

Opinion : Dr. A.B. Thapa  
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Interview: Dr. Suresh C. Chalise

The National Newsmagazine

May 30, June-05, 2008

# SPOTLIGHT

C.D.O. Regd. No. 151/039-40  
Postal Regd. No. 20/060-61

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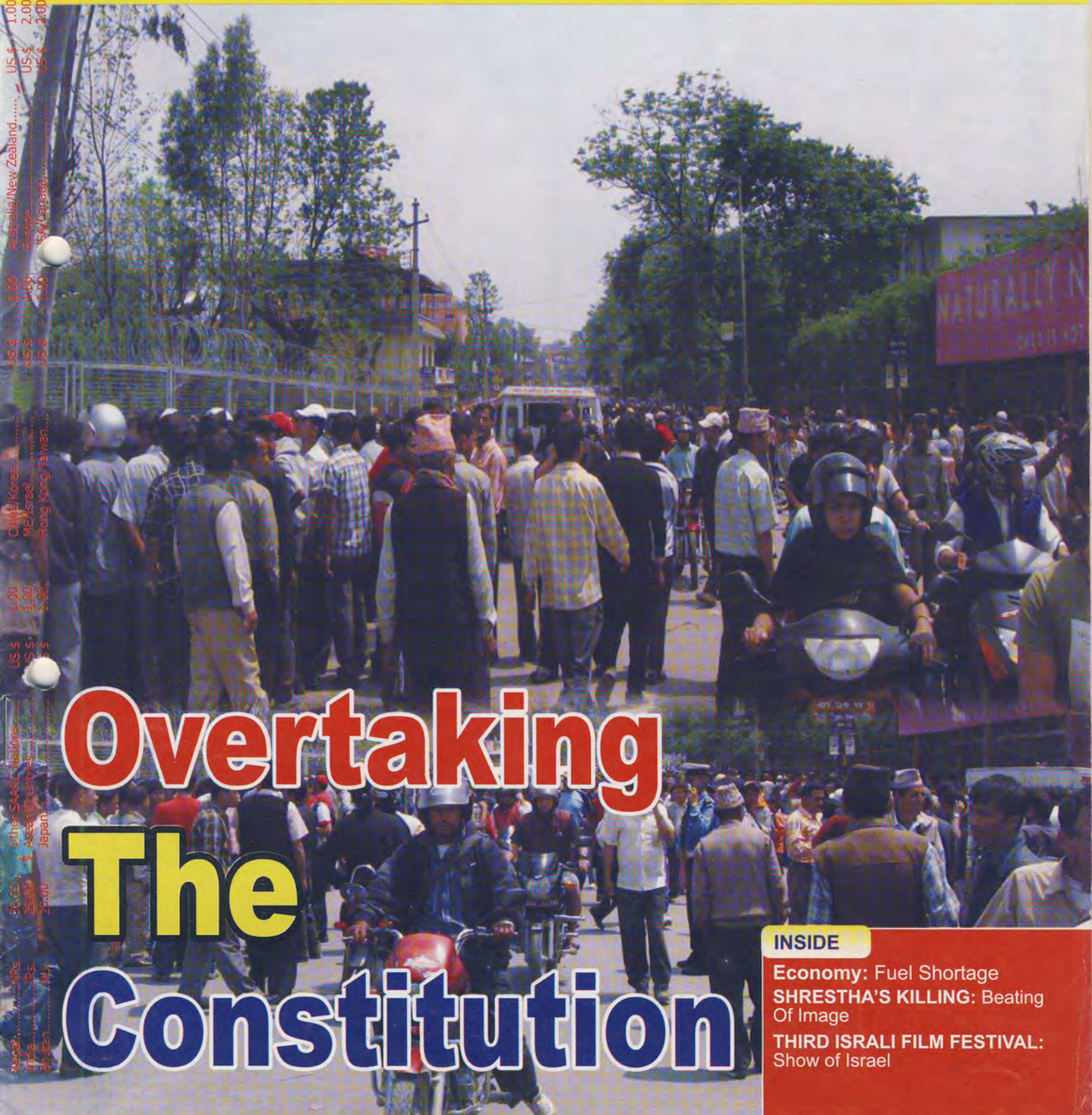
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# Overtaking The Constitution

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- SHRESTHA'S KILLING:** Beating Of Image
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# अब... १ मै रु. बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेण्ट बैंक बढी भन्दा बढी  
नागरिकहरुमा बैंकिङ्ग सेवाको पहिलो अवगत  
पर्व बाजी बस्न सकोस भन्नाका लागि सगौरब  
प्रस्तुत गर्दछ... **मात्र रु.१ मा**  
**“आफ्नै बचत खाता”**  
सम्पूर्ण अन्तराष्ट्रिय स्तरको सेवा सुविधा सहित ।



जीवनका पहिला पलक देखिनै बचतको बानी  
सुरक्षित भविष्यको लगानी



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**SPOTLIGHT**

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

Vol. 27, No 37, May 30, 2008  
Jeshta 17, 2065

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**Distribution : R.B. News Paper Traders**  
New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Ph : 4232784, 2020247, 4244679  
E-mail : rbnewspaper@hotmail.com

**Printers : Pioneer Offset Printers (P.) Ltd.**  
Dillibazar, Kathmandu  
Ph : 4415687, Fax: 977-1-4438650

C.D.O.Regd. No  
151/039-40  
Postal Regd. No  
42/61/62  
U.S. Library of Congress  
Catalogue No. 91-905060

**S**o, the two hundred and forty years of Shah era has ended. Every good or bad thing comes to an end." The old order changeth yielding place to new." A new era has dawned and a new history will be written. This revolutionary development has brought the country to the cross roads of unfathomable pit of darkness on the one side and the vision of El Dorado on the other. For Nepal to achieve the dreams of this historic revolution, the country needs politicians and statesmen with unblemished character and the highest sense of integrity and patriotism. Unfortunately, Nepal is yet to produce a politician who can satisfactorily meet the required qualifications. The bitter experiences of the last sixty years have shown that the Nepali politicians cannot function except under the shadow of a Frankenstein. As such, as long Nepal does not produce a strong leader who can stand on his own and function as his own master, there is no succor for the poor country. And this necessitates that the twenty six million people of Nepal unite to direct the destiny of their own country. Easier said than done. As such, how long poor Nepalis shall have to wait to see better days, no body can tell. Since the Nepali politicians have exposed themselves to secure greater advantages to their parties totally disregarding the interests of the country, their real motives in making such a huge constituent assembly for a tiny poor country and the commercialization in the nominations of members to the constituent assembly whose loyalty to the nation cannot be guaranteed, it would be nothing but sheer foolishness to believe that they would change the face of the country. But, as of now, there is absolutely no alternative. These very politicians are driving the country. Since the monarchy has been constitutionally abolished, there is no other power that can restrain them. Let them rule the country as they like as long the people don't wake up to see their true character. As far king Gyanendra is concerned, he failed to rule the country gracefully like a peoples' king. At least, he can recompense by retiring in good grace. If he could not serve his country like a king, he can do that as a respectable citizen. The country has entered into a brand new age. A new day has begun. And it becomes the foremost duty of every patriotic Nepali to kick out all the evil men from amongst themselves and find real good men who will take them to their cherished goal. Let all Nepalis take a pledge today to unite to march forward to make our beautiful country an envy of the whole world.

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





### Imposing Their Will

After reading your cover story, CA for What (Spotlight, May 23-29), I realized that leaders of seven political parties are still in the position to impose their will regarding the tricky constitutional issues. If the newly elected constituent assembly endorses the agenda set by previous nominated parliament, what is the use of this elected body. It is derogatory for the newly elected CA members to endorse the agenda set by nominated parliament. I hope members of newly elected members of CA will show that they are really the elected people.

**Bibek Lama**  
Via email

### Crowded Assembly

Your cover story CA for what is very timely and interesting. As you said, this is just a jamboree of 601 people from different walks of life. Most of the nominated members in this jamboree are either chosen by leaders under a well calculated tricky law of representation. I don't think this will ever bring any constitution, if they are asked to formulate. At a time when most of the professional lawyers and senior members of various parties are out of the CA, I don't think there will be serious debate on the constitutional matters. It is very interesting to read the comment of Nepali Congress leader and nephew of prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, Dr. Shashanka Koirala that the constitution is already being drafted in Indian capital New Delhi. All the incidents indicate that the constitution will be drafted not in the CA but outside. We can guess what kind of constitution is coming.

**Surendra Sapkota**  
Via email

### Eerie Aftermath

The cover story Monarchy on Trail (May 16-22) revealed many interesting things. After removal of monarchy in Afghanistan, the country faced series of violent coup and counter coup. Of

course, like in Afghanistan where former Soviet Union was trapped in the internal politics taking part in all kinds of coup and counter coup in search of a loyal person in power, India has already faced a similar situation in Nepal. Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala was backed to downsize King Gyanendra and institution of monarchy like Daud of Afghanistan. The removal of Koirala will be similar like that of coup against Daud. Installation of revolutionary Prachanda will be Taraki in power. Of course, like Taraki, Prachanda may sign many deals including the new treaty of peace and friendship, close down Gurkha recruitment and others. Another revolutionary leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai may be given a role like that of Amin. Then, there will require Babrak Karmal in the long spell for political instability in Nepal. The coming phase of Nepal's political destabilization is going to be costly and it will challenge the interest of Nepal's neighbors. As the process has already headed towards these directions, no one can reverse the course.

**Shrawan Dhungel**  
Montreal, Canada  
Via-email

### Follow The Course

I do agree with you that there are

ways to abolish monarchy. In many countries of the world, monarchies were abolished either through revolution or through the referendum. However, Nepalese politicians want to remove monarchy just through a decree of the first meeting of CA. Democratic society is just society and everybody needs justice. King Gyanendra may not be a good person; but he should be given a chance to speak about himself. It is against the natural justice. Recently, I went to see British parliament, where my guides told me how Cromwell executed Charles I in a stage-managed trial. It is very unfortunate to say that Nepal's new brand of Crowell even failed to hold a trial before doing what they want to do.

**Sabbu Lama**  
London, Via email

### Celebration Time

Now, the time has come for real celebration as a citizen of republic Nepal. We need not panic or become shocked to bid farewell to feudal institution like monarchy. Republic Nepal will bring all kinds of equality and prosperity in Nepal. Don't give the example of Afghanistan. Just see how Indians, Chinese and Americans are living joyful life as citizens of republic state. Spotlight always has monarchical tilt. Your magazine also needs to celebrate the liberation from monarchy. Don't try to make people panic.

**Debendra Limbu**  
Via email

### Religious Freedom

Despite its nature or political compulsion, monarchy is a pro-Indian institution. If you see the past history, monarchs survived just under Indian blessing. I am very happy to say that it is in our interest to abolish monarchy. Of course, it serves a bunch of Hindus in India. As a Hindu institution, monarchy always suppressed Muslims, Christians and followers of other religion. Following the declaration of republic, Nepal will be truly independent and sovereign country. As Nepal is going to be sovereign and independent, the time has come for all of us to celebrate. Long live Nepal.

**Sanjeev Gurung**  
Dharan Via-email



## Koirala Asks Prachanda To Take Initiation For New Govt

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala today formally called upon Maoist chairman Prachanda to take initiation, as the head of the largest party in the Constituent Assembly (CA), to form a new government. Koirala made this call during a meeting of three main parties - CPN (Maoist), Nepali Congress (NC) and CPN (UML) - at his residence in Baluwatar Saturday (May 24). "The Prime Minister who also acts as head of the state has asked Prachanda to take initiation for a new government in accordance with the constitution," peace minister and NC vice-president Ram Chandra Poudel told reporters after the meeting. According to him, the meeting dwelled on issues like formation of the government, amendment in the Interim Constitution, nomination of 26 CA members and appointment of a 'ceremonial president', but no decision was taken. Another round of tripartite meeting will take place in Baluwatar Sunday morning to discuss these issues. In that meeting, Maoist chairman Prachanda will provide an outline on how consensus for a unity government, and other issues, could be built, Poudel informed. Besides Prime Minister Koirala, Maoist chairman Prachanda and UML general secretary Jhal Nath Khanal, other senior leaders of the three parties including NC leaders Dr Shekhar Koirala and K.P Situala, Maoist leaders Dr Baburam Bhattarai, Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal' and Mohan Baidya 'Kiran' and UML leader Amrit Kumar Bohara participated in the meeting. *Compiled from reports*

## First Female Nepali Journalist On Top Of Everest

Shailee Basnet, a correspondent of Himal Khabar Patrika, a publication of

Himalmedia, reached the top of the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest (8848 m), at 8 am on Saturday, 24 May. She is the only journalist in the 10-member All Nepali Women's Mt. Everest Team that set out for the expedition early this month after training intensively under the supervision of experts for four months. Kanak Dixit, publisher of Himal Khabar Patrika, Kundan Aryal, editor of Himal Khabar Patrika and Ashutosh Tiwari, CEO of Himalmedia have all congratulated her on her success. Basnet is the first Nepali female journalist to reach the top of Everest. Nine of the 10 members have reached the top of Everest as of May 24. Earlier on Thursday (May 22) five members of the expedition had successfully climbed the Mt. Everest Susmita Maskey, Maya Gurung, Nwang Phuti Sherpa, Pemba Diki Sherpa and Poojan Acharya were among the 10 members of the expedition to the world's tallest peak (8848 m). Five high altitude workers from the team - Pemba Dorje Sherpa, Kaji Sherpa, Phurba Tenzing Sherpa, Ang Gelu Sherpa and Karma Gyelije Sherpa - also climbed the peak Thursday. The First Inclusive Women Sagarmatha Expedition 2008 team was permitted to climb the Mt. Everest from the normal route for the period of 75 days from April 16, 2008 under the leadership of Susmita Maskey. The team had set out to the Everest Camp on April 14. The government had waived all royalties equivalent to US\$ 100,000 to the team and also granted financial assistance of Rs 1 million to this team. This was the biggest all-Nepali women expedition to the Everest. The main objective of the expedition was to draw the world's attention to gender equality, women empowerment and the effects of climate change in the Himalayas. Meanwhile, record-breaking climber Appa Sherpa has once again broken his own record by successfully climbing the Mt Everest for 18<sup>th</sup> time. He achieved the feat on Thursday. *Compiled from reports*

## Madhesi Parties To Press For Autonomous Madhes

The three major Madhesi parties - Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP), and Sadbhavana Party - have decided to join hands in pressing for including autonomous Madhes province while

amending the constitution. Their decision has come in the wake of decision by Nepali Congress (NC) and Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) to allow Maoists to lead the government only after amending the constitution ensuring that a simple majority can form or pull down a government. The joint meeting of three Madhesi parties - who had jointly led Madhes agitation but separately contested the election - also decided to raise single voice on Madhes issues during constitution-making process. The meeting was held on Friday. "We have agreed that the constitution should be amended to also include the autonomous Madhes province as per the understanding reached between the government and the United Democratic Madhesi Front in March," said Hridayesh Tripathy, a leader of TMLP. Tripathy added, "We have also decided to cooperate while forwarding the rights and interests of Madhes during constitution-making process." Among them, the three Madhesi parties have bagged 80 seats in the recent election.

*Compiled from reports*



## 'Maoists Want To Work Closely With Bank'

Vice President of World Bank for South Asian region Praful Patel has said that the Maoist leadership wants to work closely with the bank. After meeting with Maoist leadership on Monday (May 19), Patel - who was on a four-day visit to Kathmandu - said that they expressed desire to work closely in coming days. "We have advised Maoists not to give assurances aimed at cheap publicity. When giving assurances, one must also consider the available fund and resources," he said. "The bank has assisted Nepal and its people, not on the basis of which party is in power," he said pointing at the fact that the bank provided



\$380 million dollar in last one year. Patel also met with Prime Minister, ministers, and political leaders during his visit. He said Prime Minister wanted to use assistance to develop hydropower. Patel said if Prachanda is going to lead the government, he should prepare for what needs to be done regarding macro-economy. The bank has assisted with Rs 3 billion to help the Maoist combatants in cantonments. A large portion of this help is used in paying salaries to them. Patel expressed excitement with historic changes in Nepal. In reference with the trend of tens of thousands of Nepali youths going overseas and engaging in low-paying jobs, Patel advised that equipping youths with skills could help in better utilizing them inside or outside Nepal. He is going to complete his five-year tenure in a few days. *Compiled from*

*ports*

**Police Recover Huge Cache Of Illegal Artifacts**

Nepal Police on Friday said it confiscated vast range of illegally possessed ancient idols, artifacts and woodcrafts of archaeological importance including skins and bones of endangered wildlife from the rented apartments of an American national and famous explorer Ian Baker in the capital city. Police said that acting on a tip off, a special police team from the Metropolitan Police Crime Division, Hanumandhoka had raided a house of Rajesh Maharjan at Baluwater on May 17 and seized the goods of archeological importance. The raid, which was carried out in the presence of officials from the Department of Archaeology and Department of Forest, unearthed 29 items, including idols, thankas and artifacts some of which dated back to prehistoric times. Police also arrested Maharjan on charges of being an accomplice of Baker in collecting illegal artifacts and based on the information provided by him, raided another apartment at Naxal and recovered a huge cache of nearly 100 more ancient idols, thankas including skins and bones of tigers and other endangered wildlife species. According to police, the idols and thankas were all stolen from temples. They also said that seized materials were one of the largest collections ever confiscated by the police in the country. Interestingly Ian Baker,

41, who has been reportedly staying in the country since many years, is a world-renowned explorer, novelist and a contributor for the National Geographic and several other magazines. He has been absconding since his two apartments were raided and Nepal Police has listed him on its wanted list for illegally hoarding wildlife items and artifacts of archaeological significance. Maharjan has told police that Baker had gone to Thailand after storing those materials in the house. *Compiled from reports*

**Maoist Ministers Urge PM To Invite Them To Form Govt**

Maoist ministers have urged Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala to make clear his position regarding the caretaker nature of the current government. At the cabinet meeting, on Thursday (May 22), they asked PM Girija Prasad Koirala to step down and invite them to form next government. "The PM said he would positively consider these things and speak out after reaching political understanding. We told him that if he does not do so soon, Maoist ministers will have to think about quitting the government," said Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Information and Communication Minister and Maoist spokesperson. Earlier, the Central Secretariat meeting of the Maoists had decided to make such request to the PM. "Since after the conclusion of the Constituent Assembly election the current government headed by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has automatically become a caretaker government, the Prime Minister will be requested that he should clarify his position and immediately invite CPN (Maoist), which has emerged as the largest party, to form a new government," reads the statement issued by Chairman Prachanda making public the decisions made by the central secretariat. *Compiled from reports*

**PM Assures Of Additional Food Supply To Karnali**

Prime Minister has assured of additional food supply to Karnali region where the food crisis has badly affected the people for the last few weeks. During a meeting with a delegation of political



leaders, parliamentarians and civil society leaders from the region Monday morning, PM Koirala said the government would direct concerned authorities to supply food immediately. The delegation asked the government to unveil special program to help curb the food crisis in Karnali that repeats yearly. Koirala also said the government would increase the number of food depots in the region to ease food distribution. The delegation also notified Koirala about the lack of health facilities, increase cases of diarrhea and other diseases and decreasing facilities in education sector. Food crisis is a regular phenomenon in five districts in Karnali and two districts in Seti ahead of the monsoon season. The drought that shrunk food production last year invited the crisis earlier this year. *Compiled from reports*

**Refugee Resettlement Hits Private Schools**

Private schools in Sidhuli have begun to face the shortage of teachers after Bhutanese refugees began to leave for third country settlement. According to The Kathmandu post, over three dozen Bhutanese refugees who had been teaching in the districts have already left from over a dozen schools following resettlement process to US and other countries from early this year. Many others are also on plan to leave their job creating acute shortage of teachers. Most private schools in Nepal, including in Kathmandu valley, hire Bhutanese refugee teachers, who work on low wages. According to Naya Patrika daily, more than 600 refugees have already been resettled in third counties. *Compiled from reports* ■



**PM Koirala and senior leaders at a function held by interim parliament**

**US DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE** for South and Central Asian Affairs Dr Evan A. Feigenbaum arrived in Kathmandu on Saturday (May 24) for a three day visit. According to the US Embassy, Dr Feigenbaum "plans to meet the leaders of the four largest political parties in Nepal to discuss the formation of a new interim government, the need to end political violence, and efforts to craft a new democratic constitution". He will also review recent US-funded projects including the launch of a community radio station in Humla district. Feigenbaum had joined the Bureau of South and Central Asian affairs in early 2006 following his service on the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff. He was previously the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State responsible for Central Asia.

**THE MADAN PURASKAR PUSTAKALAYA** has expressed its concern about the security of the historical materials and papers contained in the Narayanhiti Palace in the process of transfer of ownership of the premises when the country is declared a republic by the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly on May 28. "The Pustakalaya appeals to the Government of Nepal and related government agencies to actively seek the protection of those papers and materials. These rare documents are the common property of the citizens of Nepal, and should be a matter of grave interest to the government, the intelligentsia as well as researchers," a press release issued by the Pustakalaya stated. The Pustakalaya quoted its advisor and historian Dr. Ramesh Kumar Dhungel of the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS) as saying: "We know from the reports of Brian Houghton Hodson, the British Resident from 150 years ago, that the material of national and international cultural importance contained in the palace predates the unification of Nepal, and goes back to the Malla period." According to Dhungel, these objects are included in containers known as 'bada dhadda', 'lal dhadda', 'lal bakas', 'choto dhadda' and in a room known as the 'bhitri khopi'. "The material has not been made available to Nepali researchers till now, other than partially to historian-laureate Baburam Acharya. These papers are of the kind which will help in the understanding the course of national history going

as far back as back 2000 years, and they must be catalogued and preserved." Likewise, Member-Secretary of the Pustakalaya, Kanak Mani Dixit, said: "There is a danger of the papers in Narayanhiti being transferred or lost during the process of transition, and we ask the present government, the forthcoming government, the Constituent Assembly members, political leaders and the alert citizenry be aware of the dangers. We believe that the historical documentation contained in Narayanhiti must be accessioned, catalogued, preserved and protected before being made available to the public in all transparency." *The Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya* is an archive of

five decades' standing, based in Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur, which seeks to catalogue and preserve historical and contemporary materials for the sake of current use and for posterity.

**KUNIO SENGA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ADB's** South Asia Department, arrived in Kathmandu on Saturday (May 24) for a four-day official visit. During his visit, Senga will meet with the Prime Minister, Ministers of Finance, Physical Planning and Works, Local Development, Water Resources and other senior Government officials. He is also scheduled to meet with senior leaders of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). In his meetings, Senga will discuss the post-election situation in Nepal and reiterate the need for the country to remain focused on the reform and development agenda for delivery of a tangible peace dividend, according to a press release by the ADB. He will also discuss various aspects of ADB's current and future operations in Nepal. He will also meet with representatives of ADB's development partners, civil society, and media to hold discussions on a wide range of development issues and challenges facing Nepal. This is the first visit to Nepal by a high-level ADB official since the Constituent Assembly elections were held on April 10 of this year.

**THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT HAS LIFTED** the ban on export of cement and clinker to Nepal from Wednesday. Issuing a notice, the Foreign Business Directorate under the Union Ministry of Commerce said the ban was lifted only for Nepal by invoking the right under the Indian Business Law 1992. Its export had been banned on April 11. This caused severe cement shortage in Nepal.

**THE FEDERATION OF NEPALESE CHAMBER** of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) has demanded immediate revocation of local development (kabadi) tax. A national conference of FNCCI held in Birgunj recently concluded that the kabadi tax must be withdrawn within a month and has asked the government to identify alternative tax. It has said that the procedure of collective kabadi tax is downright harassing as tax-collectors appointed by District Development Committees are playing foul. The FNCCI has also asked the government to simplify taxation system. ■



# HIMALAYAN BANK DEPOSITORS' MONEY AT RISK

## *Thorough Study of Upper Tama-Kosi Project Required*

•Dr. AB Thapa

**I**t has been reported in local newspaper *Kantipur* dated May 15, 2008 that the Chief Executive Officer of the Himalayan Bank has announced the decision to finance on the request of Nepal Electricity Authority six billion rupees in construction of the Upper Tamakosi Project. It is a well known fact based on information provided by Chinese to Water and Energy Commission that the proposed Upper Tamakosi Project is very close to major glacier lakes located further upstream of the project site inside the Chinese territory.

There is a need to conduct a thorough study to insure that we may not have to face again the terrible situation similar to the one that resulted from the GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flood) when the newly built Namche Bazar Hydropower was completely wiped out without a trace. It is also necessary to verify thoroughly the final cost estimates of this project to prevent later on huge jump in project cost giving due consideration to bitter fact that the NEA tended in the past to approve blindly the project cost estimates if they were endorsed by foreign engineers regardless of whether they are adequately experienced or not.

It appears based on previous studies of other similar projects that the proposed Upper Tama-Kosi project might be entangled in few other serious technical problems also.

### **Upper Tama-Kosi Project**

The Tama- Kosi River is the second largest tributary of the Sun -Kosi River. Originally 6 hydropower stations in a cascade were planned.

The Tama-Kosi No.6 according to the Kosi basin Master Plan is the uppermost project. The intake of the proposed Upper Tama-Kosi Project is said to be further to the north close to the China-Nepal border. This reach of the Tama-Kosi is very close to places in Nepal and Tibet where very dangerous glacier lakes are located. Thus, any GLOF incidence would have left in its wake

the most horrific destruction on this stretch of the Tama-Kosi.

The 309 MW Upper Tama-Kosi Hydropower project is surrounded by much doubts about the completeness of the study to justify to take the decision to go for its implementation in immediate future. It appears based on previous studies of other similar projects that the proposed Upper Tama-Kosi project might

be entangled in few other serious technical problems also.

**Glacier Lakes Dangerous For Nepal**

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.

According to the findings of the above mentioned joint study, there are many glacier lakes in Arun, Tama Kosi, Bhothe-Kosi, Trisuli, Buri Gandaki and Karnali basins within Xizang (Tibet) of China which have past records of the glacier lake outburst floods (GLOF) events. The joint study report has recommended to conduct extensive studies to cover Tama Kosi and other basins also.

The glacier lakes study conducted jointly by experts from the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and WECS in 1991 provides detailed description of the Tsho Rolpa glacier lake on the end of the Trambau Glacier within Nepal in Tama -Kosi basin. This glacier lake is





extremely dangerous.

**Glacier Lakes Outburst History**

On August 4<sup>th</sup> 1985 the nearly completed Namche hydropower plant was completely destroyed by the Dig Tsho glacier lake outburst flood (GLOF).

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 Sunkosi River basin.

Gelhaipuco is an end moraine dammed lake located in the headwaters of Gelhaipu Gully (Natangqu River Basin, east of Riwo,

D i n g g y e  
County) in Arun  
basin. At  
14.00 on Sept.  
21, 1964, the  
lake burst  
a b r u p t l y .  
According to  
the study of the  
C h i n e s e  
Academy of

Sciences, there was a heavy precipitation in the Nantangqu River Basin, which caused the glacier of the Nantangqu 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 Sunkosi 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.

**Dam Height Could Be Much Higher**

The bed slope of the Upper Tama-Kosi is expected to be extremely steep. A very high dam is needed to provide a daily storage reservoir adequate in volume. JICA study under the Kosi Basin Master Plan had ruled out the possibility to provide daily storage pond to serve Tama-Kosi-5 and Tama-Kosi-6 projects. We have learnt, from our past Arun-3 Project planning experience that the provision of a daily storage reservoir by damming the river course itself in case of the rivers like the Arun or Tama-Kosi is going to be extremely difficult task that

would certainly  
involve a huge  
investment. In  
case of the Arun-  
3 Hydropower  
Project, it was  
planned that a  
dam only 20  
meters in height  
would suffice to  
provide daily  
storage pond but

*Unfortunately the bitter past experience of blindly believing in the manipulated cost estimate of the Khimti Hydropower is still fresh in the minds of Nepalese people. An unacceptable level of inaccuracy in cost estimate of the 60 MW Khimti Hydropower project had forced our country to buy electricity from the private developer based on a very high US \$ 140 million revised cost of that project*

at the final stage we had to raise the height to 65 meters

**Accuracy of Cost Estimates**

It is very important to know about the accuracy of the cost estimate before making a final comment in favour or against any project. Unfortunately the bitter past experience of blindly believing in the manipulated cost estimate of the Khimti Hydropower is still fresh in the minds of Nepalese people. An unacceptable level of inaccuracy in cost estimate of the 60 MW Khimti Hydropower project had forced our country to buy electricity from the private developer based on a very high US \$ 140 million revised cost of that project though the original cost of the project based on the feasibility study carried out by the NORPOWER just before the commencement of the construction was only US \$ 60 million

**In Conclusion**

It is hoped that the Himalayan Bank will not put the hard earned savings of their depositors in jeopardy by taking the decision in haste to finance the construction of the Upper Tama-Kosi Project without a thorough study. ■



US OFFICIAL VISIT

# A New Gesture

*A senior US State Department official met Maoist leader Prachanda*

By A CORRESPONDENT



**US Minister:** A new gesture

In his first such direct meeting with a senior US State Department official, the Maoist chairman Prachanda met with a visiting deputy assistant secretary of state.

Along with senior leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, he met with the visiting US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Dr Evan A. Feigenbaum on Monday (May 26) evening in Nayabazaar.

The meeting comes a few weeks after US ambassador to Nepal Nancy Powell held a brief meeting with Prachanda – the first such official contact as the US still considers the Maoists as a terrorist outfit.

The latest meeting has come on the eve of Constituent Assembly meeting,

which is expected to clear the way for a new government led by the Maoists.

The Maoists and US contacts started taking place after the Maoists emerged as the single largest party from the recent election of Constituent Assembly.

Emerging out of the meeting with the US official, Monday, Prachanda said he discussed issues regarding constituent assembly, republic declaration and development programs.

“He (Feigenbaum) inquired about the republic, government formation, constituent assembly and our focus on development programs. We told him that we want to build democracy in a new way. We have a new approach to development,” Prachanda told reporters.

Referring to US branding them terrorist, Prachanda said, “We also told

him that though we have been in the peace process for a long time, you still do not have positive outlook towards us.”

“He also had lot of questions regarding the YCL,” Prachanda said, adding, “This is also an issue raised by other political parties and we have already proposed to end its paramilitary character like staying in a barrack and so on,” he said.

The US official has already met with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and other political leaders including UML general secretary Jhalnath Khanal and Speaker Subas Nemwang.

During his four-day visit, Feigenbaum also took a trip to Humla to inspect the launch of a community radio station in Humla district.

ADB

# Inclusive Development

*ADB director general Kunio Senga calls for inclusive development*

By A CORRESPONDENT

“Nepal has passed a very important milestone in the peace process with the successful completion of the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections, which has paved the way for establishing lasting peace and stability as well as achieving higher and more sustainable economic growth in the country,” said Mr. Kunio Senga, Director General of ADB’s South Asia Department, at the end of his four-day official visit to Nepal on 27 May 2008.

Mr. Senga also reiterated ADB’s commitment to remain a trusted development partner of Nepal and

continue to assist the country in its socio-economic development at this critical juncture of the country’s history.

During his visit to Nepal, Mr. Senga met with the Ministers of Finance, Physical Planning and Works, Local Development, Water Resources and other senior Government officials. He also met with senior leaders of the main political parties.

“It is very important for Nepal to continue to stay the course on economic reform and development, maintain



macroeconomic stability, further improve governance and pursue a more inclusive development process to deliver a tangible peace dividend. This is critical for achieving the longer term goal of poverty reduction,” Mr. Senga said. He also urged political parties to continue to move forward on the basis of consensus and coalition to consolidate and bring the peace process to its logical conclusion

In his meetings with senior Government officials, Mr. Senga also discussed various aspects of ADB’s current and future operations in Nepal. Mr. Senga also held discussions with civil society, the media and development partners on Nepal’s development opportunities and challenges.

This is the first visit to Nepal by a high-level ADB official since the CA elections were held on April 10 of this year.

In 2007, it approved \$10.1 billion of loans, \$673 million of grant projects, and technical assistance amounting to \$243 million for its developing member countries. ■





Motorcycles in a long queue: Never-ending problem

## FUEL SHORTAGE

# Grinding To A Halt

*As the state-owned NOC expresses its inability to ensure smooth supply, the government promises yet another temporary measure*

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

**"I** have been unable to get petrol for weeks. As I do not have time to stay in queue for hours, I am forced to buy a liter of petrol for Rs 200 from black market," said Rajesh Dhungana, who depends on his motorcycle to travel to and fro his office everyday.

The plight of Dhungana is shared by many people. Due to persistent shortage of fuel, the simple issue of buying fuel to run vehicles has emerged as a singular challenge.

"I have to wait for hours in queue, sometime the whole night.

Otherwise, without fuel I cannot drive my taxi to earn bread for my family. When you have to stay in queue for hours to get few liters of petrol, you feel

enraged about many things – for example, there is no toilet around here. The government must solve this problem immediately," said one enraged driver who was in a queue in Maitidevi.

Amid the deepening crisis of fuel shortage, the state-owned fuel supply monopoly made a rare admission. The Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC), on Thursday (May 22) said that the selling and distribution of petroleum products will come to a halt if the government fails to take immediate measures to import fuel.

The state-owned NOC drew the attention of the government to the impending problem stating that it will run out of the existing stockpile within a week.

Addressing a press conference, NOC Executive Director Digambhar Jha informed that petrol, diesel and kerosene will be available for only six more days and aircraft fuel will last for only eight days.

Jha also informed that the import of fuel was reduced to 40 percent in comparison to the previous month. Advising the government to hand over the import of fuel to the private sector, Jha said that depending on foreign grants alone can never guarantee fuel supply.

Just a few weeks back, NOC had asked for Rs 2.07 billion loan from the government citing huge losses and failure to maintain a smooth supply of petroleum products in the country.

Subsequently, the government decided to make available Rs 800 million to the NOC.

The crisis has worsened after the Indian Oil Corporation, the sole supplier of petroleum products to Nepal, cut the fuel supply after the NOC failed to clear its dues to the IOC.

The fuel shortage in the country has returned with a vengeance after the Constituent Assembly election as queues of customers in front of petrol stations has started to become a normal sight in Kathmandu valley and outside.

Owing to its inability to pay off past dues and rising monthly losses standing at Rs 1.5 billion, Nepal Oil Corporation, the state-owned oil monopoly in the country, has been unable to secure enough imports from its Indian supplier, Indian Oil Corporation, hence deepening the shortage.

According to Jha, the current price of petroleum products correspond to US\$ 83 per barrel of crude oil in the international market. This price has now increased to around US\$ 130 per barrel.

Adding to its woes, the Nepal Petroleum Dealers Association (NPDA) has also threatened to launch strike if there is no smooth supply soon.

Earlier the NPDA had warned to launch such strike from May 28.

However, due to the Constituent Assembly meeting, they have decided to wait few more weeks before imposing the strike. The association has claimed that Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) has cut down supplies by 50 percent. ■





Bereaved family: Grief and anger

## SHRESTHA'S KILLING Beating Of Image

*The Maoists find themselves cornered over the gruesome murder of a businessman within PLA captivity*

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

**M**aoists have been used to occasional outburst of public anger over the atrocities committed by their cadres.

Be it the Madi bomb blast, murder of journalist Birendra Shah or abduction of a hotelier from Kathmandu,

But the current episode of what has been established as a brutal murder of a Koteshwore businessman Ramhari Shrestha following his abduction and torture inside the UN-monitored People's Liberation Army (PLA) cantonment in Chitwan, has continued to boil for past two weeks forcing the Maoist leadership to go on back foot.

As it comes amid Maoist preparation to hold the mantle of new government and their desire to demonstrate democratic credentials, the gruesome episode has smeared the party's image. The daily demonstration by common people and workers of other parties demanding the scalp of Chitwan camp chief Kali Bahadur Kham 'Bibidh' and the public apology from Prachanda has forced the latter to issue two statements and meet with Shrestha's relatives twice. Subsequently, he also signed a seven-

point pact with the family promising action and compensation. The issue has also become an agenda in the ongoing dialogue among political parties to end the political deadlock. It has been raised by other parties as evidence of atrocities by Maoists especially its paramilitary units like YCL.

The Maoists suspended Bibidh from his position as commander of third division and agreed to cooperate in the investigation of the incident. But the family members have demanded the dead body of Shrestha, public apology and outright arrest of Bibidh. The family is holding protest in Koteshwore by staging fast.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, a body purported to be that of Shrestha was found at the bank of Trishuli River in Jugedi of Kabilas VDC. A Maoist brigade commander, Govinda Bahadur Batala 'Jibit' who is in police custody related with the incident has claimed that the body is that of Shrestha's.

### Probe Teams

Under street pressure, the government and the Maoists have, both, formed teams to investigate the killing of Shrestha.

The cabinet meeting on Thursday formed a three-member high level committee headed by former judge Rajendra Kumar Bhandari and including Additional Inspector General of Police Amar Singh Shah and joint attorney general Saroj Prasad Gautam.

On the other hand, the meeting of Maoist central secretariat formed a three-member probe committee headed by Central Secretariat member Post Bahadur Bogati and including central committee member Hitraj Pandey and state committee member Ekraj Bhandari as members.

A statement issued after the central secretariat meeting, last week, stated that the party will take action against anyone found guilty as per the report of the committee. The meeting also decided that relief and compensation would be made available as per the understanding with the family of Shrestha.

The issue generated such public anger that there was a total shutdown of valley on May 21. The valley bandh was called by relatives of Ramhari Shrestha, and supported by Nepali Congress (NC), Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) and Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF).

According to Gyan Kumar Shrestha, brother of Ramhari and coordinator of struggle committee, they demand immediate formation of high level commission, action against guilty and public apology from Prachanda.

Ramhari Shrestha, a local resident of Koteshwore and a sympathiser of Maoists, had been killed after he was abducted and taken to PLA camp in Chitwan. He was abducted on charge of being involved in theft of Rs 1.7 million from Maoist workers who used to stay in rented apartment in his residence.

Rights activists have raised concern over the rise of impunity in the country as shown by the murder of Shrestha. Sushil Pyakurel, a prominent human rights activist, said there is an urgent need to end all kinds of impunity in the country, but said the government has largely been seen helpless in this front. He also blamed United Nation Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) of failing to properly monitor the Maoist cantonments and said that the UN body remaining unaware of the brutal murder of businessman Shrestha inside Chitwan's Shaktikhor located PLA cantonment "has raised question on its credibility. ■

## DECLARATION OF REPUBLIC NEPAL

# Overtaking

# The

# Constitution

With the declaration of republic by the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly (CA) on May 28, political leaders have overtaken the constitutional process exposing their lack of faith in the constitution. Although the election for the CA was held to draft a new constitution, which has the right to determine the structure of state, forms of government and other vital matters, the newly elected members of constituent assembly endorsed the proposal tabled by the government to declare Nepal a republic. As such, the political declaration has no legal and constitutional validity. How the history will judge the politicians' role remains to be seen

By KESHAB POUDEL

As the government led by Girija Prasad Koirala tabled the motion to declare Nepal a federal democratic republic, the overwhelming majority of members of 560-member Constituent Assembly endorsed it. Small voice coming from party like RPP-Nepal opposed this move. Nepali Congress leader K.B. Gurung declared the motion was passed and abolition of monarchy.

The mid-night declaration of the first meeting of CA on May 28 abolished Nepal's 1500-years-long history of monarchy and 240-years-long history of Shah Dynasty which worked as a part of continuity amid changes. Monarchy, at all time, provided political stability and continuity to the nation

After intense discussion for about eight hours at the Prime Minister's

residence at Baluwatar on Wednesday (May 28), the motion for the declaration of the Republic Nepal was drafted.

"The institution of monarchy is a stabilizing force, and it maintains continuity of power and authority of the state. Once a country is destabilized and monarchy is removed, there have been very few instances of stability returning. In most of the Third World countries, no





**K.B. Gurung** : Declaring Republic Nepal

orderly democratic system has been established after the forced abolition of monarchy; one or the other form of dictatorship has been fighting for the legitimacy against the same process of destabilization which had brought them to power," wrote eminent constitutional lawyer Ganesh Raj Sharma in his article, *Monarchical and the Democratic Development in Contemporary Nepal* (Nepal, a publication of Center for Nepal and Asian Studies Tribhuvan University 1989).

If that is the case, why the first meeting of Nepal's constituent assembly decided to remove the monarchy and establish Nepal as a republic. For internal players it mattered little while Nepal's southern neighbor India - which has historical, cultural and religious ties with the monarchy- drew the conclusion that the institution had not served its interests.

In the words of S. D. Muni, who seemed to have a prior knowledge of the game in Nepal, "Nepalese monarchy has hardly been sensitive to India's vital security and developmental interest, national interests."

In his paper presented at a seminar in July 2007 "Building A Republican, Inclusive and Democratic State in Nepal: The external Dimension," S. D. Muni, a

very prominent member of a think tank of the South Block in Nepal affairs, explicitly wrote about the end of monarchy in Nepal.

After losing one of its main constituencies, Nepalese monarchy, which Indian scholars often accused of playing China card against India, had lost its utility. Nobody knows how radical communist parties which had nothing in common with India except the power sharing, would fulfill Indian interests in the coming days. However, Indian strategists see Maoists as their reliable partner, consequently pushing them to power.

With the declaration of republic, political parties are watching how king Gyanendra will react or whether he will quit Narayanhity Royal Palace in grace. Sources close to Royal Palace reveal that once the CA sends its official notification, the king will take a decision to vacate the Royal Palace.

Although the CA announced its decision on Cromwellian pattern, king Gyanendra is said to be in no mood for confrontation. "I don't care whether king Gyanendra, as a person vacates Royal Palace or not, but what I am more concerned is about end of the institution

which has such a long history guaranteeing the stability and uniting all sections," said monarchist Rabindra Nath Sharma.

#### **Removal of Monarchy**

Institution of monarchy in Nepal has centuries-old history and traditions. All the festivals and rituals are bound with the ethos of monarchy, which has given sense of identity as well as acted as a factor of stability.

According to historical documents, Nepal was under Kirant, Licchivi, Thakuri, Malla and Shah Dynasty in last hundreds of years. With the integration of fragmented Nepal into a small viable and peaceful land, Prithvi Narayan Shah had established the Shah Dynasty and united Nepal into a small stable kingdom.

The monarchy has been abolished after endorsement of the motion under article 159(2). Then, there came stage managed drama and euphoria of celebration with the announcement of three day government holiday on May 28-30.

"From today, a new era for Loktantrik Nepal has been ushered and there will no more be any authoritarian rule in the country," thundered prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala. In his last leg of political career, Koirala did everything to stick to

power, from joining the extreme left to sacrificing the liberal ideology of democracy.

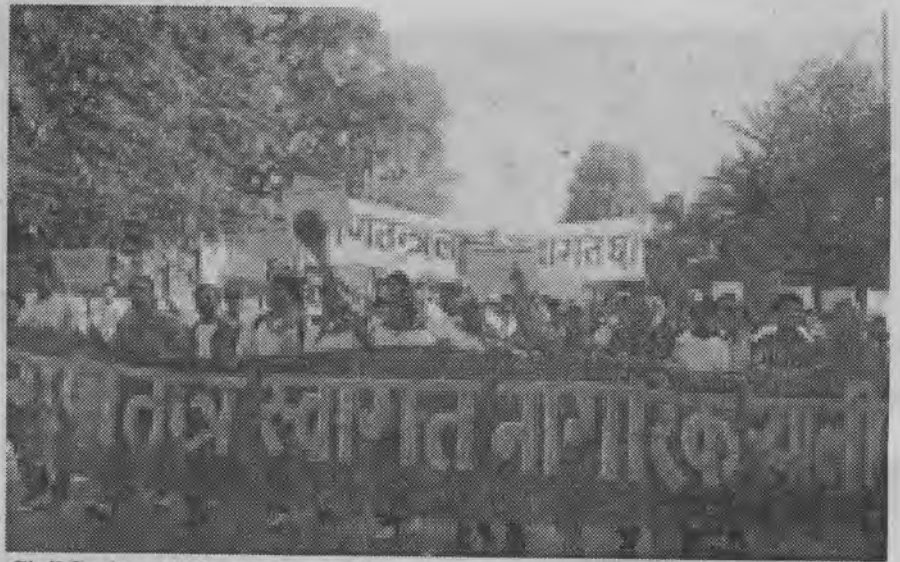
Similar voices were echoed by CPN-Maoist leader Prachanda. "After removing monarchy, the country has taken the first step to end the feudal structure. We need to create a new Nepal," said Prachanda.

CPN-UML leader Jhalnath Khanal was more jubilant than the CPN-Maoist and Congress leaders. "I have been waiting for decades to see this historic day," said CPN-UML general secretary Khanal.

In a situation worse than Cromwellian period, leaders of three political parties imposed their will on the Nepali people. In a communist dominated constituent assembly, the jubilation would be natural but the people holding the ideology of rightists and right-of-center doctrine have not shown any perceptible reactions.

"This is a day full of tragedy and the country will have to face very bad days ahead," said Kamal Thapa leader of RPP-Nepal which has voted against the motion.

Civil society members affiliated with various political parties organized various programs to celebrate the republic day in the city.



**Civil Society:** Welcome to republic

"This is the great day in the history of Nepal. Now we all are equal and every one can be elected as a head of this country," said Nilamber Acharya, former minister and former communist leader.

#### **Framing the Constitution**

Others see the situation differently. "Constituent Assembly was supposed to frame a new constitution in which efficacy of the institution of monarchy was to be reexamined but the shrewd manipulator didn't follow that fair process. Members of CA in their first

meeting were assigned to endorse what the previous self appointed nominees of the ad-hoc parliament had decided," said the analyst. "Populist forces in Nepal had all the time raised the issue of drafting of the constitution by the Constituent Assembly. Constitution deals with the basic institutions of the state and forms of the government and allocation of power to different bodies."

The interim constitution had expressed that the fate of monarchy would be decided by the new constitution through CA. Later on, they brought two amendments in the constitution and declared the abolition of monarchy subject to the endorsement by the CA.

"There is no force in Nepal, at present, to reverse this kind of arbitrary and unbridled operation against the age old institution and established norms. The world community is a helpless spectator in this unjust and unfair deal which despite being small in size and capability, had already had a long and rich experience in the state of change with continuity," said a political analyst.

#### **Political Agreement**

The proposal to introduce implementation of republic came after a mid-night meeting of the leaders of three parties CPN-UML, CPN-Maoist and Nepali Congress who inked a deal stating that the remaining matters regarding the formation of the government, functions and duties of a ceremonial president and



**Political Leaders :** No solution in sight



others would be settled after the first meeting. CPN-Maoist, Nepali Congress, and CPN-UML reached this understanding to set up ceremonial president and executive prime minister.

In the next Constituent Assembly meeting- which will sit on June 4, the parties will table other clauses for the amendment. Till writing of this story, it is still uncertain how many articles are going to be amended.

#### CA For What?

Endorsing the political agenda prepared by three parties, the CA members showed that their role is going to be no more than a rubber stamp of political coterie who will play the determining role regarding the government making.

Along with removing the monarchy, the Constituent Assembly also ushered a new phase of ethnic and linguistic political culture. Although members were elected on the political ideology of Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, CPN-Maoist and Madhesis, majority of members showed they are loyal to their own ethnic community rather than the nation as a whole.

No body cares for their political ideology what they are committed and for the protection of their own ethnic, linguistic and regional identity. It seems that the new Nepal is going to be a country of ethnicity and linguicism.

When the 575 members of Constituent Assembly took oath in 25 different languages and 80 dialects as members of new Constituent Assembly their sound echoed through the whole hall of Birendra International Convention Center (BCCI).

#### Nepalese Character

As the saying goes, "Kashi, Kashmir and Ajab Nepal (Kashi, Kashmir and strange Nepal)", Nepal's change and political characters often emerge in a strange manner.

There is no country in the world where a republic has been declared just on the basis of political declaration. Interestingly, so called civil society members, who have all kinds of foreign degrees, too, did not hesitate to celebrate

it as a grand festival.

"The declaration of republic by the CA ushered in a new era in Nepal," said former minister and civil society leader Devendra Raj Pandey. "This is a historic day and it will be remembered in the history of Nepal."

Actually, the last conflict was wrapped up deciding to write a new constitution through the CA. The last compromise was signed in New Delhi as a twelve point agreement. A prominent

Indian scholar S.D. Muni had facilitated the getting closer of the SPA and the Maoists, who signed their first operational 12 point agreement in November 2005.

"When they signed twelve points agreement, they had broader understanding that they will draft a constitution which will determine the political structure of the state, allocation of powers and all constitutional paraphernalia. The CA would also have been given the right to decide the fate of monarchy," said the analyst. "But, political leaders betrayed all the agreements for the sake of power. Even Nepal's big neighbor India has overlooked its credibility and respectability as it failed to press the parties to respect the agreement it helped broker."

"Had these politicians been honest to their original commitment, the country



King Gyanendra : Quite

could have had an ideal consensus political process," said the political analyst.

Although Nepal is declared a republic by the first meeting of the CA, the prolonged political crisis faced by Nepal is yet to end.

For all internal political forces and external players, there is no easy way out and the prolonged political instability caused by removal of centuries-old institution and upsurge of sectarian politics of ethnicity and linguistics is definite to invite more trouble.

For common people as English Poet T.S. Eliot in his poetry Murders of Cathedral says

*Kings rule or barons rule;  
We have suffered various oppressions,  
But mostly we are left to our own device,  
and we are content if we are left alone.*

# “International Community Is Concerned About The Future Of Democratic And Peace Processes”

- Dr. Suresh C. Chalise

*The Ambassador of Nepal to the United States Dr. SURESH C. CHALISE is not an unknown name for diplomats and individuals working on international relations. He is a new generation of computer savvy Nepali diplomat, who is equally at home with the evolving dynamics of Nepali foreign policy. Ambassador Chalise has earned Ph. D. from Banaras Hindu University, India and Post-Doctorate from University of Dortmund and University of Justus Liebig, Germany. Having graduated on Comprehensive Security from the APCSS, Hawaii, USA, ambassador Chalise was GP Koirala's adviser on Foreign Affairs since 2003 until 2006. Ambassador Dr. Chalise spoke to SPOTLIGHT on various issues when he was recently in Kathmandu. Excerpts:*

**I briefed the PM that US has been very positive about the Nepalese peace and democratic processes. They want to see these processes gain a momentum. They do not want Nepal being marred by loutish transition.**

**As you said you are here for consultation. What are your agenda?**

I am here with a couple of agenda. Firstly, Nepal needs to support US candidate for IOM. Such cooperation to US is important in view of our flawless and outstanding relations with the US. You know that Nepal has continuously been helped on areas such as social development, poverty alleviation, trade/tourism; apart from it, their colossal support to Nepal's fragile democratic and peace process. Secondly, as you also know, Nepal has been blessed with world's endangered species in its wildlife sanctuary. Wildlife has also been one of our poverty combating resource. Despite this, owing to more than one reason, there has been increasing poaching of these endangered species. This has also been noticed by international organizations- involved in conserving rare species, such as WWF. In order to combat poaching we need to have some regional initiatives.

**Why are you stressing this initiative?**

Nepal should work for South-Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network initiatives. South Asian nations have felt the need of such body and many big nations are interested to help the initiative. I have had talks with them and most probably Nepal will take a position in favor of such initiative in the ministerial level meeting in SAARC. I had also to talk about the significance and problem of inter country child adoption; on the establishment of monitoring mechanism for Nepalese children who have been adopted in various parts of US, Canada and Europe; with the Women and Children Minister.

**What about briefing on US policy towards Nepal's democratic and peace process to the PM?**

I briefed the PM, who currently also looks after the foreign affairs, that US has been very positive about the Nepalese peace and democratic processes. They want to see these processes gain a momentum. They do not want Nepal being marred by loutish transition.

**How do you find the Nepali Diaspora in the US?**

I find a vibrant Nepali Diaspora in US and they have been playing an important role in shaping excellent US-Nepal friendship; they are like the bridging stone. I have

come to know that Nepalis live peaceful lives wherever they go. I have noticed a great level of appreciation for Nepalis among American politicians, diplomats, scholars and ordinary citizens of US.

**How are you making your presence felt among Americans and Nepalese expatriates in USA?**

Garnering support to democracy and also to on going peace processes is one of the main objectives of our foreign policy. To achieve this objective, I need to interact with American government, American people and institutions with which government and people have inalienable yet regular relations.

**Have you participated in any interaction program?**

After I took up charge of ambassador in Washington DC, I have addressed at least three US think-tanks. I spoke at Foreign Service Institute of State Department- where I was received by the former US ambassador to Nepal Mr. James F. Moriarty; The Institute on Religion and Public Policy and also at the South-Asia Department of California University in Berkley. I shared with them the bright future of Nepal as Nepal was embarking for Inclusive Democracy. I convinced them that democracy shall enhance Nepalese image as a liberal and transparent society.

**What did you tell them?**

Nepal's strategic location in the light of immediate neighbors' unparallel economic rise, our reliable, disciplined and hardworking human capital, abundant natural resources- such as rare herbal species including Yarshagumba, beautiful mountains, wildlife with endangered species; and growing realization among developed nations to exploit clean energy (water is one of the best sources of clean energy which Nepal enjoys in huge amount) for regional or global security; Nepal would be a vivacious economy in 10 years. Of course, peace and stability are preconditions for that to happen.

**What is your priority in US?**

Since I reached Washington DC, I have been trying to reach out to as many Nepali associations and communities scattered in various parts of US. My aim is to organize and mobilize them for their empowerment. I should also make sure that Nepalis- wherever they live, should feel comfortable and live contentedly. Recently, our embassy has significantly improved its consular services. Given the resource the embassy has, we have been able to provide the quality consular services to all concerned.

**What is your impression about Nepalese Community in general in US?**



Look, I have noticed a beautiful feature among Nepalese in the US. Irrespective of their different brackets or categories, one thing is very much common in them. That is- they have tremendous love for their root or country. They miss their society enormously and want to contribute some thing to Nepal. It has really inspired and overwhelmed me.

**How was your earlier serving as the National Advisor to the Prime Minister of Nepal? Could you relate some interesting anecdotes?**

I found my job working with Prime Minister GP Koirala full of challenges as well as thrilling. I got opportunities to work and interact with various international communities, diplomatic institutions and personalities associated with world bodies. Domestically, apart from mainstream political players, I- as the office of Prime Minister was thoroughly involved in peace process - had to interact with ex-rebels and also work with security forces. As far as anecdotes are concerned, I have a plan to get them published in future, not now.

**What were the challenges for peace process now?**

In the beginning, from 2003 up to 2006, we had two major challenges: challenges of restoring democracy and establishing peace by mainstreaming the Maoist rebels. Prime minister Koirala had to work painstakingly as he faced a lot of difficulties in educating and convincing international communities to support democratic movement. At the personal level, leader Koirala was comprehensively convinced that the King's claim of state sovereignty on October 4, 2002 was against the spirit of 1990 constitution.

**How did you see the role of foreigners?**

It was really a big challenge to convince diplomats in favor of movement for democracy. But, with the passage of time, situation rapidly changed. I don't think many people would know, but as a matter of fact, almost all of the international friends of Nepal- including Jeffery James- a special advisor of UK government to Nepal, had been persuading and insisting Koirala to join then governments. But, we were unconvinced that by mere joining the government we would be bringing derailed democratic process back on track and sincerely begin with the peace process.

**How did you convince the foreigners?**

Later, international friends and also the domestic stakeholders- all realized that support to the movement would restore democracy and also would help pave the way for peace process. Accordingly, all joined and helped the democratic movement in April 2006. After the restoration of democracy, now, we had different challenges- challenges of consolidating the achievements of the popular uprising and mainstreaming of the rebels for the continued peace in society. With the advent of democracy, the peace process has sincerely been moving ahead.

**You mentioned about UN or UNMIN, could you relate some interesting anecdotes here as well with regard to UNMIN's role in peace process?**



I can tell you one episode here, which is about the first invitation letter sent to the UN by Nepal Government. Because of that letter I had to cancel my long awaited Switzerland trip. Prime Minister had entrusted me to draft an invitation letter to UN to help the peace process. I started consulting with senior members of the cabinet which included Deputy P.M. and Foreign Minister KP Oli and Finance Minister Dr. Ram Saran Mahat. At that time, top Maoists leaders were out of Kathmandu valley. In fact, government had quietly debated whether Maoists should be consulted while drafting the invitation letter or not, but the conclusion was that since country was the member of the UN and the global body only entertains the invitation from its member country, a prior consent from the rebel side was unnecessary.

**You did not consult with the Maoists?**

Government did not feel necessary to consult with the Maoist leaders. Nevertheless, at one stage, I was asked to consult another Deputy PM and Health Minister Amik Sherchan, as he was considered to be very close to Maoists. The purpose was to make him familiar with the content of invitation letter so that Maoists would not oppose. Invitation letter to UN was prepared finally and Prime Minister signed that- at about 11 am at his residence in Baluwatar. In the same after noon, I handed that letter over to the UN representative. The same evening, by 6 pm perhaps, all of a sudden PM fell very sick and was hospitalized in Shahid Gangalal Hospital.

**What was Maoist reaction?**

Later, within a week or so, Maoist expressed strong reservation over that letter and UN, too, wanted consent from the ex-rebels on the invitation letter, which led to the arrival of UN General Secretary's advisor Mr. Mistura. Following Mr. Mistura's political parleys, Maoist and government team- I was also one of them, interacted in the presence of civil society members such as Daman Dhungana and Padma Ratna Tuladhar and did altogether 17 drafts but all in vain as differences could not be hammered out. Prime Minister was assisted by Home Minister Sitaula, Dr Shekhar Koirala and my-self; whereas Prachanda was assisted by Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. After extensive discussion, both of us agreed on the content of the invitation letter to be sent to the UN.

**Who prepared that letter?**

I prepared an identical letter for government and rebels as well. Interesting part was that Maoist leaders had not been carrying their letter pad with them; as a result, I had

*I don't think many people would know, but as a matter of fact, almost all of the international friends of Nepal- including Jeffery James- a special advisor of UK government to Nepal, had been persuading and insisting Koirala to join then governments.*



to print their letter pad with logo from their website. After that, I took the letter of PM to his bed room to get his signature as he was waiting for that. After I came out of the bed room with the PM's signature, Prachands also signed his letter.

**As you worked closely with PM Koirala during his struggle time, what factor actually played a determining role in bringing Koirala so close with Maoists?**

Apparently, as widely believed, it is King's takeover and his inflexible attitude towards mainstream political forces that induced GP Koirala to sign the 12-point agreement with Maoists rebels. I agree with this notion- but, to an extent, only. However, at bottom, as I understand, the major reason was that leader Koirala was left with only two options. Either let the carnage or bloodshed continue in society, which I think, had already claimed more than 14,000 human lives and remain a mute spectator of that. Or, take initiatives and engage rebels and encourage them to become transformed as democratic force in order to establish a un-snatch-able democracy and herald peace for good in Nepal. And, as a nation's leader-who worked for democracy and human rights throughout his life and served the nation as Prime Minister for more than four occasions, Koirala audaciously preferred the latter one. His inner conscience encouraged him to work for this righteous cause.

**Nepal government's decisions for Shanghai Cooperation Organization membership and Third Country Resettlement of Bhutanese Refugees; as controversial decisions of prime minister Koirala. How do you see them as former adviser?**

Look, we can not change our geographical realities. Nepal has to link her indigent economy with the immediate neighbors' giant economies. You know that Nepal has proposed herself as a transit point for our next door neighbors with a view to provide a boost to our economy. For this purpose also we need to build an infrastructure, which includes energy security, too. There will be increasingly intense demands of energy domestically and also in the region, in the days to come. Membership to SCO shall help Nepal to create new vistas in our regional cooperation, including SAARC, as China has now been an observer to it. South-Asian countries such as India and Pakistan are already having observer status to SCO.

**How do you see Chinese government decision to extend railway line up to Nepal border?**

China's decision to extend its railway line up to Nepal and Nepal's inclusion in Asian highway, are, indeed, pointer to our new opportunities. Nepal has timely tendered its

application for the observer status to Shanghai Cooperation Organization. I have knowledge that some still speculate as to whether SCO really will help Nepal? But, I am confident, in the long run, SCO- which is composed mainly of energy rich member countries; shall help providing energy security to our emerging economy. Of course, we must be able to get China's help to utilize its infrastructure to meet Nepal's energy demand needed for her economic growth.

**How do you see Bhutanese refugees resettlement issue?**

As far as resettlement of Bhutanese refugees is concerned, you tell me, what we did to them over these eighteen years? We left refugees in misery, poverty and distress. We had reports that domestic violence increased in the camps, incidences of abuse alarmingly grew, and radicalization took place in the refugee camps. Besides, we also noticed a social tension outside the refugee camps due to refugee's indefinite presence in the area. I am convinced that Nepal's stance to implement third country re-settlement of Bhutanese refugee is without putting the policy of repatriation in disgrace. Indeed, policy of repatriation continues. It is successful as the resettlement process has begun. Without any doubt, kudos to the Core Group Countries, including US, which tirelessly persuaded the issue before Nepal government. In US, I am thinking to have some plan to mobilize Nepalese Diaspora to help Bhutanese refugees who are, at bottom, of Nepali origin.

**How do you analyze the challenges of post CA elections?**

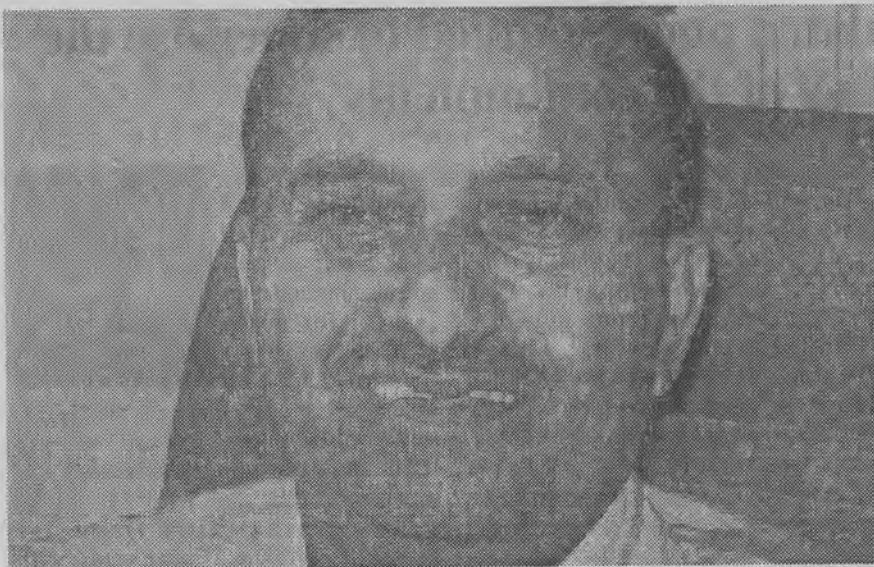
In contemporary Nepal, peace and democracy are intimately interlinked. In absence of peace, one can not think of democracy and vice-versa. Holding of CA elections was a big challenge but has successfully been accomplished. Since transition still remains in society, the post CA election Nepal is not free from challenges. International community is concerned about the future of democratic and peace processes.

**How do you see the issue reintegration of PLA?**

I see unity and broader understanding amongst major political forces to promulgate a new constitution; rehabilitation of hundreds of thousand conflict affected people; re-integration of nineteen thousand PLAs, sharing of power and resources between centre and federal governments; and accommodation of regional and ethnic aspirations etc. are major challenges. Among these, unity among pro-change forces is the major challenge being confronted by today's Nepal. In absence of political unity, there is always a danger to democracy and on going peace process; they could any time be eclipsed. Notwithstanding, I am confident that, as the leaders of present Nepal are adequately mature and seasoned; they will be able to face these challenges collectively. ■

*Holding of CA elections was a big challenge but has successfully been accomplished. Since transition still remains in society, the post CA election Nepal is not free from challenges.*





Dr. Aryal : Leading high level team

## STUDY VISIT

# Learning Federalism

*A high level civil servants are in India to look how federalism functions*

A CORRESPONDENT

A delegation of 16 senior officers of Government of Nepal left for a two-week visit to India on May 25, 2008 to study various issues and aspects related with federalism. The visit is being organised by the Government of India through the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi – the premier institute of India engaged in the training of civil servants.

According to a press release of Indian Embassy, the visit has been arranged in response to a request from the Government of Nepal in the context of adoption of federal democracy for Nepal's future political structure.

The delegation, being led by Ram Hari Aryal, Secretary, Ministry of General Administration, comprises three Secretaries, ten Joint Secretaries and three Under Secretaries from various Ministries, Departments and other organs of Government of Nepal, including Home Affairs; Finance; Local

Development; Information and Communication; Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs; General Administration; Office of Prime Minister and Councils of Minister; Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority; and Public Service Commission.

The delegation will visit New Delhi and the states of Maharashtra and Goa to get a close view of India's federal system in work along its various dimensions – ranging from legislative to judicial, administrative, financial and developmental. The programme includes a mix of lecture sessions by eminent experts and field visits to important government organs and institutions, both at the central and state levels, with focus on issues like separation of power between the legislature, executive and judiciary; functioning of Parliament and state legislatures, Supreme Court and High

Courts and the Central and the State Governments.

Besides, interaction will be arranged with some important institutions founded on the principles of federalism, such as Election Commission, Finance Commission, Planning Commission and Inter-State Council. Visit has also been arranged to the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie, which provides the foundation and mid-career training for civil servants of India. The delegation will also meet senior government leaders, parliamentarians and officials in New Delhi, Mumbai and Goa, including the Chief Minister of Delhi.

The visit of these senior officials is part of the on-going initiative for exposure visits to India by the officials of the Government of Nepal under the India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme. In 2007-08, Government of India organised management development programmes of two weeks each for six groups of Local Development Officers covering all 75 districts of Nepal.

A group of 10 Finance Officers of Government of Nepal was also trained in India in April 2007. Later, in December 2007, a high-level delegation from the Public Service Commission of Nepal visited India to study the reservation policy in the recruitment for civil services in India in the context of Nepal's new legislation for making the civil services more inclusive. All these programmes have elicited very positive feedback from the participants and encouraged the Government of India to organise more such study visits by Nepal's civil servants. The role and expertise of IIPA has been an important contributor in the success of these programmes.

According to Indian Embassy Press release, the government of India will be providing more opportunities for study and exposure visits to the Nepali civil servants in other focus areas, which it feels will further strengthen awareness of each others' systems and reinforce the friendly, professional and close relations that characterise the interaction between the civil servants of the two countries. ■

## we are neither mandated nor resourced to supervise the personnel of the cantonments

IAN MARTIN, *special representatives of the Secretary general in Nepal, addressed a press conference in UN Headquarters New York on 22 May. Excerpts of his press meeting:*

**After the elections have you met the King of Nepal and what is his sense of the election procedure?**

I haven't met the king and of course the issue of monarchy is not a matter for the United Nations itself. That's something to be decided through the democratic framework that is now being created.

**Once the mission is coming to an end, what are the other roles that United Nations can play in the transition from monarchy to federal and peace development in Nepal?**

Well of course the United Nations agencies led by the Resident Coordinator and UNDP are already considering how they can support the development process, particularly in ways that strengthen the peace process. So indeed there are many ways beyond UNMIN that the United Nations is supporting and planning to continue to support the process.

**You mentioned something about monarchy versus republic. Is it envisioned or is it a scheduled monarchy republic referendum of the kind that I associate with 1946 in Italy. Or is there talk they might decide to have such kind of referendum when the government is constituted?**

The Interim Constitution provides that a republic will be implemented at the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly, which is the meeting scheduled to begin next Wednesday. Some have advocated that there should be a referendum but that is not provided for by the Interim Constitution, and the parties that have won almost all the seats in the Constituent Assembly are committed to the immediate implementation of a republic.

**Unless they amend the constitution the king is out of a job?**

That's the implication of the existing Interim Constitution and so far as I can read the discussion that is going on among parties at the moment in Kathmandu, is what they are preparing

for next week.

**You talked a little about security events and the violence that is still taking place. How fragile is the security situation and do you personally believe that some kind of a continued larger stronger, larger different UN presence would make a difference in perhaps keeping on lead on things while the government builds up its own structures?**

Certainly during the election campaign I think the very active local presence of UNMIN civil affairs officers and human rights officers of OHCHR, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in Nepal, were a disincentive to worse violence than occurred, although there was significant violence in the course of the campaign. But now what is most essential is creation of local bodies. Local government bodies were dissolved in 2002 and ever since there have been no local government bodies, and it is essential for public security as well as for service delivery and development efforts that some local bodies are brought into existence.

**Just now the Council referred to the killing of the businessman, I think as an occasional criminal violence. What is your perception there? What if he was killed in the cantonment area with all the protests? How do you read the event?**

I cannot answer what chain of command was operating. We've said in our own statement that those who carried out or ordered the abduction or killing ought to be brought to justice and now there has been an official investigation - not only a police investigation but a special commission of inquiry established - and the Maoist leadership have promised co-operation with that, and they must indeed extend that co-operation. It's a deplorable incident. There have been some suggestions that in some way it points to a weakness in UNMIN's monitoring role at the cantonments, but that really is without foundation. We have a 24-hour surveillance of the weapons storage areas in the cantonments, but we are neither mandated nor resourced to supervise the personnel of the cantonments - around 20,000 of them in 28 sites - in addition

to the Nepal Army installations. So we monitor the overall behaviour of the combatants and their respect for peace agreement commitments by



investigating any breaches as they occur, and nobody brought to us the information regarding this incident until it became public.

**Is there any time frame for integration of the Maoist army with the main Nepalese army and what are the issues now?**

There isn't a time frame. And the Comprehensive Peace Agreement did no more than establish an intended process. It provided that there should be a special committee established by the Interim Government to address those issues. Such a committee was constituted in May of 2007. It met once in July. It never met again. So as I've indicated no substantive progress has been made on the issue and now that has to be returned to by the new government. And as I indicated the positions are very far apart. The Maoists envisage the integration of at least a significant number of the Maoist army into a future state army, whereas other political parties would rather consider the future of the former Maoist combatants as being either a return to civilian life or perhaps incorporation into new security forces - border security, industrial security. So there's a very major agenda there on which current positions are, as I say, quite far apart.

**Are the neighbouring states of Nepal playing any specific role in helping Nepal solve its internal problems?**

Nepal's peace process has, I think, had the strong support and sympathy of its neighbours and indeed all interested member states. There's been particularly close involvement of India, particularly in the negotiations with Madheshi groups that brought about an agreement that helped facilitate the election to go ahead in conditions of reasonable security in the Tarai. Obviously the neighbours watch with particular concern and interest political developments. ■



# HIV/AIDS Growing Menace

By- Anup Shrestha , Keshab Bhattarai, Prabhakar Sharma,  
Rukmani Maharjan, Sohani Rajbhandary

Dr. Michael Gottlieb, at the University of California, Los Angeles, US first identified a strange virus creeping in his microscope that would threaten the entire world for years; the virus was found in the blood of a young gay man who was called as "patient zero".

Gosh! Dr Gottlieb had discovered HIV; Human Immunodeficiency virus. The disease was termed as GRID; Gay Related Immune Deficiency Syndrome because the first reported case was found in a gay. He might not had envisioned the ramification of this lethal disease;

AIDS. Since it is incurable and there has not been discovered an accurate medicine that would find an alternative to its recovery. We often hear rumors about the cure of the virus but all doctors and scientists have desperately failed to find its cure.

There are 8.3 million people living with HIV in Asia; 2005 and AIDS claimed 6,000,000 lives. The first AIDS case reported in Nepal was in 1988, since then HIV epidemic has evolved from a 'low prevalence' to a 'concentrated epidemic'. According to 2007, national estimates that approximately 70,000 adults and children are infected with HIV. As of November 2007, a total of 10,369 cases of HIV, 1578 AIDS cases and 423 AIDS deaths had been reported to the National centre for AIDS and STD control. The sex ratio among HIV positive cases is 2:9:1(m: f) (UNGASS country report).

An enormous number of 16,000 viruses can stand on the head of a pin, and make 10 billion copies in a day, with

a mutation rate of 1 in 10,000 (Gaitonde, 2001, p. 179).

When the virus enters into the blood it may not appear in the HIV test. This period may last from 2-12 weeks; depending upon the vitality of each individual. It is known as window period or silent period. Then the HIV infected person goes through carrier stage where the virus may seem in the blood but it may not damage his health until the diseases start to spread. This stage usually lasts from 2-3 months to 10 years. The final stage is known as AIDS in

***In 2007, 70,000 adults and children were found infected with HIV in Nepal. 10,369 cases of HIV, 1578 AIDS cases and 423 AIDS deaths had been reported to the National centre for AIDS and STD control. We must create window of opportunity to reduce its spread and effectively reach out to the victim by improving access to information, care, and support to those affected.***

which the virus brings deficiency in the immune system by invading the living white blood cells known as T Lymphocytes or T helper cells. The time duration of AIDS is not definite as healthy people who were affected by AIDS as far as twenty years are still surviving today. AIDS usually lasts for 2-10 years in the individual.

'A healthy adult has between 700 and 1,500 CD4 cells per cubic millimeter of blood. Over a period of years, the T cell count of an HIV positive individual drop to a critical level, below 500, a sign of a depressed immune system. Below 200, the individual usually develops opportunistic infections. As a point perhaps 10 years after infection (or sooner), the individual is said to have AIDS.....during the lengthy incubation period, the individual appears

to be healthy but can effect other people' (Combating AIDS, Arivind Singhal and Everett M Rogers, 2003, p. 47)

The common mediums of HIV transmission is firstly due to blood and secondly due to sexual fluids such as sperm and ovum. Some common transmitting behaviors of HIV is through any flesh piercing instruments like HIV infected injections, blades etc and having sexual intercourse with HIV infected person. Some non-transmitting behavior of HIV is mosquito bite, using same toilet, same dress, hand shaking, hugging, kissing, coughing etc.

Focusing on the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, the food and drug administration has approved "Atripla Tablets"; a combination of three widely used antiretroviral drugs in a single tablet for the treatment of HIV. The drug treatment for people with HIV is HAART( Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy that helps to slow the growth of HIV in the blood. HIV/AIDS is one of the burning issues in the present scenario of the world. Today Nepal is facing a rapid increase in HIV/AIDS prevalent among high risk groups. In 2007, 70,000 adults and children were found infected with HIV in Nepal. 10,369 cases of HIV, 1578 AIDS cases and 423 AIDS deaths had been reported to the National centre for AIDS and STD control. We must create window of opportunity to reduce its spread and effectively reach out to the victim by improving access to information, care, and support to those affected.

*Students of SAIM*

## BOOK

# Talking About Tourism

*Sanjay K. Nepal's book looks at the fundamental issue of tourism and the environment*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**A**t a time when tourism activities are gradually expanding to the protected natural areas of various regions of Nepal, the environment is facing new kinds of challenges. As every one is talking about the need to garn benefits from tourism industry, writer Nepal rightly pointed out its implications on the environment.

The tourism industry brings boon as well as bane to the people. The increased and unmanageable volume of tourists will bring devastating consequences to the life of common people. Whatever benefits the tourism brings in the livelihood of the people, it will have negative consequences on the environment.

Although Nepal opened its door to foreigners nearly five decades ago, it is yet to formulate a long term strategy to use this industry to benefit a large segment of population. There are many beautiful and interesting trekking trails in far western and mid-western region but Nepal is yet to introduce these new areas for tourists.

Thanks to the concentration of trekking tourism in the limited number of areas like that of Everest base camp, Annapurna region and Langtang region, these places are facing tremendous environmental pressures.

One of the major challenges in the present context is to strike a balance between tourism and its surrounding environment. This is

**Whatever benefits the tourism brings in the livelihood of the people, it will have negative consequences on the environment.**

**Tourism and the Development Perspectives from the Nepal Himalaya**

By:

**Sanjay K. Nepal**

Published by:

**Himal Books and**

**Studienverlag Innsbruck-Wien-Munchen Austria**

Price:

**Undisclosed**

**Pages: 205**

what one can see in the book. When concentrated in and around protected areas, tourism poses specific environmental challenges such as changes in land use, loss of vegetation, garbage accumulation and trail degradation. It is precisely

because of such tourism-induced problems that more cautious tourism development policies are needed to ensure that they contribute positively to the sustainable development of mountain

"This book is an updated and abridged version of my Ph.D thesis entitled *Tourism-Induced environmental changes in the Nepalese Himalayas- Comparative Analysis of the Everest, Annapurna, Upper Mustang regions*. This book is a culmination of more than five years of research, conducted in three different countries, Nepal, Canada and Switzerland," writes the author.

"Sanjay Nepal attempts to avoid generalizations and examines the overall relationship between tourism and the environment with reference to three trekking regions of the Nepal Himalaya, namely Everest, Annapurna and Mustang," writes Pitamber Sharma in his foreword.

Supported by Austrian Development Cooperation for publication, this book highlights all important aspects of tourism and its growing impact on the environment of the region.

"The book will be found rewarding both for the policy planners as well as the lay readers concerned about the Himalayan environment. It advocates a decentralized, institutional approach for the promotion of tourism as well as programs for environmental conservations. Tourism induces environmental changes but the direction of these changes is neither predetermined nor absolute," writes Sharma.

This book is an eye opener and, especially useful for those involved in the tourism industry. ■



**"I** still have to fulfill the duty of drafting new constitution."

*Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, amid demands that he step down to allow the Maoists to form new government.*

**"T**he demand for constitutional amendment is unacceptable. It will only lead to a situation where parties will constantly engage in pulling down governments."

*Prachanda, Maoist chairman, rejecting demands for introducing provision allowing simple majority to form or pull down a government.*

**"T**he conditions we have put forth now ought to have been fulfilled a year ago. They had been killing workers of other parties. But now they even killed their own sympathizer."

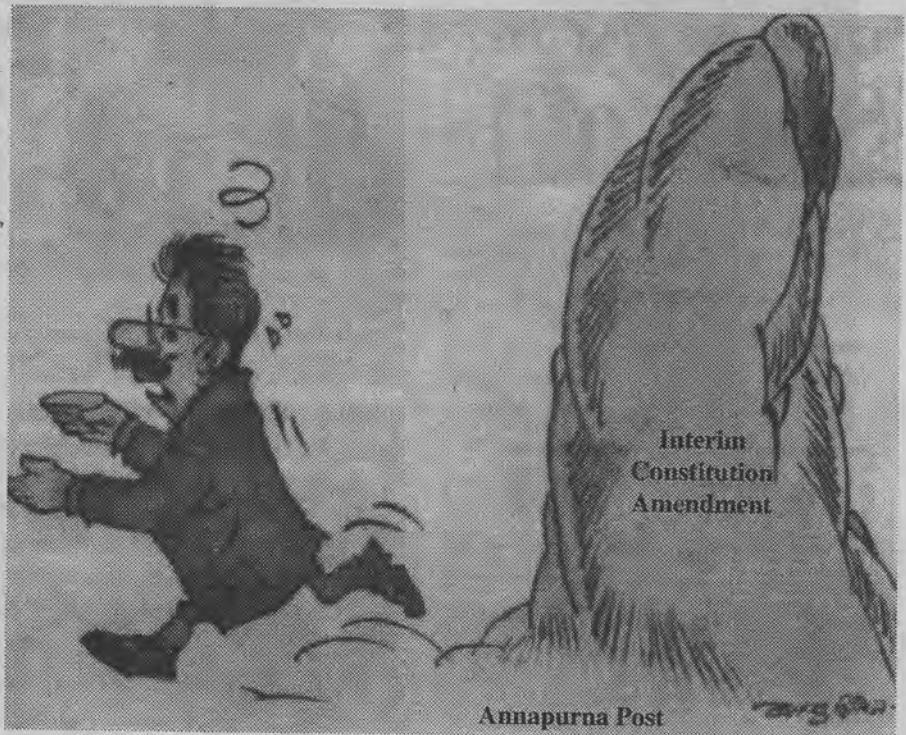
*Sher Bahadur Deuba, former prime minister and senior leader of Nepali Congress, demanding that the Maoists must first fulfill their conditions before leading the government.*

**"T**hey have not returned even an inch of seized land. In fact, they have started distributing the seized lands."

*Sushil Koirala, acting president of Nepali Congress, in BBC Nepali Service.*

**"T**he conditions put forth by Nepali Congress will boomerang on them."

*Ram Bahadur Thapa Badal, rejecting the demands by NC as*



*preconditions for Maoist government.*

**"T**he PM said he would positively consider these things and speak out after reaching political understanding. We told him that if he does not do so soon, Maoist ministers will have to think about quitting the government."

*Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Information and Communication Minister and Maoist spokesperson, saying that Maoist ministers urged the PM to make his position clear.*

**"E**verything including procedural matters are in place. People will be amazed to find out how smoothly we

will implement the republic declaration."

*Subas Nemwang, Speaker of the interim parliament, on preparations for Constituent Assembly meeting.*

**"W**e have agreed that the constitution should be amended to also include the autonomous Madhes province as per the understanding reached between the government and the United Democratic Madhesi Front in March."

*Hridayesh Tripathy, a leader of Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party, informing that three parties - MJF, TMLP and Sadbhavana Party - have agreed to work together in constitution making on issues concerning Madhes.*

## TRANSITION

**BROKEN:** Appa Sherpa, has broken his own world record by climbing the Mount Everest for 18<sup>th</sup> time.

**CLIMBED:** Shailee Basnet, the first Nepali woman journalist, the Mount Everest.

**SET:** Five members of Inclusive Nepali

Women's Mt. Everest Expedition Team - Susmita Maskey, Maya Gurung, Nwang Phuti Sherpa, Pemba Diki Sherpa and Poojan Acharya - together climbed the Mt. Everest on May 22, setting a record number of Nepali women atop the Everest.

**VISITED:** Praful Patel, vice president of World Bank for South Asian region.

**ARRIVED:** Dr. Kunio Senga, Director General of South Asia department of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), on an official visit to Nepal.

Dr Evan A. Feigenbaum, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, on a three-day visit.

## THIRD ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL

# Show of Israel

*Organized by Embassy of Israel, third Israel film festival shows the life, culture and challenges faced by Israeli society*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although the circumstances, place and culture are different, there are certain similarities in all human societies - that is trauma, tragedy, romance and implications of transformations in the society. This is what Israeli films screened at Russian Culture Center underscore.

Organized by Israeli Embassy, the film festival helped a large number of Nepalese to understand the Israeli culture, values and society. Of the six films screened, four are comedy drama



full of humor, one is an adventure drama and the other is love drama.

At a time when Nepalese film lovers are used to Bollywood and Hollywood movies, Israeli films give a different taste. Although one can find many similarities between Israeli and other western movies, it also has its distinct identity.

For Nepalese audience, film festivals help understand the culture and society of Israel. Thanks to the initiative by the Embassy of Israel, Nepalese have gotten the opportunity to share many social,

cultural and other aspects of Israel.

"The film festival helps Nepalese to see the perspective of Israel and its society. Since the last three years, we have been organizing film festivals in Nepal. I see very good response in Nepal," said ambassador of Israel to Nepal Dan Stav.

Among the six films screened in Russian Cultural Center, Free Zone 2005, a comedy drama subtitled in English is a very interesting film full of fun during its 91 minute long duration.

It is a film about a young American lady who has been living in Jerusalem for a while to marry her Israeli fiancé. However, her engagement breaks off. Shocked by the events, Rebecca

decides to go. The comedy film is full of humor and satire depicting the social life of Israel. Directed by Amos Gitai, the

film is a perfect display of human life and emotions.

The Syrian Bride (2004) is another interesting comedy. Directed by Eran Riklis, the 97 minutes comedy drama is full of interesting stories. The film is about a Syrian bride and an Israeli groom who lives in the border area of Golan height. Because of her love, Mona crosses the border to marry her Syrian fiancée. The director carefully portrayed the real story of



choice between love and patience.

Adventure drama, Someone to Run With (2006) is different than all other films. Directed by Oded Davidoff, the film is based on adventure story that takes place in the side alleys of Jerusalem and narrates a story of young boy trying to follow the footsteps of a young girl.

Directed by Shemi Zarhin, the film Aviva My Love (2006) is 107 minutes long film with a story of talented woman. Strong and sexy, the film is about Aviva's confrontation in her family with unemployed husband, moody sister, two teenage children and unpredictable mother. With full of contradicting characters, this drama is full of entertainment and difficulties faced by a lonely woman. The main character Aviva finds a different life once her talent is discovered by a famous novelist but she has to pay a price.

Directed by Julie Shles, Sallah Shabati (1964) is interesting comedy based on the story of a Yemenite Jewish family that was flown to Israel during operation Magic Carpet; a clandestine operation that flew 49,000 Yemenite Jews to Israel the year after the state was formed. This is the story about hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from Arab countries. ■





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