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SPOTLIGHT

Dec 21-27, 2007

Amendment of Interim Constitution

Nullifying The CA

IC Crunch : Serious Trouble
Garbage Politics : Dirty Capital

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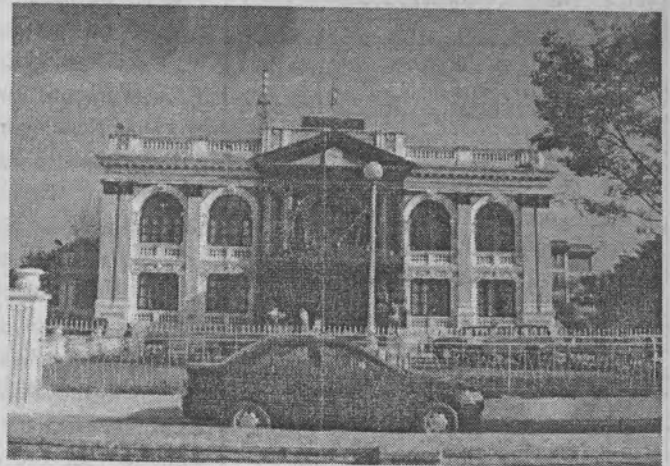
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SPOTLIGHT

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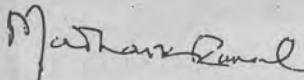
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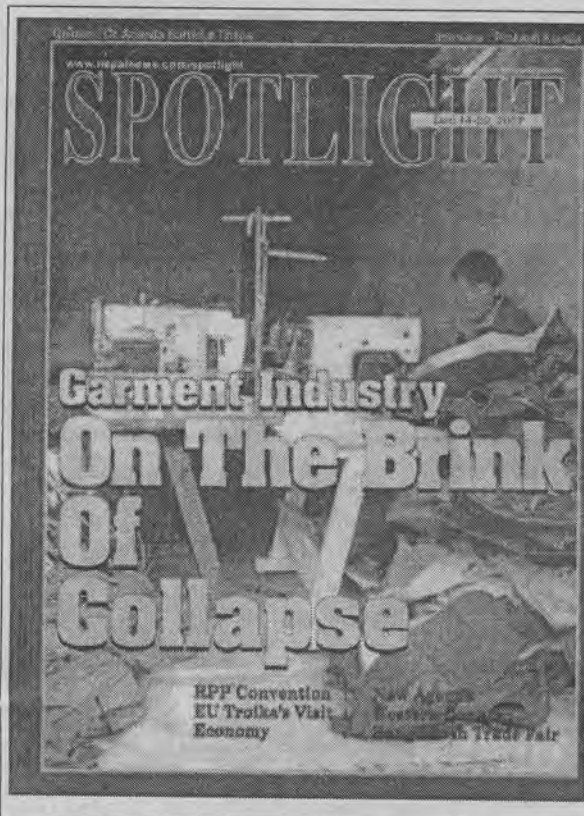
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The imperative elections to the Constituent Assembly have given to the SPA government a *carte blanche* that is being used with the greatest impunity to perpetrate their unconstitutional government subjecting the poor helpless people of Nepal to miseries and greater miseries. The CPN-Maoists, whose appetite for power was whetted by the brief stint in government, like human blood makes a simple tiger, a man eater, are losing their patience. They not only want a share in the government, but equal share of the important portfolios which makes it crystal clear that their only intention is to entrench themselves in power. They know they cannot win any considerable number of seats in any elections not conducted by themselves. And that is why they don't want the elections to the constituent assembly. As a matter fact, the seven parties too, sharing the government don't want to face the elections lest they lose the perks and the opportunities to make big money without efforts and investments. That's why they have passed in the parliament that the proposed constituent assembly will have 601 seats necessitating that more than half be nominated. This very number clearly exposes the evil intentions of the SPAM. How can a small and poor country like Nepal sustain such a large constituent assembly when countries like the United States, the United Kingdom and even the giant India too don't have that many. This very large number of the proposed CA is sure to prohibit the elections. In a situation, where the government has unequivocally proved its incompetence to maintain law and order, to provide basic necessities to the people and to generate even a semblance of confidence, the prime need of the hour is to change this unconstitutional government without a moment's delay, if we, the poor Nepalis are serious to save the integrity of the country. Since this government has no authority and no sanctions whatsoever to usurp the peoples' birth right to choose the form of government they must forbear to declare the country a Republic, and rather call for a referendum. They should not over look the possibility that they can be made accountable and face their indiscretions in future when they are out of power. It is a pity to see why the patriotic and nationalist forces are taking such a long time to unite and take appropriate steps and save the country from the clutches of power mongers. It is time Nepal's friends realized their folly of backing the wrong horse and save the poor Nepalis from further miseries. The time is running out for the great Indians too to gracefully accept their blunder not only in Nepal but in the whole South Asian region. They must not forget that those who live in glass house should not throw stone at others. And it is most high time for our security forces to sit up and take notice and not to forget that it will lose its glory and importance if it turns hybrid.


Madhav K. Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Plight of Industry

Your cover story on Garment Industry (Spotlight Dec 14-20) is interesting as it revealed the pathetic situation of Nepal's (once) highest foreign currency earner industry. It is very unfortunate to see once a shining sector of Nepal's booming export regime, the garment industry has taken a severe beating but nobody seems to be concerned about it. At a time when everybody is talking about the election for Constituent Assembly, nobody has the time to pay attention to this tragic situation.

*Sunder Shrestha
Via email*

Collapsing Economy

Nepal's industries are collapsing one after another. Garment is the recent one. From Maoist extortion to threat of general strike, Nepal's industrial sector has seen many bad situations in the recent years. It seems that running and destroying industry and industrial base in Nepal is a hidden agenda of somebody else. This may be the reason why no politician has ever talked about the collapse of garment industry. In the last one decade, Maoists have already shown that their primary duty is not to spread Maoism but to destroy Nepal's foundations and finally ruin the country. It is unfortunate that the response of other parties also is not different. When Nepal's industrial bases are collapsing one after another, nobody is there to speak for them.

*Anup Lama
Melbourne via email*

Garment Woes

It is very unfortunate to read about the pathetic condition of Nepal's once burgeoning garment industry. The

analysis made by your reporter is very interesting and logical. Along with local reason, international conditions are also responsible for the collapse of garment industry. Once the quota given to Nepalese garment in the United States was cancelled, Nepalese industry collapsed. For the fate of present situation, one has to blame, industrialists also who too failed to diversify Nepalese garment market once the US suspended quota system to Nepal.

*Bikram Shrestha
Samakhushi*

Political Pawns

The story on political instability, its cause and effects was very interesting to read. I agree with the last paragraph said by the political analyst that it is a tragedy with Nepal that persons supposed to lead the country have become pawns in the hands of an expansionist power of the south. It clearly indicates how Nepalese leaders are serving the interest of others scarifying their country's interest. Maoists' compulsion is understandable as Maoists leaders have been trained and supported by Nepal's southern

neighbors. Actually, they are Gandhian Maoist. But, the betrayal by Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala, whose brother B.P. Koirala sacrificed his life for the country, is a shame. Even for Indians they will get nothing from their misguided policy and military adventurism in Nepal. Everyone knows that India is such a big country, which can destroy Nepal in a moment. Will it guarantee its security interest in Nepal? Even if it breaks up southern plain, where there are so many small armed groups, who are backed and supported by Indian intelligence, reasonable person cannot think that it will serve India's interest. It is strange why Indians are playing such a game with Nepal.

*Bibek Gurung
London Via email*

Prakash Speaks

It was very interesting to read the interview of Prakash Koirala. At a time when all former Panchas who enjoyed the power and privileges under the direct



rule of King have turned republican, Prakash Koirala has shown his guts by speaking in favor of King though Koirala was a minister in King Gyanendra's cabinet for just a few months. From RPP leader Pashupati Rana to former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa, all have already given up their stand on monarchy, but the son of B.P. Koirala has shown guts. There may be agreements and disagreements over the issues what Prakash Koirala has raised to defend the institution.

*Bindu Subba
Dharan via-email*

This Is Last Chance For Koirala, Says Nepal

The UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal has said that by agreeing to reschedule the Constituent Assembly polls and fix new deadline of holding it by mid-April, 2008, his party had given the last chance for Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala. Talking to reporters in Kathmandu airport before he left for Kolkata, India to take part in a program



by Indian communist parties, he said, "This will be his last chance to hold election. If he fails this time, we will not follow him." *Leading dailies report*

Govt To Withdraw Shailaja's Nomination

The Foreign Ministry is going to withdraw its nomination of Shailaja Acharya as Nepalese ambassador to India owing to her 'serious health condition.' Acharya's nomination has already been accepted by Indian government. Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry sources said the ministry is 'informally' inquiring about the delay in sending the agreement letter by the governments of Saudi Arabia, Australia and France to the nominated Nepali envoys. We understand that France is going to make its decision based on the peace process, and the Maoist position in parliament and government, a source claimed. Likewise, the source added that the delay from Australia could be due to change in the government there. Hamid Ansari of UML had been nominated as envoy for Saudi Arabia while Yogendra Dhakal and Pampha Bhusal, both of Maoists, were nominated for Australia and France, respectively. *Kantipur daily reports*

Strict Law Against Bank Frauds

The government recently introduced the Banking and Punishment Bill with an aim to control crimes in the banking and financial institutions and proposed stern punishments for anyone found guilty of such offences. This is the first time that the government is preparing to promulgate Act related with crimes in financial and banking sectors. The Bill has a provision barring the founder, members of the board of director or shareholder or chief executive officer of any bank or any of their close relative from withdrawing loan from bank or financial institution they are affiliated to. The Bill, however, allows staffers to withdraw loans from the banks and financial institutions they work for. Finance Minister Dr Ram Sharan Mahat had introduced the bill in the parliament a few days ago. The Bill has proposed imprisonment of up to four years for anyone convicted of financial crime in banks and financial sectors. The parliament has given a few days' time to the parliamentarians to register amendment proposal for the Bill. The Bill has barred anyone from opening a bank account under a fake name or from helping anyone to do so. The Bill has also barred anyone from issuing a cheque that would bounce because of wrong number of inadequate balance. The Bill maintains that any bank account be kept secret and it has criminalized any act to make accounts public. The Bill has also proposed criminalizing any act of withdrawing money from other's account by using forged cheque, ATM card or any debit or credit card. The Bill has also proposed to criminalize the act of using bank loans for purposes other than mentioned in the loan contract. The Bill bars any defaulter from depositing money in foreign banks and that the bank defaulters have to pay back the bank loans. *The Himalayan Times daily reports*

NSU Raises Voice Against YCL

The Nepali Congress (NC) affiliated Nepal Student Union (NSU) organized a protest demonstration against atrocities



by the Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) in the capital on Sunday (Dec 16). The demonstration was organized at the backdrop of continuing atrocities by the YCL cadres, according to NSU president Pradeep Poudel. Last week, the YCL cadres had physically assaulted 11 NSU activists in a college in Pokhara. The NSU's rally started from Tri-Chandra Campus and went around Putalisadak, Shahid Gate and ended into a public meeting in Ratna Park. "Many people have been victimised by YCL. We will give leadership to such victims now," Poudel said. He also said that NSU was maintaining maximum restraint because it gave high priority to the peace process. "But our limit is reaching its end. If no one else is honest toward peace process, there is no need for us alone to be committed," he said.

Compiled from reports

Nepal Says Maoists Can't Go To Election With PLA

The general secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Madhav Kumar Nepal has said that the Maoists cannot go to the election with its People's Liberation Army (PLA). "A political party cannot keep army or armed militants. (They should) build sister organization not a group that fights," he said, inaugurating the district convention of the party in Chitawan, Saturday (Dec 15). Stating that the PLA will cast a shadow of fear among people during voting, he urged the Maoists to break their relations with the gun. He also urged the Maoists to put a total stop to intimidation, abduction and extortion. *Kantipur daily reports*

NAC To Halt Flights For Two Weeks

Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) is suspending all its international flights from Tuesday (December 18) for 13 days as its lone functional Boeing flies off to Brunei for a C-check, a complete overhaul. The airline's other Boeing aircraft is grounded because of a faulty engine. NAC expects to suffer losses in the amount of Rs 15 million daily in missed revenue as a result of the cancelled flights. "We will be removing the engine from the jet that is going away and fit it to the grounded aircraft and have it in the air from January 1," NAC managing director Gautam Das Shrestha told the parliamentary Public Finance Committee. According to Shrestha, the corporation earned revenue of Rs 1.004 billion from its international flights during the first four months of the current fiscal year. NAC conducts 11 weekly flights to six countries. At the meeting, parliamentarians underscored the need to reform the national flag carrier and operate it under the concept of public-private partnership. The NAC management kept the engine lying in Hong Kong for over 20 months without getting it overhauled as it wasted time in an effort to fulfill its "vested interests". In a controversial deal last month, the troubled carrier finally awarded a contract to overhaul two Boeing 757 engines, one lying in Hong Kong and the other in Brunei. Lawmaker Dr Prakash Sharan Mahat said the national carrier needed to prepare its institutional framework as the first step towards reform. IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, has initiated efforts to help restructure the distressed airline. During the last four months, NAC has been able to put only a single aircraft on its international service when foreign airlines have been rushing into Nepal's skies lured by increasing traffic. Responding to the stream of holidaymakers traveling to Nepal since the end of the conflict, the number of world airlines connecting the Himalayan nation has doubled during the last 13 months. Many carriers have also expanded their frequency recently.

eKantipur reports

Maoists To Shut Regional, Ethnic Wings

The Maoists are to dissolve their sister organizations formed on ethnic and regional basis soon. Maoist chairman Prachanda, speaking to journalists, Thursday (Dec 13) morning in Janakpur, said, "Since the duration of ethnic and regional fronts were for a limited period, we will dissolve such fronts soon." There will be involvement of Madhesi in the central leadership of the party as many Madhesi youth leaders are coming up in the party, he said. The formation of a regional party by the deserters of different parties including the Nepali Congress will have no effect on his party, he said, adding, "The deserters were active to form a regional party for quite some time and they deserted their respective parties when the time was favorable to them." *The Himalayan Times daily reports*

Poudel Accuses Palace Of Conspiring To Divide Congress

Nepali Congress Vice President and Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Minister Ram Chandra Poudel has alleged that the royal palace is hatching conspiracies to fuel violent conflict in Terai and spilt the Congress party. Interacting with the party activists in Nepalgunj, Wednesday (Dec 12), Minister Poudel said that the resignation of Minister Mahanta Thakur and other Madhesi lawmakers hinted at the conspiracy. "Due to the groupism within the NC and the conspiracy of the palace, even more problems could arise in the peace process," he said. *Compiled from reports*

ADB Extends \$100 Million Grants

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has extended US\$ 100 million in grants to help reduce poverty in isolated areas of Nepal to ensure more inclusive and sustainable economic growth. A statement issued Wednesday (Dec 13) by the ADB said the Rural Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Sector Development Program would also receive a US\$ 10 million loan from the OPEC Fund for

International Development. The loan will be managed by ADB. Through this support, ADB said it would provide much needed resources to promote good governance and poverty reduction by improving the policy environment for inclusive growth and reconstructing and rehabilitating rural infrastructure in remote areas of Nepal. The assistance package is made up of a US\$ 50 million program grant from ADB, and a project grant, which will be funded by another US\$ 50 million grant from the Bank, the loan from OPEC Fund for International Development, US\$ 15.7 million from the government of Nepal, and US\$ 2.7 million from beneficiaries. *Compiled from reports*

RPP Drops Monarchy From Statute

The Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) has dropped reference to monarchy from its party statute. The fourth national convention passed an amendment proposal to omit the reference from the statute. RPP president Pashupati SJB Rana said that the party will now focus on election and work to build alliance with like-minded parties. Meanwhile, a large section of RPP convention representatives demanded that the party decide to opt for



referendum on monarchy instead of dropping reference to monarchy in statute. Later, the dispute was resolved after all agreed to give the authority to make decision on this matter to Rana and senior leader Lokendra Bahadur Chand. *Leading dailies report*



Ophthalmologist Dr. Sanduk Ruit receiving Order of Australia decoration from Australian envoy Graeme Lade

Annapurna Post

ADDING TO THE WOES OF CONSUMERS, on the top of continuing shortage of petroleum supplies, the dealers have threatened to launch strike. The petroleum entrepreneurs have warned of coming into agitation by closing the petrol pumps all over the country if the government does not provide sufficient petroleum products according to the demands. Speaking at a press conference held in Pokhara, Central President of Nepal Petroleum Dealer Association (NPDA), Shiva Kumar Ghimire said that they would come into national level strike if the petroleum products would not be supplied according to the demands of consumers and businessmen by the December 25. The NPDA has put forth 18-points demands like easy supply of petroleum products, adjustment of price and control of leakage. It will be submitting a memo of its demands to the government on Sunday.

CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER (CEC) Bhoj Raj Pokharel Thursday (Dec 13) urged the parties to announce a new date for the CA polls three months in advance. The CEC said that a minimum time of three months was needed for the polls to be held successfully. Talking to journalists in Dhangadi, Pokharel suggested that the parties should consult the Election Commission before making any kind of amendment regarding the elections. Likewise, Pokharel stated that the present constitution does not have the provision to register a party as a regional party. At a time when the Madhesi leaders have been saying that they are preparing to register a new party, the CEC clearly said that all the parties would be registered under the same procedure. Stating that the Election Commission had been ready to hold the CA elections by November 22, Pokharel said that the elections would not happen unless the parties are ready.

THE HONG KONG EXPRESS AIRWAYS has started its flights to Kathmandu from Wednesday (Dec 12). According to Bhola Thapa, executive director of Hong Kong Nepal Tours

and Travels, the GSA of the airlines, it will operate three flights a week between Kathmandu and Hong Kong on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. In the last 13 months, nine international airlines have started their flights to Kathmandu. Next week, Orient Thai from Thailand will also start its flights to Kathmandu.

LEADERS OF SEVEN PARTIES VISITED a Maoist cantonment site, Tuesday (Dec 11), in a tour facilitated by UNMIN. They visited cantonment site in Chitwan. "In the final week of UNMIN's verification activities in the cantonments, the purpose of the visit is to offer political representatives of the Seven-Party Alliance an opportunity to see for themselves the verification process and to be briefed on that process by the UNMIN Chief Arms Monitor, General Jan Erik Wilhelmsen. Political representatives also observed the

weapons storage area and general conditions in the cantonment site," states a press release by the UNMIN. Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal, led the visit, along with the UNMIN Chief Arms Monitor and Chairman of the JMCC, General Jan Erik Wilhelmsen and other senior members of UNMIN. "UNMIN verification of Maoist army personnel in cantonment sites will be completed in a few days when all personnel in the Chitwan cantonment have been through the process. The final step of the process will be the verification of Maoist army personnel responsible for leadership security, in Kathmandu. UNMIN will report the results of verification to the parties to the Agreement on the Monitoring of Arms and Armies at the end of this process, and will make them public."

THE NEPAL STOCK EXCHANGE (Nepse) has registered index beyond the four digit point of 1000 this past week. Led by Development banks group that surged by 351.54 points, Hydropower group that flared by 98.29 points, Insurance group that surged by 89.94 points and Finance companies group that flared by 48.22 points, the Nepse index posted 25.42 points growth this week to register 1025.91 points at the closing on Thursday, the last day of the trading. On Sunday, the first day of the trading, Nepse had posted 1000.49 points.

THE SPECIAL COURT HAS ONCE AGAIN deferred the decision on the case against governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) Bijaya Nath Bhattarai. The court deferred the decision date by 15 more days after disputes arose regarding the authenticity of a letter said to have been sent by KPMG, Sri Lanka. Earlier, the court had said it would give the decision on the case on Friday (Dec 15). Bhattarai and another senior NRB official, Surendra Man Pradhan, have been accused of embezzling Rs 195.319 million that Nepal had received in foreign aid for financial sector reforms. The Commission for Investigation for Abuse of Authority (CIAA) had filed cases against Bhattarai and co-accused Pradhan in January this year ■

GLOBAL WARMING AND GLOF DANGER TO NEPAL

■ *Dr. AB Thapa*

In 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 150 countries pledged to confront the problem of greenhouse gases that result in Global Warming. In 1997 in Japan, 160 nations drafted a much stronger agreement known as the Kyôto Protocol. This treaty, which has not yet been implemented, calls for the 38 industrialized countries that now release the most greenhouse gases to cut their emissions to levels 5 percent below those of 1990. This reduction is to be achieved no later than 2012. The recent Conference on Climatic Change held in Bali, Indonesia is a follow up to above conferences. Unfortunately all countries in the world are not yet seen equally willing to resolve this serious global problem.

Scientists predict that during global warming, the northern regions of the Northern Hemisphere will heat up more than other areas of the planet. Mountain glaciers will shrink. Regions that now experience light winter snows may receive no snow at all. In temperate mountains, snowlines will be higher and snowpacks will melt earlier.

The adverse effect of the climatic changes is already being observed in Himalayan regions of our country. Glaciers are slowly retreating and new glacier lakes are being formed. Such glacier lakes pose serious threat to northern region of our country. Now water resources planners in Nepal have started to encounter the problems arising from the glacier lakes outburst floods (GLOF).

Glacier Lake Outburst Floods

Sudden outbursts of water from glaciers are also termed as "Jukuhlhaup" or glacier floods. These sporadic outbreaks take a heavy toll of human lives and properties. The discharge hydrographs from glacier floods resemble normal storm hydrographs except that the flood rise is slow but fall is abrupt.

A glacier lake is formed by glacier activities and is closely related to the present glacier state. We need to know about the relation of the glacier lake with the glacier to enable us to understand about the glacier lakes and how they burst.

The dam materials of a glacier are unconsolidated moraine or glacier ice. The glacier lakes usually outburst under two conditions in Himalayan region. A glacier dam would collapse due to external factors when a big mass of lake water overtops it consequent upon the wave motion triggered by falling rocks or avalanches. Earthquakes can also result to glacier dam failure. Glacier dam could collapse if the dam slopes are weathered. It could also collapse if the seepage from the dam body significantly rises.

Glacier Formation

Glaciers are formed by accumulation of ice and snow on lands over a long period as a result of solid precipitation exceeding melting and evaporation. Glaciers differ from other bodies of land borne ice in their ability to flow. Ice

streams form in mountain valleys and move downstream under the effect of gravity. Ice caps cover large land masses and spread out radially because of the great pressure built up by their weight.

Initially the snow deposits have density of about 0.1 and gradually change into a coarse crystalline structure with density of about 0.5. This formation is known as "neve

or firn". As new snow is deposited on the firn, it is further compacted and much of the air is expelled. Over a period of several years, the density increases and nears 0.90 under strain imposed by glacier movement. A realignment of the crystal structure occurs. The final transformation converts the firn into glacier ice, a tightly fitting crystal structure with density of 0.9 or slightly higher.

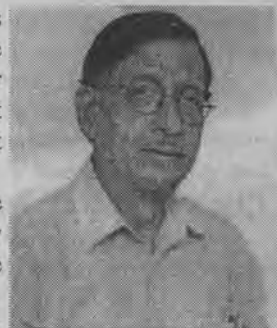
A glacier moves down its valley in nearly the same manner as a stream. Velocity surveys across glaciers show that there is a definite central current i.e. velocities near the valley walls are much lower than in the center of the glacier. On nearly horizontal or adverse slopes the greatest velocities is near the bottom of the ice mass, while on steep slopes the maximum velocity is near the surface. Ice is plastic under stress. Cracks and shear planes develop in glaciers because ice is relatively weak in tension.

A glacier carries large quantities of rock waste which is called moraine. Some of this is torn from the valley bottom by the glacier and is embedded in its bottom and sides. The moraine along the sides of the glacier is called lateral moraine: that along the front of the glacier is called terminal moraine and that at the bottom of the glacier is called ground moraine.

In temperate regions the minimum thickness of ice required to induce flow in glaciers is between 30 to 45m. The glaciers are extremely sensitive to climatic change. Prolonged changes in the mean annual or mean summer temperature of less than one degree may instigate glacier advances or retreats amounting to hundreds of meters.

Glaciological Studies

Need for the glaciological studies of the Himalayas had been felt since a long time. In 1973, in cooperation with the International Hydrological Decade (IHD) 1965-1974, which was promoted by the UNESCO, observation studies of the glaciers in the Himalayan mountains within the Nepal territory were initiated by the Japanese Society of Snow and Ice. The studies were rewarded with good results. In 1980s, Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (RONAST) was striving to set up an international center for



the study of snow and ice primarily concerned with the glaciological studies in the Himalayas to promote sustainable economic and social development in Nepal and in adjacent countries.

The Joint Sino-Nepalese GLOF study expedition to the upper reaches of the Arun and Sun-Kosi region of China took place during 14 April to 21 June 1987. Canadian advisors also participated in the expedition and report preparation.

In 1990s Dr. Tomomi Yamada of Japan and Dr. B.P. Upadhyay, Professor of TU were involved in the study of glacier lakes within Nepal. The study was conducted under the Water and Energy Commission.

Glacier Lakes at Head Reach of Nepalese Rivers

At present glaciers are retreating in the Himalayan region, as a result, glaciers lakes are being formed. Such ephemeral lakes disrupt communication systems and various infrastructures like hydropower directly, or indirectly subjecting the mainstream to periodic catastrophic floods. Glacier lake outburst floods also produce peaks in sediment transfer. In 1990s Dr.

Tomomi Yamada of Japan and Dr. B.P. Upadhyay, Professor of TU were involved in the study of glacier lakes within Nepal. The study was conducted under the Water and Energy Commission. Their study covered Lower Barun, Chamlang Tsho, Naulekh, Sabai Tsho, Dudh Kund, Mojang, Tsho Rolpa, Duwo, Thulagi, Khyimjung and Kang Guru glacier lakes.

In 1988 a joint team of Sino-Nepalese conducted the studies of the glaciers and glacier lakes in the Arun and the Sun-Kosi basins primarily in the Tibetan region of China. The Lanzhou Institute of Glaciology and Geocryology took part in the study from the Chinese side, similarly the Water and Energy Commission took part from the Nepalese side. The field investigation team used satellite imagery data to locate the lakes and to estimate their dimensions as well as their morphological characteristics. In Arun basin there are 737 glaciers in Tibet, whose total water storage is estimated to be 121 billion cu. m. It was found that there are 229 glacier lakes with an area of 46.746 sq. km. and a total storage volume of 1.23 billion cu. m. out such glacier lakes 24 are potentially dangerous. Similarly there are 45 glacier lakes in the Sun-Kosi basin with an area of 12.312 sq. km. and a total storage volume of 388 million cu. m. out of them 10 are potentially dangerous.

Glacier Lakes Outburst History

On August 4th 1985 the nearly completed Namche hydropower plant was completely destroyed by the Dig Tsho glacier lake outburst flood (GLOF). The Dig Tsho glacier was on the terminus of the Langmoche Glacier. The GLOF damaged not only the entire Namche Hydropower station but also all the bridges, trails, cultivation fields, houses, livestock along its path to

the confluence of the Dudh-Kosi and the Sun-Kosi rivers at a distance of 90 km from the Dig Tsho glacier.

Since the nineteen forties, according to Sino-Nepal study, there have been at least 10 cases of glacier lake outbursts within the basins investigated. Among them there have been five bursts in three glacier lakes of the Arun River Basin, and four in three glacier lakes of the Sun-Kosi River Basin.

In Arun Basin the most common are the end moraine-dammed lakes. Because the end moraine-dammed lakes mostly consist of end moraines formed in the Little Ice Age and are closer to their source glaciers, or connect directly with the glaciers, changes in the glaciers directly influence the water level of the glacier lake and the stability of the dam. At the same time, owing to the fact that the end moraine dams are composed of new and loose till, they are uncompacted and therefore unstable. This type of glacier lakes are easy to burst and cause floods and debris flows. The end moraine-dammed lakes are distributed most at the source of several short and small tributaries in the left side of the Arun River. They are distributed over a transitional zone from maritime to continental glaciers.

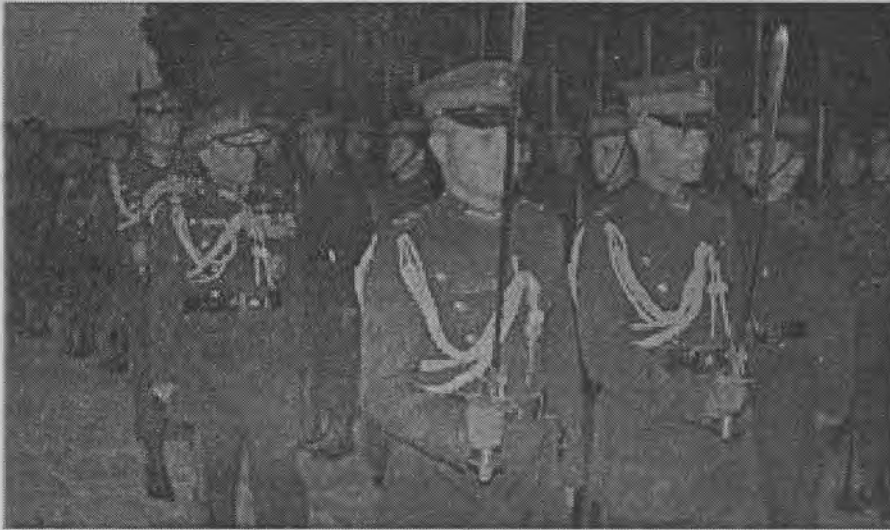
Gelhaipuco is an end moraine dammed lake located in the headwaters of Gelhaipu Gully (Natangqu River Basin, east of Riwo, Dinggye County). At 14.00 on Sept. 21, 1964, the lake burst abruptly. According to the study of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, there was a heavy precipitation in the Natangqu River Basin, which caused the glacier of the Natangqu River to slide. Huge amount of ice slid into the lake. The generated shock waves triggered the lake water to overflow the moraine dam causing the burst. There was a breach across the dam which was 30 m deep. The debris flow rushed down to the lower reaches of the Arun River in Nepal, and caused heavy economic losses.

At mid-night, July 11, 1981, an end moraine dammed lake located at the headwater of the Sun-Kosi River suddenly burst. A breach of 50m deep and 40-60m of bottom width was formed at the moraine dam. The highest burst discharge was about 1600 cu. m./s, which was observed 23 minutes after the burst. The high flood lasted about 60 minutes and the burst water amount was estimated at 19 million cu. m. The debris flow damaged the Kodari Highway and the Sun-Kosi Power Station in Nepal. The flood destroyed the Friendship Bridge at Kodari. According to the investigation of 1984, there had been a similar burst in 1964 from that same lake, but the burst discharge and damage caused was smaller.

In Conclusion

It is almost certain that in the years to come our planet is going to be much warmer. Such climatic change will have adverse impact on Himalayan glaciers. Nepal must put more efforts into the studies of snow and ice primarily concerned with the glaciological problems arising in the Himalayas to promote sustainable economic and social development of our country. ■

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)



Gen Katawal: Significant visit

NEIGHBOURS

Nervous Anxieties

As Nepal stands at a crossroads, neighbourly concerns continue to rise

By SUSHIL SHARMA

Even as the former Nepalese Maoist rebels mounted a tirade against "the Indian expansionism" last week, Delhi rolled out red carpet for two of their betes noires.

One was for the army chief, Rukmangad Katwal, and another for the flamboyant Nepali Congress leader, Sujata Koirala.

The uniformed Katwal's looked like a high-profile visit with the Indian media giving it a coverage even the prime ministers of democratic government in Nepal rarely got in the recent past.

The visit marked the restoration of the traditional ties between the armies of Nepal and India that had strained over the military-backed royal coup three years ago.

Katwal also took the opportunity to meet senior Indian officials including the foreign minister, Pranab Mukherjee, the defence minister, A.K. Antony and the influential national security adviser, M.K. Narayanan.

His Indian counterpart, Deepak Kapur, is an old-time personal friend talks with whom must have been no less important for Katwal.

Details of the meetings the chief of Nepal's only institution that had been able to withstand the recent upheavals are not available.

But a former general said, "As India grows wary of the Nepalese Maoists, it sees the Nepalese army as a force that will have a key role in the shaping of the future course of events as Nepal stands at a critical crossroad in its history."

He added, "there was a clear message of the politically significant visit of the chief of the non-political Nepalese army: the relationship between the two armies remains in tact despite the recent politically influenced aberrations."

Even as Katwal was preparing to pack his bags and catch flight back to Kathmandu after a week-long visit, Sujata Koirala dashed to Delhi cutting short a whirlwind tour of western Nepal.

She was not carrying a message from father, Girija Prasad Koirala. But the daughter of the embattled prime minister was able to get appointments with senior officials at a very quick time.

Unlike the visit of Katwal, Sujata's

was a low-profile one. It was not an official tour, either. But she met foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee, home minister Shiv Raj Patil and other top influential figures.

Details of her meetings are also not available.

Knowledgeable sources however say that India is growingly concerned at the entry of increasing number of international actors in what it considers as its backyard.

"They are especially nervous about what the Chinese are up to," they said.

Added another highly placed source, "The Chinese are equally concerned about the situation in the Terai and have cautioned the Indians about its fallouts."

The Chinese are believed to have conveyed their Terai concerns to the Indians at different official levels including, according to a source, at the ambassadorial level in Kathmandu thrice in the past few months.

This, according to them, has prompted a re-think on Delhi's Nepal policy which over the past two years leaned on "mainstreaming" the ten-year Maoist insurgency at the cost of the 240-year-old monarchy.

There are clear signs of a shift.

The Maoists see General Katwal as a main obstacle to their ultimate objective of grabbing power through "the integration" of their politically



Sujata Koirala: Daughter speaks

indoctrinated fighters into the non-political Nepali army.

Sujata earned no fewer Maoist wraths for battling for the ceremonial monarchy in recent months.

Delhi rolled out red carpets for Katwal while Sujata had had meetings with top Indian officials at an unbelievably short notice. As an analyst said, "the message is loud and clear." ■



IC CRUNCH

Serious Shortage

The huge and widening trade deficit with India is taking its toll as the country is forced to sell off precious foreign exchange earned through remittance and tourism to buy Indian Currency

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The protracted political instability is beginning seriously hurt the already troubled national economy.

Given the failure to substantially increase exports to India, the trade deficit with the southern neighbor – with whom Nepal conducts almost 70 percent of its total foreign trade – has grown to astronomical figures.

Economist Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal says the trade deficit with India is reaching almost Rs 100 billion.

That apart, there has been a steady flow of capital out of the country, particularly towards India.

All this has raised the demands for Indian Currency by many folds in the last few years. This trouble has become acute in the recent months.

This growing demand for IC, according to Dr. Pyakuryal – who is also

a board member of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the central bank of Nepal – could even jeopardize the economic sovereignty of the country.

In order to fulfill the soaring demands for IC, the NRB has been selling off the precious US dollars.

Two years ago, the NRB had sold US \$600 million to purchase IC. A year ago, it sold off US \$920 million. In the current fiscal year, the central bank has already sold US \$320 million in the first three months for the purpose. If this trend continues, it could end up selling nearly US \$ 1.5 billion to purchase IC.

The huge and growing trade deficit with India is the primary cause for shortage of Indian currency, according to officials. The deficit has reached almost Rs 100 billion from the level of Rs 60 to 70 billion a few years ago.

Exports to India, which grew by 2.6 percent last year has grown by only 0.9 percent this year. On the other hand, imports from India have grown by 9.9 percent.

The Balance of Payment (BoP) situation has turned negative for the first time since 2002. This year, the BoP has registered the loss of Rs 6 billion.

“We export yarn, juice, zinc plates and some other agro products to India. But we import high value goods like vehicles, spare parts and electronic items from there. This has naturally led to huge trade deficit,” said Dr. Pyakuryal. He points out the need to immediately align Nepal’s monetary and fiscal policies to those of India. Otherwise, he warns, the situation could be fatal.

“We have suppressed the actual rate of inflation. Our inflation is influenced more by India’s wholesale price index than by our policies. The situation is coming to such a pass that if it is not corrected immediately, we could end up becoming failed state from the failing state level,” Dr. Pyakuryal added.

Equally worryingly, the capital flight is occurring in a rapid pace in the country. According to industrialist Rajendra Khetan, the persistent economic instability within Nepal and the attraction of India’s economic growth has led to the capital flight.

Khetan says that many businessmen are taking away the capital to reap benefits from the Indian economy.

“The situation is becoming so serious that people have started seeking loans from the banks here at the interest rate of 7/8 percent and take that to India (by cashing it into IC) where they can simply earn 3/4 percent margin by putting them in deposits in Indian banks, which give around 10 percent interest on deposits,” Khetan said.

He added that the investment in robustly growing Indian share market and real estate has also spurred the capital flight.

All these have led to astronomical rise in demands of IC with which Nepal has a fixed exchange regime. The NRB is spending precious foreign exchange earned through remittance and tourism income in purchasing IC. The IC crunch is slowly beginning to hurt the reserve of US dollar also. Even the total foreign exchange reserve level has slightly decreased recently. The economists say this kind of situation cannot be sustained for too long. ■

GARBAGE MANAGEMENT

Dirty Politics

Capital city faces frequent crisis of garbage management but there has only been short term sight to deal with it

By A CORRESPONDENT



Heap of uncollected garbage: Stinking problem

As the news appeared regarding the increase in the volume of tourists' arrival in Nepal this year, the crisis of garbage collections hit the capital.

Although there is no link between tourism and garbage crisis, the pile of uncollected garbage lying in the streets of valley will have a long term implications. It does not need an expert to point out what kind of impression a tourist will get about Nepal when he/she sees pile of stinking garbage in Thamel.

For the past several months, Kathmandu Municipality has been facing the crisis of garbage dumping. Some time the garbage collection is affected by the strike of its employees but most of the time it is affected because of unnecessary demands posed by the people living in and around the landfill site.

Motivated by one or the other political parties, the local groups often stop the vehicles carrying the garbage to the land-fill site in Okharpauwa. The land fill site in Gokarna faced similar disturbance till it was closed down by the obstruction of local people. This time, too, the Kathmandu Municipality stopped the collection of garbage for more than ten days till they found the alternative site for its management.

In the last one and a half years, Nepali Congress, CPN-Maoists and CPN-UML leaders at local level played this dirty politics. Their only aim was to prove that the government is incompetent.

Kathmandu generates about 500 metric tons of garbage every day and it has only one land fill site now. Whenever there is disturbance, the garbage collection suffers and capital's main

cities are filled with filth and stinking garbage.

With over 500 manpower and all necessary equipment, Kathmandu Metropolitan has efficient garbage management system but what it is lacking is an alternative landfill site.

Following the disturbance in Okharpauwa landfill site, KMC has again started to dump the garbage along the Bagmati River so that they can build

the road over it. "This space we can still use for another few years," said a senior official of Kathmandu Metropolitan.

"It is not due to our incapability or inefficiency but the troubles created by the local people. We are tired of listening to their demands one after another," said Ram Prasad Shrestha, secretary of Ministry of Local Development. "As long as local people do not cooperate with us, it is impossible to manage the garbage well."

Since all political parties see this as an easy way to make the ruling party unpopular, they continue to use this 'weapon.' All of them want to play this dirty politics to make themselves clean.

So far as the public health, inconvenience and national prestige are concerned, it seems to be nobody's concern. What all want is to play the politics in dirt. ■

THIRD AMENDMENT IN INTERIM CONSTITUTION

Overtaking

The CA

Seven political parties formed the government promising the people that they would hold the elections for Constituent Assembly (CA) to decide major issues including the forms of government, nature of state, exercise of sovereign power, power of independent judiciary and many other such vital issues. However, what they have done in the last eighteen months so far have only helped to nullify the CA by deciding everything from bringing new interim constitution to announcing forms of government, role of judiciary, fate of monarchy and nature of state. If seven parties can take all the decisions, what is remaining there to hold the Constituent Assembly polls, which they are said to be considering holding by April, 2008?

By KESHAB POUDEL

“This is going to be the last amendment in the interim statute before the poll for Constituent Assembly,” roared CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal. “This amendment is for holding the elections for CA in April.”

“By agreeing to declare the country as republic in the present constitution, the path for holding the election for Constituent Assembly by

April has been cleared,” declared CPN-Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal a.k.a Prachanda in Butwal.

Political leaders of seven parties spoke in similar language one and a half years ago when the King reinstated the dissolved the House of Representatives and handed over all his power to meet the demands of popular uprising Jana Andolan II. The mandate of popular uprising was to

restore the House of Representatives, activate the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990, sign a peace agreement with Maoists and hold the elections for Constituent Assembly by November 2006. However, it was postponed three times in the past.

Following the recent disputes, the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) has come out with other agreements nullifying CA. The original commitment for CA



Parliament: Mere rubber stamp?

was to respect the inherent right of the people for self governance. It was has an inner sentiment of the people under the cover of which major political parties reached to power by replacing the King as a syndicated authoritarian rulers of the country.

"The SPA leaders, no doubt, believe that all the people are equal but in practice they have established that they are more equal than others. Orwellian scenario of the Animal Farm has been tragic-comically translated into the real life of Nepal," said a political analyst.

Although leaders of seven party alliance always express verbally that CA is their final destination, they have been taking steps one after another to nullify the Constituent Assembly.

Process of Overriding CA

Soon after the reinstatement of House of Representatives and formation of government under the

leadership of supreme leader of eight parties and Nepali Congress president Girija Prasad Koirala, the political situation started making strange turns. Instead of giving priority to holding the election for CA, eight party leaders made the very Constitution defunct, which they had paid allegiance to.

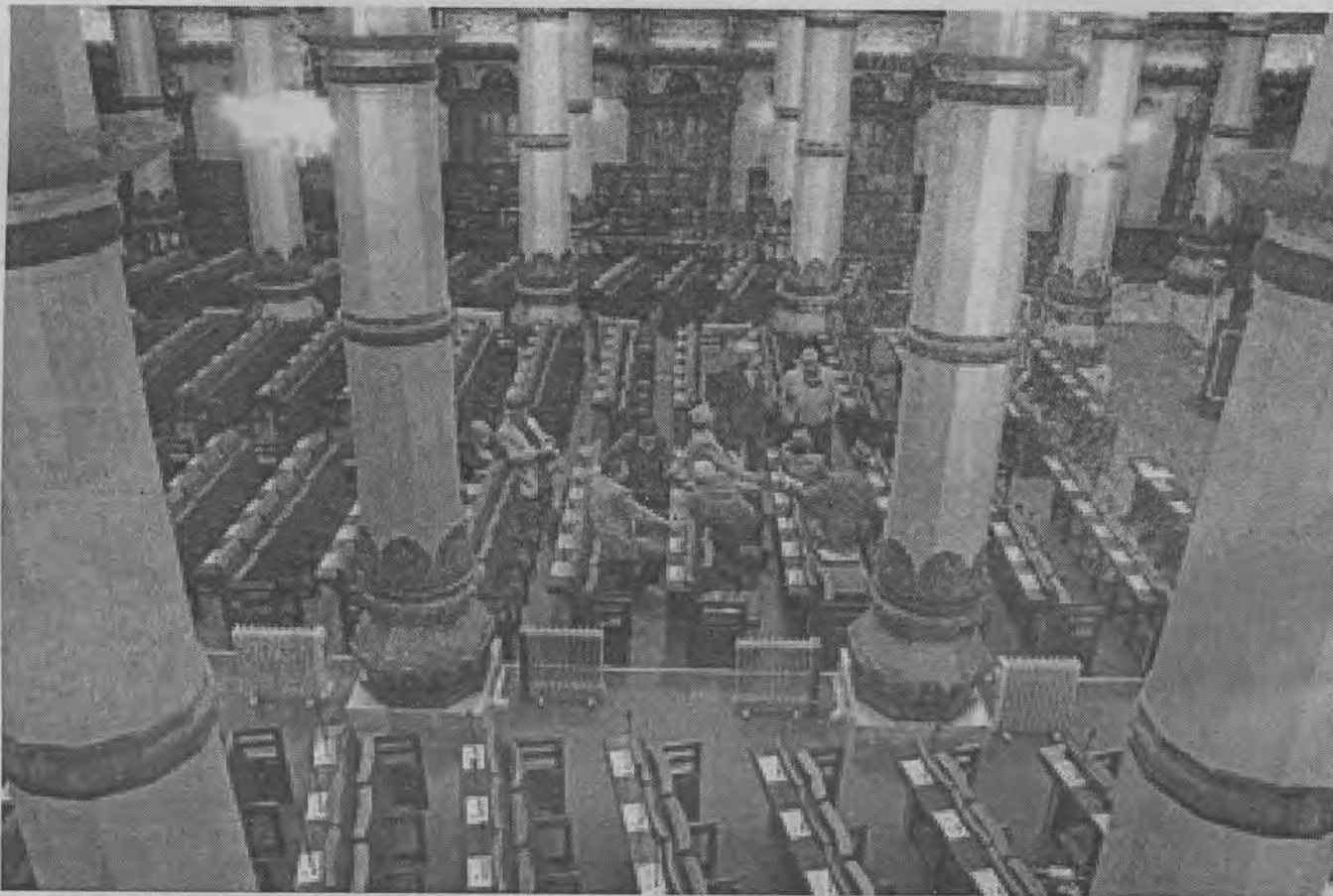
Under a 14-point proclamation of House of Representatives, the reinstated parliament made the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 defunct. The proclamation even declared that any article of the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 - which is against the clauses of proclamation - will be null and void. The House of Representatives proclamation of May 15, 2006 was the first step of fraudulence against the will of the people.

"Had we passed the CA bill first, the country would have seen the

election a long time back. However, our aim was derailed by the proclamation from the parliament. I have not seen these kinds of situation in any democratic country where proclamation could declare the constitution non-functional," said Congress leader Govinda Raj Joshi. "I don't think we will have election any time soon."

After a political understanding with the King, the House of Representatives was reinstated, Jana Andolan was called off and the Prime minister went to the Royal Palace and took oath of allegiance of the constitution of that time but the oath was not respected even for a month.

On May 15, a serious violation of the constitution was abruptly made through the 14-points proclamation. The basic stricture of the constitution was demolished by that and the



MPs Inside the House: Calling themselves supreme

parliament was declared as the supreme power of the country. The role of the King was completely wiped out except his purse.

However, the first article of Constitution of 1990 said that the constitution is the fundamental law of Nepal and all laws inconsistent with it shall to the extent of such inconsistency, be void. But flagrant violation was made of this provision and the parliament declared any violation of this proclamation as null and void.

Violation of Constitutional Order

However, the proclamation was not the end of violation of constitutional order. The next phase of a serious violation was made through interim constitution. The text of this interim constitution was finalized by leaders of eight parties and approved by the parliament, which was reinstated by the King.

The interesting parts of this drama were that the HoR which approved the constitution was replaced by nominated members (with the same members of the previous house) forming another parliament peculiarly named as a legislative parliament.

Within a year of promulgation of constitution, two amendments have already been made and a third is going to be passed probably in the ongoing session.

"This interim constitution is for interim period and it cannot take major political and constitutional decision. The country needs a new constitution and for that early election is must," said former speaker and mediator of government Maoist talks Daman Dhungana. "The monarchy should be eliminated through the CA."

In the past one and a half year, leaders assured people all the time that the future shape of constitutional order

shall be decided by the CA. They argued inside their parties and inside the parliament as well as in any available forum that the fate of monarchy will be decided by the CA. But, all the time since the restoration of previous parliament, the ruling alliance has been curtailing, one after another, the constitutional function of the King ignoring their commitment that the fate of the institution will be decided by the people. All these attempts have yet failed to provoke the King as well as the army.

Nepal's Reality

The past sixty years of experiences have shown that problem of Nepali is not making nor unmaking constitution or a form of government but it is something else related with Nepal's own geographical location. "Since 1947, Nepal has not been able to continue with any constitution or form

of government. During this period many constitutions have already been changed and this interim constitution is the sixth in experiment," said the analyst. "The situation has always favored the ruling alliance; there is a chance that they would exercise all the power of the state in absolute term except its sovereign right to deal equally with all. The balance has too much tilted towards south which may at any time get a kick-back. Its geographical proximity is the main cause of unstable experiments of constitutions but the same proximity is its guarantee of survival too," said the analyst.

Nepal's geographical situation is its problems as well as guarantor for survival as an independent country. Other political leaders who hold the view that the constitution delivered by CA will last long and provide the



Bijukchhe with PM: Opposite ends

Congress leaders who returned from India recently found that Indians, too, are positive on election. "The election has become certainty now," said Nepali Congress leader Sujata Koirala.

favor of a stable Nepal. "We have seen what southern neighbor has been doing in Nepal for the last six decades. Looking at their past actions, I don't believe that one can see a favorable response from south to bring stability in Nepal," said the officer.

"If stability is a genuine agenda of the south, then why are efforts are being directed against Nepal's two stable institutions monarchy and army?" he asked. "I am not optimistic that they will hold the election in April, 2008."

Although leaders of seven parties express commitment to hold the elections for CA in next April, many argue why they would need the election now since almost all major decisions concerning the nature of state, form of government have already been decided in fraudulent deals one after another. Even if the SPA holds the election, which is still a rare possibility, there will be nothing for the people to elect for because they have decided all the matters as per their desire. Then again, there is no guarantee that the next constitution will not face the fate similar to that of 1990 constitution. ■



Bhandari (center) and Khadka: Growing voices

political stability argue that Nepal's two neighbors are positive for election now. Chinese senior leaders recently in their visit stressed the need to have election and stability. Senior Nepali

However, others do not buy these arguments. A retired senior army officer having served for more than three decades in Royal Palace has seen nothing changing in the situation in

The Election Has Become Certainty Now

- SUJATA KOIRALA

At time when the present interim constitution is losing its legitimacy, we can revive the 1990 constitution. We can revive it by curtailing the power of king. If you ask me, I would prefer to go to elections under the 1990 constitution, if elections for the constituent assembly can not be held

Known as a blunt leader of Nepali Congress, SUJATA KOIRALA rarely ceases to make headlines. Last week, she was in the news as much for a hectic tour of the western Nepal as for a sudden dash to Delhi. "In connection with the impending publication of the biography of the prime minister father, Girija Prasad Koirala," her Delhi stay also saw the politician daughter rubbing shoulders with some topnotch figures including foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee and home minister Shiva Raj Patil. Two days after she returned, Sujata spoke to KESHAB POUDEL at her residence in Mandikhatar. Excerpts of one hour tête-à-tête:

So, what do you have to tell about your meetings in Delhi?

Delhi is all out in support for Constituent Assembly elections.

That is nothing new going by the public statements in the past, but elections could not take place. Now the situation in Terai deteriorating, how can one be optimistic about the elections?

Girijababu has to take some drastic decisions for the purpose.

What drastic decisions?

One of the steps would be to remove home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula. Nobody will come forward to defend him. He is not indispensable.

But you keep saying that Sitaula is like a pro-Maoist minister, how can the prime minister defy the Maoists and remove Sitaula at the risk of endangering the peace process?

We do not need to fear the Maoists. We should be prepared to go to the elections even without the Maoists, if they decide to stay away.

But since the Maoists came to mainstream politics under an India-engineered 12 point agreement, will India support the elections without the Maoists?

Since the Indians are very positive about the elections, they will not insist on Maoist participation as a pre-requisite for the success of the elections.

Did you carry any message from prime minister Koirala to Delhi?

No. I went there in connection with the publication of my father's biography.

It was an excuse perhaps to cover the real objective?

No, no. My visit was solely aimed discussing the

publication of the book which is at the final stage. Indian scholar Permananda had been working on the book for the past eight years. He suddenly invited me to Delhi. But, yes, I took the opportunity to meet senior Indian officials which I did in a day's time.

How did you find the attitude of the Indian establishment towards Girija Prasad Koirala. They were said to be not very happy with him, lately.

They are happy. I don't know about the past but after meeting with several leaders this time, I found that the Indian leaders are supportive of the prime minister and serious about the elections. But he needs to take certain steps.

What steps?

At time when the present interim constitution is losing its legitimacy, we can revive the 1990 constitution. We can revive it by curtailing the power of king. If you ask me, I would prefer to go to elections under the 1990 constitution, if elections for the constituent assembly can not be held. I am for strong steps towards the elections without giving in to the intimidation of the Maoists and, if need be, holding the polls even without their participation.

Will they allow to hold the elections?

They might to create trouble but we have to develop a strategy to cope with it after changing the home minister.

Is India receptive to the idea of the mobilization of the army in holding the elections? regarding the mobilization of Nepa Army to maintain the order during elections?

We need to enhance the capability of the civil police and armed police force. They are demoralized and ill-equipped now.

What about mobilization of army?

The army should be mobilized only as a last resort. I am confident such a situation will not arise.

Why?

Maoists are too weak to fight like in the past. The terai is the main problem right now which does not warrant army mobilisation..

The terai strife can even derail the polls.

Of course, senior Congress leader like Mahanta, but he can contribute by opening the regional party and brining regional violent group in peaceful process.

Did the future of monarchy come up in your meetings with the Indian leaders?

No, it didn't.

The Maoists seem to be sending an olive branch to the king following their recent call for a unity with royalists nationalists.

Maoists are champion in enacting such a drama. I don't trust them. If the king shakes hand with the Maoists, he will be finished.

But you want to retain the monarchy, no?

I am a die-hard follower of B.P. Koirala's national reconciliation policy. If Nepali Congress gives up its stand on nationalism and democracy as preached by our leader B.P. Koirala, Nepali Congress will lose its identity. I have seen all the ups and downs in politics and threat against the country. In this circumstances, B.P.s national reconciliation is more relevant today than before.

There is nothing wrong in keeping the monarchy?

If the country can survive by retaining the monarchy, what's wrong there? If we make the king democrat, we can even revive the 1990 constitution. Nobody needs to object to a monarchy as a symbol of our cultural, religious identity. There are many developed country which still have monarchy. If we strengthen the democracy from grass root level to the top, monarchy can not do any harm to us. I do not believe that removing monarchy will guarantee democracy..

There is a republican wave across the country. Can't you see that?

It is the so-called republicans who are actually trying to revive the absolute monarchy; They are not true democrats.

Recently, the Chinese ambassador to Nepal met prime minister Koirala in your residence. What can you tell us about the meeting?

Girijababu has very good relations with China. I have visited China a number of times. China has never interfered in the internal affairs of Nepal.

Coming back to the home minister issue. At a time when the terai is burning, you have been demanding the resignation of home minister Sitaula. What relations are there between his resignation and the terai problem?

Sitaula is one of the persons responsible for creating trouble in terai. Even Madheshis have been asking his resignation as a pre-condition for bringing peace in terai. They argue that home minister Sitaula is too much tilted towards the Maoists and he has not listened to them.

Would you recommend a replacement for Sitaula?

I don't have any preference. Any other person can perform better than him.

If that is the case, what compulsion prime



minister Girija Prasad Koirala does have in retaining him?

Girijababu has been retaining Sitaula in the hope that his continuation in the cabinet will bring Maoist in the mainstream. The Maoists want to see Sitaula continue in the current office.

You suspect his loyalty to the prime minister?

I can say for sure that he is loyal to Maoist than anybody else.

If Sitaula continues as a home minister, problems in terai too will remain?

Yes, the problem in terai cannot be solved without removing him from home ministry.

What steps prime minister has been taking to solve the problems in terai?

Girijababu has already held several rounds of meetings with the MPs from Terai. He is making a list of their grievances. Interestingly, an overwhelming majority of parliamentarians representing terai have demanded the resignation of home minister. They accused Sitaula of working on behalf of the Maoists.

If you are made a home minister, what would be your priority?

My priority would be to maintain law and order in the country. We need to have new strategy for internal security. Home minister need to treat all political workers equally. As a home minister, he should not side with anybody or group.

Many feel that your father is promoting you.

Girijababu has promoted many politicians, but they are now nowhere. I don't see blessing of any leader is enough to emerge as a leader. Individual capacity is also important factor. Individual needs popular support. I don't think any body can be a leader without popular support.

But people say, your father wants to see the only daughter as his successor.

It is natural for any parent to promote their children. It would be unnatural if they didn't do it

Nobody needs to object to a monarchy as a symbol of our cultural, religious identity. There are many developed country which still have monarchy. If we strengthen the democracy from grass root level to the top, monarchy can not do any harm to us.

Women in Peace Building

Three days international conference stresses the role for women in peace building

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when the country has been passing through a peace process seeking the role of women in peace building, a three day conference of International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) was held in the capital.

Inaugurated by foreign minister Sahana Pradhan, the conference shared the experiences amongst women working in electronic media from conflict affected countries and came up with strategies to enhance the role of women in building peace.

"The conference was very important for us as we shared many experiences with the media persons working in similar conflict situation like ours," said

Bandana Rana, president of IAWRT-Nepal chapter.

Organized jointly by IAWRT-Nepal chapter and Sathi-Nepal, another NGO, the participants presented the working papers on issues like Women's Participation in Peace Building, Transitional Justice, Protection of Women and Women as a Mediator in Conflict Transformation and Role of Media in Peace Building. Participated by more than 50 media women from Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, South Africa, Cameroon, Kenya, Norway, Sweden, Australia and Nepal, this was a first of its kind international conference held in Nepal.

"I am very delighted to welcome all

participants from the world and show them how Nepalese women have been dealing with the issue of conflict," said Rana.

In the last 12 years of conflict, Nepalese women have suffered a lot. Even now many women are suffering from similar conflict situation in southern plain of Nepal. "Nepalese women have shown



Rural Women: Left out Photos On Traditional Life

courage to live in the conflict facing all kinds of difficulties," said foreign minister Pradhan.

"Their participation in the peace building process is necessary to bring a long lasting peace in the country," said Bhoj Raj Pokharel, Chief Election Commissioner.

For the women working in media sector, their role is more complicated as well as important. Only through the women working in such media, it is possible to make breakthrough.

In Nepal, whether it is the peace time or conflict, women had to face all kinds of burden and only a few stories related to women's involvement in conflict found prominence in the media while a large number of such incidences went unnoticed. ■

NEPAL, MALAYSIA INCREASE FLIGHTS

Nepal and Malaysia on Wednesday (Dec 12) agreed to increase direct flights by three times to 21 passenger flights and seven cargo flights a week from both the countries, reports The Himalayan Times daily.

Following the two-day long review meeting on bilateral air service agreement (ASA) that concluded on Wednesday, the officials signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that paves the way for increasing the number of passenger and cargo flights.

The existing ASA grants permission to operate only seven flights a week from both countries. As per the new agreement, the designated airlines of both countries can operate 21 passenger flights a week, while the limit for cargo service has been fixed at seven flights. The airlines are free to use any type of aircrafts for the service.

The new ASA has also specified a provision for fifth freedom rights to the designated airlines, which could be granted following the meeting of aeronautical authorities of both countries.

According to the new provision, each country will choose the designated airlines based on air operating certificate (AOC) issued by the concerned aeronautical authorities of the respective country. The principal place of business for the designated airlines shall be its country of origin and the rights for effective regulatory control will also lie on the country that designates the airlines.

Lila Mani Poudel, secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation and Chandra Sekaran P, chief of Civil Aviation Department at the Ministry of Transport, Malaysia signed the accord on behalf of their respective governments. "The new provisions in ASA have paved the way for private airlines to operate flights," said Poudel, adding that the increased direct flights will ultimately contribute to tourism, trade and easy movement of people. He further said the increased direct flights would benefit thousands of Nepali migrant workers in Malaysia. ■

ARMY CHIEF'S INDIA VISIT

Restoration Of Tradition

After a hiatus of over two years, the longstanding tradition between Indian and Nepali Armies is restored after Gen Katawal received title of honorary General of IA

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepali Army (NA) chief General Rookmangud Katawal received the honorary title of Indian Army's General from Indian President Pratibha Patil at a function held in Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi on Wednesday (December 12).

This is a long held tradition between two armies whereby chiefs receive the honorary general title of respective countries. The tradition had not continued in the wake of 2005, February 1 takeover by the King in Nepal. The NA chief has sought resumption of arms supplies from India during his meeting with senior Indian leaders, according to a report by Press Trust of India (PTI).

The report says that Katawal, on Wednesday, met with senior Indian political leaders and is understood to have sought resumption of arms shipments from India. Katawal has met with External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Defense Minister A K Antony and held extensive discussions with his Indian counterpart Gen Deepak Kapoor. India had suspended arms supplies to Nepal in the



General Katawal receives honorary title from Indian President Pratibha Patil

wake of the same February 1 move by the King.

The PTI report adds that 'India had supplied the Nepalese army with

helicopters, light artillery guns, night vision devices and light arms and Kathmandu now wants the arms supplies and spares to be resumed with the situation in the country having stabilized, army sources said.'

'Katawal and Kapoor, they said, discussed at length the mutual security concerns. The Nepalese army chief was also given an extensive briefing on Indian security perspective.'

Katawal also met Defense Secretary Vijay Singh, Naval Chief Admiral Suresh

Mehta and Air Chief Fali Homi Major. He also met National Security Advisor M K Narayanan, Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon and Prime Minister's special envoy Shyam Saran. ■

LABOR PACT

Potentials Galore

Nepal and South Korea sign key pact paving the way for Nepalese workers to go and work in the Southeast Asian nation

By A CORRESPONDENT

After various hiccups and delays, Nepal and South Korea finally signed a crucial technical agreement, laying the ground for starting the process of sending Nepalese workers who want to go and work in South Korea.

The agreement was signed on December 11 in Kathmandu. Keshar Bahadur Baniya, director general at the Department of Labour and Employment Promotion (DLEP) and Lee Ki-Kweon, director general at the Ministry of Labor of Korea signed implementation agreement

(IA) on behalf of their respective governments.

The agreement includes detailed procedures and technical guidelines for pre-departure process. It was signed as a subsequent and essential instrument that supplements the bilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed on July 23 between Nepal and South Korea.

This accord will allow Nepali workers to go to Korea to work under employment permit system (EPS).

"This is a historic agreement and

finally, we are a step closer to sending Nepali workers to Korea," Shyam Prasad Mainali, secretary at the Ministry of Labor and Transport Management told The Himalayan Times daily.

Even as Mainali said that all processes will be set out by the government and implemented by the government agencies, groups of unemployed youths have already taken to the streets demanding that there must be total transparency in the selection process.

Reports say the government has fixed criteria for language skills, training institutes and their physical facilities and location. According to the criteria, one must take 150-hour language training on the basis of three hours a day for 50 days. The agreement states that proficiency in Korean language is one of the major criteria for eligibility.

Household Water Treatment Technology as an Alternative Measure to Achieving Millennium Development Goals in Nepal

- Dr Betman S. Bhandari

Nepal is rich in fresh water resources flowing from the Himalayas to the Indian plains; however, most rivers and streams are becoming a dumping place for raw sewage and garbage. The Nepalese government accepted that safe drinking water and household sanitation is a basic need for human development, health and well-being, as this is an internationally accepted human right (WHO, 2001). Eighty five per cent of the population was targeted to receive safe drinking water and 50% of the households were targeted to gain access to sanitation facilities as set by the Nepalese government in their tenth five year-plan (2002-2007).

Springs, rivers and streams serve as paramount sources of drinking water in the hilly areas of Nepal, with ground water, ponds and streams as water sources in the flat lowland areas of the south. From 1980 to 2000, the Nepalese government was successful in installing a high number of community drinking water supply projects particularly gravity-flow projects in the mid-hills and wells in the low land regions with the assistance of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Most drinking water projects have used surface water in the mid-hill regions and ground water in the low land regions. Although the government report shows that they have succeeded in allowing 76.9% of households access to safe water and 46.3% to household sanitation, the research shows that more than 80% of the drinking water supplies in rural areas are contaminated with pathogens and more than 10% of used wells are contaminated with arsenic, iron and manganese (DWSS 2004; RWSSFB, 2005).

Although national and international organizations are pouring grants and loans into water projects, the end users are not receiving safe and clean water at the point of use. A survey report (DWSS/WAN 2003) on Nepal rural water supply projects concluded that 56% of the drinking water projects required major repairs and 21% required complete rehabilitation. Even where clean water is available at the source, quality often is much lower within households

because of biological and chemical contamination. Most studies indicate that the factors responsible for contaminating drinking water sources include lack of water education, lack of protection, a source of leakage in the pipe distribution system, an intermittent supply of water, poor drainage systems and poor environmental surroundings.

Government policy does not seem to cover monitoring and support at the local level. There are no funds or a method of collecting funds for maintenance and operation of tap-stands although government proposed a policy of raising 5-10% of the total costs or one thousand rupees per tap-stand. Local banks are almost non-existent as they were looted and destroyed during the Maoist Movement (People's war). Concerns have been raised by the local people about the maintenance and operation of tap-stands, however, the people have no recourse for making their formal complaints known to government officials. Inadequate institutional capability at the village level, inadequate management and implementation capacity by the users, and inadequate methodologies and technical accessibilities are major issues in the sustainability of a rural community water supply system in rural Nepal.

The Nepalese government has been directed by the development agencies to implement drinking water schemes and household sanitation to meet the millennium development goals. The quality and sustainability of such projects are a major challenge in this sector. The installed schemes are not functioning well and water quality is not safe according to the national drinking water quality guidelines.

The monitoring and surveillance such projects are also very poor for these projects. Without governmental support or clear policies and guidelines, water user committees are not able to monitor their community water supply periodically and effectively. Due to insufficient water education, fragile community cohesion (due to local politics), lack of leadership and lack of incentives from the government sector, expectations of safe water by way of a community system is a long far way from

the reality.

The problems of safe drinking water and a lack of sanitation are closely related. Inadequate sanitation leads to pathogen-filled human and animal wastes and garbage draining into waterways thus contaminating the drinking water. As water quality problems are becoming more serious and widespread, the monitoring of water quality becomes an even more critical component of national efforts to provide safe water to end users.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has proposed a water safety plan to meet the water quality guidelines. Nepal's experience shows that water user committees may not be able to maintain and supply safe water. In reality, one public tap-stand is shared by more than ten households. Due to the inappropriate location of a water point, a lengthy waiting time to collect water and poor water quality, more than one third of households are compelled to use their traditional unprotected sources. Published researches have shown that the water in the reservoirs of community supply and household storage are highly contaminated. Many organizations account for spring water and river in the highlands as a safe source of water without ever testing the water quality. The government and non governmental organizations are using water quality, quantity, accessibility (20 minutes waking distance) and reliability as indicators to measure the coverage of safe water in the community which is not true in reality. In fact that is an access of clean water to the users.

Although Nepal is rich in fresh water resources, the cost of investment in a drinking water project is huge, so that many committees find they cannot afford the investment. They are then dependent on the government or development agencies to provide all or a large proportion of the funds for drinking water projects. The queue for



government project funding is long due to insufficient financial resources and budgeting by the Nepalese government. The mainstreaming of household water treatment technology in their national plan would be effective in providing safe water in rural communities including the poorest communities. Currently many types of household water treatment (HWT) technologies such as the biosand filter, ceramic filters, SODIS (solar disinfection) and chlorination are available in the market.

The Department of Water Supply and Sewerage is working in close coordination with the national and international development agencies to scale up HWT technologies. It will be effective to include in the national plan to transfer technology at the grassroots level. The HWT technology should be integrated within the infrastructure of a water supply project in which end users will be aware to drink water after treatment. ENPHO Nepal, Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH) and Nepal Red Cross Society are introducing household water treatment technologies in the low land area in coordination with UNICEF, USAID (HIP), WaterAid, Swiss organizations and RWSSFDB. The sustained use and technology adoption is significantly high in the arsenic contaminated areas and low land areas. The choices of water treatment technology varies based on the geographical location, affordability, quality of existing water sources, quantity of water, availability of technology and the perceptions of the end users.

Household water treatment technologies are easy to manufacture, affordable, user friendly, highly effective for the removal of biological contamination, easy to maintain and operate and the materials for construction are locally available. Different international organizations including the WHO, UNICEF, UN-Habitat, CAWST Canada, PSI and Swiss organizations (EAWAG and SANDEC) are supporting developing countries in providing safe water through the use of these affordable technologies. Implementation of affordable HWT programs as a campaign in each village will provide safe water for all. Furthermore, this technology becomes a viable alternative to meeting the millennium development goals (safe water) by 2015.

Former Campus Chief of Pokhara Engineering College, PU. Currently, living in Canada.

LOAD SHEDDING

Power Crisis

As water level in the rivers go down, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) announces a new load shedding schedule. The coming winter will be a long, cold and dark one

By A CORRESPONDENT

"We are going to start some new hydropower projects so the country would not have to face load shedding for a long period of time. For this, the government is proposing large and medium scale projects. NEA is planning to construct Upper Tamakoshi Project," said Minister of State for Water Resources Gyanendra Bahadur Karki.

When there were severe power shortage last year, Minister of State for Water Resources Gyanendra Bahadur Karki made these public commitments. A year has passed since then but nothing has changed and the country is going to face severe power crisis again.

According to Nepal Electricity Authority, the load shedding time will be increased by another 2 hours a week from the Tuesday evening. It was increased to six hours from previous schedule of four hours a week. Now, electricity will be cut between 5-8 PM twice a week. There will be power cut in coming days because of cold and the receding level of water in snow fed river.

The present power crisis is not an overnight development. It is the inevitable result of political crises and conflicts of the last ten years. Following the completion of Chilime Power Project, Nepal did not start any major project to meet the growing demands of electricity. Although some efforts have been made to increase the power production of Devighat and Sunkoshi, they were too little.

Even the completion of construction of Middle Marsyangdi project continues to be delayed because of disturbances caused by Maoist insurgency and political instability. Following the dismissal of Sher Bahadur Deuba's government in October 2002, Nepal has seen a number of governments with



Electric bulb: No light

unstable tenures. Although the new interim constitution was promulgated and new government formed with the backing of eight political parties is ruling the country, it is not in a position to take major decisions and nobody can predict its future.

The 70 MW middle Marsyangdi project, which was supposed to be completed by end of 2005, is yet to materialize as it faces various crises. In present circumstances, whatever officials say, Nepal's power sector will have to face more painful days in coming years.

"It is for the Maoists and leaders of seven parties to decide as they are responsible for the present crisis of power. It is not technical incapability or lack of resources but it is the lack of commitment," said a former managing director of NEA.

Whether one likes it or not, the load shedding is now a stark national problem and policy makers will have to accept it and adjust. Along with treating it as a reality, the political leadership of eight parties, who are mostly responsible for bringing the present crisis, must show vision to overcome it. ■

Book

On Administration

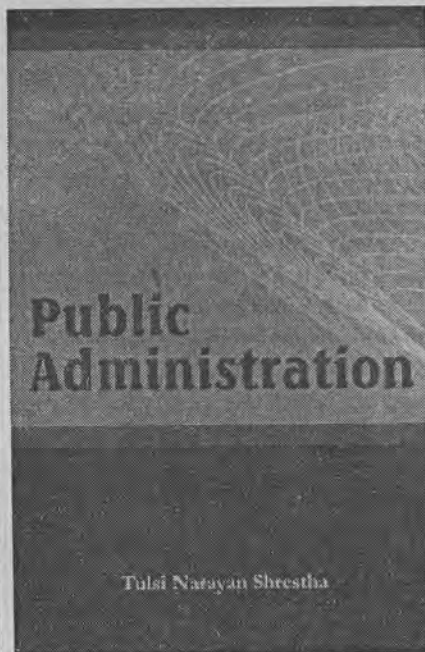
Administrative expert Tulsi Narayan Shrestha writes how Nepal's administrative institutions evolved in course of more than two thousands years of recorded history

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although modern Nepal was integrated about 240 years ago by King Prithivi Narayan Shaha, Nepal has a recorded history of more than two thousand years. Since Nepal has such a long recorded history, nobody understands the rationals behind the present leadership's declaration to make New Nepal.

But only a few Nepalese scholars and politicians are actually aware about the history of Nepal. "It is said that a nation without past is a nation without future. In other words, history alone can successfully guide and shape the future destiny of a nation in a proper perspective, leading to a bright future. Fortunately, Nepal is one of the few nations having relatively a long recorded history, stretching for more than twenty five centuries," writes Shrestha. "But, distressingly enough, Nepal's invaluable treasure of multi-faceted past has not yet been fruitfully utilized by the policy makers to shape the future destiny of the nation in proper direction in general and to improve administrative system in particular," writes Shrestha.

Renowned expert on public administration, Shrestha, who has long experiences on Nepal's public administration system, has divided the book into six parts. The first part of the book deals with the introduction to Public Administration and its current issues. The part II focuses on organization and its models. Part III discusses various dimensions of personnel, development and regulatory administrative system. Leadership,



Public Administration
By Tulsi Narayan Shrestha

Published by
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Price: Rs.295.00

Pages: 342

public and public administration and budgetary process are analyzed in part IV.

Developments of Nepal's administration, its ecological perspective and administrative reforms have been detailed in part V. The last part deals with local governance and decentralization.

Divided into 6 parts and 25 chapters, this text is written to fulfill the needs of the post-graduate students of Political Science studying at Tribhuvan

University. Besides, this book can also be useful for general readers interested in public administration, local governance and decentralization.

In the last few years, many books have already been published regarding the history of Nepal's public administration. This book is a first of its kind which explains the historical perspectives of Nepal's public administration.

From history to present context and theoretical perspective, Shrestha's book has incorporated all the necessary elements.

Highlights of the Book

- Fortunately, Nepal is one of the few nations having relatively a long recorded history, stretching for more than twenty five centuries. But distressingly enough, Nepal's invaluable treasure of multi-faceted past has not yet been fruitfully utilized by the policy makers to shape the future destiny of the nation in proper direction
- The ancient era in Nepalese history roughly lasted from the very dawn of the history to the 9th century. During this ancient period, two dynasties, the Kirats and the Lichhavis, ruled over the country.
- By the 1200 AD another new ruling dynasty of the Mallas emerged and ruled up to 1769 AD when the ruler of then Gurkha principality conquered Nepal.
- Monarchy in Nepal is one of the institutions having a long recorded history. However, its political fortune widely fluctuated in wide ranging manner – from politically most powerful institution to a position of political impotency.
- Since the King was considered as an incarnation of God, he was, at least in principle, responsible to none except to himself and Almighty. Nevertheless, the Kings had to work respecting popular wishes and feeling the pulse of the nation. Undoubtedly, the monarch, theoretically, was an autocrat but he was not a tyrant. ■

“We are near the consensus to end the deadlock and we will hold election within mid-April, 2008.”

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, talking to a delegation of students from Asia Pacific region.

“This will be his last chance to hold election. If he fails this time, we will not follow him.”

Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), giving stern warning to PM Koirala.

“At present, we are only demanding autonomy but if the government decides to deploy army in Madhes, it will turn into full-blown secessionist movement.”

Hridayesh Tripathy, Madhesi leader, who recently resigned from the parliament to form a regional party, in Reporters' Club.

“Due to the groupism within the NC and the conspiracy of the palace, even more problems could arise in the peace process.”

Ram Chandra Poudel, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, speaking at a program in Dhangadi.



“We are not bound to accept the decision of the panel that does not include us.”

Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Maoist leader, saying that the panel formed to review the peace agreement must have included their representation.

“The RPP will now focus on forging ties with like-minded parties and prepare itself for the coming election.”

Pashupati SJB Rana, the newly re-elected president of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), after the conclusion of the party's fourth national convention.

“Many people have been victimized by YCL. We will give leadership to such victims now.”

Pradeep Poudel, president of NC-affiliated Nepal Students Union (NSU).

TRANSITION

LEFT: Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), for Kolkata, India, to attend a function organized by Indian communist party.

FORMED: A three-member panel headed by Home Minister Krishna Sitaula and including UML leader Pradeep Gyawali and State Minister Ramesh Lekhak to review the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), by the cabinet.

RECOGNIZED: The Election Commission (EC) has given recognition to the establishment side of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandidevi).

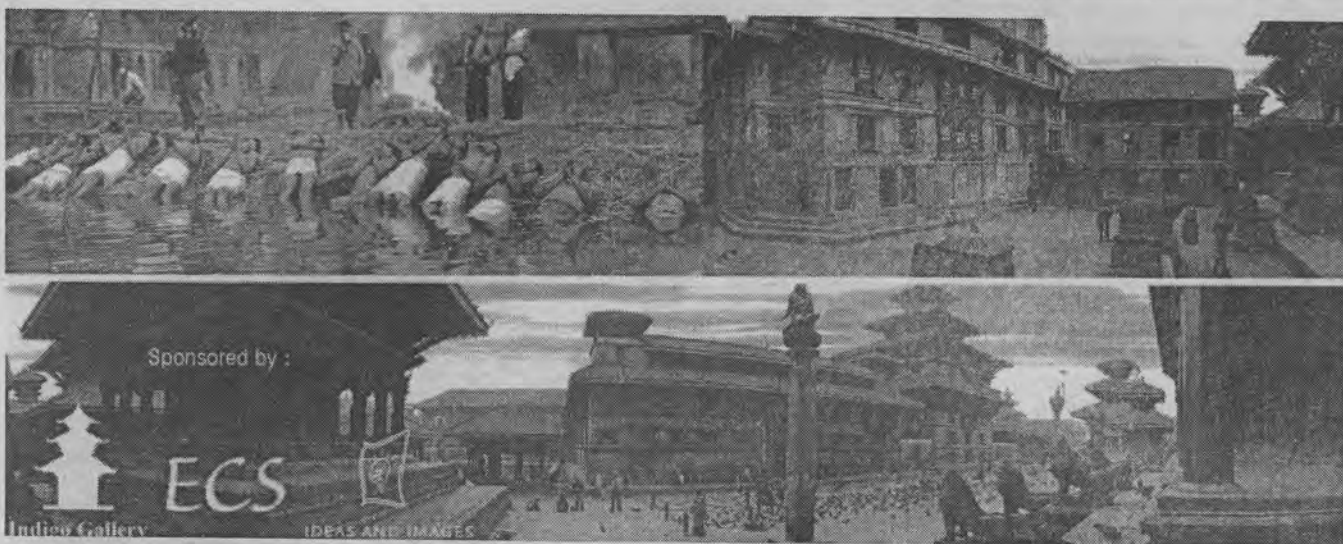
APPLIED: The Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) faction led by former minister Rajendra Mahato, for recognition as separate party with election symbol of 'arrow' at the Election Commission.

DROPPED: The reference to monarchy in the party statute, by the

fourth national convention of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP).

ELECTED: Pashupati SJB Rana, unopposed, as the president of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), for next/ five years, by the fourth national convention of the party.

Twenty-five members of the central working committee of the RPP, by the fourth national convention of the party.



Kayastha's photograph: Capturing the Imagination

EXPOSITION

Photos On Traditional Life

Kishore Kayastha's photographs capture the traditional life and culture and values of various times of Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

Every photographer or artist has his/her own way of thinking and imagination. Artist Kayastha has his own way of capturing his imagination and natural surroundings. "Kishore is already well known for his stylish commercial work but few have seen his secret garden. This young Nepali photographer obviously loves his culture and has not only developed very good technical skills but also carries an original vision and great sensitivity," said renowned photographer Eric Valli.

Eighteen photographs pasted in the wall of Indigo Gallery attracted a large number of crowd. Priced between Rs 15,000 and Rs.28, 000, the photographs exhibited at the exposition showcase various activities of Nepal.

Known for its beauty and colorful life, Nepalese society and culture is lively. With the continual extension

of urban areas, many important aspects of life of valley are vanishing. The cultural, social and religious life of Kathmandu valley is related with the nature and its surroundings but the expansion of land contributed to erode all different aspects of cultural ethos.

Thanks to the efforts and dedication of Kayastha, one can look at the few remaining important aspects of various cultural and religious parts of Nepal. The narrow alleys of Bhaktapur and open lands of outskirts, all are full of life and pleasures.

From the pictures of Om Door of Bhaktapur to Kathmandu Monsoon I and Monsoon II and the picture of Indrachowk bread bazaar, Bhaktapur Harvest, Morning Worshippers, Kokana Village and Patan Durbar Square and rice planting - they are all vivid description of the valley life.

In his panoramic photo exhibition

entitled Larger than Life at the Indigo Gallery, Naxal, Kayastha captures it all very beautifully. Kayastha's photographs have bright red and green colors in an image of village women in the field, with speed in the picture highlighting the festival rush, the use of natural light in the image to show life of local business folks.

His pictures include slow and peaceful life, the vibrancy of festivals, devotion of people praying, going about their daily chores, walking on cool morning, the paddy planning, the monsoon rain and winter season.

One of the important aspects of the exposition is that it tries to explain how people of Nepal live in simplicity and peacefully.

Born and grown up in Bhaktapur, photographer Kayastha seems to be much influenced by his surroundings. Thus, he focuses his attention on the surroundings of villages and outskirts of Bhaktapur city. From capturing the life of outskirts of Bhaktapur to the joy of festivals, photographer Kayastha's camera is able to capture all the human moments.

Inaugurated by Anil Chitrakar at Indigo Art Gallery in Naxal, Kishore Kayastha's exhibition will last till January 15. ■

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