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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Aug 17-23, 2007

Truth & Reconciliation

Debate Over

Modality

Maoist : At The Crossroad
Encounter : Raghu Panta

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प्रस्तुत छ...

रु. १,०००/- मा लोटस बचत खाता*

...अब मात्र



Lotus

बचत खाता



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

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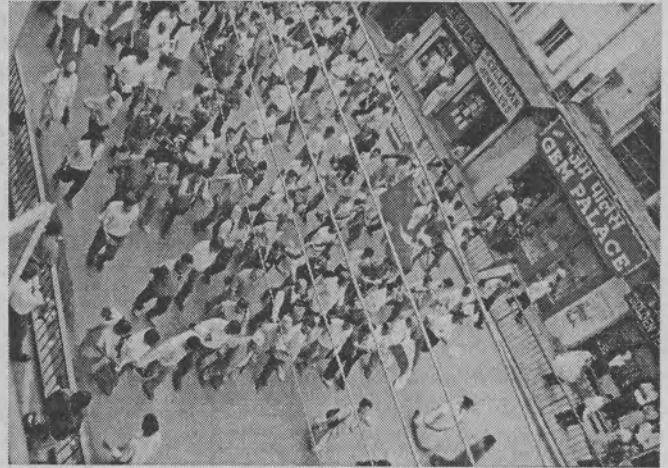
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COVER STORY: Truth And Reconcilitaion

Nepal enters into next phase of peace process with debates on truth and reconciliation. But question remains about the modality of the process

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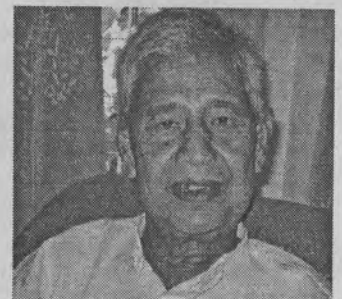


MAOISTS: Walking A Tightrope

Prachanda walks a tightrope by trying to strike balance between peace process and revolutionary zeal

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Rabindra Nath Sharma
President of RPP-Nepal,
Sharma talks about the
direction of Nepali
politics



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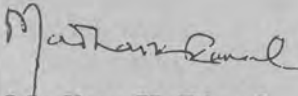
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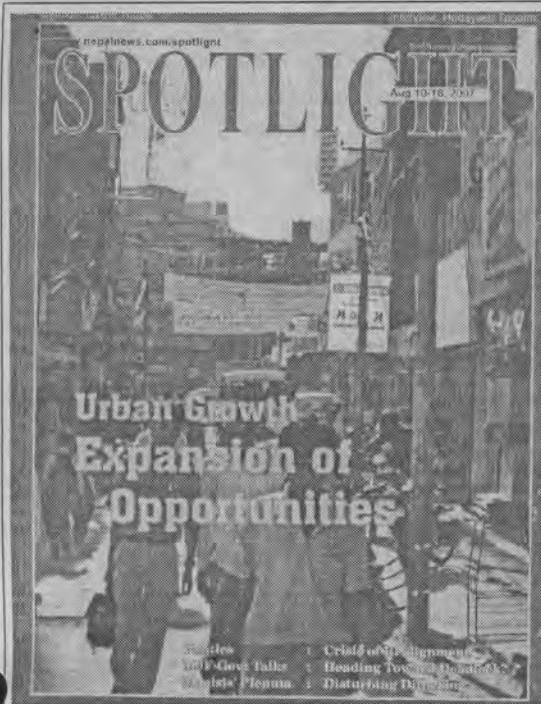
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Election to the Constituent Assembly in Nepal is gradually turning into a mirage. Except the Election Commission and the International Community, no Nepali politician seems keen about the elections. Senior politicians dreaming to hold the reigns of the government cannot tour their constituencies in the terai because of insecurity in their very lives. They are in a desperate situation not knowing what to do. Their heavy reliance on alien support and patronage and failure to establish a strong popular base has pushed them in a very difficult situation. Moreover, the wakening up of the Madhesis and Tharus in the terai and the hinterland, Dalits and the Janjatis in the hills, after centuries of discriminations and exploitations by the upper castes, the traditional ruling class is facing a very grim situation. The days of their supremacy and domination are over. If they want to survive they have to share power. Even the Maoist leadership is getting nervous. A rebel Maoist leader told this scribe that their bravado was nothing but sham. Since their grip in the terai and the hills has considerably loosened and their main alien support almost diminished, they want to hold on their gains tightly. And that is the main reason, they have given enough ropes and leverage to their cadres and the YCL. They seem much perturbed by the continuing strong stance of the Americans against them. This leader was very emphatic when he said that the Maoists were willing to go to any extent to win the American favor. Even Prachanda's statements that they would not quit the government and neither boycott the elections are clear manifestations of their severely weakened position and desperation. It is even reported that the smaller split in their leadership is on the verge of making a much bigger one.

The dwindling authority of prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala because of his failing health has brought the administration almost to a standstill. It has put a big question mark on the restoration of peace and normalcy in the country, the *sine qua non* for holding the elections. A heterogeneous cabinet of eight parties with different ideologies, each pulling its own way, has very badly affected even the day to day administration. The government has not only become a 'Tamasha' but a laughing stock for the world. But Nepali politicians are neither embarrassed nor worried. As long all those fortunate who are either in power or holding any position of profit are happy making hay while the sun shines, they care a damn what happens to the country. And the prime minister can only watch helplessly as "the dog in the manger." Even nature has not approved the workings and policies of this government. When time is so precious, the unprecedented floods that have taken away hundreds of lives and make millions homeless and displaced, will badly affect the preparations for the elections for at least the next couple of months. After that *Dashain* and *Tihar* and then comes *Mangsir 6*. How is the Elections Commission going to perform? By wishing only no body achieves anything. We do urgently want an elected representative democratic government. We did away with one man's authoritarian rule not to be subjected to non-representative eight party dictatorship. We have only jumped from the frying pans into the fire. This eight party government does not want elections. With the persisting lawlessness, chaos and anarchy aggravated by unsympathetic nature and various groups openly carrying lethal arms, no government can hold the elections. And, if they try, they will invite blood bath. However, we must have a strong working government if we want to stop further destabilization and anarchy and hold elections to the Constituent Assembly. The only way left for us is to form a National Government approved by all- the *Madheshis*, the *Dalits*, the *Janjatis* and *Tharus* and of course, the political parties. And this National Government has to be nominated by a Round Table conference of the representatives of all the peoples of Nepal. If this cannot happen, let the Savior take care. And in the present circumstances, the Savior seems to be only the Nepal Army. As such all patriotic Nepalis and good friends of Nepal have to unflinchingly render maximum help and cooperation to Nepal Army if they want to save the poor country from the catastrophe looming on the horizon.


Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



New Opportunities

The growth of urban centers is a sign of economic development of any country ("Opening Up New Opportunities" SPOTLIGHT August 10). The cover story on the rapid urbanization in Nepal also provides that same proof. But the process of urbanization has to be regulated and managed. Otherwise, environment, social and human costs will be too high.

*Sonam Sherpa
Thamel*

Open Letter On Travel Woes

My "Overland Adventure Tour" to Tibet was hardly an ideal trip. I recently returned from a fixed departure tour to Tibet and was appalled by the service and reckless disregard for the safety of tour passengers. Listed below is a brief synopsis of a complaint letter submitted to the Tibet Tourism Bureau in Lhasa. Twenty-five tour passengers signed the complaint letter in response to an unacceptable standard of service. The Tibet Tourism Bureau issued an official apology to all of the passengers of the tour group, two days after the letter was received.

How did I find myself in such a lousy tour group? As a responsible tourist, I did my research. I consulted my Lonely Planet Nepal guidebook, which recommended Eco Trek Nepal as a tour agency in Thamel that operates trips to Tibet. Upon my return to Kathmandu, I discussed my health and safety concerns with the Eco Trek manager, Mr. Ram Adhikari. I also highlighted the fact that a sudden itinerary change, such as removing Yamdrok Lake from the itinerary, amounts to a breach of my contractual agreement with Eco Trek Nepal. Mr. Adhikari responded by offering a \$10 refund, explaining that Eco Trek does not have any control over what occurs in Tibet.

From this unpleasant experience, I have learned two things. First, I have

learned about the way in which fixed departure tours to Lhasa are organized. There are two main tour operators on the Tibet side that handle all fixed departure tours from Kathmandu to Lhasa. Tibet Niwei Travel is one of these such agencies. These tours are primarily offered by Tashi Delek Nepal Treks in Kathmandu, which are then offered to various other Nepal tour agencies, such as Eco Trek Nepal. Along the way, key information such as road construction resulting in itinerary changes is not conveyed to tour passengers. Several tour passengers in my group had paid a higher rate for better accommodation. Unfortunately, they were highly disappointed to realize that the extra dollars paid amounted to the same rat infested guesthouse accommodation.

The second thing I have learned is that I would not recommend group tours from Kathmandu to Lhasa. Instead, flying into Lhasa and directly arranging trips with Tibetan tour operators would avoid a considerable amount of needless miscommunication and hassle. In addition, the 2000 meter ascent from the Nepal-China border to Lhatse, customary with many budget tours would be avoided. This will save many travelers from the vomiting, breathlessness, and headache associated with Altitude Mountain Sickness. To conclude, both Nepali and Tibetan travel agencies are shifting the responsibility onto their counterparts. None of the

agencies are willing to take any responsibility over problems encountered by their tours.

8-Day Budget Tours from Kathmandu to Tibet: Not Recommended
Day 1: Traveling at night in an area prone to landslides without explanation.

Day 2: Driver falls asleep at the wheel and has to stop at the roadside for a 40 minute nap.

Guide dismisses symptoms of Altitude Mountain Sickness claiming it is not serious. Symptoms include: vomiting, breathlessness, and disorientation.

Day 3: Multiple rats chasing guests at night inside guesthouse.

Tour guests suffering from Altitude Mountain Sickness were forced to draft a waiver removing the guide from all responsibility because they wished to travel faster than the group to mitigate the symptoms of Altitude Mountain Sickness.

Day 4: Guide disappears part way through the sight seeing tour.

Day 5: Sudden itinerary change, excluding Yamdrok Lake from the schedule.

Tour passengers are upset and wish to discuss situation with guide.

Guide attempts to charge additional amount for passengers to travel to the lake. This is in direct violation of Chinese tourist regulations.

Situation escalates to physical intimidation and tourist police are called on scene.

Day 6: Guide pressures tour passengers to visit commission souvenir shops.

Guide publicly scolds passengers who do not spend 10 minutes in each shop.

Day 7: Guide issues an ultimatum to dissatisfied tour passengers: Either visit the Sera and

Drepung Monasteries or visit the Tibet Niwei Travel Agency to file a complaint.

Day 8: Appointment to see Tibet Tourism Bureau is scheduled.

The following day at the Tibet Tourism Bureau our guide was fined 5000 yuan

and dismissed from his job for is disrespectful and inappropriate conduct throughout the tour.

No punishment was issued to the travel agency.

*Karen Choy
Canadian Tourist*

Nepal Asks Maoists Not To Disturb CA

The Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal has asked the Maoists not to disturb the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections. Nepal who met with Maoist leaders Prachanda and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, on Sunday (August 12), before he left for Norway on a ten-day tour, said that he has advised the Maoist leaders to concentrate on elections. Meanwhile, in response to reports that his party leader and Education Minister Pradeep Nepal was in a mood to resign owing to dictatorial style of functioning of the Prime Minister, Nepal asked PM Girija Prasad Koirala to correct his style of functioning. *Compiled from reports*

Sushil To Become Acting President; Deuba Ahead In Party Hierarchy

Both the Congress parties have agreed to make Sushil Koirala as acting president and Sher Bahadur Deuba as the senior leader ahead of the acting president in the party hierarchy, reports Kantipur daily. Disputes regarding vice presidency, district and regional committee leadership has stalled the unification negotiations between the taskforces of Nepali Congress (NC) and NC-Democratic for the last one week. The NC-D leaders have warned that they would go ahead on their own if there is no agreement on unification process within next five days. The daily quotes sources as saying that Prime Minister and president of NC Girija Prasad Koirala met with Sushil and Deuba, separately, last week, to reach to the understanding. He first met with Deuba to convince him to give acting presidency of the unified party to Sushil. Subsequently, he met with Sushil to convince him to accept Deuba as senior leader ahead of him in the protocol. PM Koirala then informed the taskforces of the understanding. Meanwhile, the report added that there were still disputes regarding seniority in vice presidents and general secretary. As per the understanding, the two vice presidents of NC-D, Gopal Man Shrestha and Prakash Man Singh will become vice presidents of the unified party as well.

However, the NC has asked NC-D to consider the complications that would arise with this decision since its general secretary duo Ram Chandra Poudel and KB Gurung are quite senior to Shrestha and Singh. Likewise, the taskforces are yet to reach final understanding regarding the leadership of district committees. *nepalnews.com reports*

Fleeing Rebels Announce New Faction

Even as five different teams of police and Young Communist League (YCL) are engaged in search and combing operations to locate the attackers who attacked a police post in Fikuri of Nuwakot district on Thursday (August 9) and looted weapons, the attackers have floated a new front called Janabadi Yuba Samuha. The attackers were later confirmed as Maoists who rebelled from their district party unit. Additional police reinforcement from Kathmandu has reached the area while YCL cadres are also engaged in search missions. The Maoists have claimed that a group led by one Raj Kumar Regmi who has parted ways from their party had attacked the police post. They had looted one pistol, two 303 rifles and 114 rounds of bullet. Earlier, on August 9, a group of Maoist cadres had attacked the police post at Fikuri of northern region of Nuwakot district. The Maoists beat up three policemen who were at the post when their colleagues went out, reports say. The in-charge of the police post, Sub-Inspector Ram Asis Barahi said the Maoists told them that they raided the post since the policemen were helping the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) to expand their base in the village against the Maoists. The Maoist attackers first supplied false information to the policemen that a civilian had died in neighboring Bhalcha VDC. Five out of the total 8 policemen stationed at the post headed to the village. "The Maoists then entered the police post, took us under control, tied us up and looted the arms", said Head Constable Chhabi Lal Bhatta. The policemen were freed by the locals after the Maoists left. *Leading dailies report*

Limbuwan, Khumbuwan Groups Suspend Agitation

In response to the talks offer by the government, the Limbuwan Mukti Morcha and Khumbuwan Rastriya

Morcha have decided to suspend their agitation in eastern districts and have also formed their teams to hold talks with the government. Limbuwan appointed its general secretary Khabuhang Banim as the chief of its negotiation team and the Khumbuwan has named its secretary Uttar Khumbu as the chief negotiator. The two groups have been organising indefinite strike in the eastern districts demanding autonomous federal state based on ethnicity for them in that region.

Leading dailies report

Parliament Passes Budget; Maoists Abstain The Voting

In a strange development, the Maoists abstained the voting on the budget of the current fiscal year on Thursday (August 9). When the budget was put before the parliament for approval, only the MPs of Nepali Congress, NC-Democratic and Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) voted in favor. The Maoists walked out of the parliament chanting 'no vote.' The budget unveiled last month was put to vote after series of debate. Maoist MPs announced boycott the voting, saying it failed to meet people's aspirations and that it was brought without consensus in the eight-party alliance. They also described the budget as pro-palace. Maoist chief whip Dina Nath Sharma said his party had decided to boycott the voting as the budget did not come according to the spirit of Janandolan-2 and that there were no programs for radical land reform and debt relief for small farmers. Nepal Workers and Peasants Party voted against the budget while Janamorcha Nepal and United Left Front stayed away from voting, expressing their reservations. Finance Minister Dr Ram Saran Mahat had presented Rs 168.99 billion budget for the Fiscal Year 2007/08 on July 12.

Compiled from reports

Minister Mahato Not To Be 'Recalled'

Overturning her earlier decision, the president of Nepal Sadbhavana Party – Anandidevi (NSP-A), Anandidevi Singh, has decided not to recall Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Rajendra Mahato from the cabinet. The meeting of the national executive committee of the party held late

Wednesday (August 8), made the decision not to recall Mahato, according to statement issued by the party. Earlier, on Monday, Singh had written a letter to the Prime Minister informing about the decision to 'recall' Mahato as he had failed to 'advance the Madhesi cause.' Mahato, on the other hand, had been adamantly refusing to comply with Singh's letter. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports*

Chure Agitates In Capital Streets

Condemning the killings of people of hilly origin in Terai, Chure Bhawar Ekata Samaj held a street demonstration in the capital on Wednesday (August 8). They brought the dead bodies of two of their activists – Mohan Gautam who was killed by Jwala Singh's men on August 5 in Sitapur, Saptari and Prakash Subedi who was killed by Bisphot Singh's men on August 7 in Birgunj – and held a rally. After the Chure activists tried to cremate their bodies right in the middle of the street in front of Bir Hospital, the police intervened and used tear gas shells to disperse the crowd. The police later transported the dead bodies to Aryaghat, Pashupati. The Samaj activists have condemned the government for being a silent spectator when people were being killed in Terai. *Leading dailies report*

Govt-NFIN Close Deal With 20-Point Understanding

The government and the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFIN) inked 20-point understanding on Tuesday (August 7) ending the ten rounds of talks they held so far. After inking the deal, Janajatis have withdrawn their agitation and have vowed to concentrate on Constituent Assembly (CA) elections. The government has agreed that the candidates for the first-past-the-post election system would also be selected on a proportional basis, while it was agreed that all the political parties would ensure the representation of all the 59 recognized ethnic groups in the elections. The government also agreed to ensure representation through legal or constitutional means, of all the recognized ethnic groups that are not accommodated in the two election

systems. They also agreed to form an inclusive commission on restructuring of the state on the basis of ethnicity, language, region, economic viability and cultural specialty. The NFIN has, however, relinquished its demand for fully proportional electoral system for the CA polls. "We have decided to withdraw all protest programs as the government has addressed some of our demands," said Dr. Om Gurung, coordinator of NFIN talks team. The agreement was signed by Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel on behalf of the government and Dr. Om Gurung and KB Gurung, coordinator of Indigenous Nationalities Joist Struggle Committee. *Leading dailies report*

Middle Marsyangdi Further Delayed

The completion of under construction 70 MW-strong Middle Marsyangdi hydropower project is going to be delayed by two more years. The contractors and consultant have informed Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) of the further delay due to bandh, strike and chakkajam. They have said that the project will now complete on January, 2009. The project was earlier expected to come into operation from December, 2007. The project has already been delayed by four years resulting in loss of Rs 5 billion to NEA in terms of failure to generate electricity. This loss is exclusive of losses in expenditures due to delay. NEA executive director Arjun Kumar Karki informed the parliamentary committee on Natural Resource about the delay. *Kantipur daily reports*

PABSON Decision To Hike Fees Draws Flak

The recent decision of the Private And Boarding Schools' Organization Nepal (PABSON) to increase fees in schools maximum by 25 percent has drawn flak from the stakeholders. Suprabhat Bhandari, president of the Guardians' Association Nepal, said that the PABSON is not an authentic body to increase students' fees. The increment in fees should be in line with the education regulations that states the School

Management Committee has the authority to increase fees, which should be later approved by Fee-Ceiling Fixing Committee at District Education Office, he added. Bhandari said: "Though private schools take exorbitant fees from students, more than 90 percent of the teachers are unpaid and exploited". Pradeep Poudel, president of the Nepal Students' Union, said that the PABSON's "one-sided" decision only favors a handful of people. "Instead of decreasing fees, its decision to hike is totally unjustifiable and we are against the decision," he said, adding: "The decision has proved the exploitation and other irregularities in private schools." Poudel asked the PABSON to withdraw its decision. "If not, we will be compelled to hit the streets." Umesh Shrestha, president of the PABSON, said they decided to increase the students' fees so as to provide more salary to teachers as their pay has not been increased for five years. "We have directed the schools outside the Valley to raise the fees according to the situation of schools and School Management Committees," he said. *Leading dailies report*

RBB Registers Profit Of Rs 1.68 Billion

The state-owned Rastriya Banijya Bank (RBB) has registered profit of Rs 1.68 billion in last fiscal year. This is more by one percent compared to previous fiscal year when it had posted Rs 1.65 billion profit. The bank, which is going through reform process, is the largest bank in terms of deposits and loan investment. The bank has informed that its deposits increased by 9 percent in last fiscal year. Likewise, loan investment also increased by 9.29 percent. Total deposit of the bank has reached Rs 50.34 billion. The non performing loans have come down to 29 percent from 70 percent few years ago. The bank has informed that since the new (foreign) management took over, its loan recovery has increased to 99.5 percent. The bank has cut manpower by 43 percent. Its net asset is still negative due to past losses.

Kantipur daily reports ■



Prime Minister GP Koirala receives credentials from the US envoy Nancy Powell *Gorkhapatra*

PRIME MINISTER GIRIJA PRASAD KOIRALA accepted the resignation by Maoist leader and Forest Minister Matrika Yadav on Friday (August 10). Koirala accepted the resignation, which was tendered a week ago by Yadav, with the consent of Maoist leadership. According to Information and Communication Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara, another Maoist Minister Dev Gurung, who currently holds the portfolio of Local Development, will take over the reins of Forest and Soil Conservation Ministry for the time being. Yadav had refused to withdraw his resignation despite request from the Maoist leadership.

THE UNITED STATES HAS DONATED \$3 million dollars to support the Constituent Assembly election in Nepal, U.S. Ambassador Nancy J. Powell announced on Friday (August 10). "The funds are specifically designated for election ballots, demonstrating continued US support to Nepal, its Election Commission, and the democratic transition," states a press release by the US embassy. "The United States is pleased to provide this support to help Nepal hold its Constituent Assembly election on November 22," said Ambassador Powell. "This election is central to Nepal's successful democratic transition." In separate meetings, the Ambassador informed Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Chief Election Commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel of the new US funding for the ballot papers. "The \$3 million donation is in addition to the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) current \$3.8 million program in support of the upcoming elections in Nepal," the statement said.

THE US AMBASSADOR TO NEPAL NANCY J. POWELL presented credentials to the Prime Minister on Thursday (August 9) at a special function in Singh Durbar. Following the restoration of democracy, PM Koirala, who is also head of state, has been receiving credentials from foreign diplomats. Earlier, envoys used to present their credentials to the king. Powell replaces Moriarty as new US ambassador.

Meanwhile, North Korean Ambassador Jang Young Chol also presented his credentials to the PM on Thursday in a separate function.

THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT has decided that only Nepali or Malaysian citizens should now be appointed as security guards. This decision will open up 100,000 more job opportunities for Nepali workers. At present, there are 300,000 Nepali workers in Malaysia – 30,000 working as security guards. The Malaysian government has directed the employers there to replace guards of other nationalities with Nepalis. The government decision came in the wake of reports of rape of a lady by a Pakistani guard.

THE MANAGEMENT OF DABUR NEPAL has warned that the multi-national company could return from Nepal for good. It has said that if the Maoist-affiliated workers do not allow the resumption of production within 15 days, it will leave the country. The pro-Maoist workers have stalled its production facility in Bara since Friday. The talks between management and workers facilitated by Birgunj Chamber of Commerce and Industry could not succeed on Sunday (August 12). "It is highly irresponsible for them to close down factory when the management had said that it will decide on their issues through talks within four days," said senior general manager Sanwar Pal Malhotra. "Our position is, first production then only negotiation," he said, adding that such disturbances by the Maoist workers won't let MNCs function. The Maoist workers have demanded that 65 workers working in loading-unloading section should be made permanent. The Dabur has said that the obstruction in production has led to losses of Rs 30 million per day. At the Bara's production unit, Dabur Nepal has employed 640 workers. The company has given direct and indirect employment to 50,000 people in the country. Following strike by the Maoist-affiliated workers, the Dabur Nepal factory in Lipnimal, Bara had been closed from Friday (August 10) for an indefinite period. The factory management said it shut the factory down after the Dabur Nepal Workers' Union affiliated to the Maoists All Nepal Trade Union Federation called on indefinite strike. Shiv Lal Chhetri, president of the union said that the union called on the indefinite strike as the factory management did not pay attention to their demands. However, the factory management alleged the workers' union that they suddenly called the strike despite their readiness to fulfill the workers' demands in four days. "Since the managers were out of Birgunj, four days time was sought for the discussion at high level to fulfill the workers' demand," the management said. The workers' union alleged that the agreement reached a year ago to give permanent appointment to 65 temporary workers has not yet been carried out. Their other demands include life insurance for the workers, upgradation of the workers' facilities and the uniform. The management informed that the factory's export stands nearly at four billion rupees yearly. The company pays Rs 400 million tax to the government. ■

“Republic is our mandatory condition. Proportional representation and federalism are our positions, not preconditions. But we will not boycott the election.”

Prachanda, Maoist chairman, clarifying the decisions made by fifth plenum of the Maoists, at a press meet.

“We didn’t see Maoists’ commitment on the CA. They were the ones who raised the issue of CA the most but now by bringing out conditions that have not been agreed upon (by eight parties), they are trying to foil the November election.”

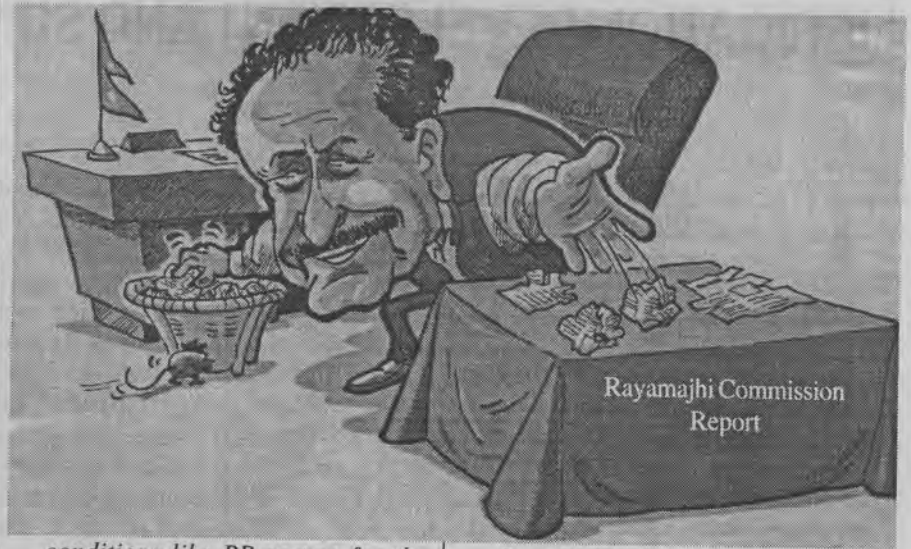
Ram Chandra Poudel, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, responding to decision by Maoist plenum.

“We will go to the streets for agitation by forging republican alliance.”

Barshaman Pun aka Ananta, deputy commander of the Maoists, talking to reporters after plenum meeting.

“Proportional election system is the best method and an agreement could have been reached on it had the Maoists remained firm when they made a national consensus for the elections. However, the issue has become irrelevant in the present context.”

Jhal Nath Khanal, senior leader of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), criticizing Maoists for setting



conditions like PR system for the elections, in Rupandehi.

“Iurge all parties in the flood affected districts to allow humanitarian and development workers to carry on their activities without fear or any form of interference. Bandhs and intimidation obviously hinder relief work directly.”

Matthew Kahane, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, appealing for unhindered access to aid workers to help flood victims.

“The hardest hit communities need to receive food, clean water, and access to sanitation facilities. But we also need to look beyond this emergency phase, towards helping people return to a normal way of life and enable vulnerable communities to be prepared for future disasters such as this.”

Dev Ratna Dhakhwa, secretary general of the Nepal Red Cross Society, which is leading the aid works.

“Unlike in the past, we will implement this act.”

Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Minister for Information and Communication, vowing to enforce Working Journalists Act (First Amendment), in the parliament.

“I am in no mood to remain in this position by bearing pressures from the Prime Minister. If the party allows, I will resign within 12 hours.”

Pradeep Nepal, Minister for Education and Sports and senior UML leader, criticizing the 'dictatorial style of functioning' of the prime minister, in Nepal Samacharpatra.

TRANSITION

ACCEPTED: Resignation by Matrika Yadav, Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala.

LEFT: Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), for Norway, on a ten-day tour.

PRESENTED: The United States ambassador to Nepal Nancy J. Powell, her credentials, to the Prime

Minister, at a special function in Singh Durbar.

North Korean Ambassador to Nepal, Jang Young Chol, his credentials, to the Prime Minister.

FORMED: Talks team by Limbuwan Mukti Morcha and Khumbuwan Rastriya Morcha. Limbuwan appointed its general secretary Khabuhang Banim as the chief of its negotiation team and the Khumbuwan has named its secretary

Uttar Khumbu as it talks team leader.

PASSED: Budget of the fiscal year 2007/08, by the parliament, by majority.

WITHDRAWN: The decision to ‘recall’ Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Rajendra Mahato from the cabinet, by the president of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP-Anandidevi) Anandidevi Singh.

IRRIGATION DEVELOPMENT AND SUN-KOSI PROJECT

By Dr. AB Thapa

The necessity of the irrigation development on a large scale in Nepal had been keenly felt since the middle of 1960s. Bearing in mind such necessity of large scale irrigation development, the experts of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Government of Nepal had carried out the First Phase study of the Sun-Kosi Terai Project in 1965 and 1966 to determine the possibility of irrigation development in the Eastern Terai Plain by diverting the abundant water of the Sun-Kosi River. The Interim Report on Feasibility Study of the Sun-Kosi Terai Project was submitted in October, 1969. The plan to divert the Sun-Kosi River into the Kamla River has been described in that report. The final feasibility report was submitted in October, 1972.

The feasibility report makes it perfectly clear that the people in Nepal are mostly dependant for their food supply and livelihood on a narrow belt of cultivated land in Terai. The potential new land for cultivation is very limited in Nepal. Thus, there is a need to raise agricultural productivity by intensification; i.e. by increasing the average cropping intensity. The Sun-Kosi diversion could help to provide sufficient water round the year to increase the cropping intensity as well as the per hectare yield, as a result, the agricultural production could be substantially increased.

Sun-Kosi Kamla Diversion

Two possible diversion plans had been identified for further study at the end of the First Phase study. They were called "A" Plan and "B" Plan. Under Plan "A", the Sun-Kosi River was to be diverted into the Trijuga River, a tributary of the Sapta Kosi River, through a tunnel about 7 kilometers long to irrigate lands on the right bank of the Sapta Kosi. Similarly under the Plan "B", the Sun-Kosi River was to be diverted into the Kamla River through a headrace tunnel about 15 kilometers long to irrigate both sides of the downstream reaches of the Kamla.

The field survey activities were started in October 1967. The whole dry season of the year 1967/68 was spent in identifying the most feasible plan. Following the surveys and studies of both the alternative plans, it was found that the "B" Plan to divert the Sun-Kosi River into the Kamla was the most feasible irrigation project. The selection of the Plan "B" for further study was approved by the FAO Headquarter and also by the Government of Nepal. The dry season of the following year 1968/69 was devoted to conduct semi-detailed surveys and the studies of the Sun-Kosi Kamla Diversion Project. Meantime, the general studies of irrigation development was also undertaken that covered a vast region of cultivated lands in Terai approximately

500,000 ha in area from Kosi on the east to the Nepal-India border line (about 20 km to the west from Birgunj) on the west. According to one of the studies the diversion of the regulated flow of the Sun-Kosi River could provide more than sufficient water needed for year round irrigation of lands within the project area estimated at 300,000 ha in net coverage.

Agricultural Studies

Extensive agricultural studies of the whole project area were made in course of the feasibility study. General reconnaissance soil survey of the Eastern Terai plain is one of them. The survey report gives the results of the reconnaissance soil survey covering the entire project area of 540,000 hectares in gross. It was revealed that about 80 percent of the entire area has good soils for irrigation farming belonging to Grade I, II and III according to the USDA standard. No alkalinity or salinity problems exist.

A special pilot farm was set up at Hardinath in Dhanukha district to conduct agronomic studies. Such studies covered cultivation of crops like paddy, wheat, sugarcane, maize, mustard, fodders and other vegetables. Tests were conducted to determine the irrigation water requirement, optimum sowing time, optimum use of fertilizer, selection of best varieties etc.

Project Area

The Terai Plain consists of the alluvial fans and the recent river deposit which are gently sloped from north to south. The elevations at the foot of the Churia Hills range from 150 to slightly over 200 meters. The plain has gentle slopes ranging from 1/1,000 at the foothills to 1/5,000 at the border line with India. The countless small streams and rivers have their origin in Churia Hills. They feed the plain until they reach the Ganges or its main tributaries.

The Project area lies between the Kosi River and the Indo-Nepal border line at a distance of about 20 km to the west of the Birgunj town. Similarly the Churia Foothill is the northern boundary while the Indo-Nepal border the southern. The project area is nearly rectangular in shape. The length is about 240 kilometers and the width varies between 20 and 40 kilometers. The total project area is about 8,500 sq. km. out of it in 1970s when the feasibility study was made the gross cultivated land, reclaimable land, non-reclaimable land (mainly river beds) and forests on flat land were 5,450 sq. km, 570 sq. km, 650 sq. km and 1,870 sq. km respectively.

The project area covers 8 districts of Terai. They are Parsa, Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhanukha, Sirha and Saptari. The total population in the project area in early 1970s was about 1,770,000 whereas, according to the Statistical Book published in 1994 by the Central Bureau of Statistics it had increased to about 3,600,000.

The River

The Sun-Kosi River is the biggest tributary of the Kosi River. The total drainage area of this river at Tribeni (near Barahachetra) is 17,960 sq. km. At this point all three main tributaries join and further downstream the river is called the Kosi. Hydrometric records covering the period between the years 1948 and 1967 showed that the yearly mean discharge of the Sun-Kosi River at Tribeni varied between 932 cu. m/sec. and 622 cu. m/sec. The estimated yearly mean discharge of the Sun-Kosi River (based upon the data at Tribeni) at the proposed dam site varies between 871 cu. m/sec. and 576 cu. m/sec.

The annual average sediment load of the Sun-Kosi River at Tribeni according to some studies is about 54 million cu. m. The annual average sediment load of the Kosi at Tribeni is about 119 million cu. m.

The Sun-Kosi Dam

The FAO had provided Nepal technical and financial assistance to conduct the study of the Sun-Kosi dam project for the agricultural development in the Terai Plain that had three main functions. They were capital formation needed for social investment through the increased income of farmers, sufficient food supply for the whole country, and increased employment in the Terai Plains. The Government of India had also investigated the Sun-Kosi dam site in 1940s. At that time India was exploring the possibility of building the Sun-Kosi dam primarily for controlling the Kosi River floods. The Indian survey team had favoured Kurule dam site on the Sun-Kosi River because it appeared geologically sound and allowed to have a big storage reservoir that extended in Dudh-Kosi and Sun-Kosi valleys. In all subsequent studies that followed thereafter the location for the dam at Kurule has remained unchanged. The site for the Sun-Kosi dam proposed in the FAO supported study is also at Kurule.

The Master Plan study of the Kosi River water resources was made in 1985 by JICA (Japan Government Agency) team. The Sun-Kosi River diversion for irrigating lands in the Eastern Terai had been identified as one of the top priority projects in the Master Plan study. That study too had adopted the Kurule as the appropriate location for the dam across the Sun-Kosi River to divert it into the Kamla River.

Water Right Issue

The FAO provided assistance to Nepal in revising the 1954 Kosi River Treaty. Dr. Dante A. Caponera, Chief, Legislation Branch of FAO, Rome was in Nepal in 1966. The Kosi Treaty was revised on 19th December, 1966. Nepal's full right over the Kosi River water has been very clearly explained in the revised treaty. The Article 4 (i) of the Treaty related with the water rights has been presented hereinafter:

"HMG shall have every right to withdraw for irrigation and for any other purpose in Nepal water from the Kosi river and from the Sun-Kosi river or within the Kosi basin from any other tributaries of the Kosi river as may be required from time to time. The Union (it indicates

India) shall have the right to regulate all the balance of supplies in the Kosi river at the barrage site thus available from time to time and to generate power in the Eastern Canal."

Geology

A separate report on the Geology of "B" Plan Area as a part of the Sun-Kosi Project feasibility study was prepared by Dr. J. B. Auden in January 1967. Dr. Auden is well known for his great contribution in the field of Himalayan geology. An abstract of the geological investigations has been presented in the report "Feasibility Study of Irrigation Development in the Terai Plain, 1972".

Power Development Planning

In planning the Sun-Kosi diversion, three options were considered. They are the diversion plan exclusively for irrigation, non-peaking power development option, and peaking power development option.

At present the available minimum discharge of the Sun-Kosi River at the diversion site is about 140 cum. m/sec. It is proposed to build a 34 m high dam and a 15,000 m long diversion tunnel 6 m in diameter to divert 140 cu m/sec. Sun-Kosi River water if this project is to be planned exclusively to irrigate lands in Terai.

The next alternative is the Sun-Kosi diversion project along with a non-peaking hydropower station. The diversion project would be having a 73 m high dam and a 15,000 m long tunnel 8.4 m in diameter to divert 215 cum. m/sec flow. Installed capacity of the hydropower station would be 330 MW.

The third alternative is the Sun-Kosi diversion along with a peaking hydropower station. The diversion project would have a 115 m high dam and a 12,700 m long tunnel 8 m in diameter. There would be another dam at Kakaru. The firm discharge 140 cu. m/sec diverted from the Sun-Kosi River would be stored in a pondage to be provided on the Kakaru Khola, at about 8 kilometers upstream from Amtai Bazar. The required storage capacity at that pondage was determined to be about 9.6 million cu. m to meet the peak load with load factor of 21 percent, which would correspond to daily peaking time of 5 hours. The installed capacity of the hydropower station would be 1,050 MW.

JICA Study

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) had helped Nepal to carry out the Master Plan Study of the Kosi River water resources development. The final study report was submitted on March, 1985. Three reservoir type schemes have been planned for the Sun-Kosi River. They are the Sun-Kosi No. 1 Dam, Sun-Kosi No. 2 Dam and the Sun-Kosi No. 3 Dam schemes. The lowermost is the Sun-Kosi No. 1 Dam Scheme. The Sun-Kosi No. 1 Dam according to JICA study and the Sun-Kosi dam proposed in the FAO supported irrigation development study are virtually one and the same. The sole difference between them is over the dam height. The FAO study has proposed a dam about 120 meters in height, whereas the JICA study recommends dam height in between 147 and 195 meters.

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

MAOISTS

Walking A Tightrope

Prachanda downplays plenum decisions by posing them as positions, not preconditions, for the elections

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

At a time when other political parties criticized the Maoists for putting forth republic and proportional representation as preconditions for the Constituent Assembly elections, chairman Prachanda has tried to walk a tightrope by downplaying the decision of the fifth plenum.

At a press meet early this week, Prachanda indicated that these are the positions of the party and not preconditions. He added that they will not boycott the Constituent Assembly (CA) election even if these 'positions/preconditions' are not met.

"Republic is our mandatory condition. Proportional representation and federalism are our positions, not preconditions. But we will not boycott the election," he said.

In another move to placate the 'revolutionary comrades' of his party, Prachanda has also said that since the party has concluded that the moral, legal and political basis for their remaining a member of the government has diminished, the party will decide, within 10 days, whether to remain in the interim government. He reiterated that the party will launch peaceful movement and 'revolt' if necessary.

The latest pronouncements from Prachanda make it clear that he is trying to strike a balance between implementing its past pacts with seven parties and placating the growing disquiet among the rank and file of his party.

As soon as words got out that the August 3-10 plenum of the party had decided to put forth preconditions for the elections, other parties had accused that the Maoists may be trying to avoid the election. "We didn't see Maoists' commitment on the CA. They were the ones who raised the issue of CA the most but now by bringing out conditions that have not been agreed upon (by eight parties), they are trying to foil the

November election," said Ram Chandra Poudel, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction.

Even parties like People's Front that have been supportive of Maoists at most times urged them not to set preconditions for the elections at this juncture.

Although the fifth expanded meeting or plenum passed the political report by Prachanda, unanimously, with some amendments, Prachanda had to face a



Prachanda (center) at the press meet: Balancing Act Kantipur

pretty tough questions from a section of his party leaders who are not at all happy with the "flexibility and compromises" made by them in the past one year.

There are even sections of Maoist leaders who have openly announced rebellion by accusing the leadership of "abandoning revolution." Laxman Tharu aka Roshan, ex Maoist leader of its Tharu wing, is one such rebel who has claimed that his group is swelling by the day. Tharu claimed that PLA fighters deserting cantonment have joined his group. He even said he has three battalion force ready.

Just last week, one Raj Kumar Regmi aka Sandesh rebelled from the party and attacked a police post in Nuwakot looting weapons. Although the Maoists quickly took him under control and returned looted weapons, the incident indicated a

brewing trouble for the party.

"If the Maoists are not able to convince their rank and file, there are chances of further rebellion, which could undermine the whole peace process," said Shyam Shrestha, a leftist intellectual.

For the time being, however, Prachanda has attempted to divert the frustrations among his workers and leaders by talking about movement and revolt. "We will be preparing an election manifesto, which will also be our manifesto for the movement," Prachanda said at the press meet. A team led by Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has been formed to draft the manifesto. On the other hand, with the aim of bringing indigenous groups and other agitators on board, the party has also formed a team led by Ram Bahadur Thapa aka Badal to hold roundtable conference with them. And to strike a broader leftist unity, it has formed a team led by Mohan Baidya aka Kiran to hold talks with communist parties.

Meanwhile, the 34 central committee members of the party have stated that they collectively own Rs 36.3 million worth properties. According to reports, Ram Karki has the highest amount of properties at Rs 3.8 million followed by Lekhraj Bhatta, Ananta and Agni Sapkota (Kanchan) who own Rs 2.5 million each. Prachanda owns Rs 400,000 cash. Likewise, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has recorded that he owns Rs 300,000 worth properties while his wife Minister Hishila Yami has Rs one million. Information Minister Krishna Mahara is reported to own Rs 300,000 while Dinanath Sharma owns Rs 475,000. Lokendra Bista, Maoist MP, is reported to have recorded the lowest amount of property at Rs 3000. ■

PRESS FREEDOM

Unabashed Attack

Pro-Maoist elements are increasingly becoming more brazen in their targeting of private and independent media

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

There is a clear double standard in the manner the pro-Maoist elements are operating to target free media.

In the recent months, the Maoist-affiliated unions have championed the causes of 'workers' to ram through basic tenets of press freedom and public right to information.

But at the same time, in the state-owned Gorkhapatra corporation – it is interesting to note that senior Maoist leader Krishna Mahara is the Minister for Information and Communication – the management has sacked 49 journo without so much as a passing concern for the 'working journalists' there.

After a break of a month, the Maoist-aligned trade union workers have started disrupting the printing and distribution of The Himalayan Times and Annapurna Post dailies and have also forced Radio HBC FM to go off the air.

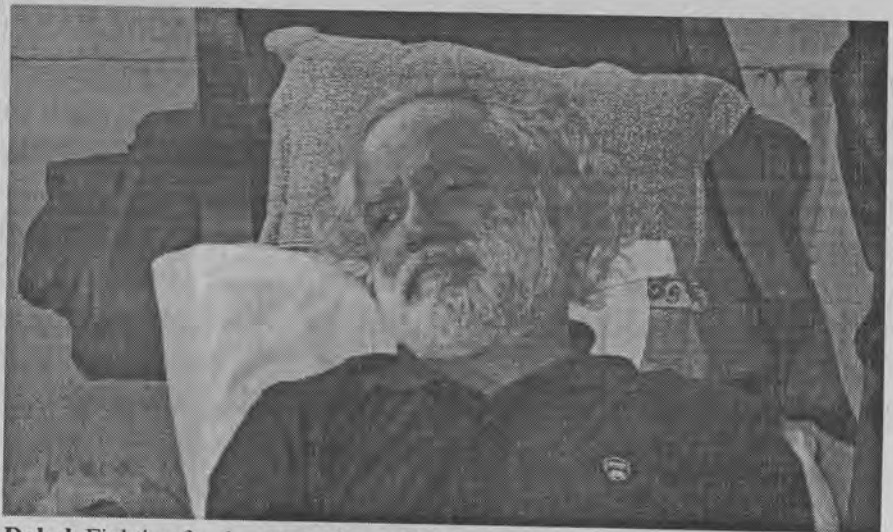
In the two dailies, the union workers resorted to disruptions citing that the two newspapers had carried news against them on their front pages in Saturday's edition.

"On (Friday, August 10) evening, Arjun Kumar Gautam, chairman of APCA Nepal unit of the union, entered the editorial floor of Annapurna Post and threatened not to distribute the newspapers if the news against them was published the next day. On the following, they seized all copies of newspapers from the Sama Printers, Bhainsepati, and dumped them inside the printing press.

Despite police presence, they did not let anybody bring the copies out of Sama Printers.

Both the dailies had carried the news

about the Patan Appellate Court's summons to the Maoist affiliated trade union leaders on Saturday's editions," the statement by the newspapers say.



Dahal: Fighting for the cause of press freedom

The Court, on August 9, had summoned Arjun Kumar Gautam, chairman of the union's APCA Nepal branch, Khadananda Pokharel, chairman of Sama Printers branch and Kuchindra Thapa, chairman of dispatchers' sub committee to the court to ask why a stay order should not be issued asking them not to disrupt the dailies' distribution. All of them had refused to accept the court summons.

On Monday (August 13), the union workers even prevented the staffers of both the dailies from entering the office premises in Anam Nagar.

The Maoist workers organized a corner meeting at the premises of the APCA Nepal later in the evening and warned the journalists to be sensitive while writing news about them. They also threatened to close down the

newspapers if their demands were not met.

They had, on Sunday, threatened the journalists of physical action if they wrote news related to them.

On the other hand, Birendra Dahal, a manager of Radio HBC FM, has launched fast unto death from Sunday demanding full respect to press freedom. He launched the hunger strike after pro-Maoist 'republican radio workers' closed down the radio since last one week. Dahal started his fast-unto-death from Sunday within the premises of Media

Village in Tilganga. Dahal has called for firm commitment by the Maoists and its affiliate groups expressing their faith in full press freedom.

Enraged by the continued attack on press freedom Nepal Media Society in a press release condemned the interference of the pro-Maoist unions in the working of newspapers and FM radio stations. It said that it was forced to conclude that in view of the ongoing counter-productive and disruptive activities of such unions against organizations, which are striving to inform people, work for human rights and freedom, that democracy really does not exist in the country. It has asked the government for providing protection to media houses, protect their right to dissemination of information and ensure that daily work in their offices or printing presses is not obstructed. ■

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

Difficult To Balance

As Nepal enters into a new political phase from conflict to compromise and peace, most difficult part now is how to heal the wounds of the conflicts and create complete social harmony and reconciliation in the society. With the mandatory clause of Interim Constitution, the government has proposed a draft bill of Truth and Reconciliation Commission – which stresses on finding out truth with a motive to build the reconciliation. But a new wave of opposition appears pressing to add punitive measures for the violators of human rights. Situated in a very unique geographical location with history of frequent violent rebellions, Nepalese society always survived not on hatred but love and not on vengeance but forgiveness. As pressure is mounting, the government has very limited choices as it can neither withstand the pressure of western countries and right activists nor take the risk of breaking the fragile peace

By KESHAB POUDEL

“We may never forget but we must forgive ... to make peace with an enemy, one must work with that enemy and, that enemy becomes your partner,” - South African president Nelson Mandela.

“The simple most important factor which became the driving force towards a totally new dispensation in South Africa was fundamental, a change of heart It was not a sudden change but a process – a process of introspection, soul searching of repentance...” - F.W. De Klerk, former president of South Africa in the book “Struggling To Forgive” written by Brian Frost.

Looking at the development of South Africa, Nepal needs to learn from that kind of attitude to create a situation for lasting peace and stability. A short sighted attitude to rule in the spirit of

revenge or punishment will create more trouble in society.

South Africa shows how reconciliation between all the forces has paid off – in terms of its economic prosperity, stability and harmony. However, in Zimbabwe, rebel leader Robert Mugabe ruined the country by taking punitive act against the minority whites under similar commission of 1985.

Truth And Reconciliation

Nepal has a long history of importing the words. Now, the words like impunity, truth and reconciliation, inclusion and exclusion are in the market. Any catchy jargon or political/development phrase gets quick response in Nepal. But the problem is to embrace their true meaning in good faith and not be perverted by simply parroting them.

The words Truth and Reconciliation have broader meaning - balancing between revealing the incidents of human misdeeds and recommending for reconciliation.

Every citizen should have the right to know what happened during the long political conflicts when many people lost their near and dear ones. Hundreds were disappeared, thousands were injured and tens of thousands of population were internally displaced. Such commission can find out the truth. In most cases, it promotes for reconciliation but it also recommends for punishment if it finds gross violation of humanitarian law.

In accordance with the provision of Interim Constitution, the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction drafted the bill to set up the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission. The draft bill says an independent and impartial Commission will be constituted to bring the actual facts to the public by investigating the truth of persons involved in gross violation of human rights and crime against humanity committed by both the government and Maoists during the course of armed conflict between February 13, 1996 and November 21, 2006.

Draft Bill

According to the draft bill, the members of the commission will be appointed on the recommendation of committee constituted with the consensus of the political parties represented in the parliament. The commission is given authority to make reconciliation between the victim and the perpetrator, mutually, if any individual is found guilty while carrying out inquiry and investigation under the act. In the course of making reconciliation, the commission may ask the perpetrator to make an apology with the victim by regretting for his/her past misdeeds.

The commission can also recommend the government for necessary action against such persons who are found guilty. In another provision, the commission is empowered to make recommendation for amnesty even to such person who is found to have committed violation of human rights and crime against humanity in course of abiding by his/ her duties or with the objective of fulfilling political motives. However, the bill denies amnesty to a person involved in acts: any kind of murder committed after taking the victim under control or carried out in an inhumane manner, and cruel torture and rape.

"There are many blunders in the bill. Its consequence in the first place is that it has made politics and crime complementary/synonymous to each other. It has given license to/of committing any kind of gross violation of human rights including killings, murders, rape etc and crime against

humanity to any person who performs public duties or is involved in politics," said lawyer Bhimarjun Acharya.

In the mean time, the European Union and UN Human Rights Commission have already lodged protests on some clauses that seek to give amnesty to such persons who are found to have committed gross violation of human rights or crime against humanity. "Office of High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) – Nepal is deeply

limited options. The article 33 (T) of Interim Constitution obliges the state and the government to constitute Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the truth against individuals who perpetrated the crime against humanity and violators of human rights and create a situation of reconciliation in the society by establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"The mandate of the constitution is to investigate the truth about the violator



Political agitation: Demand for change

concerned about provisions which would amnesty the perpetrators of gross human rights violation of international humanitarian law, including extrajudicial execution, torture and disappearances. Amnesty provisions, which prevent prosecution for these offences, are inconsistent with Nepal's obligations under International Law," said Sandra Beidas, acting Representative.

European Union also expressed its concern over certain clauses in the draft, which seek to give amnesty to the gross violator of human rights and persons involved in the crime against the humanity.

Constitutional Limits

Despite the pressure from western countries and human rights organizations, the government has very

of human rights and perpetrator of crime against humanity in order to create a climate of reconciliation. Where arise the question of punishment on which the article 33 (T) does not say anything about," Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel told Spotlight. "Our peace process has a unique nature and it is different than all others in the world. We have settled conflicts on our own and we will manage this on our own."

Under this clause, the government is mandated only to constitute the commission whose objective is limited to investigate and then establish reconciliation. "On what ground you are talking about punishment and granting or not granting amnesty," asked a constitutional lawyer.

"Commission which is constituted by the government cannot travel beyond the constitutional limit," said Minister Poudel. "If we started to dig the wounds, our society will continue to face conflicts. We have also provisions to punish serious violators of international humanitarian laws but our thrust will be for reconciliation."

South African Model

South Africa's leaders have shown how they can heal the wounds of past oppression and start the process of reconciliation.

Even former UN Human Rights Commission's commissioner Marry Robinson in her foreword of the book "Struggling To Forgive" written by Brian Frost, writes, "In his one description of the day, president Mandela wryly noted that the same officer saluting him would, not long ago, have been rushing to arrest him. But, close to the president were prison officer as his guest, a sign that this man would not seek revenge on his prosecutor. Instead he has built his politics on his believe that -to make peace with an enemy one must work with that enemy, and that enemy becomes one's partner."

Although many criticize South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission for giving amnesty to all the violators of human rights and failing to compensate the victims, it has produced harmony in South Africa.

The term Truth and Reconciliation first appeared in Nepal's interim constitution. Rarely anybody in politics has been bothered to formulate this concept into clear and concrete terms. Some experts and human rights activists have pressured politicians and policy makers to follow the example of truth and reconciliation commission of South Africa.

Those experts, however, ignore to explain to the Nepali people what the Commission meant in South Africa and other parts of the world. So far as our government knowledge goes, it means to

safeguard the society from the politics of vengeance and reprisals.

"South Africa is a country which has insignificant minority of white compared to the vast majority of blacks who constitute about 90 percent of the population. After change over to a new system, the white supremacy ended in the power but they were not haunted for the past deeds and misdeeds of that racist government. Not a single officer of any organ of the state was even transferred from one place to another place for their past deeds and not a single person lost the job whether it is in the executive or judiciary. This was not a miracle coming from heaven but was a man made result inspired by the universal dictum of live and let live," said a political analyst.

"Yes the leadership had a credit for that and Nelson Mandela will be remembered forever but he didn't claim

anything like Asian leaders whether elected or nominated by some historical reasons. He retired from the power but not from Achilles of power. That will be inconceivable to Loktantrik leaders in Nepal whose sole objective has been power and to loose everything for power even at the risk of independence and integrity of nation," said the analyst.

Conceptual Misunderstanding

It is not very clear yet about the conceptual base of the idea of Truth and Reconciliation. "If it is similar to the South African example, after the change there was no victor. There was neither victor nor victim between the classes of people. In contrast to that, the present change in Nepal has created a class of

victors as well as a class of victims," said the analyst. A witch haunting is going on since the day a class of people emerged as victors.

"Nepal was at a turning point where its leader who had taken oath of the office of Prime minister and who had option to lead the nation in South African pattern of Truth and Reconciliation. But he was far away from his own august brother B.P. Koirala's policy of national reconciliation and much far away from the politics of reconciliation adhered by Nelson Mandela in South Africa," said the analyst.



Poudel: "We have unique solution"

People talk of Desmond Tutu also but he had neither the power of the state with him nor a wider appeal like that of Mandela who too had not heeded followers with venom or vengeance due to the cruelest atrocities in the past. But he had a strong will to withstand such extremist pressures as he proceeded by his subsequent character that the power was not everything for him. Noble ideas have their importance but there must be upright honest upholder of that. Unfortunately, Nepal does not have leader of that caliber.

Although the common people of this country have an ideal and reconciliatory attitudes among themselves and this multi-ethnic, multi-racial and multi-

lingual country never had to go through such violence in the past, this peculiarity of Nepal should have its homegrown and spontaneous leadership which unfortunately has failed to groom up.

Recently some activities have been initiated by the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation. The senior minister from Nepali Congress has to undergo political metamorphosis to initiate a real peace and reconciliation.

There is a challenge not only between the conflicting interests of the class of victors in power which is known as eight party alliance but this has to embrace persons of that category also who have yet been denounced as reactionaries and revisionists.

Having been trained in a democratic tradition of the party which had heritage of the noble idea of national reconciliation as pronounced by B.P. Koirala, it is not inconceivable to expect Minister Poudel to initiate a true peace and reconciliation.

"If you want to make new Nepal, you must develop certain attitudes of adjustment, accommodations and forgiveness," said Poudel. "Our peace process has unique character and it was made possible by our own efforts. In this context, no model is applicable in Nepal. I myself suffered a lot, locked up in isolated place but I cannot recommend doing similar things for my enemy. I am not saying that gross human rights violators should be given amnesty."

Question of Impunity

The concept of impunity is much talked about theme in seminars and symposiums as well as in the press without elaborating much about its implications. If this concept is strictly applied in Nepal, at least there is nobody in the power at present who could be immune from the guilt of their past. Almost all politicians in this country have faced all kinds of criminal charges against them in their career in the past.

Even prime minister Koirala had countless charges against him in police records as he hijacked a civilian plane.

Koirala got amnesty even during controlled regime of Panchayat.

Several leaders of CPN-UML had serious criminal charges against them including cold blooded brutal murders. They, too, enjoyed complete amnesty from court conviction. The

recent group of Maoist leaders, too, have serious criminal charges against them and some of them have court convictions also, but they too are enjoying similar favor.

The same group of leaders in the government who had promoted the idea of political revenge, have slowly and gradually realized that for a better understanding between all shades of opinion in the country, political vengeance is not a proper course to follow.

Without considering intricacies of Nepal's politics, several non-governmental organizations backed by foreign centers are, all the time making propaganda to implement the strict standard of punishment for the past crimes.

"It will take some time for the witch hunting propaganda to subside though some NGOs may lose their lucrative jobs in this regard. So far as the criminalities are concerned, the laws of Nepal have enough provisions to deal with that. Whatever happens in an abnormal political situation of the country, there will be many aspects to take into consideration. In its peculiar geopolitical situation, it is very difficult to go into the root of the crimes of political nature and bring that into the court of justice. Courts of Nepal have been following all kinds of principles of fair



British ambassador Dr. Hall: Concerns about impunity

justice including the presumption of innocence," said the analyst.

A crime has to be proved beyond reasonable doubt and with all ingredients of motives and intention. "Nepal does not have that facility to dig out all covered deeds of political nature. Even if some cases are picked up and put into trial, that would ultimately prove to be a farcical one inspired by vendetta. The wisest and most practical thing to follow in Nepal at present is to concentrate mainly upon repairing the damages done in the past by all. They who were running the government in the past were using the same administrative machineries and security agencies which the rebels of past as leaders of government at present are using to restore peace and stability in the country," said the analyst.

One has to understand the concerns expressed by European Union and other western countries because they have strictly law abiding sensitivities from top to the bottom, even the violation of traffic rules which are ignored in South Asian countries, are very strictly dealt with in those countries. They have reached to the highest state of governance whereas Nepal is among those countries which have to live in a handicapped situation. The ultimate goal for a democratic order is the same but journey to that for Nepal will have many ups and downs with unpleasant compromises on the way. ■

“Monarchy Was The First Loser Of The Upsurge Of Extremist Communists, India Will Be Another Loser”

-Rabindra Nath Sharma

Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal president RABINDRA NATH SHARMA is a well known politician. Sharama spoke to KESHAB POUDEL on various issues regarding the contemporary political situation. Excerpts:

We have to start not only negotiations with armed and unarmed groups of terai, and Chure Bhawar but we also need India's support to pressure these groups. If we start our work now, I don't think they will create any problem for CA.

Do you see any possibility of holding the elections for Constituent Assembly?

If one looks at the ongoing political events on surface, possibility of holding the elections is doomed as Terai's armed movement is yet to die and the distrust between the people living in Terai and Chure Bhawar is widening. The Maoists, too, are still intimidating people and creating other obstructions. Necessary laws are yet to be passed. Beneath the surface, there is a different picture. Those groups who want to hold the elections at any cost don't care about free and fair and conducive environment that are prerequisite for credible election.

As Maoists claim that Constituent Assembly election is their agenda, what has prompted them to block the elections?

Certainly, Constituent Assembly election was Maoists' agenda in the past. But now, it is just a slogan. They don't want election because they fought twelve years long struggle not to restore plural multi-party democracy but for dictatorship of proletariat. They will not establish one party system through the elections. If they give up their ideology, there will be division in the party. No political leader whether he is Prachanda or Dr. Baburam are in a position to change their stand as their utility in leadership will end after giving up their ideological stand. Prolonging the present situation will serve their interest best.

At a time when many are saying that Maoists will sweep the elections, how do you look at it?

If election is held in free and fair manner, Maoists will not win even a single seat allocated for the first past the post system. Of course, they will win some seats on the basis of proportional representation. Maoists may not have a position as they have now after the election.

What about the response of international community?

International community including India wants to have election so that the government gets legitimacy. There is no doubt that there is a need to hold free, fair and impartial election to take the current political situation to its logical end.

How do you hold the election when large

numbers of new armed groups are terrorizing the southern plains?

There is a political solution to terai's problems. We have to start not only negotiations with armed and unarmed groups of terai, and Chure Bhawar but we also need India's support to pressure these groups. If we start our work now, I don't think they will create any problem for CA. I still see Maoists as the main stumbling block in holding election.

What is the way out to bring Maoists into the election process?

Maoists may participate in the election in case all other political parties agree to guarantee certain seats for them in coming election. Till Maoists do not get such guarantee, they will obstruct the election.

What about other parties?

Among the constituents of seven parties, Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have shown interest to hold the election. Political parties like ours also need election as we want to establish legitimacy of people. For other small constituents of alliance, election is not their priority. For instance, United People's Front - which will hardly win any seat in the parliament - is represented by a minister now. Similarly, United Left Front - which will not win a single seat, too, has representative in the government.

Do you mean to say that if Nepali Congress and CPN-UML agree to allocate certain reservation to the Maoists they would allow holding the election?

If two major parties allocate safe seats to Maoists, the election will be held. Again, it is going to be election for the sake of election. So far as holding free and fair election is concerned, I don't see any immediate possibility for that. Even if the election is held, that is going to be just a kind of election, which do not reflect aspiration of people.

Don't you see prolonged political instability in Nepal will have spill over effects on our neighbors?

Nepal's prolonged political instability will have spill over effects on both our neighbors. As a geographically closer neighbor, it will hamper India much more than other neighbor. However, our two neighbors cannot alone bring political stability in Nepal. Though India is still a decisive power in Nepal, it has to face other forces now. In the past, south of the Himalayas used to be

India's sphere of influence but that is gradually changing. The change is also brought about by development in Tibetan Autonomous Region including the improvement of transportation network. The role and importance of China has also increased. As a neighbor, China, too, has its stake.

How do you see China's involvement in Nepal?

China has not directly involved in Nepal's internal affair but it has indicated that it will not remain aloof in case of growing instability. The recent statement given by new Chinese ambassador to Nepal is very meaningful and significant in this context. Through the ambassador, China reaffirmed its commitment that it respects sovereignty and integrity of Nepal. It says that any foreign interference in Nepal's affair is not acceptable to China. It indicates that China wants its presence in Nepal.

Does China have any ally in Nepal?

Chinese know that they don't need to create force to defend their interest in Nepal. If you see the present case, one of the powerful parties of eight party alliance is gradually switching towards north.

How do you see the role of other players?

As the world's sole super power, America also has a strong presence in Nepal. Apart from that, there is the United Nations Mission in Nepal. The history of UN missions in the other countries show that their presence complicates the situation rather than resolving it. Though UN's mandate is just a year, it will be here for a long time to come.

As you said Nepal shares a long open border with India, what support Nepal needs from India to attain stability and prosperity?

As I have mentioned, India is still a decisive power in Nepal. We need all out support from our southern neighbor to bring stability and prosperity in Nepal. The relations of two countries are bound by geography, history and culture. As India has open border, prolonged political instability in Nepal will have spill over effect on India. At a time when India's Maoists have been expanding their areas of influence following methods and strategies adopted by Nepalese Maoists in the past, growing Maoist influence in Nepal will definitely be harmful to India.

How do you see India's attitude towards the present political situation and monarchy?

After meeting with Indian political friends and officials recently, I have reached to a conclusion that India is not against the institution of monarchy. Indian politicians and officials were definitely hurt by some actions King Gyanendra took after October 4, 2002 and February 1, 2005. After these events, India and Nepal were unable to develop political understanding. There are complaints in India that Palace did not fulfill its commitments made to India. They said that even

the King's action was hostile to their security interest and that Nepal's monarch did not respect India's sensitivity whether it was in Dhaka SAARC Summit or other international arena. They feel that while India supported monarchy in the entire crisis, the latter betrayed India whenever they required its support. I must say that it is in the interest of Nepal as well as in the interest of India to have constitutional monarchy in Nepal. Once this institution is uprooted, no force can provide stability in Nepal.

How do you see Chinese stand?

China has not spoken anything about Nepal's political process as it has shown that it will adjust with any system.

How do you explain the present stand of India that it will accept the verdict of Nepalese people?

This is a very vague and dubious stand. Will India accept verdict of Nepalese people to turn it into a tyrannical one party state? As the largest democratic country of the world, India must say clearly that India wants to see multi-party parliamentary democracy in Nepal. I don't understand why India is hesitating to say so. There is also the need to change perception in India.

Will chaotic Nepal serve India's interest?

As a friend of India, what I have always been saying is that only democratic and stable Nepal can serve the interests of India as it needs strong presence of democratic forces. From 12 point agreement to April's negotiations, India reportedly was involved in Nepal with an intention of establishing democratic process in Nepal. As 12 point agreement is gradually producing hostile results by diminishing the role of democratic forces in Nepal, the time will tell how justifiable the agreement to restore democracy in Nepal will be.

What do you suggest for long lasting peace in Nepal?

No single political force is decisive in Nepal. If all the political forces within eight party alliances and outside eight parties unite and major external players back them, then there will be possibility to bring the peace and normalcy in the country.

There is rumor that the efforts are underway to convert the present interim-legislature into the Constituent Assembly. How do you look at it?

It is the Maoists who want to avoid the election. If the situation demands, they will not mind to declare this interim legislative parliament (I want to say as a Bhardari Sabha) as the Constituent Assembly. Even former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa warned recently about the possibility to turn this parliament into a Constituent Assembly. Maoists will press for that. If efforts are being made to turn the existing nominated parliament into a Constituent Assembly (CA), it is definite to invite unfortunate situation. Such efforts will trigger permanent chaos.

What do you read from Surya Bahadur Thapa's recent remarks on the possibility of converting the present parliament into CA?

Look, I was not here when Thapa made that comment and I did not have any conversation with him before he made the comment. As a responsible and experienced

Will India accept verdict of Nepalese people to turn it into a tyrannical one party state? As the largest democratic country of the world, India must say clearly that India wants to see multi-party parliamentary democracy in Nepal

The world's history shows that declaring republic will not bring democracy and stability in the country. Afghanistan, Cambodia and Iran are very good examples how the state as a whole were devastated after the removal of monarchy and how authoritarian systems replaced old liberal systems.

politician, I don't think Surya Bahadurji made that remark without any basis. This is not a running commentary but a matter of serious consideration.

How do you see the position of democratic forces and democracy now?

Communists are still far away from grabbing the power but monarchy was the main loser of the actions of October 4, 2002 and February 1, 2005. Monarchy was the first loser of the upsurge of extremist communists in Nepal and India will be another loser of this new upsurge. Democratic forces will be wiped out if this trend continues for long. In this scenario, I have not seen any possibility for long lasting peace and stability.

As a party registered as a follower of constitutional monarchy, do you see any possibility to secure majority in election in the present context?

If all political parties, which have faith in constitutional monarchy, unite, there is immense possibility to secure majority in favor of constitutional monarchy. I am not talking about the new monarchy. What I am pleading is the same idea accepted by United People's Front and Nepali Congress in 1990 people's movement. Actually, I was not a part of that agitation but our party accepted the constitution pronounced by them. All the parties which were born after the political change of 1990, they adhered to the line of constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy. When we are taking the stand for constitutional monarchy, they accused us as a monarchist. What about them when the constitution of 1990 was drafted by Nepali Congress and United Left Front. We have not changed our stand but other political parties have changed.

How do you see the institution of monarchy?

It is very tragic to say that we have completely ignored the importance and utility of the institution of monarchy on the basis of the behavior by an individual King. Whether I will be alive or not, I can predict that the country will have to pay a huge price for the present activities directed against the institution of monarchy. Whether one likes it or not, institution of monarchy is the only factor uniting and safeguarding Nepal's sovereignty. If you ask me personally, I was the politician who was badly humiliated and who suffered much after King Gyanendra's action of October 4, 2002. Although Special Court has already given me a clean chit dismissing all the charges of corruption, it will take a long time to heal the humiliation suffered by my family members, relatives and myself. Whatever political and other personal cost I had to pay, as a country of multi-religious, multicultural and multi-linguistic with diverse geography, I still believe that only the institution of monarchy has the capability to unite and protect the

identity of our independent nation.

Don't you think removing monarchy will establish stability in Nepal?

The world's history shows that

declaring republic will not bring democracy and stability in the country. Afghanistan, Cambodia and Iran are very good examples how the state as a whole were devastated after the removal of monarchy and how authoritarian systems replaced old liberal systems. Monarchy is the essential factor for country's stability. Some countries even restored the monarchy to bring the stability and democracy. Show me a country where republic democracy was established following the removal of monarchy.

Leaders and workers of eight political parties term your party as regressive, how do you look at it?

It is very strange to say that I was the only one to have opposed all the move of King after October 4, 2002 but I am termed as a monarchist and regressive now. Those - who are in power now - had applied for the position of prime minister when the palace announced tender for the position. They now claim themselves to be revolutionaries and progressive. All those who instigated the King for direct rule are now standing as republicans. Since I am old and in my last leg of political career, I will oppose all kinds of tyranny whether it is by eight party or monarch. I don't have any hesitation to defend constitutional monarchy.

How do you see Girijababu's stand?

Girijababu who is known as a strong politician has lost his credibility as nobody knows what stand he will take the next day. Every moment he has been changing his stands. He took oath as a prime minister by King in April but he backed the proclamation of House of Representatives and signed the document to suspend the monarchy. Whether it is his old age or political compulsions, Girijababu is unstable on his views. He has already taken multiple stands on monarchy. They have deviated their stand from the April agreement with the King.

Do you see the possibility to turn Nepal into a peaceful, prosperous and stable nation?

There is a need for wisdom among all. There is a need for understanding among democratic and liberal parties. The Maoists, too, must change their behavior. If the situation like this continues, all of us Nepalis will be losers. ■



DISASTER RELIEF

Call For Access

Amid violence by armed Madhesi outfits and strike by Chure activists, UN calls for unhindered access for aid workers in flood-affected region

By A CORRESPONDENT

The UN has appealed for free and smooth access of relief workers and delivery of aid materials to flood-affected regions. After his three-day visit to the flood-affected areas in eastern region, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Matthew Kahane has pointed out the need to respect the Basic Operating Guidelines of the UN, donors and I/NGOs.

"It is essential that relief work is not interfered with by any individuals or groups of people and I urge all parties in the flood affected districts to allow humanitarian and development workers to carry on their activities without fear or any form of interference. Bandhs and intimidation obviously hinder relief work directly," stated Kahane.

In a statement issued by United Nations Information Center, Kahane has said that in absence of unhindered access for humanitarian workers and delivery of relief, it will be very difficult to provide the much needed support to flood victims.

The eastern region, particularly Terai districts, has been affected by violence and killings by several armed outfits in recent months. Since last few days, the activists of Chure Bhawar Ekata Samaj have staged strike in highways, which

could affect the transport of relief materials and aid workers.

Kahane visited the eastern region to assess the effects of the floods and the potential longer-term humanitarian consequences of this natural disaster, according to a press release issued by UNIC.

"I am very happy to see that most of the flood waters have receded, but I am struck by the considerable damage caused by the flood and its immediate and longer-term impact on the livelihoods of the people affected," stated Kahane.

Kahane visited some of the most affected VDCs and held meetings with the Presidents and District Chapter Chairmen of Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) and the Chief District Officers in Sunsari, Saptari and Siraha districts, the release adds. He also attended a regional coordination meeting of UN agencies, the NRCS and the INGOs involved in the flood response in Biratnagar, Morang District.

Although encouraged by the fact that affected families had resumed their daily agricultural and employment activities including rice planting, he was concerned whether the flood victims had enough resources to re-establish their livelihoods without additional help.

He further witnessed effective

assessments being done by the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS), the Police, the Armed Police (APF), and community volunteers under the overall coordination of the CDOs with resources provided by the Government, international and national Non Governmental Organisations (I/NGOs) and the United Nations (UN) as well as local private entrepreneurs through the NRCS.

"We believe that the NRCS as an impartial Nepali organisation with a country-wide network is best placed to continue doing assessments and providing immediate flood response with the support of law enforcement personnel and UN agencies," said Kahane adding, "We heard from the villages of the need for more comprehensive river management arrangements and embankments to avoid future flooding."

With support from the Government, UN, I/NGOs and the private sector, NRCS seemed to have sufficient stocks to take care of the immediate needs of the affected. But the logistical support like boats, jeeps; and the fuel to operate them, to get the relief materials to the affected people from the district headquarters on time, remained in short supply, the release adds.

"Now that the water has receded, there is a need for detailed assessment under the supervision of the District Administration and with the support of the NGOs, UN, NRCS and other technical people to assess crop loss and damaged infrastructure like roads, bridges and irrigation canals."

According to the latest NRCS estimates, 96 people have died; a total of 337, 241 people are reportedly affected throughout the country; 22,248 houses are partially and 15,819 houses are completely destroyed. ■

RED CROSS ISSUES APPEAL

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has made an emergency appeal "for \$1.7 million to help more than 20,000 families affected by torrential monsoon rains, landslides and extensive flooding in the south of Nepal."

The Nepal Red Cross Society has estimated that more than 330,000 people have been affected due to floods.

"The hardest hit communities need to receive food, clean water, and access to sanitation facilities," says the secretary general of the Nepal Red Cross, Dev Ratna Dhakhwa. "But we also need to look beyond this emergency phase, towards helping people return to a normal way of life and enable vulnerable communities to be prepared for future disasters such as this," he adds, in a

statement issued by the Red Cross.

The Nepal Red Cross has been leading the distribution of relief in the country and is working closely with the government, United Nations agencies and other aid organizations. Volunteers in each of the 33 affected districts have so far distributed rice, noodles, salt and sugar to around 30,000 families, along with first aid and ambulance services. Plastic sheets, cooking utensils and blankets have also been given to more than 3,000 families. ■

Quietly comes the new National Anthem

-by Madan Regmi

After dillydally of eight months the Eight Party Government finally declared a National Anthem almost quietly on August 3rd 2007- this day will be remembered as a historic one as on this day Nepal got a National Anthem- where the country and the people have an honorable place.

This National Anthem has replaced the one thrust on the people for over forty years. In reminiscence, in 1899 the then Rana Prime Minister Bir Shamsheer Rana had introduced two salutation music, one for the Monarch and the next for the Prime Minister. Both of these were without lyrics. Bir Shamsheer had seized power by massacring the siblings of Junga Bahadur Rana, the founder of the Rana regime. End of the Rana rule in 1950 also led to the elimination of the Rana Prime Minister's salutation song. The Monarch's salutation music however was declared as the National Anthem by the absolute Monarch Mahendra in 1962- and its lyric was written by Chakra Pani Chalishe. This "national anthem", a eulogy of the Monarchy, was meant to alienate the Nepalese people from the patriotic feelings right from their childhood and to make them Royalist. It read:

*"May glory crown you, courageous
Sovereign,
You, the gallant Nepali,
Shri Panch Maharajadhiraja, our
glorious ruler,
May he live for many years to come
And may the number of his subjects
increase*

Let every Nepalese sing this with joy."

Nepal reeled without National Anthem for eight months. The Eight Party Government in dilemma yet couldn't afford to lose its face. Thus it conceded to the popular will and finally declared Byakul Maila's (Pradip Rai's) lyrics which was given music by the famous composer Mr. Ambar Gurung as the National Anthem. This reads:

*"Of hundreds of blooming flowers, we
the one garland - Nepali*

*Sovereign, spread out from Mechi to
Mahakali.*

*Amassing nature's millions of resources
By the blood of heroes, independent
and immovable.*

*Land of knowledge, land of peace,
Terai hill Himalaya*

*Indivisible this beloved, our
motherland Nepal.*

*The diverse races, languages, faiths,
and cultures are comprehensive*

*Our progressive nation, long live long
live Nepal."*

(Unofficial translation)

This National Anthem has represented the people and the nation to an extent. This of course is an achievement that demonstrates the rising people's power. The Royalists, nevertheless, are after smearing the patriotic lyrics of Byakul Maila. These Royalists should understand that the so-called national anthem declared by King Mahendra was a humiliation to the nation and the Nepalese people. One can of course say that Maila's lyrics could have been more forceful. Of course there are rooms for

improvement in the future.

The Royalist are so blind that they don't even know the universally acknowledge definition of the national anthem which says, "a national anthem is a generally patriotic musical composition that is evoking and eulogizing the history, traditions and struggles of its people, recognized either by a nation's government as the official national song, or by convention through use by the people". Nevertheless the National Anthem should have been presented to the people in a grand way accompanied by National celebrations.

For an apt judgment of the Nepalese of all over the world, it will be worthwhile to illustrate the national anthems of some few countries at least, so that they will have some idea of how far we have achieved in the making of a Glorious National anthem.

Bangladesh

*My Bengal of Gold,
I love you.*

Forever your skies,

Your air set my heart in tune

As if it were a flute.

In spring, O mother mine,

The fragrance from your mango groves

Makes me wild with joy,

Ah, what a thrill!

In autumn, O mother mine,

In the full blossomed paddy fields

*I have seen spread all over sweet
smiles.*

Ah, what a beauty, what shades,

*What an affection, and what a
tenderness!*

What a quilt have you spread

At the feet of banyan trees
 And along the banks of rivers!
 O mother mine, words from your lips
 Are like nectar to my ears.
 Ah, what a thrill!
 If sadness, O mother mine,
 Casts a gloom on your face,
 My eyes are filled with tears!

China

Arise! All who refuse to be slaves!
 Let our flesh and blood become our
 new Great Wall!
 As the Chinese nation faces its greatest
 peril,
 All forcefully expend their last cries.
 Arise! Arise! Arise!
 May our million hearts beat as one,
 Brave the enemy's fire, March on!
 Brave the enemy's fire, March on!
 March on! March on! On!

Cuba

Hasten to battle, men of Bayamo,
 That the homeland looks proudly to
 you.
 Do not fear a glorious death
 Because to die for the country is to live.
 To live in chains *
 Is to live in dishonour and ignominy.
 Hear the clarion call,
 Hasten, brave ones, to battle!

France

Arise, children of the fatherland
 The day of glory has arrived!
 Against us, the tyranny's
 Bloody banner is raised. (repeat)
 Do you hear in the fields
 The howling of these savage soldiers?
 They are coming into your midst
 To cut the throats of your sons, your
 wives!
 To arms, citizens!
 Form your battalions!
 Let us march, let us march!
 May tainted blood
 Water our fields!
 Sacred patriotic love,
 Lead and support our avenging arms
 Liberty, cherished liberty,

Fight back with your defenders!
 (repeat)
 Under our flags, let victory
 Hurry to your manly tone,
 So that your enemies, in their last
 breath,
 See your triumph and our glory!
 To arms, citizens...

Monaco

Forever, in our land,
 One flag has flown in the wind
 Forever, the colours red and white
 Have symbolised our liberty
 Great and small [people] have always
 respected them.

Sri Lanka

Mother Lanka we salute Thee!
 Plenteous in prosperity, Thou,
 Beauteous in grace and love,
 Laden with corn and luscious fruit
 And fragrant flowers of radiant hue,
 Giver of life and all good things,
 Our land of joy and victory,
 Receive our grateful praise sublime,
 Lanka! we worship Thee.
 Thou gavest us Knowledge and Truth,
 Thou art our strength and inward faith,
 Our light divine and sentient being,
 Breath of life and liberation.
 Grant us, bondage free, inspiration.
 Inspire us for ever.
 In wisdom and strength renewed,
 Ill-will, hatred, strife all ended,
 In love enfolded, a mighty nation
 Marching onward, all as one,
 Lead us, Mother, to fullest freedom.

United States

O say, can you see, by the dawn's early
 light,
 What so proudly we hailed at the
 twilight's last gleaming,
 Whose broad stripes and bright stars,
 through the perilous fight
 O'er the ramparts we watched, were
 so gallantly streaming?
 And the rockets' red glare, the bombs
 bursting in air
 Gave proof through the night that our

flag was still there;
 O say, does that star-spangled banner
 yet wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home
 of the brave?
 On the shore, dimly seen thro' the mist
 of the deep,
 Where the foe's haughty host in dread
 silence reposes,
 What is that which the breeze, o'er the
 towering steep,
 As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half
 discloses?
 Now it catches the gleam of the
 morning's first beam,
 In full glory reflected, now shines on
 the stream
 'Tis the star-spangled banner. Oh! long
 may it wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home
 of the brave!
 And where is that band who so
 vauntingly swore
 That the havoc of war and the battle's
 confusion
 A home and a country should leave us
 no more?
 Their blood has washed out their foul
 footsteps' pollution.
 No refuge could save the hireling and
 slave
 From the terror of flight, or the gloom
 of the grave,
 And the star-spangled banner in
 triumph doth wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home
 of the brave.
 Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall
 stand
 Between their loved homes and the
 war's desolation,
 Blest with victory and peace, may the
 Heav'n-rescued land
 Praise the Power that hath made and
 preserved us a nation!
 Then conquer we must, when our cause
 it is just,
 And this be our motto: "In God is our
 Trust"

REMITTANCE FROM INDIA

According to 'Study Report on Remittances from India', published by Nepal Rastra Bank, the migrant workers' remittances alone contributed to 16.7 percent to the country's gross domestic products (GDP) in 2005-06, while the contribution of remittance from India stood at 2.1 percent.

The central bank's report, which is based on surveys in New Delhi and five major border points along the Indo-Nepal border, is first of its kind of a study on remittance from India, reports *The Himalayan Times* daily.

The study has revealed that the majority (99 percent) of the remittance from India comes through unofficial channels such as through friends and relatives or workers bringing the money themselves when they come home on leave.

The report points out the need of encouraging workers for using official channels such as banks and financial institutions as well as money transfer agencies to remit their hard earned money back home. The banks and

financial institutions both in Nepal and India are yet to exploit a huge scope of inward money transfer business from India to Nepal, says the report. The report contemplates that the decelerating reserve of Indian Currency (IC) in Nepal could be controlled if remittance from India was routed through official channels. It is worthwhile to note that the central bank purchased Rs 64 billion worth of IC by paying \$920 million from its reserves during the fiscal year 2006-07 alone to finance trade deficit among others.

Nepal received an average of Rs 12 billion in remittance annually from India over the past six years, although a mere one percent of the amount was remitted through official channels.

The remittance inflow from Indian has maintained a growth of an average 23.67 percent over the past 15 years against 37.78 percent growth in total inflows. However, the share of Indian remittance out of the total remittances dropped to 12.4 percent in 2005-06

from 45.5 percent 1989-90.

Nepal had received Rs 968.7 million in 1989-90, which climbed to Rs 12.10 billion in 2005-06. On the other hand, the share of overseas remittances grew dramatically by 87.6 percent to Rs 85.43 billion in 2005-06 from more than Rs 1.15 billion in 1989-90.

The study has found that most Nepali migrant workers in India are unskilled or semi-skilled, earning IRs 3,000-4,000 a month. Majority of these workers hail from hill districts of western and mid-western Nepal. New Delhi, Mumbai, Himanchal Pradesh and Haryana are the major destinations for Nepali migrant workers in India while many of them are working in Gorkha Rifles of the Indian Army.

Based on a field survey in New Delhi, the report estimates that a Nepali worker can remit an average of IRs 25,016 a year, which is more than double of what previous estimation of Nepal Living Standard Survey 2004 had. It had estimated per capita remittance from India at IRs 11,510.

Dollar Depreciation Affects Remittance

The depreciation of US dollar has affected the remittance earning and foreign exchange reserve, say reports. The growth rate of forex reserve has declined in the first 11 months of the last fiscal year.

The report on economic situation about the 11 months of recently ended fiscal year (2006/07) published by the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has stated that during that period, total forex reserve declined

by 1.6 percent to reach Rs 162 billion. The central bank has said that the decline is due to depreciation of US dollar.

During this period, the value of US dollar depreciated by 13.3 percent compared with its appreciation by 4.22 percent in the previous fiscal year. The scarcity of Indian currency has also deepened. During the review period, NRB spent US\$ 820 million to buy Rs 57.36 billion of Indian

currency. The share of Indian currency in total forex reserve stands at only 5 percent.

The report says the inflation rate has come down to 4.5 percent during the period compared with 9.1 percent previous year. Total exports have increased merely by 0.8 percent. Exports to third countries have declined (by 2 percent) while those to India have marginally increased (by 2.1 percent). Total imports have increased by 11 percent. Although government spending has increased, it has been sustained by the handsome rise in revenue collection.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OBSERVE INT'L DAY

The fifteenth International Day of Indigenous People has been observed, Thursday (August 9), in the country by holding various programs. While various ethnic groups took out rallies in the capital demanding right to indigenous people and calling for meaningful Constituent Assembly elections, the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFIN) organized the major celebrations in Butwal in western Nepal.

Addressing the celebrations in Butwal, Ian Martin, chief of UNMIN and Special Representative of UN Secretary General, expressed satisfaction over the recently sealed deal between the government and indigenous community. "This year's International Day of the World's Indigenous People has particular resonance in Nepal, with the dialogue between Janajati representatives and the Government resulting in a positive outcome this week," he said.

Terming the agreement as a major step for Nepal's indigenous peoples, Martin said, "It also highlights the need for continuing dialogue to ensure that there is consensus on the electoral system with Madhesis, Dalits and other traditionally marginalized groups. This will contribute to achieving the ultimate goal of the election: to produce a Constituent Assembly that is truly representative and able to frame a constitution which responds to the aspirations of all Nepalese people."

Martin also appealed to the indigenous community to pay particular attention towards uplifting "most marginalized within the community as well as women." "In this week's agreement between the Janajati and Government representatives, the Government made the commitment to adopt and ratify two important United Nations instruments. Firstly, the Government committed to adopt the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention (known as Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization), which ensures consultation with and participation of indigenous communities and organizations. And secondly, it committed to ratify the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which establishes international human rights standards for the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. The Declaration was adopted by the Human Rights Council in June 2006, and the General Assembly is expected to adopt it in the coming days."

Addressing a separate program by the National Network of Indigenous Women in Kathmandu, Sandra Beidas, acting OHCHR representative in Nepal, said, "Creating an inclusive Nepalese society will take time. But greater representation for marginalized groups in the Constituent Assembly - including greater representation of Janajati women - should provide an unprecedented opportunity for such groups to have a strong role in determining the shape and nature of the new Nepal." Louise Arbour, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a statement issued on Thursday, called on member states of the United Nations - including Nepal - to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the General Assembly in the next few days. Nepalnews.com reports ■

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"The Government Should Ensure Implementation Of The Acts"

-Raghu Panta

Having a long experience in media, CPN-UML Central Committee member RAGHU PANTA is now a member of Legislative-Parliament where he heads the Environment, Communication and Technology Committee. After a long gap, parliament has passed two bills, one is related to Working Journalist and another is related to Right to Information and Panta worked as a head of bill reform committee and was behind their passage. Panta spoke to SPOTLIGHT on various issues related with the new acts. Excerpt:

Do you think the elections for Constituent Assembly will be held?

We must hold the elections for CA on schedule. If we cannot hold elections, it will not only be the failure of eight political parties but failure of all the people who believe in Loktantrik system. It will create more trouble and uncertainty in the country. For this, eight political parties who are in power have greater responsibility. I hope that we can hold the elections if we remain united.

How do you hold the elections when there is rampant violence in terai and Maoists are demanding declaring republic before the poll?

After their recent national meetings, Maoists seem to have back-tracked from their earlier commitments. Maoists' two conditions on proportional representation and declaration of republic from the parliament are directed to push the elections for CA farther. If they are really committed, they should have followed CPN-UML's two stands when we engaged in negotiations (on interim constitution). Now the Maoists cannot go beyond their commitment. In his first public interview, Prachanda said that they would accept the verdict of the people given through the elections of Constituent Assembly. It is for the people of Nepal to decide whether they want monarchy or not. If Maoist leader Prachanda is really sincere to his commitment, he must show political honesty abiding by his own commitments.

What is the response of your party?

Our party holds the view that this decision of Maoist is to preempt the elections for Constituent Assembly.

As a member of parliament involved in reforming two bills - right to information and working journalist - how did you try to make them effective?

The bill regarding Right to

Information and Working Journalist Act (First Amendment) were two important bills tabled in the parliament during this session. After long and intensive discussions, members of our committee asked me to be a coordinator of the committee to make necessary changes and amendments on both the bills. I am happy to say that the amendments and suggestions given by my sub-committee were accepted by full committee. Later on, parliament passed the bill incorporating all our suggestions and amendments. Both the bills have their own values.

What are the major highlights of Right to Information Act?

We have been raising the concern regarding the need of Right to Information Act since the political change of 1990. Finally, we were able to pass it. This bill is not only related to press but also the common citizens of Nepal who can now have access to almost all information of the state. The bill empowers common citizens of Nepal. This will strengthen the fundamental rights of the citizens. This act will guarantee the fundamental rights of the citizens. More will we practice, more the people will be empowered. After the constitution of Nepal, this act is another milestone.

How do you see the Working Journalist Act?

This act is aimed at guaranteeing the jobs of working journalists of Nepal. It is related to the rights and duties of working journalists. At present, most of the broadsheet dailies are in a position to provide some kinds of facilities to journalists, trade unions and other workers working under such media house. The management and investors of such big houses must realize that it is the hard labors of journalists, employees and laborers that have contributed to make them profitable. Success and failures of any organization depends upon the hard labor and commitment of workers. One of the aims of the act is to make arrangements to share certain percent of profits between media houses and working journalist. The management of media houses must guarantee the jobs of working journalists, and their right to assemble under trade union law. Media houses must pay certain compensation to journalists and provide adequate salary. This is not a complete act and

there will be need to update it. This act is a balance, as it does not intend to harm the interest of investors. The act will protect the rights of the working journalists.

Having long experiences of working in weekly tabloids yourself, do you see any possibility of implementing the act?

It is definite that small newspapers are not in a position to implement the act. The government has given prerogative whether to implement all provisions of the act or to implement some of them. This act is balanced. The government has to take initiative to implement it.

But, some of the investors of big media houses said the act is one sided and it ignores the interest of investors?

Of course, this bill is aimed to protect the interests and rights of working journalist but the act also gives certain privileges to investors and management. There is also a provision under which the management can hire 15 percent of its editorial staffs under contract.

Had you discussed this issue with the representatives of media houses?

Unfortunately, we did not have any discussion with representatives of the managers of media house. Although we invited media owners, they did not come. We also wanted to listen to them. I also hold the view that working journalists can enjoy their rights and privileges only if the media houses under which journalists work can survive. If media houses cannot survive, there is no question of protection of rights for the working journalists only. This act is not made to control the media owners but to protect all those working in the media.

How do you see the obstruction created by some trade unions in the media?

The media owners should give right to working journalists, laborers and employees and they cannot prevent the right to unite in media houses. Media houses are not only professional organization but also an industry. This is the reason every one has the right to unite to protect their rights. However, in the name of exercising their rights, workers must not obstruct the distribution of newspapers. ■



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