

SPOTLIGHT

April 25, May 1, 2008

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CA Poll

Fractured Mandate

निर्वाचन आयोग
 नेपाल



INSIDE

HIV /AIDS : Omniuous trend

FOOD STUFFS : Price Spike

MAOIST ECONOMIC POLICY: Courting Capitals

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THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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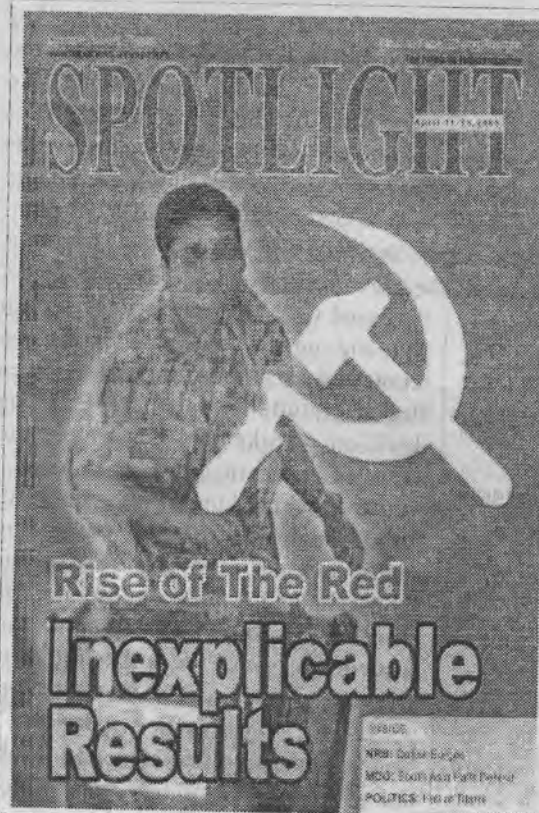
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The poll results have made it clear that the Nepali people are not only totally disillusioned with the corrupt and anti-national politicians of the Nepali Congress and CPN (UML) but want to test a new party which is still to prove its merit. If the hopes of Girija Prasad Koirala to install his daughter as his successor have been dashed to pieces, the dreams of Madhav Nepal to become prime minister too have evaporated into the thin air. Since the CPN (Maoists) have emerged as the largest party with the visible claim to lead the country, they too will have to overcome problems before they establish themselves as legitimate leaders in the government. The rigid clauses of the Interim Constitution passed by an illegitimate assembly of nominated members who had lost all reason and logic in the flush of unprecedented victory against the monarchy, have made their job of forming the new government very formidable. The claims of the seven party alliance to rule the country have been nullified by the polls. The Maoists seem to be riding the waves. It is time they came down to earth and realized the reality. Since they have not been given an absolute majority, they must not overlook the frustrations and disillusionments of the people underlying their partial mandate. It is their testing time. They must not do anything that might induce the people to tar them with the same brush they did with the Nepali Congress and the UML. They must never lose sight of the axiomatic truth that this assembly has been elected to draft the peoples' constitution. As such, this constituent assembly has no mandate whatsoever to pass any laws or ruling that could have far reaching repercussions for the people or the country or affect the societal or national structure, heritage or beliefs. Any trespassing of the only mandate is sure to spell disaster not only for the government in power but to the whole country as well. The Nepali people have suffered for long. They are indeed looking up to the revolutionary Maoists but are also very apprehensive that the Maoists too might be strayed away from their designated path by quislings, *Lendhup Dorj*is and enemies of the state. In order to avoid such invisible pitfalls, the Maoists must renounce their rigid and extreme character and conform to the democratic behavior which entails tolerance and liberalism in their thinking and outlook. They must take all sectors of the society with them, using their wisdom in choosing honest and patriotic men only and shunning the failed politicians. They must get over their prejudices and work only in the interest of the nation and the people. They cannot afford to let down their poor countrymen who have greatly suffered from exploitation and discrimination for centuries and are now standing at the threshold dreaming for a better future.

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



Red Analysis

Your analysis Rise of the Red: Inexplicable Results (April 11-24) helps understand the difficulties ahead in Nepal's political scenario. Of course, the rise of Maoists was beyond imagination for all the forces. Given the present positive coverage by the media of world's largest democracy India, it shows that they knew what was going to happen. Otherwise, there is no reason for democratic-minded India media and columnists and former diplomats to celebrate the rise of totalitarian communists in Nepal as their victory. Are all Indians the followers of totalitarian communists? If not, there is something hidden agenda behind the unexpected rise of Maoists in Nepal.

Pradhumna Lama
Kolkata, India

Therefore I suggest so-called leaders look before you leap. Or this is another strategy of USA and others to divide the CHINA like USSR ?

Yours Faithfully,
Yam guring

Watford, WD18 0AU

Koirala In Trouble

Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala is known for his double face. Whenever he fails to achieve the results desired by him, Koirala does not mind blaming that on hidden hand. When Nepali Congress lost the election in 1995, Koirala interpreted it as a grand design. After reading your story, I was shocked to know that Koirala again blamed hidden hand for his failure. Koirala who has destroyed everything in his last leg of political career deserves to be ousted from power as he is a great traitor to Nepal.

Ashok Tiwari

Washington DC Via email

March Of Red

I am very happy to see the rise of red in Nepal. This is great thing for the Maoists all over the world. At a time when capitalists have been dictating the world, Nepal's Maoists have proved that the state can be controlled through the use of armed revolution in the first phase and later participating the election as an insurgent. Nepal's Maoists showed the way to liberate the oppressed people. Maoists should be given opportunity to form the government as Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have already lost their grounds.

Surya Bahadur KC
Pokhara via email

New Era

After the conclusion of the election for constituent assembly, Nepal has entered into a new era. Though the road ahead is very difficult and humpy, more than two-years-long rule of unaccountable government comes to an end. This itself is a big achievement. Nepalese people must thank all the forces who supported Nepal to hold the election. As a close neighbor, India's support was very remarkable as it

provided all kinds of moral and logistics support. It must be appreciated by one and all.

Nirmala Shrestha
Via email

Sports Rights

Sports is becoming the dirty games of politics nowadays. Everyday we are hearing China and the human rights issues'. My questions to these so-called the preachers of humanrights leaders of Australia, Canada, UK, USA and others.

When you point the index finger to others about the humanrights issues' to others three fingers is always pointing at you. We must learn to see ourselves in the mirror first, before we blame others about the humanrights issues. Where did these so-called leaders dump the humanrights of the 'INDEGINIOUS PEOPLE' been leaving for thousands of years in their lands? Iraq, Afghanistan, Daffur etc?

Not but least, I am the former Gurkha soldiers from the British army. It is almost 200 years we are still struggling hard to find our 'STATUS' in the British army from the British govt?

Our Pride

At a time when nobody is talking about the pride of Nepal and our heroes, Laxmi Thapa's articles are very inspiring and encouraging. The role of Bhakti Thapa in the grand unification of Himalayan region is interesting. Laxmi Thapa deserves to be thanked for her efforts to highlight Nepal's strength and capability. We need more persons like Thapa.

Bhogendra Limbu
Jawalakhel Via-email

Viewing From Far

Although I am far from my country, I have been closely watching all the activities in Nepal. What I find strange is that nobody shows any interest to exploit the power of large number of youth population. As you know, we have been working hard to build many countries of the Gulf. If similar drive for construction starts in Nepal, there are a large number of Nepalese who would want to serve our motherland. As all our leaders are trying to divide the nation on the basis of language, ethnicity and region, we might be embroiled in decades long conflict and we will not have any time to think about development.

Krishna Rai
Doha Via-email



NC Cries Foul Over Election Violence And Irregularities; Decides To Accept Its Result

The Nepali Congress (NC), which faced a stunning defeat in the recent Constituent Assembly (CA) election, has said that the elections were not held in peaceful and fearless environment. "Elections did not take place in easy atmosphere. There were pre-poll psychological intimidation, physical attacks, threats, booth capturing and even post-election intimidation in many places across the country," said Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, leader of NC, addressing a press meet, Thursday (Apr 17). He, however, said the party will accept the result due to larger concern for peace process. "We will actively carry out our duty towards peace process and constitution-making exercise," he said. Dr. Mahat also said that NC will not immediately walk out of the current government. "Our party president is the prime minister and is also working as the acting head of state. He does not have the freedom to walk out of the government like other parties," he said. Dr. Mahat said that the formal decision of the party to remain in the government even after the first meeting of the constituent assembly will be taken after the central working committee meeting of April 24. The informal meeting of the Nepali Congress central working committee (CWC) members available in the capital held Thursday decided to hold its meeting on April 24 to discuss party's defeat in the polls. The party has asked

its central committee members to attend the meeting compulsorily. The party has already asked the district committee to send the reports assessing the cause party's defeat in the polls. The central committee will review the past loopholes and chalk out strategies for future. *Compiled from reports*

Over 6000 Pass

The Korean Language Test

The results of the recently held Korean language test – as the first step to recruiting Nepali workers for jobs in South Korea – have been published. The Korean selectors have notified that 6772 have passed the language test. "This does not, however, mean that all of them will be eligible for job recruitment in South Korea. They will now have to undergo standard medical check-up following which their name will be enlisted in a roster," said Keshar Bahadur Baniya, director general of Department of Labor and Employment Promotion. "The Korean employers will choose workers they want from that roster," Baniya added. Over 31,500 people had appeared in the language test. *Compiled from reports*

School Operators Warned Not To Collect Exorbitant Fees

All Nepal National Independent Students' Union-Revolutionary (ANNISU-R), a Maoist-affiliated student wing, on Saturday (Apr 19), expressed serious concern about the collection of fees under different heads, including admission fee, by state-owned and private schools. The union said it was breach of the 19-point agreement reached with the union last year and it would take action against such schools that were charging exorbitant fees from the students and parents against the accord. "We request all government schools to admit students without charging any fee until the next

government is formed and another provision is introduced to address the issue," said Lekhnath Neupane, the president of the union, at a press conference. He also requested the parents not to pay fees under any head. Private school owners had signed a 19-point accord with the union some 11 months ago. As per the accord, schools are not supposed to charge admission fee each year and not hike fees unilaterally. The union said the private schools have been fleecing students and parents. "The decision to hike the fees by private schools is against the agreement," Neupane said, adding, "We request all private schools to stop collecting additional fees immediately." The private schools had a few weeks ago decided to hike fees by 20 percent beginning this academic session. "We will be forced to fight against such schools if the problem persisted," he warned. However, Neupane clarified that his union would not go for physical action against such schools, but will opt for social and legal means to solve the problem. Neupane also urged the government to advertise vacancy for 62,000 teachers and hire them through free competition. The union demanded that the royal palace and the property of the royal family be nationalized and utilized for the development of education sector.

Leading dailies report

BJP Hopes Nepal Govt Won't Be Anti-Hindu

Jittery over the win of Maoists in Nepal elections, India's main opposition party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has expressed hopes that Nepal won't be anti-Hindu. The BJP welcomed the results of the constituent assembly in a statement issued on Friday (Apr 18). The statement released after an extended meeting of the party's central office bearers said, "Till recently, Nepal was a Hindu nation and because it was a Hindu nation, it dealt equitably with its citizens belonging to other faiths. Now, Nepal is being declared a secular State. We hope that under the new dispensation, Nepal will not become anti-Hindu and anti-India." *Compiled from reports*

Indian Envoy Reassures India's 'Active Support' To Nepal

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Shiva Shankar Mukherjee has reiterated that India will continue to extend its support to the future CPN-Maoist led government. He also said that the Indian government is 'happy' with the political changes in Nepal. Talking to media persons at the TU Teaching Hospital where he had reached to enquire about the health condition of journalist Rishi Dhamala Thursday (Apr 17), Mukherjee said that since the Maoists have got the people's mandate, the new government to be formed under its leadership would have "full support" of India. "India respects the aspiration of the Nepalese people," he said, adding that his country would continue to help Nepal's peace process in the coming days also. The Indian envoy further said that India has since long been wishing to see establishment of a sustainable peace and improvement of democratic values in Nepal, and expressed hope that the political parties would work in cooperation to ensure the smooth running of the government. Earlier Mukherjee had said that India will go by the wishes of the people of Nepal and "actively work" with whichever party forms the government in Nepal. *Compiled from reports*

MJF Ready To Support Future Maoist Govt: Yadav

Coordinator of the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) Upendra Yadav has pledged support to the would-be government led by the CPN (Maoist). Yadav said this while addressing a function in Lahan of Siraha district on Wednesday (Apr 16). There has not been any deliberation within the party on whether to join the next government. The MJF chief also said that his party wants to improve the relationship with the Maoists. The two parties are at odds for quite a long time, and the relations worsened after 27 Maoist cadres were killed in a deadly massacre in Rautahat in March 2007 which, the Maoists claim, was incited by the MJF. Having received surprisingly positive results in the constituent assembly polls, the MJF has

emerged as a major political force in Terai and appears to have gained a bargaining power as the future Maoist government will need strong coalition support. *Compiled from reports*

Dismantle YCL: Nepal Advises Prachanda

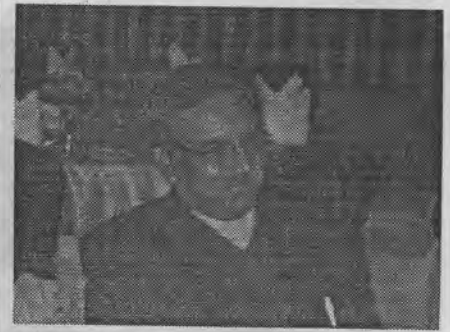
The immediate past general secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Madhav Kumar Nepal has advised Maoist chairman Prachanda to dismantle Young Communist League (YCL), reports Kantipur daily. During his meeting with the Maoist chief, Nepal said that dissolving YCL and turning the Maoists into non-military organization would help the UML in continuing with its cooperation in the joint government. Prachanda and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai had met with Nepal, Thursday, to coax him to ensure that UML is a part of Maoist-led government to be formed after the Constituent Assembly (CA) meets. The daily quotes sources as saying that Nepal termed YCL and its anarchic activities as obstruction in such cooperation and coalition. He cited recent examples of vandalism of UML candidate's residence in Dang; atrocities in Dhading and urged Prachanda to dissolve such outfit and play role of the large party. *Compiled from reports*

A Lady Journo Eyes Everest Ascent

A lady journalist is preparing to scale the Mt Everest. Shaili Basnet, a journalist associated with Himal Khabarpatrika, who has completed training for mountain ascent, said, "I will be successful." She will be a member of the First Inclusive Women Everest Expedition. On Wednesday (Apr 16), the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) wished her all the success. Earlier, journalist Ang Chhiring Sherpa had become the first journalist to scale the world's highest mountain. *Compiled from reports*

Prachanda To Head New Govt, Says Ready To Talk To King

Maoist chairman Prachanda has said that he himself will lead the next government as per the people's mandate expressed through the election. "I will soon come before you by taking the reins



of leadership of first republican government," Prachanda told voters of Kathmandu 10 constituency on Saturday (Apr 19). Meanwhile, he has said that in order to implement republic and to bring about graceful exit of monarchy, he is ready to talk to King Gyanendra. Prachanda informed that he has started initiatives by talking with other political parties and diplomatic missions. "The King will not be removed forcefully or dishonorably," Prachanda said, adding, "We have started talks with people close to the King." Incidentally, Prachanda and senior Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai had met with Kamal Thapa, president of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP-Nepal) - a pro monarchy party - on Friday. Prachanda also said that if the King accepts the people's mandate, he will not face any action for past activities and could engage in normal business or even politics. The Maoists appear aware about the wrong message any forceful eviction of monarchy could send inside and outside the country. "We can present another surprise to the world by holding talk with (the King) about removal. If needed, I myself am willing to hold formal talks with him," Prachanda told Kantipur. Meanwhile, Dr. Bhattarai has said that while removing monarchy, they could provide the outgoing King with economic, social and cultural rights and benefits. In an interview with Bahas talk program of Nepal Television on Saturday, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai said, "We want to bid farewell to the King in an honorable and respectful manner. He can be given economic, social and cultural rights." Dr. Bhattarai did not elaborate what kind of cultural rights could be given. But he hinted that the King could be provided with 'allowances.' *Compiled from reports* ■



Children being administered Vitamin A capsules *Annapurna Post*

THE ELECTION COMMISSION (EC) has said the election costs are well within the limit of its budget estimate that was announced earlier. According to the EC, the total amount spent so far in election programs has not exceeded 2.73 billion rupees, the estimated budget for the election. The commission said that 75 district election offices and the offices of election officers in 240 constituencies will conduct thorough auditing of their spending and then send the details to the center. EC spokesperson Laxman Bhattarai said that the EC would start assessing the costs as soon as it completes the election works. Reports say the total costs of the CA election, including the money spent by national and international observation missions, could cross 6 billion rupees, but Bhattarai said the EC had no information regarding the money spent by other agencies.

MAOISTS HAVE VOWED TO DEVELOP hydropower and have expressed willingness to overcome any challenge including the one posed by employees to realize their aim. In an interaction with bankers and power developers, Thursday, Maoist leaders said they will form a high level committee soon to proceed with project developments. The Maoists have committed in their manifesto to develop 10,000 MW of power in ten years.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS URGED INDIA to withdraw its decision to ban exports of cement and clinker towards Nepal. The Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies has written a letter to the Indian Embassy requesting lifting of such restrictions for Nepal because of its serious impact in the local market. The Ministry is also preparing to make its case clear to concerned Indian officials by mobilizing Nepalese Embassy in New Delhi. Citing spiraling inflation, the Indian government had restricted export of cement, clinker and food stuffs. Due to the decision, the import of cement and clinker has stopped since April 11 triggering rise in cement price by over 20 percent in the local market. Although 70 percent of total cement

demand is met domestically, most of the industries depend on the import of clinker as raw material from India.

THE CPN (CPN) HAS QUIT THE GOVERNMENT after its defeat in the constituent assembly elections. Following the party's decision to quit the government, all seven UML minister including two state ministers tendered their resignation to Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala Wednesday (Apr 16) afternoon. In their joint resignation letter, the UML ministers stated that their party decided to pull out of the government honoring the people's verdict expressed through the CA polls. Foreign minister Sahana Pradhan, education minister Pradeep Nepal, tourism minister Prithvi Subba Gurung, general administration minister Ram Chandra Yadav, agriculture and cooperatives minister Chhabilal Biswokarma and state ministers Mohan Singh Rathour and Nagendra Prasad Chaudhary had represented the UML in the Koirala-led government. Foreign minister Pradhan, who led the UML team in the government, met PM Koirala in Baluwatar and presented the resignation letter to Prime Minister Koirala. The Prime Minister is said to have asked the UML team to reconsider its decision to quit the government "so soon". Earlier Wednesday, UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal had met Koirala and discussed the post-election scenario, particularly the election result that has gone in favour of the Maoists. The UML's decision to pull out of the government comes at a time when the CPN (Maoist), which has emerged as the biggest party after the polls and is set to led the new government, has pledged collaboration with other parties in running the government. Compiled from reports

IN A BID TO INCREASE CHILDREN'S ACCESS to quality education, the government has from Wednesday (Apr 16) started, what it calls, a nationwide "school enrollment campaign". According to the Department of Education (DOE), the campaign that is organized every year will chiefly target over one hundred thousand children who have not received any primary level schooling till now. The Department further said that this campaign will run for the next three weeks during which time not only children coming to schools will get admission but the education officials would themselves also go to each and every house asking parents to admit their children in schools. Janardan Sharma, director of DOE, informed that from this year on children below the age of 5 years would not be admitted in the primary level like in the past years. Instead they will be admitted in pre-primary or kindergarten schools, he said. Since the past five years, the DOE has been starting the campaign from the beginning of every new academic year to meet the government's aim of "Education for all" till the year 2015. It is estimated that around 445,000 children across the country don't have access to school education ■

BRITISH ABANDONED PLAN TO CONQUER NEPAL

Was it a Token of Generosity or Fear of Unending War?

•Mrs Laxmi Thapa

At a time when the western part of the South Asia was bearing the brunt of the repeated brutal invasions by Nadir Shah and his successors who massacred innumerable innocent peoples and plundered vast areas, and when this whole region was being swiftly converted into the colony of the western powers, Nepal was able to rise within a very short time from a scratch to become a relatively powerful Himalayan country. Nepal had gathered enough momentum to move forward to protect the peoples dwelling in the north-western part of this vast region from anarchy. However, the build up of Nepalese strength brought her on a collision course with the colonial power of that time. Britain had good reason to fear that if the Nepalese build up continued for some time, the colonial rule of Britain could soon come to an end in South Asia much the same way as in the North America a short time before.

It is unfortunate that our historians and educationists have not cared to impart to younger generations the knowledge about the big role of our ancestors in protecting the vast Himalayan region from falling prey to colonial power. Almost all other countries in Asia and Africa were enslaved by colonial powers but our country could remain free forever by virtue of our forefathers' great sacrifices in the cause to defend the sovereignty of our country. Our new generation virtually knows nothing about our glorious past. Thus, they are denied the opportunity to draw moral lessons from the great sacrifices of our ancestors. It is hoped that in near future our country's attention would be drawn to end this shocking state of affairs.

British-Nepal War

The British actively began preparation for the war from the time when F.R. Hastings-Earl of Moira landed in India as Governor General and Commander-in-Chief in 1813. The actual declaration of war against Nepal is recorded as 1 November, 1814, though the war began from middle of October.

Background of War With British

Some historians say that David Ochterlony was anti-Nepal from the beginning. It was he who thoroughly incited

the Governor General Hastings-Earl of Moira to declare war against Nepal through his reportages and plans to eliminate. David Ochterlony was responsible to arrange the signing of the Amritsar Treaty with Ranjit Singh of Punjab in 1809 that was to a great extent directed against Nepal. He was a British agent at Ludhiana in 1811. Externally he tried to develop cordial friendship with Nepalese commanders who never suspected his sincerity. It is said about him that he followed the dictum: "In love and war everything is fair".

Initial Nepalese Victory

British had expected a blitz-krieg victory. It is said that the Governor General Hastings had planned to win the war in one mighty sweep in one to two months in end 1814 but certainly before the Christmas. He was badly mistaken in his assessment. We Nepalese fought very bravely. In early months of the war the initial British invasion was completely beaten off. British offensive ended in complete failure. Nepalese force stationed within the shelter of the fortress were not only able to defend their position against an invading enemy many times superior in strength but they even shocked them by their dreadful counteroffensive that used to be accompanied by big losses on British side. The British rule in India was at a risk of falling apart.

Unfortunately at that time the Sikhs and Marathas did not join Nepal in liberating the whole of the South Asian Continent from the grip of the European domination.

British New Strategy

After the initial defeats the British changed their strategy to avoid their casualties. They started to deploy long range guns to level the fortification and force the enemy to flee. This strategy paid off. The British were able to advance quickly into the territory under our control. They even used elephants to carry heavy guns across the mountains.

Towards the beginning of the 1816 the British force under Ochterlony had continued to advance towards Kathmandu. The British force was already close to the valley. It might have appeared that the British conquest was quite near. At that juncture the British abandoned their intention to conquer Nepal and agreed to end the war. Why the British decided to

abandon the idea of conquering Nepal? Was it a token of generosity or fear of unending war and even a defeat?

Lesson From American War of Independence

F.R. Hastings, Earl of Moira, who was at the time of war with Nepal the British Governor in India, had fought from the British side in the American War of Independence. He must have learnt from the American war that any unwise move to defeat native fighting force can end in a total failure.

On October 17, 1777, an English army under General Burgoyne, advancing southwards on New York, was forced to capitulate at Saratoga. This prompted France to enter on war against the British for the establishment of the American republic.

Cornwallis, Charles, 1st Marquis Cornwallis, British general and statesman, whose defeat at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781, was

decisive in ending the British rule over America. He was responsible for the British victory at Brandywine Creek, Pennsylvania, in September 1777, and later in the same

British force advancing towards Kathmandu would not have forgotten the horrific experience of that bloody battle. Bhakti Thapa had laid down his life in the battlefield. Nepalese casualties were 390 whereas the British casualties also were too high and reached 384.

month he occupied Philadelphia. On May 12, 1780, Cornwallis, in command of British forces in the South, achieved a great victory over General Horatio Gates at Camden and South Carolina. In March 1781 Cornwallis moved to the coast. At that time Washington saw this an opportunity to defeat Cornwallis. On October 19, 1781 Cornwallis was forced to surrender at Yorktown, Virginia. With his surrender the American victory was assured.

Jitgarh Type Surprises

In early months of 1815 General John Sullivan Wood had led an attack on Jitgarh Fort, which is on the western route to Kathmandu. British force numbered about 10,000. The fierce resistance of the defending Nepalese force had caught the attacking British force by surprise. British force had to bear the brunt of the ferocity of Nepalese defense. British troop ran into well laid gauntlet of fire. Within hours the British invading force was completely routed. General Wood had to flee from the battle area with his remaining force that survived.

It was certain that at several locations the Jitgarh type resistance of the Nepalese force defending the capital would have caught the British force moving towards Kathmandu in early 1816 by surprise. Such counter attack could be disastrous to British invading force.

Nepalese Ready to Defend at all Costs

The Deothal Battle fought on April 16, 1815 had made it very clear that the Nepalese of all ages are ready for ultimate sacrifice if the need arises. A small column of only about

400 under 74 years old Bhakti Thapa had launched a fierce counter attack against the entrenched British force numbering about 3500. British force advancing towards Kathmandu would not have forgotten the horrific experience of that bloody battle. Bhakti Thapa had laid down his life in the battlefield. Nepalese casualties were 390 whereas the British casualties also were too high and reached 384. The casualties ratio was one to one under the most adverse conditions to the Nepalese. Fear of fierce Nepalese counter offensive must have been the strongest deterrent to discourage the British force to continue their advance towards Kathmandu.

Depressed Morale of British Force

Edward Bishop has written how the British found themselves weakened at the end of British-Nepal War in the book *Better To Die- The Story of The Gorkhas*: "Lord Moira thought the war would be over by the Christmas. In the event his invading columns encountered so much misfortune at the hands of the Gorkhas that, quite apart from the Nepalese conflict being obscured by Waterloo and other momentous events in Europe of the period, written

reference to it was discouraged over the next hundred years for fear of alerting the British Empire's subject people to the fallibility of the British soldiers and their arms..the operations of Moira's columns redounded so little to our credit that the less said about them, the better." The depressed morale of the British force might have prevented to advance to capture Kathmandu which would have been accompanied with great loss of lives on both sides. ■

**Best wishes for
Prosperous
New Year 2065 B.S.**



madanlal chiranjilal

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Maoist leaders with business leaders: Time to mend fences?

MAOIST ECONOMIC POLICY

Courting Capitalists

Maoist leadership has made a number of moves to assure the business community, which still remains nervous over their economic policy

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

“For now, we are not going to implement any property ceiling. We don't have any policy of seizing capital/property. We want to develop domestic capital. We will promote the investment of capital for generation of employment and profit-making,” said Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader.

His statement was among a volley of similar comments by the Maoist leadership in recent days.

As the news of impending Maoist win in the Constituent Assembly (CA) election hit, the country's only secondary share market Nepal Stock Exchange (Nepse) nosedived.

It was an indication of the nervousness of investors over the Maoists' economic policies.

Subsequently, Maoist chairman Prachanda and Dr. Bhattarai held a series of interactions with business community.

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“We want to change the existing feudal economic relations towards capitalism by promoting domestic capital development. No one needs to worry about our policies,” said Prachanda, addressing an interaction with the business community at a five-star hotel last week.

He said his party will strike a balance between investors' as well as workers' interests.

“We need to perform economic miracle now. We will focus on development of capital.” He also hinted that Industrial Security Force (ISF), which has been proposed to bolster security in industrial sector, can be formed by accommodating Maoist combatants.

He added that his party was in close contact with international donors and Indian officials to continue their assistance in development.

“The business community need not have any doubts about us,” he said, adding that socialism can be established only after capital is developed.

“We need to perform an economic miracle now,” he said.

The business community, however, is yet to be fully convinced with comrades' words.

“Words and works are different. We want to see an immediate implementation of their words,” said Suraj Vaidya, senior vice president of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI).

The business community has advised the Maoist leaders to continue with liberal economy and create environment conducive for investment. The private sector is worried over Maoist stance vis-à-vis economic liberalization and privatization.

“We are not yet fully convinced (with their policy) because of the ideology they carry. We want guarantee of capital, guarantee of investment and property, among others,” said Surendra Bir Malakar, president of Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC).

One of the major points of discomfiture among the business community is what kind of labor policy the Maoists adopt.

In the past the Maoist-affiliated trade unions had been raising what the business community terms as ‘unreasonable demands.’

“The labor policy will be their first test. If they continue with the demands they had made earlier, then no industry can run in Nepal. Even a recent World Bank report has shown that Nepal's labor policy is wrong-footed,” said Vaidya.

“The Maoists have called for public-private partnership. That must include full partnership of private sector before formulating any policy, during implementation of policy and in the monitoring of its implementation,” added Vaidya.

The Maoists have not yet clarified their stance vis-à-vis the ongoing reforms and economic liberalization, which is also a cause of worry for business community and development partners ■

DECLARING REPUBLIC

Present Tense

Despite the election of an out-and-out republican assembly, key actors put the monarchy at the centre-stage

By SUSHIL SHARMA

Not a single monarchist candidate won in the direct elections for the 240 seats of the constituent assembly. Just a handful of them



Prachanda: Republican

are expected to make it under the proportional elections for another 335 seats.

So, it should be only a formality for the elected republican assembly to implement the earlier decision of the non-elected interim parliament on abolishing monarchy.

If the impossible-looking constitutional complications are untangled by what looks like an elusive consensus, the assembly should sit in a month's time. And the first meeting will convert the monarchical republic that Nepal currently is, into a complete democratic republic.

But king Gyanendra is in no hurry to shift from the 3000-royal guard-protected Narayanhity to Nirmal Niwas, leave alone seeking asylum abroad, according to informed sources.

Said a veteran politician after he met the king on Tuesday, "the king seemed very confident."

Perhaps he is still bidding his time. Hopeful that the situation would ultimately turn in his favour.

While nursing such hopes, it is improbable that king Gyanendra, having badly burned his fingers in the ill-advised take-over three years ago, is not taking key external factors into consideration.

After all, it was the Delhi agreement between the Maoists and the mainline

parties that ended the suicidal royal power-grab.

As far as internal factors are considered, he is banking on the further deepening of the long-running mistrust between the Maoists and the other main parties over the electoral outcome.

Having travelled together for the last three years against the common enemy — the king — the Maoists and the mainline parties mainly the Nepali Congress and UML have shown signs of drifting apart.

If the NC and the UML felt "betrayed" by the intimidating Maoists at the hustings, the latter has not yet ruled out a 'foul play' to stop it from capturing the seat of power.

Having been drubbed in the elections the NC and the UML have lately been not upbeat over the prospects of a Maoist-engineered republic.

They fear that they could be the next target of a party that has 19,000 verified armed combatants and tens of thousands of unarmed but military-trained young cadres across the country.

That fear speaks for the two major parties' silence — if not an about-turn yet — on abolishing the monarchy.

They have sent feelers to the king for consultations on future course of action in dealing with a resurgent former insurgents, according to sources.

It is not known if the king did respond and, if yes, how. One thing is known. That he has responded to the feelers from a totally unexpected quarter — the Maoists.

The vocal republican Maoists are said to be seeking Narayanhity's support in their quest for a firm hold in the Singh Durbar. In return of some kind of space for the monarchy in the new republican order.

The message had been conveyed

during meetings the top Maoist leaders, Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai, had had with some key



King Gyanendra: Not in hurry

monarchist figures.

Incidentally, the meetings had been followed by Baburam's suggestion, in a TV interview, about a cultural king with a state allowance.

Prachanda talked about a graceful exit to discuss which, he said, he was ready to meet the king.

Sources did not rule out a face-to-face meeting. "Behind-the-scene negotiations are underway."

Said a source, "the Maoists feared a conspiracy of NC, UML and, more importantly, foreign powers to deny them the power. They wanted an understanding between what they say were patriotic forces."

The suggestion, some say, may have been aimed at winning the backing of the Nepali army which the Maoists once dubbed "royal American army."

It was the Nepali army that had blocked the red march to Singh Durbar before the former rebels opted for a different route.

The Maoists deny any closed-door dealings. They insist that the meetings with the royalists are aimed at ensuring a smooth transition to republic and saving the king a humiliating ouster.

"We do not want any vestiges of feudal institutions in any form," thundered Prachanda, two days after the party's military strategist, Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal', challenged political strategist Bhattarai's take on cultural king.

Sources say, it is understandable for the Maoists to show such a public posture. In response to the Maoist leaders' apologetic explanation 'we can not make an about-turn in public', they were reportedly told to find, at least, ways to postpone the declaration of a republic.

That, according to sources, will test the Maoist gesture to the king. ■

THE BIG THREE

Poles Apart

Major parties brace for internal polarization over the formation of a new government

By SUSHIL SHARMA

It is not decided yet. The central committee will meet soon and make a decision."

That was influential Maoist leader Baburam Bhattarai to a question on whether he was going to be the future prime minister.

Two days after Bhattarai made the



Dr. Bhattarai: Different opinion

remarks in a BBC talk show, his senior Prachanda told a Kirtipur rally that he would himself lead the government.

Projected by the party as "the future first president of Nepal", Prachanda hinted that he would settle for the prime

ministership. Even before the party's central committee had met.

In a TV interview, also last week, Bhattarai dropped suggestion about a cultural king.

Less than 24 days later, his long-time rival in the party, Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal' roundly brushed aside such a suggestion.

As debate on the shape of the future government intensified, influential UML leader K.P.Oli flatly ruled out the UML joining the coalition under a Maoist prime minister.

"How can we join hands with those who broke our head, beat us up and intimidated our family members," he asked.

The veteran leftist leader had lost to an unknown young Maoist candidate in the eastern Jhapa district

Another key leader, Bamdev Gautam, beat a different note. He also received a severe drubbing at the hands of a Maoist underdog in Bardiya. But the UML lion roared, "We must work together with the Maoists to write a new constitution."

A sizeable section of the UML leadership including the outgoing general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal and the likes of Iswor Pokharel are also opposed to the idea of joining a Maoist-led government.

They fear that such a move would be seen as giving in to the Maoist intimidation.

A potential successor to Madhav

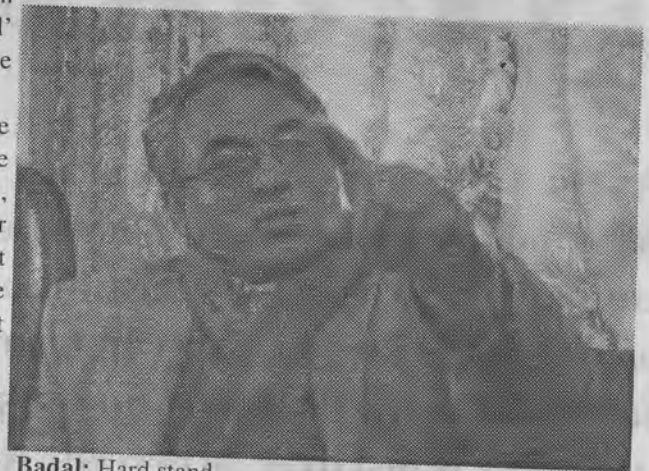
Nepal at the helm of the UML is Jhalnath Khanal. He has not let his mind known yet.

But he will be at pains to bridge the sharp divide between the pro and anti Maoist factions.

The Nepali Congress faces a similar situation. No senior leader has spoken in favour of an alliance with the Maoists in the new government.

But the party's pro-republican faction who had been accused of acquiescing too much to the Maoists is positively inclined towards the former rebels.

It puts blame more on the current leadership and the campaign management for the poll debacle.



Badal: Hard stand

But critics of the alliance with the Maoists have threatened to quit the party if the alliance was continued. They attribute the party's "ideological deviation" towards the radical left to the election defeat.

"We have made it clear to the party president Girija Prasad Koirala," said a senior leader, "if the party is forced to join the Maoists in the government, many heavyweights would either join the Madhesi Forum or remain idle."

Analysts say, the possibility of former rulers of the *aadhar chhetra* in remote villages ruling from Singh Durbar in the capital may be an exciting event.

No less exciting will be its fallout on all the three major parties including the ex-rebel outfit. ■

CA ELECTIONS

Illusive

Mandate

As the vote counting is at the last leg, the results indicate that voters have not given absolute mandate to any single party to govern the country and write the constitution. Although CPN-Maoist emerged as the single largest party in terms of number of votes received and seats won in the first-past-post system, its strength in 601 Constituent Assembly is just over 30 percent. As nobody mustered enough strength to govern the country and write the new constitution single-handedly, the country seems to be heading towards another stage of political deadlock

By KESHAB POUDEL

"As the single largest party, it is our turn to form the next government," said CPN-Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal aka Prachanda addressing a mass meeting in his constituency no 10 of Kathmandu. "People have already endorsed our programs through popular votes."

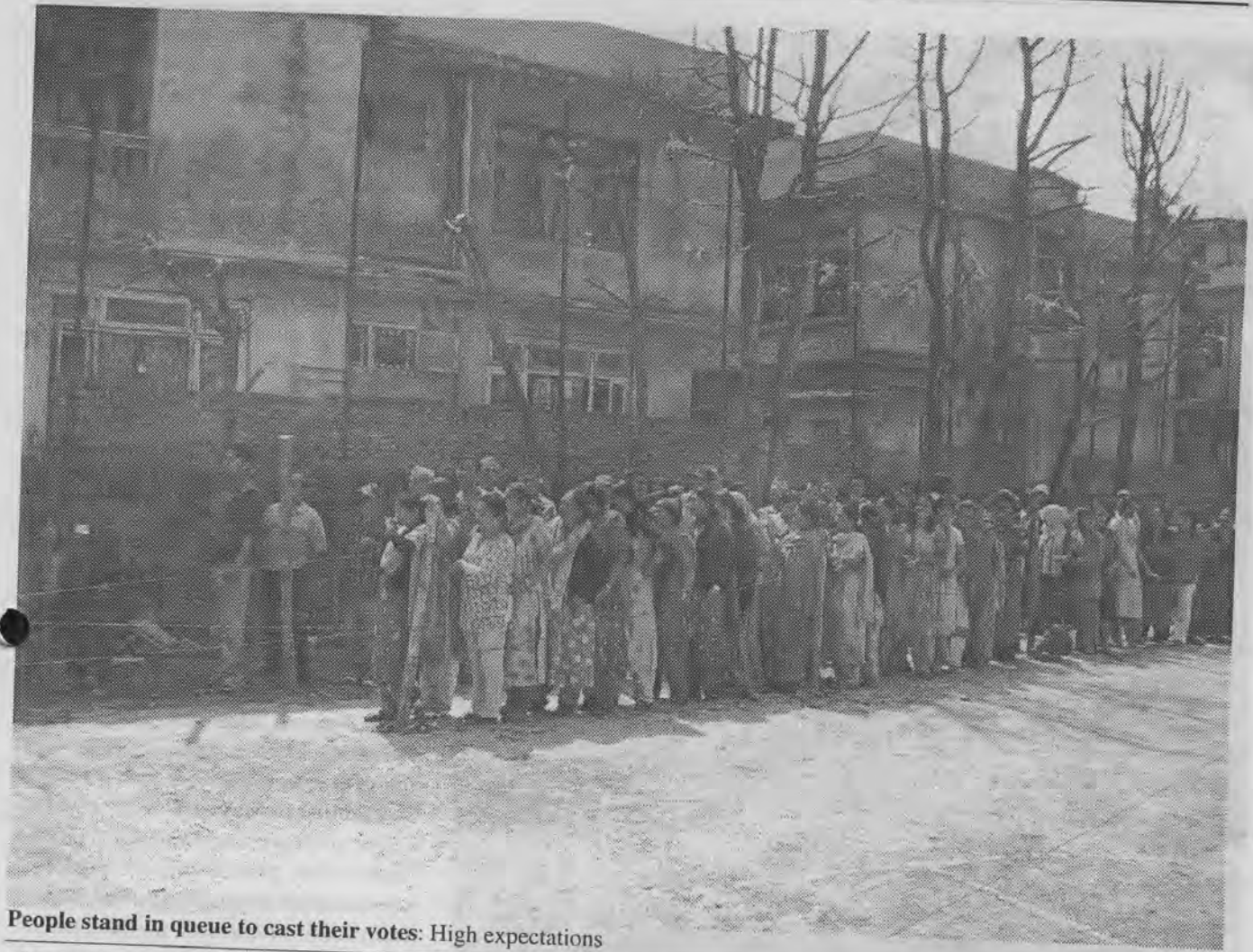
"We will bring constitutional proposal to remove monarchy in the first meeting of Constituent Assembly.

As per the mandate given by the people, other parties must support us to form the next government under the leadership of CPN-Maoist," said Maoist leader Ram Bahadur Badal.

There is a confusion that the Maoist have a mandate to rule the country including making of the constitution but the peculiarity of this interim constitution treats Maoists as one of the minority parties like all others 12 parties.

Maoists have to depend upon other major parties to form a government and they need more such support to work out in making constitution

As voters gave votes to country's three major political parties, there is a fractured mandate. Whatever Maoist leaders claim, they, too, have failed not only to secure two third majority but even the simple majority to govern the country. Securing little over 30 percent



People stand in queue to cast their votes: High expectations

of votes in proportional representation and winning 120 out of 240 seats under the FPTP election means the Maoist total strength will be around 220 seats in 60-member 1 assembly.

"As all the parties are in the minority, the composition of the present house will compel parties to enter into compromise and concessions for every bits and pieces of constitution making and forming the government is equally challenging to them. The constitution is silent over the elections of the prime minister and formation of the cabinet. What is required is broad based consensus among major political parties. That way Maoists are not in any better position than other parties," said a political analyst.

As per the present constitution, no political party can form the government, even if it secures clear cut majority. Under the article 38 (1) of the interim

constitution, the prime minister shall be selected by political consensus and the Council of Ministers shall be formed under the chairpersonship of the prime minister.

The article 38 (2) says if consensus cannot be reached pursuant of clause (1), the prime minister shall be elected by a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Legislature Parliament. (3) The structure of, and allocation of portfolios to the interim council of minister shall be determined by consensus.

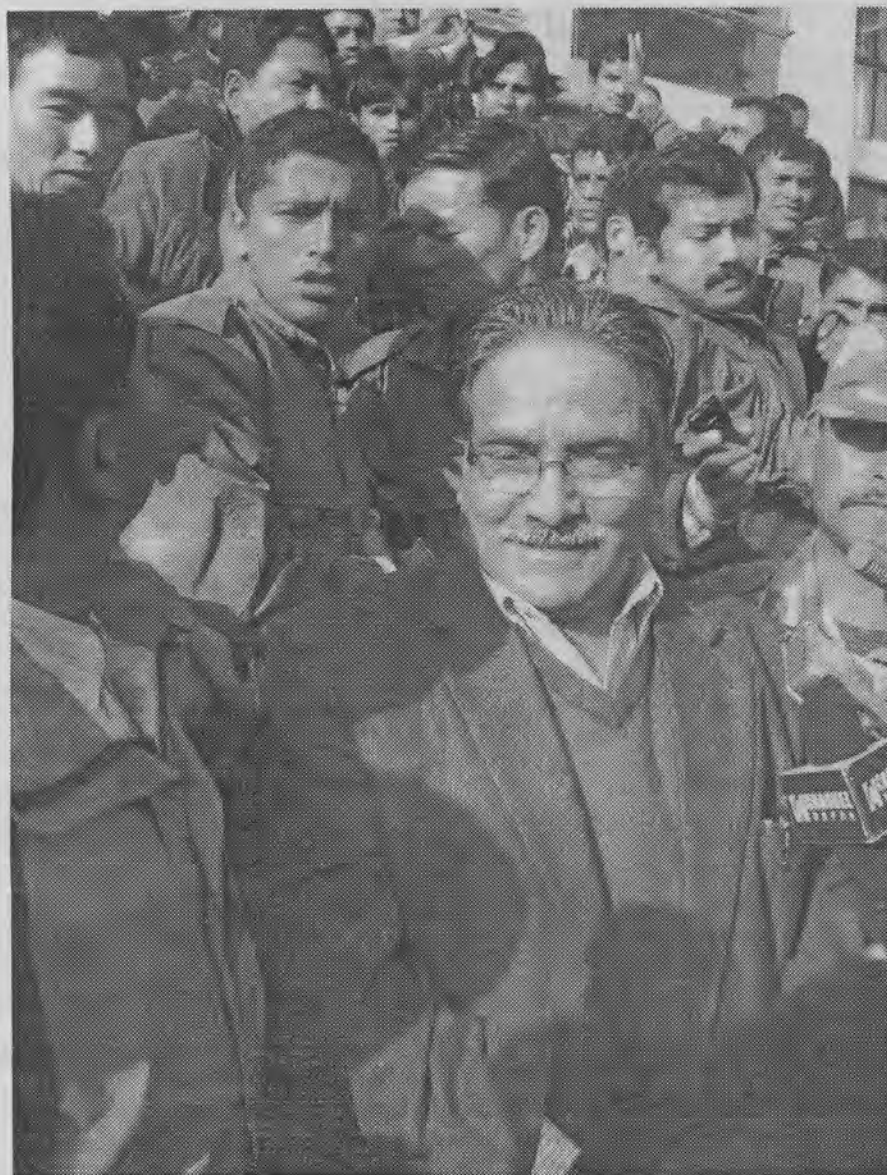
Although the constitutional provisions legitimize seven parties as key players when the constitution was formulated, more than a dozen of other players are entering the CA following the election including Madheshi Janadhikar Forum, Terai-Madhesh-Loktantrik Party, Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Nepal Sadbhavana Party and others.

Unlike the claim by the Maoists, forming the new government is not an easy matter. "We will see how Maoists will respond to our demands of autonomous single terai," said Upendra Yadav, president of Madheshi Janadhikar Forum.

Political Consensus

At a time when no political parties has won majority to form the government on its own, the way out for any political party is to form the government through the political consensus among at least three parties.

With its emergence as the largest party with 220 plus seats in 601 member CA, Maoists require another 182 seats to form the majority government. Maoists can form the government in a situation when two out of three parties support them such as Madheshi Janadhikar Forum, Nepali Congress or



Prachanda: Victorious

CPN-UML

Politically it is not easy for CPN-UML, Nepali Congress and Madheshi Janadhikar Forum to back the Maoists in power. Nepali Congress has lost a chance to be in the lead position but it will have significant say in formation of the government and making of the constitution.

The composition of the assembly is such that the Maoists can pull down any government formed with its support but other parties cannot pull down the Maoist government if it reaches to the power.

According to article 55 of the interim constitution, the prime minister can be removed only through two third majority.

The article says the member of legislature parliament can register vote of no confidence against the prime minister, but a decision on the motion shall be made by two-thirds majority of the members of the Legislature-Parliament present.

Doubt Over Maoist

Given the recent track record of Maoist cadres of Young Communist League who terrorized the rural parts of the country by physically attacking candidates and supporters of opposition candidates, majority of leaders of Nepali Congress and CPN-UML are still reluctant to give support to Maoists to form the government.

They fear that the Maoists can start intimidating others once they are in a position where no party can oust them. "This will be suicidal for us. We cannot back the party which will introduce authoritarian system through our votes," said Govinda Raj Joshi a senior Nepali Congress leader.

Similar voices are echoing from the side of CPN-UML also. "Of course, Maoists have the right to form the government as the single largest party but how can we support them when most of our party workers were brutally attacked during the election," said Bam Dev Gautam CPN-UML leader.

Even Congress leaders like Dr. Shekhar Koirala, a well known Maoist sympathizer, has different attitude. "Maoists need to return the property captured by them and they must allow the internally displaced persons to go to their homes as a prerequisite to get support from Congress," said Dr. Koirala. "They also need to contain violent activities of Young Communist League."

Communist In Majority

For the first time in the history of Nepal, the parliament will have communist majority. In terms of votes secured by communist parties, their presence will be over 60 percent. As the center to the right has virtually become non-existent, there is a great vacuum.

"There are better chances for communists in broad sense if all the leftist parties come to a common agreement. Theoretically, it is in their common interest in the parliament. If they do that, the politics of the country will develop into ideological polarization between communist and non-communist. But in practical terms, it is unthinkable in present day Nepal in the geo-political context," said the political analyst. "Communist groups don't have the leader of that wisdom and guts to forge broad based alliances of leftist forces. Any attempt towards that will invite a serious operation from the external force mainly from the south. As all have burnt their fingers, there are no chances for such leftist unity in the country."

In this background, the NC has an



Kathmandu election office: Crowded atmosphere

advantageous position. NC is not a cadre based party like communist but it is a mass based party under a particular leadership. Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala is not in haste in his desperation in the post-election period like CPN-UML's Madhav Kumar Nepal.

Koirala had definitely suffered a serious set back in his political prestige and appeal but the provision of this peculiarly drafted interim constitution has yet to give him a leverage to manipulate between different constituents in the power.

Euphoria Over

The jubilation of winning the elections may subside in due course of time. Shortly afterwards, all constituents will be forced to join hands with each other for delivery of goods to the people.

"From euphoria, Nepal's politics is now coming down to ground reality where political actors need each others' support. Given the nature of present constitution which is based on consensus, it is definite to invite some kind of deadlock in the formation of the government. Except in the case of abolition of monarchy, it requires two third majority to make the constitution functional," said the analyst.

Even on the issues of monarchy, the

parties are gradually shifting their positions. Though they have committed to declare Nepal as republic, the parties are yet to frame

the constitutional way to pass the resolution in the first meeting. Compared to leaders of political parties, the King is in relaxed mood as he has been spending his time taking part in family gatherings and marriage ceremonies.

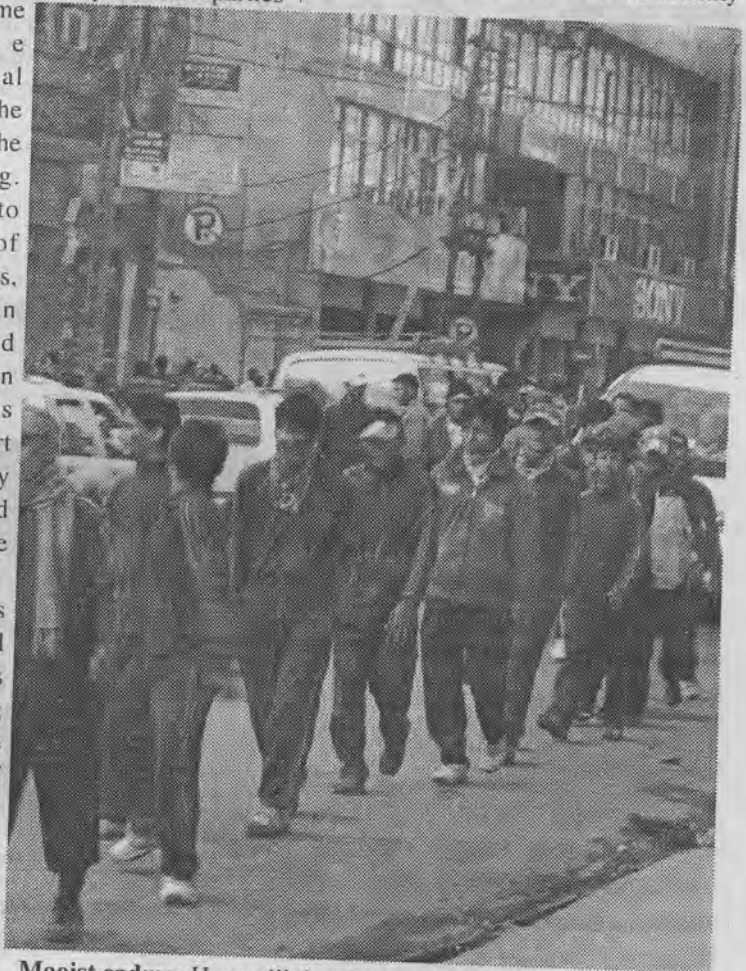
"King is relaxed and confident. He is watching carefully the move of political parties," said a senior monarchist leader who met

with the King recently. "Given the present political complications, King's position is more secure."

Experiments of Constitution

There had been experiments in the past with synthetic politics between heterogeneous views and interests during the Panchayat period. After the change in 1990, the first past post elections of the parliament had brought out ruling and opposition parties heading for almost two party system. Even during coalition government period, there were ruling as well as opposition benches. Those experiments were rejected due to abnormal political developments in the country and thus the constitution was scrapped away. Now again a synthesis of heterogeneous forces have come into practice and the present interim constitution reaffirms the same thing.

Different political parties are there in the field competing against each other but they don't have their distinct identity



Maoist cadres: How will they behave in coming days?



Maoist office in Bhaktapur: Jubilant mood

different than others. All the major political parties have share in the power and bear the consequences of being in power together. "The synthetic politics have been remodeled into a new form and people are denied of ventilating their grievances through a dependable

opposition against the deeds and misdeeds of ruling force. Ultimately, the constitution will be a document of compromises in which all will gain something and all will lose something. Communists will definitely lose their ideological indoctrination and similarly

democrats will lose their democratic appeal. In reality politics in Nepal will head towards apolitical synthetic experiments till the next upheaval which may not be too far," said the analyst.

From drafting the constitution in two and half years and running the government smoothly, they also need to have politics of consensus. It is inevitable that whenever there are internal disputes among major political parties, there will appear unseen force to manipulate.

"There are inherent compulsions for compromise for both internal as well as external players. Recent events on both the side of Nepal may force all to think seriously and behave responsibly," said the analyst.

Since Prime minister and ruling party will be handicapped even if Maoists come to power, the way ahead for the coming days will be very difficult and unpredictable. It seems inevitable that the political actors will have to spend most of their time in settling the political deadlock. This is what the message of fractured mandate is going to be. ■

NEW GOVERNMENT

Head-hunting

Who will head the new government is not clear yet

By A CORRESPONDENT

The Maoists have staked a claim to lead the new government. Naturally. Having emerged as the single largest party in the 601-member constituent assembly.

The claim is, however, not constitutionally binding. Either a consensus or a two-third majority is what the constitution requires any individual or party to lead the new government.

The Maoists do not even have a simple majority.

Consensus in favour of the Maoists looks increasingly elusive. After the

parliamentary parties.

Against this backdrop, prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala is reportedly giving second thoughts to his earlier decision to leave Baluwatar.

Known himself for intoxication of power Koirala is probably happy to be under pressure to reassess the situation.

The pre-poll-confident president of the Nepali Congress is said to be under pressure to continue in office as a consensus head of the government despite the post-poll shock. To prevent ultra-communist-led government.

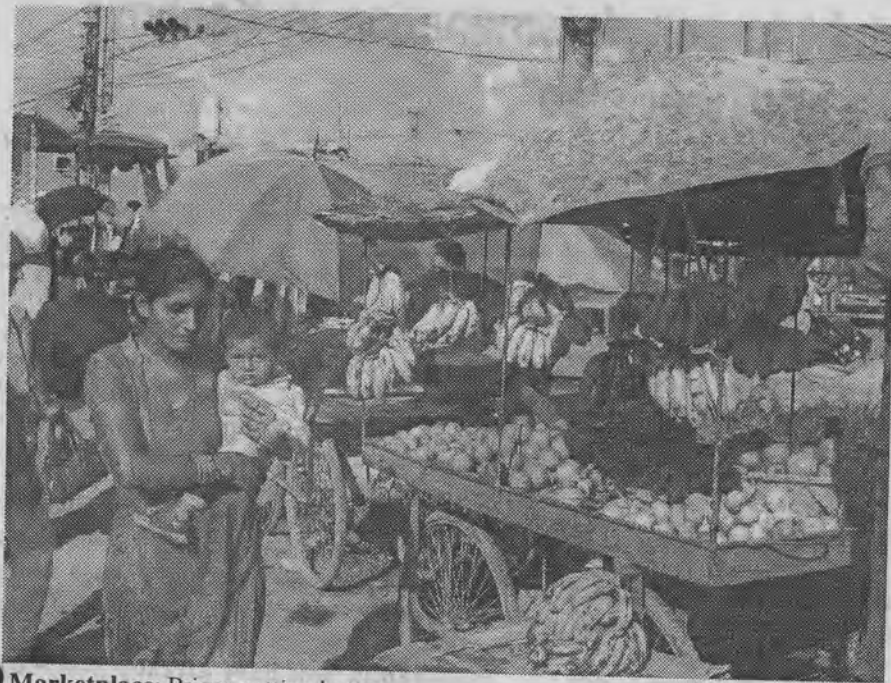
"Behind-the-scene diplomatic moves are already afoot", according to sources.

Plans are also said to be in place to persuade some other figures from the Nepali Congress or non-left parties, if Koirala did not oblige. ■



PM Koirala : Silent move

elections that saw the former rebels shocking and surprising the major



Marketplace: Prices getting hotter

FOOD STUFFS

Price Spike

The global price rise of food stuffs has affected Nepalese market compelling authorities to take stark measures

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

In the past two months, the prices of essential food products have jumped, on average, by 20 percent.

Price of rice, wheat, flour, edible oil, pulses and cereals have all increased.

"If we compare the current price of food stuffs with that of two/three months before, we can find that they have increased, on average, between 15 to 20 percent," said Pabitra Bajracharya, president of Nepal Retail Traders Association.

"Across the board the price rise has affected all kinds of foodstuffs including cereals, rice, pulses, oil etc," said Bajracharya.

Till two months ago, the price of rice (Mansuli rice) was Rs 850 per 30 kg packet. This has increased to Rs 1000 now. The price of wheat flour has increased from Rs 24 to Rs 28 per kg.

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The price of edible oil has shot up from Rs 90 per liter to Rs 130 per liter. Pulses and cereals too have jumped significantly.

"The price with which you could buy two sacks of food stuffs now get you only one sack. Everything has become expensive rice, pulses, cereals, oil," said Jujubhai Shrestha, a retail trader at Ason market.

The price of food is increasing all over the world. Along with the increase in the price of petroleum products, the price of delivery, too, increased. Likewise, the use of food stuffs like maize in producing bio-fuel has made it scarce. Moreover, the world is facing worst food scarcity in the last three decades. All of these factors have contributed to rising prices of food in the world.

Consequently, riots and demonstrations have broken out in dozens of countries in Asia and Africa including Egypt, Senegal, Haiti, Bangladesh and so on.

India has, like many other countries, banned the export of wheat and rice (except Basmati rice).

The government of Nepal, too, is preparing to restrict the export of essential foodstuffs.

"Our production is enough. And we don't have production or supply side problem. But exports of them could lead to a problem. Therefore, we are discussing about restricting their exports," said Gyan Darshan Udas, spokesperson at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies.

The government and private sector agreed to restrict export of rice, paddy, wheat and maize, among other food stuffs. "It was agreed to ban the export of food stuffs because there could be crisis situation otherwise," said Kush Kumar Joshi, president of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI). Some of the food stuffs such as rice and wheat and products like flour are exported to India and Bangladesh.

As the Maoists prepare to take charge of the new government, they are likely to face the problem of food shortage and price rise.

"If there is international price rise, then we would have to look into the option of adjusting domestic prices through consultations with all stakeholders and political parties," said Krishna Bahadur Mahara, a senior Maoist leader and Minister for Information and Communication.

The United Nations Secretary General Ban ki Moon has expressed concerns that food shortage could hit the target of reducing hunger and poverty in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

He has warned that the rise in prices of essential food could not only affect economic growth and social progress but also hit the political security situation, particularly in developing and poor countries. ■

"We support the right to self determination in Kashmir and Tibet also"

- Dr. Baburam Bhattarai

Senior leader of CPN-Maoist **Dr. BABURAM BHATTARAI** is also known as an architect of Maoist insurgency in Nepal. Dr. Bhattarai has major influence in the Maoist party. At a time when CPN-Maoist has emerged as the single largest party, Dr. Bhattarai spoke about his party's strategy at length to *Sajha Sawal* program of BBC World Trust and BBC Nepali Service. He also addressed queries from some members of the audience at the interview program held last week at Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) hall. Excerpts of his interview:

You have said that you will accept demand of federal state with the right to self determination in Nepal. People are raising similar demands of right to self determination in Kashmir, North-east Indian state and Tibet. What will be your position on these demands?

We will support the demands of people of Indian Kashmir, Assam, and north east states of India and Tibet also about the right to self determination. What kind of determination is up to them to decide. We will support these kinds of demands raised in any part of the world including in America and Latin American states and Africa. This is our ideology. Every one should get it.

You used to say that MJF is a King's party and party backed by fundamentalist Hindus. Have you changed your stand now?

There are still such forces but we want to work together with them now as people have chosen them as a legitimate political party.

But they have been demanding separate Madhes state with a right to self determination. How do you look at it?

Making a single geographical state is a different thing. But, each state should get the right to self determination

(A query by an audience) - I was badly beaten by Maoist cadres. From the candidates to common people, YCL is attacking everyone. What is this all about?

We need not forget that 15 YCL cadres were killed in last one and a half month. It is also equally true that there are some incidents of high-handedness by YCL. We do regret over such incidents.

Maoists are yet to return the properties confiscated during the decade long insurgency. Such activities are still continuing. How do you look at it?

We need to take actions against those who still do these kinds of things. During the decade long people's war, we confiscated the properties of few people, not all the people. It is true that properties were confiscated. We need to give justice to them.

At a time when you have been taking about the formation of government on the basis of consensus, you are also imposing your party's program on such government. Is it new government's New Nepal consensus?

In accordance with the mandate of the people, we have the right to place our programs before the people. There is nothing wrong in it. Even within this mandate of the people, we want consensus. Our aim is not to impose our program.

Baburamji, you have already projected Prachandaji as a future president. Are you future prime minister?

The party is yet to decide it. The party will take decision on individuals based on his capacity, and need. We are ready to play any role as demanded by the party. I cannot say right now who is going to be prime minister and president now as the party will take decision on that. So far as Prachanda's role is concerned, our party chairman Prachanda is going to be the first president of Nepal.

After removal of the King, there may require president for the interim period. As your party has proposed a powerful president, how do you see the possibility of proposing Girija Prasad Koirala as an interim president?

We have not decided yet about Koirala. Our party's wish is to make our party president Prachanda as the first president. For this, we will try to develop consensus on who is going to be president for the interim period. On the basis of political consultation, the decision will be taken on that. Our efforts will be to make our party president Prachanda as the first president of Nepal.

Despite taking actions against ministers and executing them on corruption charges, there are still incidents of corruption in China, the country of Mao, which your party regards as a model. How do you say that taking stern action will reduce the level of corruption?

It is a commendable job to give death penalty to corrupt people. You cannot say otherwise.

My question is even with such harsh punishment; the corruption continues to be there. How do we believe that you will contain corruption?

You are taking actions to control the corruption.

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We will support the demands of people of Indian Kashmir, Assam, and north east states of India and Tibet also about the right to self determination. What kind of determination is up to them to decide.

Will you also introduce the law to give death penalty to corrupt people?

I don't want to talk on death penalty. We will introduce stern actions against those corrupt people so that nobody will dare continue it.

You have said that the per capita income of the country will be increased to US\$ 3000 in ten years?

Yes. If you want to make Nepal as a developed country in 30 years period, you must turn Nepal into a middle income level country within 10 years. In 20 years, we want to make Nepal a developed country and highly developed country in 40 years. That is our commitment.

Is it said that to increase the per capita income to US\$ 3000 in ten years, you need to have growth rate of 27 percent per year. Is it possible?

It is definitely possible. There is nothing impossible. If we have inner guts and identification of real program, it is absolutely possible. For this we need to use forest, water, herbals and manpower. We believe that it is possible.

Do you have any example where any country has achieved such growth in shortest period of time?

There were countries like Soviet Union. After the revolution in Soviet Union, it achieved such kinds of growth. In the 30 years period, they had made such a tremendous achievement. They had achieved not only 37 percent growth per year but some time they achieved even 50 percent growth. There is even 100 percent growth in some years.

Economists have said if Maoists achieve the growth rate of 30 percent a year, they should be immediately rewarded with the Nobel Prize. It means you will certainly receive Nobel Prize now?

Nobel Prize is a different matter. We know what kinds of people receive the Nobel prize. Whether I get Nobel Prize or not, I think these kinds of GDP growth is possible and it must be achieved. For this all Nepalese need to be united.

It is said that the foreign aid will be suspended, and foreign investors will go back. The recent crash in the share market is another example how people are losing their faith. How do you look at it?

It is an incorrect rumor that the foreign aid will be suspended after Maoists come to power. The reality is that all of the diplomatic community wants to continue to support even if Maoists come to power. So far as the crash of share market is concerned, it is also wrong. In a political situation like present one, there are always ups and downs in share market.

When you are talking about foreign aid, your party chairman Prachanda had declared that win of Maoists will be the defeat of India



and America. After winning the election, you have defeated India and America. But now you are saying that you will not term India as an expansionist and America as an imperialist power. Is it not that you have tricked the people?

This is not a question of tricking anyone. Finding consensus on non-negotiable things is what is Loktantra all about. Finding minimum understanding on wide range of differences is also applicable on international relations. Despite our differences with the governments of US and India, we want to continue our state-to-state diplomatic relations with them.

It means now you are in a process of appeasing India and USA?

It is not a question of appeasing anyone. This is a process of putting straight facts and things. We will point out our differences as well as our points of agreements.

You used to say that India is an expansionist and America is an imperialist power. Does your party still stick on that assertion?

We still stick to our stand but we want to build relations on the basis of points of agreements. We want to continue our relations with all the countries.

How will you remove the King from Narayanhity, if you want to remove the King?

The first meeting of Constituent Assembly will implement republic. This means the end of monarchy and King Gyanendra will leave Royal Palace. This is the mandate of people. We believe that the King will accept the mandate of people. We will create secure place for him.

Before the meeting?

If he leaves the country before the meeting that is better.

Who will stay in Narayanhity, then?

It should be converted into history/museum.

Are you talking about the King or monarchy?

I am talking about monarchy not about individual King.

Despite our differences with the governments of US and India, we want to continue our state-to-state diplomatic relations with them.

HIV/AIDS

Ominous Trend

The latest survey on HIV/AIDS infection shows that rural women who do not engage in risky behavior are falling victims

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The biennial survey on HIV/AIDS infection estimation for 2007 by the National Center for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC) has shown that rural women, particularly from mid and far western region, have been increasingly falling victims of the HIV/AIDS infection.

"It is seen that many rural women from mid and far western region who themselves do not engage in any risk behavior are becoming victims of the infection because their husbands who go to India – to places with higher HIV/AIDS prevalence – and bring the infection back home and transmit the same to their spouses," said Dr. Padam Bahadur Chand, director of NCASC.

The survey of 2007 shows that of the 69,790 estimated infections across the country, 21 percent comprise of such rural female.

"Traditionally, men from the mid and far western region have been going to India for seasonal work. These migrant men engage in risky behavior when abroad," said Dr. Chand.

In fact, seasonal migrant laborers comprise of 41 percent of total estimated infections in the country.

Even urban female who do not exhibit risky behavior are falling victims of risky behaviors of their spouses. Of the total, 5.4 percent of the infected persons include such urban females.

"There is now a higher risk of monogamous women being infected because of the behavior of their husbands outside the family or home and here in Nepal it is getting to be an emerging



Rural women: Vulnerable

issue, it is getting to be serious," said Dr. Maria Elena Borrromes, Country Director of UNAIDS/Nepal.

"The latest survey exposes a new stark reality for us. While the people exhibiting risky behaviors such as unsafe sexual activities, injecting drug users, mobile population (truckers), female sex workers, clients of sex workers have been at risk for long, now we see that even population under low risk such as the housewives are falling victims," said Dr. Chand.

He said that the authorities now need to re-orient their programs to help address the increasing incidences of infection among such low risk population.

"There has to be comprehensive interventions targeting the migrant workers and their families. There has to

be pre-departure, as well as reintegration packages," said Dr. Borrromes.

The 2007 survey reveals that there are estimate 69,790 people with HIV/AIDS infection in Nepal – a figure which is relatively comparable with 70,352 shown by 2005 survey. "The number looks stable, which could be due to better survey technique employed this time. In fact, globally new surveys have shown

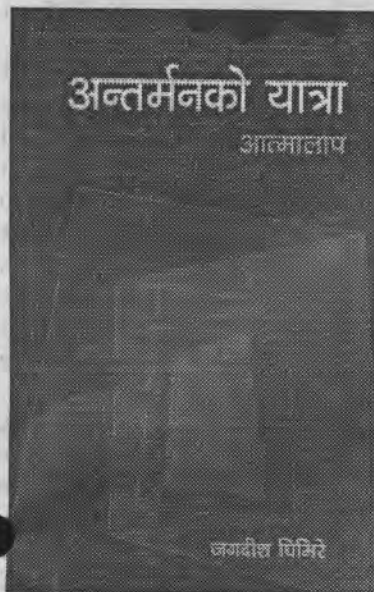
that infection number has dropped from 39 million to 34 million. It has been accepted while the infections have not fallen so dramatically, better survey techniques have pushed estimations closer to reality," said Dr. Chand.

Of the total estimated infections, 64,585 comprises of adults between the age of 15 and 49 years of age (with 16,387 of them women). Likewise, 1857 were children below 14 years of age and 3348 were adults above 50 years of age.

The migrant workers, clients of sex workers, female sex workers and mobile population (truckers) continue to be in high risk zone. Almost one-half of the estimated patients come from highway belt region in Terai (49.7 percent). Kathmandu valley contributes to 15.7 percent of the total infections; far west contributes 16 percent with remaining hills contributing 18.6 percent. ■

BOOK

A Journey To The Soul



Jagdish Ghimire has already carved out for himself an appropriate niche in the literary field of Nepal. His latest work that was launched a few days back is a clear manifestation of the most rare human qualities of "strength and determination" that a person could be endowed with. Jagdish Ghimire is one of such rare specimens. "Travel of the Inner Heart a colloquy with the soul" could not have been written by a lesser man. Written at a time when he was fighting death in the form of deadly cancer, the book reflects the steel in his character. The very fact that Jagdish could totally ignore the unavoidable eventuality waiting round the corner, which most of us dread to face or even to imagine and impassively dedicate himself to write this book unquestionable places him in the distinctive situation few can aspire to.

This book looks to me to be unique in this respect that it

cannot be wholly labeled either as an auto, a memoir, a reminiscence and essay, a travelogue or a novel but contains the inimitable fascination to keep the reader glued. It is a hotchpotch of every thing that provides a clear insight to the thinking, aims and objectives of the author – his pride, charity and patriotism. Written in vernacular in simple and flowing language, I do trust, the book will inspire hope and confidence in all the readers who are faced with similar situation like the author. And lastly I would like to pray for a long life to Jagdish so that he may continue to keep on continuing to contribute his mite to the uplifting of his society and building of his nation.

By Madhav Kumar Rimal



Antarmanko Yatra
(A Journey to the Soul)
Memoir

By Jagdish Ghimire
Published by Jagdish
Ghimire Foundation
Price: Rs.300 and
Rs. 1000 hardcover
Pages: 239

ARMY, POLICE
DEPLOYED ON EVEREST

Nepal has deployed dozens of army and police personnel on Mount Everest in a bid to foil any Free-Tibet movement against China as Tibetan activists have threatened to spoil the Olympics torch relay, reports Kantipur.

Acting upon concern of the Chinese government toward ensuring a safe passage for the torch, 25 army and police personnel have already reached Camp II with logistics and mountaineering equipment to prevent any activities against China, confirmed spokesperson of Home Ministry Mod Raj Dotel.

These personnel have received special mountaineering training. Camp II is at around 6,500 metres above sea level, beyond the Khumbu region. Dotel said that the security personnel have been instructed to open fire if protests against China turn violent and go out of control in the Everest region.

"If the security personnel feel pressure to control any untoward incident, we have made an arrangement to deploy additional forces during Olympics torch run," said Dotel, adding that Nepal Government would not allow any such activities taking place in the country.

Nepal Government officially regards Tibet as part of China. In this connection, the government had also imposed a restriction between May 1 and 10 on climbing Mount Everest. This was announced last month to prevent any possible Tibetan protests and disturbance of the torch relay in the region.

However, the government eased the restriction and told climbers they would be allowed to climb up to Camp II so that they can better prepare for their ascent to the summit.

Army spokesperson Ramindra Chhetri also confirmed that 11 army officers, who have received mountaineering training, have been sent to Camp II from the capital. Krishna Prasad Gyanwali, under-secretary at Ministry of Tourism, said the army personnel would accompany expedition teams as liaison officers and would ensure that no climber goes above Camp II before May 10.

Jyoti Adhikari, president of Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal, expressed hope that security officers could also prevent those who try to sneak climb the mountain without permission as similar cases had been reported on earlier occasions. This current climbing season that ends in May, according to Adhikari, around 500 persons including foreigners and porters are expected to climb the mountain. Some of them have already left for the base camp in Namche Bazaar. ■

NEPALI CONGRESS

Stung By Election

The Nepali Congress (NC) has accused the Maoists of stealing election by using force but has decided to accept the results

By A CORRESPONDENT

On April 17, Thursday, Nepali Congress (NC) called a press meet to apprise the media about its initial post election analysis.

At the press meet, Congress leaders painted ironical pictures regarding the election.

On the one hand, they presented evidences upon evidences of Maoists' foul tactics in winning the election and, on the other hand, they said they were resigned to the poll result 'in the larger interest of peace and constitution making process.'

The NC, which faced a stunning defeat in the recent Constituent Assembly (CA) election, has said that the elections were not held in peaceful and fearless environment.

"Elections did not take place in easy atmosphere. There were pre-poll psychological intimidation, physical attacks, threats, booth capturing and even post-election intimidation in many places across the country," said Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, leader of NC.

Dr. Mahat put forth incidents in many districts pointing to the Maoist atrocities. "Look at the result of Gorkha, there the Maoist candidate got over 40,000 votes and our candidate got less than 10,000. That does not reflect the true situation there," he said.

Around 20 district committees of Nepali Congress (NC) have already claimed that they faced election defeat due to Maoist atrocities, intimidations and threats.

They have point out the Maoist use of threats to go back to jungle if they are defeated in the election, the continued capture of seized properties, inability of displaced persons to return home, physical attacks and obstructions



Sujata Koirala and Dr. Mahat (Right) : Stung By Election

against other parties' cadres from entering villages as some reasons for their defeat.

Submitting report to the party evaluating the electoral defeat, the committees have made such assertions, according to NC office secretary Shobhakar Parajuli.

The NC had urged all district committees to submit their reports analyzing party's defeat by Tuesday.

Notwithstanding his assertions of foul play in the election by the Maoists, Dr. Mahat, however, said the party will accept the result due to larger concern for peace process.

"We will actively carry out our duty towards peace process and constitution-making exercise," he said.

Dr. Mahat also said that NC will not immediately walk out of the current government. "Our party president is the prime minister and is also working as acting head of state. He does not have the freedom to walk out of the government like other parties," he said.

The Congress is expected to take a formal decision about whether the party will remain in the government even after the first meeting of the constituent assembly at the central working committee meeting slated to begin from April 24.

The party has asked its central committee members to attend the meeting compulsorily. The party has already asked

the district committee to send the reports assessing the cause party's defeat in the polls.

Meanwhile, a report by an election observation group has stated that security during election time remained inadequate and that the Maoists were

involved in violent activities far more than any other party.

Releasing its preliminary report on Sunday, Democracy and Election Alliance Nepal (DEAN) said that the pre-poll violence resulted mainly because of poor security arrangement.

Though the election concluded in a peaceful manner, the election campaigning of the political parties was very limited due to security problem, DEAN said. Over 30 people had been murdered, 81 people abducted and 890 people injured in the different part of the country till the election date.

The report also pointed out that majority of the complaints of irregularities on the election day were made by Nepali Congress and CPN-UML against the Maoists and Madhesi Janadhikar Forum.

On the election day (April 10), four people had lost their lives, 112 people injured and eight others abducted in different districts, it said. DEAN had deployed 9393 election observers on short-term and long term basis. ■

“The King will not be removed forcefully or dishonorably.”

Maoist chairman Prachanda, saying that he is willing to hold talks with King Gyanendra to facilitate 'graceful exit of monarchy,' in Kantipur.

“We want to bid farewell to the King in an honorable and respectful manner. He can be given economic, social and cultural rights.”

Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader, in an interview with Bahas program.

“Elections did not take place in easy atmosphere. There were pre-poll psychological intimidation, physical attacks, threats, booth capturing and even post-election intimidation in many places across the country. But we will actively carry out our duty towards peace process and constitution-making exercise.”

Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, leader of Nepali Congress (NC), addressing a press meet.

“The defeat of Nepali Congress in the CA election is not the defeat of its ideology.”

Narahari Acharya, Nepali Congress leader, saying that the defeat of the party was due to failure of people in party leadership and management, in Kantipur.

“Till recently, Nepal was a Hindu nation and because it was a Hindu nation, it dealt equitably with its citizens belonging to other faiths. Now, Nepal is being declared a secular State. We hope



that under the new dispensation, Nepal will not become anti-Hindu and anti-India.”

The Bharatiya Janata Party, India's main opposition party, in a statement released after an extended meeting of the party's central office bearers on April 18, which discussed Maoist win in Nepal election.

“India respects the aspiration of the Nepalese people.”

Shiv Shankar Mukherjee, Indian ambassador to Nepal, saying that since the Maoists have got the people's mandate, the new government to be formed under its leadership would have "full support" of India.

“Because of their ideology, we want to be ensured about guarantee of capital and investment. We are not yet totally assured.”

Surendra Bir Malakar, president of Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC), saying that the business community is still nervous about Maoists' economic policies.

“The number appears stable probably due to better technique of estimation used this time.”

Dr. Padam Bahadur Chand, director of the National Center for HIV/AIDS and STD Control, releasing latest estimation of HIV/AIDS patients in Nepal, which shows the number remaining stable over last two years.

TRANSITION

DEFEATED: Arjun Narsingh KC, spokesperson of Nepali Congress (NC), from Nuwakot.

COMPLETED: Re-polling in 106 centers of 21 constituencies of 12 districts, by the Election Commission (EC).

HELD: Election for Constituent Assembly (CA) held in Surkhet-1

constituency on April 19. The election in the constituency had been postponed due to the killing of a Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) candidate Rishi Prasad Sharma on the eve of April 10.

CRASHED: A helicopter, in Mount Makalu base area region, on Saturday (Apr 19). All seventeen passengers including the crew members were unhurt in the accident of the helicopter

belonging to Shree Air. There were eight foreign tourists among the passengers.

PLANNED: A huge temple of Bindyabasini Devi at the cost of Rs 1 billion. The temple will be constructed in Satungal of Kathmandu. The temple complex will include Satsang building, hotel and other facilities. The plan is made by Bindyabasini Spiritual Association. ■

KOREAN ART EXHIBITION

Masked Expression

Korean artist Oh Soo Jin expresses human behavior through faces

By A CORRESPONDENT

Artists use various forms to express their feelings about nature, human and society.

Some choose abstract and some use figures but the common aim of all the paintings is to describe and highlight various parts of human life.

Although it is one of the medium to draw human emotions, values and expressions, mask has a special importance in paintings. Artists express human feelings like depression, cheerfulness, sadness and actions and reactions through masks.

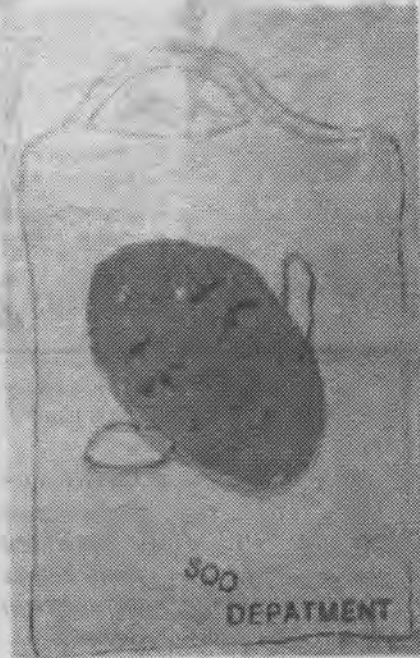
Korean artist Oh Soo Jin too chooses mask as a means to express the human feelings. Displayed at Dent Inn, Heritage Plaza, the paintings created by artist Jin are full of meaning.

Created by Korean artist Jin, the masks express different meanings of life. The combination of color and meaning make the paintings more powerful. She adds different colors to make the meaning more explicit and interesting.

Jin uses colors to match expressions in the masks. For instance, she uses various colors to show happiness of men.

Similarly, when there is anger, a person's face usually turns red and when there is a moment of nervousness, the face turns pale. Korean artist Jin very carefully uses the colors to portray the meaning of the masks. Not only the colors but the shape of the mask is also interesting.

"Each individual has a different face and various facial expressions in accordance with the situation. One has different face when he/ she is in mood of happiness and mood of sadness. And one can see these reactions through the faces of individuals. This is what I wanted to paint," said artist Jin. "I have made all efforts to capture these kinds



of facial expressions but it is not easy as it changes so suddenly that one needs to grasp at the fraction of the moment."

Human psychology is very complicated as it changes at the spur of the moment. Faces of human changes from time to time and from moment to moment but artist Jin is able to grasp these changes in her mask paintings.

Her paintings express the fact that



every individual has his or her own way of expressing the feelings which she compares in her masks.

Be it during the medieval period or ancient times; mask has always been used as an effective tool to describe the human society. Mask is a very popular form of painting to express human feeling. From temples to other sites, one can see various forms of masks expressing various feelings.

The exhibition of the painting is on till May 5. "This is a part of Nepal Korea exhibition," said Kim Hyoung Hyo. According to Hyo, four Nepalese artists have already visited Korea to exhibit their works. This is first time the work of a Korean artist is being displayed in Nepal.

"I am very impressed by the beautiful mountains and surroundings of Nepal. I find uniqueness in lifestyle, culture and nature. The valley is full of colorful life and surrounding," said artist Jin. ■

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