in its own hand. Despite their claim that they have support of majority of Nepalese, many people are afraid of them. If the activities of this organization are not checked then the fairness of the election may be in jeopardy.

**Rammani Sharma**  
*Baneshwore*

## Difficult Job

Managing budget has always been very difficult task to the finance ministers of Nepal. This year also finance minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat expressed his concern by stating that he has been inundated by huge demands of budget on non productive sector. It also seems that Maoists, local bodies and others have made lavish demands which may be unaffordable by our economy. Although the decrease in expenses to the royal family may have relieved the finance minister, he has to address some unavoidable expenditure for the management of Maoist's PLA (People Liberation Army) and increase the salaries of the government employees.

**Dinesh Rai**  
*Balaju*



## Bomb Exploded In Birgunj, Violence In Terai

A series of bomb blasts occurred in the commercial town of Birgunj on Sunday (July 08). Half a dozen socket bombs exploded in front of a commercial building Sirpur that housed showroom of Balwan tractor. The building belongs to former vice president of Birgunj Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sushil Mittal. No human casualty was reported in the explosions. Indian gangster Munna Sharma later phoned local FM stations claiming responsibility for the explosions. Meanwhile, on Sunday morning, an unidentified gang shot and killed a local trader in Bariyapur village in Bara district. Shyam Kishor Kushwaha, 32, of Pattharhatti, Bara, was shot by four gunmen who came on two motorbikes. Kushwaha, who owned a bicycle shop in Bariyapur, died while being rushed to a hospital in the district headquarters Kalaiya. In Siraha district, one Rakesh Kumar Nandan, who was abducted by unidentified gang from Siraha Bazaar Thursday night, was found dead in Chatari VDC. Similarly, one alleged dacoit was killed in a clash with Armed Police Force (APF) personnel in Banarmula area of Saptari district, Saturday night. *Compiled from reports*

### King Advises To Work For Peace

King Gyanendra has advised to work for peace. He gave the advice to his well-wishers during the 61<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations. On Sunday (July 8), a reception was hosted by Crown Prince Paras to celebrate King Gyanendra's birthday. Ministers, eight party leaders, police and army officials and government officials did not attend the reception. Leaders of Rastriya Prajatantra Party, and people close to palace attended it. "Almost everyone

got the reply from the King that all should work for peace," said a journalist who attended the reception. King, however, refused to entertain queries from journalists. Many who met the King told him that the country was embroiled in insecurity and even disintegration. Some even complained to him that the understanding between the King and party leaders were not being followed. *Kantipur daily reports*

## Former Indian PM Chandra Shekhar Passes Away

Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel left for New Delhi on Sunday (July 8) to express condolence at the passing away of former Indian Prime Minister and socialist leader Chandra Shekhar. Central leaders of Nepali Congress Shailaja Acharya, Chakra Prasad Bastola and Dr. Shekhar Koirala have also left for New Delhi. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, Maoist chairman Prachanda, Nepali Congress-Democratic president Sher Bahadur Deuba have expressed sadness over the death of the Indian leader. *Kantipur daily reports*

## CJ Says Hearing Of Judges Not Appropriate; Speaker Says It Is Appropriate

Chief Justice Dilip Kumar Poudel has said that the current practice of conducting parliamentary hearing to appoint judges of Supreme Court (SC) is inappropriate. "It is neither legally nor practically appropriate," said CJ Poudel, talking to reporters at the airport as he returned home after completing a brief visit to China. "But since the interim constitution has the provision (of parliamentary hearing), we have to follow it," he added. Meanwhile, Speaker of the parliament Subas Nemwang, who is himself a senior advocate, has supported the

## parliamentary hearing of judges saying it will usher in transparency in judiciary. *Compiled from reports*

### Eleven Injured After YCL Intervenes Monarchists' Rally

Around eleven persons have been injured after YCL cadres intervened the rally by monarchists on Saturday (July 7). The YCL cadres attacked a couple of persons and small clashes had occurred in areas like Bhotahity, Asan, New Road, Sundhara and Lainchaur. Earlier, supporters of King Gyanendra had taken out a small rally to greet the King on his 61<sup>st</sup> birthday at Durbar Marg, in front of Narayanhiti royal palace, on Saturday morning. Their plan to organize a rally from Tundikhel was blocked by cadres of political parties. Scores of people had gathered at Durbar Marg, and chanted slogans against the eight parties and in support of the King. Former prime ministers Surya Bahadur Thapa, Lokendra Bahadur Chand and Kirti Nidhi Bista and former royalist ministers Niranjana Thapa, Roshan Karki, Buddhi Man Tamang, Kamal Thapa and Mohammad Mohsin went to the palace to greet the King. Large numbers of Nepal Police and Armed Police personnel were mobilized in and around Durbar Marg in view of possible confrontation. On Friday, the palace had requested the government to provide security during the Diamond Jubilee birth celebration of the King. The Home Ministry had instructed district security committee to make necessary security arrangement. Earlier, on Friday night, the King hosted a dinner reception where 125 of the 800 invitees had attended. The attendees included former Panchas, royal relatives, some Major Generals of the army who are going to retire soon and former army officials. Prime Minister, ministers, Speaker, army chief and other senior officials of the

government stayed away from the party. *Compiled from reports*

## **Maoists Want Their Envoy In UK**

Maoist chairman Prachanda who returned home on Saturday (July 7) after completing a weeklong tour to Switzerland has said that his party has asked the Prime Minister to let them nominate their men as ambassadors in France, Denmark, South Korea and United Kingdom. Prachanda said that the PM has not yet agreed to their request for envoy in the UK. Talking to journalists in the airport, he said that he will hold talks with the PM on this issue. Prachanda said his party rejects what he called as 'activism' by the King in the name of hosting birthday reception. He reiterated that his party will work to abolish monarchy ahead of CA elections. Prachanda said that his visit to Switzerland was fruitful in learning about federalism there. In response to queries, Prachanda said that outgoing US ambassador James Moriarty had been quite disappointing. He hoped that relations with new US envoy Nancy Powell will be better. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports*

## **Differences In UML**

### **Regarding Its Outlook Towards Maoists**

Senior UML leaders have aired serious differences on the outlook of the party towards the Maoists. While general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, in his political resolution tabled at the ongoing central committee meeting, has termed the Maoists as extremist leftists, leaders such as Jhal Nath Khanal and Bamdev Gautam have demanded that the party term Maoists as democratic force since they have already joined the mainstream by dropping arms. Nepal had said that the Maoists still harbor militarist thinking but Khanal and Gautam retorted. Nepal

had said that no force can become democratic just by laying down arms when it does not reform its thinking. He said Maoist thinking and behavior has not improved. In his report, Nepal has mentioned that there are pro-palace, bourgeois reformists, extremist leftists and democratic forces active in the country. Meanwhile, Gautam has asked UML leadership to forge wider unity among republicans and common front with the Maoists. Nepal, however, replied that there was no need to forge common front with the Maoists at present. *Kantipur daily reports*

### **MJF Trains Its Cadres To Use Domestic Weapons**

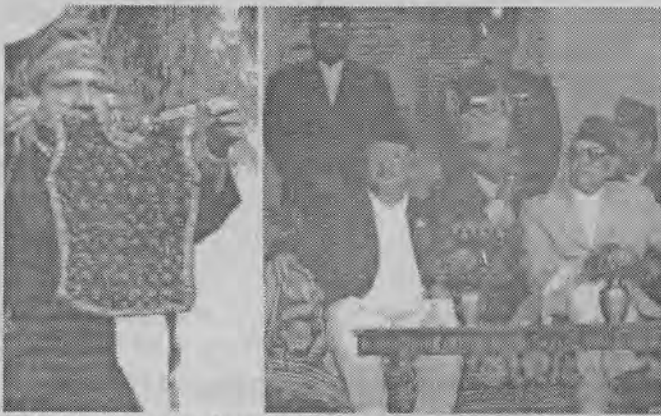
Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), which is engaged in movement in Terai, has started to train its cadres to use domestic weapons in the name of checking Maoist excesses. According to Nepal Samacharpatra daily, the MJF has formed Sunsari Madhesi Youth Forum (MYF) and provided training on wrestling, lathi-charge, using swords, bows and arrows etc. The Sunsari president of the MYF, SN Mehta said that they are preparing to provide combat dress to their cadres. He also warned that his organization will deploy youths with domestic weapons to foil the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections planned in November in case the government does not fulfill their demands before then. The report said that retired police and army men are providing training to the MYF cadres with the intention of checking the activities of Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL). Mehta added that around 800 cadres are receiving training in Sunsari district. He said that they will, however, not be trained to use other weapons. He also said that they are planning to increase the number of cadres in Sunsari's MYF to 1500 within two weeks. Mehta said

that they will make public their combat dress after that. Mehta claimed that the training was being provided as per the decision of MJF central committee and would be expanded to cover all Terai districts. He added that if the government fulfills their demand then they will mobilize their cadres to ensure that the elections are held successfully. *Nepalnews.com reports*

## **Students Angry Over King's Planned Birthday Bash**

Student and youth activists affiliated with the eight parties have decided to submit a memo to the government asking it to ban the royal palace from holding the King's birthday bash. At a joint meeting held at the office of UML-affiliated Democratic National Youth Federation (DNYF) on Thursday (July 5), they decided to hold demonstrations on Saturday against the birthday reception. They have said that since the constitution does not recognize the King, he should not organize the party in his capacity as the monarch. The royal palace is said to be preparing to celebrate the 61<sup>st</sup> birthday of King Gyanendra by holding various programs and parties on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Meanwhile, former minister and co-chair of the organizing committee Dr. Durga Pokharel said that the plan of reception will go ahead despite criticisms. "We will gather in Tundikhel and silently and peacefully go to the palace to greet the King," she said, adding, "Those who want to uphold the value of freedom of expression should respect others' freedom of expression as well." She also claimed that invitations have not be sent to ambassadors. She said so in response to reports that various ambassadors have decided not to attend the birthday party. *Compiled from reports* ■





PM Koirala in Jawalakhel witnessing Bhoto Jatra festival  
*Gorkhapatra*

**PRIME MINISTER GIRIJA PRASAD KOIRALA** witnessed the 'Bhoto Jatra' ceremony organized at the end of the chariot procession of Rato Machhindranath in Jawalakhel, Lalitpur, Sunday evening. PM Koirala, who enjoys the powers of the head of the state, witnessed the Bhoto Jatra amidst a huge public gathering. Earlier, the King would witness the traditional ceremony. Nepal Army presented guard of honor to the Prime Minister when he arrived at Jawalakhel to witness Bhoto Jatra. Speaker Subash Nemwang, Chief Justice Dilip Poudel and some ministers were also present there.

**THE PARLIAMENTARY SPECIAL HEARING COMMITTEE (PSHC)** on Friday (July 6) approved nominations of four judges of the Supreme Court after completing the hearing of their appointment process. The hearing committee questioned four judges- Damodar Prasad Sharma, Ram Kumar Prasad Shah, Gauri Dhakal and Kalyan Shrestha -regarding the complaints about their integrity and other professional issues, before they were confirmed as the apex court judges. The committee had earlier received altogether 14 complaints against the four judges who were recently recommended by the Judicial Council for permanent status.

**THE SPECIAL COURT**, on Friday (July 6), decided to set free suspended governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) Bijaynath Bhattarai on bail. Bhattarai was freed on the deposition of bail amount of Rs 250,000. The decision was made by Special Court bench of judges Bhup Dhoj Adhikary, Komal Nath Sharma and Cholendra SJB Rana. Earlier, the Special Court had, on Thursday, ordered the police to detain Bhattarai until Friday's hearing on the corruption case filed against him by the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA). Along with NRB director Surendra Man Pradhan, Bhattarai had faced CIAA charge of embezzling Rs 24.5 million in ending contract of consultant of supervision strengthening project under financial sector reforms program.

**ELEVEN PERSONS WERE KILLED** when a tractor they were traveling in fell off the road into an irrigation canal in Manusmara in Sarlahi district on Friday (July 6). The tractor was transporting persons of a marriage party from Sisautiya village to Tandri of Barahathwa when it fell off the road at

around 10 pm. Superintendent of Police Ganesh KC has informed that they have taken out 11 dead bodies including nine kids and two adults from the canal.

**CONTINUING WITH THE SUSTAINED RISE OF INDEX**, Nepal Stock Exchange (Nepse) witnessed the increase of 19.82 points this past week. According to weekly share trading analysis report, the Nepse index, which had stood at 593.65 points on the opening day, soared to 613.47 points on the closing. The Nepse – the only secondary share market in the country – scaled historic heights reaching past 600 points this week. Meanwhile, the price of gold has decreased marginally during last week. It decreased from the price of Rs 16,347 per tola to Rs 16,282 per tola in one week.

**THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF)** has expressed concern over the recent filing of corruption charge against top officials of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) and has hoped that the issue will be resolved as rapidly as possible on the basis of credible evidence. Talking to The Kathmandu Post, Alexander Pitt, resident representative of IMF, stressed on the need to settle the issue as soon as possible to end ongoing confusions, restore the morale of the central bank's staff, and refocus NRB on its mandate. "We hope that with an early and credible resolution of the issue, NRB can refocus its energies on carrying out its mandate as quickly as possible," Pitt said. He further stressed that an expeditious resolution is critically important for continuation of financial sector reform being led by NRB. "The ongoing reforms are crucial for economic progress in Nepal including in the context of PRGF-supported program," he further noted.

**TWO CONGRESS LEADERS** were gunned down by unknown group in Nawalparasi on Monday (July 2) evening. The group shot dead former Nepali Congress-Democratic (NC-D) regional chairman of Nawalparasi's constituency no 3 Bechaye Yadav and NC deputy chairman of Bhujahawa village, Gobari Yadav. According to witnesses, a group of four persons on two motorcycles killed the two leaders at Guthichowk in Bhurjawa VDC at around 6:45. The site of the killing lies some 15 km south of Bardhaghat on the East-West Mahendra Highway. There had been repeated assaults and attempts on Bechaye Yadav's life by the Maoists and members of the then anti-Maoist retaliation committee three years ago. Yadav was displaced and forced to resettle in India but had been living in the capital lately. Police believe that "criminal gangs" are responsible for the killings.

**THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED** to provide guarantee for loans worth Rs 1.2 billion for Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC). According to government spokesperson and Information Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the government has decided to instruct Employees Provident Fund (EPF) to provide loan of Rs 800 million and Citizen Investment Fund (CIF) to provide loan of Rs 400 million to the NOC on its guarantee. The government hopes that the loan amount will help NOC pay some of its dues to Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), which would then ease the supply of fuel. Currently, the bandhs in Terai as well as lack of adequate supply have triggered acute shortage. ■



**"T**he Constituent Assembly will bring a new revolution in the country. Bloodshed and violent revolution does not give durable solution. So, we need peaceful revolution for socio-economic transformation."

*Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, addressing the interim parliament.*

**"W**e reject the 'activism' by the King in the name of celebrating birthday."

*Prachanda, Maoist chairman, talking to reporters.*

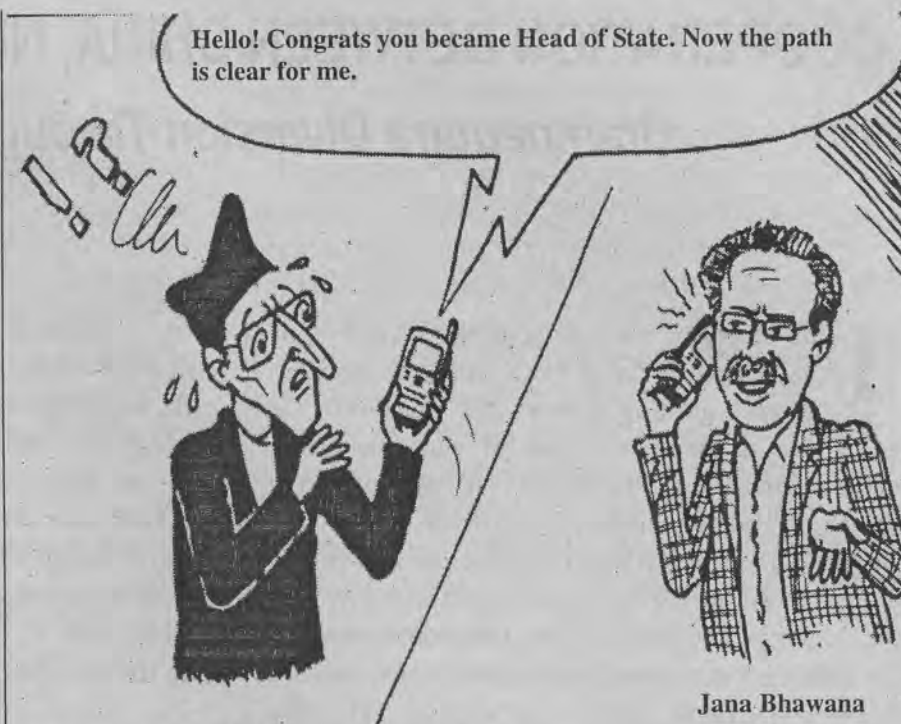
**"T**he environment may be uneasy. There may be violence, bullets may be fired and booths may be captured. But the elections of Constituent Assembly will take place at any cost in November."

*Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of Unified Marxist Leninist, addressing a program by Manmohan Memorial Academy, in Nepal Samacharpatra.*

**"I** have told him (PM Koirala) that I do not have any personal wish. I just want him to have respectful unity from center to local level."

*Sher Bahadur Deuba, president of Nepali Congress Democratic, after meeting with PM Koirala to discuss Congress unity.*

**"I**t is neither legally nor practically appropriate."



*Chief Justice Dilip Kumar Poudel, on the current provision of parliamentary hearing of Supreme Court judges before their appointment.*

**"T**he hearing will increase transparency in judiciary."

*Subas Nemwang, Speaker of the parliament, at a program.*

**"S**ince she is a woman, she might be of a softer nature."

*Chandra Prakash Gajurel, chief of international relations cell of the*

*Maoists, on how his party was looking forward to the appointment of Nancy Powell as new US ambassador to Nepal, in Jana Aastha.*

**"T**hose who want to uphold the value of freedom of expression should respect others' freedom of expression as well."

*Dr. Durga Pokharel, former minister in royal cabinet and co-chair of committee formed to organize King Gyanendra's birthday, in response to warning by student activists that they will foil their plan, in BBC Nepali Service.*

## TRANSITION

**APPROVED:** The names of four judges of Supreme Court by the Parliamentary Special Hearing Committee (PSHC). Four judges appointed as permanent judges of the apex court include Damodar Sharma, Ram Kumar Prasad Shah, Kalyan Shrestha and Gauri Dhakal.

**RETURNED:** Maoist chairman Prachanda and senior leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, after completing their visit to Switzerland. Dr. Bhattarai also visited Norway.

Chief Justice Dilip Kumar Poudel,

after completing his visit to China at the invitation of head of Chinese judiciary.

**PASSED AWAY:** Chandra Shekhar, former prime minister of India and leader of Janata Dal, at the age of 80 in New Delhi.

**LEFT:** Ram Chandra Poudel, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, for New Delhi, to pay last respects to Chandra Shekhar, the former PM of India who died on July 8. Nepali Congress leader Shailaja Acharya, Chakra Prasad Bastola and Dr. Shekhar Koirala have also left for New Delhi.

Sahana Pradhan, Foreign Minister, for

Istanbul, Turkey, to take part in the conference of Least Developed Countries. Pradhan will also visit Israel and Egypt.

**FORMED:** The parliament has formed a task force including five MPs from five parties to probe the complaints registered at the Parliamentary Special Hearing Committee (PSHC) against the four nominees for permanent judges of the Supreme Court. The task force includes Ram Baran Yadav (NC), Astalaxmi Shakya (UML), Dinanath Sharma (Maoists), Dr. Minendra Rijal (NC-Democratic) and Lilamani Pokharel (People's Front) as members.



# COOPERATION BETWEEN CHINA, NEPAL AND INDIA

## *Brahmaputra Diversion Through Nepal*

-By Dr. AB Thapa

**T**he supply of water is gradually dwindling in the Ganga basin of the South Asia because of ever growing demand for water. It was one of the main causes of sour relationship between India and Bangladesh in the past. The recent Farakka agreement between India and Bangladesh on Ganga water sharing has helped to a great extent to resolve this problem. However, both the countries accept the fact that sooner or later the present dry season flow of the Ganga must be augmented. There are two proposals. (1) India proposes to divert the Brahmaputra at Jogighopa in Assam through Bangladesh into Ganga near Farakka. (2) Bangladesh proposes to build storage reservoirs in the Ganga basin itself to augment the dry season flow. Both the countries are sticking to their own proposal. A compromise appears to be very remote. However, there could be other alternatives also. One of such possible options could be based on ideas floated by scientists at the Harvard, USA. It is the diversion of Brahmaputra through Nepal into the Ganga.

### **Scientists at Harvard**

In the book "Eastern Water Study" the scientists at Harvard, USA have stressed the need of creative thinking about assessing inter-basin transfer of water options including trans-Himalayan prospects using the Gandak or Kosi for diversions from Tsangpo (Brahmaputra). Such diversion could be very effective for mitigating the problems of growing shortages of dry season flow of the Ganga river and also for the generation of cheap electricity.

### **WECS's Concept**

The diversion of the Brahmaputra river into the Arun river from a suitable place not too far away from the Sigatse (in China) could be one of the options. The Brahmaputra is a very big river and thus its valley must be deep compared to Arun

valley. It implies that a long tunnel would be required to effect such diversion. This tunnel length could be considerably reduced by adopting the following two measures. (1): Provision of a high dam across the Brahmaputra river for elevating the water level and also for storage. (2) Provision of pumping station if further elevation of water level is desirable. It could be single or multistage pumping for delivery of water into the Arun system.

### **The Brahmaputra River**

The source of the mighty Brahmaputra river known as Tsangpo in China lies in the Cheme-

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*Farakka agreement between India and Bangladesh on Ganga water sharing has helped to a great extent to resolve this problem. However, both the countries accept the fact that sooner or later the present dry season flow of the Ganga must be augmented.*

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Yungdong Glacier near the Lake Manasarobar in Tibet. This river flows for 2900 kms from its source to its confluence with the Ganga in Bangladesh. This river enters Bangladesh as the Jamuna. The mingled water of the Ganga and the Jamuna (Brahmaputra) empties into the Bay of Bengal. It might surprise us to learn that not until early in the last century it was certain that the Tsangpo and the Brahmaputra were one.

### **Compatibility of the Project**

Due to vast difference in climatic conditions of the tropical Indian subcontinent and alpine type environment of the Tibetan plateau, the adverse effect of the Brahmaputra diversion on Tibet might not be too significant. The diversion of the Brahmaputra is required mainly in two seasons. These two seasons are the spring and winter. In



rainy season of summer the diversion is not necessary because there is always plentiful of water in the Ganga itself.

In Brahmaputra region of the Tibet like in all other similar regions of the north the spring season is the time of plentiful water. The Brahmaputra river must be in high floods in spring seasons when the snow all over Tibet lying below the perpetual snow line completely melts. Such abundant flood water could be diverted into the Ganga. Quite the opposite, the spring season is a period when there is acute shortage of water in the Ganga.

The diametrically opposite spring season hydrological characteristics of the upper reach Brahmaputra and the Ganga make the trans-Himalayan diversion attractive. The prospect of diversion of the Brahmaputra into the Ganga in autumn and winter is also not bad.

Tibet needs water in limited quantity for irrigation mostly in summer season when the ambient temperature is sufficiently high to support the growth of agricultural crops. After a very short warm period of summer months the temperature again starts to lower down. Towards the middle of autumn before the temperature plunges down to a level close to freezing point not only the harvesting but often even the sowing works for the next season's crops should be completed. This signifies that during the autumn the use of Brahmaputra water in Tibet would be only limited. Thus a good proportion of the autumn flow of the Brahmaputra could also be diverted without adverse effect on the Tibetan agriculture.

In winter every thing on the surface is frozen in Tibet including the top layer of water in the river. Beneath the ice the water of the Brahmaputra flows even in the coldest day of a year. There are hardly any chances of utilization of such Brahmaputra water in Tibet in appreciable quantity. A good proportion of the winter flow of the Brahmaputra could be diverted to augment the Ganga flow.

### **Abundant Electricity Generation**

The diversion of the Brahmaputra into the Ganga would allow to generate cheap electricity in big quantity. There is a very big drop in elevation between

the Tibetan plateau and the Ganga plain. Such drop is about 5 kilometers. This big drop in elevation could be used for power generation.

### **Cooperation Between China, Nepal and India**

Finding new ways to exploit the vast water resources that might indefinitely remain idle in the remote areas of the Himalayan region could be a challenge before the scientists and technicians in this new century. The diversion of the Brahmaputra through Nepal into the Ganga could be one of such engineering problems.

About two decades ago RONAST had carried out extensive exercise to set up a Regional Center on snow and ice in Nepal. The objective of the proposed CENTER was to develop cooperation among the countries of the Himalayan region for

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*The diametrically opposite spring season hydrological characteristics of the upper reach Brahmaputra and the Ganga make the trans-Himalayan diversion attractive. The prospect of diversion of the Brahmaputra into the Ganga in autumn and winter is also not bad*

glaciological research in the mountain range of the Himalaya. The CENTER was expected to promote sustainable economic and social development studies. As such, it would have consisted largely of application oriented research with both scientifically and socially valid objectives. RONAST, to take this idea a step further, even established relationship with Italian National Research Center (CNR) to carry out jointly Himalayan studies. A big research center equipped with modern facilities has already been set up near the base camp of the Mount Everest at Lobouche.

In future China, Nepal and India could work together to set up a Regional Center on snow and ice. Such centre would have been the most appropriate institution to help the Brahmaputra diversion or similar other studies.

*(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)*



# Democracy in Experiment

**Nepal has spent almost six decades in experimenting various models of constitutions and democracies but the country did not have to pay as high a price in the past as it is paying now**

By **KESHAB POUDEL**

**I**n the new version of democracy (Loktantra), Nepal has entered into a situation where all democratic values, liberal ideals and the precedents set by its own constitutional experiments and practices are in the process of systematic destruction.

By scrapping a democratic and liberal constitution of 1990, the eight party alliance promulgated a new interim constitution, which also adheres to many liberal ideals theoretically but in practice the constitution grants all the power to eight political parties.

Although the preamble and article 2 of the Interim Constitution says that sovereignty and executive power lies in the people, article 38 (1) of the constitution says prime minister shall be appointed on the basis of political consensus of eight political parties. It clarifies that eight political parties include Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, Nepali Congress Democratic, United People's Front, Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandidevi), United Leftist Front and CPN-Maoist.

Even the article 38(3) says the structure of the cabinet and portfolio allocation shall be made under the consensus among eight political parties.

"Nepal has become unique political laboratory of experimenting forms of democracies and constitutions. Now the country has reached to the sixth stage of experimenting a new constitution- a unique nature of constitution which empowers eight political parties in power," said a political analyst. "Interim constitution is neither grant from the monarch nor given by the people in whom the sovereignty is supposed to be vested but it has been promulgated under

the cover of eight political parties' agreement. The constitution has neither the strength of curbing or controlling the arbitrary exercise of executive power nor it has capability to protect any right of a person in the street," said the analyst.

The political leaders of the present change found the previous constitution of 1990 was inadequate and irrelevant to complete the new task before them. A



**People greeting King Gyanendra: Exercising their right** *Annapurna Post*

consensus was built up in the country through them to promulgate a workable rules and norms in the form of constitution. The interim constitution was promulgated but the old habit was hard to die as tendency of defiance of the norms and behavior laid down by the constitution has not changed.

Even this interim constitution is being defied by highest executive functionary of the state when he was offering the King to abdicate for the continuation of institution of monarchy in Nepal.

The Interim Constitution does not give that kind of power to the Prime Minister. In constitutional terms, he cannot enter into such agreement with the King because of the binding provision of the constitution which says the first

session of Constituent Assembly (CA) would decide the fate of monarchy.

The article 159 (3) of the Interim Constitution says the first meeting of Constituent Assembly meeting shall decide the fate of the monarchy on simple majority whatever is written elsewhere.

"The constitution is there but it does not bind the prime minister. Things are running parallel in terms of power exercise. There are such innumerable instances where the provisions of the constitution have been flouted by its signatory parties," said the analyst.

The constitution guarantees freedom of beliefs, speech and expression but that does not guarantee the common people to come out freely with their views. The article 12 of interim constitution says all citizens have the freedom of opinion and expression, freedom to assemble peaceably and without arms. It seems that rights guaranteed by constitution are a

privilege for eight political parties only.

"This is not a time to work following constitution and law but this is time to work under a political agreement," said CPN-Maoist leader Prachanda. "Notwithstanding whatever is written in the constitution, this legislative parliament can declare Nepal as republic."

It is not only the Maoist leader who has been saying this. Even the leader of diehard follower of liberal democracy, prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala has lost the balance. "Feudal elements can help us by fleeing the country before the elections of Constituent Assembly so that Nepal can be declared as a new republic," said Koirala, who has been groomed in liberal democratic values

under his own legendary brother B.P. Koirala.

**Unstable Stand**

Leaders of eight political parties have shown unstable nature in the last one and half year. First they demanded the revival of dissolved House of Representatives. With the pressure of MPs, King Gyanendra was forced to revive the House without citing any provision of the constitution.

They pressured again for the dissolution of revived House of Representatives to pave the way to constitute another Legislative Parliament. "The country is suffering from poverty in everything except the smiles and innocence of the common people. There is poverty everywhere else," said the analyst.

"As the constitution is a norm of behavior in a democratic society, its violation is a symptom of political instability and unstable relations between political forces of the country," said the analyst.

The present legislative parliament knows about the continuation of monarchy and, therefore, royal expenditures are being allocated out of taxpayer's money. "But when a section of people who are also tax payers try to assert their rights to express greetings to the King, they are brutally treated by the cadres of eight party alliance led by extremist party," said the analyst.

It is not in the appearance but the test which convinces the people that the provisions of the constitution are not merely decorative but defective also. The main ingredients of any right created by law or constitution are a guarantee for its exercise. A right without a protective remedy is just a piece of decoration in the paper.

**No Legal Remedy**

The most challenging task of any democratic society is to guarantee for the effective remedy when the right is endangered. That is what people don't have at present.

"A right without effective remedy has no meaning. Nepal has reached into this stage of absurdity and unnatural unity of heterogeneous forces in power. The present political situation has

damaged the ongoing democratic development as well as national integration. The country has entered into modern constitutional process without vitality of continuity," said the analyst.

Judiciary - a credible institution - had been built up step by step and precedents by precedents during the last 60 years of practice under the concept of independence of judiciary. However, it has never been in such a critical stage. The court and judges have never been so harassed and intimidated from the "share holders" of executive power.

People are forced to live with the

said the analyst.

**Wish For Liberal Democracy**

People have a wish to have a liberal democracy and integrated nation. The leaders of present political alliance had multiple choices during the practice of parliamentary democracy to choose leader of their choice. Following the promulgation of interim constitution the choice has been destroyed.

"The rich cultural heritages of Nepal have been perennial sources of nourishment of this sate and the nationhood. What appears in media everyday has, to a large extent, set the tone for dominating idea but that alone



**Political activists: Birthday-bashing**

*Kantipur*

eight political parties' uneasy alliance rules. Anybody who dares to defer with them could be violently dealt with like that of storm troopers in the Nazi era.

The latest example is of the unpleasant incident on the King's birthday. Even an eighty-years-old person was physically assaulted for his defiance of the warning. Several other middle aged persons were hospitalized for attempt to pay respect to King. "Had people abided by our advice, they would not have to face such situation," said home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula.

"In a democracy, it is a fundamental right of anybody to hold republican or monarchist view. The present interim constitution also guarantees that in words which is frequently violated in practice by these incidents and the government does not have any desire to protect the rights of an individual and make the constitution meaningful and respected,"

is not the correct reflection of the mood of the people at large. What is known as the silent majority is there very much alert and enlightened on same basic issues they confront in everyday life," said the analyst.

As it is said the quality of pudding lies in its taste, what the people have been promised by the leaders in power at that time to get into the power have all been belied.

Ministers of major constituents have openly ventilated their dislikes of prime minister's role and behavior. "Prime minister is acting as if this is a majority government of Nepali Congress," said Minister for Sports and Education Pradeep Nepal .

"By all implications, it appears that the eight party alliance is mysteriously inter-weaved and forced to act on certain predetermined strategy," said the analyst.



## GOVERNMENT POLICIES

# Thrust On Polls

The eight-party government has unveiled its first annual policies and programs on July 4 in the parliament. The policies, as usual, touch upon various sectors of socio-economy and promise relief for the people. Naturally, the policies have given singular focus on the holding of free and fair elections for the Constituent Assembly (CA). But the subsequent discussions in the parliament exposed utter lack of unanimity among the alliance partners. At a time when the country is increasingly divided over crucial issues and when the southern plains are in flames, only the unflinching unity among the eight parties can actually steer the nation out of uncertainty and turmoil. However, the apparent lack of trust between the seven parties and the Maoists in the face of continued use of force and intimidation by the latter could disrupt the election process

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

*Maoist chairman Prachanda has said that if the elections of CA do not take place in November, it will lead to catastrophe. "I think if we'll not be able to hold elections, it will be disaster for the country. The whole political scenario can change to a very serious anarchy in this country," Prachanda said in his recent interview with Karan Thapar of India.*

*A few days ago, general secretary of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), Madhav Kumar Nepal said that the CA elections must be held in November at any cost, "There may be obstructions in the polls, bullets may be fired, booths may be looted, but the elections must take place," he said addressing a program by Manmohan Memorial Academy in Kathmandu on July 7.*

*Prime Minister Girija Prasad*

*Koirala himself has said that CA will usher in new peaceful revolution and bring about socio-economic transformation. He said this time CA will be held on time.*

The statements made by the top three leaders underscore the importance of elections in this country. The elections are important both to give legitimacy to the domestic players and recognition in the international community.

As such, the government has given full-fledged emphasis on holding the CA elections on pre-determined date of November 22 in its policies and programs this year.

In its policies the government has also emphasized on the improvement in the security situation and reconstruction of infrastructure

destroyed during the armed conflict.

As PM Koirala said the political change in the country would not be consolidated unless there is economic and social reform through the process of CA.

Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel spelled out the policies and programs at the parliament on behalf of the Prime Minister stating that the government will make efforts to significantly improve the security situation and create proper climate for free and fair election.

And elaborating the government's plans on improving security, Minister Poudel listed that the government will continue to adopt 'carrot and stick' approach – giving due attention to holding negotiations with agitating

parties while also using stringent measures to control crime and violence.

He promised to empower the police and armed police, especially in Terai, to control the violence there. Likewise, special laws have been promised to check highway disturbances.

### Sundry Plans

Apart from CA elections and security situation, the policies and programs have also attempted to address various socio-political and economic issues facing the nation.

It has decided to form a commission to finalize the structure of the federal system.

On the issue of economy, the government has announced to implement the three-year interim plan – which has just recently been approved by National Development Council - focusing on peace building, reconstruction of the infrastructure and economic reforms.

Dealing with specific issues, the policy document states that 'special economic zones' will be set up in the upcoming fiscal year.

The policy document says that in order to achieve the targeted economic growth, the interim government will carry on with the policy to prioritize the agricultural sector, involvement of the private sector and promotion of tourism and foreign employment.

It says that an integrated program for economic and social transformation of the Nepali society will be introduced and scientific land reform initiatives implemented. Once again, like all the past governments, this government, too, has promised to establish an industrial security force.

The policy document further promises to diversify tourism sector, establish more national airports and

one more international airport, and operate the Nepal Airlines Corporation under Public Private Partnership.

It vows to distribute land to the landless people, increase the access of rural people to development facilities and economic activities, rehabilitate ex-Kamaiyas, involve community in education sector, increase school enrollment, expand programs for technical education, restructure health services to provide free services to the needy and strengthen health posts,



PM Koirala: Promises Galore

develop university as research centers and establish an agriculture university.

The policy documents stresses on multilateral investments on hydropower development. It promises new irrigation schemes. Likewise, the government has also vowed to connect five district headquarters by road in the new fiscal year.

A few weeks ago, Ministry of Works and Physical Planning, too, had released its policy document stating that a number of north-south roads would be developed.

In order to give impetus to the local development initiatives, the policy states that local bodies will be managed under political consent. Due to absence of political leadership at local bodies,

huge amount of budget allocated to them have remained unused.

In its policies and programs, the government has said that it aims to 'democratize' the Nepali Army. Rehabilitation and integration of the Maoist army are also in the government's priority list.

Likewise, it reiterates that the government will start process to nationalize the state properties used by King Gyanendra and set up a trust to manage the properties of late King

Kantipur

Birendra and his family.

As Nepal's economy is becoming increasingly dependant on the remittance sent by its overseas workers, the government has decided to sign labor agreements with the host countries in order to guarantee Nepali workers' legal recognition in those countries, which will also increase their salaries and benefits.

As such, Nepal last week signed a labor agreement with the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The agreement was signed in the capital on Tuesday (July 3) by Minister of State for Labor and Transport Management Ramesh Lekhak and visiting Labor Minister from UAE Dr. Ali bin Abdullah al Kaabi. The agreement will establish



legal recognition and status of Nepali workers in UAE. It will entitle them with legal benefits and salaries at par with other foreign workers.

### Confusing Differences

Although the government's policies and programs were unveiled after the cabinet endorsed it following the discussion among eight party leaders, the lawmakers belonging even to the ruling parties rushed to file amendment proposals when it was presented for discussion at the parliament.

Twenty-three amendment proposals have been filed – majority by the Maoist MPs. Taking part in the discussion on policies and programs, which started from Sunday (July 8), Maoist MPs demanded that their cadres killed in “people’s war” should be declared martyrs and wanted Maoist army to be integrated into national army, among others.

Likewise, MP of People’s Front Lilamani Pokharel criticized the policies saying it came without the consent of eight parties. Chitra Bahadur KC, MP of Rastriya Jana Morcha regretted the use of term “prime minister of eight parties” in the policy document.

Maoist leader Dinanath Sharma said that the policies do not adequately address the progressive demands of the people. He said it should have laid down clear policy on republic.

Such contradictions among eight party leaders at a time when the country is in dire need of unified voice to conduct successful CA elections could not have come at worse period.

### Madhes Unrest

The continued killings and violence in Terai are having a disastrous effect on the preparations for the elections.

On July 10, Kantipur daily reported

that in the first three weeks of Asar month, there were only three days when there was no bandh in eastern Terai districts. Various outfits, armed and unarmed, have taken turns to impose bandh at the drop of a hat.

Their unrest has particularly affected districts such as Saptari, Siraha, Mahottari, Rautahat, Sarlahi and Dhanusha. Sunsari and Morang, too, have been affected.

Reports say there are one dozen armed outfits active in the region now. They include the three factions of

Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha; Terai Cobra; Terai Bagi; Janabadi Ganatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha; Madhesi Tiger; Royal defense army SuPa (far west); Kranti Dal; Rastriya Army Nepal; Nepal Defense Army; Nepal Janatantrik Party etc. These apart, even criminal gangs working in border regions have started to increase their influence in places like Birgunj.

As promised by the government in its policies and programs, it must improve the security situation in Madhes region before it can think of holding the elections in a free, fair and fearless manner.

It is no longer true that improvement in behavior of Maoists and their affiliate Young Communist League (YCL), alone can create



**Violence:** No respite

conducive atmosphere for the elections. The violent elements of Madhes must be tamed before the poll preparations can proceed.

This much was made amply clear by the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Bhoj Raj Pokharel. While welcoming the announcement of elections date by the government, Pokharel had stated that creating favorable political and security atmosphere is also equally important.

Since the eyes of the whole world will be focused on Nepal as it moves closer towards the CA elections, all the political actors of the country must rise above their partisan interests to ensure that the nation will pass this historic test with flying colors. ■

## VISIT OF CHINESE DELEGATION

# Neighborly Concern

**As Nepal is preparing to hold the elections for Constituent Assembly, a high level delegation from China comes to comprehend the situation**

By KESHAB POUDEL

**A**t a time when international community has been showing their interest in the forthcoming elections for Constituent Assembly, China, Nepal's northern neighbor, too has shown its neighborly concern about Nepal's overall situation and prospects of holding the polls.

Since Nepal shares more than 1400 kilometers long border with China, Nepal's political instability and worsening situation will have far reaching consequences in Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. This is why China keenly watches political development in Nepal. China feels any foreign interference in Nepal as a direct threat to security of Tibet.

Led by vice president of China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) professor Li Shaoxian, the high level Chinese delegation shared this concern with officials, political leaders and member of civil society.

"China wants to see politically stable and economically prosperous sovereign and independent Nepal. China will oppose any move by any outside force to intervene in the internal affairs of Nepal. Nepalese people will decide their fate through the elections of Constituent Assembly and China is ready support Nepal in this direction," said vice president professor Li. CICIR is an internationally acknowledged international comprehensive research institute of China with top scholars and experts of various subjects in its realm.

During their five days stay, vice president Li's delegation met with prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, foreign minister Sahana Pradhan and other high level officials, political leaders of major political parties, elections commissioners and civil society members. They also visited Maoist cantonment.

Although Chinese government is yet to officially recognize CPN-Maoists, various Chinese delegations representing non-governmental level have already held a series of meeting with Maoist leadership and Maoist leaders, too, have visited China. Professor Li's delegation also met with Maoist leader Prachanda



**Regmi and Li sign agreement: For mutual benefit**

and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai.

Li's delegation - which visited Nepal under the invitation of China Study Center - also went to Lumbini, birth place of Gautam Buddha.

As Nepal's stability is still under threat, Chinese have shown serious concerns over the ongoing political activities. "Today, Nepal needs China's all round unflinching support than ever before and it is firmly there. China's strong support to Nepal has been declared once again by the Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Mr. Zheng Xianglin in a recent interview to Nepal Weekly. Stressing that there is no change in the Chinese policy towards Nepal announced by its Deputy Prime Minister Chen-Yi in 1962, ambassador Zhen said that 'When Nepali people face difficulties and pain, we will take that as ours; especially when Nepali people face some difficulties to uphold sovereignty

and territorial integrity. Any foreign intervention in Nepal will not be tolerated by China.' This manifestation of the Representative of our great northern neighbor conveys in clearest term that Nepal-China relationship is inseparably bound together," said Madan Regmi, chairman of China Study Center, Nepal. "We have over 2000 years old cultural bondage. Buddha and his teachings have been the cardinal source and strength of our cultural relations."

During their visit, CICIR delegation signed agreement with China Study Center for academic exchange and cooperation. Chairman of China Study Center (CSC), Nepal Madan Regmi and vice present of CICIR professor Li Shaoxian signed an agreement for academic exchanges and cooperation between them.

CSC and CICIR agreed in sharing the

common goal of mutually strengthening academic research capabilities of two institutions and promoting the traditional neighborly friendship and bilateral cooperation through consultation based on equal footing.

Among others, CSC and CICIR agreed to exchange delegation from each other sides every alternative year. The agreement stipulates CSC and CICIR will invite each other to the international conferences, symposium and seminars organized by them. Under the agreement, CSC and CICIR will hold joint research program over the issues of common concern.

With the restoration of Loktantra, a number of governmental and non-governmental delegations from China visited Nepal. All of them stressed the need to make Nepal prosperous, independent and sovereign. That is also the pre-requisite for the security of China. ■



## “Maternal Health Situation Can’t Improve Without Cooperation From Male”

-Dr. Ram Hari Aryal

*It surprises many but there are so many factors which are contributing to its decline. First of all, the growing number of migration, second is separation of spouse and higher awareness level among the male as well as change in marriage pattern.*

*DR. RAM HARI ARYAL, Chief of Population Division of Ministry of Health, is a well known population expert. He has worked as a secretary at the Population Committee of House of Representatives and in the National Planning Commission. Dr Aryal has done his Ph. D from Australia National University. Dr. Aryal spoke to SPOTLIGHT on various issues on the eve of World Population Day. Excerpts:*

**As Nepal has been celebrating the World Population Day since last many years and it has been conducive various population control measures, what implications they have had in overall population growth?**

Yes we have been celebrating the World Population Day since 1987. After the world's population reached 5 billion and most of them concentrated in developing countries, UN announced July 11 as the World Population Day with aim to generate awareness, and involve stakeholders in developing countries. Every year, we celebrate world population day with various slogans.

**What is the special message of this year?**

As population is a multiple and diversified issue, this year we are celebrating the population day with a slogan of Men as a Partner of Maternal Health. This is a fact that men have to play important role in the maternal health. At a time when men's involvement is very negligible in maternal health in countries like Nepal, any program encouraging male in maternal health will be significant. One cannot change maternal health situation without the participation and involvement of male.

**What is the state of maternal mortality rate now?**

According to recently published Demographic and Health Survey 2006 maternal mortality has drastically declined to 281 per 10,000 births. It was 539 in 1996. As the maternal mortality rate has declined, there is also a need to involve more men in maternal health to sustain it. We will conduct various programs to involve men as well as families in the maternal health. Maternal mortality is not only a responsibility of women but family as a whole need to be a partner. In our country, number of female is little bit higher than male. In this context, there is a need for a balanced development. Just giving reservation to women is not enough for their overall development but what is required is to empower and educate them.

**What is the state of fertility?**

Total fertility rate has dramatically declined from 4.6 births per women in 1996 to 3.1 births in 2006. This is a very good trend - as a drop of one and half births per women in the past ten years. The challenge now is how to maintain it. In the year 2001, the total fertility rate was 4.1 but the decline started from 2001. The fertility is still higher in rural areas with 3.3 births and 2.1 in urban areas. This is a very exemplary progress where a child was reduced in the period of just five years.

**How has it declined in such a manner?**

It surprises many but there are so many factors which are contributing to its decline. First of all the growing number of migration, second is separation of spouse and higher awareness level among the male as well as change in marriage pattern. We are now further analyzing the new trend. We want to know why it declined sharply.

**What are the major challenges now?**

Our challenges are now to maintain it. Along with taking the programs to rural areas, we need to involve all kinds of people in the process. Our experiences have already shown that this kind of progress cannot be sustained without active involvement of people in the grass-root level.

**How do you involve grass root people?**

In this process, we have already formulated population perspective plan which is in the process of implementation. The plan will involve all the stakeholders in population management program. After the implementation of Population Perspective Plan, our program will be rural oriented and focus will be given for the involvement of the people in grass root level. From inception to monitoring and evaluation, involvement and inclusion of concerned stakeholders at grass root level are necessary.

**How do you see the composition of population?**

As Nepal's population composition consists of overwhelming number of adolescents and youth, Nepal's population growth will be higher for another 20 to 30 years. Because of relatively high fertility rate in the past, a large proportion of Nepal's population is under the age of 15. According to survey, 41 percent is under 15 years old with 13 percent under age 5. Next 20 to 30 years is going to be a period of population momentum. Our indicator shows that we need to work vigorously to achieve our target in the population management. Of course, there is a major challenge but we need to use these challenges as opportunity.

**Every one is talking about the need of involvement of rural population, what programs do you have to implement them?**

How we can involve rural population in our program will determine future of Nepal's population growth as we know the fertility rate in hills is still high at 4.1 births per woman. If we are able to involve rural population, the present rate of 3.1 of fertility rate will not reverse back again. We have seen this kind of situation in Bangladesh where the fertility was declined drastically and stalled for 15-20 years. According to a theory, once the fertility declines, it will not reverse back. It will further decline or remain stalled for years.

**What is the way to sustain it?**

If we are able to stall the present fertility rate this will be major achievement for us. It will further decline because of change in the family relationship. There have already been perceptible changes in traditional family relation pattern. The preference of son against daughter is gradually reducing. The trend of going overseas for education and work has also brought the change in family relations. That change will definitely bring change in fertility. Another positive side is that the use of contraceptive has also increased. Nearly one in two currently married women are using a method of contraception with 44 percent women using a modern method. According to survey, nearly all Nepalese women and men know of at least one method of contraception.

**How do you see the situation of child health?**

In maternal child health, we have made tremendous achievement and we are now in a position to meet Millennium Development Goals. Our immunization program is very successful and there is growing awareness among the population about the need to immunize the children. This also assures male and female that they don't need many children.

**How do you give general health service?**

Now our challenge is to provide quality service rural areas. Because of increase in access to health, one can see change in health indicators. We need to sustain change and make it more sustainable.

**What will be the implications of growing number of population?**

If our population will continue to grow at the rate of 2.5 percent, Nepal's population will be doubled in next 30 years. We have not done any analysis on what the carrying capacity of Nepal is in terms of population. It is necessary to conduct research on how much population will be sustained in given availability of resources.

**What is the carrying capacity of Nepal?**

After completing the research, we can say how many people will be sustained by our natural resources. For example, the population of the valley is over 3 million and it has made the valley overcrowded. If we are unable to manage the



population growth in the valley, it will create major problems for us. To reduce migration to the valley, we need to build infrastructures in other parts of Nepal also. We have to develop opportunities in different parts of Nepal to retain the local population. When we are talking about new Nepal, we need to expand our opportunities outside the valley. If people get opportunity in other parts of the country, people will not come to valley.

**How supportive is the present health system in maternal health?**

Although our survey report shows that only a small number of women have access to health centers during the time of delivery, more and more health centers continue to expand in the rural parts of Nepal. Only handful of women gets anti-natal and post natal care. Even in such a situation, our maternal mortality rate has declined. If women have more access to health centers, the situation will be much different. We need to generate awareness. The health awareness in rural areas has tremendously increased as people understand the need to go to health centers in case of problems. Thanks to increase in the access to health services, we have seen the present change in fertility, maternal mortality and infant mortality. We have health volunteers, health staffs and doctors in the rural areas. We have been launching various programs involving the community.

**Why is men's role important?**

We have not done the research on involvement of male partners in maternal issues but it is still low. Men have to take care of women during child bearing.

**How do you see the rate of delivery at the health posts?**

Delivery at health facilities need to increase. This will result in low casualty. Nepal still has high prevalence of early marriage and there is a social pressure of early child. If a woman gives birth in younger age, maternal mortality as well as child mortality is higher. We need to encourage people to have late marriage and there is a need to discourage early child. ■

*In maternal child health, we have made tremendous achievement and we are now in a position to meet Millennium Development Goals. Our immunization program is very successful*



## SLC RESULTS

# Gain or Pain?

**Despite passing of more than 58 percent, this year's School Leaving Certificate too is not a gain for all. Many see it still as a pain**

By **NIRAKAR POUDEL**

**F**or Denis Karki, 17, a student of GEMS, a reputed private school of Kathmandu, it was the happiest day of his life. He secured distinction in the School Leaving Certificate Examination.

However, the result did not produce a moment of joy to many. For Anita Baral, 18, of Jhapa district, 500 miles east of capital and Sabita Poudel, 17, of Kalakkhola of Syangja district, 250 miles west of capital, the result came as a shadow of death. After failing to pass examination, Baral ended her life by taking poison and Poudel killed herself by hanging in kitchen ceiling.

According to SLC Examination Board, 274,210 regular students appeared in the SLC examinations this year, but only 58.6 percent were successful to pass the exam.

According to the results, which were published late night on Thursday (July 5), 58.64 percent of regular examinees have passed the exams along with 31.5 percent of the exempted ones. In total, there were over 352,000 students who appeared this year's SLC. Last year, only 46.51 percent of regular examinees had passed the SLC test.

As per the Office of the Controller of Examination (OCE), Sanothimi, 56,153 students have passed in first division; 89,662 in second division and 7789 in third division. Likewise, over 7000 students have passed securing distinction marks. Like in the past year, the OCE has not published the names of top ten students. The results of this year's SLC have been published in daily

newspapers including Gorkhapatra, The Kathmandu Post and Annapurna Post. They are also made available in websites of the ministry of education and department of education ([www.moe.gov.np](http://www.moe.gov.np); [www.doe.gov.np](http://www.doe.gov.np)), among others. Likewise, they can also be availed through SMS to 1400 number of Nepal Telecom. This year's SLC had been held on April 4-12.

"It was a day of jubilation," said Karki who secured distinction. For students of private boarding schools like Karki, SLC examination is no more iron gate but for the students from government schools like Poudel and Baral, SLC is a totally different story.

"This is the best result in the last few years," said Minister of Sports and Education Pradeep Nepal. "We still need to improve it."

Many education experts claimed that the quality of education has improved in Nepal in recent years. Their assertion is based on the trend in increase in proportion of the students who pass "Iron Gate" in recent years.

"This claim is a complete illusion because the majority of the passed students are from private schools. If we analyze the performance of the government schools the situation is gloomy. This vast difference in the performances of the government schools and the private schools has raised a big question," said an educationist.

It is said that the better outcome in the SLC examination this year may be attributed to the fact that the syllabus was watered down. This year only the

syllabus of class 10 was included for the examination in contrast to previous years when syllabus from both the class 9 and 10 were included.

The criteria to pass the exam were eased by allowing grace mark of 5 for those who pass at least two subjects. It seems that only the private schools were favored by these new rules. Graded English Medium School (GEMS), for example, achieved outstanding result this year with 128 students out of 189 students securing distinction and the rest passing with the first division.

The government schools all over the country were still unable to improve their results.

Experts argue that the government must step forward to improve the quality of education in the government schools and make it as competitive as private schools. Although the government invests fair amount of money on education, the reason for the government schools to produce unsatisfactory outcome are politics that prevail in the schools and lack of well qualified teachers.

Despite the alluring prospects in the government schools, most of teachers of these schools are involved in politics and are dispassionate about teaching. When inquired about the number of days required to complete the course, a teacher of a private school replied that at least 180 days are required. If we take into account the number of strikes and bandhs, these minimum numbers of days are not covered.

Private schools usually compensate these bandhs and strikes by taking classes on other holidays and conducting coaching classes. On the other hand, government schools remain closed even when private schools are opened due to the obstruction of the teachers demanding better facilities or fulfillments of other unnecessary demands.

In the rural parts of Nepal, there are no qualified teachers in the secondary levels. Recently, there was news in the media about the teacher of primary levels

coaching those of the secondary level.

There were talks about setting two different boards for the government schools and the private schools if the quality of education in the government school is not improved. Currently, the course studied by a student of a private school, who has access to the Internet, all the technologies, libraries and different sources of information, and a

affect education. The education should be declared peace zone," said a teacher.

"Although the private schools have achieved excellent results, some schools have put unnecessary pressure on students by conducting classes' up to twelve hours per day. Such unnecessary workloads have prevented students from social interactions, sports and other basic entertainment," added another teacher.



**Examinees:** Searching their numbers *Annapurna Post*

student of a remote village who is totally unaware of computers and other technologies is same.

Is it a fair competition? In fact, it is obvious that the competition is not fair. To make the competition impartial either the quality of education in the private institutions should be lessened or the government school should also be provided with the same access to information and technologies as the private schools. Since, the former is a ridiculous option, the only alternative is to upgrade quality of government schools.

"The overall result this year is very promising. The result can be improved even more if these frequent bandhs don't

If the classes are not disturbed by strikes in upcoming days, the pressure on the students might lessen and schools can focus on developing student's personality and other activities.

This disparity between the quality of education in the private and the government institutions must be addressed very soon. If this issue is not taken seriously, there will always be pain for one group of the students and gain for the other group. The government must take immediate action to figure out the way that will be in favor of both the groups. If the government had addressed this issue a few years back, then Anita Baral and Sabita Poudel might not have committed suicide. ■

## WEST SETI TO START BY YEAR END

Construction of the 750-MW West Seti, which will be the biggest power plant in Nepal, is expected to start by the end of 2007.

The construction of the mega project located in Doti district, far-western region, will be completed in five years at an estimated cost of USD 1.2 billion, Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS) said quoting officials at the construction company West Seti Hydro Limited (WSHL), a subsidiary of Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC) of Australia.

Nepal government has 15 percent share in West Seti project being financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and three Chinese banks. Under the project agreement (PA) signed in June 1997 the Nepal government had assured to grant all licenses to WSHL for the development, construction, ownership and operation of the project, including generation and transmission licenses for a period of 30 years from the date of issue of the license.

The electricity generated from West Seti will be exported to India. Nepal government will receive revenue for the 10 percent of the power generated as royalty payment.

A power purchase agreement (PPA) with a term of 25 years, to be effective from the start of commercial operation, was signed by WSHL with Power Trade Corporation of India in 2003. WSHL managing director William Bultitude said the project would be handed over to Nepal government after 30 years. (Courtesy: nepalnews.com) ■



# Mr. Moriarty, Take Note

- By Madhav K. Rimal

James F. Moriarty, the US envoy to Nepal, is perhaps one of the rare envoys who enjoys creating ripples in the troubled waters. US envoys generally belong to a special class. They not only carry a lot of weight, they carry a lot of burden also. As the lone super power, at the moment, and undeniably the most powerful and influential nation in the world, if the US thinks she has the authority to do what she pleases, who can stop her. George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq is the example. Morality and human values don't mean anything in politics and are sacrificed at the snap of the little finger. No ghost need come from hell to tell us that all big and powerful countries think only of safeguarding and furthering their own interests. They won't bat their eyelids even to send thousands of innocent men and women in their prime to their untimely and cruel deaths if it serves their purpose.

One must be able to understand that, in the present age, all envoys carry out the plans, programs and directives of their governments. The days when envoys used to declare wars are no more. As such, Moriarty has done nothing more than successfully pursuing his government's policies. And we think he deserves a pat on the back. We must understand that unlike our government, the US government doesn't make policies on the spur of the moment. Neither do their envoys try to further the political party's interests that appoint them. In our country, our politicians think their parties are bigger and more important than their nation. That's why there is such a big tug o' war in the appointment of the envoys.

Does one need any further explanation about the intentions and integrities of Nepali politicians? Moriarty, we think, is an excellent representative of his country. He has

been working in the best interests of his country. Instead of finding fault with his behavior, if we analyze the workings and behavior of our government objectively, perhaps, we would not be prejudiced against Moriarty. The total absence of a strong and stable foreign policy that safeguarded our national interests and an efficient and honest machinery to implement it, has turned our foreign service into a lucrative institution for wining and dining and luxurious life style.

Even more important is how many of our envoys possess a personality that can impress and influence the host government? Needless to state, Moriarty belongs to a different class. It is, indeed, true that the present US policy towards Nepal might not be to our liking nor beneficial to our national interest. But we must understand no nation makes policies to please or benefit others. If the United States is over-solicitous to maintain their unique global hegemony and searching ways and means to further strengthen it, shouldn't it be viewed as natural? If they think their closer relations with India would help them achieve their objective, who are we to blame them? Of course, they need not have sacrificed poor Nepal's interests to the extent of endangering her integrity. But they must have their constraints, their *quid pro quo* with India. However, we think they have backed a wrong horse. An old American diplomat friend I met recently in Washington D.C. had confided to this scribe that the Bush government has been ill-advised. The new democratic government that is sure to take the reins will definitely make drastic changes in the policies. "India," he had told me, "cannot catch up with China in another hundred years, even if the United States (read Bush government) opened its nuclear arsenal

to her. The gap between them will keep on widening as China races to become a super power." Moriarty or the US government could indeed have influenced India not to drive Nepal to the extent that she might not be able to cope with the fissiparous tendencies generated by India's destabilizing Nepal. But her own ambitions must have outweighed her interest in Nepal's solidarity. This scribe did take up the issue of India's aiding and abetting Maoists' violent incursions against Nepal from the sanctuaries in India with Moriarty's predecessors, which was blatantly violating the US President's avowal to fight against global terrorism. But they just smiled and shrugged their shoulders. It was evident by their behavior that the US government would do nothing that might antagonize India. Granted that Nepal's utility as a window on China had evaporated long back. But pushing a small, poor and helpless country to be disintegrated by its giant and mighty neighbor would, in no way, augment American stature in the world as a champion for democracy and the weak. This will only drive them to their only succor- China. And as far Nepal is concerned, the Chinese would not leave Nepal totally friendless. If in the changed context, the Chinese might have to think twice or thrice to maintain their traditional stance, even if Nepal's satellite politicians don't solicit the Chinese, the Nepali people are fully confident China will come to their rescue whenever needed. So, Moriarty do take note and don't pursue a policy that won't serve you for long. Because, it is full of potential dangers of not only disturbing peace in the region but also driving the millions of Hindus to the fold of terrorism with the possibility of joining hands with millions of Islamic terrorists. ■

## WORLD POPULATION DAY

## Men In Maternal Health

At a time when maternal mortality rate is still higher in rural areas, encouraging male's role in maternal health will be significant

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although maternal mortality rate and women fertility rate has dramatically declined in the last one decade, the status of women health is still low. Incidents of early marriage and early child bearing are still rampant in rural parts of Nepal resulting in high child and maternal mortality rate.

With the low literacy rate and rampant prevalence of traditional thinking, men's participation in the efforts to reduce maternal mortality rate is very negligible, despite certain change

in pattern and progress; men still have decisive position in the households.

As long as men cannot take part in the maternal health, it is impossible to reduce maternal mortality rate. Realizing the need to involve the men in the maternal health, World Population day chose the theme "Men as Partner in Maternal Health."

"This is very timely theme in the country like ours where men's involvement is further required to reduce the maternal mortality rate. In urban

areas, the situation is gradually changing as men are actively taking part in the health of women but the overwhelming majority of rural people consider it is just female role," said Dr. Ramhari Aryal, chief of Population Division, Ministry of Population and Health.

Man as father, husband and head of the family can make a lot of difference in bringing change in the social and family system. In a country where women are generally less educated than men at all levels of education, with a median of less than a year of schooling compared with 2.8 percent years among males.

According to Demographic and Health Survey, an overwhelming majority of births in the five years before the survey were delivered at home (81 percent). In this bleak scenario, the participation of men and family as a whole is required to improve the maternal mortality situation. ■

विश्व जनसंख्या दिवस-२०६४

(आषाढ २७, २०६४)

World Population Day-2007

(July 11, 2007)

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"Men as Partners in Maternal Health"



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Men at work  
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# Monarchy And Economy

Journalist Surya Thapa discusses the issue of economic relevancy of monarchy

By A CORRESPONDENT

As the elections for Constituent Assembly approaches, the debate over future of monarchy intensifies. The leaders, workers and intellectuals ideologically affiliated to eight political parties have been pursuing their agenda saying that there is no utility of monarchy in Nepal.

In a series of debates over monarchy or republic, many books have already been released. As monarchists are completely denied the right to express their views, the books written by republicans particularly followers of communists are dominating the market.

Although it is suppressed and somehow neutralized because of King Gyanendra's personal actions and activities, there is still a powerful opinion in favor of monarchy. At a time when there is physical threat to those who declare themselves a monarchist, recently published opinion poll conducted by Interdisciplinary Analysts showed that 38 percent respondents want the monarchy because it is a part of their tradition. Of course, individual monarchs have their own right and wrong doings but the institution of monarchy has a long history in Nepal. From Kirat to Lichhavi, Thakuri and Malla to now Shah, all dynasties have contributed to bring stability in Nepal protecting Nepal's own identity. In a country where the modern institutions are yet to be established, the ethos of monarchy have long been associated with Nepal and is difficult to erase from the mind of people.

In a series of drives for republic, various articles and books are being

published in Nepal showing how monarchy has exploited Nepal in terms of politics as well as economy. Surya Thapa, editor of *Buddhabar*, a weekly tabloid ideologically affiliated to CPN-UML, has published his third book on monarchy. This is about the economy of monarchy and its utility.

The book is first of its kinds, which produces all properties enjoyed by monarch, kings and royal family members. It says the properties accumulated by Royal family members now exceed billions of rupees. Based on official documents, this book is very interesting to read.

Well researched, the book also reveals many important things including the efforts made by King Gyanendra to transfer the property owned by his two brothers including the family members of late King Birendra.

As a republican himself, one cannot except the pro-monarchical stand from

## Rajtantrako Artharajniti (Monarchy's Politics of Economy)

By: Surya Thapa

Published by: Pairavi

Book House, Putali Sadak,  
Kathmandu,

Telephone 4430823

Price: Rs. 250.00 and

Rs. 1000.00 for  
hard copy

Pages: 278

author Surya Thapa. Like in his previous two books, Thapa argues that monarchy is a burden to Nepal in terms of economy. According to Thapa, monarchs in Nepal have accumulated property worth billions of rupees by controlling industries, among others. Kings of Nepal also occupy public places including forest and religious shrines.

Although monarchy is a feudal institution and it might have exploited economically, no one can deny its role in national integration as well as bringing political stability in a country like Nepal with multi-ethnic and multi-cultural setting.

In many countries of the world, abolition of monarchy resulted in prolonged anarchy and instability. In some countries, monarchs were replaced by more tyrannical and authoritarian rulers. Downfall of Afghanistan began after overthrow of King Jahir Shaha. Similarly, abolition of monarchy in Cambodia resulted in upsurge of Pol Pot regime. In Iran, religious Mullahs replaced moderate monarchy. There are many cases where elected presidents, too, accumulated billion of dollars worth of properties.

Compared with the elected president, monarchy has one advantage as it represents the institution with a long history and tradition. In many incidents in South Asia, many small nations have lost their identity after removal of monarchy. The removal of monarchy has also resulted in prolonged political instability. Afghanistan is a good example where deposed King was summoned to legitimize new republican constitution.

In Cambodia, the communist ruler Hun Sen - who overthrew monarch - restored it hoping to bring stability in the country.

Thapa's book gives a very good insight about how much properties monarch and Royal family members hold in this country. He also shows how much budget was increased following the Royal take over of February 1, 2005. It is an interesting read.

## Indian Firm 'Bags' Arun III, Upper Karnali

Indian firm GMR Infrastructure has reportedly bagged the Upper Karnali (UK) and Arun III hydroelectricity projects, while it is expecting to also bag Upper Marshyangdi II and III, reports *The Himalayan Times daily*.

The company has plans to generate 952 megawatt of power in Nepal and market it in India through Power Trading Corporation (PTC). The report to this effect, filed from Mumbai, appeared in July 5 edition of the Economic Times. While the installed capacity of UK and Arun III is 300 MW and 402 MW respectively, that of Upper Marshyangdi II and III put together is 250 W.

Both the export-oriented hydro electricity projects (Arun III and UK) are to be implemented on a Build Operate Own Transfer (BOOT) model for a 30-year period that includes construction.

Under the conditions, which have come to light earlier, ownership will be handed over to Nepal after three decades. Besides the free power, Nepal also retains the right to purchase up to 10 percent of the power generated at the projects, the report further said. GMR has offered Nepal 33 percent free equity in the UK, apart from 7.5 percent free energy.

The proposal also includes two and a half years to prepare for the project and four and a half years for construction, including financing with debt-equity of 75:25.

In Arun III, the company will share 15 percent of the power in the first 15 years of operation and 10 percent for the remainder of the license period. The report has quoted sources, saying, "The Ministry has decided to award the hydropower projects to GMR, at the recommendation of the evaluation committee."

But spokesperson at the Ministry of Water Resources Anup Kumar Upadhyaya, temporized when asked to comment on the latest development merely saying, "I am not aware of such a decision." It may be recalled that the task force headed by former secretary Bhanu Prasad Acharya had recommended that GMR be awarded the two projects in a report submitted to the government two months ago. ■

## 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
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- Simple Convictions My Struggle for Peace and Democracy Girija Prasad Koirala\2006.....Rs. 250.00
- 18 Uncertainty on a Himalayan Scale, Thompson \Warburation \ Hatley \2007..... Rs. 250.00



# “We Will Not Tolerate Interference On Nepal’s Internal Affairs

-Prof. Li Shaoxian

*LISHAOXIAN, vice-president of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), an internationally acknowledged comprehensive research institute of China with top scholars and experts of various subjects in its realm was recently in town under an invitation of China Study Center (CSC). During his visit to Nepal, Li met prime minister, senior ministers, leaders of political parties and member of civil society and traveled to Lumbini and Chitwan. Li briefly spoke to SPOTLIGHT at a diner hosted in his honor by China Study Center. Excerpts:*

**How do you see the Nepal-China relations?**

The relations between the two countries are very excellent and cordial. Our relation is based on respect to each other’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference on each other’s internal affairs.

**If some country interferes in internal affairs of Nepal, how will China respond?**

China will oppose foreign interference in the internal affairs of any country including Nepal. China believes that people of Nepal are capable to solve their problems by their own. We will not tolerate interference on Nepal’s internal affairs by any country of the world. Whenever China was weak in the past, one or other forces interfered in internal affairs of its neighbor.

**What is your observation about Nepalese leaders?**

Nepalese leaders and Nepalese people give high value to the relations with China. Nepal-China relations is centuries old and the people to people contact between the two countries is centuries old. I am very happy to say that Nepalese people and political leaders as

a whole have understanding about this.

**As Nepal, which shares more than 1500 kilometers long border with China, has been passing through a very chaotic and unstable situation, how does China look at it?**

As a friendly neighbor, China always wants to see politically stable and economically prosperous Nepal. As Nepal is heading to hold the elections for Constituent Assembly, there will be peace after that. Sooner the stability and normalcy return, better for the region and Nepal. Nepal’s instability will have long term implications in its border with Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. My observation is that Nepalese people have capability and strength to settle all their own internal problems and bring back normalcy in the country.

**How will China support in holding elections of Constituent Assembly in Nepal?**

Chinese government and Chinese people are ready to support Nepal to successfully hold the elections for Constituent Assembly. When our delegation met prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, leaders of other political parties, all of them expressed their hope that China will support Nepal to hold the elections. As Chinese government and Chinese people always want to see prosperous and stable Nepal, we will support all the efforts made by Nepal to achieve peace and stability.

**Do you see possibility of holding elections in Nepal?**

After our discussion with Nepalese high level officials, leaders of political parties and members of civil society, I got the impression that all are committed to hold the elections.

**As Qinghai- Lhasa railway has brought tremendous change in**



**Tibetan Autonomous Region, how the country in the region can benefit from it?**

It brings immense economic prosperity to Tibetan Autonomous region linking it with the rest of China. This railway will also help Nepal diversify its trade. Once the railway is extended up to the border, Nepal will have another alternative route for international trade. Even your political leaders and ministers expressed the satisfaction over extension of railway in Tibet.

**What is the purpose of your visit?**

One of the purposes of our visit is to foster people to people contact and to see overall situation of Nepal including learning something about holding the elections of Constituent Assembly. As I have already mentioned, we met prime minister, foreign minister and leaders of all major political parties and civil society members.

**What is your impression about Nepal?**

This is a very beautiful country and people are very nice and humble. ■



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